

**Why Electronic Voice Phenomena Should be Considered the Best Available Evidence
for the Survival of Human Consciousness After Permanent Bodily Death
(Abridged)**

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This essay seeks to illustrate why I consider Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) as providing the best available evidence for the survival of human consciousness after permanent bodily death. The assurance that our personality and consciousness is preserved, allows us to live a fuller life, liberated from the fear of death and EVP has the capacity to provide such affirmation. Whilst the methodology for obtaining EVP is simple, validating how we judge the credibility and veracity of the phenomena can be challenging. I will do this by exploring four key aspects of recordings; in examining the method of its capture, in the analysis and interpretation of the messages received, by questioning how the operator may affect results and finally in assessing what we may learn from those who communicate with us.

It was Colin Smythe, a publisher working with the Swedish artist and filmmaker, Frederick Jurgenson in 1958, who coined the term Electronic Voice phenomena (EVP). Konstantins Raudive, a Latvian psychologist, took great inspiration from Jurgenson's book *Voices from Space* (1964); they worked briefly together but not overly productively, before Raudive published *Breakthrough* (1971) and popularised his recordings as "*Raudive voices*". This was to become a seminal book that stimulated a significant growth of interest in the subject, but EVP being a less personalised and generic description of the recording phenomenon and not being isolated to tape or audio recorders, has prevailed as the common acronym.

EVP falls under the umbrella of Instrumental Transcommunication (ITC), under which practically any device capable of receiving either visual or audio signals may be used to receive messages from the deceased. Who first recorded EVP is open to debate. In the 1920s, Inventor Thomas Edison postured that it was possible to construct an apparatus to contact personalities in another existence, but there is no proof that his machine was ever built or functioned. From 1936 Attila von Szalay captured voices on a phonograph, and later with Raymond Bayliss on the tape recorder. Catholic Fathers Gemelli and Ernetti were to gain patronage from Pope Pius XII in the 1950s for continued EVP experimentation, after inadvertently capturing voices with a steel wire recorder, during a recital. Since the development of modern communications circuitry in the late 1950s and the recent popularisation of the subject, basic equipment is affordable to all and has provided an

opportunity for anyone with a curiosity in EVP, to practically investigate the phenomena for themselves.

It is understandable for those who explore ITC as a means of post-mortem communication, to attain the goal of two-way conversation. Direct Radio Voice (DRV) has proven to facilitate this objective, but very few researchers have achieved clear channels with the other side, however, Anabela Cardoso in Portugal, and Marcello Bacci (1927-2019) in Italy are well-known practitioners who have demonstrated remarkable results in this field. DRV in its simplest form, is listening to a radio frequency between stations that is free of recognisable speech. As with any discipline, those who obtain even modest success are personally driven and will have spent a considerable amount of time, most often years in pursuit of communication. Practitioners who achieve consistent results, are seldom able to provide a service to members of the public, in the way we might expect a spiritual medium to work.

Whilst DRV is highly evidential and an important method of post-mortem communication, due to the necessary time needed to develop a clear channel, it is unobtainable and impractical to all but a few, however, in comparison with DRV achieving evidential, sentient communication through EVP is relatively straightforward and requires considerably less time to achieve with only a modest financial outlay. It must be said though that the inherent nature of recording for EVP does not permit two-way communication, even when recordings are immediately reviewed for replies, the resultant staccato conversation is far from fluid or natural. Those with no prior experience of ITC may require a period of development to establish a connection. How this is done will depend on the operator's circumstances and their willingness to experiment, without being defeated by inevitable setbacks and delays in progress.

Researchers who actively record for EVP are generally willing to share positive results and recordings with those who are new to the subject, relatively few, however, are open to discussing their modus operandi in great depth. Professor Dr. Ernst Senkowski (2019), a renowned German physicist and ITC researcher is keen to point out "*experimenters in EVP like to speak about their "research", but with very few exceptions they have no professional background, they are neither able nor interested in scientific work and in experiments*

following established rules". Senkowski's attitude is prevalent amongst scientists and provides an insight as to why many lay researchers are wary of engaging with professional bodies, and why many potentially valuable sources of evidence are ignored and lost. If research is interpreted as being a systematic investigation, with the objective of finding answers to questions, then surely those who work with a transparent and documented methodology might be considered researchers and be encouraged. For the sake of unity in this essay, I will refer to those who record for EVP as operators which has been adopted widely in the community and is less contentious.

In 2005 I made the decision to form a physical circle to personally explore whether the séance phenomena that had intrigued me was genuine, or merely Victorian pantomime. Before starting the investigation, I required the assistance of a physical medium to lead the group. I visited many Spiritualist churches, demonstrations, and private circles in England, but none of those I sat with, fulfilled my brief. The required medium would need to be open to questioning and prepared to attempt the production of phenomena under red light; no medium when approached, was willing to be scrutinised as they demonstrated.

There were many accounts of unwittingly discovered natural physical mediums in the past, such as Welshmen Jack Webber and Alec Harris, both of whom were found to generate spontaneous phenomena in their environment; in my childhood I too had experienced such things to a lesser degree, so I decided out of desperation, that I would act as the medium. It was to be a challenging induction; I had no experience of sitting in or leading a circle and had only historical accounts of seances for guidance as to how to proceed. There was a direct benefit of being my own test subject, in that I could criticise my performance and its effect on phenomena, and appraise our protocols, making immediate changes where necessary without upsetting group dynamics.

On formation, as group we agreed that we should work only for the benefit of our communicators. We believe in part, one of the reasons we have achieved success, is that we do not research for personal gain or entertainment. We work as a team to provide the best evidence we can, for those who are open to listening and on occasion when conditions permit, to see communicators transfigure. The opportunity to witness physical phenomena, take part in EVP recordings and investigate historic sites are benefits of joining the group, but it has not always been an easy journey for those who have joined us.

Finding suitable sitters for physical seances proved to be problematic from the outset. The sitter's task is to attend regularly, for a period of two hours once or twice a month, solely as an observer and to act as a battery for phenomena; my role is to perform as the medium, to analyse recordings and to document our sittings in the journal, online and in videos. We discovered, no matter how affable a relationship may be outside of a séance room, turning the lights out was a definitive test of whether a candidate is suitable to join; sitters are accepted on the understanding they will positively suspend judgement of phenomena during the sitting, yet take part in a critical evaluation of the proceedings post sitting, accepting that reported phenomena might not be considered evidential without objective evidence or multiple witnesses.

For those of a scientific disposition or with a questioning mind, the mere mention of the phrase *physical séance* is cloaked in presupposition; historically it is justifiable to be cautious of accepting proffered phenomena as genuine, as fraud continues to be revealed in public demonstrations. On entering our room, it was recognisable as an homage to an era when mediums such as Eusapia Paladino, Eva Carrière (born Marthe Béraud) and Elizabeth D'Esperance (born Elizabeth Hope) practiced their theatrical styles of mediumship in séance parlours. I had read many accounts of their purported abilities to conjure spirits and reasoned that despite all of them sounding thoroughly implausible, notable men such as the founders of the SPR, Frederic Myers and Sir Oliver Lodge, had been convinced of the veracity of the phenomena. I was curious to know if there was any grain of truth in the accounts and to my utter astonishment, the first sitting proved positive, with a moving light that radiated out from a wall before moving around all areas of the room.

For a period of two years, nearly all séance sittings took place in complete darkness, and whilst this proved beneficial for the establishment and frequency of light phenomena, my innate cynicism and need to rule out explicable explanations for increasing auditory phenomena, led me to introduce an overhead source of dimmable red lighting. With a slow ramping from pitch blackness to 15 watts, red light did not inhibit visible phenomena^{Clip1} and on five individual occasions partial body materialisations of a head and hands, were reported by sitters Debbie Townsend and Tracey Martin. The first regular pattern of phenomena to be established was the independent adjustment of the overhead light by communicators, prior

to the initiation of phenomena, and corroboration by communicators of transfigurations through EVP¹.

More than twenty sitters came and went, but it was Tracey and Debbie, who became the core sitters and who regularly witnessed significant phenomena. Our approach was felt to be unworkable for several potential members and guests, who upon witnessing significant phenomena become overly excited. It is necessary when sitting to put aside the ego, naively I expected sitters to be able to articulate their experience without becoming hysterical. Two individuals reporting strong sensory phenomena, attempted to take control and direction of the group, causing an instantaneous change of atmosphere in the séance room; an EVP captured during such a sitting capably captures the negativity, *"I like to let 'em have doubts"*². These incidents have resulted in our wariness to admit strangers to sittings.

When we began experimenting with EVP, we learnt that whilst we could control our immediate environment and ourselves, we had no command over the phenomena or ability to dictate the level of communication we received; once this was understood and accepted, our progress was rapid. Evidently, a calm, happy environment, and the positive mental attitude of those present proved conducive to an increased rate of EVP capture. It was important that as a group, we agreed not to pursue information that was not available to us; asking in-depth questions about the identity of speakers, seeking personal advice, and asking for prior knowledge of future events, were all vetoed subjects. This was position was not arrived at from an isolated advisory EVP, but from the pattern of many when we attempted to press for answers. From listening to speaker's conversations, they have an awareness of future events but are not permitted to divulge them; the restriction of knowledge is not unique to EVP and has been anecdotally expressed by other mediums. Pushing these boundaries placed a strain on our relationships with our communicators and caused the production of phenomena to abruptly cease. Who or what authority is behind the censorship of information is another subject that we have been prohibited from knowing.

The framework of our sitting protocol, where we meet regularly and accept to set aside our day to day lives, altruistically for the benefit of our communicators, encourages a positive mindset for sitting. Members agree on joining, that only illness or prearranged holidays are acceptable reasons not to attend, that no alcohol should be consumed ideally for twenty-four hours prior to sitting and eating a light dinner a minimum of two hours

before we begin, is advised when possible. When any member of the group sits with a hangover, has had a heavy meal, or cancels without notice, our communication is negatively affected. It has been noticeable that those who have hastily agreed to our guidelines to gain access to sittings, without giving serious consideration to the undertaking, have found the level of commitment difficult to sustain.

Numerous experiences of unacceptable behaviour by inexperienced sitters in séance sittings, have resulted in caution for granting access requests to potential members. Sitters are given a three-month trial before their acceptance, and they must be approved by our communicators before becoming regular members of the group. However, the rules for taking part in an informal EVP recording are more relaxed, and even those with little prior knowledge of the subject are welcome to attend. Whatever a sitter's motivation for attending, albeit out of curiosity or personal solace, is of no importance. We do not restrict their questions but only ask them to be respectful and remain mindful of our etiquette. The results of such sessions are erratic, but it is our hope that if unseasoned sitters receive responses to their questions, it may encourage their own exploration of EVP, ITC, and mediumship.

Personally, I was profoundly uncomfortable with the subjective nature of mental mediumship used in the group, until correlating confirmatory messages through EVP was established. With the communicator's guidance, it was possible to piece together a new way of working that set practices not just for sittings but for future research outside of the séance room. We learned that whilst darkness in the direct area of recording was not critical, the best results would be obtained in the absence of natural daylight³; directing communicators expressed their desire for us to state at the beginning of a session who was present, for how long we would record or what light conditions would be used⁴. Personally, I do not hold any religious belief in a god but when introducing new members, I have stressed the importance that whilst they are not expected to express religiosity, it is imperative to show respect to those who have articulated their faith⁵; because of this we may jointly recite a prayer if it is considered appropriate, regardless of individual's convictions.

Although our practices cannot strictly control our environment, conditions in the physical circle permit the reduction of external sensory stimuli, so that focusing on sight, sound, and touch, is naturally amplified. The heightened awareness of sitters has resulted in

more reports of perceiving fleeting interactions with communicators, that increasingly correspond with corroborative EVP. During sittings, the sense of touch was our least reported phenomena, however, when this was acknowledged and reported immediately, verbally, speakers were more likely to register a reaction that was captured on the recording. In a sitting when only Tracey and I were present, she reported the sensation of a field of energy on the top of her head; a well-spoken male communicator responds with "*Blow me!*"⁶, his surprise at being able to be physically sensed is striking. There are rare incidences of communicators reporting being touched by us when we attempt to make physical contact with phenomena; on one occasion when reaching into a mist, a woman's voice conveys shock as she reports a physical sensation, "*Oh my God, it feels like you touched me then*"⁷. Lacking a neural system, the expression of retaining the ability to feel is surprising, but the speaker's sensation may be generated by a disturbance in their electromagnetic field; I have yet to receive confirmation that this theory is correct.

The close and sometimes physical interaction we have with our communicators is present inside and outside of the séance room, and because of our highly emotive experiences, there is an understandable air of expectation as we begin a recording, especially when entering prior to a séance. Before a sitting, the room we use is routinely cleaned and all infiltrating sources of light are excluded, and it is not unusual to experience phenomena with corresponding EVP during the setup period. I commonly play classical music at a low level in the background, this has been either interrupted or turned off, and there have been instances where I feel as if arms are placed reassuringly around my shoulders. On one occasion the music was repeatedly increased in volume multiple times, and out of frustration I complained, a lady's voice replies to my remark, saying "*We are watching*"⁸, I surmised the adjustment of the music was a way of making her presence known.

I have little doubt that our presupposition for success in recording EVP, has a bearing on obtaining evidence. Affirmation of the reality of our communicators, through personalised EVP messages, such a sitter hearing their name called, or receiving a direct response, has moved most attendees from questioning the phenomena to accepting it as being genuine, and moving from a position of belief in the afterlife, to knowing. This does not necessarily infer that we all hold the same opinion or interpret phenomena uniformly; we do not. When seance activity peaked in our second year the diversity of phenomena included audible

noises, audible voices, visible lights, transfiguration, materialisation of body parts (hands, head), EVP, and specific instances of unique phenomena, that were never repeated; journaling events post séance was an increasing challenge and there were many heated disagreements in the chronologically and subjective experience of observed phenomena.

The reason I trialled using a digital dictaphone in the séance room was to document physical phenomena and the proceedings of sittings, and to avoid disagreements post sitting; there was no intention or expectation of capturing EVP. I was mindful of our flawed confidence in recollecting multiple detailed events over the period of two hours; inevitably, innocent errors of judgement and disagreements in the order and magnitude of events did and still do occur. Sitters were initially sympathetic to my reasons for recording and were excited to finally hear the voices of those who communicated with us through other means, but not all members of the group were happy with the direction in which the results took us. The focus of sittings rapidly shifted from the production of materialisations and associated physical phenomena, to obtaining clear EVP communication as objective evidence of sitter's observations.

The reaction of external listeners to our recordings remains highly sceptical; most disregard the communication as fraudulent and those who cautiously consider it, criticise our methodology. I appreciate that to support the validity of EVP as evidential paranormal phenomena, it would be preferable to experiment only in shielded conditions, but environments such as anechoic chambers are not realistically available or affordable to lay operators. The reduction of extraneous background noise where possible is preferable but I would hesitate to consider only EVP captured in controlled conditions as being credible evidence, as residual environmental sound waves may play a key part in facilitating the transmission of EVP.

By continually refining our practices, when necessary, our approach to optimising the capture of EVP in sittings, evolved into the establishment of three recording guidelines for use in differing environments: in seances, field recordings and in solo experimentation. Capture rates demonstrate the séance room environment provides the best recording outcomes with up to 30% more EVP, followed by field recordings in historic sites, then solitary experiments. The unifying factor that determines how successful we are in all environments, is our state of mind, our use of language and how we behave whilst recording;

the conscious actions and motivations of those physically present, have a direct effect on the rate of EVP capture and vocal clarity.

Field recordings take place infrequently and the locations we investigate are coloured by our interest in history. In our experience, publicly accessible locations are restrictive of videoing but positively disregard audio recordings when permission is sought. The prime concern when recording externally is a lack of control over environmental background sounds and the presence of people; even with minimal staff and visitors present on site, recording is ill advised, and sessions must be extended to allow cordoning of an area before we can begin. Our confidence in validating EVP is diminished when we do not have sole access to a site, and captures are scrutinised with more vigour before being considered as genuine. When sole access is possible, our confidence is increased, and we have obtained a collection of highly evidential recordings. Working late one night at a Cambridge college, I placed an Olympus VN2100 recorder on a stage lectern and retired to sit in the auditorium; the resulting EVP is not only remarkable for its clarity but for the relevance of the content, "They wouldn't want to shoot me – I'll take the spy – We don't want them having the chip"⁹. The isolated clip, which is spoken by three men, possibly alludes to the Cambridge Spy Ring which ran from the 1930s-1950s.

We feel that visiting period properties, combined with our ability to capture EVP, allows us to bring history to life, in a way few get to experience it. Our objective is always to record the voices of those who are known to us, and who are traceable; while we may not have a recording of the speaker's voice from the distant past to prove their identity, we hope the context of their message will convey their authenticity. I was fortunate to stay at Hever Castle, Kent, and walk alone in the rooms where Queen Anne Boleyn lived and played. Anne's beautifully illustrated Book of Hours was open at her inscription to Henry VIII, "*By daily proof you shall find me, to be to you both loving and kind*". As I looked down admiring the artwork, a lady's voice says "*I've written in the book*"¹⁰, whether this is the voice of Anne Boleyn is unknowable but the circumstances surrounding its capture, support it as a possibility.

Familiarisation with the history of a site is important to our visiting. If our aim is to make a link with those who lived and worked there, a knowledge of the inhabitant's lives, and their characteristics helps in establishing communication. Whilst we do not generally permit guests to take part in recordings, members of staff or those who are linked with a property

and are understanding of our quiet approach, are welcome to attend. Field recording sessions are less formal than a seance, but we adhere to the same behavioural guidelines; there is no requirement for prayer, unless we are recording in a formerly consecrated building or ruin. It is not detrimental to results if guests do not share our belief in whom we are communicating with, or hold opposing views, only that they are willing to actively take part in the recording.

The informality of recording in domestic settings can be conducive to good results, depending on the attitude of the residents attending the session. We record in our own homes frequently, without concern, but when we are requested to investigate a haunting, there is a need for great sensitivity to the psychological state of the residents. EVP can facilitate communication when conditions permit but it has limitations; the popularisation of the subject on television has led to many misperceptions of the process of how we communicate, and with whom. Difficulties arise when residents expect to hear only the voice of specific individuals and may become upset at hearing unknown voices, worrying unnecessarily of unwanted guests. We rarely accept requests to record in private homes unless it is considered appropriate, but should a resident be open to recording themselves, I provide support and technical assistance when possible.

Performing experiments by myself with just a recorder can be mentally taxing. Regardless of many years of experience and a library of clear EVP, constant dismissal of self-doubt and monitoring of my inner voice is necessary. Due to the intensity of concentration required, I work for shorter bursts of up to thirty minutes; the lack of immediate feedback results in a stilted one-sided conversation, which requires dependence on psychic perception to maintain contact. Aside from EVP, I began experimenting alone with online conferencing software in 2020; shortly after beginning, I received replies in speech and text which is promising, but results are not yet consistent, and tests are ongoing to improve this channel of ITC communication.

With practice, patience and respect, a bridge may be built that facilitates regular contact, and when a solid relationship has been forged, the likelihood of receiving meaningful and relevant messages increases. As a group and as individuals, we have never been subject to critical review or been reliant on any external agency for funding; this has granted us the freedom to spontaneously experiment without being overly concerned in achieving positive

results. Experimentation with new equipment or a different behavioural approach, may deliver negligible results initially but with persistence and development, they sometimes herald a dramatic jump in progress; when we introduced a new recorder, a communicator acknowledged the equipment immediately, "*It's getting us loud*"¹¹. Speakers will work with whatever equipment the operator possesses and can modify their method of transmission to suit the apparatus, and the environment.

Regardless of the recording location, the same equipment has been used uniformly since 2016, unless is it an experimental session with a new audio device or computer. Two Olympus VN2100 digital voice recorders are used, one worn as a lapel microphone, the other placed on a nearby surface. Technical equipment failures are few with basic devices but isolating the causes of problems are difficult when they do occur; unexpected battery drainage happens infrequently, most often during field recordings, equipment may be turned off during use, and recordings may be deleted from the dictaphone after completion. It is clear from EVP recordings, that not all communicators wish for their presence to be captured and they are aware that we can hear their conversations¹². Whether their motivation is to intentionally interfere with our equipment is unknown, but frequent camera failures and corrupted data when attempting to video the group, has resulted in us stopping filming.

In the months following the trial recording, consistently clear EVP was captured at each sitting and it became obvious that our results were atypical and deserving of further investigation. Although excited by the group's development, I felt a more rigid approach was required to explore how and why we were obtaining voices with such clarity. I was nervous of accepting the communication as EVP, before ruling out explicable sources of transmission. I naively assumed that the voices would have an easily determinable source of generation, but having exhausted my limited technical knowledge, I sought advice from the Society of Psychical Research (SPR).

Our group was visited by Dr Barrie Colvin, an expert on acoustic knocking phenomena associated with poltergeist activity, and a long serving SPR council member. Dr Colvin arrived with a battery of his own equipment and proceeded to examine the séance room before the sitting; nothing was found for electromagnetic or acoustic anomalies above baseline recordings. Dr Colvin was then shown our equipment and witnessed the phenomena first-hand after a short test recording, prior to the séance. He was later provided with a

dictaphone, used in the recording to test at his accommodation that evening. Not being able to replicate our results with the equipment, he did not return to the group. A different recording was then proffered to Steve Parsons, another SPR council member, who not being present at the séance could only surmise, quite understandably, that there were additional voices to ours on the recording. Unfortunately, despite considerable effort, I was not able to elicit technical support, so I had no choice but to proceed with my own independent study.

At this point our equipment was limited; I had only one recording device, the Olympus VN2100 and a standard Toshiba Satellite laptop. The Parapsychological Association through the Gilbert Roller Grant very kindly provided funds to obtain additional equipment to determine if the results were idiosyncratic to our existing devices. The equipment for the study consisted of a Packard Bell laptop, the existing Toshiba laptop, both of which were used for the analysis of recordings, and three additional dictaphones, a Sony ICD-B600, an Olympus LS10 and a second Olympus VN2100. An Advent laptop was used on two occasions but was discontinued due to hardware failure. None of the equipment was modified in any way, and the recorders were used only with their internal microphone.

A uniformly systematic way of sitting and recording was introduced, the only variation being where in the room chairs were placed, due to varying numbers of sitters being present. Recorders at the start of the study were placed at the same location but following the capture of a duplicated EVP on different devices, recorders were placed at opposite ends of the room; my objective was to determine if the difference in amplitude of any duplicated EVP might indicate a spatial point of generation within the room. Unfortunately, during the study there were restraints on the amount of time I had for the analysis of recordings, and it was not always possible to record with multiple dictaphones for every sitting. The number of duplicated EVP overall remains miniscule, but they are infrequently captured; in a more recent field recording, an EVP (Fig.1) was captured on both an Olympus VN2100 and Olympus LS10. The voice of the EVP on the Olympus LS10 is thin¹³ versus the Olympus VN2100¹⁴ and is missing Tracey's response to my comment on environmental noise.

From August 2009 to March 2010, with eight months of data, the robustness of the phenomena was self-evident (Fig.1). As the study progressed, it was easy to discern which equipment performed well together, by placing one dictaphone recording onto multiple computers; the outcome was judged by the quantity and clarity of captured EVP. During the

study, both units of the Olympus VN2100s resulted in an increased number of EVP with greater coherence, than either the Sony ICD-B600 or Olympus LS10. The Packard Bell and Toshiba laptops run the Windows Vista operating system and Audacity version 1.3.5.0, these settings are still in use and due to their efficacy, the operating systems have not been upgraded. From the results, the Toshiba laptop paired with an Olympus VN2100 proved to be most successful combination to record EVP and remains so. The only change to our methodology post study, is the processing of clips after isolation in Audacity; EVP is cleaned with Adobe Audition, Creative Cloud on an iMac, which has increased their intelligibility.

Sitting	Recording Number	Length of Recording	A	B	C	Tn	Direct Responses	Digital Recorder used	Computer Used
1st	1	01:44:45	0	15	8	23	1B	VN1	Toshiba
	2		0	3	0	3	0	Sony	Packard Bell
2nd	3	01:50:00	10	24	22	56	1B / 3C	VN2	Toshiba
	4		6	5	2	13	0	Sony	Advent
3rd	5	00:00:00	0	0	0	0	0	Sony	Toshiba
	6	00:00:00	0	0	0	0	0	LS10	
	7	01:53:20	15	24	17	56	3A / 3B / 3C	VN1	
4th	8	00:21:30	2	5	7	14	1C	VN2	Toshiba
	9	00:32:55	2	7	5	14	0	VN1	
5th	10	00:17:38	3	13	8	24	1A / 2C	VN2	Advent
	11		1	1	2	4	1A	Sony	Toshiba
6th	12	01:02:45	5	18	13	36	2B / 1C	VN2	Toshiba
	14		1	2	0	3	1A	LS10	Packard Bell
7th	15	01:43:20	4	3	14	21	1A	LS10	Toshiba
	16	01:41:30	10	15	8	33	2A / 1B	VN1	
8th	17	02:03:30	12	25	18	55	3A / 3B	VN1	Toshiba
	18		4	13	5	23	5B / 1C	Sony	Advent
9th	19	02:54:00	8	23	33	64	2A / 2B	VN2	Toshiba
10th	20	02:00:00	10	9	25	44	3A/1B/1C	VN2	Packard Bell
11th	21	02:04:29	0	0	0	0	0	LS10	Toshiba
	22		1	3	4	8	1C	VN1	Toshiba
12th	23	02:01:00	3	14	19	36	2B/1C	VN1	Toshiba
13th	24	02:07:00	2	8	16	26	1A / 1B / 1C	VN1	Toshiba
14th	25	02:02:00	3	6	15	24	3C	VN2	Packard Bell
15th	26	02:05:30	2	8	12	22	1A / 1B / 1C	VN1	Toshiba
16th	27	01:53:48	3	6	0	9	2A	VN1	Toshiba
17th	28	02:01:00	2	7	0	9	2B	VN2	Packard Bell
18th	29	01:34:00	0	4	1	5	1B / 1C	VN1	Packard Bell
19th	30	02:24:00	6	18	24	48	2A / 4B / 2C	VN2	Toshiba
20th	31	01:55:00	0	15	0	15	2B	VN1	Toshiba
21st	32	01:55:00	3	16	14	33	1A / 1B	VN1	Toshiba

Fig. 1 Results on the capture rate and clarity of EVP during the study by equipment device. I categorise EVP into three levels; A – clear with a common understanding¹⁵, B – easily heard but ambiguous¹⁶, C – difficult to interpret and ambiguous¹⁷, N – a non-vocal noise, either heard or only present on the recording¹⁸

Since the study ended, I have continued to upload recordings to multiple computers, running the same software, and discovered the soundcard to be a critical variable in the creation of EVP from digital recordings. There are minor differences in the amplitudes of EVP between identical Toshiba laptops with the same card, but using different computers such as an iMac, results are dramatically reduced. The version of Audacity and its settings have a minor effect on EVP reproduction, in comparison. In my experience, the method of how recordings are transferred also has a direct bearing on how many EVP are recognised and reported, this was incidentally discovered in early experiments; the Olympus VN2100 is a basic device requiring real time transfers from the earphone socket to the computer, the Olympus LS10 has direct USB functionality. When the same recording on the Olympus LS10 was transferred via a standard 3.5mm cable, rather than by USB, the capture rate on Audacity was greater. Why the use of a copper conductor should positively amplify the production of EVP from pre-existing digital recordings, remains unknown.

After the analysis of a recording has been completed, and before the next sitting, group members are played EVP clips from the previous session; this has two functions, to agree a common interpretation of words and phrases, and to personally acquaint members with the speakers, thereby forming a stronger link with our communicators. Hearing the voices, provides a more vivid sense of their reality and enables sitters to be less inhibited during seances; they are more likely to play an active part in the recording, than attending without a review. Because the nature of EVP has not been fully explained, members still question their experiences of paranormal phenomena, regardless of our body of evidence and mentally, it can be challenging to deduce whether the phenomena are actual or unconscious self-deception. When Tracey reported seeing a flash of white light, it was a confirmational EVP, stating "*big flash*"¹⁹, that affirmed the phenomena as being witnessed.

Ambiguity in the interpretation of EVP is an enduring problem unless a clip is exceptionally clear, and as a part of the study, I wanted to assess how our translations would compare to an online listening test of volunteers who visited the website (Fig. 2). Volunteers were asked before hearing the clips, whether they believed that EVP was genuinely paranormal voices of the deceased, and if they were non-believers in the afterlife or

undecided; all subjects were asked to perform a two-part listening exercise, both parts featured clips with varying levels of clarity graded A-C. Part one, was a set of blind listening clips with no translation and part two featured clips provided with an interpretation.

PART 1	Participants	clip 1 - B	clip 2 - A	clip 3 - B	clip 4 - A	clip 5 - A	clip 6 - C	clip 7 - B	clip 8 - A
Believers	38	0	1 exact match	0	8 exact matches	3 exact matches	0	0	0
			21, two or more words match		12, one word match	17, two or more words match			
Non-believers	7	0	0	0	1 exact match 3, one word match	4, two or more words match	0	0	0
Undecided	7	0	1 exact match	0	5 exact matches	1 exact match	0	0	0
					1, one word match	5, two or more words match			
Participants were asked to listen to 8 clips and provide a translation									
PART 2	Participants	clip 1 - B	clip 2 - A	clip 3 - B	clip 4 - A	clip 5 - A	clip 6 - C	clip 7 - B	clip 8 - A
Believers	21	6 agreed	10 agreed	3 agreed	11 agreed	10 agreed	5 agreed	2 agreed	7 agreed
		8 agreed with two or more words	11 agreed with two or more words	4 agreed with two or more words	5 agreed with one word	8 agreed with 2 or more words		9 agreed with two or more words	
Non-believers	2	0 agreed	1 agreed 1 agreed with one word	0 agreed	1 agreed 1 agreed with one word	2 agreed with four words	1 agreed	1 agreed with two words	1 agreed
Undecided	5	1 agreed	2 agreed	2 agreed with one or more words	2 agreed	1 agreed	1 agreed	1 agreed	1 agreed
			2 agreed with one or more words		2 agreed with one word	4 agreed with two or more words			
Participants were provided with 8 clips and translations, then asked if they agreed to each translation and if not to provide their own									

Fig. 2 Results of an online EVP listening test

The results demonstrated that if you held a positive belief in EVP being voices of the deceased, you were more likely to agree with an increased number of words of our translation. Believers also agreed more frequently with the provided translations in part two, with A grade clips being more likely to have a shared translation, as expected. This result would align with the findings of Anne Winsper (2020), who relates a significant difference between non-EVPers (sceptics), and high-EVPers (those who record), in their ability to perceive vocal noises in recordings and who are more likely to report anomalous experiences. In hindsight, there was a flaw to my test; it would have been helpful to perform a blind listening test with volunteers, who had no context of the voices being EVP, as a control group.

We all carry biases borne out of personal experience, education, and societal conditioning; whether we can consciously or subconsciously acknowledge them and put them aside when reviewing EVP recordings is arguable. I consider the factors influencing a listener’s ability to do this, is their perception of the integrity of the experimenter, the clarity of the voices, being satisfied with the conditions in which the voices were captured, and their

motivation for listening. There is a delicate balance between retaining objectivity versus discarding valid phenomena because it does not fit the listener's perceived parameters of possibility, plausibility, or credibility. When any one of these criteria exceeds the boggle factor, we may understandably or justifiably, be overly sceptical in our examination of the proposed evidence. However, retaining the ability to cautiously suspend judgement, until you have sufficient information to make a reasoned argument for its authenticity, is critical and may prevent the loss of potential evidence.

When Frederick Jurgensen inadvertently captured human voices whilst recording birdsong, many operators took inspiration from his spontaneous success, to trial the use of an additional background sound, as a source wave for the modulation of EVP. Having obtained the very clear voices of two elderly ladies^{20,21} during my initial trial of an electronic dictaphone, without a supplementary source, I question its necessity. As our group record in a rural location, I considered what imperceptible residual environmental noise was being manipulated; the sources I considered were radio waves, nearby livestock, Wi-Fi, electrical noise from domestic appliances and the inherent noise of the recording device. Some factors could be controlled by turning off the electrical supply or by shielding equipment, but positive results persisted. We posed the question to communicators, of how sound is modulated to form EVP and received the following response, "*then I change the waves*"²², the answer although it affirms that modulation is taking place, does not provide a specific source of its generation.

Carrier waves generated by an oscillator are rarely employed as a background for EVP modulation; when we experimented briefly with sine waves, the clinical sound did nothing to facilitate the formation of human speech and in our small room resulted in nausea and headaches, so testing was abandoned. In 1974 ITC operator and physical medium William J. O'Neil, was commissioned and funded to perform experiments by George Meek, who reported success with their Mark II device, using a 1200 MHz oscillator (Fig. 3). SPIRICOM (1982) as it was later called, produced an almost robotic voice, whose language required a concerted effort to discern. I have attempted to replicate these experiments unproductively with a variety of mechanistic wave forms, but when I revert to human speech, success is achieved in varying degrees.

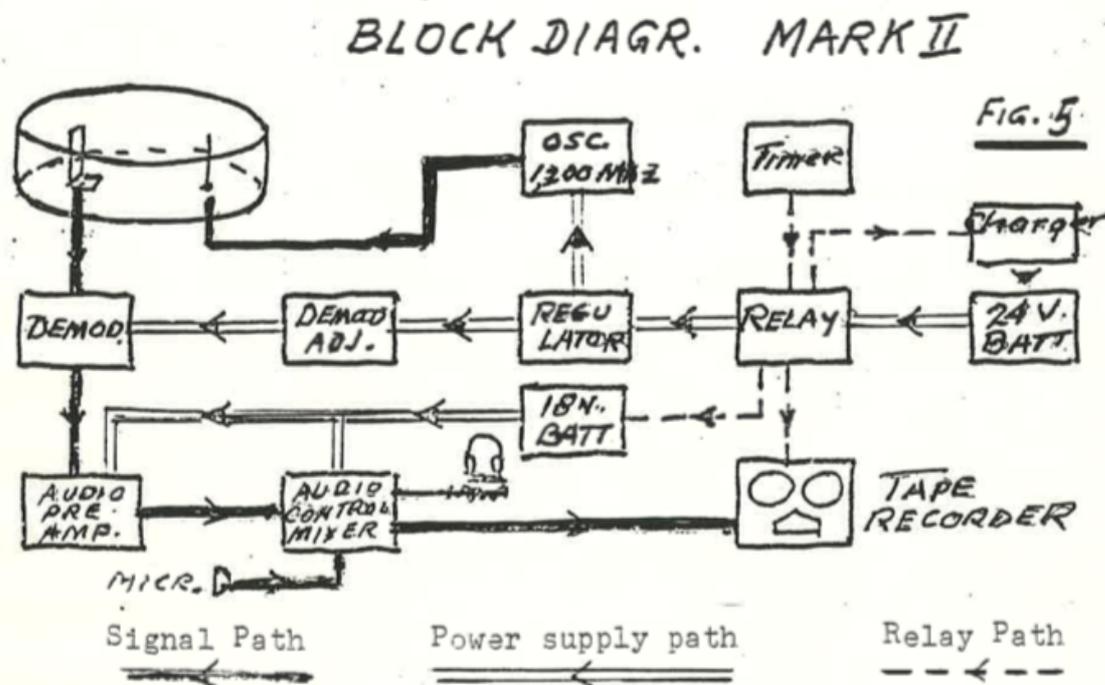


Fig. 3, George Meek's Mark II 1200 MHz device, used from 1973-1977

Operators in the UK researching for EVP, who are receiving consistently clear communication, report experimental success using a background of unintelligible human speech to facilitate modulation. Background sound files are created using a foreign speaker, in a tongue that is not known to the operator, having a distinctly different phonology, such as a Slavic language. The background recording is then reversed and spliced, before reviewing to ensure that any speech perceived as having a meaning in English, is removed. It is rare that each uniquely generated background recording is used on more than one occasion, but to test how different communicator teams might modulate the same recording, I supplied a scrambled Norwegian speaker, in ten second bursts to another operator. We both achieved positive results, but the character of EVP communication we received was incomparable.

Regardless of the unintelligibility of the background recording, I have experimented successfully using vocal pitches ranging between 85 – 255 hertz; this frequency range was chosen because the average span of adult human speech is 85-180 hertz for men, and 165-255 hertz for women. Working without a carrier wave does appear to severely hinder

responses for operators with less experience and those who record infrequently, for short sessions. I reserve this method only for sporadic use when working alone, but the capture rate does consistently increase when working with a language background versus a state of quietude, in this circumstance. I believe the use of a carrier should therefore be personal choice, unless the mechanics of capture is under scrutiny, when shielding is desirable.

We accept there will be a natural hesitancy for listeners to unquestionably accept an EVP when it was modulated from a generated background or carrier wave. Regardless of your trust in the operator, if you are not physically present at the time of recording and did not participate in the following review, it can be difficult to appreciate the genuine nature of the phenomena and question the bias of how EVP are created and isolated. When doubt arises, the evidential content of the EVP message may substantiate its genuine nature, providing of course it is contextual and demonstrates the sentience of the speaker.

My preference when recording with members of the group, is to work without provision of an additional carrier wave, and to reduce any ambient environmental sounds to a minimum, where control permits. A visitor to our group requested the use of white noise, random radio signals of equal intensity at different frequencies; DRV had not been previously attempted by our group and no voices were heard, and the noise proved to be disruptive to our way of sitting. Personally, I found focusing during the session almost impossible and regardless of the amplitude used, our communicators were not able to modulate language from the source and reviewing the recording made for painful listening. In our own domestic setting, our recordings have demonstrated residual environmental noises and the device's noise are more than proficient for the modulation for EVP; the radio experiment will not be repeated.

Professor Charles Tart, psychologist, and parapsychologist, argues that EVP is *"nothing more than stray radio waves and those who study this field have not demonstrated the necessary research disciplines to produce credible evidence"*. I have some sympathy with Tart in the desire to follow the scientific method, however his statement is incorrect; the phenomena has consistently been captured during controlled shielding experiments. Anabela Cardoso (2012), performed a series of experimental recordings in an acoustic studio with a high level of sound insulation and electromagnetic shielding; voices were captured, although these were considerably softer than those captured in unshielded environments. As a group

we have not had the opportunity to record in controlled environments, but instead have experimented with metallised “Faraday” shielding bags, as used by the military; our results generally echo those of Cardoso with only rare exceptions of clear voices.

The language of EVP falls broadly into three categories; direct responses, conversations between speakers and those who are unaware of our presence. The commonality between all categories is that the speaker’s language is in the present tense. Regardless of when a speaker physically died, recordings hint that time may be multi-layered and traversable from their perspective, they are not constrained by the linear rules that we live by. From piecing together thousands of clips, a picture emerges of speakers living within a period that was contemporary to their physical life, however, they are seemingly able to leave this at will and communicate with us when they desire.

Messages spoken through EVP have the capability to portray the linguistic characteristics of the mortal voice belonging to an individual. Our recognition of speakers who actively assist and guide our research, is aided by their distinctive national and regional accents. This aspect of the phenomena has given us the confidence to identify and place our trust in communicators who engaged in post-mortem research before passing over, and whose interest in the subject remains active. A female Scottish medium, Helen, who first appeared to us through transfiguration but who also frequently speaks through EVP, has a distinctive Scottish accent^{23,24}. Whilst her messages are usually supportive, should she take a dislike to a visitor her language may be colourful, which is a character trait that was documented by those she worked with before her passing.

Few EVP operators have the capability to meaningfully analyse vocal characteristics of their recordings, and external examination of wave forms is costly and not open to the lay researcher. It would be ideal to have a comparative recording of the captured voice of a speaker when alive, but as few communicators provide their full identity, or lived in a period when voices were recorded, it is rarely possible to match a speaker to a clip. Paolo Presi (2006) in the analysis of a short utterance, lists several anomalies including poor melodic and harmonic contents, expanded vowels, abnormal fluctuations of the voice and possible dysphonia. In contrast to Presi, our recordings (when captured without use of a background noise) are more akin to our voices, both in wave form and in amplitude; the similarity

between Tracey’s voice and a communicator’s voice is striking and highlights the normality of speech we obtain in séance sittings (Fig. 4).

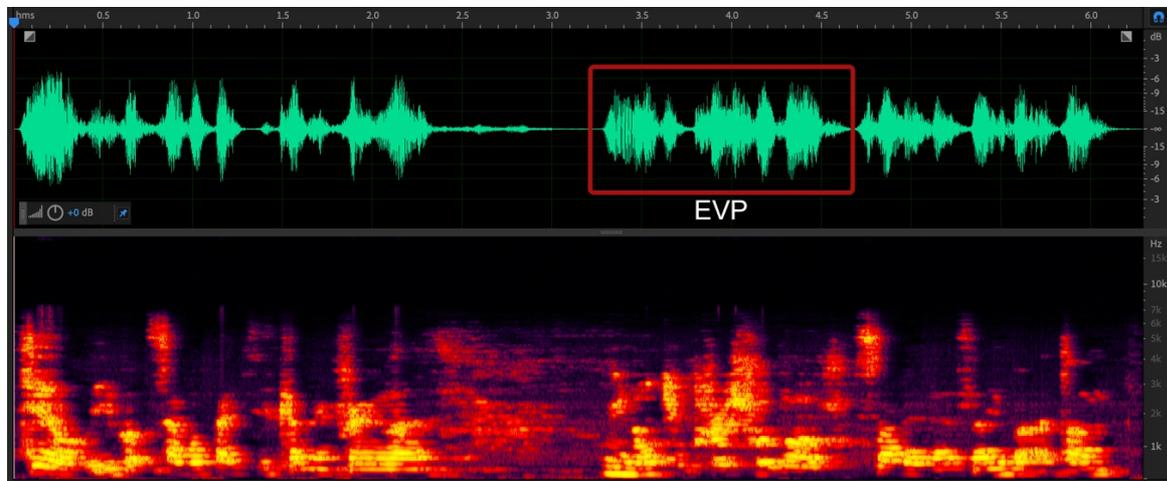


Fig. 4, Sitter and communicator’s vocal pattern, as displayed on Audition, Adobe Creative Cloud, 2021.

The voices of those who communicate, portray every emotion that we are capable of; when a direct response is received, the tone of the speaker’s voice can be affecting to listen to. During a sitting Helen was asked to come forward, but it was a gentleman who responded not to the sitter but to advise Helen, “*Careful Helen, they’re out of the way*”²⁵. This comment not only illustrates the speaker’s cognisance of who was present on our side but of cautious behaviour. The timbre of the human voice imparts a mental picture of who we are listening to and our reactions to what they say, and how it is said, are instinctual.

Without any visual cues humans have an innate ability, albeit to differing degrees, of how we gauge the personality of a speaker. Phil McAleer (2014) at the University of Glasgow asked 320 people to rate the word “*hello*” on a scale of 1 to 9 for specific personality traits including trustworthiness, dominance, and attractiveness. From a strikingly short utterance, listeners reported a high consistency of perceived personality, only attractiveness fell outside of a broad consensus, which being a subjective experience might be expected. If we apply the study findings to the interpretation of those whom we record, especially when the same voice is captured repeatedly, our perceptions of communicators may be considered accurate. During a field recording, I captured the voice a gentleman saying “*Sarah, bless you*”²⁶, the EVP clearly imparts not only his nationality, but the enunciation reflects a high level of

education. Without additional information, it would be difficult to place the speaker but knowing this clip was captured at a prominent High Church of England building, its context holds more meaning, and creates a mental picture of how the speaker might appear.

In the first year of recording, whilst appreciative of receiving clear voices and contextual messages, we were perplexed as to why most EVP were spoken by female communicators. Our concern was that external listeners, knowing that our group consisted only of women, would assume that the clips were of our voices. To address this, we asked that more men come forward, with voices that would be easily distinguished from our own. Almost immediately, the balance of male to female voices changed and it is now men, who speak more frequently on recordings.

It was Charlie^{27,28} who became our first regular male communicator, he was easily recognised by his accent and upbeat demeanour. The cottage where recordings were held, was sited close to an active military base and for three days every year, fast jets skimmed the roof top during displays for the air show. On the last evening when the jets were grounded, we gathered for a sitting; it was no surprise to hear Charlie's voice, and his comment "*Ello flight's just gone out*"²⁹ could not have been more pertinent, as a C130 Hercules had recently departed.

Obtaining forenames upon request has been relatively easy although most speakers are adamant in refusing to provide their surname. Those who are reportedly seen and described by sitters as they transfigure in seances, are more likely to let us know of their identity³⁰, however, there remain only a few communicators that we have detailed knowledge of. Charlie is an exception, but it took years of piecing together brief EVP to learn that he was a WWII aircraft mechanic, who came from Arsenal, a residential area of North London. We are still unable to formerly identify him as his family name and service number have yet to be provided. The discovery of why there is such a resistance to withhold information that would definitively identify a speaker, is an ongoing quest.

Aside from the anomalous character of EVP, associated linguistic anomalies exist that are beyond explanation by even the most experienced and open-minded operator. Examples of EVP that fall into this category are the voices of group members whose words are transformed through modulation, the content of EVP being modified after archiving, messages in foreign languages that cannot be identified, receiving only English EVP when

recording overseas and messages that are complete nonsense. The instinctual reaction is to dismiss all recordings that fall within these categories as human error or misinterpretations, and in the first few years we did, however, they continue to be captured and regardless of our lack of understanding in why they are transmitted, I believe they are worthy of consideration.

The most entertaining of the anomalies is the modulation by communicators of group member's speech into passages that are not only uncharacteristic of their vocal tone but are also grammatically uncomfortable. An apt example was the hijacking of my voice, to convey what the speaker had seen during a series of multiple transfigurations, in a seance. The EVP is loud, and the speaker sounded excited, "His face was like King Kong weren't it, they were taking turns", before my voice abruptly returned to my normal timbre, when I asked Tracey about the position of the cabinet curtains³¹. This type of anomaly has been distinct to seance recordings, and because this phenomenon is so specific, I would theorise that it requires the group's collective energy, to facilitate the manipulation of language in this way.

Uncontextual nonsense EVP, but messages retaining clear enunciation, began to be recorded after the study began in 2008 and continues to the present day. Principally they feature in longer focused recordings, such as seances. One example in my voice, "*You're going away to Harvard hoo ha ha ha*"³², and another in Tracey's voice "*It's the Holy Grail with your shoes off*"³³, demonstrate the intellectual absurdity of the phenomenon. Unlike our modulated voices being morphed by speakers to air their observations, these clips bear no relevance to our conversation and have no easily discernible purpose, other than possibly as a demonstration of the speaker's ability to alter waves forms, or an experiment in transmission from their side.

EVP in foreign languages is scarcely recorded, and rarer still are strings of words in multiple languages. When performing solo recording experiments, I may begin by asking communicators to come forward by greetings in English, Arabic, French, or German, but to date direct responses have been in English; only in seance room conditions when multiple people are present, are non-English EVP captured. The first message we received in an unknown foreign language was "*Erav sanka Kompf*"³⁴, as a phrase this was incomprehensible, but individually the words do have meaning and are possibly from three individual languages; Erav, is a Sanskrit name that translates as having infinite strength, sanku is Old Norse,

meaning to gather and Kompf is a Germanic surname. Compiling a cumulative meaning from the proposed translation would be tenuous, and I recognise that my interpretation may not be correct, resulting in the provisional meaning being defunct. Interpreting foreign EVP is demanding, especially when the sentence structure is unfamiliar. An EVP of a simple Arabic phrase was understandable, but the words were in reversed order of their common usage; the phrase "*ma-salaam*" (goodbye), had been changed to "*Salaam ma*"³⁵, which could literally be interpreted as peace water. Curiously, routinely placed under my chair for séances, is a decorated Arabic pottery bowl full of water; so maybe the latter translation is correct.

When recording overseas in a country, whose native tongue is distinctly different from your own, you might logically expect to record samples of native speakers, but in our experience that has not proven to be the case. Reaction to our presented recordings of overseas EVP has been almost universally hostile because we have recorded no foreign speakers, all voices were in English. The recorded voices in Norway were disconcertingly familiar; at the Folkemuseum in Oslo, in the quiet month of February, standing on the porch of an old church, we captured the name of "*Raleigh*"³⁶. Raleigh's name has been captured 26 times during field trips to Tudor and Elizabethan buildings; we have no proof that it relates to Sir Walter Raleigh, but assume it to be him, due to his link with the locations. I was unable to find any documentation to support that he had visited Norway, only reference to a comment he made regarding his discovery of the Trinidadian Pitch Lake, "*It melteth not with the sunne as the pitch of Norway*". If the speaker isn't Raleigh, the reason for providing his name is open to conjecture.

The number of words received in an EVP message, based on our library of 15,000 clips, ranges commonly between one and five, this would fit with the findings of Dr Carlo Trina (Firenze, Italy), whose review of 24,000 clips gathered from four operators showed a maximum of around five syllables per capture. MacRae (1984), puts forward three to four words of between 1.5 - 1.75 seconds, yet the duration of our highly articulated clips range from 1-5 seconds, longer strings of less intelligible speech by multiple speakers are often captured, and Ernst Senkowski reported an outstanding sentence consisting of 36 syllables. From this we may see that a blanket statement of the duration of EVP is not possible; I

consider the likely factors to influence the capture rate are environmental conditions and how the recording is affected by the operator.

When focusing on EVP as communication, it is helpful to be aware of the mechanics of human speech; how we anatomically influence the sounds that we produce and our individual ability to differentiate between acoustic patterns. The building blocks of speech are individual sounds, or phonemes. When combined these form words or morphemes, and in turn sentences are formulated; these are further coloured by the tempo, stress, and intonation of the speaker. The process of producing intelligible language is uniquely human and dependant on our physical bodies, and whilst operators have put forward theories for how ITC speech is captured, the capability to assess their claims scientifically is not possible (Buckner & Buckner, 2012). Accepting that those who communicate through EVP use a non-mechanistic method to project speech, it should be no surprise that unusual inflections of vocal modulation will arise, however, our library of supporting EVP for this essay, demonstrates that clear, understandable speech is frequently captured in recordings.

During one séance sitting in August 2008 which was chosen at random, 23 EVP were captured that were perceived as being class A, 4 were single monosyllabic words, the remainder were names or coherent sentences; the number and ratio of words classed B for the same sitting were almost identical. Over the following year, the quantity of captured EVP varied but pattern of language complexity remained consistent. Direct replies to questions were more likely to be obtained when only regular sitters attended a recording, but names were freely given to all attendees, whether the speaker was known to the sitter or not. There is an undoubted bias in the interpretation and reporting of EVP, as each operator becomes practiced at hearing their own unique channel of communication, practitioners have often likened this process to learning a new language. I began a study of the language contained in our archive some time ago, but with over 13 years of data to collate and many hundreds of recordings, a summary of findings is not to be expected until at least 2023. Until then, the most salient points are that messages are in the present tense, unless speakers refer to their previous lives, when the past tense is used; whether this reflects other operator's results is unknown, as none to my knowledge have actively mined their data in a similar way.

There are many intriguing and perplexing anomalies in the pattern of language within EVP and none that we can fully explain. Operators known to me in the UK capture similar

phenomena, but their results are rarely reported to a wider audience or documented to any depth. The reporting of communications that go beyond normal speech patterns, has led to open ridicule by those who are not fully conversant with recognised anomalies, and even by those within the community. It is my hope that in airing perplexing aspects of EVP, others may be encouraged to share their results, so that a wider sample is available for analysis, and with it, discussion that may lead to a greater understanding of the phenomena.

Engaging with audiences, other than those who have a specific interest in EVP, has helped our group to define how we present our work; we have been widely perceived, incorrectly, as ghosthunters, Spiritualists and psychics, none of which we identify with. Although I have some sympathy with their assumption, while those who record for EVP might not commonly consider themselves to be mediums in the popularist way we might envisage a spiritual intermediary, I believe there are many similarities in their attunement to communicators. When experimenting over extended periods the operator may recognise a subtle shift in their senses as they record. Whether you call it intuition, extra sensory perception or mediumship, these feelings when acknowledged by the conscious mind and acted upon, guide the operator to behave in a way that often benefits the working relationship. Regardless of how proficient an operator may become at sensing the presence of a speaker, it is impossible to be certain that a specific link with an individual may be achieved and it reminds us again that ultimately, we are not able to exert control over communication.

The unpredictability and undetermined nature of the phenomena we work with should always be borne in mind when recording, remembering that discouraging results are usually transitory. During sessions, mentally I might misinterpret a message or be unable to differentiate a voice, the outcome of which can be frustrating to both sides³⁷. Using psychic skills such as clairaudience to receive information from speakers is testing because it requires acceptance from sitters that my perceptions are correct when they are often inaccurate. We must also accept that difficulties exist for communicators, environmental conditions unbeknownst to us may prohibit them from making audio or visual contact³⁸. As a group, we accept that not all sittings are equally active, and some may be eerily absent of phenomena, in which case we try to put aside any disappointment and remind ourselves of previous positive sittings.

Having a heightened level of psychic awareness may be a positive indicator for success in EVP capture but as an innate ability we all possess, actively working to further your potential, whether through meditation or psychic exercises such as remote viewing, will increase results if you are willing to invest in the effort. As children we have a natural curiosity to investigate and engage with subjects we do not understand, but as we grow older, few are able to allocate a substantial amount of time to an activity that promises no material reward. Those who have succeeded in achieving clear channels of communication through EVP and ITC, have universally invested many years refining their expertise at their own cost. Progress is by trial and error; equipment that works exceptionally well for one operator may draw nothing for the next. George W. Meek, founder of the METAscience Foundation, working with the physical medium William (Bill) O'Neil achieved remarkable communication with Dr George Jeffries Mueller (deceased), through SPIRICOM in the 1980s. Because operators have not been able to replicate their results with their schematics, cynics are keen to report fraudulent results, but I would advise a cautious acceptance that idiosyncratic methodologies may be valid in ITC experimentation.

The mental and physical well-being of operators may be negatively affected, possibly due to the demands of experimentation and/or the toll of criticism; should an operator disclose a mental health problem, their interests in the subject are often pathologised by doctors and academics; this is unhelpful and stigmatising and disinclines external consideration of potential data. The subject is rarely addressed in literature or in research, yet anecdotally in the UK community at least, we are aware that many who regularly take part in ITC experimentation and physical mediumship, have chronic health problems. Historic and modern reports of physical mediumship often mention post séance exhaustion, but this does not appear to be a feature of ITC and EVP experimentation. Personally, my ability to capture EVP and enable transfiguration is reduced when fatigued and communicators have demonstrated an awareness of how my overall health affects results. An example of this was a séance, after a long working day; a speaker acknowledges my lack of energy as Tracey reports a blurring face, "*Oh she's feeling tired*"³⁹. After learning of other operators' unfortunate experiences, I wondered how our personal effect on phenomena, could be objectively studied without the requirement for outside interaction.

With an increase in the affordability of electroencephalography (EEG) devices, it has been possible for our group to explore how our brains perform whilst we record for EVP; group members were eager to see if phenomena correlated with fluxes in specific brain wave frequencies. Numerous papers have focused on determining if common patterns of brain waves are exhibited during altered states of consciousness, whilst attempting communication with the deceased. Delorme *et al.* (2013) found statistically significant electrocortical activity of beta (13-32 Hz) and gamma (32-100 Hz) wave bands in six subjects, that correlated with the accurate relaying of descriptions of known targets, in a test of mental mediumship. I was unable to find any study relevant to ITC or physical mediumship, so I purchased two Muse headbands to investigate our group. Muse is a dry EEG device with seven data points, two frontal lobe sensors at F7 and F8, two temporal sensors at TP9, TP10 and three reference sensors on the forehead at Fp1, Fp2 and Fpz. I took EEG readings for sittings lasting two hours using the Mind Monitor app. Readings so far have been unremarkable for all channels except gamma waves; short bursts of 90 - 120 Hz occurring during periods of sensory phenomena. Further study is required to determine if there is a supporting correlation of gamma waves to EVP capture.

The technical, a-religious approach our group embraces, is not common amongst physical circles or ITC operators. If God is a being that possesses the ability to communicate as some claim He can, our EVP library holds no entries to support His existence. Neither have we received any communication alluding to any denomination of god or a deity being in the position of an intelligent designer. Heaven has only one mention in 16 years, and hell has none; the name Lucifer⁴⁰ was captured during a séance, but I am not convinced it was anything more than an ethereal jokester. Religious topics have very little mention in our archive, but there are numerous references to god^{41,42}; as I and group members are not followers of any faith, whom the deity is that speakers refer to, is open to interpretation.

Regardless of our lack of faith, we have been requested by trusted communicators to initiate seances with a prayer to request protection and speakers may be heard to join in with the "Amen"⁴³. Although I would be happy to work without adhering to this request, I think it important that we show respect to those whom we work with, as they have actively demonstrated many times in the past, that they have our best intentions at heart. And

ultimately on some subjects, we recognise they have a greater knowledge of forces we know nothing about, despite our scepticism.

We have recorded numerous EVP of speakers expressing exasperation with my refusal to be intimidated by menacing threats of death and violence. Passing over appears not change your nature or temperament, and those who cannot bend us to their will, on a rare occasion, might successfully physically strike out. In one sitting, I felt a sharp poke in my eye, the EVP captured at the same time has a menacing tone, *“So she has gone”, “Get out of the way”*⁴⁴. In a more recent sitting, I experienced a piercingly sharp pain in my side. The EVP captured whilst I yelp, features the sound of a man cocking a gun as a speaker says, *“Pull the trigger now”*⁴⁵. When strikes do happen, the pain resolves quickly and I do not allow the interference to disrupt our session, we continue as usual until our scheduled time for closure. It should be noted that no physical blow has been delt to an innocent sitter; there was however one visitor who behaved appallingly and was winded; she did not return. I have no fear of etherical bullies, many of whom have been captured in seances, but knowing they can interact with us, I would encourage those who are of an overly nervous disposition not to experiment with EVP in isolation.

I have no answer as to why those who were horrid before their death, are permitted to return. Hypothetically, one might argue if there is a God and a positive force, there must exist a balancing negative force, call it what you will. Humans as a species are capable of monstrous destruction; attributing their actions as the work of an evil deity may be common to many belief systems but I have no evidence to support this in my archive. My assumption based upon the voices of those I have heard, is that those who continue to be vengeful and carry hate, have chosen to be that way. Only when they tire of their anger and truly repent their actions, do they gain peace. We are each accountable for our own actions, why anybody might want to live an eternity of misery, is beyond my comprehension.

One of the earliest recollections I have, is of my baptism into the Catholic Church, as a toddler. Every Sunday my father took me to mass; I enjoyed the ritual and pageantry, but I never developed faith in God. I am still drawn to the peace of a church or temple, and when empty I will record if I feel there to be a welcome atmosphere. Sitting in a small chapel, I became enveloped in the sensation of a warm hug and the voice of a lady, whose voice is thoughtful says, *“confess her Sarah”*⁴⁶. Because of heartening experiences and recordings

such as this, I chose to dwell on the positive side of EVP research. When you begin to record as a group, as well as making new earthly acquaintances, you bring together an equivalent group of unknown communicators. It takes time for mutual trust to be achieved on both sides but when you hear it, the evidence of our continuation becomes unquestionable.

In isolation, one exceptional EVP provides nothing more than a tantalising insight. Since regular recordings began in 2008, I have amassed an archive of fifteen thousand EVP clips, ten thousand of which have been subjectively classed A and B. The ability of communicators to provide consistent and clear sentient messages in different environments, strongly supports the hypothesis of EVP as being evidential of the continuance of human consciousness and testifies to the reality of post-mortem communication. There are important caveats to our understanding; the fine mechanics of the phenomena remains unknown as does the method of our transition to another state of being, and how those who have passed experience their new plane(s) of existence.

To accept unquestioningly that all purported recordings of EVP are voices of the dead, would be a foolhardy assumption. Only when you are personally satisfied that the evidence has been gathered with integrity and is not otherwise accountable, are you able to critically appraise the communication on its linguistic merits. I acknowledge that accepting EVP as evidence based upon my judgement may be difficult for some readers, and I will concede that cognitive bias may be present, but with a wealth of communication directly addressing the subject of death and dying, the mass of data provides a convincing argument.

It may surprise some, but the topic of death and dying is rarely discussed in recording sessions; our preferred focus is on the practical and evidential aspects of communication and on the production of phenomena; and all messages relating to mortality were spontaneously given, not elicited. We are assured by communicators, that most but not all who speak or appear, have lived before in a physical body, we feel this excludes the need for us to repeatedly request a description of a communicators physical state of being. One gentleman captured in a séance, simply states *“you’ve got to listen carefully, we are dead”*⁴⁷; the probability of being wilfully misled is unlikely, given that further examples such as *“the dead ones are coming to arrive”*⁴⁸ and *“Did it really happen to me since I’m dead?”*⁴⁹, reinforces my supposition.

Communicators who wish to discuss their passing and of being remembered by the living, project their voices well with most clips being class A; this is presumed to be due to the highly emotive nature of their message. Hearing speakers talk of being deceased, and of their eagerness still to be heard, can be heart-rending; especially when it is the voice of a child asking their mother to be remembered⁵⁰. Our methodology of recording for EVP leaves us sadly lacking in the ability to immediately respond, and we can only hope that in replying to their messages in the next recording session, speakers are reassured that they have not been forgotten. When we call out for communicators to give us their names, speakers sometimes refer to how they were known in the past tense, *"I was Mickey Randall"*⁵¹, *"I was Dale Armson"*⁵², yet their personalities are as they once were, and their voices remain audibly distinctive.

Most speakers do not want to relive the misery they experience on passing but would rather tell us their name or refer to the period in which they existed, or mention people they knew. As a group we have little interest in the popularist morbid side of EVP investigations and have no pleasure in asking communicators to revisit painful memories. Listening to men vividly recalling their death is upsetting, *"You slip under, that's how I feel"*, *"Suicide"*⁵³, neither they or us would gain anything by asking speakers to recall their experience in greater depth. It might seem logical to capture the recollections of those who died in tragic circumstances at historic battle sites, and places of torture, but in practice we rarely do; their remembrance is more important and outweighs pain in nearly all instances.

Brief EVP consisting of a singular name are commonly captured; a gentleman who asked, *"Who checks up if you're dead?"*⁵⁴, poses an important but uncomfortable conundrum. If framed as an expectation for us to validate messages as coming from an individual who is deceased, we are likely to fail. We do not routinely research ad-hoc names unless they accompany explicit messages or are related to a property, because without supporting information the chance of finding a documented personal history is remote. Despite the weakness in our ability to formerly recognise communicators, they are relentless in their efforts to link with us; as one lady's question illustrates, *"is anybody saying they think of us"*⁵⁵.

For many years we captured the name Billy as an isolated EVP, which although a common name was not personal to any members of the group. The name abruptly stopped

featuring on recordings after we captured a man's voice admitting "*I killed Billy*"⁵⁶. Confessions of murder by the perpetrator, and of committing a violent crime are not uncommon, but these are not EVP that I glibly share. In two incidences, EVP pertaining to an open case were recorded, full names and the locations were identified, and were alarmingly evidential. I made it clear to communicators, that the recordings of those who make criminal confessions will not be made public or passed on to the authorities, so I can only assume the speaker's air their admission of guilt to leave their crime behind.

The popular perception of gathering EVP to bear witness for hauntings and murders may bring the curious into the subject, and many operators even with very little experience, may successfully capture EVP communication related to these events on their devices; but few who are not dedicated to the subject, repeatedly capture easily heard voices. Most clips presented on social media platforms and television entertainment shows are not clear, but even if a small percentage are genuine, it would demonstrate the pervasive ability of the deceased to communicate. EVP from one group in isolation cannot be considered as evidential, but worldwide thousands of operators consistently capture recognisable human voices. Practitioners are disparate and often geographically distant even from those they work with; many frequent online forums to discuss results and equipment, without ever meeting. A much-needed sense of community within ITC is missing; Tom Butler (2016), founder of the Association of TransCommunication, attempted to bring practitioners together for joint experimentation but due to a lack of participation, the online group was closed, and the project ended.

A greater interaction between operators on a global scale, would undoubtedly progress development for all those concerned. Welcoming external investigation and collaboration on a very private practice may be uncomfortable initially, but if as a community we shy away from discussing the validity of EVP as paranormal phenomena and do not invite independent analysis, and healthy criticism of our recordings, then we cannot complain when we are not taken seriously. Years of consistent results have given us the confidence to be open in demonstrating our operating practices to visitors, and those who wish to experience a recording when time permits.

Experimentation in our group is ongoing, and each year we are conducting trials of new equipment. Changing multiple variables at the same time, makes isolating the respective

positive and negative effects on recordings difficult. And with limited available time together as a group, we must be highly selective on who is present. Occasionally, we may try retracing other researcher's work, but this is seldom productive, and even less so when visitors attend. During an attempt to replicate a radio experiment by Marcello Bacci, I ask for guidance regarding a specific piece of equipment and a speaker helpfully suggests that Konstantins Raudive may have what we require; a lady then breaks in, but it is unclear as to whether she is helping or hindering, "*Konstantins does*," "*Someone at odds, trying to confirm*"⁵⁷. Interactions such as this, convince us that communicators have a full awareness of our desire to progress and will assist with research and development when permitted.

EVP is undoubtedly under researched and has been largely ignored by science and academic parapsychology. There is a need to develop a way for us to work alongside mainstream science to explore the questions we all have. Hindering this has been the development of mobile telephone EVP applications and a plethora of ghost busting devices with pre-programmed vocabularies and radio scanners, promising instantaneous results. With so many entertainment television shows centring on their use as evidence of paranormal activity, it is easy to understand why they have become so popular and why funded researchers chose not to engage in the field. The world has moved on from the days when innovators of EVP research were widely known and respected, and we live in a world where we are bombarded by things to occupy our time; few of the younger generation are willing to spend hours analysing recordings, when they can obtain a similar experience with a relatively small investment of money and an ITC app. Regardless of the gadgets raising a wider awareness of the possibility of post-mortem communication, they have done little to advance understanding in the field.

The search for proof of survival of consciousness after death of the physical body is more than a longing to know we survive. It is a fundamental aspect of our contentment and happiness to know that our lives have held meaning, of hope that precious memories will not be forgotten, and to know if our actions influence what happens after we die. We come into the physical world and depart it alone but all desire to be reunited with those we love, even in the absence of faith or without personal confidence in survival.

For the uninitiated seeker there are bewildering choices of whom to seek advice from and in whom you should place your trust; you may consider religion, occultism, or

parapsychology to begin your quest. The choice is highly personal and likely coloured by your cultural background, but if you are looking for evidence, no matter how well intentioned, mediumship and faith-based religious arguments are coloured by the mind of the corporeal advisor. Objective communication from those who have passed is achievable by most, and if the operator's modus operandi is respected, with strict protocols and transparent methodologies, ITC and EVP have the capacity to provide evidence whilst withstanding scientific scrutiny.

The views expressed in this essay, are based upon my evaluation of data gathered from recordings, seances and time spent in consideration of how competing theories of mind-body dualism might model phenomena; is the physical brain or the conscious mind a driver for phenomena? The brain/mind argument provides an engaging ontological exercise that has enabled me to play with hypotheses for how the speaker's consciousness might be manifested as EVP, but ultimately neither provides a definitive answer. David Rousseau (2012) summarises the competing dualist hypotheses as *"all evidence suggestive of survival is the product of powerful subconscious psychic activity by living agents, mobilised and guided by deep-seated psychological needs"*, versus, *"best cases represent evidence suggestive of survival mostly from interaction between living people and the discarnate souls of formerly living persons"*. I would surmise that EVP cannot be explained by facets of either mental or physical theories, and there remains within each hypothesis a possible clue to the generation and transmission of the phenomena. My simplistic analysis would suggest that EVP are recordings of physical sound waves, received from a non-corporeal source of generation; implying the sender must therefore have a physical modality or holds the capacity to manifest material effects in our state of reality, but the operator aids in the modulation of sound.

In our everyday lives where the physicalism of our reality is accepted unquestioningly, the possibility of alternative parallel realities, where consciousness resides coexisting alongside us, is rarely contemplated. Forming a hypothesis that encompasses the location and state of reality that communicators reside in, has been guided by fragmentary EVP cannot be watertight. As operators it is challenging for us to formulate the questions which might provoke answers that the scientific community and the wider public would find worthy of consideration. Our experiences have convinced us of who our communicators are,

but we have gained no ground in our perennial search for questions such as where they are. The uncomfortable evidence that we hold, already challenges the current paradigm of Modern Science but few are willing to listen. If EVP is to progress to wider acceptance, then new approaches and collaborations should be entertained.

The slow rate at which particles vibrate in objects we interact with, gives us a false sense of our reality as being solid. When sitting in a pitch-dark room, our perception is changed, and the sensory deprivation permits us to detach from our familiar world. Putting arguments aside for the need of darkness for physical phenomena, it has proved beneficial to the discovering how our communicators may appear and move. When a moving white light is seen passing through an object, the photons strike our retina and the message is transmitted to our brains and deciphered as a visual stimulus; it is a real experience, yet no identifiable source of power is physically present to account for the generation of photons. Upon playback of the recording, synchronous sound waves may be captured, and in this instance a lady's voice reported "*I was in the light*"⁵⁸. Our natural laws are redundant in their ability to provide any correlation with either the reported visual anomaly or the vocal recording, our reality as we experience it, cannot be fully explained by science and possibly should not be taken as solid.

We have a limited perception of time and are confined in the present, but EVP has the potential to allow us a glimpse into the past. During field recordings I have captured many historical conversations that would most certainly have been privy, only to a select few. An example was captured close to the Council Chamber in Hampton Court Palace, two gentlemen discuss a new addition to the royal fleet, "*I have the name of a boat ship, a war ship*", "*Will you sail it here?*"⁵⁹. Some may consider this an auditory equivalent of the stone tape theory; where the memory of an event is absorbed into the surroundings and replayed at a later date; but a solid body of EVP would support a more radical proposal, that the speakers continue to exist in their own timeline and their existence is subjectively as solid as ours. Reality appears to be relative to the perspective of the experiencer.

Psi as defined by Thouless and Wiesner (1948) is "*a generic designator for cognitive or influential capacities that are not mediated by the known bodily channels*", this alludes to the anomalous process of energy transfer, that cannot be explained in terms of physical or biological mechanisms. Might this energy force have a bearing on the individual's ability to

influence or facilitate the imprinting or modulation of EVP? I recognise that considering the application of the psi hypothesis as a source of EVP might seem improbable as studies support only miniscule effects, but in individuals who naturally demonstrate cognitive psi or psychokinesis, macro-PK events such as poltergeist phenomena are commonly reported. My suggestion is not that we create the phenomena from our subconscious, as is a common interpretation of the Super-psi hypothesis, but that as organisms with electromagnetic fields, we are conduits who are used as batteries. With a wealth of positive statistical data, psi has been accepted by most in the community as observationally quantifiable, an innate ability that we each possess, and possibly a genetic trait expressed to varying extents.

The evidence required to prove survival post-mortem, is subjective to a degree. Verification for one person might be the recalling of specific facts or memory in an individual's life, another person might only accept a code word or the manifestation of their earthly form. We have been frustrated in the past, when we were not able to obtain survival evidence at another's request, especially when we considered our questions to be innocuous; but from previous communication, we understand that not every speaker has the answer, and even those that do, are not always permitted to disclose certain information. Recognising and accepting the inability of speakers to provide specific answers through EVP, should not be seen as discouraging or a reason for dismissing its use. If you are willing to work within boundaries, whose edges you will only discover through personal experimentation, the connection you will achieve is rewarding enough.

Our archive of EVP voices illustrates that those who have passed over, whether you chose to call them communicators, speakers, spirits, or the dead, are able to hear us, see us and interact with us audibly and visibly. There are many documented accounts of physical circles, but I am yet to find a comparable group focused on EVP; we strongly believe our success in part, is due to our unique approach. The quality of communication I and my group have captured is remarkable and it is right that it should be questioned before being accepted. I appreciate that I am unable to comprehensively explain how we obtain our results, but I believe this should not invalidate our work, or detract you from considering the voices as evidence of our continued existence. For now, we must accept that we do not have all the answers, but that the contribution of EVP worldwide, is undeniably significant.

My objective in this essay was to attest why I consider Electronic Voice Phenomena should be considered as the best available evidence for the survival of human consciousness after permanent bodily death. We have explored the method of its capture, how the phenomena may be processed and analysed, what affect the operator has on the efficacy of recordings and how, through the language of EVP, we are assured that cognisance and the ability to communicate, is retained. Although there are many aspects of EVP transmission and reception that are not fully understood, the highly evidential nature of messages that are received, strongly supports the survival hypothesis and is worthy of further research.

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EVP Reference Index

Referenced EVP clips may be heard at <http://evp-voices.info/evidentialevp.html>

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[2]. Browning, R. (2008) EVP 2, *"I like to let 'em have doubts"*

[3]. Browning, R. (2014) EVP 3, *"It needs to be dark"*

[4]. Browning, R. (2009) EVP 4, *"You haven't said how you're sitting"*

[5]. Browning, R. (2017) EVP 5, *"They're getting something Christ's made out of it"*

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[10]. Browning, R. (2020) EVP 10, *"Thank you - I've written in the book"*

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