

The Séance

A Game for Continuum

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Please read the enclosed documentation carefully. Indemnity waivers will be signed on arrival at the game location. Please ensure details of next of kin and contact numbers plus any pertinent medical conditions are lodged with Continuum LLC. The game hosts can not be held responsible for any spiritual, psychiatric, medical losses including but not limited to possession, obsession, serious mental health issues or mutilation or death arising from participation in this game, or what follows you home...

The files which follow are Confidential. Enjoy, but please do not distribute! They are simply to provide some theoretical background to the game. The only instructions you need are on this page. You may however wish to glance through some of the other material before the night, but if you print it off don't bring it with you. *(LPG: The Donut can handle any debris? Check with The Dude? PA)*

The planned game is controversial in parapsychological circles, and fool ethics committees may use it as an excuse to reduce our Paraphysics labs chance of further funding. It is possible that academics from the SPR or ASSAP may visit Continuum, email you or arrive on the night; please ignore any so called warnings they approach you with. It is just a game after all, and every regard for your safety has been taken.

(Ed – shall we drop this bit? - and have we we actually got the Cleaners on standby this time? We don't want another Nottingham... PA)

The game is heavily influenced by some Nordic LARPS and has a three part structure

1. A general introduction, and character creation. Yes you create your characters on the night – modern dress is fine.
2. A series of short workshops.
3. A Batcheldor/Owen influenced séance to generate a tulpa or thoughtform, or the (imaginary at start of game) friend you all share, and the resolution of the strange matter of their death...

Clean up, debriefing *(and sedation/admission on 72 hour holding order if required – PA)*

The séance is a Modern Horror game with very adult themes. Please act respectfully at all times and follow the simple rules we ask you to observe. We will have your safety and best interests at heart.

The game involves a séance to contact the spirit of a friend of yours who has died. Please bring ONE object, of no great monetary or sentimental value (just in case it is lost or damaged) that may be handled by other players during the game. It could be a book, a photograph, a CD, a flower, anything at all – other players will be asked to describe how it relates to their relationship to the deceased during character generation.

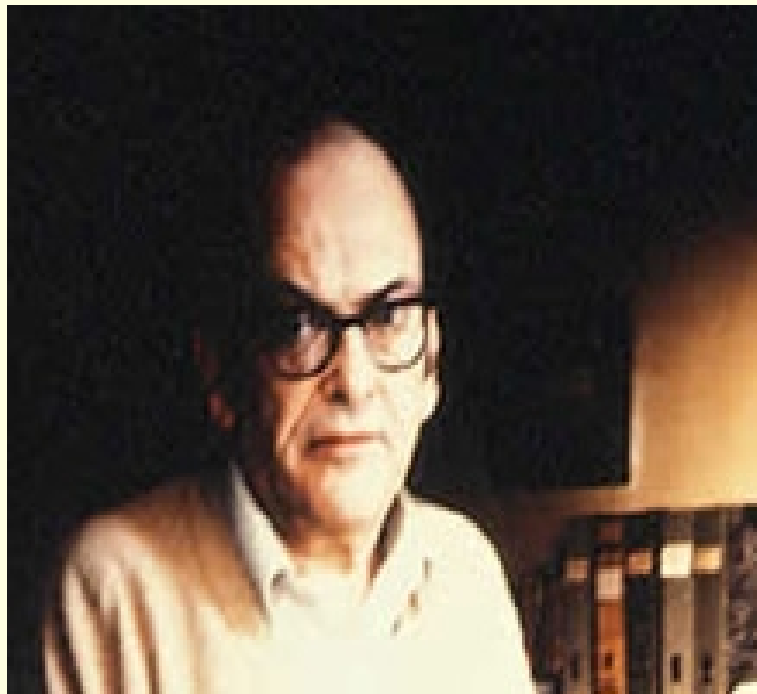
Thank you for taking a chance on this very unusual game, and looking forward to seeing you there!

(LPG check with Lisa and Dr M – I have Zopiclone ready, also diazepam & temazepam 5mg and I think we should have a couple of depot shots of chlorpromazine just in case it goes a bit Andover? Tell Rich to come up with something deniable in case of a bad reaction – even an expunge if need be. Oh and for the workshop make sure we have the right bloody antivenin this time. And of course the restraints, and half a dozen cadaver pouches so we don't end up carrying bits in sacks if it goes wrong. CJ)

Kenneth Batcheldor

The most important pioneer in the study of macro-PK (large scale psychokinesis) in a sitter-group environment. Having been fascinated by stories of Victorian table-tilting sessions, he set about investigating the phenomenon at his home. Despite initial scepticism, he soon came to realise that it was indeed possible to exert forces on a table in a manner which excluded normal manipulation.

He was well aware of the possibility of self-deception and methods of fraud. He was equally aware of the notion of autonomic/ unconscious muscular action, often referred to as the Ideomotor Effect, in which sitters unwittingly use normal muscular movements to obtain a positive result.



Born in 1921, he worked as a principal clinical psychologist for a group of Devonshire hospitals. He retired early at the age of 55 and spent the rest of his life evaluating the evidence surrounding the phenomenon of table-tilting and associated phenomena. Two or three evenings a month would be devoted to practical sessions of table movements, along with several of his neighbours and friends.

His idea of reviving the traditional Victorian after-dinner seance arose spontaneously at a social evening in 1964. One of his guests had told some good ghost stories and Batcheldor suggested having a go at table-tipping, just for fun. Nothing happened at that first session, but a few evenings later they tried again and were rewarded with a loud bang. Whether paranormal or not, this encouraged the sitters to keep going, and at the eleventh sitting (the first to be held in total darkness) the table left the floor unaided by any normal means



A Typical Table-Tilting Session Table Phenomena

Having had such success, Batcheldor decided to devote the rest of his life to the table phenomena and was very successful in establishing the conditions suitable for the successful development of these rather strange effects.

"There's something about table-tipping that enables a group of ordinary people to succeed in generating PK without even trying, provided they are reasonably open-minded. It is this - in most cases the table will start to move due to unconscious muscular activity. This can give an amazing illusion that the table is moving of its own accord as if animated by some mysterious force. You get the impression you are already succeeding in generating paranormal movements. This has precisely the same impact on you as real success would have - it sweeps your doubts aside and produces total faith...

Such faith is very difficult to acquire by deliberate effort. It called for complete suspension of any kind of objective attitude, for conditions essential for the generation of PK were simply not compatible with those of a scientific experiment. **A ludic, playful attitude, and a willingness to ascribe events to external (fraudulent, natural) forces is necessary to generate the forces. Things work best when everyone is playing about as if participating in a game, and is able to believe that someone is controlling events. Then the forces are almost always raised: putting them down can be difficult, even dangerous however."**

(LPG: Edit the Red Bit out – don't want the player getting jumpy, and just because ASSAP and the SPR want informed consent does not mean we need to tell them what they might have follow them home... PA)



Experiments at Home, 1978

Batcheldor's Findings

Batcheldor's principal findings were both technical and psychological in nature. They had been derived following many years of painstaking devotion to the subject of table-tilting. For several years he worked closely with Colin Brookes-Smith and he developed his "List of Rules for Sitters". The term "sitters" relates to the use of a card-table wired with strain gauges and motion-detectors as the feedback component and "output" part of the technology.

The members of the group would be seated around the table whilst instrumentation was used to provide objective records of any phenomena. Over the course of 200 sessions from April 1964 to December 1965, many examples of ostensibly paranormal phenomena took place. A friend of Kens, William Chick, attended 80 sessions and in 70 of these physical phenomena took place. Ken published his results in several papers, one of the most important being:

Batcheldor, K (1966) "Report on a Case of Table Levitation and Associated Phenomena" in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 43, No.729, 339-356.

Following Batcheldor's premature death most of his writing remain unpublished, and only available in the Marloes Road offices of the SPR. The Secretary, Peter, restricts access to what Lerwill & Newman refer to as "the philosophical and pragmatic equivalent to the Necronomicon: the notes appear to provide a theoretical framework for experiments with the very nature of reality, assuming as Ellis postulated a non-materialist neutral monist space/time where the observer plays an important part in the collapse of the wave function, and such effects may have ramifications to even macro levels. See Prof Bernard Carr's parapsychysics PSPR for possible implications, especially

Carr, B (2008) "Can Psychical Research Bridge the Gulf Between Matter and Mind?" in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 59 ; No.221

also

von Lucadou, W., & Zahradnik, F. (2004). "Predictions of the MPI about RSPK." In *Proceedings of the parapsychological association*

Technical Findings

Batcheldor was one of the first investigators to get raps and table movements in a seance type of setting. These were under his close control and he took great efforts to ensure that movements were not the result of normal forces, including those due to UMA (Unconscious Muscular Activity). The first total levitation of the table occurred in complete darkness which left the group somewhat uncertain to what had happened. Ken then attached electric switches to the table legs and connected the wires to a light on top of the table. The light would come on only if all legs were off the floor at the same time. Occasionally, the table would remain off the floor for a period of about 20 seconds. The light also had the advantage that during levitation everyone could see all the hands were on top of the table and not lifting it. All later sittings were tape recorded and a buzzer was used instead of a light to signify total levitation of the table, an audible event that would be recorded on the tape. Despite the odd technical hitch when the table tilted by more than 40 degrees, the system worked well. Attempts were made to obtain photographic evidence of complete levitations but this was never achieved, partly because there were considerably fewer levitations when the photographic apparatus was involved. Total levitations only ever occurred in total darkness or in light which was insufficient to illuminate the underneath of the table.

With regard to lighting conditions, the majority of sittings were held either in very low light or in total darkness (with the use of luminous paint to follow the movement of the table). The team came to favour the use of an Ilford Infrared Safelight which gave good visibility, was restful on the eyes and did not greatly inhibit the phenomena.

Rapping Phenomena

Typical sittings started with everyone seated around a table with their hands placed face down on the table top. There was always an initial period of waiting before anything happened, this period being around 5-10 minutes, although it could be as short as one minute and as long as half an hour.

The first signs of activity were usually creaks or cracking noises in the wood of the table. Most of these seemed normally produced by sideways stress on the table and may be called crepitations. However, these were interspersed with sharp taps, scrapings, or soft thuds, apparently due to some separate body striking the table. In a few cases these thuds were unmistakably heard on the chairs, the floor and on the walls. As table movements increased so too did the occurrence of rapping sounds. In most sittings attempts were made to communicate with any directing intelligence, occasionally with considerable response, but more usually with no response. The group often experienced cold breezes, mainly around the hands, as if they were being puffed on or fanned and were apparently too distinct to be confused with normal draughts in the room.

Psychological Findings

Possibly the most important contribution made by Ken Batcheldor, the psychological parameters which act as a prerequisite for successful sitter groups must be regarded as particularly significant.

During the course of his 200 sittings, Ken was able to establish the conditions under which he obtained successful results as a matter of course. This information, which has been grossly underutilised by successive groups, deserves very special consideration. It is true to say that certain recommendations came about as a result of a close working relationship with a fellow investigator, Colin Brookes-Smith. It was Colin who in 1970 published the Manual of Advanced Psychokinetic Procedures but much of this derived from Ken Batcheldor's List of Rules for Sitters. Out of this work came a list of fifty-three pointers, each designed to assist any group of normal people obtain successful PK phenomena in a sitter group environment.

The Practicalities

The success or otherwise of a group sitting is influenced greatly by certain important psychological factors of the group structure. Batcheldor summarised his findings in the following manner. He became quite convinced that there are three big reasons why PK might succeed or fail. They are:

1. **Belief:** even the slightest doubt is bad news for getting positive results.
2. **"Ownership Resistance"** : Ken used this term to describe people's reluctance to be responsible for PK. People prefer to think that others, including possible spirits, are responsible for PK effects. This offloads the responsibility to others and therefore increases the chances of success.
3. **"Witness Inhibition"** : the fact that people are sometimes very uncomfortable watching PK, no matter who is responsible for it.

Batcheldor felt that the best way to get around all three of these problems is to use a "group party atmosphere". Often he would have one person prime the pump by faking an event to get around the need for belief to get things going. Ownership resistance was less of a problem because no-one knew who in the group was actually responsible for the PK. Perhaps most importantly, he used laughter, singing and a light party-like atmosphere to cut down on witness inhibition. Some researchers feel that the unconscious mind knows how to produce PK - it just needs a set goal and a way to keep the conscious mind from interfering with it's production.



The Phillip Experiment

The classic experiment that is publicly known based upon the work of Batchelder and Brookes-Smith is the Philip Experiment. Forgoing the typical setting of the traditional seance, eight men and women chose a well-lit room and met once a week for a period of one year. They placed their hands upon a sturdy table and concentrated their thoughts on bringing forth a force of energy. They did not call out to the spirit of a known person who had once lived. Instead the group believed, and set out to prove, that their collective will could produce a psychical phenomenon. If they were successful, their experiment would shed new light on parapsychics, on Spiritualism and on the theory of what constitutes a ghost.



To give their efforts a focus they invented a deceased entity named Philip. They decided on his personality and physical characteristics, gave him a time period in which he lived, a background with names and dates, a detailed appearance ((see above), a loveless marriage and a tragic romance with someone named Margo. Their fanciful story kept them together over months of trial and error ... but what finally took place was not fanciful.

They called to Philip and something answered, but no-one knew who. The answers were in the form of a rapping code - one knock for "yes", two knocks for "no". The table itself could not be confined. On occasions it flung itself across the room, followed group members around and exhibited a unique, sometimes playful "personality".

Accounts of the Philip experiment excited interest among physicists, who came to observe. To measure the intensity of the rappings, an electrically wired metal plate was hung in the room and the group was asked to try to transfer the responses from the table to the metal plate. The quality of the recorded sounds was acoustically different from other noise. The force had not been identified, nor had it been explained. But it was generally accepted that something strange was going on. The video below shows some of the effects produced at these sittings along with some thoughts from Iris Owen and finally some speculations from Dr Joel Whitton.

Following the success of the first group, a second group was formed. Their aim was to create a different story and attempt to produce the same phenomena. With the benefit of the first group's experience, the second group was able to achieve similar results within minutes of concentrated effort.

The leaders of the experiment believe that it is possible to repeat this phenomenon anywhere, with any determined group. They feel one or two persons alone probably do not have the psychic strength to be successful and recommend that those attempting this type of experiment do so with at least six to eight people present.

Further Reading:

Conjuring Up Philip, An Adventure in Psychokinesis, Iris M. Owen with Margaret Sparrow, Harper & Row Publishers, 1976.

Conjuring Up Philip, Paranormal Review (SPR), 48, 16-22 (2008)

Additional Resources

<http://www.historyvshollywood.com/reelfaces/quiet-ones/>

<http://vimeo.com/14698763>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2lGPT2Jlcc>

www.spr.ac.uk - The Society for Psychical Research

www.assap.ac.uk - Association for Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

<http://www.koestler-parapsychology.psy.ed.ac.uk/> - Koestler Parapsychology Unit at Edinburgh University

<http://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/research/groups/aeru/> AERU at York University

<http://www.tcm.phy.cam.ac.uk/~bdj10/mm/top.html> Mind-Matter Unification Project Cambridge

<http://www.medicine.virginia.edu/clinical/departments/psychiatry/sections/cspp/dops> - Division Perceptual Studies Virginia University

<http://www.igpp.de/english/welcome.htm> Das Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene

<http://www.rhine.org/> - Rhine Research Centre

<http://www.lu.se/lucat/group/012010000> CERCAP, Lund University, Sweden

<http://www.gold.ac.uk/apru/> APRU, Goldsmiths, London