

# Charles Hope

Charles Melbourne Hope (1892-1962), a minor British aristocrat, devoted much of his life to psychical research, participating in experiments with Rudi Schneider and in the investigation of Borley Rectory.

## Life

Charles Melbourne Hope (Lord Hope) was born in Ararat, Victoria in Australia. His father, John Hope, the 1st Marquis of Linlithgow, was a colonial governor. Hope was educated at Eton College and served in the army from 1911. He was a successful amateur golf and tennis player, taking part in national championships.

## Psychical Research

Hope joined the [Society for Psychical Research](#) (SPR) in 1926 and served on its governing council between 1931 and 1955. He was a generous supporter of the organization, in terms both of time and financial donations. In 1931 he was invited by the London Spiritual Alliance to become a member of its research branch, the London Psychical Laboratory.

Sittings with the American medium [George Valiantine](#)<sup>1</sup> in 1927 left him disappointed at the lack of evidence of postmortem survival, and uncertain even whether Valiantine was genuine.<sup>2</sup> Other activities included a visit to Brook House, Frimley, the site of an alleged haunting, in 1949,<sup>3</sup> and the acquisition of molds of the 'Walter' thumbprints from the [Margery séances](#) in the late 1920s.<sup>4</sup>

## Rudi Schneider

Hope collaborated with Eugene Osty's investigation of the Austrian medium [Rudi Schneider](#) in Paris between 1930 and 1931. The following year he conducted his own experiments with Schneider in London, publishing his findings in the SPR Proceedings<sup>5</sup> along with similar reports by other investigators. Here he drew attention to apparatus used and precautions against fraud; he also had audio recordings made of Schneider's peculiar breathing while in a trance.<sup>6</sup> He contested claims by [Harry Price](#) that Schneider fraudulently used a free hand to stage phenomena, arguing that this only damaged Price's reputation.<sup>7</sup> He later published his recollections of his involvement with Schneider,<sup>8</sup> maintaining that under sympathetic conditions Schneider was able to produce 'impressive phenomena' and adding that Schneider's belief in his 'unusual' powers was 'quite genuine'.

## Borley Rectory

Hope made two visits to [Borley Rectory](#), the location of an alleged haunting, in 1929. His extensive notes (housed in Cambridge University Library) were quoted frequently in a critical survey published later by Dingwall, Goldney and Hall.<sup>9</sup> In comments made to Harry Price, who led the investigation, Hope said 'I was not impressed and thought the phenomena were produced by normal means'.<sup>10</sup>

## Selected Articles

Appendix – Report on some sittings with Valiantine and Phoenix in 1927 (1932). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 411-27.

Report of a series of sittings with Rudi Schneider (1933). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 41, 255-330.

Report of a visit to Brook House, Frimley (1949, with R. Heywood). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 35, 56-60.

Rudi Schneider. Recollections and comments (1958). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 39, 214-15.

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## Literature

Anon. (1933). Notice. Further gramophone records. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 28, 83.

Cummins, H. (1935). The Hope tablets. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 43, 21.

Dingwall, E.J., Goldney, K.M., & Hall, T.H. (1956). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 51, 1-181.

Hope, C. (1932). Appendix – Report on some sittings with Valiantine and Phoenix in 1927. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 411-27.

Hope, C. (1933). Report of a series of sittings with Rudi Schneider. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 41, 255-330.

Hope, C. (1958). Rudi Schneider. Recollections and comments. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 39, 214-15.

Hope, C., & Heywood, R. (1949). Report of a visit to Brook House, Frimley. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 35, 56-60.

## Endnotes

### Footnotes

- [1](#). Hope (1932), 411-27.
- [2](#). Hope (1932), 419.
- [3](#). Hope & Heywood (1949), 56-60.
- [4](#). Cited in Cummins (1935), 21.
- [5](#). Hope (1933), 255-330.
- [6](#). Anon. (1933), 83.
- [7](#). Hope (1933), 290.
- [8](#). Hope (1958), 214-15.

- [9.](#) Dingwall, Goldney, & Hall (1956), 32 passim.
- [10.](#) Dingwall et al. (1956), 33.

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