

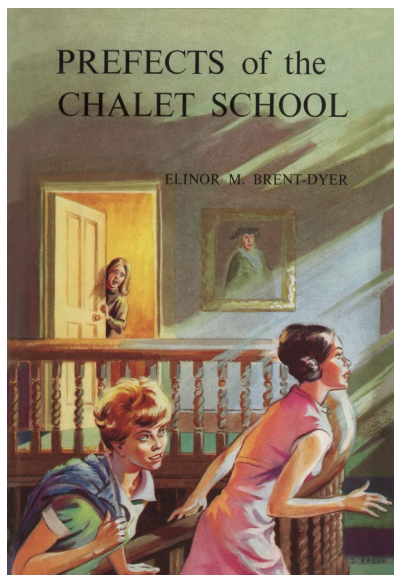
was nine years older than myself, but though we were very different people it did not stop us having a very happy marriage. No, he was not a doctor, but a minister and came as minister of my church whilst I was still at school. He died just short of our 48th wedding anniversary.”

Mark Taha “I believe that Jem was 12 years older than Madge, Madge 12 years older than Joey. I still don’t blame Joey for resenting him ordering her around. He could be pompous sometimes. Leaving the Church? Surely she could still have gone to Mass – I don’t think they check at the door!”

Julie Robertson “Congratulations to Annette Mackay on her story from Len’s point of view. I felt she captured Len’s voice perfectly, and found the arguments ‘Len’ put forward to be very reasonable and thought provoking. Related to this I have always wondered why we (in general) seemed to happily accept Gisela marrying Gottfried so young, and indeed, 18 year old Marie von Eschenau becoming engaged at the end of *New House*. I remember feeling no concern about these events, in fact I seem to remember thinking it was quite romantic. Why then was I / were we, bothered by Len’s engagement to Reg? Was it because times had changed, thinking had moved on? I’m not sure this was it for me because I first read *Prefects* when I was 12. Thoughts?”

Jessie Collins “I really enjoyed Annette Mackay’s letter from Len Maynard. Len is one of my favourite CS characters

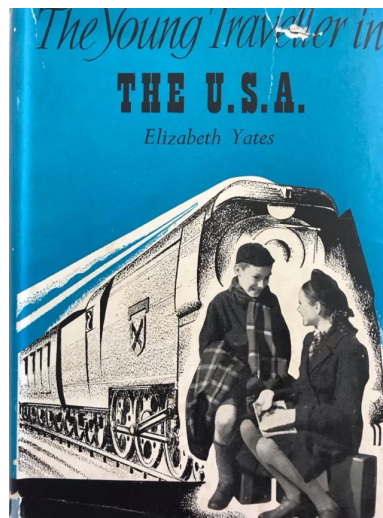
and I always hoped that she and Reg would get together. They always seemed right for each other. It seemed a very fitting end to the whole series when we were invited to their wedding. It saddens me a bit that there will never be a fill-in about their married life because of course the series is now at an end, but I am glad we saw them married. I do hope we shall receive another letter from Len, and perhaps one from Reg as well. Also, I hadn’t thought about the number of couples with large age gaps in the CS stories until I read Annette’s take on them. Perhaps that was because my husband and I had a large age gap ourselves and it had never mattered. When we met I was 17, still a schoolgirl, and he was 25, newly home from his three and a half years as a prisoner of war with the Japanese. Our



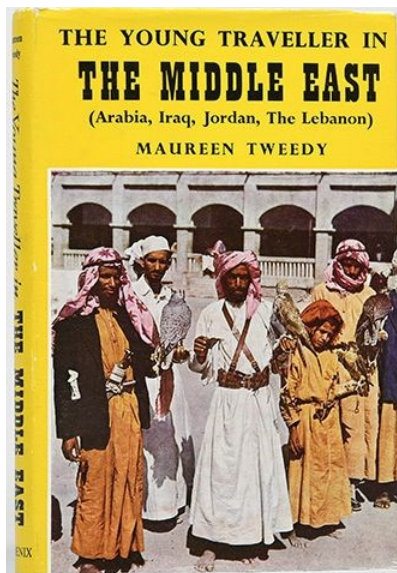
would have to ‘consort’ with daughters of shopkeepers such as Sophie Hamel. Jo adds to her horror when she promptly informs Thekla that one girl is the daughter of a British Army Sergeant and a lady’s maid, and then Frieda gently reminds Thekla that “Our Lady was the Wife of a carpenter.” In spite of the influence of the Chalet School, Thekla remains very Prussianised and fails to fit in with the ethos of the Chalet School and so is eventually expelled.

YT in the USA 1948 Elizabeth Yates

Jill and Brian are criss-crossing the whole of the USA under the aegis of their Aunt Louisa. Life is very different in America to post-war UK. Jill and Brian sing along to advertisements on the radio – a real novelty - and eat waffles, which of course we readers of *What Katy Did at School* knew all about, even if we’d never tasted them. In New Orleans Brian asks directions from a boy of his own age. They chat whilst waiting for the bus. “Tell me more,” says Brian. “Let’s sit together.” The boy shakes his head. They can’t sit together because the boy is a negro and has to sit in a section marked For Colored Only. Jill and Brian are appalled at this, and Aunt Louisa has to explain the background of slavery and segregation that had given rise to this. Having read EBD’s depiction of the terrified flight of Herr



Goldman who had been chased to death simply because he was a Jew, I had been made aware of the dreadful, sad happenings in the world. Books like these showed me just how many differences there were in the world.



YT in The Middle East 1960 Maureen Tweedy

Angela and John visit the Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Yasmin, a graduate from the American University in Beirut, takes Angela to visit Mrs Mahmud. John can’t visit her as Mrs Mahmud lives in purdah, out of the sight of all males. Mrs Mahmud has given birth to seven sons, and Yasmin explains that to give birth to a son is the dream of every Arab wife. In spite of Mr Mahmud being a ship-owner, Mrs Mahmud lives in a rough-and-ready room

desired rather than consecutive, a great option if staying with family and wanting to take opportunistic daytrips. Soon we were comfortably ensconced in the charming Restaurant Schäfli enjoying local food and wine and looking forward to the days ahead.

On Saturday we rose at the unearthly hour of 04.45 in order to catch the 05.54 train to Bern, then onto Visp, and finally Zermatt. The 07.34 train from Bern to Milan which took us to Visp was incredibly crowded with a curious mixture of winter-sporters and shoppers. Luggage racks were stacked with skis and snowboards, and sporty-looking Swiss dressed in snow gear were munching apples on their way to the slopes. The shoppers were all headed to Domodossola, which is the first station in Italy. We learned that there's a Saturday market there, at which Swiss folks love to pick up pasta, cheeses and other produce and go out for a nice Italian lunch. With the high prices in Switzerland, I didn't wonder at this strategy! While it would have added too much time to our trip, we did note that our ticket would in fact permit this detour, as rather curiously the Swiss pass enables the bearer to travel to the first station beyond any border.

However, onwards and quite literally upwards for us as our train from Visp began to climb steadily uphill. We spotted mountain goats leaping on a high-up snowdrift resulting from an avalanche. There were narrow waterfalls cascading down the mountainsides. There were lean-to barns and picturesque chalets. And there were alps! I've always adored the Alps, and being in the alpine landscape once again was a true delight.



Arriving in Zermatt shortly before 10.00, I was glad I'd come prepared wearing two layers on my bottom half, five layers on my top half, and my best ski

and learning.” In the summer months, Miss Murphy (known to the girls as “Murph”) would supervise swimming in the lake. But in the winter, this lady created an ice rink for her girls by pouring a total of 200 buckets of water over the courtyard and letting it freeze. She would do this at two-hour intervals throughout the night, to create what was referred to as Murph’s Ice Rink. One morning, she was quite cross to find the postman had driven over her rink, and that his van had slid right to the front door! I could imagine Miss Wilson creating such a rink.



Bedrooms were used as dormitories, and there is a photo of one room with beds crammed into the space. The Main Hall downstairs that the Holt Family had used to house their billiards table and rare Manx piano, became the school hall. There is a lovely minstrels’ gallery up a set of stairs from the piano, and to the left of that, another little gallery reminiscent of a tree house. This would be a cosy and hidden spot on a cold day to chat with your friends or read a book.

Downstairs rooms became classrooms, and each display amazing Arts and Crafts features such as huge inglenook fireplaces with built-in seating.

The girls would help local farmers with their potato harvests, learn to weave baskets from reeds, and were taken walking on the fells. The fell walking would be a good Chalet School activity, but I cannot see Miss Annersley releasing students to help with the harvest!

Miss Murphy retired in 1958 after 17 years as Headmistress. Today, one of the small bedrooms is named after her, and features a display of information about the school from past pupils, and a pair of ice skates hung on the wall.

Blackwell School was established after the College left in 1962 and continued until 1976. In *The People’s Friend* article, former student Kitty North remembers her time there from the ages of seven to 13. Kitty became an artist and recently had an exhibition of her work in Salts Mill, Saltaire, and in the Lakes. Her time at school in the Lakes continues to inspire her work, and she “absolutely loved” her time at the school, which she described as “dreamy” and