contains eight excellent colour plates. In addition to the material on Lindow Man itself there are many references to other preserved bodies. The major book has a large section on the archaeology, folklore, and oral tradition surrounding bog bodies, including the "boggarts and bogles," the strange village games in parts of Britain that may be related to bog sacrifices, and the beheading myths of mediaeval times.

History and archaeology are said to be classic hobbies of doctors, and there is certainly a large enough medical component in both of these books to provide unusual fascination for our profession. With

Christmas on the horizon start dropping hints about the house so that one or preferably both of these books get into your stocking.

The Lindow Man: the Body in the Bog. I M Stead, J B Bourke, D Brothwell. (Pp 208; £15.) London: British Museum Publications, 1986. ISBN 0-7141-1386-7.

The Bog Man and the Archaeology of People. D Brothwell. (Pp 128; figs; £5.95 paperback.) London: British Museum Publications, 1986. ISBN 0-7141-1384-0.

The paranormal defended

TERRY HAMBLIN

Halfway through reading Dr Inglis's interesting book I began to suspect that the hidden power of the title was not the strange magical force of "psi," manifesting itself as extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, poltergeists, and clairvoyance, but the secret conspiracy among established scientists to belittle, denigrate, and otherwise put down any suggestion that such a force might exist. For this is not an impartial investigation into the paranormal but a polemic against those who from Michael Faraday to Martin Gardner have considered the whole thing to be a flim flam and its practitioners charlatans wanting exposure.

The only time that I ever met Brian Inglis we argued about horoscopes. I told him that the finding of the French psychologist, Michael Gauquelin, that sports champions tended to be born under Mars "rising" had been exposed on BBC television as having inadequate controls. He insisted that far from discrediting Gauquelin, further research had confirmed his results, but that this had been covered up by the scientific establishment. At the time I put it down to his Irish, radical quirkiness—the meeting had been about cancer and he had been espousing the mind over matter cause—but in this book he gives details of this and other attempts to discredit anything with a hint of the occult about it.

The book is not likely to gain many sympathisers from among active scientists as it is contentious in its argument and less than scrupulous in its logic, yet there is probably some truth in its general thrust. Having followed the creation-evolution debate for some time, I have been surprised by the way that scientists close ranks behind a palpably unlikely Darwinian view of events rather than admit to any sort of God interfering in their affairs. As C S Lewis said in his book *Miracles*, no particular instance will be admitted as miraculous until every possible natural explanation has been tried and failed, and the most improbable natural explanation will be accepted—collective hallucination, hypnosis, widespread conspiracy, lying by those not known to be liars with nothing to gain by the lie—rather than that a miracle has occurred.

Dr Inglis adduces many inexplicable phenomena to his cause: the homing of pigeons, the social behaviour of termites, the mating of moths, the shoaling of fish and flocking of starlings, plants that grow better when spoken to, dogs that know you are leaving before they are spoken to, fire walking, spontaneous combustion, speaking in tongues, walking on water, feeding 5000; even Elisha the prophet leaking the plans of the King of Syria.

It is when he cites the antics of spiritualists and mediums that he leaves me behind. I mean, what is all this table tapping and exuding of ectoplasm about? To do Dr Inglis justice, he does not believe in fairies and hobgoblins but suggests that underlying all these phenomena is an untapped and untamed force that sometimes works and sometimes doesn't, depending on factors that are equally indescribable. No wonder the scientists find it hard to stomach. It is a bit like the radio that has an intermittent fault—it always works at the repairers but not when it gets back home.

Putting aside all prejudice and having no fame to hazard or ideology to defend, is there any reason to believe that Brian Inglis is not a crank or at best a dupe of cranks? I remember when reading Fritjof Capra's book *The Tao of Physics*, which relates subparticle physics to Eastern mysticism, thinking that even though the book was purest sophistry, the glimpse into the previously unknown world of quarks and charm had disturbed the fulcrum on which I had thought to move the earth. There are more things, Horatio; and Dr Inglis does well to remind us of the intolerance of dogma that in the past disparaged Galileo, meteorites, and hypnotism. On the other hand, our models of reality are always provisional and the odd uncomfortable instance will not make us jettison them for the paper and balsa wood thing that he proposes here; rather we will change a wheel or modify an air inlet until we get it right. Coincidence is often astonishing and fraud remarkably widespread. I won't be much impressed by Russian children who regularly get a one in five chance correct six times in 25, but if Uri Geller, now purportedly working for Rio Tinto Zinc, can find new gold mines simply by taking thought—I'll still think I'm being conned.

The Hidden Power. B Inglis. (Pp 320; figs; £10.95.) London: Cape, 1986. ISBN 0-224-02284-9.

She may subscribe to the "breast is best" theory, but it doesn't look as if her heart's in it. Gillray's 1796 cartoon of a fashionable mother giving a quick feed before going out for the evening is one of the many excellent illustrations in *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: a History of Infant Feeding* by Valerie Fildes (Edinburgh University Press; £19.75). Dealing mainly with European practices in the period 1500-1800, it also provides a short outline of earlier customs from antiquity to the Middle Ages and contains

many surprising and fascinating details—as well as a wealth of statistical data—about the four basic methods of feeding: maternal breastfeeding, wet nursing, hand feeding, and direct animal suckling.