Independent Direct Voice Mediumship

This term is used to describe a type of mediumship, within a séance, where a voice is heard within the room and this voice cannot be ascribed to the medium or any other living person in that room. The location of the voice can appear to come from near the medium from or any other part of the room. Direct voice mediumship appears to be quite rare.

There have been many claims regarding exponents of direct voice mediums through the decades and it would be impossible to report on every single one.

Several investigators, who have had excellent results through direct voice mediumship, have published their experiences. Some of the best known are:

*Glimpses of the next State* and *The Voices*, by Admiral Usborne Moore, which describe the mediumship of Mrs Etta Wriedt.

*Towards the Stars,* by Dennis Bradley, describing the mediumship of Valiantine.

*On the Edge of the Etheric,* by Arthur Findlay, describing the mediumship of John Sloan.

*The Dead Have Never Died,* by E Randall, describing the mediumship of Mrs French.

One such medium with the ability to facilitate direct voice was Leslie Flint.

Leslie was born in Hackney, London, in 1911. He died in 1994.

In séance conditions he did not use trumpets or other paraphernalia to assist in any way with voice production. In Leslie’s case the voices appeared to be located in a space, a little above his head and slightly to one side. It is on record that sometimes those who spoke could only achieve a whisper, hoarse and strained and yet others spoke clearly and fluently in voices recognisably similar to their own when they were alive.

It has often been suggested that really good mediums come from a background which had some kind of trauma or stress in it. This was certainly true in Leslie’s case. He was born in a Salvation Army home and, cutting the account very short, his mother could not cope with a baby and so his grandmother stepped in and raised him. His grandmother could not read or write but she had a very strong moral and ethical code. He was therefore dutifully sent to Sunday school and he really enjoyed it as he loved all the bible stories, accepting them all as the literal truth. Having an inquiring mind he was puzzled when he discovered that one of the boys who attended his Sunday school also attended another two. He asked himself questions such as: - Did they all have different gods?

When he was seven he had his first psychic experience. He heard his grandmother talking to a lady in the kitchen of their home and popped his head in to see who it was. Later he asked his grandmother who the lady was and met the reply that no one had been there. He described the woman and was rewarded with a clout on the ear to the strains of the grandmother’s voice saying, ‘That’s Mrs Pugh… and she has been dead and buried for a month or more.’ He soon learned to keep quiet. He did have other similar subsequent experiences but feared that there was something wrong with him.

I think that it is useful, if not imperative, to examine the background of any person concerned with alleged phenomena, as the perspective may be extremely important.

By the age of 13 Leslie had obtained a job at the local graveyard, keeping the graves tidy, clipping grass verges, weeding and rolling the grass. He also dug new graves, which was a backbreaking task, but it earned his keep.

He continued this work for several years. As he had an inquiring mind and was desperately trying to understand his experiences, he set out in search of an answer. His first port of call was the church. He hopped from church to church looking for reliable information about life and death.

During this period, while working in the graveyard, he came across a neglected overgrown grave, just beyond the line that he had to attend to. He felt sad for whoever was in there and decided to tidy it up anyway, although relatives had not paid for the upkeep. When he cut away the long grass around it he was shocked to find that it was the grave of one of his favourite teachers at school, Mr Edwin Lewis. Just at that point a woman visited a grave along from him and replaced the flowers in front of it with fresh flowers. She threw the old ones, which looked fine to Leslie, in a refuse bin nearby. He retrieved them and found a jam jar, filled it with water and placed the flowers on Mr Lewis’s grave.

On his quest to find a meaning to his life at various churches he visited, he heard a minister state emphatically that all people should keep away from Spiritualism and Spiritualist’s meetings. He had never heard of Spiritualists at that point, but spurred on by the minister’s ‘warning’ he went along that very same evening as the flower incident to a Spiritualist’s meeting where the medium was a Mrs Annie Johnson. She was billed as a trance medium, who would give an address followed by clairvoyance.

It is on record that he thought, ‘What is trance and clairvoyance, only one way to find out.’

At the meeting, during the address, a man’s voice came out of the entranced Mrs Johnson and Leslie was more than puzzled. He was even more shocked when, during the demonstration of mediumship, the medium pointed at him and said: - ‘There is a man here who wants to thank you for the flowers you put on his grave this morning. He tells me he was a schoolmaster and his name was Edwin Lewis.’ He didn’t know what to make of it all.

After a time, he was invited to come to a ‘home circle’ run by a Mrs Cook. During the first visit he thought that he had fallen asleep, but was astounded to find that he had spoken to the assembled members in what appeared to be a trance like state.

That was the beginning of a very long career as a direct voice medium. It was nothing that he sought. Claims of his work reached the ears of many who wanted to test his abilities. He willingly agreed to be investigated.

Among the many reports of Flint’s ability are by:

W McIntyre in June 1939, on behalf of The International Institute for Psychic Investigation.

B. Abdy Collins in July 1946

Reverend Charles Drayton Thomas and Donald West, on behalf of the SPR in 1948

Brigadier R C Firebrace CBE

Mr F Sibley

Kathleen Goldney in 1949

Other investigators included Lord Hugh Dowding

The Reverend Arthur Sharp.

George Bishop, dramatic critic for the Daily Telegraph 1959

Conan Shaw, psychical researcher, 1969

Professor William R Bennett 1970

Dr Aubrey Rose, Lawyer, OBE, CBE 1978 onwards

Some critics had advanced the theory that all people who attended a Flint séance were in some way hypnotised in some sort of mass hysteria and that the voices heard were not ‘real’ but imagined by the sitters. This theory was somewhat diminished when steps were taken to record a séance and the voices were still produced and were heard on the recordings as clear as a bell.

The Reverend Drayton Thomas gave the following account of the first of his experiments with Flint, which was held in the premises of the Society for Psychical Research, London.

‘I placed over his tightly closed lips a strip of Elastoplast. It was five and a half inches long and two and a half inches wide and had very strong adhesive. This I firmly pressed over and into the crevices of the closed lips. A scarf was then tied tightly over this and the mediums hands tied firmly to the arms of the chair; another cord was so tied that he would be unable to bend down his head.’

Subsequently Drayton Thomas also enlisted the help of another psychical researcher who was an electronic expert in further experimentation. Sadly the identity of this person cannot be easily found. Some tests were carried out at this person’s flat and others, yet again, at the premises of the SPR. When the electronic expert was present the séance protocol was as follows:

Flint’s lips were sealed with plaster. On some occasions water would also be put in his mouth.

A throat microphone was attached to him and wired to amplifiers so that the slightest sound made through Flint’s larynx would be greatly magnified.

An infra –red telescope was used by the researchers, which enabled them to watch every movement throughout the séance.

Flint’s hands were firmly held by sitters on either side of him.

Despite all of these precautions, independent direct voices were heard, once again providing relevant information to individual sitters.

Under these test conditions and on more than one occasion a researcher, viewing through the infra-red telescope, reported that they could see what looked like an ‘ectoplasmic’ larynx forming on the left side of Flint some two feet away from him. This appeared to be the vicinity of the source of the discarnate voices.

Drayton Thomas’s evaluation of Flint’s mediumistic abilities was that, ‘Leslie Flint had absolutely no part in producing the voices.’

Ref [www.tanika.com/04-mediums/flint.htm](http://www.tanika.com/04-mediums/flint.htm)

With regard to these sessions Brigadier Firebrace wrote:-

‘I well remember the test sittings I had with you and Drayton Thomas. At these sittings you had an infra-red telescope focused on you and you had a throat microphone round your throat. There was an electronic expert present who watched the instruments which were attached to the throat microphone. I can well remember that under these conditions we got the direct voice without any indication on the instruments that it was registered by the throat microphone.

But the voices were fainter than on previous sittings I had with you. An interesting point was on the final occasion when, with a voice speaking faintly, the infra-red telescope suddenly fused; the voice immediately doubled in volume. This indicated to me that infra-red rays [may] weaken mediumship in some way. I must add that you could not possibly have known that the infra-red telescope was out of action...’

At a séance attended by Lord Dowding a young man came through, saying that his name was Peter William Handford Kite. He gave an address and asked if someone would be good enough to contact his parents. The parents accepted an invitation to attend a future séance. Peter’s own voice was heard by all when he provided the following information.

He spoke about a joke concerning the purchase of an Alsatian dog before he died.

That his mother had put a photograph of him, and photographs of his grave in Norway, in her bag that morning.

That he liked the cherry tree that they had planted for him in the memorial garden.

His bedroom was unchanged in the six years since he died.

That he did not like the wallpaper in his bedroom.

He also found it amusing that his father was still driving *his* car, although it was too small for him.

The young man’s parents affirmed emphatically that all of this was correct and that they indeed were convinced that they had had a conversation with their son.

Ref. [www.survivalafterdeath.org/experiments/direct-voice/flint.htm](http://www.survivalafterdeath.org/experiments/direct-voice/flint.htm)

Through his lifetime Leslie travelled all over the world demonstrating his independent direct voice mediumship. He would often travel alone to previously unseen venues, where no previous ‘set up’ would have been possible, even if such a ‘set up’ ever existed.

Professor William R Bennett, professor of electrical engineering at Columbia University in New York City, tested Leslie at length. After completing his exhaustive investigation, the thoroughly vouched for Flint’s authenticity by stating:-

‘My experience with Mr Flint is first hand; I have heard the independent voices. Furthermore, modern investigation techniques, not available in earlier tests, corroborate previous conclusions by indicating that the voices are not his. But to be thorough one should consider the possibility of five live accomplices. This suggestion became untenable to me during his visit to New York in September 1970 when, in an impromptu séance in my apartment, the same voices not only appeared but took part in conversations with the guests.’

At a demonstration in New York City, before 75 people Flint’s ‘gatekeeper’ announced that a Mr Carl Schneider was there ready to speak. A purported Mr Schneider spoke. At first there was no response from the audience but a member of the audience finally spoke up and stated that he knew a Carl Schneider, but as far as he knew Schneider was still alive. The next day that person attempted to call Schneider, only to find that he had committed suicide a year earlier.

Ref. [www.leslieflint.com/reviews.html](http://www.leslieflint.com/reviews.html)

Another witness, Dr Aubrey Rose, OBE, CBE, one of the most brilliant lawyers in England, attended many sittings with Leslie Flint and claimed that through Flint he received ‘The most detailed evidence for survival of the individual beyond this life.’ Rose stated that his investigation into survival began when he heard a tape-recording of a voice that he recognised as that of the deceased Judge, Lord Birkett, speaking through Leslie Flint. As a result Rose became so interested that he took part in further experimentation and investigation into this phenomenon and, much later, he became a close friend of Flint.

Ref. Book by Rose ‘*The Rainbow Never Ends’* 2005

Dame Ellen Terry, a Shakespearean actress, came through a tape-recorded Flint séance in 1964. The recording was sent to an old friend of Ellen’s. Her verdict was ‘I am satisfied that it is the voice of the friend I knew so well, Ellen Terry. She pronounces her words exactly as she did when I knew her.’ The tape-recording was also sent to friends in London who had in their possession a record previously made by the actress. They compared the voice on the record with the voice on the tape-recording and reported ‘They are identical.’

You can hear the 1964 tape- recording on

<http://greaterreality.com/recordings/Leslie%20Flint.mp3>

If we consider the variety of voices that purported to come through Flint, we must address the fact that a great variety of nationalities and ages of both genders that were recorded. The 120, or so, speakers on recordings speak with passion and energy and converse with the sitters, often at a very personal level. No sensible person could consider that these conversations had been scripted and rehearsed. The speakers spoke openly and honestly in the style of their own personalities, with the knowledge of that personality and with conviction. If actors had been engaged in fraud to create the diversity of characters they must have also been ventriloquists, as the voices came from the area, already described, close to and around Flint. Along with this Flint would have had to have extensive knowledge of world and personal events surrounding individuals. For example, there is a tape of a Mister Al Pritchatt’s detailed and veridical account of his death on a battlefield in World War 1.

There are, however, also reports which are not so positive.

On Wednesday the 19th Oct 1938 a group met at Mr Flint’s house. The recorder of the proceedings was Miss Mercy Phillimore.

She concluded that: ‘The general tone of the procedure was extremely vulgar and inept, and I could not refrain from an active feeling of utter distrust through the whole performance…. I am undecided in my mind as to whether the whole thing was fraudulent or whether these voices were a psychic manifestation of an utterly low and debased order.’

A Mr and Mrs Hunt who were also present agreed with Miss Phillimore’s report.

However, at the same séance, another person present, Mr Abdy Collins, wrote the following: ‘What struck me especially was that no trumpet was used and the voices appeared to come from close by the medium. As far as I could judge none of the voices were ventriloquial and while Micky (one of the discarnate personalities) was speaking, the medium coughed and laughed. I am inclined to think that the voices were genuine phenomenon.’

On Wednesday 7th April, 1954, another group attended a sitting in Flint’s flat.

The séance lasted about an hour and a half and no significant temperature fluctuation was noted. The general conclusions were written by Mr H. Stuart Benny as follows: ‘Inconclusive but interesting. Not necessarily fraudulent though lacking in any substantial evidence to the contrary. It would have been possible, in the writer’s opinion, for a good mimic to have produced that voices as experienced, but the writer does not suggest that they were necessarily produced thus.’

There is a Leslie Flint Educational Trust, whose director has been the Reverend Larry Taylor since 1975. Anyone can purchase copies of Leslie Flint’s tapes from this source.

Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore wrote:

‘Among the manifold phases of spiritism which have been exhibited in this country, the most satisfactory and provably genuine is that of the “direct voice.” We have had it with us in a mild way for many years through the mediumship of Mrs. Everitt, Mr. Cecil Husk, Mr. C. E. Williams, and Mr. F. Craddock;

But English people as a whole did not know what was the “direct voice” until Mrs. Etta Wriedt came to Wimbledon as the guest of Mr. W. T. Stead in May, 1911.’

Etta Wriedt was an American direct voice medium.

She charged a fee of one dollar for a sitting. She never sat in a séance cabinet, did not go into trance and often joined in with the conversations with the external voices that were heard at the séance. The psychical researcher Vice-Admiral Usborne Moore heard three voices at once, one in each ear and one through a trumpet that was present at the séance. Although the medium spoke only English, voices were heard to speak in in many languages including Arabic, Serbian, Dutch, French, German, Gaelic, Hebrew Hindustani and Spanish. Etta spoke with a Yankee drawl.

Etta’s control was Dr John Sharp, who purported to come from Glasgow in the eighteenth century. He claimed to be an apothecary, who travelled to Indiana, where he worked and died.

At the séances with W. T. Stead in Wimbledon, E. K. Harper, Stead’s secretary, recorded approximately 200 sittings with Etta Wriedt. She was often a witness to hearing direct voices in daylight. There were sometimes other phenomena associated with the voices at times such as luminous forms gliding about and, on occasion, dogs materialised and barked. At other times flowers would be taken from vases in the room and individual flowers would be placed in the hands of each sitter. On other occasions luminous discs, as bright as the moon, were reported to be seen dancing around the room.

This medium came back to the U K. again in 1912, 1913, 1915 and 1919, where she spent a lot of time in Rothesay, Isle of Bute, Scotland.

While in England, the eminent psychical researcher, and one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, Sir William F. Barrett heard simultaneous voices coming through and/or around Wriedt. At some point in the proceedings a voice was heard claiming to be Professor Henry Sidgwick, who had died before Etta arrived in England. Barrett reasoned that although Wriedt would have known the name Sidgwick she would be unlikely to know that Sidgwick had a speech impediment, so he asked the voice ‘Are you all right now’.

The immediate reply was ‘You mean the impediment in my speech, but I do not stutter now.’

Barrett’s conclusion was ‘I went to Mrs Wriedt’s séance in a somewhat sceptical spirit, but I came to the conclusion that she is a genuine and remarkable medium, and has given abundant proof to others besides myself that the voices and the contents of the messages are given wholly beyond the range of trickery or collusion.’

References: Nandor Fodor Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science.

Vice- Admiral W, Usborne Moore. Spirit Identity by Direct voice.

In 1921, Arthur James Balfour founded the Glasgow Society for Psychical Research, with the wealthy Scottish businessman Arthur Findlay. During this time Findlay investigated the direct voice mediumship of John Campbell Sloan.

He following is a quote from Findlay: “After 39 séances with John Sloan, for which he refused any payment, I was satisfied, after applying every test I could think of, that the voices were not those of the medium or any other earth person present.”

Regardless of the identity of any direct voice medium and the empirical nature of the evidence supplied to individual sitters; this phenomenon can only be documented. The case for genuine independent direct voice becomes more compelling where voice comparisons can be made against the communicators voice when they were alive.