

The Fays: Tragedy and Trials

presented by

Dean Arnold

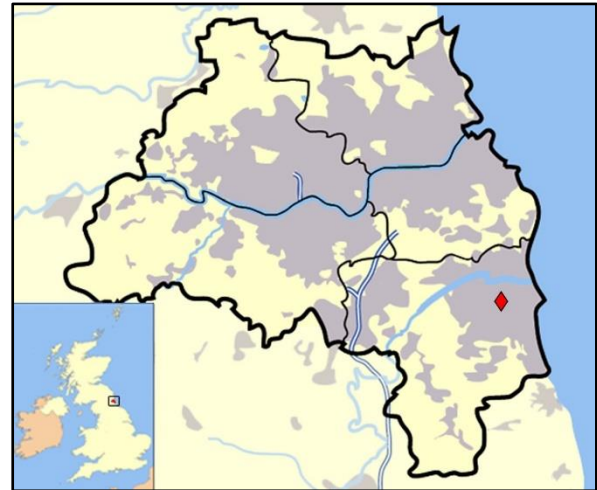
at Yankee Gathering XIII, November 2010

© Dean Arnold, 2017

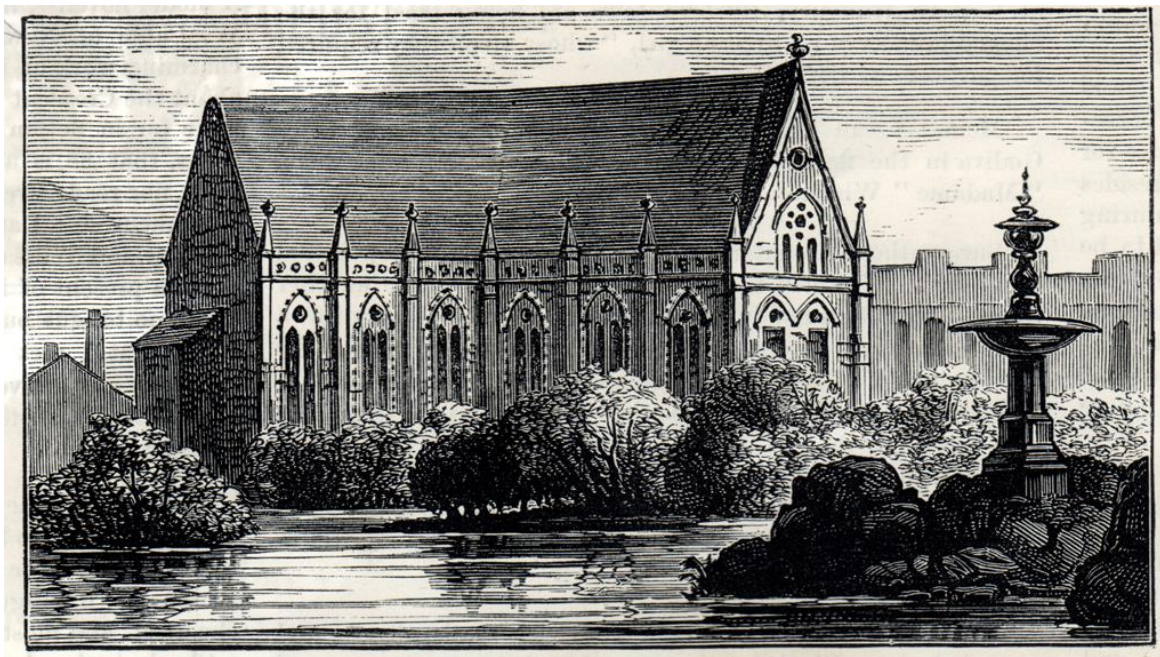
The Fays: Tragedy and Trials

The Tragedy

Let me take you back to mid-Victorian England; to a town in the Northeast called Sunderland. It was a beautiful, bright and warm day on Saturday the 16th of June, 1883. A perfect day, in fact, for a magic performance by the Fays to be given at the impressive Victoria Hall.



The red diamond marks the location of Sunderland in the North East of England.



Victoria Hall, Sunderland.

In the days leading up to the performance, local residents were promised "The Greatest Treat for Children Ever Given".

Alexander Fay, a travelling magician, ventriloquist, and entertainer, along with members of his company had visited several local schools creating huge anticipation for the show by promising talking waxworks, living marionettes, conjuring tricks and a

Victoria Hall, Sunderland,
On Saturday Afternoon at 3 o'clock.
SCHOOL TICKET

THE FAYS

From the Tynemouth Aquarium,
Will give a Grand Day Performance for Children,
THE GREATEST TREAT FOR CHILDREN EVER GIVEN
Conjuring, Talking Waxworks, Living
Marionettes, The Great Ghost Illusion, &c.

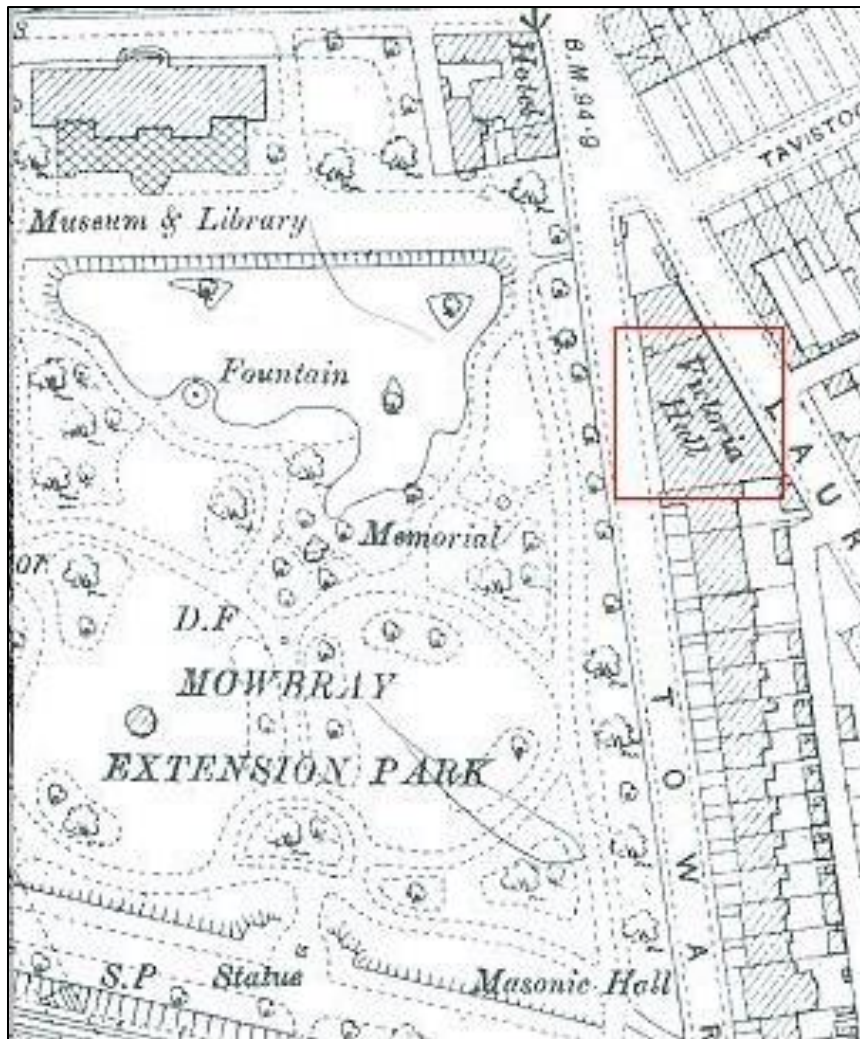
This Ticket will admit any number of Children on payment of
ONE PENNY Each; Reserved Seats, 2d., Nurses
or Parents with Children 3d.

PRIZES!
Every Child entering the room will stand a chance of receiving
a handsome Present, Books, Toys, &c.
This Entertainment has been witnessed by thousands of
delighted Children throughout England.

On Saturday Afternoon at Three o'clock
SCHOOL TICKET
THE FAYS
From the Tynemouth Aquarium
Will give a Grand Day Performance for Children.
The Greatest Treat for Children ever given.
Conjuring, Talking Waxworks, Living Marionettes,
The Great Ghost Illusion, &c
The Ticket will admit any number of Children on
payment of
ONE PENNY EACH, Reserved Seats 2d, Nurse
or Parent with Children 3d
PRIZES!
Every Child entering the room will stand a chance
of receiving a handsome Present, Books, Toys &c.
This Entertainment has been witnessed by
Thousands of delighted children throughout
England.

Great Ghost Illusion. To further drum-up demand for the show, many of the local school teachers were provided free admissions if they agreed to distribute handbills to their classes and encourage their students to attend the performance.

But possibly what generated the most excitement, certainly among the children in the town and local



surrounding communities, was the announcement that “Every child will stand the chance of receiving a handsome present”. All this was being offered for a one penny admission fee.

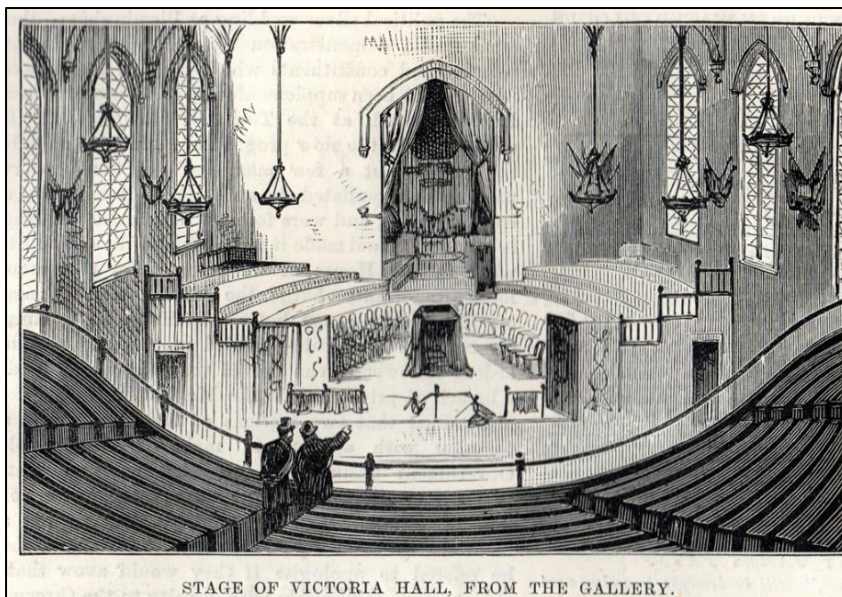
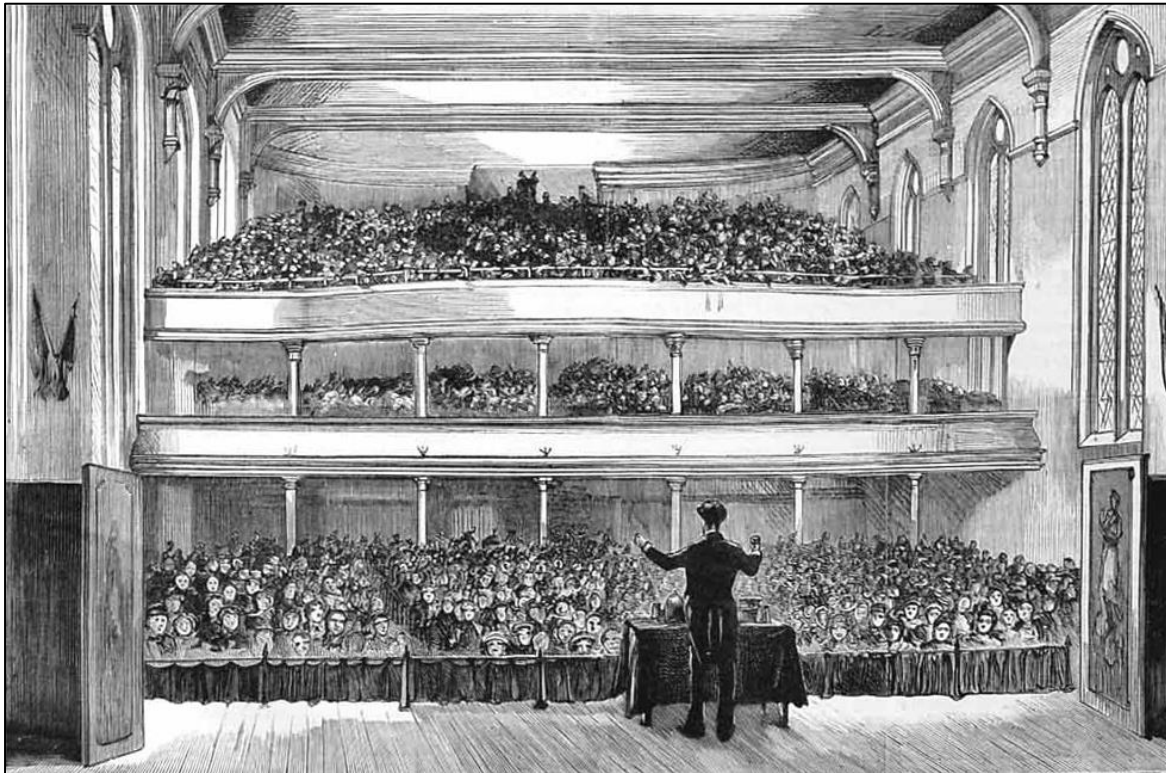
So it was no surprise that on that lovely Saturday afternoon, somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 children showed up at the Victorian Hall seeking admission.

The Victoria Hall, situated on the corner of Toward Road and

Laura Street had opened its doors in 1872 through the generosity of Edward Backhouse, famous in Sunderland for his philanthropy. He was committed to charitable and temperance work particularly amongst the poor in the East End of the city. It is here that he saw the need for a new public hall and a site was chosen in 1870 next to Mowbray Park where the grand, Gothic style hall was built. Edward Backhouse had died four years earlier but he surely would have approved his trustees’ decision to allow a magic performance to be held that day.

The hall was split into three. The stalls seated about 1,000 people; the gallery had seating for 1,100, with room for about 400 more. On this occasion, Fay was not allowed to make use of the dress circle because there was a standing rule not to open this area for admissions less than six pennies. So, with an overall potential capacity of around 2,500, Alexander Fay (and his business partner - his sister Annie) already knew from a recent performance in Newcastle, that his Grand Day stood a good chance of pulling in over £200, a tidy sum in those days. On this particular afternoon, the gallery was full to bursting, with excited children wondering what present they would receive.

Adults were few: several of the school teachers who were given free tickets were in attendance, and Fay had several people on the doors, but the vast majority of children were unaccompanied with some as young as three years old. At around three o'clock the performance began.



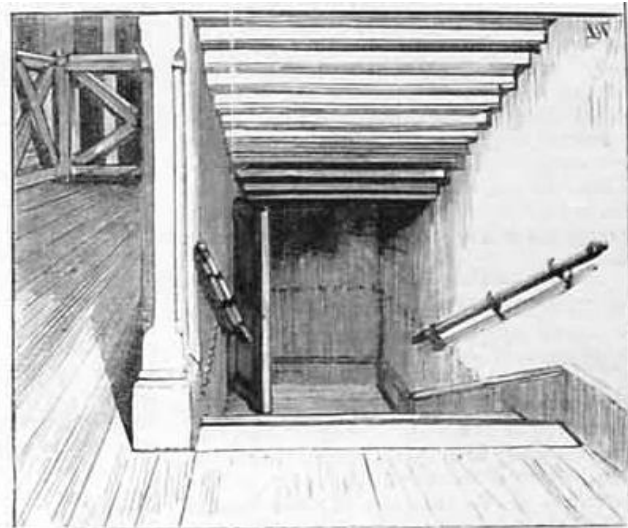
Alexander Fay made his grand entrance; boys and girls screamed with delight as his voice reached across the stage and into the gallery. By all accounts the performance was well received. A few boys had to be reprimanded for misbehaviour:

spitting from the gallery and throwing hats and other objects on the audience below. At one point Fay produced an effect involving vast quantities of smoke which

caused several children in the audience to vomit. But he quickly won them back with well-rehearsed conjuring effects.

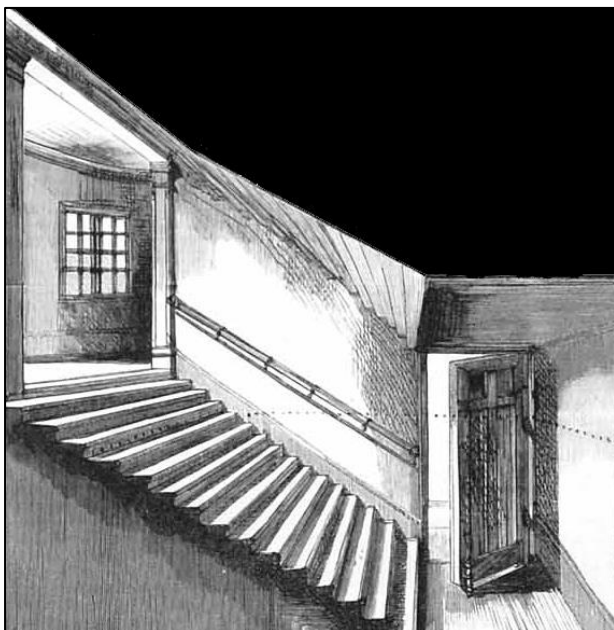
The whole performance lasted about an hour and a half, with an interval. Fay built up to his finale by producing pigeons, which flew round the hall, but his final effect was the hat trick, in which toys were conjured out of a hat, and thrown to the audience.

Fay, along with his helpers, continued throwing small treats to the children in the body of the hall. Each throw resulted in a scrummage as a beaming child secreted a gift, and others scampered for the next treat. The children in the gallery looked on in horror, as no treats were coming their way. The action was all downstairs. "You will get yours on the way out," Fay reassured the children up in the balcony.



A man called Hesseltine was dispatched to hand out prizes at the door by which the gallery children left. Suddenly the word spread in the gallery, "This way for presents." Children nearest the upstairs exits who heard the summons quickly slipped out.

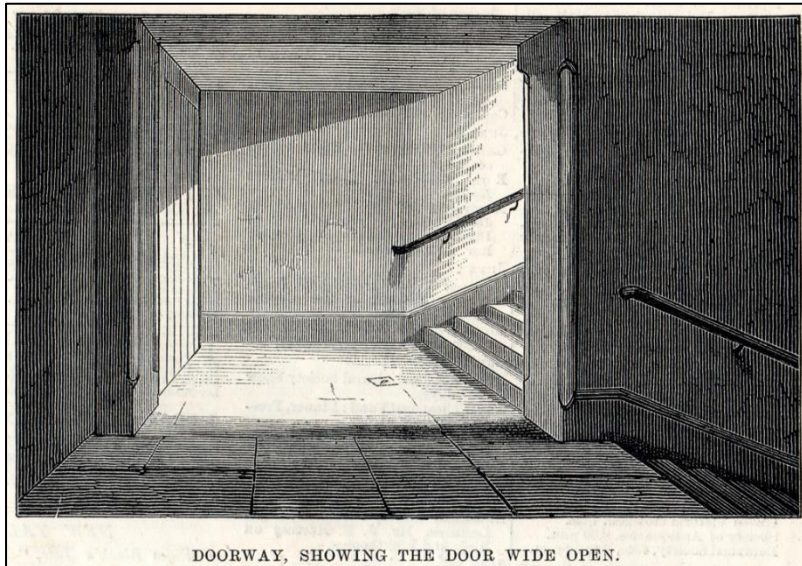
Hundreds of frenzied children desperate not to miss out on the promised gifts soon followed; running down the flights of stairs.



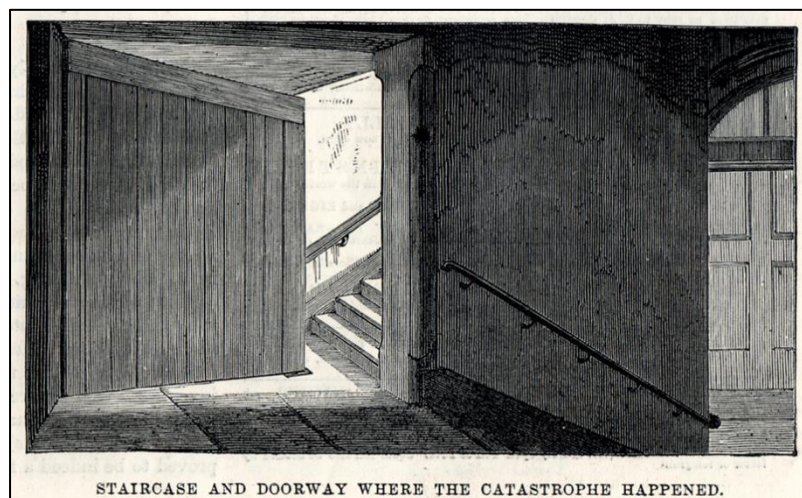
Now what unfolds in the next few minutes is surely the greatest tragedy of any magic performance and one of the saddest events in England's long history, for the door separating the main hall and the gallery had become bolted partially closed with only an 22 inch gap for egress allowing only a single child at a time to pass through.

It goes without saying that a backlog soon occurred. It is believed that three

children tried to pass through together and became wedged in the doorway. A flood of children then fell head over heels, one on top of the other. Screams and shrieks echoed down the staircases until all the air was squeezed from their lungs, but more still pressed down from above.



"Don't let go of my hand, as someone is standing upon my face," whispered six-year-old Charlie Dixon to his big brother Alfie. As child after child tumbled on top of the pair, crushing the breath from their chests, Alfie felt an overwhelming tiredness as he tried to cling on. Minutes later, he was pulled barely conscious from the tangled heap of bodies. Little Charlie, however, was one of the youngsters who died that day.



Mr Graham, the hall manager, was one of the first to arrive at the bolted door. He stated "When I approached the lower door I heard some fearful

screams, groans and noises of struggling. I rushed to the door and attempted to open it, and found I could not do so; the bolt was in the socket about two feet from the door frame, and the opening was jammed up nearly as high as my head with the bodies of children." Mr Graham rushed his way upstairs via an alternative route and came down the stairway crammed with children. When he reached the fourth step from the bottom he found the children packed in a mass.

"At first I did not think that any were dead, but when we tried to release them I discovered my mistake. I tried at first to take out children from the thickest of the mass, but they were so tightly wedged in that I could scarcely move them without

risk of further injury to their poor limbs, so I began by picking out those little ones from the top who groaned, moved their limbs or showed other signs of life.”

Some rather confused and contradictory statements were taken from the survivors. For example, twelve year old Thomas Wilson, who was at the back of the main hall, stated that a man on the stage told those downstairs that presents were available in the gallery.

At the door a man was standing giving away presents but when the man saw a boy with five or six presents he said this will never do and bolted the door partially closed in order to better control the flow of children. He then threw some presents towards the street and told the children to leave via the Toward Road door. Thomas managed to get a round whistle and made his way home, safely.

But many were not so lucky. Within the span of approximately 5 minutes, 183 children (114 boys and 69 girls) were crushed or trampled to death and another 100 seriously injured. Most of the victims were aged between seven and ten, but two were just three years old.



Later, a child of thirteen was found, dazed, in Tatham Street, walking past a local chapel, holding her dead, four-year-old sister in her arms.

The bodies, many barely recognizable, were laid out in rows for identification. More than one family lost all of their children. For Lizzie Hallewell this was surely the

worst day of her life. She anxiously scanned the rows of the dead, and without showing any further signs of emotion pointed to a little figure, that's one.



Queen Victoria

A few yards later she pointed again, that's another. Then as she came to the last child in the row, she lost composure and burst into loud sobs "My God! All my family, gone."

The news of this devastating tragedy quickly spread and within days Alexander Fay and his sister Annie had gained international infamy. Queen Victoria wrote to the clergymen of the town, who relayed her message of condolence at the subsequent funerals and services throughout the town. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God'.

The Early Years

Before I describe further the aftermath of this tragedy, let me first present what led to Alexander and Annie performing in Sunderland on that fateful day in June.

While much has been written about what has become to be known as the Sunderland Disaster, little has been written or is known about the Fays themselves. Eddie Dawes wrote about the incident in the *Magic Circular* in 1979 and concludes his article by stating that very little is known about the conjurer Alexander Fay and his sister Annie Fay. He cautions that Annie should not be confused with the celebrated Annie Eva Fay and that Alexander is accorded one small mention by Clarke in the *Annals of Conjuring* as being one of the earliest to do second-sight performances in imitation of Robert-Houdin.

So, with this small scrap of information, I set about finding-out more about the Fays. First let's see if we can discover who they are.

In researching the Fay's identities and origins, I managed to piece together from census data that it was likely that Alexander was born around 1851 in Middlesex, England, and his sister was born around 1858. So at the time of the tragedy, Alexander would have been 32 and Annie only 25 years of age.

We know this because Alexander Fay appears in the 1881 Census resident at 89 Newchurch Road, in Lancashire, England as a border. His occupation is listed as a

Ventriloquist (Performer) and he is married. Annie Fay also appears at the same address, interestingly as a Ventriloquist Wife. This raises the question of whether Annie was actually Alexander's wife rather than his sister as stated at both Victoria Hall inquests. I don't think that to be the case but rather it was easier, and arguably cheaper at the time to seek lodging as husband and wife versus brother and sister. Later census data from both 1901 and 1911 confirms the approximate date of birth of both Annie and Alexander.

Page 82																
The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the																
* Civil Parish (or Township) of		City or Municipal Borough of		Municipal Ward of		Parliamentary Borough of		Town of		Village or Hamlet, &c., of		Local Board, or (Improvement Commissioners District) of		Ecclesiastical District of		
Marplebone		Marplebone		Portland Place		Marplebone								All Souls		
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Inhabited or Vacant	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION	AGE of		Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	Whether						
						Male	Female			1. Deaf and dumb	2. Blind	3. Lame or idiot	4. Lunatic			
<i>Duckett Street contd.</i>																
557	1		William James	brother	Mar	60		Clark	London North London							
			Elizabeth	Wife	Mar	47		Domestic Serv	Warrick							
558	2	1	Henry Jones	Head	Mar	47		Wear of Boots	Waltham							
			John F. D.	Wife	Mar	47			Waltham							
			William K. G.	Son	Mar	17										
			Caroline S. Bell	Coast	Mar	25		Domestic Serv	St. Saffron							
			Elizabeth Muscibwhite	Serv	Mar	19			St. Saffron							
			Francis Weston	Serv	Mar	18			St. Saffron							
			Jessie C. Drake	Serv	Mar	18			Warrick							
559	3															
559	4	1	Caroline Hylton	Wife	Mar	48		Serv on her means	Barnes							
			Florence Bullock	Serv	Mar	35			Barnes							
560			Elizabeth Roswell	Head	Mar	47			Warrick							
			John Hammond	Serv	Mar	19		Teacher of music	Bath							
			John J. H. Hill	Serv	Mar	60		Gentleman	Warrick							
			My Mary	Serv	Mar	58			London							
			Florence Kay	Serv	Mar	25			St.							
			James Hastings	Serv	Mar	58		Domestic Serv	St.							
			James Christie	Serv	Mar	28			St.							
			Janina Gorman	Serv	Mar	25			St.							
561	5	1	Christina Jackson	Head	Mar	28		Match & Sewing Machine	Warrick							
			Katherine D.	Wife	Mar	21			St.							
			Frederick D.	Serv	Mar	3 yrs			London							
			James Williams	Serv	Mar	27		Boat	Warrick							
4	Total of Houses..		3		14		Total of Males and Females..		7		16					

* Draw the pen through such of the words as are inappropriate.

Above: This is a typical census record from which data can be gleaned. The Fays are not shown on this particular record.

22	Indith Lord	Head	Mar	56	Temperance Hotel Keeper
	Elizabeth D. D.	Serv	Mar	22	Warrick
	Annie Fay	Boarder	Mar	23	Ventriloquist's Wife
	Maria J. Talletti	Boarder	Mar	28	Dramatist's Wife
	Michael McManis	Boarder	Mar	58	Commercial Traveller
22	Alexander Fay	Boarder	Mar	30	Ventriloquist

Above: The 1881 Census for 89 Newchurch Road, Bacup, Lancashire, England showing details for Annie and Alexander Fay.

Despite exhaustive searches, I was unable to find any birth records for an Alexander and/or Annie Fay with similar dates of birth. I had my strong suspicions that Fay was not their real names, but rather a stage name.

Through my own research I had already ascertained a relationship between Fay and a John Butters. I had established this link through an address, 83 Regent Street, in Derby.

**WANTED, a Respectable, Steady Young Man as
PIANIST, and who will not object to make himself useful.
References and terms to ALEX. FAY, 83, Regent-street, Derby.**

THE WORLD FAMOUS ENTERTAINERS
THE FAYS,
 IN THEIR GREAT SENSATIONS.
 "THE AMERICAN WONDERS."
 (TITLE REGISTERED.)

*Mystery, Magic, Spiritualism by Miss ANNIE FAY. And Ventriloquism
 Extraordinary (with ten life-sized Figures.) Original Blocks, Lithos, and Magnificent
 Poets.*

PERMANENT ADDRESS:—
 ALEXANDER FAY,
 83, REGENT-STREET,
 DERBY.

*Heath Royal
 Goole Aug 9 1881*

Dear Sir,

*Please say
 if you have a vacant
 date in July or August
 you can offer me a
 a return visit
 as I shall be in your
 the neighbourhood of Brighton
 then. Here and original Business
 Magnificent stage fittings
 Blocks Lithos & Posters
 Yours truly
 Alex. Fay.*


This address began to appear around March of 1879, in various small adverts that Fay was placing in newspapers and journals as well as on his early stationary (an example is show here). By tracking this address, I found that it was the location for the shop of John Butters who was pawnbroker and merchant. I further discovered an article in the local Derby paper about an incident that happened in February 1879 involving a bill poster named Jonathan Bostock, Alexander Fay and John Butters.

Fay was giving a performance at the Town Hall in Derby, when during the performance Jonathan Bostock, who Fay had previously employed as a bill poster, turned-up clanging his bell and demanding payment. John Butters, who was

described as an assistant to Alexander Fay, stopped Bostock from entering the Town Hall. An altercation occurred on the steps where it would appear that Bostock swung the bell at Butters, who in self-defence raised his arms to guard off the blow; the bell bouncing back and striking Bostock in the face causing blood to flow.

Bostock was later to bring a case against Butters, but the case was dismissed, the court finding that Bostock was not very sober on the evening in question.

Clearly this established a strong link between John Butters and Alexander Fay and so the reference to Alfred Hutchinson must be valid. This led me to find the birth certificate of one Alfred Hutchinson, born the 14th of July, 1851 to William and Mary Hutchinson at 7 White Horse Lane, in Lower Mile End Old Town in the county of Middlesex. Alfred's father's occupation is listed as a chemist. Through various additional research I am reasonably convinced that this is our man Alexander. However, research into the Hutchinson family continues.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH  **GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE**
 Application Number 2249549-2

REGISTRATION DISTRICT					STEPNEY				
1851 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Lower Mile End Old Town					in the County of Middlesex				


Columns:- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
25	fourteenth July 1851 White Horse Lane	Alfred	Boy	William Hutchinson	Mary Hutchinson formerly Sewell	Chemist	M. Hutchinson Mother 7 White Horse Lane Stepney	fourteenth August 1851	Samuel Crickshaw Registrar	

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.
 Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 23rd day of April 2010

BXCE 507192

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE ©CROWN COPYRIGHT
 WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

IPS 037108 21544 0409 3MSPSL 023265  MC

Birth Certificate for Alfred Hutchinson.

Now that we have a good idea of the true identity of Alexander Fay, let's piece together his professional career, and that of Annie, leading up to the Victoria Hall performance.

In tracking the Fays professional career, my search began with the statement given at one of the inquests following the Sunderland Disaster made by Alexander Fay in which he states that he had been an entertainer for eight years, which would mean that he started his career around 1875.

A rich source of information for tracking Victorian performers is the relatively recent online database of Victorian publications that the British Library has created. This resource includes scanned and searchable copies of *The Era*, the most prolific variety and entertainment publication at that time.



If we go back to the mid-1870s, much is happening in the world of magic in Britain. In July, 1874 Anna Eva Fay makes her debut in London appearing at the Crystal Palace. Anna created quite a stir with her performance which was viewed at the time as a demonstration of genuine spiritualism. She presented both a "light and dark séance" ...a light séance being spiritualistic demonstrations performed in full light while a dark séance being performed with little or no light.

In January 1875 Colonel Cordova opens his new Drawing Rooms at 3 Tichborne Street, next door to the London Pavilion.

Col. Cordova claims to have played over 2000 nights to crowded and delighted audiences in America. The show includes Jane Dillon and Nella Davenport as well as Mr S Novello, mimic, protean act, and nature's own ventriloquist.



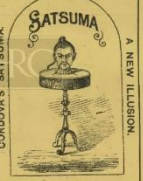

By March of 1875, Colonel Cordova is receiving favourable reviews for his show. Of particular note is Nella Davenport, who is described as a "well-favoured and symmetrical young lady".

In early April, Col. Cordova announces that after 100 consecutive nights in London, Colonel Cordova entertainment "A Night in




CORDOVA'S NEW
DRAWING ROOMS
TICHBORNE ST.] NEARLY OPPOSITE THE CRITERION. PICCADILLY CIRCUS.
WILL OPEN ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8,
FOR THE SEASON.
First Appearance in London of

COL. CORDOVA
The celebrated and pre-eminent WONDER-WORKER.
Miss JANE DILLON
The unrivalled ANTI-SPIRIT MEDIA; and
Miss NELLA DAVENPORT
The accomplished and imitable PHENOMENON.
From the Academies of Music, New York City, Philadelphia, and the principal Opera House and Theatres in America,
WHO HAVE THE HONOUR TO ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF THEIR WORLD-REMOVED & IMITABLE ENTERTAINMENT.

A NIGHT IN FAIRYLAND
As produced by them for upwards of 2,000 Nights to Crowded and Delighted Audiences, and endorsed by the entire American Press as the most extraordinary and highly Sensational Attraction ever witnessed.

CORDOVA ORIGINAL		CORDOVA'S GOBLIN SPIRITS DECAPITATION FEAT.		CORDOVA'S SATSUMA		CORDOVA'S SATSUMA		THE ANTI-SPIRITUALIST
------------------	---	---	--	-------------------	---	-------------------	---	-----------------------

INTRODUCING FOR THE FIRST TIME A SERIES OF
STARTLING MARVELLOUS ILLUSIONARY MIRACLES!

MISS DAVENPORTS		SPIRITUAL FLIGHT	MISS JANE DILLON		AS 'MELPHISTOPHELES'	MISS JANE DILLON		VENUS AT REST
-----------------	--	------------------	------------------	---	----------------------	------------------	--	---------------

AND
THE MOST THRILLING SPECTRAL PHENOMENA
NEVER BEFORE ATTEMPTED BY ANY OTHER LIVING ARTIST.

Mr. S. NOVELLO
The unequalled MIMIC, PROFANE ARTIST and Nature's own VENTRILQUIST, will appear each Evening between the First and Second Parts of these unique Entertainments.

EVERY EVENING at EIGHT o'clock. Doors open at 7.30.
MORNING Performances every Monday, Wednesday & Saturday at 3.
Doors open at 2.30, when the Programmes will be specially arranged for the LADIES and JUVENILES.

Box Office open on and after MONDAY, Feb. 1st, where Seats may be secured in advance without extra charge.
Admission—2s. and ONE SHILLING. Reserved Stalls, 5s. and 3s.
The Buffet in the Minor Drawing Room will be under the Management of the popular Caterer, GALT, WATSON, Col. Cordova, Manager.

<p style="text-align: center;">THE SPIRITUAL FLIGHT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE JEWEL ROBBERY OR THE FIRST IN THE WINECELLAR.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE ILLUSIONARY MIRACLE.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE SO CALLED SPIRIT-WRITING OR SECOND SIGHT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COL. CORDOVA and MISS DAVENPORT.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THE SPIRITUAL FLIGHT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE JEWEL ROBBERY OR THE FIRST IN THE WINECELLAR.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE ILLUSIONARY MIRACLE.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE SO CALLED SPIRIT-WRITING OR SECOND SIGHT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COL. CORDOVA and MISS DAVENPORT.</p>
--	--

Fairyland" is now on their first provincial tour.

At around the same time, Mr. Crookes runs his famous scientific tests on Anna Eva Fay using a galvanometer, eventually declaring Anna genuine.

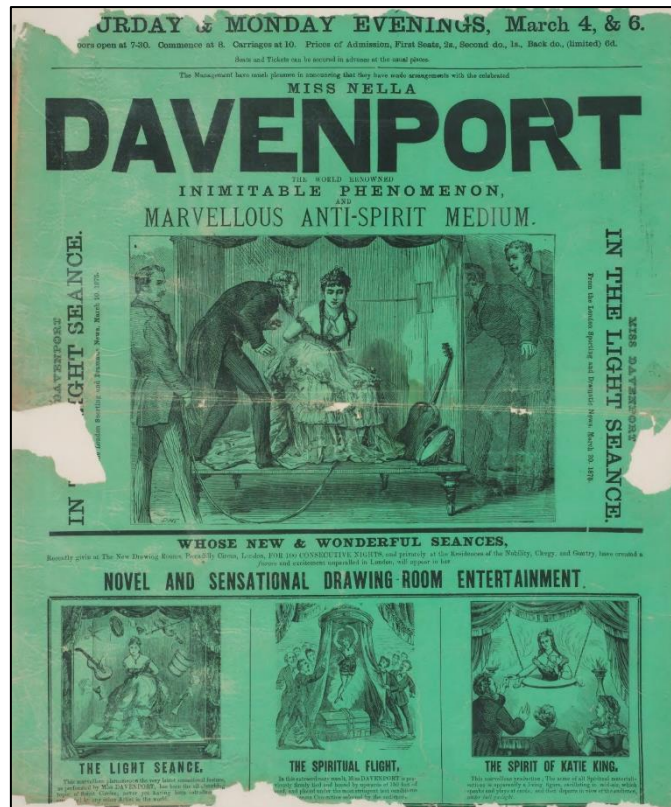
In early May, Col. Cordova "for three nights only" appears at The Royal Theatre in Oxford

along with Nella Davenport the unrivalled anti-spirit Medium. The act is described as coming from the academies of Music, New York City, Philadelphia and the principal Opera Houses and Theatres in America. As we shall soon see, this description of the act will prove important to my research into Alexander and Annie.

In mid-May, Anna Eva Fay appears St. James's Hall, Birmingham. Her feats and "manifestations" are described as exciting the wonder and curiosity of large audiences. Within two

weeks Col. Cordova and Nella Davenport also appear in Birmingham at the Exchange Assembly Rooms. One report indicates that Nella's performance was as good as Anna Eva Fay's. Another states Nella's aims at dispelling the delusion of spiritualism, have excited great astonishment. Without at all darkening the room, and whilst secured by the neck, feet, and hands to iron staples in a cabinet, she exhibits the various so-called "manifestations" which caused such a profound sensation when produced by the Davenport Brothers as well as Anna Eva Fay.

During the year of 1876, Anna Eva Fay returns to the United States, while Nella Davenport continues to tour often billing herself as The World-Renowned American Enchantress. By this time, she would often appear without Col. Cordova featuring other acts.



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL HALL, ISLINGTON.
NELLA DAVENPORT'S Novel and Sensational
 DRAWING-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT,
 Every Evening at Eight.
 Doors open at 7.30. Prices, 2s., 1s., and 6d.
 NELLA DAVENPORT'S SPIRITUALISTIC
 TABLEAUX, under the direction of Mr Jonathan Moore, the
 American Humorist, illustrating Incidents in the Lives of celebrated
 Statesmen of the past and present day.
 LEILA DILLON, the American Cantatrice and
 Protean Character Mimic, with COCKIE, the Australian Wonder,
 will appear every Evening at Miss DAVENPORT'S ENTERTAINMENT.
 W. H. Williams, Manager.
 ARGYLL ROOMS.—OPEN EVERY EVENING

For example, a show in December 1876 given in Islington included Leila Dillon, American Cantatrice and Protean Character Mimic as well as Cockie the Australian Wonder (Cockie being a trained cockatoo).

In March of 1877 we find possibly the first public mention of Alexander Fay

WANTED, Young MAN, Respectable and Steady,
to deliver Bills and make himself useful. Must join at once.
Terms to **Fay's Wonders**, Town Hall, Hexham, Monday and Tuesday;
Lecture Hall, Blaydon-on-Tyne, Wednesday and Thursday next. R.
Pollock may write.

appearing in *The Era* in which he is advertising for an assistant: Wanted young man to deliver bills and make himself useful. Send terms to Fays Wonders.

The following month another notice appears in *The Era*, this time advertising Captain

CAPTAIN FAY'S WONDERS,
including an exposé of "Dr. Slade's Slate Writing" and a host
of other "Modern Miracles." Can arrange for Rinks, Aquariums,
Gardens, and Watering Places during Summer Months.
Address, 423, High-street, Cheltenham, to be forwarded.

Fay's Wonders which includes an expose of "Dr Slade's Slate Writing" and a host of other "Modern Miracles". Subsequent advertisements appear in May, one entitled *A Strange Man In Yorkshire! Captain Fay, the Famous American Conjuror* another appeared that same month announcing: *Modern Miracles - Captain Fay the celebrated American Conjuror and Anti-Spiritualist, a Special Novelty for Fetes, Rinks, Gardens, Bazaars, Institutes, &c. Splendid Picture Posters from One to Sixteen Sheets.*

The first use of the name Alexander appears in September: *Colonel Alexander Fay, the Premier Ventriloquist and Prestidigitateur. Now concluding a successful tour through the Clyde Watering Places. The finest ventriloquial show in the world. Six magnificent Life-Size Figures.* [Note: The Clyde is a major river in Scotland.]

JERSEY.
THEATRE ROYAL.—Proprietor, Mr W. Rousby; Lessee, Madame Moreau-Santi.—After some little delay Madame Moreau-Santi has redeemed her promise by reopening the Theatre with an entirely new opera bouffe company. *La Peri-chole* has been given.
ROYAL HALL.—Miss **Nella Davenport** has been amusing Jersey audiences during the past fortnight with her astounding (so-called) spirit manifestations. Colonel Cordova also does some very clever conjuring business in the intervals. Mr Fay's ventriloquial entertainment also forms a prominent part of the programme. Miss Lula Dillon's rapid flight from sack to box is a very clever feat, and sends the audience home wonder-stricken. Numbers return night after night to see "how it's done."

In November, 1877, we find something interesting advertised. Alexander Fay is now performing with Col. Cordova and Nella Davenport at the Royal Hall in Jersey. Fay's ventriloquial entertainment forms a prominent part of the

programme. And thus the link is established between Fay, Col. Cordova and Nella Davenport.

DAVENPORT, WRIGHT, and CO.'S
THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL AGENCY,
29, LEICESTER-SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
 Represented in every Principal City in the World.
 N.B.—Frequent Openings for Talented Amateurs.
 Routes and Engagements Arranged for Stars
 and Travelling Companies.

DAVENPORT, WRIGHT, and CO.,
 Sole Agents for
 Miss CLARE GLADYS and Mr ALWYNE MAUDE'S LONDON
 COMPANY,
 Miss EUGENIE FORBES, Child Actress, Mimic, and Dancer.
 Miss NELLA DAVENPORT'S Anti-Spiritualistic Entertainment,
 "Lights and Shades of the Spirit World."
 Mr A. FAY'S FUNNY FOLKS (Six Life-size Automata).
 Mr STEPHEN MASSETT, America's own Orator, Mimic, and Musical
 Delineator (now in San Francisco).
 Mr JONATHAN MOORE'S Historical *Tableaux* and Illustrious
 Statesmen.
 For future dates and terms,
 address our London Offices,
 29, Leicester-square, W.C.

In December of that same year, Davenport, Wright and Co. are listed as agents for both Nella Davenport as well as Alexander Fay and his Funny Folks (Six Life-size Automata). At first glance this may not appear that important. However, it turns out that Davenport, Wright and Co. is actually a talent agency owned by Col.

Cordova, whose real name is William White Maitland. The following year, Maitland ends up in court charged with keeping and using a betting-house at 29 Leicester Square, under the name of Davenport, Wright, and Co. At the hearing Maitland declares he is an accountant, entertainer and agent, aged 37 at the time. Col. Cordova aka William White Maitland is convicted of running an illegal betting operation and fined £50. Four years later, in 1882, Maitland again finds himself in court. He is accused of inserting advertisements in papers representing that he could procure engagements for artists at first-class London venues on payment of a premium.

In several cases money had been paid without engagement being secured. He is again convicted and fined £50. Finally, my research turned up that Maitland would again be charged for using unlicensed premises for the purpose of betting in 1898.

ENTERTAINMENTS.

CARDIFF CIRCUS AND PALACE OF VARIETIES.
 —The benefit of the very popular male and female bicyclists, F. Bale, Middle. Frances, and young Otto, will take place at the circus, on Friday evening. A more than usually amusing programme is provided, including a live monkey velocipedist, and amateur bicycle and other contests.

STUART-HALL, CARDIFF.—Miss Nella Davenport, a well-known enchantress from America, is nightly assisted by agile spirits, whose spirituality, however, is due to nothing more than scientific skill. Mimicry, mirth-provoking ventriloquial sketches, and mechanical automata, count to those who desire to spend an enjoyable evening for much more than the quack nonsense of trading spiritualists. As a consequence Miss Davenport is patronised by audiences at once puzzled and agreeably entertained. Miss Annie Fay, one of the company, in her wonderful séances is extraordinarily bewildering; Mr. Alexander Fay as premier ventriloquist sustains his high reputation; the musical renderings are good, and the entertainments now being given at the Stuart-hall may fairly be said to be worth witnessing.

Let me go back to December 1877. Nella Davenport and Alexander Fay are now performing together in Cardiff, Wales. Of even greater significance is the fact that a Miss Annie Fay is mentioned as forming part of the company. Her wonderful séances are described as extraordinarily bewildering. Nella, Alexander and Annie tour Wales for another two months with Alexander performing ventriloquism and conjuring and Annie providing Spiritual Entertainment.

The following year, 1878, Nella and Alexander perform both separately and together throughout the year. By 1879, it would appear that Alexander and Annie strike out on their own touring Wales, the Northeast and Northwest of England. They are billing the act as: Fay's American Wonders with Magnificent Stage Accessories, Splendid Lithos and 40-sheet Posters.

THEATRE ROYAL, OXFORD,
*By Permission of the Rev. the Vice-Chancellor and the
 Worshipful the Mayor.*

TO-NIGHT (FRIDAY) & SATURDAY, Dec. 12 & 13.

GREAT Success and Enthusiastic Reception of the
F A Y S,

From the Academies of Music, New York City, Philadelphia, and the principal Opera Houses and Theatres in America, in their Novel & Sensational Entertainment, **AMERICAN WONDERS**, as recently produced in London and immediate vicinity for upwards of 250 Consecutive Nights.

Miss **ANNIE FAY**, the world-renowned American Enchantress, Anti-Spirit Medium and Clairvoyante; Miss **EDITH LESTRANGE**, the Indescribable and Inimitable Phenomenon; and Mr. **ALEXANDER FAY**, the Premier Ventriloquist of the World, Humorous Mimic, and Classical Prestidigitateur. Solo Pianist, Mr. **A. MATHEWS, R.A.M.**; Business Manager, Mr. **T. J. BENSON.**

Admission—Private Boxes, £1 1s. each; each Separate Chair, 5s; Circle and Stalls, 3s.; Pit, 2s.; Balcony, 1s.; Gallery, 6d. Doors open at 7.30, commence at 8. Carriages at 10. Tickets may be had at the Box Office.

In December 1879, the Fays appear at the Theatre Royal in Oxford. The billing for this show is remarkably similar to the one used four years earlier by Col. Cordova and Nella Davenport -- Miss Annie Fay, the world-renowned American Enchantress along with Alexander Fay. From the academies of Music, New York City, Philadelphia and the principal Opera Houses and Theatres in America.

So it would appear that by this point in their career, Alexander and Annie have appropriated much of their act from Col. Cordova and Nella Davenport. Of note is the fact that I was unable to find any further reference to Nella Davenport nor Col. Cordova past 1879.

The show was comprised of Alexander presenting conjuring followed by ventriloquism featuring Fay's Funny Folks, six or seven large vent dolls.

"The most extraordinary and bewildering entertainment ever introduced to a London audience."—Daily Telegraph, Feb. 1877.
THREE RECENT AND SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENTS IN LONDON.

PENRYN HALL
 BANGOR.

FOR FOUR NIGHTS ONLY,
WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, AND SATURDAY,
 AUGUST 20, 21, 22 & 23.

First 4s. 6d.; Second 3s. 6d.; Back Seats, 6d.
 Doors open at 7.30, commence at 8. Carriages ordered at Ten.


The Managers do not profess to guarantee the day late with arrangements with the audience.

MISS ANNIE FAY


THE WORLD-FAMOUS AND
INIMITABLE PHENOMENON,
From the academies of Music, New York City, Philadelphia, and Principal Opera Houses and Theatres in London.

MYSTIC, MIRTHFUL, MUSICAL AND MARVELLOUS
AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT


The most extraordinary and bewildering entertainment ever introduced to a London audience.



THE ORIGINAL AND GENUINE
LIGHT & DARK SEANCES
With the assistance of the most distinguished and celebrated mediums of the age.



The Mystical Power of Betty King.



MISS EDITH LESTRANGE
 in the Marvellous Spiritual Flight.

VENTRILLOQUISM EXTRAORDINARY!

ALEXANDER FAY

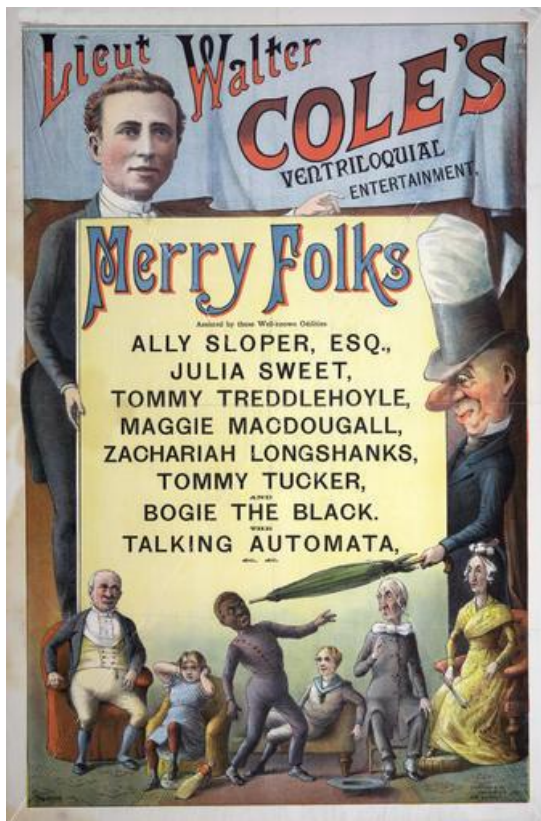
The Greatest Ventriloquist and Vocal Illusionist in the World.
With the Grand Pianist, Solo Pianist, and Principal Vocalist and Theatrical Artist, Mr. A. MATHEWS, R.A.M., and the most magnificent and extraordinary Ventriloquist performance ever witnessed.

"THE FUNNY FOLKS,"

MARVELLOUS SPIRIT READING BY MISS ANNIE FAY.

The Entertainment and Reading of the Seances are under the Management of
DR. J. BUTE
The Renowned Writer of the "British" and "American" Lectures.

Book Printing at 11, Strand, near ABLETT'S, and FLETCHER'S, and give their respective
DARK SEANCE
Exactly as given by the original DAVENPORT BROTHERS.



My research would indicate that this part of the act was heavily patterned on the famous ventriloquist Lieutenant Walter Cole and his Merry Folks.

In the second half of the show, Annie would then present a light séance. This was often followed by a dark séance for an additional cost. Typically they would intermingle a vocalist or pianist between sections of the show. The Fays would continue to follow this basic format, with variations, for the remainder of their careers.

For the next several years the Fays tour England including places such as Reading, Oxford, Brighton, London, Torquay, Liverpool, Manchester, Tynemouth, Stockton, Darlington, Whitby, Hull, Bradford, Halifax, Scarborough, Harrogate, Crewe, Derby as well as parts of Wales and Scotland. In addition to their normal act, they began to do Saturday afternoon children's shows, either in the venue they were performing at, or in nearby halls. This proved a reasonably lucrative venture. The first mention I could find of them giving children's performances was in 1882.

PUBLIC HALL.

FAY'S
Entertainment

To-Night at 8.

PROGRAMME.

1st Magic.

2ND VENTRILOQUISM,
THE FUNNY FOLKS.

3rd.
MISS ANNIE FAY'S
MARVELLOUS
LIGHT SEANCE

4th.
Thought Reading.

5th., The Enchanted Casket
AND THE GREAT
SPIRIT FLIGHT.

50 Elegant and costly Presents,
Will be given away each evening.

To conclude with the Marvellous
DARK SEANCE.
Tickets, 6d. extra.

**FAY'S
AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT.**

PROGRAMME

SOLO PIANOFORTE MISS EDITH ELMER.
Magic **Mr. ALEXANDER FAY.**
 The Ornithological Labyrinth—The Flight of the Canaries—The Enchanted Cards—The Dissociated Pigeons—Laughable Mistake and Catalytic Restoration, &c.

SONG MISS EDITH ELMER.
 The Celebrated Lady Tenor.

Ventriloquism **Mr. ALEXANDER FAY**
 THE PREMIER VENTRILOQUIST OF THE WORLD.
 Will introduce his original Singing and Talking Automaton,
 "THE MERRY FAMILY."

* INTERVAL OF FIVE MINUTES. *

SOLO PIANOFORTE MISS EDITH ELMER.
MYSTERY
MISS ANNIE FAY'S
MARVELLOUS LIGHT SEANCE.
 STRANGE MANIFESTATIONS!
 MOST BEWILDERING RESULTS!
 MID-AIR EXTRAVAGANZAS!
 AND STARTLING PHENOMENA!

SONG MISS EDITH ELMER.
Mystery **MISS ANNIE FAY**
 In her Extraordinary Supernatural Vision and Great Spirit Flight.

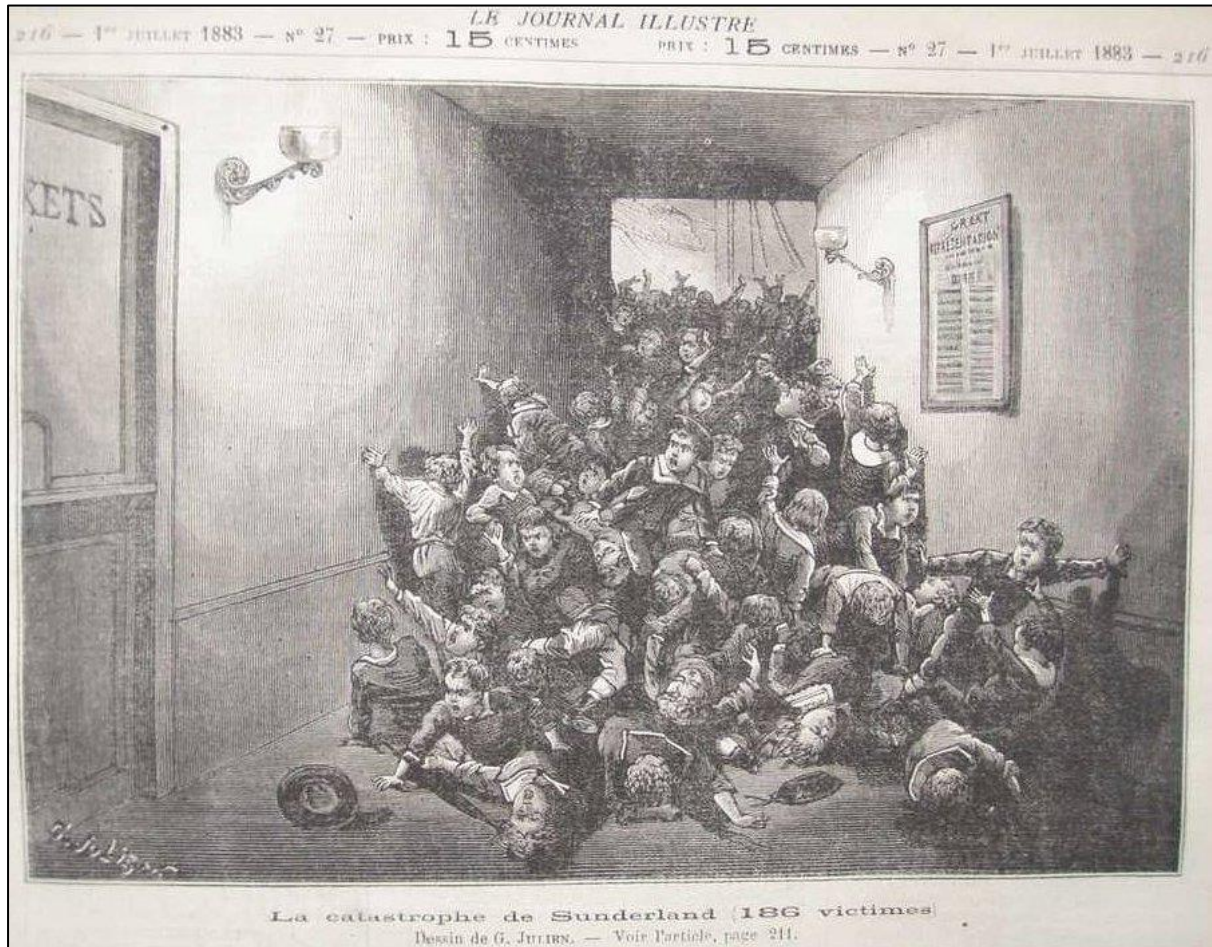
Concluding with the Marvellous
DOUBLE DARK SEANCE,
 Exactly as given by the DAVENPORT BROTHERS, and supposed to be produced by the Spirits of the Dead!
ADMISSION, SIXPENCE EXTRA.

In March, 1883, writing from the Goodfellows Hall, in Yorkshire, Alexander seeks to secure dates from the Manager of the Brighton Aquarium. In this handwritten note, Alexander writes: "We have magnificent new entertainment & properties; new & original thought reading; refined entertainment a la Maskelyne & Cooke." By April, The Fays begin what proves to be a reasonably long run at the Tynemouth Aquarium, about 12 miles north of Sunderland. And as we now know, it is from this location that they decide to hold a Saturday afternoon children's show at the Victoria Hall in nearby Sunderland.



The Aquarium, Tynemouth.

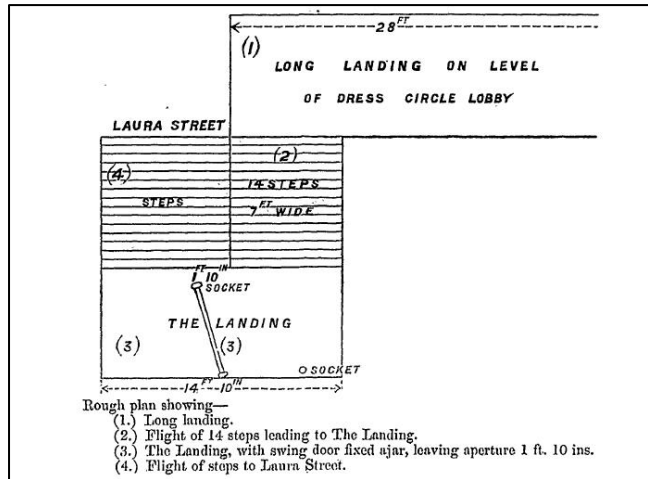
The Aftermath



Immediately following the tragedy that took place on the 16th of June, two inquests were held due to the fact that the children who perished in the disaster came from two different counties. In the evidence given both Alexander Fay and Mr. Graham, the hall-keeper, testified that during the interval the heavy door separating the main body of the hall from the gallery was open (Fay knew this because he had gone up to the gallery to reprimand several boys how were behaving badly). Fay's assistant, Hesseltine who was responsible for distributing toys and prizes to the children in gallery, claimed that the large swing door was already bolted partially closed when he arrived. However, several children gave accounts differing from Hesseltine's claiming that Hesseltine closed the door in an attempt to control the rush of children seeking prizes.

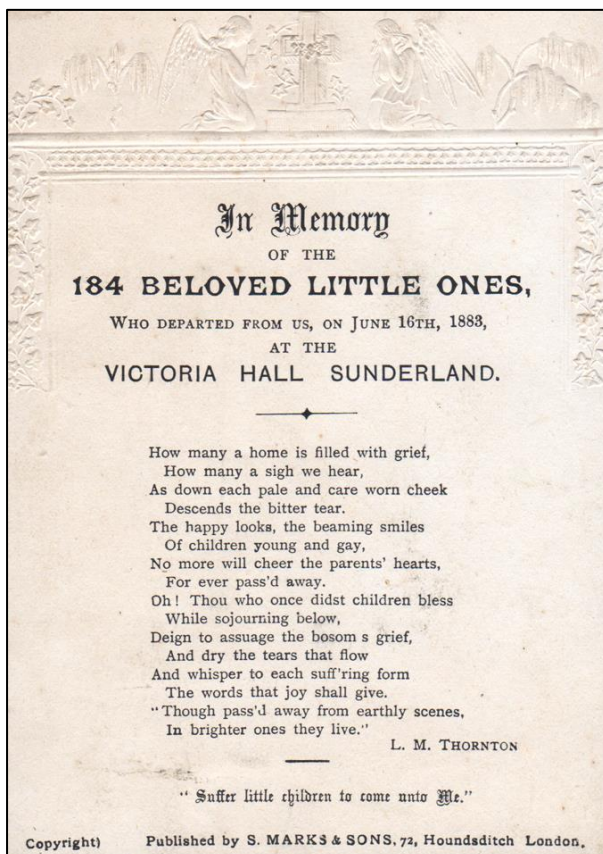
In his report to Parliament on July 14th, Hugh Shield, MP, includes a moving account of 11 year old Inez (Innis) Coe who was indirectly spared because of her disability. She went down the stairs early to avoid the crush and was told by a man at the bottom that she could not leave until the others from upstairs had come down.

Once the stampede started, Inez (Innis) snuggled into the corner of the stairway and used her crutch as a crash barrier. She saw a boy fall down and others trip over him and she squeezed into the corner as bodies piled up around her. After what must have seemed like hours, she saw a man reaching down to pull out the dead bodies that surrounded her. Screaming: "take me out before the dead ones I'm alive." Inez (Innis) was hoisted clear. On reaching the outside she fainted but was revived with a bucket of cold water.



In the end, both juries concluded that there was insufficient evidence to determine how the swing door came to be closed and bolted. Both Fay and Mr. Coates (the proprietor of the Victoria Hall) were highly censured for their recklessness in allowing such a large number of children to be brought together in the Hall without having provided an adequate staff of assistants to control and protect the children. They were further chastised for giving little thought to their audience but rather appeared more concerned about the collection of money. The behaviour of the

school teachers was also admonished for accepting free tickets and not acting in the best interest of their pupils. The final conclusion of the juries was that the negligence on the part of either Fay and Coates was not sufficiently culpable to warrant a verdict of manslaughter.



In the aftermath, money poured into the town, including a donation from her majesty Queen Victoria.

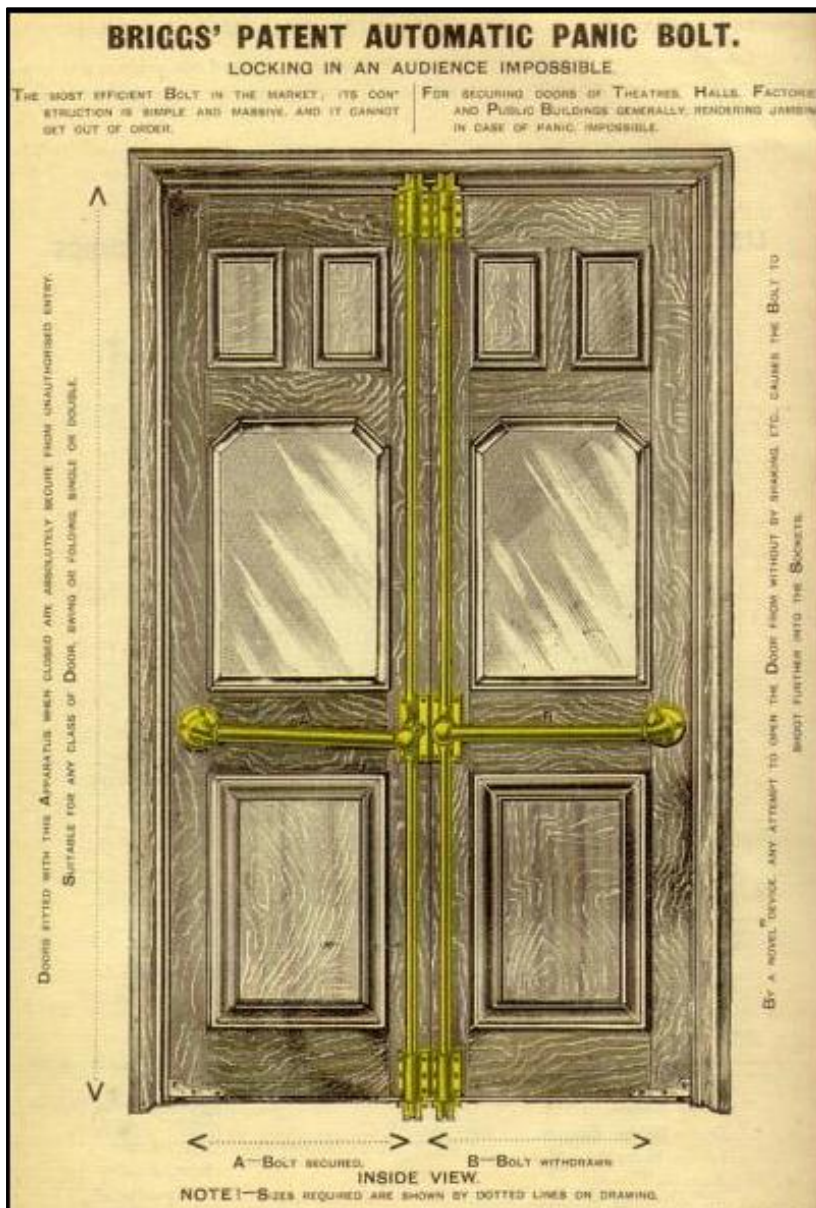
Poems were written and memorial cards produced. Monies from the donations were used to erect a monument to the dead children in Mowbray Park. This took the form of a

life-size white marble statue depicting a grieving mother holding a dead child.

Robert Alexander Briggs was living in Sunderland at the time, a young architect who was so shocked at the tragedy that he resolved that such a thing should never occur again. Eight years later, in November, 1891, he applied for a patent for a bolt which he had perfected. It was granted in August, 1892.



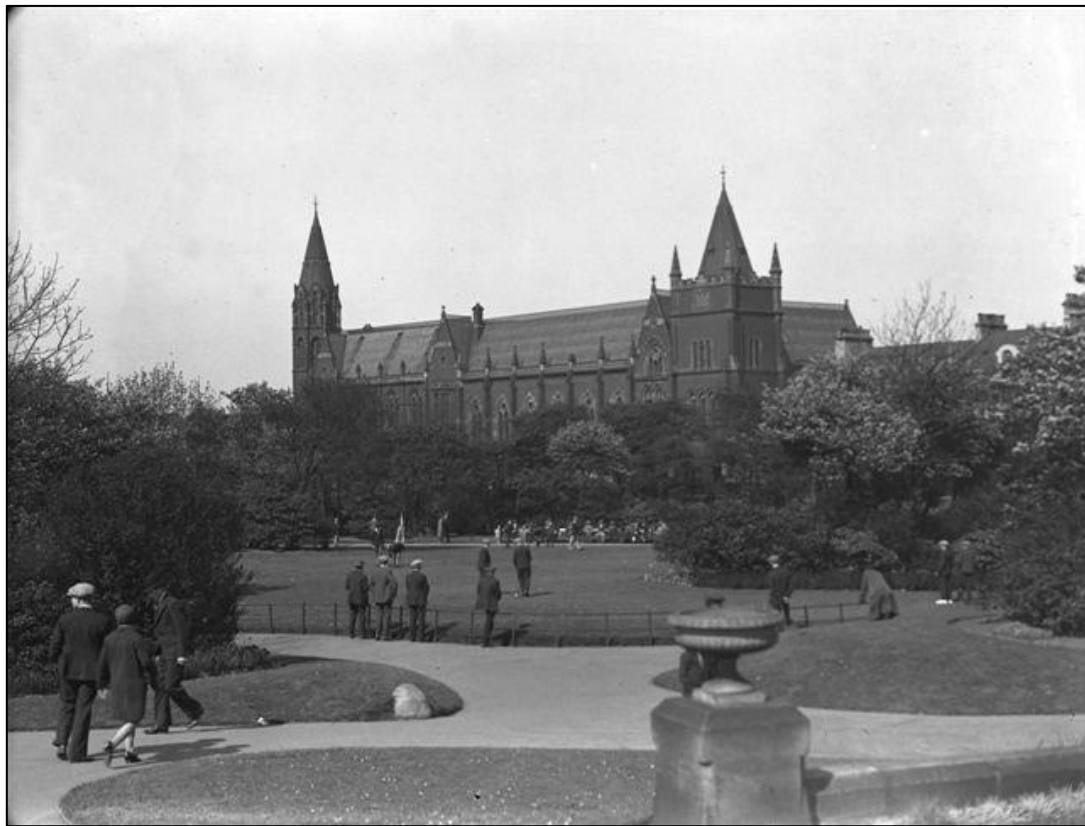
The device consists of a lock operated by movable rods across the width of each exit door. Thus fitted, the lock makes it impossible for an audience to be locked in but, at the same time, such a door is absolutely secure from unauthorised entry. This is the basis for the emergency exit door whose basic design is the same as those used today.



Victoria Hall was initially boarded-up but in 1906 it was extended and re-opened as the "Alexandra Hall" with the intention of providing wider entertainment.

However, the tragedy had damned it, audiences simply wouldn't go there, and artists wouldn't play there. It remained in periodic use until the night of April 15th, 1941 when, at around 3:00 a.m. during a heavy air-raid on the town, a German

parachute-mine scored a direct hit on the northern end of the building and completely demolished it. Few missed the sullen reminder of the earlier tragedy.



The Alexandra Hall, Sunderland.



The Alexandra Hall after it was bombed in 1941.

In 1994 Sunderland Council undertook a major refurbishment of Sunderland Museum and the surrounding area. As part of this project the marble memorial to the dead of 1883 disaster was fully restored, and re-erected in a copper and brass protective enclosure near to its original location in Mowbray Park where it stands today.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that what led me on this exploration into the Sunderland Disaster and the Fays was this little broken rocking horse.



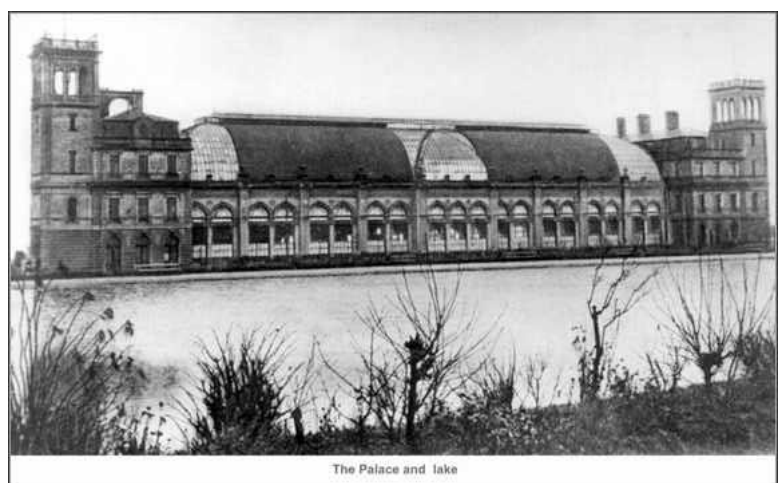
This is one of the actual toys given out as prizes at the end of Fay's magic show. It was given to Emily Steel of Gray Road, Sunderland on

the day of the disaster. A boy grabbed it and got away with the front legs and rockers. Completely by chance, about a year ago [around 2009], I read that this toy had been selected by the BBC as one of Britain's 100 most important objects. Intrigued, I set out on a journey to learn more about both the tragedy and the Fays.

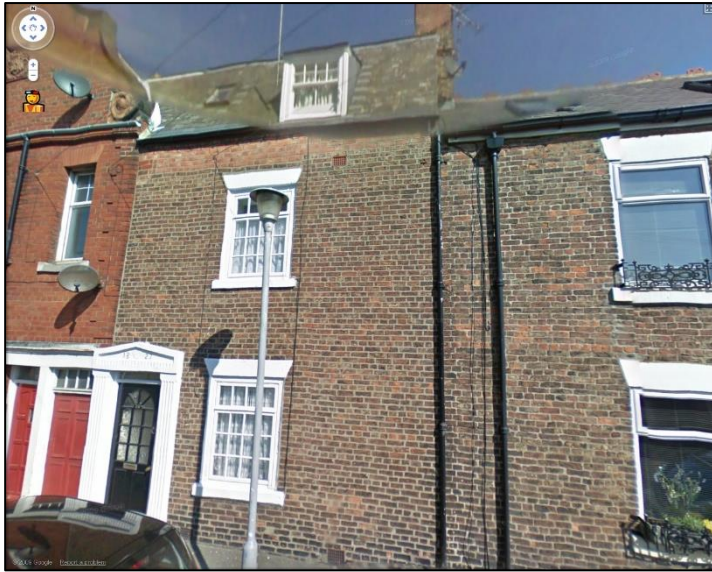
The Latter Years

So what happened to the Fays? Did they continue to perform after this tragic event? Did they change their name? Were they able to secure future bookings?

Well, in fact they did continue to perform almost immediately following the inquests. They went back to performing at the Tynemouth Aquarium.



The Palace and lake



35 Percy Street, Tynemouth.

During one of the trials, Annie testified that she had been “staying with my brother at Tynemouth”. My research found that Robert Hutchinson, along with his family was living in Tynemouth at the time of the disaster at 35 Percy Street which provides further supporting evidence that Annie and Alexander were brother and sister and they likely had a brother named Robert.

By the end of July they conclude their season at the Tynemouth Aquarium and once again adopt their arduous touring schedule around England, Wales and Scotland.

They follow this pattern for the next twenty-five years. It’s largely through the pages of *The Era* that we are able to track their movements.

They also continue to use the same billing and remain faithful to the act that was originated by Col. Cordova and Nella Davenport.

For example, in a program once owned by Peter Warlock the Fays are appearing at the Town Hall in Bermondsey, in East London. Of particular note is the fact that they are featuring “The Fay’s Vanishing Lady - the latest Parisian and London Sensation” in their act. This safely dates the performances to around 1886-7 since the Fays, like many others at the time, were copying de Kolta’s masterpiece that Charles Bertram first presented at the Egyptian Hall in August 1886.

PROGRAMME ONE PENNY
 → TOWN HALL, BERMONDSEY ←
 EVERY EVENING -TILL FURTHER NOTICE.
 THE PROGRAMME WILL BE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING,
 AND DURING EASTER WEEK—
MR. ARTHUR LLOYD
 Will commence the Entertainment with some of his most popular Comedies.
 THE
FAY'S
 From the Academies of Lyons, New York, C. de Philadelphia, and the Personal Opera Houses and
 Theatres in America, in their novel and sensational entertainment,
AMERICAN WONDERS
 As recently produced in various and distinguished theatres of New York, Philadelphia, Boston,
 Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, and other cities, and as presented in the most elaborate
 and amusingly bewildering, and sensational ever placed upon the stage. Ad. 10.
 → MISS ANNIE FAY ←
 The World renowned American Sensation, the Great Medium and Clairvoyant
MISS EDITH WELLMER
 The Famous Entertainer,
MR. WALTER NORMAN
 Clairvoyant & Medium,
MR. ALEXANDER FAY
 The Famous Ventriloquist of the World, France, and Canada, from his native
 ILLUSORY MIRACLES PROF. ALEX. FAY
MISS ANNIE FAY'S
 MARVELLOUS LIGHT SEANCE.
 STRANGE MANIFESTATIONS! MOST BIZARRE RESULTS! MID-AIR
 EXTRAVAGANZA! AND STARTLING PHENOMENA!
 "The Fay's has his feet and neck, will be fastened by a no. 1000 selected from
 the London Exhibition, and the LIFE-LIKE GOLF BALL
 THE MYSTERIOUS BELL RINGING THE SPIRIT CARPETING AND THE
 ANIMATED VIOLIN THE GREAT COOLER & WATER MONSTER."
 (L. F. de la S. 1886-7)
 THE TAMBOURINE FLIGHT THE WORKING SCISSORS THE MOUTH
 ORGAN IN ITS TRAVELS THE RUBBER & ROBIN THE SPIRIT DROPPER
 AND GREAT PAUL SCYTHION. THE SELF-JETING KNIFE.
 & a table of Miracles, Jests and World's Sports of Fun and Amusement.
 Are nightly produced at each Seance, in the immediate presence of the Company.
MR. ALEXANDER FAY,
 The acknowledged Premier VENTRILOQUIST of the world will commence his grand Seance of
 "THE FUNNY FOLKS,"
 (THE LIFE SIZE MESSMERISM AND THE)
 Mr. FAY is considered by all competent judges to be the greatest medium the human voice
 or hand, and his performance as a Ventriloquist is pronounced by the faculty and press of this
 country the most wonderful entertainment of the kind ever introduced in the British Empire.
 Miss Annie Fay's Extraordinary Supernatural Vision and
THE FAY'S VANISHING LADY,
 The latest Parisian and London Sensation
 THE INSTANTANEOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF A LADY
 In full sight of the audience, the Stage Carpet and the Carpet on the top of the house.
 The Performance will conclude each Evening with Professor Fay's experiment in Psychology, &
MIRACLES OF MESMERISM.
 THIS PROGRAMME SUBJECT TO ALTERATION
 At the discretion of the Public Entertainment Mr. ALEXANDER FAY and Miss ANNIE FAY, will
 (by special demand) give their world renowned and marvellous
DARK HALF HOUR,
 The wonder of the Nineteenth Century being an exact representation of the Dark Seance of
 Spiritualism, and supposed to be produced by the aid of the Dead.
 N. B.—The Seance with Original Exhibitions given by THE FAYS in England during the past
 10 years and annually witnessed in the presence of Countesses and others who pretend to receive
 Spiritualism. The Seance includes all the dramatic and the most Marvellous performed by the Seance
 of the Parisian Seances, and other of the most famous. To be performed at a Seance 1000
 At 10 o'clock in the evening. Tickets 10s. 6d. 5s. 6d. 3s. 6d. 2s. 6d. 1s. 6d.



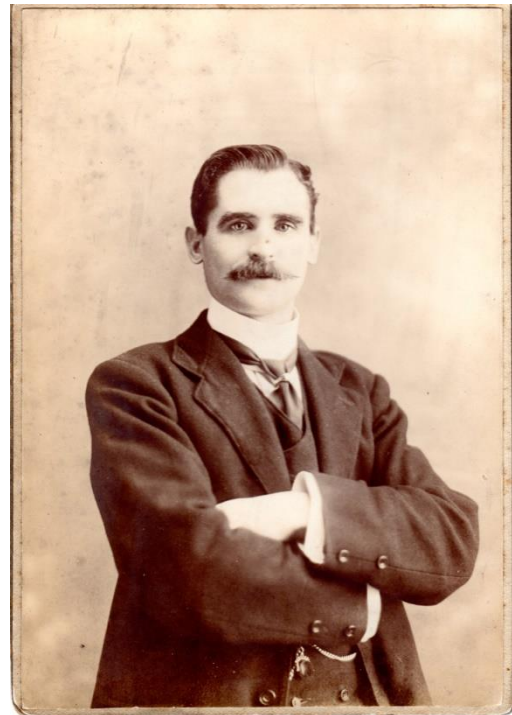
In the summer of 1887, after an eleven year absence, Anna Eva Fay returns to the United Kingdom. Soon after her return, an interesting notice appears in the pages of *The Era*:

The Fays, World-renowned Entertainers. Established in England Ten Years. Alexander Fay and Miss Fay beg to inform Managers, Sharers, &c., they have no connection with a Spiritualistic Entertainment now given in Scotland under name of "Anna" Fay.

THE FAYS, the World-renowned Entertainers,
Established in England Ten Years. Now the greatest success, PUBLIC HALL, HASTINGS, under the management of Mr. W. Morton. Alexander Fay and Miss Fay beg to inform Managers, Sharers, &c., they have no connection with a Spiritualistic Entertainment now given in Scotland under name of "Anna" Fay. N.B.—The Fays are open to share complete entertainment. Magnificent Printing, 40-Sheet Posters.

At some point in the late 1880s, early 1890s, Fay takes on an assistant, Gustave Fasola.

However, by 1893 Fasola strikes out on his own and for several years he pretty much duplicates Fay's act until he decides to completely overhaul the show and re-launch himself as Fasola, The Famous Indian Fakir. To add further confusion, at some point Fasola marries an Annie Fay. Fasola will later gain his own international notoriety for an incident that occurs during one of his performances... but I will leave that story for Gary Hunt to tell.



Fasola

At the turn of the century, we find that Alexander Fay is married to Nellie age 25, and has two children Eveline, aged 3 and Lillian aged 1:

<i>James M. Kelley</i>	<i>Wanda</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Married</i>
<i>Alexander Fay</i>	<i>Nellie</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>Public</i>
<i>Nellie</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>do do</i>
<i>Eveline</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>S.</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>do do</i>
<i>Lillian</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>S.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>do do</i>

A program from Peter Lane's collection from 1904 confirms that the Fays are continuing to hold true to form by providing a show that is almost identical to the one that was given 25 years earlier.

By 1905 the trail goes cold. Whether the Fays continued to perform further into the 20th century I have been unable to ascertain. I do know that an Alexander Fay appears in the 1911 census as a border at 84 Castlereagh Street, Barnsley in Yorkshire. His profession is recorded as an Entertainer, and his marital status is now widowed.

The final clue to what became of Alexander Fay is contained in an article that appeared on Saturday, September 5th, 1936 in the *World's Fair*. It is a letter written by Mons. Ducarel to the editor on the topic: "Conjurers I met and saw over 40 years ago". At the end of this wonderful article we find the following:

Royal Hall, Gainsboro
OCT 29 1904

PUBLIC HALL, TO-NIGHT.

"The most Extraordinary and Bewildering Entertainment ever introduced to a London Audience."
DAILY TELEGRAPH, February, 1887.

The Management have much pleasure in announcing the Engagement of

THE FAYS'
AMERICAN MYSTERIES.
TITLE REGISTERED.

❖ PROGRAMME. ❖

Overture *Stradella*

Magic Mr. ALEXANDER FAY
The Ornithological Labyrinth—The Flight of the Canaries—The Enchanted Cards—The Dissicated Pigeons—
Laughable Mistake and Cabalistic Restoration, &c., &c.

Mystery Miss ANNIE FAY
Miss Annie Fay's Marvellous LIGHT SEANCE.
Strange Manifestations! Most Bewildering Results! Mid-Air Extravaganzas! and Startling Phenomena!

Ventriloquism Mr. ALEXANDER FAY
The Premier Ventriloquist in the World, will introduce his Original Singing and Talking Automaton,
"THE MERRY FAMILY".
Miss FAY will introduce her Original Illusion, the Greatest Novelty of the age—

THE CRYSTAL CASSET, A PUZZLE TO THE SCIENTISTS
Miss FAY'S Supernatural Vision and Thought Transmission. Extraordinary.

THE MYSTERIOUS SPIRIT FLIGHT.

Concluding with
PROFESSOR FAY'S MARVELS OF HYPNOTISM.

CARL & CARR, The Famous Comedians, will appear.

After the conclusion of the Evening Entertainment, Mr. FAY will give his marvellous

❖ **DARK SEANCE.** ❖
The Wonder of the 19th Century, exactly as given by the DAVENPORT BROTHERS.
Including all the most Wonderful Manifestations and Startling Spectral Phenomena, supposed to be done by the aid of the
Spirits of the Dead.

N.B.—This is the FAYS' Original Entertainment, established in England twenty years.

Alexander Fay did conjuring and ventriloquism but the most attractive was given by Miss Fay in a cabinet séance. She was tied with calico strips to a stake and various effects took place inside the cabinet. Poverty overtook Fay and he died in Leeds Workhouse.



The Leeds Workhouse.

Despite my own search through the Leeds Workhouse archives, I have been unable to locate either an Alexander Fay or an Alfred Hutchinson. Throughout my research into the Fays following the Sunderland Disaster, I found no evidence that they ever again presented a similar Children's Saturday afternoon show.

There remain many unanswered questions about the Fays. We may never know exactly when Alexander passed away or what happened to Annie and we certainly will never know who, or how, the door to the gallery at Victoria Hall came to be bolted partially shut on that fateful day in June, 1883.

Thank you for listening.