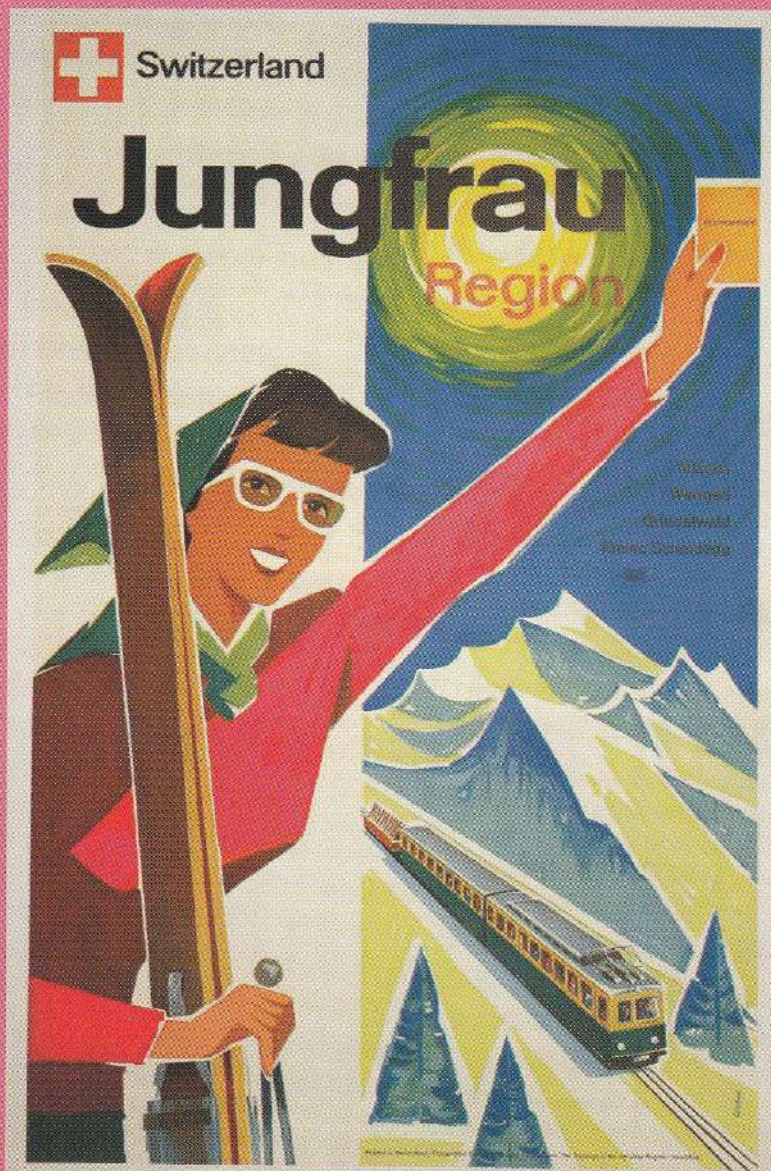




Friends of the Chalet School

99 Onwards and Upwards



February 2013

A Chalet Confab

Details of Chalet School Life

Anne James “It seems strange though perfectly understandable that Mary Perry and others should be fascinated by details of our everyday life in the 1930s and 1940s. I think, technology apart, that one of the



greatest changes has been the coming of central heating. Few schoolgirls now will be coming home to light a coal fire, sometimes having to hold a newspaper up in front to help the fire to draw. Then there were the boilers for washing clothes before twin tubs arrived in the 1950s as did telephones with direct dial. It all seemed natural at the time.”

Viv Grimwade “I remember party lines very well. When we first had one installed in the late 1960s / early 1970s it was the

only way to acquire a line. Our other parties were an elderly couple who clearly had a lot of time to kill by chatting away – not good news when you’re waiting for the latest boyfriend to ring! Joey’s scalding a dishcloth and hanging it to dry on a bush brought back memories of my grandmothers and mother. It was simply the norm in their era, because they didn’t have the convenience of disposable Jaycloths etc. Incidentally, unclean dishcloths are the biggest source of transferring germs in a household.”

Cartref

Jane Cooper “My mother was Welsh and always used to tell me that she didn’t learn to speak English until she went to school. I have her Welsh dictionary and in that ‘Cartref’ is given the meanings ‘home, abode’ just as Patricia Lowe says.”

Charmian Bilger “Cartref is the Welsh equivalent of the French ‘Chez Nous’”.

Olympics

Mark Taha “I wonder if any of the CS girls would have visited the Olympics in 1936 (Berlin) or 1948 (London)?”



Whilst I realise that Joey would not have had bunk beds, I imagine that the majority of her homes would have been a similar size to this house, so it would have been fairly easy to fit in extra people – particularly by putting extra beds in large rooms such as the nurseries.”

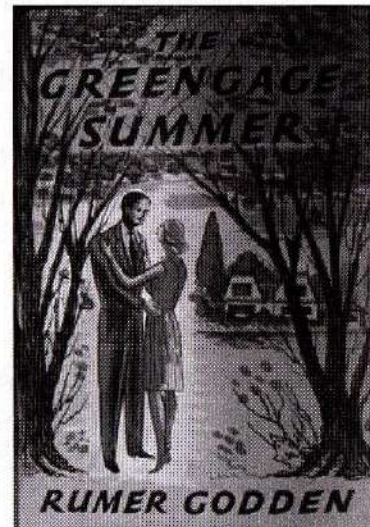
Inez Meadows “I have often wondered about the perception of sizes of houses and rooms in EBD’s books. She talks about a bedroom being small and then says it has four chairs in it as well as two beds and other basic bedroom furniture. Also, when Marie von Eschenau is coming to live in England she asks Joey to look out for a small house for her with only five or six bedrooms. Not what I’d call small in either case!”

Chalet Names, First Names, Unusual Names

Mark Taha “Nicola is in distinguished company - US Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Richard Milhous Nixon.”

Heather Bird “I have just finished re-reading *Leader* and finally after many years of pondering the pronunciation of Jacynth I decided to Google the name. It is of Greek origin meaning beautiful beloved and is usually a girl’s name. It is pronounced *Jhaasihnth*. When reading I have always thought of Cecil as *Sayseal*. I hadn’t considered EBD’s boyish shorts applying to Cecil as she always seems such a sweet feminine little girl.”

Pat Turner “I first came across Cecil as a feminine name in Rumer Godden’s *The Greengage Summer*. We see what happens through the eyes of next to the eldest girl, Cecil. In the film Cecil and the middle child, Hetty, are rolled into one. The other fictional Cecil that comes to mind is Winifred Darch’s *Cecil of the Carnation* (1924). The only real woman I know who bore the name is the historian Cecil Woodham-Smith who wrote the brilliant account of the battle of Balaclava, *The Reason Why*, with pen portraits of the men involved in the Charge of the Light Brigade. I was so impressed that I thought I’d read her book about the Irish famine, *The Great Hunger*. As I couldn’t find it in the library in the 940s (Dewey Decimal Classification – History and Geography) I checked the catalogue and found it in the 640s - Nutrition! Finally, it occurs to me that Cécile is quite common in France.”



Ruth Gemmell “Although not a common name, Cornelia is surely just the female form of Cornelius, who was an early Pope and saint. All the suggested pronunciations for Cecil assume that the letter C is pronounced like the letter S, as is usual in the UK, America and France. However, as EBD was a Catholic in

Great to Belong

Sonia Ankers "It is such a delight when the FOCS envelope arrives and it includes the November magazine. I don't wait to read it but devour it immediately. I am back in the wonderful world of childhood literature – snow, toboggans, mountains, dressing the tree etc. I was about ten when my father's ship came into port and we went aboard. In his cabin standing on his desk was *Exploits of the Chalet Girls* and I was away on a lifetime collection. I don't know when or how I heard of you but it has brought me so much joy ever since. I came to Centenary weekend in Hereford in 1994 which was tremendous. I am 88 now and less active but still reading my books."

Joy Bagster "Lovely to get the November issue which was packed full of interesting articles and comments. I agree with Glenda Walkington that it's a pleasant surprise when the magazine comes early, even if it means a longer wait for the next edition."

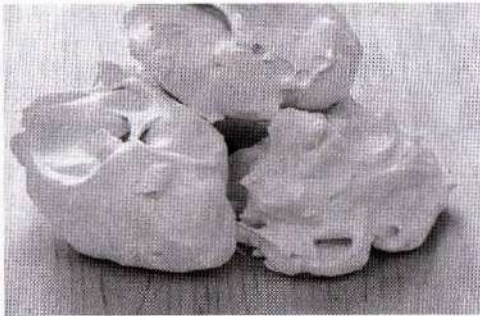


Writers

Maureen Sunderland "I seem to remember that Amy Stephens became a well known writer, but I cannot remember where I gained this impression."

Swiss Cakes

Judy Harris "In an earlier FOCS magazine I think I expressed surprise at the emphasis EBD had placed on meringues when describing the desserts eaten by the girls on excursions, as in my extensive Swiss travels in recent years, I saw little evidence of meringues. However, I am now wondering whether perhaps in



EBD's time, meringues were indeed quite popular, perhaps even iconic, in the Bernese Oberland! One of our Australian *Friends of the World Centres* members shared with me some letters she wrote to her mother when she was visiting *Our Chalet* in 1954. At one point, she reports that after a trip to Hahnenmoos, a well-known location in the Adelboden ski fields,

'(We) went sliding the rest of the way home, two per luge. We stopped at a café on the way and indulged in coffee and a meringue each, supposed to be the best meringues in Switzerland.'

Boarding School Life and Dumping Children

Mark Taha "I believe Bride did ask Dick to take them out but he refused. I still

say he and Mollie should have gone straight to their children's schools and taken them out till after the holidays. They'd have had some weeks to get to know each other."

Pinafores

Tricia Green "I was interested to read about pinafores in the latest magazine. Growing up in the 1960s I was of the generation of little girls who wore brightly coloured pinafores / overalls over our dresses (at five or six; they would have been distinctly 'uncool' at the age of nine or ten!) I remember two I had, decorated with nursery characters with a deep pocket running all the way along the front, known as a 'crumb pocket' although my mother pointed out that was not permission to put crumbs in it! My mother and her contemporaries also



wore 'pinnies' to do the housework, taking them off to sit down in the evening or if invited round for a cup of tea with a friend. A family move away from other close relatives, followed by a visit to hospital, unsettled me at the age of five so that I would make a sudden dive at Mum and clutch her by the 'pinny', afraid that she might suddenly get away from me! Does anyone also remember how little girls' dresses of that date fastened with buttons and a bow at the back, not a great start in learning to dress oneself! After PE lessons, all the little girls in my infant school class would stand in a big circle, each doing up the dress of the child in front – I'm fairly

sure we worked this one out for ourselves, without adult intervention."

Dorothy Waterhouse "Margo Astill comments that in her world aprons were worn by adults and pinafores by children. My mother always wore a pinafore. I do not think that she owned an apron. All the folk I knew as children wore 'pinnies'. That would be from the 1930s onwards."

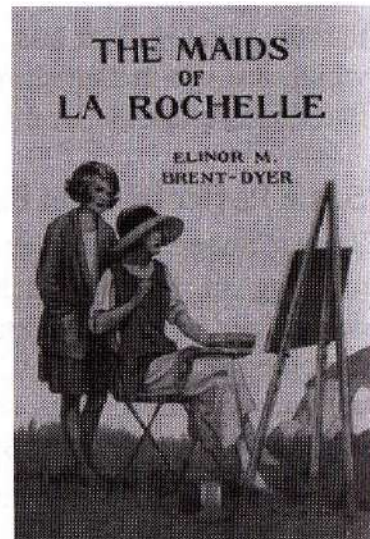
Deborah Oakley "The section on pinafores was relevant as I remember going with my mother to buy the wrap-around 'pinnies' for my grandmother."

Joy Bagster "My mother always wore an apron when she was cooking or doing the housework. In the morning it would be a full length apron but this was changed to a half-apron in the afternoon. The morning apron would be a serviceable dark colour while the afternoon one would probably be made of a floral material and trimmed with a frill. When anyone knocked on the front door the apron would be whipped off and left in the kitchen. It was also removed before my father came home from work in the evening. I think this was to give the impression that the day's work was finished and she could devote the rest of the evening to looking after his needs. How times have changed!"

Mark Taha “Perhaps she didn’t approve of convent schools. What would the pupils’ different values have been? And would the Chesters have stayed on Guernsey during the occupation or left with Beth?”

Jane Harris “The Chesters, Ozannes and Lucys all left Guernsey and stayed in England for the duration of the War. They leave in *Goes to It* and are still there in *Three Go* when Clem, Mary-Lou and Clem’s godfather, Peter Young, meet Janie Lucy and family at the cinema.”

Susanne Brownlie “I enjoyed Jilly Day’s thoroughly-researched, thought-provoking article on Anne Chester. I had always liked Anne, but had never really considered her development as a character before, especially since, like most of us, I originally read the books out of sequence, with the La Rochelles much later. I am now able to see her as much more of a person; her flaws making her easier to empathize and sympathize with than the more perfect Elizabeth. I can understand how hard it must have been for



her being ‘the poor relation’ – which rarely brings out the best in any of us – and agree that she was probably, and unsurprisingly, suffering from postnatal depression. Janie is not exhibiting much sensitivity when she attacks her for neglecting Beth – this may be the case, but there could have been a better way of handling it. This part reminds me of Noel Streatfeild’s autobiographical *A Vicarage Family* where she feels that her mother must resent her for being so robustly healthy, unlike her younger sister who died in infancy: ‘Why should she have all that energy when so little of it, passed to Edith, might have kept her alive?’ Anne is interesting in being neither one of Brent-Dyer’s supermums (Joey, Janie et al) nor utterly hopeless (Prof Richardson), but a normal mother struggling

to do her best in difficult circumstances. I’m glad it all works out happily for her in the end.”

Jessie Collins “I loved the long article by Jilly Day about Anne Chester. Since I haven’t read any of the La Rochelle books, I never felt that I got to know Anne very well, but this has now been remedied in a delightful way. There is so much

Tiffin or Chocolate Fridge Cake

Mark Taha "I remember Billy Bunter once referring to lunch as 'tiffin' in a Bunter book."

Cynthia Castellan "My Collins *English Dictionary* defines Tiffin as a light meal eaten in India. When my parents and I lived in an apartment hotel in pre-WW2 Shanghai, we took all our meals in its restaurant and I well remember the menu headed 'Tiffin' when we went there for lunch!"

Chalet Friends Sing

Gillian Smith "Unfortunately I missed the *Songs of Praise* referred to, but was glad to see Jill Ashmore enjoyed singing with Paul Leddington Wright playing the organ. He was at school with my brother, although several years younger. He was a superb pianist even at that young age and he accompanied my brother (a flautist) when the latter took his exams up to Grade Eight."

Jill Ashmore "I saw the one on 14th October and loved it, in fact I e-mailed the BBC to tell them. It was so uplifting and everyone smiled; the hymns were so well chosen and sung – it was beautiful."

Winter Holidays

Gillian Smith "The photos on the back cover of the November issue brought back happy memories of winter holidays in Austria, especially the Maria-Theresien Strasse in the snow."

Aucassin and Nicolette

Kate Marsland "To add to Ruth Endredy's comment about Aucassin and Nicolette. I presume the C Hubert H Parry is the great composer of *I was Glad* and *Jerusalem*. What a wonderful find! I have sung *I was Glad* in the past - it is a wonderful piece. I always felt that Parry's music may well have had links to Ernest Farrar. Parry's friend, Walter Parratt, was an organist from Huddersfield. There is a statue of him in the grounds of the parish church (I was brought up only eight miles away and have seen it there). Parratt took over from Parry as Professor of Music at Oxford, and he was also tutor to Ernest Farrar (right) at the Royal College of Music. Parratt became a



My Fourth Trip to Pertisau and Side Trips

Hilary Hartley "I too have visited the Eagles' Nest, when on one of those school trips! I remember feeling distinctly edgy as we went through the tunnel – a feeling not unlike that later experienced when visiting the underground hospital in Jersey – but the view from the top was fantastic. We had a good day and looking down and seeing the tiny chalets at the foot of the mountain the thing that came to mind, even then, was the line from the hymn How great Thou Art– 'When I look down from lofty mountain splendour and see the brook and feel the gentle breeze'. The brook however was in fact a decent sized river!"

Two Sams

Mark Taha "Bruno's reaction to Samaris' playing was to my delight, too!"

Pills and Potions

Frances Bailey "Yes, I well remember Haliborange tablets, very orangey and not at all oily; they were very nice. I can imagine how easy it would be for a child to eat too many. I believe there might have been a liquid or syrup version of Haliborange too but the memory is a bit vague."

Vanessa Thomas "They lit up my childhood in the 1960s. My mother had tried and failed to get me to drink cod-liver oil, and these little, orange 'sweeties' were a viable alternative.

Though she did tend to get sick of my continual pleadings for 'just one more?'

Deborah Oakley "I beamed as I read Sue Allen's description of being given Haliborange tablets as a child, as I remember them very well and can echo her enthusiasm for them!"

Irene Moll "Yes, Sue Allen, I remember being given Haliborange tablets, probably because unlike most tablets they did taste very nice."

Wartime Chocolate

ViV Turner "I was never rationed as my mother had a friend who owned a sweet shop. However I do recall enjoying mice which were made of delicious fondant cream."

Captain Oates and the Terra Nova Expedition of 1912

Jilly Day "How very thoughtful of Captain Scott to write a letter of thanks in



happy: my mother was asked to ensure that I was not present at any future Pack meetings ...”

Crying

Jilly Day “I found David Bennion’s article on crying very interesting. I vividly remember reading *Party Frock* as a child and I completely identified with poor Phoebe’s disgrace on bursting into tears at the breakfast table, such a scene of shocked horror would have been acted out in my own home. I disagree with David and I still feel sympathy for poor Phoebe and wish her family, especially her father, could have been more understanding. Crying was ‘just not done’ in my home so I learnt early that rapid eye blinking prevented tears spilling down ones cheeks when reading an emotive passage such as Jo’s anticipated death in *Rivals* and I’ve never lost the ‘ability’ to sit stony faced through



weepy films. Recently I was with a couple of friends and the subject of crying in public or private arose; one friend explained that crying in private is of no use because tears should demonstrate one’s unhappiness to others, whereas I have never felt able to display feelings of grief or unhappiness in public as it would be ‘letting the side down’. And yet in my working life I have sought to comfort and support many people in distress and appreciate their honesty in showing emotion. I must though confess to distaste for the almost universal crying and tear shedding at modern sports and competitive events when both winner and loser blub with abandon, whatever happened to a delighted grin or wry smile?”

Mark Taha “I have always been easy to reduce to tears, I’m afraid.”

Inez Meadows “When my father died and it came time for the funeral, my mother said to me ‘of course, we won’t cry.’ And my response was ‘of course not.’ This seemed perfectly normal to me. At the church communion service a lady friend sobbed loud and long, much to our embarrassment! The cremation service followed after lunch and as this was to be partly military with the playing of the Last Post, Mum and I decided that she must be stopped, so we gave her a sedative to keep her calm and quiet. It worked! When news of my grandmother’s death came from the hospital in the middle of the night I suddenly burst into tears without warning. My poor mother was horrified! Thankfully we both kept calm at her services, as I did at my mother’s. However when it came to the interment of her ashes some four months later in another country, I cried all the way through – to my own embarrassment! Attitudes to