

Some More Ghost Stories

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For as long as I can remember during my life, I have had unusual experiences that could be termed ghostly or supernatural, the earliest examples in childhood being dreams of people dying, or of talking to them before they died, and the actual event occurring on or about the same time. These rather unnerving events are now much more rare, but there have instead been various other sorts of experiences relating to houses or buildings, or even outdoor locations. Sometimes there have been visual, aural or even tactile events; there have been places where I would rather not go, or where going there had an effect on my well-being for some time after.

The most memorable events are elsewhere chronicled, viz: **Of Small Creatures, Binding Over, The Demon Barber**, but there are a few others that were shorter in duration, yet intense and memorable for all that. Although these experiences have persisted throughout my life, as well as actually changing in nature as the years go by, I am not about to rush out and buy black robe and a crystal ball, or set myself up as an authority on these matters. As a matter of fact, interesting and all as they are, they can be unnerving, and even inconvenient and confusing, especially when displacing clear thinking. I have met self-so-called "spiritual" types who go on about being "sensitive" or "at one with the universe"; perhaps an occurrence of the real thing would put them off that sort of presumption for good and all...?

Actually, the words spirit and spiritual are not in my usual vocabulary at all, as they are usually used by the more rhetorically self-promoting of our number. The use of these terms begs the questions that there is such a thing as a spirit. Some people claim they are more "spiritual" than others, and what a ready-made ego trip that is in the wrong intellectual hands, let alone leading onto that question-begging can of intellectual worms called religion, with all the pejorative self-indulgence that can bring.

But, I digress. Sufficient to say that I do not have any positive theories or ideas about what I have experienced over the years, but the tales are interesting, remain strong in my memory, and are told without trimmings for readership of the more non-sensitive, non-spiritual and less-suggestible individual who may find them entertaining, or even of interest. No answers or theories or ideology should be read into the anecdotes; time will bring more answers, and it would be hubristic to anticipate or exploit this fact. The choice of language, and mode of telling are supposed to be low-key in support of these themes.

First of all, I will leave aside the childhood premonitions, the nature and effects of which may be easily imagined, and usually related to family and friends. Thankfully, these experiences are now more infrequent. Apart from all that, one could begin with the next phase, constant throughout my life, which concerns experiences or incidents concerned with location. Sometimes public places have a noticeable effect; for instance, I do not like to frequent churches, and avoid doing so now I have put in enough of that sort of sightseeing over the years. On the other hand, graveyards in general are not such a problem, although smaller graveyards I am wary of. Graves concerned with mass, or untimely, death are to be avoided where possible; examples are war graves and memorials, children's' graves, or actual sites where these sorts of events actually took place.

One of the eeriest experiences I ever had was when I visited Tianmen Square a couple of months after the riot. One could still see the marks of the fires on the concrete, and there was a sensation of many people all around yet who could not be seen, and my skin tingled wherever I walked in that portentous place. I declined to view the embalmed Great Leader, and instead looked after bags and cameras while I remained among the ghosts of those who had perished as a by-product of the Leadership. Similarly, Port Arthur in Tasmania is a place that I do not wish to return to, being possessed of great sadness and regret, while in surroundings of great geographical beauty. So much had happened there, with so many impressions experienced, I felt numbed by it all.

There is also a certain historic building in Sydney that, although now preserved and well cared for, caused me to feel ill for a couple of days after I had visited there. The Great War cemeteries of Europe, or those concentration camps, for all that I do think of the history and of those that died there in those times, would never be on my personal visitors list. The Adelaide River Cemetery in the NT was bad enough, as I remember only too well. In fact, adverse experiences in religious settings or in burial-places have actually increased for me as I have gotten older. The presence, or otherwise, of other people does not appear to diminish these experiences, either. Certainly, Tianmen Square was evidence of that.

Kakadu National Park was the source of two contrasting experiences which I remember vividly. At Nourlangie Rock, at the conclusion of the little guided tour, I stayed on to enjoy the scenery, and get the feel of the spot, so to speak. I then felt the urge to leave the Rock and go off into the reserve area and see more. This feeling persisted strongly, and I went further and further away from the Rock, over the next ridge, along the next and so on. It was as if there were a group of people walking with me, and their voices, or their eagerness, were spurring me on to going further and see more. When finally I looked back, I realised the Rock was far away, and the sun setting, so the spell was broken, and I turned back. This still remains one of the most vivid of my memories, and of a "magic" place of great beauty. I certainly do not claim great affinity with Aboriginal traditional culture, although the anthropological data is very interesting. But I do enjoy scenery and wild places, which may have been an influencing factor.

The following day, I drove to the area where the Blue Paintings were, and tagged along with a tour as the group took the track from the car park to the site. The day was hot and cloudless, and the air along that narrow track was still and heavy. As I walked with the group, I felt more and more enervated, and almost dizzy, and began to wish that I had not come this way. The paintings were a disappointment to the visitors, being recent enough to be painted with acrylics. We all had expected more, and there was a certain anticlimax or irritability apparent, and someone asked the guide if there were more in the area, and whether it was possible to see them. The guide said, no, we had to remain on the track, as the area was actually a burial ground, and there were bodies in crevices all around.

At that bit of news, I turned immediately, and set off for the car park without waiting for the rest of the group. Now I had the explanation for why I felt so ill and enervated, and by the time I made it back to my van, I was staggering and gasping, and desperate to get away from that awful place. I even clipped a guide-rail in my haste to drive away, but did not think of anything else but getting back onto the main road. As I got further down the road, I began to feel better, and stopped at billabong campsite to have a "brew". For the rest of the day, I felt a bit off-colour, and thought much of the two experiences a few hours apart. The optimism generated by the first no doubt potentiated the impact of the second, as I was quite unprepared for what occurred, and could put up no resistance to the effects of that uneasy and sombre place.

On a prospecting job near Pine Creek, also in the NT, I had another unsettling experience similar to that of the Blue Paintings, and not once, but twice in fact. The job was an interesting one, and I was alone in the area, with a week or so to pace out a grid, and mark points from which I took bags of samples. The site did have an access road, so I was able to park my van close to the claim, and had a pleasant and comfortable camp beside a creek still flowing after recent rains, as it was the towards the end of the Wet Season. Gold prospecting had been carried out years before in the area, and, here and there, were signs of earlier workings, like parts of walls, or a partially benched track along a ridge. I was working for a company in modern times whose modern equipment, not to mention the price of gold, made resurveying of the old claims a worthwhile option.

For me, there was all kinds of interest in what I was doing, and the outback was always a good place to be, wherever one happened to be, or in whatever season. On one particular day, I was descending an angled ridge, on the outside of the grid pattern I was following, thinking my own thoughts as I watched my footing among the rocks and vegetation, when suddenly I staggered, as if the pack on my back had suddenly increased in weight, and was throwing me off balance, and my strength seemed to fail me. My breathing was laboured as I fought to keep my balance on the slope, and then I realised that whatever had ambushed me was not possessed of corporeal form, and all I could think of was, oh, no, not again, and who is it this time, and then concentrated on keeping my balance and energy sustained for the next quarter of a mile as I passed off the ridge, and along the creek-bed into clear ground. All the while, I had some sort of vision in my mind's eye of someone being hit with a shovel without warning, and of anger at being left for dead. An awful fate in such a remote place....

When I finally threw off the "burden", and stopped to get my breath, that image remained, and does to this day. What exactly did happen in that remote place I will never know, but the matter was obviously yet unresolved, and I had walked right across the site without any warning of what was to follow this unwitting 'transgression'. I resolved to be more careful, and headed back to the van, as I still did not feel 100%; anyway, there was not much left of that day's projected work that could not be accomplished with an early start the next day. I also resolved to be careful of how I approached that end of the grid, although fortunately, crossing that area was more as a means of access than part of a sampling pattern.

So, the work continued for the next couple of days, as the physical effects, if not the memory of the "encounter" faded. I continued to flag the grid, and bring back my bags of samples to the van. However, very early on the morning of what would have been the last day's work, there was a warning of a late-season cyclone approaching the coast, which may have affected the area in which I was working. The van would be better shifted back to the main road, as the access road was rough, with dry run-offs crossing it, and by now, the van had extra weight of samples aboard. I decided to get an early start, and finish off the last section of the grid, as it would take a few more hours to feel the effects of the cyclone so far inland. I rose soon after, and loaded up the van for a quick departure when my work was finished. As I set off for the grid that morning, the sky was just beginning to get that high-level dense grey look, so I would be not wasting any time finishing the job.

The last line of the grid was duly finished, and I took a short-cut across one corner, using the compass to keep me in the general direction of the camp. Crossing a couple of lines, I came to an angled ridge, and started down, thinking absentmindedly that I had been this way before, at least some time recently, then I realised where I had inadvertently led myself. Before I had time to change direction, I was "ambushed" part-way down the down the same ridge as before. This time, the weight, and the enervation, seemed worst than the first time, as I tried to physically and mentally shake off the ghostly burden, while concentrating on getting away from that ill-omened place. This time, I was almost back to the camp before I shook off whatever I had disturbed, and when I arrived back at the van, I wasted no time in shrugging off my pack, starting up the van, and driving through the deepening gloom of the changing weather onto the main road. As it turned out, the cyclone broke up before coming inland, but at least I did not have to go back to the grid again, and I actually spent a couple of days at Edith Falls after I dropped the samples off at the Assay Office in Pine Creek. No ghosts there, at the Falls, as far as I was concerned, and no cyclone either, as it turned out.

From experience, I know that long periods in the bush without familiar sounds can produce auditory hallucinations, like music or voices, especially near the sound of running water, sometimes so real that one might think that there is someone actually close by. However, the incident near Pine Creek was definitely not of that nature, nor was the next little incident, short-lived, but again it sticks in my memory. This time, I was up in a valley in the South Island of NZ. I had set off from a hut early on a fine fresh autumn morning, and was making good time along a wide and grassy river flat, with the braided stream off to one side of me. The valley had been settled at one time, or at least used as a high-country summer pasture, because there was still the odd post to be seen, and I passed the ruin of a shepherd's the ruin of a shepherds hut on the way.

At this particular point, I was walking along, enjoying the mid-morning sun, when I appeared to be walking towards a small column of mist which had appeared ahead of me, I did not take any notice, and just walked on, and through it. It was then that I noticed a smell, a real odour of decay that lingered in my nostrils. I thought that was a bit strange, and turned around, thinking that I had passed a dead animal, and not been observant enough to spot it among the grass and rubble of the valley floor. But there was none to be seen, and not even a fresh cow-pat, if there were any cattle still about. The mist had vanished, as well, and then so had the smell when I retraced my steps. That was a bit of a puzzle for me as I continued on my way, but at that time I had no answer.

Since then I have experienced the same sort of unusual odour in other places on occasion, and have found out that this sort of phenomenon is associated with some type of ghost, or whatever else one might call them. So, this poses the question of what was the source of the slight mist and odour miles from anywhere in that alpine valley, on a fine autumn day? Certainly, there were no volcanic vents or hot springs in the area, no recent signs of livestock having passed this way, and such physical entities have somewhat different smells, anyway, at least in my experience.

Other experiences have included Ouija board sessions, and even being present at a death, when what looked like a small puff of vapour issued from the mouth of the dying person, as the event occurred. Not so easily explainable in the dry atmosphere of a centrally-heated hospital room. Actually, another rather bizarre aspect of hospital work was being able to "see" or sense who was about to die. This is not uncommon, though, amongst people who work regularly in such situations. Also, in relation to illness, at times when I have been quite ill and on my own, I have experienced a presence sitting quietly near the bed, or just being in the room for the duration of the illness.

The Ouija sessions were most interesting, with coherent messages and use of numbers evident. One had the impression that fingers followed the glass as it moved; certainly, pushing was not a conscious action. One old house in Wellington, NZ, yielded several manifestations, including one that caused the glass to fly off the board onto the floor, and another who gave us a whole life story of emigration from Eastern Europe before WW 1, and also was a keen observer of life in the house, which caused a bit of a stir. For those who may think this Ouija business a bit contrived, please note some controlled experiments were carried out to eliminate those who seemed to "short-circuit" our circle. (Unusually four in number)

On one occasion, all participants were blindfolded before the séance began, and as events proceeded, the blind-folds were removed, in turn, but with a twist not planned previously. As each blindfold was removed in silence, while the glass was still moving, respective fingers were also removed from the glass in turn, until there was only one blindfolded person left touching the glass, which continued to move either randomly, or in answer to questions. One can imagine the surprise and alarm of the last subject as the blindfold was removed, and the rest of us were then seen sitting back, hands well clear of the tabletop. The most satisfactory consternation we all witnessed was made even more so by the fact that the remaining active participant was also a major doubter, who from that day forth never would doubt again, but would also never participate again, either. I took part in more ouija board séances after that, but began to be concerned by the aggressive and unfriendly events on some occasions, so gave it all away before any harm came of playing about with such things.

Dowsing, or divining, of water is another ability or talent among members of my extended family, and I have been able to practise this since I was a child. I can do it with a piece of wire, but prefer to use a green forked twig that can be easily "sprung" between my two hands held low to the front of my body as I walk. Dry or dead twigs do not work for me at all; wire will, but not as well as a fresh twig. Although I have not pursued this sort of activity with any seriousness, I can say that in controlled situations, my "results" have tallied with known drains, cisterns, sewers, and underground water of various kinds!

One day, while I was on holiday in Germany, I was fooling about with different sorts of twigs to see if things were different in the Northern Hemisphere, and found I had an audience of about 10 people watching me. I actually happened to be taking time off from a barbecue to follow up on a story someone was telling about not being able to sleep in nearby house because of the possible presence of an underground stream passing underneath the house. (Actually, this was found to be the case after dowsing the area.) The doubters in the group of watchers were having a laugh at my "antics", and were only too pleased to have a go, and prove me wrong. They were convinced that I made the twig move by sleight-of-hand.

Certainly, nothing much seemed to happen as they took their turn and paced back and forth across a "known" water source near the surface. That is until I walked with each one, and laid a single finger on bare wrist or arm as we moved, they were all very surprised when the wand began to move as it should, and they realised that it moved of its own accord after all. This went on for an hour or so, during which time a couple of them "got the feel of it", and produced good results of their own. One was a young girl whose wand action went up, rather than the usual down, a reaction so marked that I suggested she try to get some pocket-money from local farmers in the area by dowsing for them.

After a while, I began to feel very tired, and then found that I could no longer produce results by myself, as if a certain type of energy had been used up while repeatedly shepherding so many others at one time. Actually, it was weeks or even months before I really got back my knack of dowsing again. Since then, things have returned to normal, but I have learned to be more careful when demonstrating by such a method. Dowsing for materials other than water is also possible, though not an ability I have, apparently. As a footnote to the demonstration, I had a curious feeling of being bereft of something important until my dowsing ability was restored.

Although this dowsing story is not really "ghostly", it is at least "other-wordly", or related to senses which appear to exist, but are not fully understood, either. Perhaps one day, when more is known about such things, there may well be a connection found to exist between these other-worldly phenomena, and why some people are more sensitive or receptive than others. Poltergeists I am not so sure about, but something surely dogs me in dealings with post offices, banks, and supermarkets; Murphy's Rule seems to apply. Also, I experience heat near stoves or machinery that have been recently used, although at that time happen to be "cold."

Often I have thought about investigating these phenomena, or developing such abilities more, but it is hard to avoid the lunatic fringe who are attracted by the opportunity to claim some special knowledge above everyone else, or else I have run up against the blank wall of doubt.

So, I just dabble now and again, and hope I live long enough for an objective answer to these and related phenomena, following proper scientific investigation. Certainly, I do not bother with lucky numbers or horoscopes, and try to make life's little decisions with some everyday objectivity.

Now, to the next best haunted house story after **Small Creatures**, and a more benevolent sort of presence to share a house with. This experience took place in an old federation-style red-brick duplex in one of the older suburbs of Perth, WA., at a time of change, and possible demolition of the house. The duplex was long and narrow, with a hall that extended along the double brick dividing wall. There was a twin duplex on the lot next door, (different owner), with both flats having had a longish and diverse history as rented premises. The duplex that I was living in was in quite good condition, although showing some signs of neglect as "investment" properties of that kind usually do, (while the last rental value is squeezed out of them), until a compliant council allows a far more expensive and inflation-boosting edifice to be built in its place. The duplex next door in contrast, was in poorer condition, and unwisely administered as to tenancy, was to suffer this fate of displacement during my stay.

This was a source of anxiety, apparently, to an entity who shared our particular domicile, which would eventually also be replaced in a similar fashion. Or, to put it another way, this ghost seemed as concerned about the security of his dwelling as we were, and there was the possibility of our lease being the last, and not renewed, on our side of the fence.

The first sign that the house was not "normal" was the strong feeling of unease that I experienced in a certain room, the lounge which also formed part of the hall. I was the first to move into the house, and occupied a smaller bedroom, but could never get to sleep at night unless I closed the door, feeling that I was under some kind of inspection. I never used the lounge at that time, as I always felt as if I was actually intruding in someone else's room!

One summer night, just after moving in, and following a weekend garage sale we had for the tenants moving out and for us moving in, I was finally alone again in my caretaker role, finishing off a solitary meal, and pleased the day was over. Garage sales have that kind of an effect, sometimes, especially when long drawn out, and in times of recession. I poured myself a cup of tea, and sat down on the kitchen armchair by the back door to watch the news on TV, put my feet up, and sat back to enjoy the breeze blowing past the chair and up the hall to the front of the house, to where the screened front windows were opened. I took a sip of tea, leaned my head back, and a movement in the hall caught my eye.

I turned my head slightly to see a man walk out of the lounge at the end of the hall, turn, and disappear towards the alcove that housed the front door. At first, I thought that someone had sneaked into the house after the sale, and had been waiting for a chance to get away once I was settled. There was no sound of the door closing, but I got up, and dashed down the hall, turning on various lights as I did so. When I got to the front door, it was closed, and the outside screen door was also snibbed when I checked. All the window screens were intact, so I then began to remember the feelings of unease I had when in that part of the house. Oh, not again, is what I then thought, as was customary for me on these occasions, and resignedly hoped to myself that "we" were all going to get on all right, as there was another friend coming to live there in a week or so. So, I went back to watch TV, and finish my cup of tea again.

Anyway, who wants to confront a real flesh and blood "intruder"? I would prefer the less corporeal type. But I got the message that the new arrivals were under inspection, and that the other "inhabitant" was conscious of territory, and reluctant to share it. From then on, events followed a particular pattern. Always, there was the feeling of being watched while I was in the house. At times, I would feel goose flesh down my back, as if there was a cold breeze behind me. Each afternoon, when I was present in the house, I would hear a creak of a certain floorboard in the hall-way. With a double brick wall dividing the duplex, there was no chance that the noise came from there. One day, I was walking out of my own room into the hall, and again I saw the same figure, though a little more clearly, leaning over the kitchen table, apparently looking at the newspaper left there. The figure was of a dark-haired, middle-sized man, in older, more conventional clothes. I stopped to get a better look as my eyes swept past that part of the kitchen, but I did not see the figure again.

About this time, the other more corporeal occupant of the house arrived, and the real process of settling was completed. Our landlord began to be a problem, also, as in spite of the lease, he wanted access to the house for improvements or for sales purposes. We were not sure which, as the basis was money. We evoked the lease, and in no uncertain terms said that we did not wish to be disturbed. There was an exception made for the repair of previously unlicensed sewage "improvements", this sort of event gives the general idea of exactly the sort of landlord we had.

Then, I began to get messages, or impressions that seemed to drift into my head when I had nothing in particular on my mind. These involved details of the other "inhabitant", a man who had come to the house between the Wars, as a returned soldier, but who could never feel really settled after his experiences, and had not married. This would have tallied with the age of the house, which at that time was about 65 years. He was worried about the house, and seemed pleased that we were "protecting" it from the unspecified depredations of the landlord. He appeared to move freely to all parts of the house, including the workshop, going by the frequency of the cold sensations felt by me in these various locations. The front part of the house still retained the strongest feelings of occupation. My flatmates, now grown to three in number, seemed oblivious to all this, but after a conversation with a previous tenant one day, I found that she, too, had similar experiences to me, but had been hesitant to discuss them with her family at the time. She also had an affinity for the old house, and was sorry to leave at the time.

Then, one day, the house next door, which actually belonged to one of our landlord's many relatives, was emptied of its last lot of tenants, and then demolished to make way for something "better". Oh well, we were sorry about the old house, but at least the drug raids and debt-collecting wars would cease. Our "inhabitant" seemed to draw back or diminish in influence, as if overcome by the events, and the removal of what for him would have been a landmark of many decades standing. Certainly, there were no more sightings, it was as if he was at last facing the fact that the change would come, and the house would be no more. Occasionally, I would have the cold sensations, be mainly I would feel them without any real surprise, as if someone had come into a room where I was, stayed awhile for company, then left without saying anything.

The building site next door was a source of problems, and the last tree on the common boundary, the only bit of green that remained to use amidst all the unrelieved concrete, was also chopped down, despite efforts to prevent this. By that time, I had enough of everything and packed up and left, and another tenant replaced me. But I did feel sorry for the longest "inhabitant", as relocation for him did seem to be a problem, especially if he stayed on in new and uncomfortable surroundings, with new people with whom he had nothing in common, apart from different architecture to cope with!

Who knows what his reasons for staying on, or if the situation could be changed? But the days of the old house were definitely numbered. Perhaps a hex on the sale of the house next door would delay matters? I do know that six months after it was finished, the interest rates were climbing, but there was no sale, mainly because the price and planning was hardly typical of the district. Who knows whether this hex may have been imposed...?

Another "old house" experience of note occurred during a visit to a real estate "open house" preview at an old terrace house in Melbourne. This particular residence had been refurbished for the pending sale, and glistened and echoed impressively, technical anachronisms, new bathrooms and all, as I wandered through. There was a steep staircase which dominated one side of the house, shining with new varnish over the old scars, and creaking at each step as I climbed to the second floor.

After a quick look around the rooms near the head of the stairs, I turned to descend again. Although I was still some distance from the top step, I had the experience of unsteadiness, and leant against the wall to regain my balance before descending to the small side landing that in turn led up a couple of steps to another bedroom on the top level. As I looked back to the top step that had seemed to pose such a threat to me, I again had the impression of falling, and seemed to see in my mind's eye a female figure falling forwards down the main flight of stairs. The distinct feeling of unease that accompanied this entire experience did not lessen until I carefully descended to the ground floor, and exited the house onto the street.

The estate agent was standing at the small wrought iron gate, and I struck up a conversation about the house, and mentioned my misgivings about the staircase without being specific about my recent experience. The agent changed the subject, and then moved away to speak to someone else. Perhaps there was a mishearing of my comment by someone only half-listening anyway, and no ulterior motive existed, but on my own impressions of that house, I would not want to buy it whether I had the money or not...

Finally, a few words about what occurred when I actually did attempt a more serious investigation of some of the phenomena I had experienced through the years. The results were quite startling, even if not carried out under controlled scientific conditions. What actually happened was that I began to attend a spiritualist group to see what I could discover about "alternative" views concerning the various forms of contact that could occur between the respective dimensions of existence that seemed to be involved. Well, there will be no stories of ectoplasmic manifestations or whatever, that sort of thing did not go on with this group. The activities were sensibly structured to take the group through various stages by the medium, who was an ordinary housewife, and who conducted these evenings in her ordinary lounge, and with normal, slightly dimmed illumination.

On the two evenings I attended, the group sat about the table to be given a briefing on what was to take place, and what to expect in the nature of physical changes while the "spirits" were called up. After the preliminaries, this calling-up did take place, and I experienced certain electricity that I had felt at other times, with a slight drop in temperature, and the sensation of a breeze blowing softly about me. However, this time there were others who felt the same thing as I, even if for the first time, and the feeling of an unseen group about us, as if inspecting us, was very strong, more pronounced than I had hitherto felt.

But I personally was without the feelings of fear or unease that have accompanied previous experiences of this nature in uncontrolled and usually unexpected circumstances. This first session was rather short, and in a sense it was a relief to come back to coffee and discussion in the now ordinary lounge. Some of the group felt stimulated by the experience, though I felt quite enervated once the initial effects had worn off, much as I have done on previous occasions in similar circumstances.

The following week, the group had another calling-up experience, and then we moved on to an exercise in psychometry, which is the handling of randomly chosen objects previously unknown to the subject to test for perceived associations. In this case, the objects were common articles of property, like rings, watches, etc., though not from any of the present visitors, for obvious reasons. These were handled in turn, without much reaction, until it came to my turn with two particular objects, a ring and a watch.

As soon as I handled each one, a flood of images swept into my mind, unlike anything I have experienced before. With the watch, I began to talk about the owner, whom I perceived to be a tall fair male with a bone problem, but nothing could be done, as the problem was bone cancer, and death was inevitable. Shocked gasps all around, and it was hard for me to credit what I said, also. The ring brought forth visions of a female standing on a hill beside the sea, with herb or shrub gardens around her. But I held one image back this time, the fact that this person had heart trouble, and would not enjoy the garden for long. There had been enough shocks from the first example. The medium did not say much during my informative moments, except to nod encouragingly. I do not think there is much else she could have done in view of what I said about the watch.

After the session, and when there was an opportunity to talk privately with the medium, I asked her about the truth of what I had said, as I was startled by the vividness of the images I had seen in my "mind's eye". She told me the owner of the watch was a relative, and that the bone cancer was known about. The person in the garden was herself, and this image was of an ambition of hers, to live with such a garden, beside the sea. By this time I had to know the answer to the bit about heart disease, and was told that, yes, she did have heart problems, and realized time would be short to have the garden ambition fulfilled.

I suppose the medium thought that, since she knew that I had various experiences of an other-worldly nature in the past, and had come to her group to "further my education", I would be interested or rewarded to have my "information" corroborated. I certainly felt concerned about stumbling on such information, however unwittingly, and regardless of whether I was praised for my perspicacity, as I was at the time. Actually, I had decided, then and there, not to return to this or any similar structured or group activity of this sort. There was even the future prospect of unpleasant surprises due to contact with the personal property of family or friends, especially if I was to enhance my talents in this sort of perceptual exercise. Apart from that jeopardy, the unpleasantness of the experience outweighed any sense of achievement, and I felt something of a voyeur. In the final analysis, I did not want to be privy to such knowledge or insights, at that, or any other time.

So, an interesting experience, and certainly confirmatory of matters of which I was previously aware, but not to be sought out in the future. Answers to these phenomena remain in the future, and I will be happy to leave the getting of such wisdom to others. As I said somewhere else, life's little decisions are better made with everyday objectivity; I would prefer not to be distracted by other-worldly phenomena such as I have described. Whatever answers lie in the future, I personally feel such phenomena should not be approached with any frivolity, or worse, with a motive of exploitation.