

“In the Society to which I now have the gratification of being admitted I find myself exalted to the VII^o or Grade of Adeptus Exemptus, a post of honour which notwithstanding the assurance of the M[ost] E[xcellent] Z[erubabel] I am afraid I shall but very inadequately fill.”

Freemasons will recognise Hockley's gentle humour in the play on the Holy Royal Arch ceremony and the reference to being “employed to dig and delve”.

Bristol College had been formed by Captain Francis Irwin (later to be promoted to Major), Hockley's friend and correspondent, who had been admitted to the Society on 13th October 1867 (which, you will note, co-incidentally, happened to be Frederick Hockley's fifty-ninth birthday). On 8th April 1869 Irwin had been authorised by the Supreme College in London to form Bristol College and to become its first Chief Adept. The College was founded on 29th December 1869 and continued to work actively for at least ten years.

The lecture in the little red manuscript book should have been given at the sixth meeting of Bristol College on 14th April 1873 but it was not delivered as Hockley was not present. The paper was entitled “Evenings with the Indwellers of the World of Spirits” and was later published in *The Rosicrucian and Masonic Record* in April 1877. It is important in our present context because, in his preliminary remarks, Hockley refers to his mirror. [Fig. 5]

“After thirty years' desultory working with crystals and mirrors, I had in 1854, under spiritual instructions, prepared and consecrated a large mirror, dedicated to a spirit known to me as the C.A.⁶, for the purpose of receiving visions and

⁶ Hockley's abbreviation for “Crowned Angel”.

responses to metaphysical questions proposed by myself and friends. To this object I devoted my Tuesday evenings, and on these occasions was very reluctant to receive spiritual communications from other sources.”

It has been suggested that the Mirror now in the possession of High Council was given to Hockley by Madame Helena Blavatsky but this seems unlikely in view of his comments to Irwin in a letter of July 1878 in which he says that one of her books is “rather useful as a selection on Spiritual matters” but describes it as a “pillaging” from lots of other authors.⁷ (With reference to Madame Blavatsky, Hamill also mentions in a footnote that “on at least three occasions her seances were exposed as mechanical trickery.”)

Just to revert briefly to the history of Bristol College, in 1873, Herbert Thomas Francis Irwin was admitted. Herbert was, of course, Francis George Irwin's son and was another correspondent of Frederick Hockley whose letters evidence his concern for the welfare of the nervous and sickly young man. At that time Herbert was a medical student in Paris but he failed his examinations and the failure resulted in a psychological disturbance for which he took laudanum resulting in his death from an overdose on 8th January 1879.

As you probably know, laudanum, or tincture of opium, was widely used in Victorian times for the treatment of a large number of conditions. It was available without prescription and, being regarded as a medicine and therefore not being subject to the tax on alcohol, it was cheaper than gin or wine.

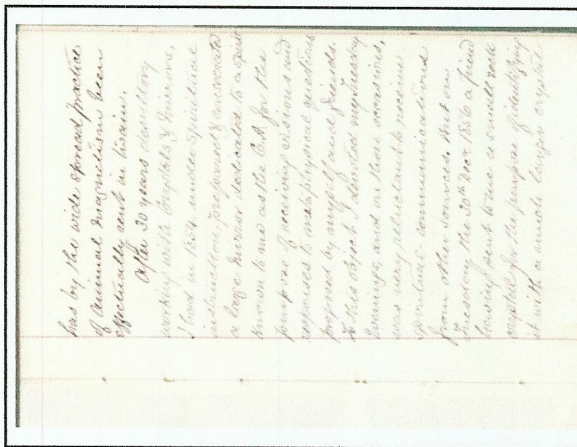


Figure 5 Hockley refers to his mirror

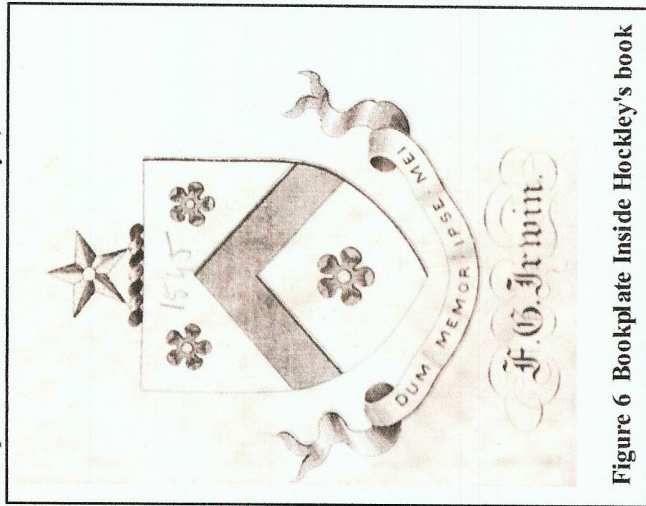


Figure 6 Bookplate Inside Hockley's book

⁷ Hamill, J., *The Rosicrucian Seer*, The Antiquarian Press, 1986, p 86.

Herbert's death greatly distressed his father who thereafter withdrew from Masonic and Rosierucian activities and the work of the College diminished in the late 1880's. It probably met for the last time in July 1893 although Frater Greensill's *History of the S.R.I.A.* is confusing on this point as on page 103 he stated that "The meeting on 14th April 1873 was the last of which records have been found" while on page 201 he wrote "The last evidence of its actually working was in July 1893." I think that the earlier date is probably a typographical error since the College was still in existence in 1900 although not active by then.⁸

[Fig. 6] Francis Irwin's bookplate is pasted inside the front cover of Hockley's manuscript book but on the facing page [Fig. 7] there is an *In Memoriam* plate to Herbert. The swastika is, of course, a very ancient good-luck sign and, in the 1870's had yet to acquire the sinister associations which it was to gain in the following century.

It seems that Hockley never attended Bristol College in person but, in July 1876⁹, he became a member of Metropolitan College where he did attend occasionally although he never presented a paper.

Frederick Hockley was an avid collector of books and manuscripts on many occult subjects and his library numbered over 2,000 items¹⁰. In his later years he frequently complained about the inconvenience of so many volumes, especially when he had to move his lodgings, but I suspect that this was just transient irritation and there is little evidence that he ever actually disposed of any of his

⁸ William Wynn Wescott, *History of the S.R.I.A.*, 30th December 1900, p 20.

⁹ William Wynn Wescott, *History of the S.R.I.A.*, 30th December 1900, p 17. Hamill gives the date of Hockley joining Metropolitan College as 1875.

¹⁰ Letter dated 26th September 1877 to William Robert Woodman

beloved books although he often lent them to Francis Irwin and other correspondents.

Many contemporary spiritualists hoped that his library would remain intact after his death and it has been suggested that it went to Francis Irwin but Hockley's will specified that his library was to be sold and volumes from his collection were certainly available for sale from at least one occult bookseller in 1887 and for some years thereafter.

During his later years Hockley suffered from insomnia, headaches and poor eyesight. He died at 1 Vernon Chambers, Southampton Row on 10th November 1885 and his death, [Fig. 8] registered two days later by his cousin, Thomas Price, was certified as due to "Natural decay" and "Exhaustion".

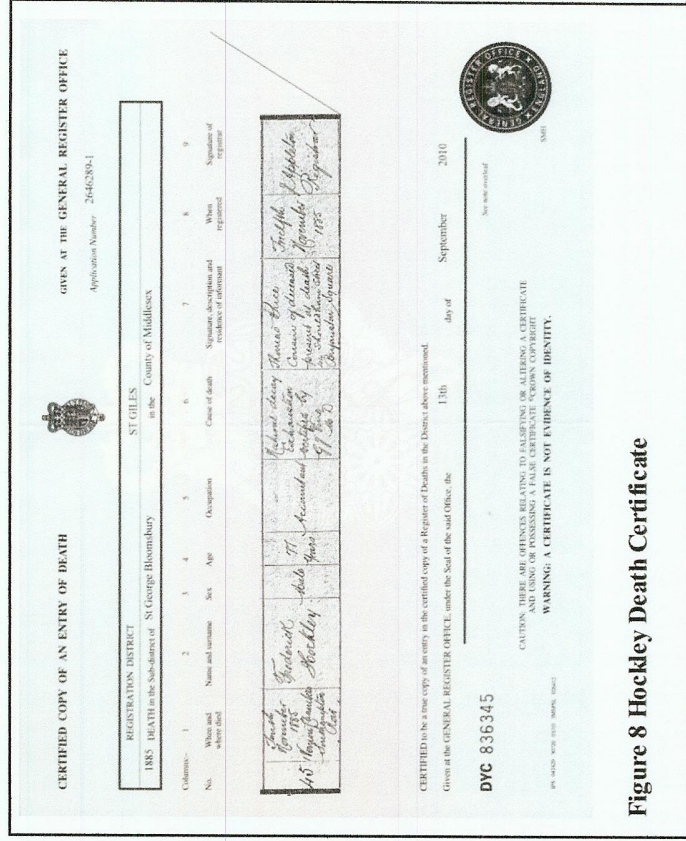


Figure 8 Hockley Death Certificate

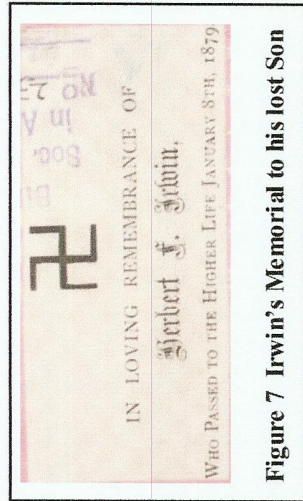


Figure 7 Irwin's Memorial to his lost Son

Hockley had knowledge of and interest in a wide range of occult topics and he published numerous books and papers on a variety of subjects. However, it was in the field of scrying that he was and is best known.

A good, working definition of scrying is “The deliberate act of perceiving events that lie beyond the range of the physical senses by using the agents of the unconscious mind.”¹¹

Thus clairvoyance, being unbidden and unsought, is not scrying, nor is divination by the interpretation of physical objects or events. On the other hand, dowsing and what Hockley called “crystallomancy” are forms of scrying.

The scryer is usually portrayed gazing into a crystal ball but both Frederick Hockley and also his illustrious predecessor, Dr John Dee, also used mirrors. Hockley certainly preferred to use a mirror, indeed, in *Invocating by Magic Crystals and Mirrors*, a bound and illuminated letter to Barbara Honywood he wrote:

“When you have got used to a Crystal, feel confidence in it, and assured yourself in many ways of its truth, then you can use a Mirror for that is a very great deal the best.”

Barbara Honywood was what R.A. Gilbert has termed a “Society Spiritualist” meaning that she was from the somewhat more elevated ranks of Victorian society rather than from the middle-class as was Hockley or the increasingly mobile working class. Despite the detailed instructions which Hockley provided on the use of crystals and mirrors, it is not known whether she actually practiced scrying herself although she certainly continued her spiritualist activities, gave evidence to the Special Committee of the London Dialectical Society in 1869 (as, you will remember, did Hockley) and in 1873 was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the British National Association of Spiritualists. She developed an interest in “spirit paintings” and it is for this that she is best remembered today. In June 2009 there was an exhibition of her paintings in the Gallery of Bethlem Royal Hospital, Beckenham.

As I have already pointed out, Hockley did not see visions himself in either crystals or mirrors but merely recorded the observations of others. Amongst these the most successful seems to have been Emma Louisa Leigh who was born in

Andover, Hampshire on 5th August 1838 but was living with her family in Croydon, Surrey in the early 1850’s when Hockley met her. She acted as his seer for about seven years before dying in September 1858 at the age of 20.

Her death was registered [Fig. 9] as being due to “Pthisis” which was the old name for “consumption” or tuberculosis of the lungs which was, of course, a common cause of death in the XIXth Century. She died at her family home at Cherry Orchard Lane, Croydon but I was interested to see that the informant was Frederick Hockley himself and the certificate records that he was present at her death.

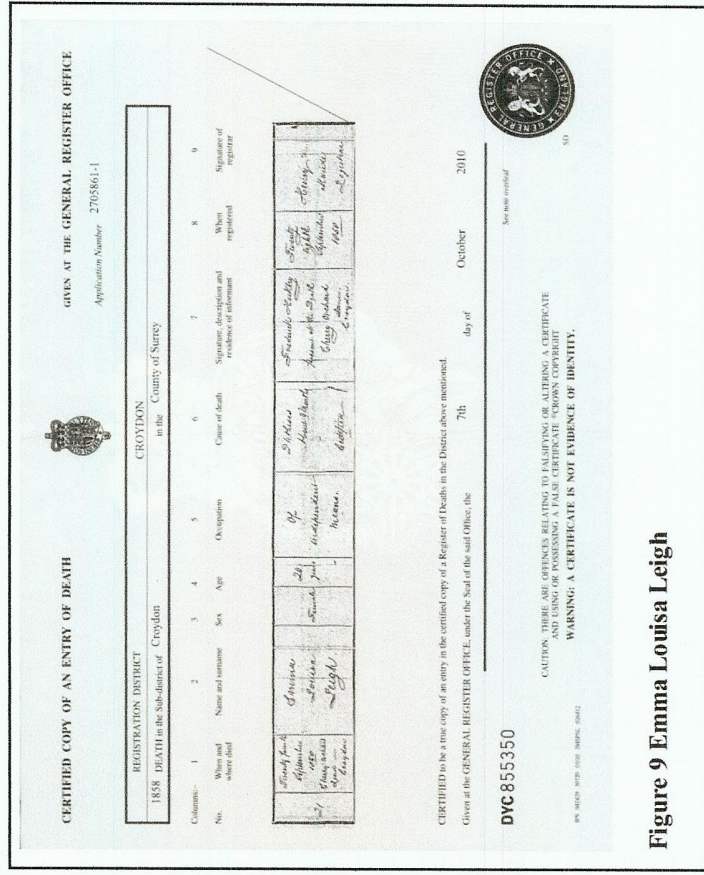


Figure 9 Emma Louisa Leigh

It was with Emma Leigh as his seer that Hockley recorded the events in this little book which recount four exchanges between 30th December 1856 and 18th January

¹¹ Donald Tyson, *Scrying for Beginners*, Llewellyn Publications, 2008, p. 3.

1857 with a monk who had been accused of practising black magic and had been tortured by the Inquisition and burned to death in 1693.

Despite Hockley's statement in 1869 that he had never seen anything in a crystal himself, he did write a report which was first published in the *Spiritualist* in 1880 in which he claimed to have received a message via his crystal instructing him in how to summon what, when he put the instructions into practice, proved to be an evil spirit. The report makes exciting reading but is, in my opinion, more than a little fanciful. As it has no direct relevance to scrying I will not recount it here but it is reproduced in full in Hamill's book¹². However, although I am neither a neurologist nor a psychiatrist, my medical background did lead me to identify some suspicious features so I sent a copy of the account to a psychologist friend who agreed that it could be indicative of a long-standing brain lesion in the temporal lobe associated with cultural expectations and Hockley's long preoccupation with the occult. Of course it is impossible to make any definitive diagnosis based on the scanty evidence but it is interesting that, as I mentioned a few moments ago, for the last ten years or so of his life Hockley did suffer from insomnia, headaches and "eye-strain". Before I finish, I should like to deal briefly with what one may term the "mechanics of scrying".

At present we are concerned mainly with the use of a mirror but many other items and substances have been used successfully.

The earliest was probably water scrying using the surface of the water in a natural pool or, more conveniently, of water contained in a bowl or basin. The ancient Egyptians and Greeks probably favoured this method and Nostradamus certainly did – we know that he used a basin supported on a tripod, which itself has esoteric connotations.

Scrying with oil was favoured by the Babylonians and fire, smoke and, of course, crystals have also been used.

Common factors in all of these is that their use is accompanied by ritual and ceremonial, sometimes quite simple, at other times very complex, and that frequent practice greatly improves the scryer's abilities.

From this it also follows that whatever object is used, it must be treated with reverence. Donald Tyson wrote as recently as 1997:

"Always remember that what you perceive in the physical world is created within your own mind. If you treat your working instruments with respect and regard them as possessing a charge of esoteric potency, then they will indeed have power in your mind. If you handle them carelessly and throw them down anywhere you please, they will become objects of small importance in your mind, and you will never be able to get outstanding results from them."¹³

It seems probable that both the ceremony and the objects themselves act as a sort of trigger to facilitate the communication in the mind of the scryer between the conscious and the unconscious rather as a hypnotist can train a subject to enter a trance by counting from one to ten. The words themselves – one, two, three, four – are unimportant, what matters is the effect that they have on the subject.

The unconscious mind is, of course, at work all the time in us all. On a practical level it influences our bowel activity and our heart rate and some of its functions are also accessible to the conscious mind. Most of us cannot consciously control our heart rate but although breathing is normally an unconscious act we can all consciously modify our breathing if we wish to do so. The Indian mystics develop this conscious control of the unconscious to a remarkable extent.

As well as these physical effects however, the unconscious mind is also responsible for our dreams, our flashes of inspiration and insight and probably also for the visions or sensation experienced by the scryer.

The question that remains unanswered is whether those experiences originate solely from the scryer's unconscious or whether they are communicated from some external source and, if so, whether they are communicated by the crystal or mirror or whether the object acts as a sort of psychic window on to another plane or parallel reality.

¹² Hamill, J., *The Rosicrucian Seer*, The Antiquarian Press, 1986, pp 129-131.

¹³ Donald Tyson, *Scrying for Beginners*, Llewellyn Publications, 1997, p.48.