

VOLUME 40

NUMBER 1

Autumn 2018

The Australian Journal of  
**Clinical**  
**Hypnotherapy**  
**& Hypnosis**

An interdisciplinary  
journal dedicated to  
advancing the art,  
science and practice  
of hypnosis



Australian Society of Clinical  
**Hypnotherapists**  
**Change.Grow.Succeed.**



## Contents

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James Braid (I): Natural Philosopher,  
Structured Thinker, Gentleman Scientist,  
and Innovative Surgeon

Lindsay B Yeates

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James Braid (II): Mesmerism, Braid's  
Crucial Experiment, and Braid's  
Discovery of Neuro-Hypnotism

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This publication has been  
adopted as the official  
journal of the Australian  
Society of Clinical  
Hypnotherapists  
[www.asch.com.au](http://www.asch.com.au)

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# Contents

---

1 Editorial

---

3 James Braid (I): Natural Philosopher,  
Structured Thinker, Gentleman Scientist,  
and Innovative Surgeon

Lindsay B Yeates

---

40 James Braid (II): Mesmerism, Braid's  
Crucial Experiment, and Braid's  
Discovery of Neuro-Hypnotism

Lindsay B Yeates

---

---

93 About the Contributor

---

94 Publication Standards

---

97 Subscription Information

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ISSN 0810-0713

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Published by the Australian Society of Clinical Hypnotherapists

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# Editorial

This is the 40<sup>th</sup> publication year of *The Australian Journal of Clinical Hypnotherapy & Hypnosis*! To celebrate, we are publishing a theme volume (four articles over two issues!) that take us back to one of the pioneers of “hypnotism”—James Braid (1795-1860) who was a Scottish scientist, surgeon and who is generally regarded as the “Father of Modern Hypnotism”.

Lindsay Yeates, who is a regular contributor to the journal, has delivered four exquisitely written scholarly articles, which take you on a journey through Braid’s life, profession, philosophy, and explorations and discoveries.

There were two things that grabbed my attention from the outset...

The first is that the articles establish historical context and precedence for many hypnotherapy techniques we learned in *Hypnosis 101* that we have taken for granted and attributed to modern practice but which were, in fact, developed about 200 years ago. For example, Braid invented the double “upwards and inwards squint plus mental concentration” technique as an induction. Braid also introduced and solidified the technical term “suggestion”—which he had adopted from the work of Thomas Brown, his philosophy lecturer at Edinburgh University—into his demonstrations, teachings and writings. In addition, he also discovered that having his subjects sit in an erect posture, rather than reclining, was more conducive to helping them concentrate the mind, maintaining a fixed gaze, as well as controlling the body. He did these things from the perspective of scientifically investigating the phenomenon of hypnotism and gaining clinical experience over an 18-year period. It is therefore a shame, as well as a travesty of justice, to learn that James Braid’s contribution to hypnotism was manipulated or excised out of the historical record during the 1890s by detractors who were committed more to commercial considerations and self-promotion than to truth. What makes this even more unfair is that James Braid was renowned for his compassion and concern for his patients, as well as for the health, safety and

welfare of the communities in which he resided. Lindsay Yeates has gone a long way to redress the imbalance of the historical narrative and to restore James Braid to his rightful place.

The second aspect that grabbed my attention comes from my perspective as a fiction writer, as well as a viewer of television and film. James Braid's background has all the hallmarks of great storytelling and drama, which leads me to believe that Braid's life and his relationship with his contemporaries would form the foundation for a fascinating in-depth documentary series, or even better, a fabulous dramatised television mini-series in the spirit of *Victoria*. Imagine a cast of characters made up of the early "clerics, exorcists, phrenologists, mystics, medicos and mesmerists" that Lindsay Yeates describes so eloquently... all touting their respective scientific, religious and political philosophies and ready to take each other down to serve their individual agendas. Throw in some colourful characters such as William Maxwell who was in command of the guard that led Louis XVI to the guillotine, and who then acquired a handkerchief soaked in the King's blood, which he carried on his person for the rest of his life and you've got the makings of a great television drama.

But read on, and make your mind up for yourself...

Julie Ditrich

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: The terms "subconscious", "unconscious" and "unconscious processes" are interchangeable, and will vary from article to article. Individual authors will determine what terminology they prefer to use, as this is predicated on the models of psychology, hypnotherapy, psychotherapy and other modalities in which they trained. Similarly, usage of the words "client" and "patient" will also vary from author to author, depending on their background and qualifications.*