

# Brian Inglis

Brian Inglis (1916-1993) was an Irish journalist, author and broadcaster, best known in the UK as presenter of Granada Television's historical series *All Our Yesterdays*. His many published works include books about alternative medicine and psychical research.

## Life and Career

Brian St John Inglis was born on 31 July 1916 in Dublin, Ireland. His father was Sir Claude Cavendish Inglis, a hydraulic engineer; his mother was Lady Vera Inglis (née Blood). He attended school in Shrewsbury, then Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford. He was awarded a PhD in history after having served in the RAF Coastal Command during World War II.

In 1954 Inglis joined *The Spectator*, first as assistant editor, then editor, turning it into 'by far the most lively and readable of the weekly papers' and championing progressive social causes.<sup>1</sup> In 1962 he began a new career in television, presenting the long-running programmes [What the Papers Say](#) and [All Our Yesterdays](#). He died in 1993.

## Psychical Research

An obituarist writes:

For the last 20 years, Inglis had taken an interest in, as he entitled one of his books, 'Science and Parascience', including extra-sensory perception, homeopathic medicine and spontaneous combustion. This got him into furious rows in the correspondence columns with scientists of a traditional nature. However, Inglis never became obsessed with such matters and seldom introduced them into his conversation with friends, which was always gossip and amusing.<sup>2</sup>

Inglis was an active member of the Society for Psychical Research contributing reviews and comment to its journal. He presented the ITV three-part series 'Margins of the Mind' in 1968, a documentary investigation of dowsing, spiritual healing and telepathy. His publications about the paranormal described coincidence, dreams, trance, altered states of mind, clairvoyance, precognition and especially alternate types of healing; also, early research of spirit mediums. Of particular note is his two-volume history of the scientific research of the paranormal, *Natural and Supernatural* (covering antiquity to 1914) and *Science and Parascience* (1915-1939), a well-researched survey of the development of scientific approaches to anomalous phenomena.

Plans to bring the subject up-to-date in a third volume were interrupted by his death.<sup>3</sup>

Together with [Arthur Koestler](#) and Tony Bloomfield, Inglis co-created the KIB foundation, the forerunner to the [Koestler Parapsychology Unit](#) based at the University of Edinburgh.

## Works

### Books

*Fringe Medicine* (1964). London: Faber & Faber.

*Natural and Supernatural: A History of the Paranormal from Earliest Times to 1914* (1977). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

*Natural Medicine* (1979). London: Collins.

*The Alternative Health Guide* (1983, with R. West). London: M. Joseph.

*Science and Parascience 1914-1939* (1984). London: Hodder & Stoughton.

*The Paranormal* (1985). London: Granada.

*The Hidden Power* (1986). London: J. Cape.

*The Power of Dreams* (1987). London: Grafton Books.

*Trance: A Natural History of Altered States of Mind* (1989). London: Grafton Books.

*Coincidence: A Matter of Chance or Synchronicity* (1990). London: Hutchinson.

### Articles

Correspondence: Dowsing and electromagnetic waves (1970). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 257-78.

Correspondence (1971). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 46, 207-08.

Correspondence (1976). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 414.

Correspondence: The paranormal (1986). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 53, 257-58.

Sir William Barrett (1988). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 16-24.

James Randi (1991). *Psi Researcher* 3, 22.

James Randi (1992). *Psi Researcher* 5, 18.

### Book Reviews

*Parapsychology and Contemporary Science*, by A.P. Dubrov and V.N. Pushkin (1983). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 149-50.

*The Spiritualists*, by R. Brandon (1983). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 209-12.

*The Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, by L. Shepard (1986). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 398-99.

*The Seen and the Unseen*, by A. MacKenzie (1988). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 98-99.

*The Oxford Companion to the Mind*, ed. by R.L. Gregory (1988). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 236-37.

*Ghosts, Demons and Henry James*, by P.G. Beidler (1990). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 56, 240-42.

## Literature

Henry, J. (1993). Brian Inglis. *Psi Researcher* 8, 29.

West, R. (2011). [Obituary: Brian Inglis](#). Independent, 22 October.

## Endnotes

### Footnotes

- [1.](#) West (2011).
- [2.](#) West (2011).
- [3.](#) Henry (1993).