

# Renée Haynes

Renée Haynes (1906-1994) was an English historian and psychical researcher who wrote extensively about psi phenomena. Haynes coined the term 'boggle threshold', which is widely used in parapsychology to indicate the point at which tolerance of an anomalous claim turns to disbelief, and which varies from one person to another.

## Life and Career

Renée Oriana Haynes was born in London on July 23, 1906. Her father was a lawyer, her mother a granddaughter of [TH Huxley](#). She read law and history at St Hugh's College, Oxford and subsequently worked for the publishers Geoffrey Bles in London. She married Jarrard Tickell, a journalist and novelist in 1929 and started writing books at around this time. In the 1940s she worked for the British Council. She converted to Catholicism in 1942. In 1946 she became a member of the [Society for Psychical Research](#).

## Psychical Research

Haynes's interest in psychical research began with vivid precognitive dreams. Some of these she described in her 1961 book *The Hidden Springs: An Enquiry into Extrasensory Perception*, a study of spontaneous experiences. She was less interested in mass experiments and statistical evaluations, stating that 'there is undue reverence for that sacred object the computer'<sup>[1]</sup> - a stance that was criticized by some of her colleagues.<sup>[2]</sup> Some also disagreed with her tendency to dismiss the objections of psi-sceptics.<sup>[3]</sup> Haynes's account of the SPR's century of research, *The Society for Psychical Research 1882-1982: A History*, was praised for acquainting the general public with its existence and activities, but was also criticized for being poorly documented.<sup>[4]</sup>

Haynes served on the SPR council from 1957. In 1970 she became the editor of its quarterly Journal, holding the post until 1981.

## Boggle Threshold

Haynes coined the colloquial term '[boggle threshold](#)', the point at which the mental discomfort caused by a new idea or claim causes a person to reject it as untrue. This has been widely used in parapsychology to refer to the variation in personal levels of resistance to paranormal claims. See [Boggle Threshold](#).

## Selected Publications

### Books

*Neapolitan Ice* (1929). London: Chatto & Windus.

*Pan, Caesar and God* (1938). London: William Heinemann.

*Hilaire Belloc* (1953). London: Longmans, Green and Company.

*The Hidden Springs: An Enquiry into Extra-sensory Perception* (1961). London: Hutchinson.

*Philosopher King: The Humanist Pope Benedict XIV* (1970). London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

*The Seeing Eye The Seeing I: Perception, Sensory and Extrasensory* (1976). New York: St Martin's Press.

*The Society for Psychical Research 1882-1982: A History* (1982). London: Macdonald.

## **Book Reviews**

*Doubles in Literary Psychology* by R. Tymms (1949). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 35, 88-89.

*Acquainted with the Night* by N. Price (1950). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 35, 195.

*Our Lady of Fatima* by W.T. Walsh (1950). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 35, 217-19.

*The Message of Fatima* by C.C. Martindale (1951). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 36, 376-78.

*Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* by R.A. Knox (1951). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 36, 402-4.

*The Stuff of Dreams* by A. Uttley (1954). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 37, 289-90.

*The Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. by G. Smith (1970). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 302-5.

*Periodical Literature I: American* (1970). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 354-57.

*Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty and his Expectations* by W. Grey Walter (1970). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 363-64.

*Superstition and the Superstitious* by E. Maple (1971). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 46, 251-52.

*Parent and Child Telepathy. Five Hundred and Five Possible Episodes in a Family: A Study of the Telepathy of Everyday Life* by B.E. Schwarz (1972). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 46, 43-45.

*The Psychic World of Peter Hurkos* by N.L. Browning (1972). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 46, 213-14.

*Unfinished Man* by R. van Over (1973). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 47, 55-56.

*Les Domaines de la Parapsychologie* by H. Larcher and P. Ravignat (1973). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 47, 117-20.

*The Lake and the Castle* by A. Guirdham (1977). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 466-67.

*The Search for the Full Human Being* by L. LeShan (1977). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 540-42.

*Dracula Country: Travels and Folk Beliefs in Romania* by A. MacKenzie (1978). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 760-61.

*Ruskin, Lady Mount-Temple and The Spiritualists. An Episode in Broad-Lands History* by Van Akin Burd (1983). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 133-35.

*Something Hidden* by L.E. Rhine (1984). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 390-91.

*Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* by M. Baker (1986). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 53, 241-43.

*Queen Victoria's Other World* by P. Underwood (1988). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 37-38.

## **Translations**

*Psychical Phenomena* by Réginald-Omez (1959, translated by R. Haynes). London, Burns and Oates.

*Our Pioneers VII Charles Richet (1850-1935)* by R. Warcollier (1959, translated by R. Haynes). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 157-62.

## **Correspondence**

[Psi activity] (1959). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 198-99.

An 'ether imprint'? (1960). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 429-30.

'Out of the body' experiences (1961). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 41, 52.

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ESP and pains (1967). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 44, 49-50.

[Edmund Halley] (1983). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 153.

[Cross correspondences] (1983). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 220-21.

[St Francis of Assisi] (1984). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 399.

[Ian Stevenson] (1989). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 312.

## Articles

From Carl Gustav Jung: 1875-1961, 'Exploring uncharted territory', *The Tablet*, 17 June 1961 (1961). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 41, 169-71.

Catholic views of parapsychology (1964). *International Journal of Parapsychology* VI/4, 389-406.

Postscript to *The Roots of Coincidence* by A. Koestler (1972). London: Hutchinson.

Some Christian imagery in *Life after Death* by A. Toynbee, A. Koestler et al (1976). London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Obituary: Letitia Fairfield (1978). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 753.

Obituary: Gardner Murphy (1979). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 50, 132.

Obituary: Rosalind Heywood (1980). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 50, 521-22.

The trees and the wood: The importance of historical and legal evidence in psychical research (1980). *Parapsychology Review*, 77/3, 17-21.

In search of Harry Price (1982). *The Unexplained* 99, 1974-77.

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Obituary: Arthur Koestler (1983). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 52, 159-60.

Tribute: Anita Gregory (1985). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 53, 132-33.

In Memoriam: Alister Hardy (1985). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 53, 198-200.

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Tribute: John Cutten (1990). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 56, 191-92.

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## Literature

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## **Endnotes**

### **Footnotes**

1. ^ Cited in Berger (1991), 176.
2. ^ Beloff (1993), 78.
3. ^ Beloff (1983), 140.
4. ^ Alvarado (1983), 156.