



J.B. Priestley

John Boynton Priestley lived on the Isle from 1933 to 1959, first at Billingham Manor then at Brook Hill House.

J.B. Priestley was born in Bradford in 1894 and after being educated at Belle Vue Grammar School, he went to work for a wool firm called Helm & Co. It was whilst working here that he started writing at night; he had some of his articles published in newspapers as far away as London and he later moved south.

He served in World War I and

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He moved to the Isle of Wight and resided in Brook Hill House and Billingham Manor (in Chillerton) between 1933 and 1959. Due to the fact that he loved socialising with friends and family, he hosted great parties and was nick-named 'Jolly Jack' for his bubbly character. However, to those who did not know him particularly well, he came across as rather gruff.

During his time on the Isle of Wight, he wrote many of his works, including *An Inspector Calls*, which is one of his best-known plays and a classic of the mid-twentieth century.

Activities you might enjoy...

Media / English Language / Literature / Creative Writing



- ▶ Priestley made a number of radio broadcasts. Explore the use of radio as a major source of communication during Priestley's working life.
- ▶ At the time Priestley was at Brook, radio was used by the British and the Nazis as a propaganda device to influence people - discuss the positive and negative aspects of this.
- ▶ What methods are used to influence young people today, and what messages might we suppress?
- ▶ Consider how, without images, the emphasis in radio was purely on words and sound to convey meaning.
- ▶ Listen to parts of Priestley's *Delight*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtclGy2lINA>
- ▶ Write about your own delights in life. These could be entitled 'Delights of my Childhood', or 'Regrets'. These could be written to be read out and recorded like radio broadcasts.

Arts, Literary & History Trail - BROOK - KS5



On-site activities you might like...

Priestley was well travelled and wrote about the places he visited including his own impressions.

- ▶ Walk up to the Long Stone in Mottistone which Priestley's wife, Jacquetta, worked to excavate.
- ▶ Use what you see as inspiration for a creative response.
- ▶ Write up notes on your impressions of the Isle of Wight so far. Include descriptions of locations in an entertaining style that could be published on a tourism website like www.myisleofwight.com or broadcast on radio without the luxury of images.



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Back at school or college you could...

- ▶ Look at the tradition of letter writing for airing thoughts and opinions and compare with the blogs of today. At this time, people didn't have the technology we have today. They wrote letters to each others to express their feelings and let their friends know what was happening in their everyday lives. The slower pace of life meant that people could sit and take the time to craft a letter. They also did less in their lives so could focus on the things they did do.
- ▶ Write a letter to a friend or relative giving vivid descriptions and your impressions of locations on the Isle of Wight.
- ▶ Read the following quote from <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/39110>
'Focusing on the 1930s, it shows how Priestley travelled widely in the United States and came to admire the democratic and collective aspects of American culture, whilst also developing a critique of what he saw as the lack of individuality and creativity in other elements of the 'mass' society, anticipating arguments he would develop after 1945'.
- ▶ Discuss this idea of a 'lack of individuality and creativity in a mass society'. Do you think there is a lack of individualism among the youth of today? Is this the same in Britain and overseas?
- ▶ Use the quote as a statement for a discursive essay.