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**First prepared in October 2006 by the Survival Research Institute of Canada (Debra Barr and Walter Meyer zu Erpen).** Capitalization of any name or subject in the text below indicates that you will find an entry on that topic in the forthcoming third edition of Rosemary Ellen Guiley's *Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits* (October 2007).

## **Bishop, Beatrice Ethel Gaulton (1891-1974)**

Nurse, well-known medium, ordained minister, and a leading figure in Canadian Spiritualism. Beatrice Ethel Gaulton was born on 31 December 1891 at 1 Willoughby Cottages, Willoughby Lane, Tottenham, Middlesex, near London, England, the daughter of James Davis Gaulton and Catherine Emma Such. Her father was a "floor cloth printer."<sup>1</sup> When Beatrice Gaulton was just three years old, her father died at the age of 31.<sup>2</sup> In 1895, the widowed Emma Catherine (sic) Gaulton remarried, to Frederick Tansley Munnings.<sup>3</sup> A half-sister to Beatrice, Hilda Tansley Munnings, was born in 1896.<sup>4</sup>

During World War I, while on holiday at Bournemouth, Dorset, Beatrice Gaulton first entered a Spiritualist church. Though an Anglican Church member, she was soon a convinced Spiritualist, having found the philosophy for which she had been unconsciously searching. She was so impressed by her initial experiences that soon after returning to London she resigned her position as Charge Nurse of the Children's Block of a large institution.<sup>5</sup>

Returning to Bournemouth Spiritualist Church, Gaulton studied for five years and developed her psychic talents under the minister Frank T. Blake, who was President of the SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION and one of England's finest teachers. Hewat McKenzie, founder of the BRITISH COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE, also encouraged her in the pursuit of her spiritual gifts. Thereafter, she lived for a number of years in Sussex, London and Kent where she played an influential role in several churches. She was President of the Margate Spiritualist Church in Kent and served on circuit churches at Dover, Folkestone, Canterbury, and Ramsgate. The dynamic quality of her MEDIUMSHIP ensured good attendance at services and helped raise funds for new church buildings. When she first visited Bournemouth, a medium had prophesied that she would become a Spiritualist worker, but would do her greatest work in Canada and the United States, to which she responded: "How silly! I'll never go to Canada."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The marriage of her parents is registered at Hackney earlier in 1891.

<sup>2</sup>His death was registered at Poplar in early 1895.

<sup>3</sup>Their marriage was registered at Poplar before the end of the September 1895 quarter year.

<sup>4</sup>Her birth was registered at West Ham before the end of the June 1896 quarter year.

<sup>5</sup> Reverend Joyce Tarvin believes that this implies that she was the nurse in charge of the Children's Block in a large hospital; Reverend Gloria Brough indicated that the Charge Nurse reported to a Sister who in turn reported to the Matron.

<sup>6</sup>"She missed her train—and became a medium," *Psychic News*, 1 June 1974, p. 3.

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However, during a six-month holiday in 1935, Beatrice Gaulton fell in love with Canada and decided to return to take up residence. She lectured and demonstrated her psychic gifts at churches in the Toronto area, including Britten Memorial Church of Canada. The pastor of that church, Reverend Martha Stier McGuire, ordained her a minister of the Gospel of SPIRITUALISM under the auspices of the International General Assembly of Spiritualists. Gaulton was pleased that her ordination certificate was signed by the assembly's founder and president ARTHUR AUGUSTUS FORD on 12 September 1937.

Beatrice Gaulton travelled extensively in Eastern Canada and the United States, then on the invitation of Reverend Ada Garrad, Western Representative of the NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (NSA), made her first tour of Western Canada. In 1938, at Vancouver, British Columbia, she married widower Cyril Buxton Bishop (1880-1946) who had three grown children. As was often the practice among Spiritualist mediums, she added her husband's surname to her own and became known as Beatrice Gaulton Bishop. Marriage brought travel as a Spiritualist missionary to an end. Her ordination was transferred to the NSA of Canada, and in the 1940s, through her NSA affiliation, she received marriage rights within British Columbia.

Between 1943 and 1946, Gaulton Bishop was Pastor and President of First United Spiritualist Church of Vancouver, and Cyril Bishop, by vocation an accountant, was Secretary. Under her able leadership, membership increased considerably, to 62 members in 1946. The church had in 1945 moved from rental accommodation in the Oddfellows Hall to 2380 Pine Street, on which it held an agreement for sale. The larger premises included living space for Mr. and Mrs. Bishop.

In addition to demonstrating evidence of SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH, Gaulton Bishop was a gifted spiritual healer and trance medium. She had a spirit CONTROL named Azra, who had been a Christian martyr and whose job it was to come through for trance sermons. In 1963, he had been manifesting for 30 years. She also had a humorous girl spirit, named Pansy, who would control Gaulton Bishop to give evidence of survival to sitters.

The year following Cyril Bishop's sudden passing in December 1946, Gaulton Bishop returned to England in July to represent Canada at the international gathering of Spiritualists held at Bournemouth. It was at that meeting, after

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World War II, that the INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALIST FEDERATION was reorganized. During her stay, she visited many churches.

Upon returning to Canada, Gaulton Bishop settled at White Rock, British Columbia. With the support of Reverend Ethel Kate Showers, the White Rock Society for Psychic Study was founded. In 1952, she was called to take the pastorate of the National Memorial Church at Vancouver.

After holding various offices on the NSA executive, Gaulton Bishop served as its President during 1956-1958. In March 1957, when invited to read prayers before the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, she became not only the first Spiritualist to perform that duty, but also the first woman minister of any denomination to be permitted to do so.

During 1957, Gaulton Bishop was instrumental in a plan to bring the churches of the NSA and the Spiritualists' National Union of Canada (see SPIRITUALIST CHURCH OF CANADA) closer together, in order to give the Spiritualist movement added strength and fuller representation throughout Canada. The attempt was not successful, and in 1959, Gaulton Bishop together with Reverend Dr. John Horning and Reverend Doris A. Horning were the principals involved in the founding of the INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE that was intended to draw Spiritualists the world over into closer brotherhood and unity.

In her seventies, Gaulton Bishop remained a tireless exponent for Spiritualism; she served as the ISA's President and senior minister until her passing. In 1966, she was invited to express her views about Spiritualism and ESP on Vancouver's foremost radio station CKNW. The host for the two-hour show was the highly opinionated Jack Webster. After a short interview, the telephone lines were opened up to listeners for questions and comments that reflected the understanding of Spiritualism in the mid-1960s. Instead of tearing her apart, as some ISA members had feared, Gaulton Bishop reported that Webster had "thoroughly enjoyed the broadcast and was with me every step of the way, which surprised many of the listeners who knew him as a very impatient, and sometimes very aggressive broadcaster." She pondered whether "our good unseen friends had a softening influence on him." Though alone together in the switchboard room at the radio studio, there had been a tremendous power. Gaulton Bishop was "sure that subconsciously he responded to it."<sup>7</sup>

While acknowledging that the PLANCHETTE was an easy means of communicating with spirit, Gaulton Bishop had herself never used one and was a vocal opponent to its use. In November 1968, in response to Christmas advertisements promoting them as a children's game, the Vancouver *Sun* quoted

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<sup>7</sup> *International Spiritualist Review*, vol. 7, no. 7 (March 1966).

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her as stating that “the ouija board is a very, very dangerous instrument. . . It’s just like playing with electricity. If you don’t know how to handle it, you’ll get a shock.” Gaulton Bishop said that its use “seems to bring on an uprush of the subconscious.”<sup>8</sup> She had known cases of individuals who had become mentally unbalanced; some had purportedly come under the control of undesirable forces through use of the board and had required healing treatment. The toy manufacturers had their say in the following days.

Beatrice Gaulton Bishop passed to spirit on 22 April 1974, at Burnaby, BC. In her eulogy, friend and colleague Reverend Doris Horning wrote that “Spiritualism has lost one of its brightest lights.” Reverend Mrs. Bishop would be long remembered for “her great love . . . her teachings, and her wisdom of the things of the spirit which she shared with all.”<sup>9</sup> For years, her living quarters had doubled as meeting space for the study groups and development classes regularly invited to her apartment.

In her memory, protege Reverend Nancy Macrae and her husband Frank Stepney named their church the Gaulton Bishop Spiritualist Centre. For a number of years, it was located at Surrey, BC; latterly it was known as the Gaulton Bishop White Eagle Star Centre.

### **Further Reading:**

*Journals of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia*, 1957, vol. 87, p. 93, for 18 March 1957.

“Reverend Beatrice Gaulton Bishop,” *NSA News Review*, vol. 1, no. 4 (February 1957): 2-3.

*International Spiritualist Review*, various issues including March 1966.

British Columbia Companies Branch society files S-535 (First United Spiritualist Church of Vancouver) and S-5777 (International Spiritualist Alliance).

*Edmonton Journal*, May 1963, *Vancouver Sun*, November 1968, *Psychic News*, June 1974, and other historical research in the possession of the Survival Research Institute of Canada, Victoria, BC.

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<sup>8</sup>Nat Cole, “Lady Spiritualist Charges: Ouija Boards ‘Dangerous,’” *Sun* (Vancouver), 6 November 1968, pp. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup>“Transition,” a typescript prepared by Doris A. Horning as her eulogy for Beatrice Gaulton Bishop.