

Psi Researchers I

Introduction

This is the first section of an international list of scientists and intellectuals who contributed to the investigation of psi phenomena, giving brief summaries of their interests and activities. It broadly covers the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1940s. [A second section](#) covers the post-war period, although there is some overlap between the two. A third section of present-day (mainly living) researchers is in preparation.

This first section includes dedicated researchers such as Frederic Myers and Edmund Gurney, and scientists such as William Crookes, Friedrich Zöllner, Charles Richet and William James, for whom psi research was a part-time activity. It also features individuals in other fields who were involved in some way, for instance politician Arthur Balfour, philosophers Charles Peirce, Gabriel Marcel and Henri Bergson, classicist ER Dodds, novelists Arthur Conan Doyle, Hamlin Garland and JB Priestley, and journalists William T Stead and René Sudre.

The list is not comprehensive and additions may be made from time to time. Names of researchers with biographical articles on the Psi Encyclopedia are linked to the articles not on first mention as usual, but at the heads of their entries below.

Arthur Balfour (1848–1930)

[Arthur Balfour](#) was a British Tory politician who served as prime minister between 1902 and 1905. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge under the philosopher [Henry Sidgwick](#), his brother-in-law from 1876 and a co-founder of the [Society for Psychical Research \(SPR\)](#). Balfour became interested in telepathy and its possibilities for experimental work, and served as the Society's president in 1893. He was distraught at the death by typhoid in 1875 of his cousin Mary Littleton, whom he had hoped to marry, and remained single until his death. In later life he became associated with the celebrated Palm Sunday case, a mediumistic episode of the type known as '[cross-correspondences](#)', in which Littleton appeared to be giving evidence of having survived death.^{[1](#)}

Gerald Balfour (1853–1945)

[Gerald Balfour](#) studied at [Trinity College, Cambridge](#). There he knew Henry Sidgwick, co-founder of the SPR, which he joined in 1883. A Tory politician like his elder brother Arthur, he held various government posts until 1906, when he retired to devote himself to psychical research. He served as president of the SPR between 1906 and 1907, and was actively involved in investigating the [cross-correspondences](#), a series of mediumistic communications that occupied much of the Society's attention in the first three decades of the twentieth century. In 1909, he contributed a detailed article on the cross correspondences^{[2](#)} to the [Hibbert Journal](#) and an extensive article in a later *Proceedings of the SPR* was devoted to the mediumship of 'Mrs Willett' (Winifred Coombe-Tenant).^{[3](#)}

William Barrett (1845–1925)

[William Barrett](#) was a driving force behind the creation of the SPR. He studied chemistry and physics at university and was appointed professor of physics at the [Royal College of Science in Dublin](#) in 1873. He became interested in psi research in the 1860s and experimented with mesmerism and ESP in 1876. Barrett was acquainted with Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers and Edmund Gurney and was instrumental in bringing them together with Spiritualists to found the SPR: he organized the first meeting in 1882, served as the first editor of the *Journal of the SPR*, and as president in 1904. Barrett conducted what may have been the first ever systematic investigation of [dowsing](#). He also contributed reports of investigations into [poltergeist](#) and [table-turning](#) phenomena.⁴

Henri Bergson (1859–1941)

The French philosopher [Henri Bergson](#) took a close interest in hypnosis and psychic phenomena, and this informed his interactionist-dualist conception of mind. He was an advocate of a ‘filter’ and ‘transmission’ view of consciousness, along with William James, CD Broad, FCS Schiller and others, in which the brain does not ‘produce’ memory and perception, but rather constrains, filters or shapes it. He posited that altered states of consciousness weaken the mechanism, allowing an expansion of memory and perception, as do the threat or proximity of death. Bergson was cautious about avowing belief in psi and survival, but observed that his theory allowed for both. He was president of the SPR in 1913.

Theodora Bosanquet (1881–1961)

Theodora Bosanquet was secretary and amanuensis to the author [Henry James](#) between 1907 and 1916; her diaries about this period are held in the archives of [Harvard University](#). Bosanquet later joined the SPR, and edited its *Journal* during World War II. Her unpublished documents (now in the [SPR’s Cambridge archives](#)) contain notes and reports, mainly from the 1930s, about such matters as automatic writing, meditations and the mediumship of [Gladys Leonard](#).

Ernesto Bozzano (1862–1943)

[Ernesto Bozzano](#) was an Italian psychologist and psychical researcher, author of books analysing phenomena such as clairvoyance, [premonitions](#), [xenoglossy](#), [deathbed visions](#) and [mediumistic](#) descriptions of death. Bozzano was a strong believer in post-mortem survival on the basis of personal experiences with the medium [Eusapia Palladino](#) and readings of the research literature. He also held that discarnate spirits are the source of many psychic experiences. His work has seldom been translated, with the result that it has been long overlooked in the English-speaking world, although it is now being reassessed by scholars and historians.

Whately Carington (1892–1947)

[Walter Whately Carington](#), a Cambridge science graduate, was an active member of the Society for Psychical Research. He investigated the investigation of trance mediums such as [Gladys Leonard](#), [Eileen Garrett](#) and [Rudi Schneider](#), using tests

based on word association and psychogalvanic reflex, concluding that their 'controls' were secondary personalities. He was among the first to recognize the importance of statistics in psi research, although his application of statistics met with criticisms from later commentators.⁵

Hereward Carrington (1880–1958)

[Hereward Carrington](#) was an investigator and a prolific writer of books and articles about aspects of psi research.⁶ Born in Jersey, UK, he moved to the US in 1907 and became an active investigator in the [American Society for Psychical Research \(ASPR\)](#). His initial interest was the fraudulent methods used by mediums, which his conjuring skills helped discover, winning the approval of [Harry Houdini](#).⁷ However, as one of a three-man team investigating the Italian medium [Eusapia Palladino](#) he became convinced of her genuineness, and took her to the US to try to convince scientists and intellectuals there, with limited success. Carrington was later involved in the investigation of the Boston physical medium [Mina Crandon](#) that was initiated by the magazine *Scientific American* in 1924. In 1932, he conducted experiments with the mental medium Eileen Garrett in New York.⁸

William Crookes (1832–1919)

[William Crookes](#) discovered the element thallium and developed partial-vacuum tubes that led to the discovery of cathode rays and x-rays. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1863 and knighted in 1897. Among Crookes's many interests were the psychical phenomena reported in Spiritualist seances. His investigations of mediums, notably [DD Home](#), [Kate Jencken \(née Fox\)](#) and Florence Cook, convinced him of the genuineness of the claims and this also brought him considerable notoriety. He served as president of the SPR from 1896 to 1899. Crookes's reports continue to be the subject of controversy in the present day.

Marie Curie (1867–1934) and Pierre Curie (1859–1906)

Born in Warsaw, [Marie Curie](#) (née Maria Skłodowska) moved to Paris in 1891 where she researched radioactivity with [Pierre Curie](#) (later her husband). Marie Curie is credited with the discovery of the elements polonium and radium and won Nobel prizes for both physics and chemistry. The Curies were among a group of scientists and intellectuals who took an interest in the medium [Eusapia Palladino](#), attending sittings in Paris; Pierre's notes and letters described effects such as levitating tables at a time when the couple were controlling her.⁹ Pierre also conducted some tests concerning ionisation around the medium.¹⁰

Max Dessoir (1867–1941)

[Max Dessoir](#) was a psychologist and philosopher, who taught as a professor in Berlin until he was forced out by the Nazis. He was secretary of the Berlin Society for Experimental Psychology, which published papers on the mind origins of telepathy, dreams and hypnosis. Articles by Dessoir appeared in the SPR's publications¹¹; he also submitted items for its 1886 survey of apparitions [Phantasms of the Living](#). He attended sittings with the medium Rosalie Thompson in

1900. Dessoir is credited with having coined the term 'parapsychology' to describe a science that explores what lies beyond the ordinary.^{[12](#)}

ER Dodds (1893–1979)

[Eric Robertson Dodds](#) was born in County Down in Ireland and studied at University College, Oxford, where in 1936 he became Regius Professor of Greek. He joined the SPR council in 1927 and served as president from 1961 to 1963. Dodds was an expert in classical mythology and philosophy, and wrote about psi in the classical period.^{[13](#)} He took part in investigations of mediums, including [Gladys Leonard](#), concluding that telepathic communication was a more likely explanation than spirit contact for veridical information given in her statements.^{[14](#)} His 1934 paper 'Why I Do Not Believe in Survival' has been much quoted.^{[15](#)}

Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930)

[Arthur Conan Doyle](#) studied medicine in his native Edinburgh and subsequently won fame as the creator of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. In later life he became a firm believer in Spiritualism^{[16](#)} and was a vocal advocate for the veracity of paranormal claims. He acquired a reputation for credulity, exacerbated by his support of questionable episodes such as the [Cottingley Fairies](#). Having at first supported the SPR he later came into conflict with it, believing it to be hostile to Spiritualism.

Charles Drayton Thomas (1868–1953)

Drayton Thomas (as he referred to himself) was ordained a Methodist minister having first worked as a businessman. A convinced spiritualist, he carried out a detailed investigation of the mental medium [Gladys Leonard](#),^{[17](#)} during which he believed himself to be in communication with his deceased sister and father. These yielded a series of important papers published in the SPR *Proceedings* on subjects such as proxy sittings, book and newspaper tests and direct voice communication.

John W Edmonds (1799–1874)

[John Edmonds](#) was an American lawyer, judge and politician. He became one of the first serious investigators of mediumship when rapped messages at a sitting produced veridical information about his deceased wife. He observed levitations, automatic writing, xenoglossy and other unlearned skills, and himself developed mediumship skills. Edmonds described his experiences in a two-volume collaboration with George T Dexter, *Spiritualism*, published in 1853. The ensuing controversy cost him his judgeship on the New York Supreme Court, but he did not waver in his conviction about survival.

Everard Feilding (1867–1936)

[Everard Feilding](#), a barrister and minor aristocrat, investigated the Polish medium [Stanisława Tomczyk](#) on behalf of the SPR (and later married her). He is remembered in particular for his role in the Society's second investigation of the Italian medium [Eusapia Palladino](#) in Naples in 1908, as one of three principal investigators. He

subsequently wrote what became known as ‘The Feilding Report’,¹⁸ a detailed endorsement of her psychic abilities. Despite this, he considered himself an open-minded sceptic; a fellow SPR investigator commented that his scepticism was ‘extreme’.¹⁹

Camille Flammarion (1842–1925)

[Nicolas Camille Flammarion](#) was an eminent French astronomer, founder of the magazine *L’Astronomie* in 1882 and later president of the Astronomical Society of France. His interest in psychical research was stimulated by reading [Allan Kardec’s](#) *Le Livre des Esprits*.²⁰ He collected many examples of putative paranormal phenomena in France, notably of an acoustic nature, such as the experience reported by the composer [Camille Saint-Saëns](#) of hearing music with no apparent source at the time of a close friend’s death. His three-volume work *Death and its Mystery* described a variety of accounts of anomalous events.²¹ He served as president of the SPR in 1923.

Théodore Flournoy (1854–1920)

Born in Geneva, [Théodore Flournoy](#) was professor of psychology at the University of Geneva from 1891. He is best known for his study of the trance medium [Hélène Smith](#) (Catherine Müller) in 1894–95, described in *Des Indes à la Planète Mars* (*From India to the Planet Mars*) (1900); he concluded that the information she gave was combination of cryptomnesia and unconscious creative invention. He also carried out other investigations in mental mediumship and of physical séance phenomena.²²

Nandor Fodor (1895–1964)

[Nandor Fodor](#) studied law in his native Hungary, before moving to the US and later Britain to work as a journalist. He pursued interests in psychoanalysis (he was at one time an associate of Sigmund Freud) and psychical research, publishing his highly-regarded *Encyclopedia of Psychic Science* in 1934. Fodor was research officer of the International Institute for Psychical Research, the London representative to the American Society for Psychical Research and the assistant editor to *Light*, a spiritualist journal. In mid-life, Fodor began to argue that paranormal phenomena should be explained in psychoanalytic terms, particularly with regard to mediumistic and poltergeist phenomena, which he argued were caused by living individuals suffering from stress or emotional repression.²³

Hamlin Garland (1861–1940)

[Hamlin Garland](#), a Pulitzer-prize winning author, investigated mediumistic phenomena on behalf of a psychical research society based in Boston, which he described in *Forty Years of Psychic Research* (1936). A notable episode in later life was his [unearthing of religious artefacts](#) said to have been buried by North American Indians during the missionary period, whose precise locations were revealed through mediumistic communications. Garland was seemingly convinced that the communications originated with deceased spirits rather than the medium’s subconscious, but declined to assert it.

Gustave Geley (1868–1924)

[Gustave Geley](#) combined a successful medical career at Annecy in France with an interest in séance phenomena and reincarnation. He wrote books about the phenomena of clairvoyance, trance, and premonition that he witnessed as a member of the Society for Psychical Studies in nearby Geneva. In 1919, he retired from medicine to become director of the newly established [Institut Métapsychique International \(IMI\)](#). Geley developed a theory about ectoplasm in vitalist rather than spiritualist terms. He is especially remembered for his investigation of the Polish medium [Franek Kluski](#), which became the cause of a long-running controversy. He died in a plane crash in 1924.

Edmund Gurney (1847–1888)

[Edmund Gurney](#) was born in Hersham, Surrey and studied classics at Trinity College, Cambridge. His original vocation was music, about which he wrote a philosophical treatise;²⁴ he also studied medicine and law. He was a founding member of the SPR, serving as its honorary secretary and writing the bulk of *Phantasms of the Living*, a two-volume study of the evidence for telepathy and crisis apparitions.²⁵ Gurney wrote about the nature of hallucinations and other related phenomena and carried out experiments in telepathy. He died aged 41 from an apparently accidental overdose of the chloroform he used as a pain killer.²⁶

Robert Hare (1781–1858)

[Robert Hare](#), a chemistry professor at the [University of Pennsylvania](#), is credited with inventions that included the calorimeter, the deflagrator (a type of battery) and the oxyhydrogen blowtorch. He contributed regularly to the *American Journal of Science*. In 1855, he declared his conversion to Spiritualism and published a book about his investigations of mediums, for which he developed experimental apparatus. Hare's reputation ensured a wide audience, although his claims were harshly attacked by fellow scientists.

Richard Hodgson (1855–1905)

Australian by birth, [Richard Hodgson](#) moved to England to study at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was an early member of the SPR, which had been co-founded by his tutor Henry Sidgwick. He made his name with an [investigation in India of psychic claims made by Helena Blavatsky](#), the founder of Theosophy, which he concluded were fraudulent. He took a sceptical view of physical mediums then being investigated by the Society. In 1887, he was appointed to run the American branch of the Society in Boston, and devoted much time to the study there of [Leonora Piper](#), a mental (clairvoyant) medium, becoming convinced first of the genuineness of her abilities, and eventually of the reality of survival of death. He died suddenly aged fifty after a strenuous game of handball, following which he was reported to have communicated through Piper.

James Hyslop (1854–1920)

[James Hyslop](#), a philosophy professor and psychologist at [Columbia University](#), devoted the last fifteen years of his life to psychical research, after receiving impressive veridical communications in sessions with the medium [Leonora Piper](#). He studied Piper and other prominent American mediums, writing books and papers for publications of the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR), which he also served as executive secretary and treasurer. Hyslop was a strong proponent of survival, arguing that the best mediumistic evidence established this beyond reasonable doubt.

William James (1842–1910)

The Harvard psychologist and philosopher [William James](#) is one of the most prominent intellectuals to have been active in psychical research. His interest was mainly to analyze the research literature and synthesize concepts, but he also carried out some research, notably with the Boston medium [Leonora Piper](#), whom he first brought the attention of colleagues at the SPR. James wrote about psi research in mainstream scientific journals, decrying critics who dismissed it out of hand, an attitude he considered unscientific. James came to believe that mind is independent of the brain, and that human minds are interconnected as part of a greater cosmic consciousness. However, he repeatedly stated he had no explanation for the mechanism behind psychical phenomena and appeared unconvinced by the case for personal survival of death.

Andrew Lang (1844–1912)

[Andrew Lang](#) was born in Selkirk, Scotland and studied at [St Andrews University](#) and [Balliol College, Oxford](#). He became an honorary fellow of [Merton College](#), Oxford, where the renowned anthropologist [Walter Evans-Wentz](#) was one of his students. Lang developed an interest in the paranormal through his extensive anthropology and folklore studies. He joined the SPR in 1906 and was appointed its president in 1911. He contributed to the *Journal* and *Proceedings* on a wide range of subjects: poltergeists, crystal gazing, ghosts and hauntings, auditory hallucinations (notably the voices of Joan of Arc), levitation and others.²⁷ Lang found himself increasingly unable to discount certain aspects of the paranormal when he judged the evidence to be secure, but was antagonistic towards phenomena displayed by 'paid mediums'.²⁸

Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909)

[Cesare Lombroso](#) was born in Verona and studied at several universities in Europe. He was appointed professor of Forensic Medicine and Hygiene at Turin in 1878 and he later became professor of psychiatry and anthropology there, believing that criminals could be identified by physical defects. He joined the Society for Psychical Research as a corresponding member; during the latter part of his life he studied mediumship and investigated the medium [Eusapia Palladino](#). His book *After Death – What?* explored his views on the subject in some detail and included his studies of hypnotism.²⁹

Edith Lyttelton (1865–1948)

Dame [Edith Lyttelton](#) was educated privately. She was married to [Alfred Lyttelton](#), a politician, and became a delegate to the [League of Nations](#). She joined the SPR in 1902, serving as its president from 1933 to 1934. Lyttelton produced automatic writing, and wrote books about psi phenomena: *The Superconscious Mind* (1931)³⁰ and *Some Cases of Prediction* (1937).³¹

Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973)

[Gabriel Marcel](#), a French existentialist philosopher, experimented with a planchette as a young man during World War I, and was impressed by the accuracy of the veridical information he received. In his later writings he explored the nature of psi and survival, of which he was personally convinced, although also dubious about the ability of modern parapsychological methods to provide meaningful insights.

William McDougall (1871–1938)

[William McDougall](#) was born in Lancashire, UK and studied at the universities of Manchester, Cambridge and Oxford. He was appointed professor of Psychology at Harvard in 1921, going on to Duke University in 1927, where one of his students was [JB Rhine](#). He founded the parapsychology unit at Duke and edited the *Journal of Parapsychology* in 1937; he served as SPR president from 1920 to 1921. McDougall was particularly interested in telepathy and what would later become known as ‘near-death experiences’. An admirer of the psychologist William James,³² he came to believe that ‘the spirit was not wholly dependent on the physical brain’,³³ and in several books stressed the importance of including psychical research in the field of psychology.³⁴

Enrico Morselli (1852–1929)

[Enrico Morselli](#), an Italian psychiatrist, was an early investigator of the Italian physical medium [Eusapia Palladino](#), interested especially in the physiological aspects of the phenomena. His two-volume book *Psychology and ‘Spiritism’* (1908) asserts that most of them were genuine, against critics who considered them to be wholly fraudulent. However, he disbelieved in survival and argued that mediumship is pathological, its symptoms largely coinciding with those of hysteria. For Morselli, Palladino’s ‘control spirit’ was a creation of her mind, and her physical manifestations were caused by a ‘bio-psychic force’ originating in her body.

Frederic WH Myers (1843–1901)

[Frederic Myers](#) was a principal founder of the Society for Psychical Research, established in London in 1882. His book *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, published posthumously in 1903,³⁵ analyzes phenomena associated with what he called the ‘Subliminal Self’, such as automatic writing, precognitive dreams and the trance states of mediums, and is regarded as a major theoretical contribution to understanding this kind of anomalous mental experience. Myers’s thought about the unconscious anticipated in some respects the work of [Sigmund Freud](#), whose writings he introduced to the British and American reading public. However, he departed from the mainstream in considering much anomalous mental phenomena to be normal aspects of human consciousness, not pathological

symptoms requiring treatment, and also possible indicators of the continuation of consciousness after death.

Charles Peirce (1839–1914)

Philosopher [Charles Peirce](#), the founder of [American Pragmatism](#), paid close attention to the claims of psychical researchers, particularly with regard to telepathy, examining the evidence in some depth. He adopted a sceptical but open-minded attitude, confessing to a 'legitimate and well-founded prejudice against the supernatural', but also acknowledging 'there is a considerable body of respectable evidence in favour of telepathy, in general'. A similar tension between caution and respect for parapsychological evidence is also found in his writings about psychokinesis and survival of death.

Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo (1868–1954)

[Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo](#), a Russian citizen, joined the SPR in 1890 and contributed Russian cases to its Census of Hallucinations. He investigated the Russian medium SF Sambor and uncovered his methods of producing fraudulent phenomena; he also participated in the SPR's 1907 investigation of [Eusapia Palladino](#) in Naples and published an independent report.³⁶ Solovovo contributed to the SPR *Proceedings* and *Journal* on such topics as extrasensory perception and the mediumship of [DD Home](#).³⁷

John Piddington (1869–1952)

A competent organiser, John Piddington was entrusted with a variety of administrative roles within the SPR. He was interested in the investigation of mediums, stressing the need for careful reporting.³⁸ In 1905, he helped to set up the American Society for Psychical Research. He was assiduous in following up mediumistic evidence of the type known as '[cross correspondences](#)', working closely with investigators and mediums, and contributed articles of description and analysis to SPR publications.³⁹

Frank Podmore (1856–1910)

[Frank Podmore](#) was born in Elstree, Hertfordshire and was educated at [Pembroke College, Oxford](#). In 1884, he was a founding member of the socialist [Fabian Society](#). He worked for the Post Office in London, from which he is said to have had to resign because of his homosexuality. He was an early member of the Society for Psychical Research and worked with [Frederic Myers](#) and [Edmund Gurney](#) on the compilation of *Phantasms of the Living*. Having initially accepted Spiritualism he became increasingly sceptical, believing that only the existence of telepathy had strong evidence in its favour. Podmore wrote numerous articles and books about psychic phenomena, of which the later ones argued in favour of non-paranormal alternatives.⁴⁰ He died by drowning; whether by accident or suicide was never established. *****This entry has too much of a tabloid feel for my taste. I don't mind the homosexuality mention, it's nice to see acknowledgment of the existence of gay people everywhere, but when the cause of his drowning is**

unknown, I think we should let him off the suspicion of suicide by deleting the part of that sentence that follows the semicolon.

Harry Price (1881–1948)

[Harry Price](#) was born in London and held jobs in sales and journalism before establishing a career as Britain's best-known psychical researcher, publishing numerous books and articles in the popular media. He was an expert amateur conjurer, a member of the [Magic Circle](#) from 1922. He joined the SPR in 1920, but left it to form his own [National Laboratory of Psychical Research](#) in 1926. He was an active investigator of mediums such as [Rudi Schneider](#), and of poltergeist and haunting claims, notably the controversial [Borley Rectory](#) episode about which he published a best-selling book.⁴¹

JB Priestley (1894–1984)

The British novelist and playwright [John Boynton Priestley](#) held a keen interest in psychical research that manifested in works such as *Dangerous Corner* (1932), *Time and the Conways* (1937) and *An Inspector Calls* (1945). Priestley was interested in the concept of time-slips and was especially impressed by the examination of [dream precognition](#) in [JW Dunne's](#) *An Experiment with Time* (1929). As a member of the SPR he corresponded at length in its *Journal* about his beliefs and theories concerning precognition (the letters are housed in the SPR archives).

Walter Franklin Prince (1863–1934)

[Walter Franklin Prince](#) was born in Detroit, USA and became an Episcopal minister, later acquiring his PhD from [Yale University](#). He was drawn to psychical research after he encountered '[Doris Fischer](#)', a woman who displayed multiple personalities. During the course of investigating her case he became involved with the American Society for Psychical Research, and served as president of the SPR in 1930-1931. Prince was an active researcher in a number of areas, providing a detailed report of the [Patience Worth](#) case and celebrity accounts of psychic experiences in *Noted Witnesses for Psychic Occurrences* (1928).⁴² He also attended séances for physical phenomena, about which he was sceptical.

Charles Richet (1850–1935)

[Charles Richet](#) was born in Paris where he studied medicine and physiology. He won the Nobel Prize in 1913 for his discovery of anaphylaxis. Richet became interested in hypnotism after observing [Jean-Martin Charcot's](#) work with hysterical patients. Subjects of his extensive investigations included [Eusapia Palladino](#), [Marthe Béraud \(Eva C\)](#), [Stefan Ossowiecki](#) and William Eglinton, described in numerous articles and also in his influential book *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* (1922).⁴³ Richet is believed to have coined the term 'ectoplasm'.⁴⁴ In 1890, he founded the quarterly journal *Annales des Sciences Psychiques (Revue Métapsychique)* from 1920). He also served as president of the SPR and of the [Institut Métapsychique International](#) in Paris.

William Salter (1880–1969)

[William Henry Salter](#) was born in London and studied classics at Trinity College, Cambridge. He acquired a law degree in 1902. In 1915 he married Helen Verrall, daughter of a Cambridge academic who had contributed automatic writings of the cross-correspondence type. Salter joined the SPR in 1916 and held various posts, including that of president. He deposited with Trinity College, Cambridge major collections of psychical research documentation regarding 'reminiscences of the SPR' and the '[Cross Correspondences](#)'. He also wrote at length about key members such as [Frederic Myers](#), [Edmund Gurney](#) and [Richard Hodgson](#), and investigated the [alleged time-slip at Versailles](#) experienced by Moberley and Jourdain.⁴⁵

HF Saltmarsh (1881–1943)

[Herbert Francis Saltmarsh](#), a Londoner, worked initially for a shipping business, but was forced by ill health to retire early, devoting the rest of his career to psychical research with the SPR. He is noted for mediumistic researches focused on [precognition](#) and [psychometry](#),⁴⁶ in which he developed methods for accurately scoring and classifying results.⁴⁷

Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1862–1929)

Baron Albert Phillibert Franz Freiherr von Schrenck-Notzing was born in Oldenburg, Germany and studied hypnosis and psychiatry in Munich. After befriending [Charles Richet](#) in 1889 he became increasingly interested in telepathy and psychical research. He investigated [Eusapia Palladino](#) with Richet in France and then carried out in-depth research with mediums [Marthe Béraud \(Eva C\)](#), [Stanislava Tomczyk](#), [Franek Kluski](#), the [Schneider brothers](#) and others, some of which was described in his book *The Phenomena of Materialisation* (1914).⁴⁸

Eleanor Sidgwick (1845–1936)

[Eleanor Sidgwick](#), sister of conservative prime minister Arthur Balfour (see above), was born in East Lothian and educated at [Newnham College, Cambridge](#), of which she was later Principal. She married the philosopher Henry Sidgwick (see below), and was active both as administrator and investigator in the early years of the Society for Psychical Research, of which her husband was co-founder and first president. After he died in 1900 she was the dominant figure in the organization for three decades. Sidgwick made important contributions to the study of mediums [Leonora Piper](#) and [Gladys Leonard](#).⁴⁹

Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900)

[Henry Sidgwick](#) studied classics at [Trinity College, Cambridge](#), where he was later appointed professor of moral philosophy, a post he held until his death. Like many of his contemporaries, he questioned whether religious belief was possible in the new scientific age, and this stimulated his interest in psi research. He took a lead in founding the Society for Psychical Research, along with other individuals associated with Trinity College, and was its first president, his reputation helping to give it credibility. He contributed to some research activities, notably the 1894 Census of Hallucinations. He quickly became convinced that telepathy genuinely occurs, but remained uncertain about phenomena indicating survival of death.

William T Stead (1849–1912)

[William Thomas Stead](#) was a British journalist, author, social reformer and medium. He became interested in the paranormal in his youth after witnessing ghostly phenomena, and this stimulated a collection of accounts entitled *Real Ghost Stories* (1891).⁵⁰ Experiments with automatic writing culminated in the publication in 1909 of *Letters from Julia*, describing veridical communications from a deceased woman. Stead perished in the sinking of the *Titanic*, which he had envisioned in a novel written twenty years earlier. Following his death he was widely reported to have communicated at mediumistic sittings.

John Strutt, 3rd Baron Rayleigh (1842–1919)

[John William Strutt](#) studied mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge and served as Cavendish Professor of Physics there from 1879 until 1884. He jointly discovered the gas argon, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1904. He was president of the [Royal Society](#) from 1905 to 1908. His marriage to Henry Sidgwick's sister-in-law brought him into contact with psychical research: he was present at the first formal meeting of the SPR in 1882 and later served as its president, arguing that scientists 'should concern themselves with phenomena which lay just outside convention's boundaries'.⁵¹ His activity in the field included experiments in hypnosis, research with the medium [Kate Jencken \(née Fox\)](#) and a sitting with [Eusapia Palladino](#) in Cambridge.

Robert Strutt, 4th Baron Rayleigh (1875–1947)

[Robert John Strutt](#) studied mathematics and natural sciences at Trinity College, Cambridge. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1905 and was Professor of Physics at Imperial College, London from 1908 to 1919; he was president of the SPR in 1937–8. Strutt was closely interested in the investigations of [Eusapia Palladino](#), [Kathleen Goligher](#) and [Rudi Schneider](#) in Paris in 1932. ⁵²

René Sudre (1880–1968)

[René Sudre](#) was a French science journalist who studied, disseminated and vigorously defended psi research during the 1920s. He shared his encyclopedic knowledge of extra-sensory perception and psychokinesis in his 500-page book *Traité de Parapsychologie*, published in 1956.⁵³ Sudre was opposed to Spiritualism, and developed a psychology-based model of mediumistic phenomena that avoided supernatural interpretations. Through his English-language works he came to be regarded as France's leading parapsychological authority, although they are rarely cited today.

Herbert Thurston (1856–1939)

[Herbert Thurston](#) was a British Jesuit priest, scholar and author of books and articles on parapsychology, about which he was unusually open-minded for a Catholic. Thurston considered poltergeist activity to be real, but was dubious about the possibility of communication with the dead. Instead, he viewed mediumistic phenomena as arising from the medium's subconscious, and criticized Spiritualists

for their certainty about it. However, he also worried that communicators could be demons or other malevolent beings.

Margaret Verrall (1857–1916)

[Margaret Verrall](#) is unusual in having been both a mediumistic subject and an investigator. She was a classical scholar and lecturer at [Newnham College, Cambridge](#); an interest in psychical phenomena led her to join the SPR in 1889, and she contributed articles to its publications on her experiments in telepathy, crystal-gazing and automatic writing. Her deceased husband Arthur Verrall, a classics lecturer at Trinity College, appeared to communicate through her later automatic writings, and these and other scripts became a significant part of the years-long 'cross correspondences' project, notably the celebrated 'Palm Sunday' case, to which her daughter Helen also contributed. She also authored papers analysing the cross-correspondences and other mediumistic phenomena.

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913)

[Alfred Russel Wallace](#), known as the independent co-discoverer with Charles Darwin of the theory of evolution by natural selection, developed an interest in mesmerism in 1844, which in the 1850s led to him attend spiritualist séances. He contributed reports of his observations of mediums such as William Eglinton to spiritualist and psychical publications, but his enthusiastic endorsements were often disputed by other researchers.

René Warcollier (1881–1962)

[René Warcollier](#) was a French chemical engineer and inventor, best remembered today for his pioneering studies in telepathy. Warcollier's method was the transmission at a distance of mental images through drawings, in which he reported a 20% success rate with untrained subjects and 50% success after training. In his analysis, he focused on the complex psychological processes underlying telepathy.

Johann Friedrich Zöllner (1834–1882)

Johann Friedrich Zöllner was professor of astrophysics at [Leipzig University](#) from 1872, where he made a significant contribution in spectrum analysis and related areas. Zöllner held tests with the British medium [Henry Slade](#) in order to test his theories about a four-dimensional space, reporting positive results: in one notable instance, two wooden rings which were previously strung on a piece of catgut were found encircling the leg of a small table. Slade was discredited in a public trial, and Zöllner himself was harshly criticized by other German scientists, although he also had some supporters, and the episode remains controversial.

Literature

Balfour, G. (1935). [A study of the psychological aspects of Mrs Willett's mediumship, and of the statements of the communicators concerning process.](#) *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 43, 43-318.

- Bayfield, M.A. (1913). [Andrew Lang and psychical research](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 26, 419-30.
- Broad, C.D. (1970). Obituary: W.H. Salter. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 203-8.
- Brian, D. (2005). *The Curies: A Biography of the Most Controversial Family in Science*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Carr, B. (2008). Worlds Apart? Can psychical research bridge the gap between matter and mind? Appendix A: Brief history of physicist presidents. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 59, 1-96.
- Carrington, H. (1907). *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*. Boston: H.B. Turner & Co.
- Carrington, H. (1914). *The Problems of Psychical Research*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.
- Carrington, H. (1933). An instrumental test of the independence of a 'spirit control'. *American Psychical Institute, Bulletin I*: New York.
- Courtier, J. (1908). Rapport sur les Séances d' Eusapia Palladino a l'Institut General Psychologique. *Bulletin de l'Institut General Psychologique*, 415-546.
- Dessoir, M. (1886). [Experiments in Muscle-Reading and Thought-Transference](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 4, 111-26.
- Dodds, E.R. (1934). [Why I do not believe in survival](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 42, 147-72.
- Dodds, E.R. (1972). Supernormal phenomena in classical antiquity. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 55.
- Doyle, A.C. (1926). [The History of Spiritualism](#). London: Cassell and Co. Ltd.
- Drayton Thomas, C. (1922). *Some New Evidence for Human Survival*. London: Collins.
- Feilding, E., Baggally, W.W., & Carrington, H. (1909). [Report on a series of sittings with Eusapia Palladino](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 23, 309-566.
- Feilding, E., & Marriott, W. (1911). [Report on a further series of sittings with Eusapia Palladino at Naples](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 25, 57-69
- Flammarion, C. (1922). *Death and its Mystery*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.
- Flammarion, C. (1923). [Presidential Address](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 34, 1-27.
- Flournoy, T. (1911). *Spiritism and Psychology*. H. Carrington (trans.). New York & London: Harper.

- Fodor, N. (1933). *Encyclopedia of Psychic Science*. London: Arthurs Press Ltd.
- Fodor, N. (1948). The poltergeist psychoanalyzed. *Psychiatric Quarterly* 22, 195-203.
- Gurney, E. (1880). *The Power of Sound*. London: Smith, Elder, & Co.
- Gurney, E. (1886). *Phantasms of the Living, Vols. I and II*. London: Society for Psychical Research.
- Hall, T. (1964). *The Strange Case of Edmund Gurney*. London: Duckworth.
- Haynes, R. (1982). *The Society for Psychical Research. 1882–1982, A History*. London & Sydney: MacDonald & Co.
- Inglis, B. (1985). *The Paranormal*. London: Guild Publication.
- Lang, A. (1911). [Presidential Address](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 25, 364-76.
- Lombroso, C. (1909). *After Death – What?* Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.
- Lyttelton, E. (1931). *The Superconscious Mind*. London: Philip Allan.
- Lyttelton, E. (1937). *Some Cases of Prediction*. London: G. Bell & Sons.
- McDougall, W. (1911). *Body and Mind*. London: Methuen.
- McDougall, W. (1921). [Presidential Address](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 31, 106-23.
- McDougall, W. (1938). *The Riddle of Life*. London: Methuen.
- Myers, F.W.H. (1903, 1904). *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (2 vols.). London and New York: Longmans.
- Muldoon, S., & Carrington, H. (1929). *The Projection of the Astral Body*. London: Rider & Co.
- Piddington, J.G. (1924). [Presidential Address](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 34, 131-52.
- Piddington, J.G. (1916). [Cross correspondences of a Gallic type](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 29, 1-45.
- Podmore, F. (1902). *Modern Spiritualism*, 2 vols. London: Methuen.
- Price, H. (1942). *Search for Truth: My Life for Psychical Research*. London: Collins.
- Price, H. (1936). *Confessions of a Ghost Hunter*. London: Putnam & Co. Ltd.
- Prince, W.F. (1928). *Noted Witnesses for Psychic Occurrences*. Boston: Boston Society for Psychical Research.

Rayleigh, Lord (1938). [Presidential Address: The problem of physical phenomena in connection with psychical research](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 1-18.

Richet, C. (1923). *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*. New York: Macmillan.

Saltmarsh, H.F. (1930). [Report on the investigation of some sittings with Mrs Warren Elliott](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 39, 48-175.

Saltmarsh, H.F. (1934). [Report on cases of apparent precognition](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 42, 49-103.

Schrenck-Notzing, Baron A. (1914). *The Phenomena of Materialisation* [English edition 1920]. London: K. Paul, Trench and Trubner.

Sidgwick, E. (1932). [The Society for Psychical Research: A short account of its history and work on the occasion of the Society's Jubilee, 1932](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 41, 1-27.

Solovovo, Count (1911). [Les phénomènes physiques du Spiritisme](#). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 25, 413-46.

Stead, W.T. (1909). *After Death or Letters from Julia*. Chicago: The Progressive Thinker Publishing House. [Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing, LLC.]

Sudre, R. (1956). *Traité de Parapsychologie*. Paris: Payot.

Thalbourne, M., & Rosenbaum, R. (1986). The origin of the word 'parapsychology'. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 53, 225-9.

Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1](#). Haynes (1982).
- [2](#). Haynes (1982), 190.
- [3](#). Balfour (1935).
- [4](#). Carr (2008).
- [5](#). Broad (1962).
- [6](#). E.g., Carrington (1914).
- [7](#). Carrington (1907).
- [8](#). Carrington (1933), 96.
- [9](#). Brian (2005).
- [10](#). Courtier (1908).
- [11](#). Dessoir (1886), 111-26.
- [12](#). For a full history of the term see Thalbourne & Rosenbaum (1986), 225-9.
- [13](#). Dodds (1972).
- [14](#). Dodds (1934).

- [15.](#) Dodds (1934).
- [16.](#) E.g., Doyle (1926).
- [17.](#) Drayton Thomas (1922).
- [18.](#) Feilding et al (1909).
- [19.](#) Inglis (1985), 291-2.
- [20.](#) Flammarion (1923).
- [21.](#) Flammarion (1922).
- [22.](#) Flournoy (1911).
- [23.](#) Fodor (1948).
- [24.](#) Gurney (1880).
- [25.](#) Gurney (1886).
- [26.](#) Hall (1964).
- [27.](#) Bayfield (1913).
- [28.](#) Lang (1911).
- [29.](#) Lombroso (1909).
- [30.](#) Lyttelton (1931).
- [31.](#) Lyttelton (1937).
- [32.](#) McDougall (1921).
- [33.](#) Haynes (1982), 91.
- [34.](#) Including McDougall (1911 & 1938).
- [35.](#) Myers (1903, 1904).
- [36.](#) Feilding & Marriott (1911).
- [37.](#) E.g., Solovovo (1911).
- [38.](#) Piddington (1924).
- [39.](#) Piddington (1916).
- [40.](#) Podmore (1902).
- [41.](#) Price (1942).
- [42.](#) Prince (1928).
- [43.](#) Richetk (1923).
- [44.](#) Fodor (1933).
- [45.](#) Broad (1970).
- [46.](#) Saltmarsh (1930, 1934).
- [47.](#) SPR Archives.
- [48.](#) Schrenck-Notzing (1914).
- [49.](#) E.g., Sidgwick (1932).
- [50.](#) Stead (1891).
- [51.](#) Inglis (1985), 314.
- [52.](#) Rayleigh (1938).
- [53.](#) Sudre (1956).