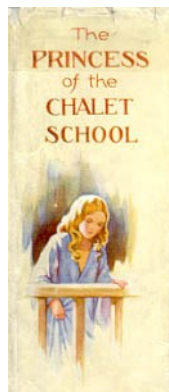


occasion. Especially her ‘What am I like?’ moments or her boasting about the size of her family. She has enough good times to outweigh the bad but I still find her comments grating at times. However, Jo aged 13 is fun and funny, and I am thoroughly enjoying renewing my acquaintance with her and with the girls who are so keen to start new traditions and do everything as they think it should be done.”

Football Supporters?

Mark Taha “Austria was one of leading football nations in the 1930s I can imagine the Maranis and Mensches cheering the ‘Wunderteam’ (right). However, I suspect that Jack and Jem would most likely have been rugby fans. I remember Jem ice skating once.”



School at Last

Julie Robertson “Congratulations to Jessie Collins on this story, I always wished that EBD had shown us Elizaveta actually arriving at the CS and how different it must have been for her, so thank you Jessie.”

Kathleen Porter “I also enjoyed Jessie Collins’ story on page 39 onwards. It has been a lovely read, thank you.”

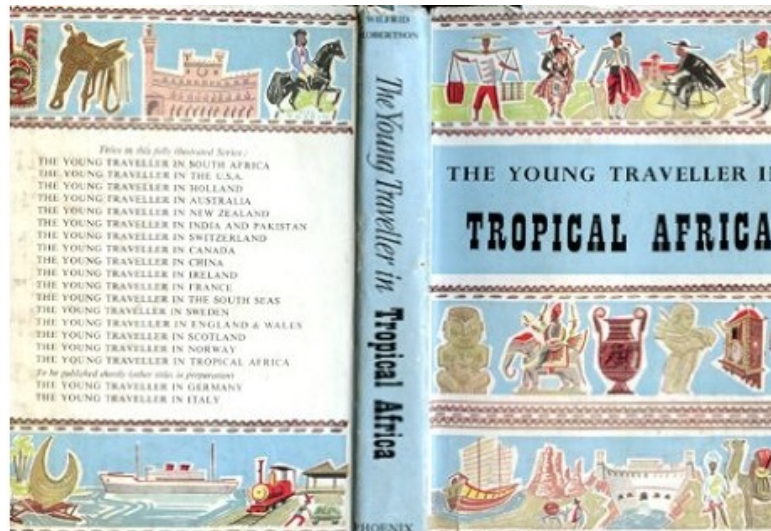
Judi Marsh “A most delightful story by Jessie Collins; loved this insight into Elizaveta’s thoughts and experiences as she seeks to be just another schoolgirl. Thank you.”

Jilly Day “What a lovely, cheery story about Elisaveta. Congratulations to Jessie Collins. I always do enjoy reading Jessie’s thoughtful comments in the magazine.”

Games at the Chalet School

Frances Simmons “I’ve always wondered if anyone got stuck playing the same game or at least a couple of games all night. The bit in *Problem* where Hilda Jukes moves back to ‘Lists’, moves back again to thread needles then comes forward to ‘Lists’, from where she manages to escape after another round. Therefore escaping to the game she played at the start! Also, Mark Taha asks why Joyce and Thekla didn’t whisper their messages. That’s an easy one to answer and Joyce gives it. ‘And have the mistresses catch us and stop us going to Saturday-night!’ said Joyce. ‘What

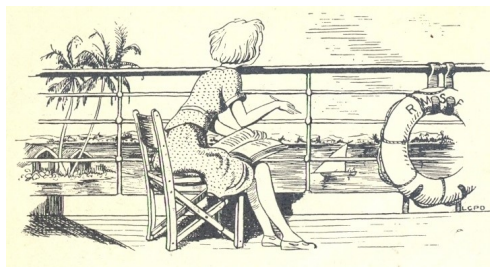




written too early for her to start discussing the Mau-Mau uprisings which were just beginning in 1951 when it was published. Wilfrid Robertson takes Jeremy through several very varied African countries, varied in that they were still ruled by generally European powers, but also varied in that they were very different countries in very different parts of Africa. One of the pleasures of reading *The Young Traveller in Tropical Africa* today is to be reminded of the names of countries and towns in colonial times, names now long gone: Kenya Colony; German East Africa; Northern Rhodesia; Portuguese East Africa; Belgian Congo; French Equatorial Africa; Spanish Guinea. I assume that the unfamiliar spelling of place names in this book, eg 'Brassaville' instead of the 'Brazzaville' we use now, reflects the language of the colonial power, in this case France.

Jeremy is passed from unknown (to him) man to unknown (to him) man in a casual manner which today would have Social Services tearing itself into knots under the Care and Protection of Minors Acts, given that he is only 15. School is ignored, as Wilfrid Robertson obviously thought that travelling across Africa was sufficient education for a boy.

Sharlie and her parents take the train down to Marseilles as Mummy is afraid of being seasick if they sail through the Bay of Biscay. They take a boat from Marseilles, so presumably travel through the Suez Canal and down the East African Coast to Mombasa in British East Africa. EBD's descriptions are always good – 'a peaceful lagoon' 'beaches of white sand – powdered coral' – and 'Fort Jesus' at



mother and I “had words” about my choice of hairstyle when I was about fifteen and I know she finds the way we students dress to be scruffy to say the least. As for music, I’ll always love classical music but my taste for what might be called pop and jazz is way beyond the comprehension of my parents. I am pleased that my parents like Reg and are happy with my choice of prospective husband - I love them dearly and would hate to have fallen out with them over something so fundamental - but it is and always has been *my* choice.



Secondly, to those of you who are of, shall I say, more mature years, you must have forgotten how incredibly insulting it is to be told that at 18, almost 19, one is too immature to know one’s own mind. I mean, really? If anything, I have been criticised for being too old in my attitude and for worrying myself unduly about my younger siblings. Why should I suddenly be immature and too young to know my own mind?



Then there is the amazing idea that after getting engaged at nearly 19 and married, we hope, when I am 21, I am then going to do an “Auntie Madge” and retire into domesticity. Get real! This is the late 1950s and marriage in this day and age does not have to equal domesticity and babies. Reg and I would certainly hope to have a family one day, though may I stress that we have absolutely no intention of rivalling Mamma, but we have no intention of starting on Day 1 or even Year 1.

And there is another point that has to be mentioned, although it really should not matter to anyone but us. While my parents like Reg and are happy that we should marry they are disappointed that my marriage will in all probability see me leaving the Roman Catholic Church. Reg, as you know, has been brought up as an Anglican; he even sang in the choir as a youngster, and has no desire to change and I would certainly prefer to remain in the church in which I have been raised. I have discussed all this with Father Stephen, my chaplain here at Oxford, and he is sympathetic, but while times have changed, the barriers to mixed marriages are still considerable. I’ve also written to Auntie Rob for advice and she believes that one’s faith and how one lives one’s daily life are the important things and that the label is unimportant. As Mamma began life as an Anglican and as most of my relatives belong to the same church I can see the truth in Auntie Rob’s words but it will still be a wrench.

Next, I would like to scotch the myth that Reg and I grew up together. As you



Chalet School Girls in the WRNS by Annie Harris

After reading Barbara Mitchell's article in the November magazine, I also remembered being intrigued when I read in *The Chalet School Goes to It* that Nancy Wilmot, Anne Seymour, Elsie Carr, Ida Reavley and Irene Silksworth were serving in the WRNS. The book was published in 1941 and conscription for women wasn't introduced until December 1941 so they would have been volunteers. The experiences of the school in *Chalet School in Exile* explain their volunteering to serve against the Nazis.

Why did EBD choose The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS also known as Wrens)? Originally formed in 1917 to free up men for the frontline and disbanded in 1919, the Wrens were re-formed in 1939. Recruitment posters

once again encouraged women to "Join the Wrens and free a man for service in the Fleet."

According to my mother, the 1939 uniform, designed by leading fashion designer Edward Molyneux, was considered to be the most attractive uniform of the women's services and this influenced many women in their choice to volunteer for the Wrens. She told us her choice of the WRNS, when she was called up for war work in 1943, was primarily because she was a champion swimmer and a good rower. The uniform was an added bonus for a specialist embroidery apprentice at fashion designer Norman Hartnell's workshop, The uniform may have influenced EBD in her choice of both the service and of Anne Seymour who is described as an artist and Elsie Carr who had an artistic hobby.

Anne Seymour was described as a good rower and all of them would have had swimming and rowing lessons according to the books. All of them had been Guides. It is also possible EBD knew that former Guides were being actively recruited for their knowledge of the Morse Code.

I agree that the trilingual girls from the Chalet School might well have found themselves working at Bletchley Park. I was

