

Inglis, Anthony Vivian ('Tony')

by Bridget Hourican

Inglis, Anthony Vivian ('Tony') (1911–97), film art director, was born 14 April 1911 in Dublin, son of John J. Inglis, civil engineer, and Annie Inglis (née O'Reilly). During the 1916 rising the family house in Mount St. was occupied by British soldiers. Tony had a brief vocation for the Christian Brothers, with whom he went to study in England. Returning to Dublin, he attended the Metropolitan School of Art in Kildare St. and worked under Seán Keating (qv) and Oliver Sheppard (qv). A promising student, he won a scholarship to Brussels, awarded for his statue of St Francis of Assisi, and in Dublin he showed twenty-two designs, mostly for stained glass, at a group exhibition; the *Irish Times* (4 Jan. 1933) commented that they were 'indicative of a fertile mind and strong individuality'. At college he met Pat Burke Kennedy, whom he married in 1936. She was petite, pretty, and vivacious, and worked as a model – advertising, on one occasion, Pond's cream. The couple moved to London, where Inglis worked for J. Walter Thompson, an American advertising agency.

On the outbreak of war in 1939 he returned to Dublin and joined the Irish Marine Service for a short time before starting work for the *Cork Examiner*, drawing maps. In 1942 he won the Maritime Institute of Ireland's award for designing their seal, which depicted a viking longship. The following year he was invited to work on Laurence Olivier's film of *Henry V*, designing armour, costumes, and sets. This was his film breakthrough and soon led to his specialising in art direction, a job that involves creating the visual style of the film. In Dublin he worked as set designer for *The promise of Barty O'Brien* (1951), an American production with a Sean O'Faolain (qv) script; and as art director on *Return to Glennascaul* (1951), directed by Hilton Edwards (qv) and narrated by Orson Welles. He later worked with Edwards, again as set designer, on his 1951 theatrical productions 'Liffey Lane' and 'Death of a salesman' at the Gate. He tried his hand at directing, debuting with two short public health films, *Keep your teeth* and *Everybody's responsibility* (1951), on food hygiene. During 1952–4 he lived and worked in the South Sea Islands. Back in Dublin he directed the more experimental and arthouse *Pretty Polly* (1956), which was thirteen minutes long, starred Noel Purcell (qv), and told the story, in verse, of the last run of a Dublin jarvey car. Between film jobs, Inglis continued to work as an artist and provided stained-glass windows for the Flowing Tide pub in Lower Abbey St. and the marriage chapel of St Agatha's church in North William St. He was also responsible for the crib in St Andrew's church, Westland Row.

Film work increasingly brought him outside Ireland, and in the late 1950s he moved to London. He was art director of the German film *The devil's agent* (1961), directed by John Paddy Carstairs, and of *Johnny Nobody* (1961), directed by Nigel Patrick. In 1970 he worked with Billy Wilder on the acclaimed *Private life of Sherlock Holmes*. His greatest success came in 1976, when he was nominated for an Oscar for art

direction of the John Huston (qv) film *The man who would be king*, set in India and starring Sean Connery and Michael Caine. He gained relatively little attention for this, partly because he was living in London at the time, and also because he was by nature modest. The French art director Alexander Trauner was co-nominated with him. Inglis worked on few other films. He died in October 1997.

GRO, register of birth 1911; *Ir. Times*, 4 Jan. 1933, 13 Jan. 1958, 30 Apr. 1962, 4 Nov. 1997; Kevin Rockett, *The Irish filmography* (1996); www.imdb.com (accessed Sept. 2005); www.irishplayography.com (accessed July 2008)

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