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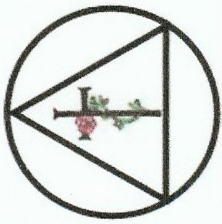


JOHN R. PATERNOSTER, IX°
M.W. Frater Supreme Magus



Irwin's 'Fredrick Hockley' Mirror
Great Queen Street c 1960s

Frederick Hockley – The Man and the Mirror



Metropolitan Study Group
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Frederick Hockley – The Man and the Mirror

By

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Frederick Hockley, born 13th October, 1808, died 10th November, 1885.

What else can I tell you about Frederick Hockley?

When writing about an historical character I like to be able to give more than just the bald facts; I want to feel that I have some understanding of what motivates, what drives that person. But with Frederick Hockley I struggled for several weeks without success to make that connection.

It was not just that Hockley died more than 100 years ago. When, for a different audience, I wrote about Phillip IV of France who died in 1314, I felt that, despite the distance in time, I

was able to understand something of his personality and his motivations.

Nor was it just the lack of information about Hockley, although it is surprising how little is actually known about him.

But then, just one month ago, Alistair Lees handed me this little book [Fig. 1] which contains the text of a lecture by Hockley that was due to be delivered to Bristol College S.R.I.A. in 1873.

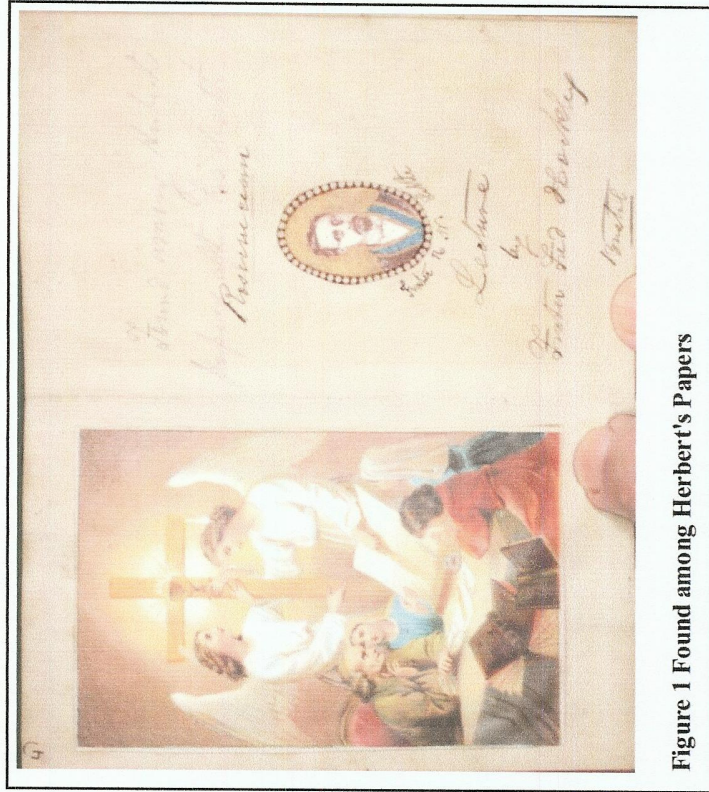


Figure 1 Found among Herbert's Papers

You will notice that the title page is annotated in pencil, "Found among Herbert's papers after his death". [Fig. 2] I shall refer to Herbert Irwin again later.

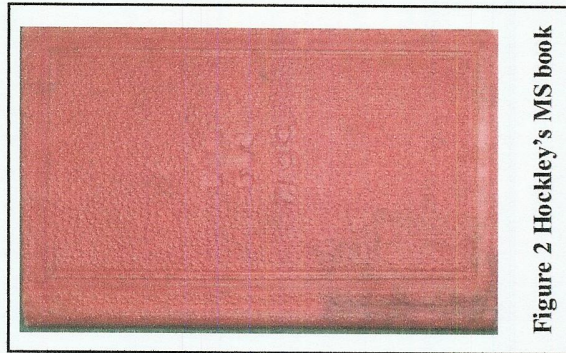


Figure 2 Hockley's MS book

I had already read a published transcript of the lecture but, suddenly, here in my hands I had, not just a little mid-Victorian manuscript book but a book whose pages Hockley himself had turned, pages on which Hockley had written in his own neat hand [Fig. 3]; and suddenly I had a link, however tenuous, to the personality that was Frederick Hockley. So who was he?

The best account of Hockley's life is contained in the Introduction by John Hamill to [Fig. 4] *The Rosicrucian Seer – Magical Writings of Frederick Hockley* which was published in 1986. The book itself mainly consists of a collection of the letters that Frederick Hockley wrote to his friend Major Francis George Irwin and his son Herbert Irwin between 1872 and about 1878 together with other letters and published papers by Hockley.

As most of you probably know, John Hamill was formerly the Librarian and Curator of the Library and Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England. In his Introduction to the 1986 edition of his book Hamill wrote of Hockley: "For details of his birth the only source traced is his own copy of Sibley's *Uranoscopy* in which he entered his own birth details on a nativity chart as "Born October 13th 2.20 am 1808 Latitude 51° 32' N".¹ Where he was born or what his parentage was has not been established."

This was partially incorrect as Hamill admits in the Preface, written in 2008, for the reprint of his book in 2009². The 1851 Census records a Frederick Hockley lodging at 10 North Hereford Terrace, West Hackney, Tower Hamlets who was then aged 42 (the correct age for "our" Frederick Hockley) and was a widower

¹ 'Nat. Oct. 13th. 2h.20 am 1808 Lat. 51 32N'

² Hamill, J., *The Rosicrucian Seer*, The Teitan Press, 2009, p vii.

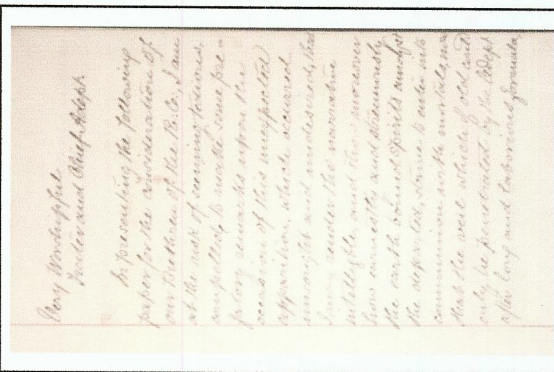


Figure 3 Hockley's Neat Hand

working as a clerk and who had been born in Lambeth, Surrey. (Lambeth, although now part of Inner London, was, at that time, in the county of Surrey.)

Any doubt that the 1851 entry is indeed for our Frederick Hockley is resolved by reference to the entry in the 1871 Census records which contain a Frederick Hockley lodging at 167 Liverpool Road, Islington (which is known to have been his address from the letters to the Irwins) who was then aged 62 and was a Public Accountant, again stated to be widower and born in Lambeth.

It seems, therefore, that Hockley may have been in error in recording the latitude of his birth since the most northern boundary of Lambeth (where it reaches the Thames) is 51° 30' 30" N. (51° 32' N being the latitude of St Pancras Station and Regents Park.)

Incidentally, for some reason that I cannot explain, I could find no record of an appropriate Frederick Hockley in either of the censuses for 1841 (the first that was carried out) or in 1861. (The 1841 record does contain a Frederick and Sarah Hockley living in Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire but their ages are wrong by two and about four years respectively and there is no other evidence that our Frederick Hockley ever lived in Buckinghamshire.)

Up to the age of eight Hockley was educated at Captain Webb's school at Hoxton. Sometime thereafter he began working for John Denley, an occult bookseller in Covent Garden and by 1824, at the age of sixteen, he had begun his experiments

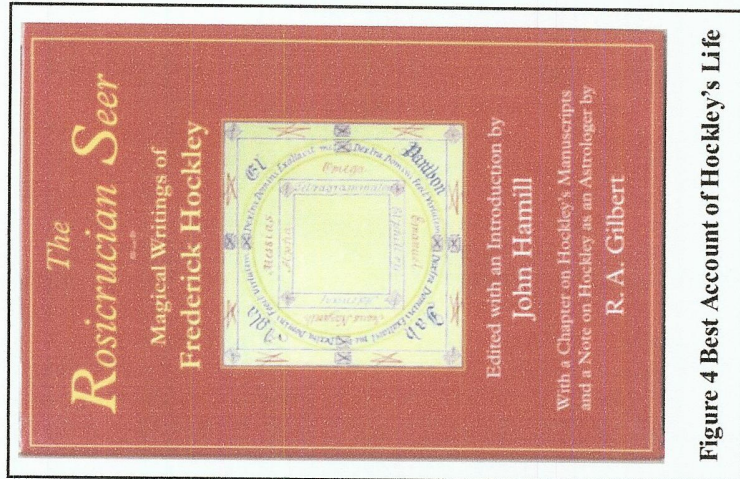


Figure 4 Best Account of Hockley's Life

with scrying using a crystal although, on his own admission in his Evidence to the London Dialectical Society in June 1869, he had never seen anything himself³.

The title of Hamill's book is therefore something of a misnomer as it appears that Hockley was not, himself, a "seer" in the sense of a "scryer" but that he always acted through an intermediary. They were usually female, often young girls, for whom he used the name "speculatrix".

Although Hockley maintained his connection with John Denley, by 1840 he was employed as an accountant with a firm of lawyers and he seems to have continued in this occupation until his death in 1885.

Hockley married but there is even less documentary evidence about his wife than about Hockley himself. Almost all that is known about her is that her name was Sarah and that she died on 8th December, 1850 at the age of 38. (But see the Addendum to this paper.)

The marriage seems to have been a happy one and Hockley certainly made numerous attempts to contact his wife after her death. A late as February 1883, Kenneth MacKenzie, a spiritualist and one-time friend of Frederick Hockley, wrote to Francis Irwin that Hockley was "sadly troubled at not being able to get any communication from his wife."⁴ However, Hockley was apparently successful, shortly before his own death, in receiving a message written between slates through the mediumship of a William Eglinton, a spiritualist medium who specialised in physical manifestations.

As I have already mentioned, in January 1872 Hockley was lodging at 167 Liverpool Road, Islington and he remained there until 1877 although he also used his office address at 3 Raymond Buildings, Grays Inn. In September 1877 he moved to 4 Richmond Terrace, Clapham Road but, for some reason which his letters do not explain, he then had to move at short and apparently unexpected notice⁵ in July 1878 to 87 Fentiman Road, also in Clapham.

³ Hockley's verbal evidence to the special Committee on Spiritualism delivered on Tuesday, 8th June, 1869, published in the Society's Report on Spiritualism in 1871, pp. 184-187.

⁴ Quoted by Hamill, J., *The Rosicrucian Seer*, The Antiquarian Press, 1986, p 93

⁵ Letter to Herbert Irwin dated 19th June 1878.

Richmond Terrace seems to have disappeared but Fentiman Road still exists (although there is no longer a No 87). Situated just south of the Oval cricket ground the modern day postcode is SW8 1LA. I do not know whether it had any significance for Hockley but I was interested to see that, just a few yards from Fentiman Road, there is Elias Place and both Ashmole Place and Ashmole Street!

On 21st March, 1864, at the age of fifty-six, Hockley was Initiated into Freemasonry in British Lodge No 8 becoming Junior Warden fifteen months later and Master of the Lodge in 1867. In that year British Lodge nominated him as a Grand Steward and he was accordingly invested on 24th April. Also in 1867 he joined the Grand Stewards Lodge and was its Secretary from 1877 until his death eight years later. He must have been highly regarded by the Brethren of the Lodge for a special jewel was struck to mark his contribution but sadly he died before it could be presented to him. That jewel is still worn by every Grand Stewards Lodge secretary to this day.

Hockley's admission into the S.R.I.A in 1872 seems to have been somewhat irregular. His application for membership was submitted to Bristol College where Francis Irwin was the Chief Adept. Bristol College was then meeting in Weston-Super-Mare and the ballot took place in Hockley's absence – he was still in London – and apparently despite the fact that his name did not appear on the Summons as an Aspirant. Not only was the ballot unanimous in his favour but, in his absence, he was immediately made a member of the VII^o even though he had never participated in any Rosicrucian ceremony!

Indeed, on 16th March 1872 in a letter to Francis Irwin acknowledging his admission, Hockley wrote: "Not being personally known to the Brethren, I cannot but feel that the honour they have done me, upon your recommendation, is a proof not of my qualifications but of the esteem and respect in which you M[ost] W[orshipful] Brother are held by the members of the College.

"It is true that when I was Exalted into the Supreme Degree of R[oyal] A[rch] M[ason], after giving proofs of my proficiency, I was informed by the M[ost] E[xcellent] Z[erubabel] that my humility was a sure indication of merit, and that he was convinced I was qualified to discharge the duties of the most important stations, but these offices being filled I was merely employed to dig and delve, and was in due time promoted to the office of Scribe.