

Coming Back Down Under

— Case 78 —

While under hypnosis in Sydney, Australia, Helen Pickering recalled a past life as a male doctor in Scotland during the early 19th century. She recalled having studied at the University of Aberdeen and practicing medicine in the small Scottish town of Blairgowrie.

Helen also recalled drinking in a bar in the Seaman's Mission in Aberdeen as a young man, and described the sights from the dormitories that overlooked the bay from the medical school where Burns trained. She recalled the layout of the medical school, as well as the town of Blairgowrie. She also recalled being an important person in civic affairs, being involved with the town council. Her/his name was Dr. James Burns.

These hypnotic sessions were part of a series of experiments by hypnotist Peter Ramster designed to explore the possibility of gaining solid evidence for reincarnation. A film about these experiments was produced, much of which can be seen in segments on YouTube. The following section is taken almost verbatim from Ramster's write up of the case, which he titled, "The Recall of Helen Pickering."¹

Once I had an understanding of everything she recalled, Helen was taken to Scotland, to Blairgowrie.

Everything was filmed as it happened. She was blindfolded on the way there so she could gain no clues as to where she was. She was taken to a point just outside the town where the blindfold was taken off. At first she was confused. In Australia she had spoken of a grassy square in the middle of town around which the road ran on both sides. This was not visible from where we stopped. Helen walked to the end of the road and turned right into another road that led onto a bridge over a stream. This led into the town centre. She began to walk across the bridge, and as she walked, the grassy square came into sight.

It was the spark of recognition she needed. There was a sudden change in her demeanour. To

that point she had been hesitant, unsure of her surroundings. Suddenly, she knew where she was and recognised what was ahead. It was exactly as she had described to me when under hypnosis in Sydney. Upon reaching the square she realised the town was just as she remembered it to be, though she had never been to Scotland before in this life. She was able to recognise the changes made since the time she recalled living there.

Dr. James Burns had been an important person of the town. He had been involved in civic affairs as well as the town council. Naturally we looked for evidence of his existence and to confirm the reality of his profession. For a start, we decided to look at the town's archived records that went back hundreds of years. The records uncovered more than we had expected.

James Burns was indeed mentioned, and he was indeed involved in civic affairs. When looking for reminders of Dr. James Burns we found them in the former minute books of the council. We even found James Burn's signature. Under hypnosis in Australia, Helen had recalled that Dr. James Burns was a Justice of the Peace. James Burn's signature written in the old books, confirmed this.

Under hypnosis Helen recalled attending medical school from the early 1830s. She recalled in detail the layout of the school as well as its other features, such as the library, lecture halls, staircases and so on, as well as the dormitories on the upper floor. She recalled the school had a U shape at the front, and at the back went out in a T shape. She recalled the chapel and other features, as well as the view from the cloisters of the old building.

We took Helen to Aberdeen to a point near the old wharves and took the blindfold off. Again we had tried to ensure that Helen gained no clues as to where she was from modern road signs or other modern pointers. She was left for a moment to try to get her bearings. After a short interlude, she pointed down the road to the direction she wished to go, so we again began to move forward; a few of us at the front, with the film crew filming from every vantage point. We had gained the assistance of independent witnesses: someone at

the local university, and a person from a local radio station.

After walking a short distance from the place we had begun, Helen pointed out where the seaman's mission had stood. The people who were acting as witnesses had no idea as to whether it was true for not. Enquiries by our team showed it to be true. A lady from Sydney, Australia, had known something about Aberdeen that even people who lived there didn't know.

We took Helen to a place near where the old medical school once stood. Leading the way she then entered into the grounds of an old building. We all walked into the car park [parking lot]. The building stretched across in front of us but also wrapped along the sides of us as well. It came out from the front in a U shape. This was exactly as Helen had described the old medical school when under hypnosis in Sydney.

There were some differences today. The grass had gone and been replaced by bitumen. The entrance was a bit more grand. Tentatively, Helen walked towards the front of the building. It was still a part of Aberdeen university. Once past the doors and inside, the familiarity overtook Helen. She stood silent for a moment and looked upwards into the building, surveying the staircase that lay in front of her. She looked white, as if she had seen a ghost. She had been unprepared for the familiarity. Tentatively she began to ascend the stairs. She was visibly moved by what she saw. At the top of the stairs she reminded me of her words in Sydney, when she told me that you were able to look out over the first floor balcony to the entrance below. She was correct. We walked past what she recalled was the library. It was not a library at the time we were there, but it was during the time of James Burns. Helen led us along hallways and into places that she recalled. She identified where a staircase once stood, then she led us out the back of the building to confirm it went out in a T shape as she recalled. Sure enough, the T shape was there. It had been a medical school and Helen's recall was correct. Some features she recalled were very specific, and we could see once we visited the place that the important features she had recalled were there.

The building did go out in a T shape at the back and had a U shape at the front. Inside the building was similar as well. Helen had also drawn a drawing of the old school as she remembered it, before we left, so one could see the similarities and some of the differences.

We found a man who had studied and written a paper on the old college of medicine as it was in the time of James Burns. He was able to confirm that Helen was correct in her memory of the details of the building, including the position of a staircase that she noticed was missing today. The building today is not as it was. Helen was able to confirm her knowledge through his expertise on the old building. He also tested her for her knowledge. There was no logical reason for Helen to have known what she knew, except for the explanation of reincarnation and a memory coming from that time. It was not the present building that Helen recalled, but the original building before it was altered, the building that stood in the early 19th century that had long since been changed.

Every piece of her findings was filmed and recorded as it happened, including the discussion with the expert. Helen's recollections initially came only with hypnosis. Her findings proved the reality of those recollections, from the details of the old medical school, to aspects of Aberdeen, to details of the town of Blairgowrie. Even the records of James Burns, a man important in Blairgowrie's civic affairs at the time, was found.

[End of Ramster's write-up.]

Discussion

The most evidential parts of this case are Pickering's knowledge of:

- Burn's occupation as a medical doctor
- his involvement in civic affairs
- his role as a justice of the peace
- the prior location of a seaman's mission building
- the position of a staircase in a medical-school building that had since been torn down.

Any explanation other than reincarnation would require Pickering to possess unheard-of skills at clairvoyantly examining numerous old documents residing in a foreign land. And even that probably could not explain her knowledge of the mission's prior location.

Although several people have placed synopses of this case on the Internet, I have only come across one serious attempt at criticism.² Unfortunately, this one is written in a language I do not read and the Google translation often leaves the meaning of phrases unclear. The language barrier

works both ways, causing, it seems, the critic to misunderstand parts of Ramster's film. (His critique shows no sign that he ever read the written report.) In short, the criticism amounts to very little, other than a distraction from the real evidence of this strong case.



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¹ This section was taken, with permission, from the website <http://www.aramaiglobal.org>. I have made minor edits and shortened it somewhat.

² See "Een bewijs uit graniet" at <http://www.skepsis.nl/ramster-video.html>.