

Opening up the origins of the “Crewe Circle”

Les Simpson

Thanks to a minor headline in the Daily Mail on 2nd January this year, I read with some disbelief a story of paranormal, or if sceptics prefer, Photographic “Slight of Hand.” I was amused, when mentioned to the club, that I, and the majority of those attended, had no idea either of the Circle’s existence. I am captivated by a forgotten story based in my hometown. Thanks go to the Mail for reminding us of it.

Although, apparently, when mentioned to Ron Smith by Peter Robinson, Ron filled Peter with chapter and verse.

So, the Crewe Circle was formed by a William Hope in Crewe in the 1920’s He captivated the world by producing evidence of what seemed at the time, the supernatural, in evidence by photographic means.

He had the proof there in an image which drew in luminaries such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. To say his work was spooky would be an understatement. He provided “The Proof.”

Sir Arthur went on to produce a book entitled “The Case for Spirit Photography.” Meetings for the Circle were held at a spiritualist hall in Crewe and my research leads to Adelaide Street, although not proven.

However his fame or if you wish, Infamy, was exposed by The Society of Physical Research as fraudulent. He was caught switching plates with one having an image already on it.

Early production of Layers, perhaps?

Personally I have very little interest in the supernatural, admitting to complete ignorance of the subject.

However, I am totally “Blown Away” by this story, especially as it all revolves around Crewe, (Which, by the way Daily Mail is in Cheshire !!!) and would suggest that CPS members follow my lead and frequent themselves with a wonderful piece of history from our town.

Not just famous for executive cars and trains eh?

Below, I have listed some important websites, well worth having a look at. I learned a great deal from these.

The Daily Mail's article can you found by either following the link below:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3871650/The-ghosts-caught-camera-spirit-photographs-world-captivated-1920s-wasn-t-seems.html>

or by entering 'dailymail-crewecircle' in a search engine. selecting the top item “British photographer William Hope”

<http://www.prairieghosts.com/> This is a cracker of a site.

Wikipedia :- Crewe Circle

Wikipedia :- William Hope

<http://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com>

On this page search the Encyclopaedia for 'the case for spirit photography'.

<http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk> Then search for 'crewecircle'.

Happy reading folks. Don't blame me if you have nightmares!

Best wishes, Les