

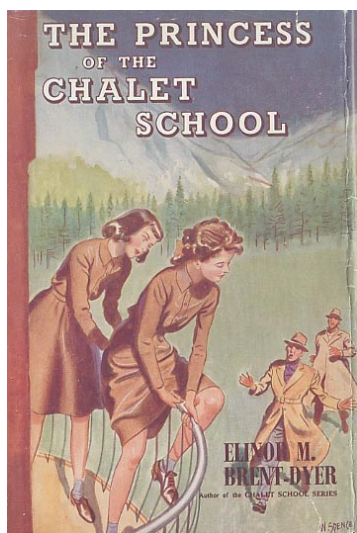
agree with Rhona Cameron’s comments about the book.”

The Chalet Series - Collecting and Disposing

Fiona Beveridge “In the November 2024 FOCS Magazine (No 146), Catherine Inchmore invites suggestions as to how she might eventually dispose of her Chalet Books. How would I answer the question for myself? I imagined myself wandering into the umpteen charity shops in my home city and depositing one or two Chalet Books in each one. I then imagined the pleasure of younger collectors wandering in and finding - a find! Ah well! My collection is still safe on the shelves.”

Jenny Marshall “Is there more fun in the chase or managing to have the full set? It took me a good many years to collect the whole Chalet School series and I used to get very excited when GGBP announced another title in the series. Eventually, I had the whole series – mainly GGBP but also a few hardbacks. Like

Catherine Inchmore, I’m concerned that my books will be passed by my children (no CS interest there!) to a charity shop that won’t appreciate the books for their worth – either financially or collectability-wise. So I, too, have now decided to part company with the Swiss-based books and will probably, in time, dispose of all but the Austria-based stories which are my favourites and would probably, these days, be described as being the ‘most authentic’.”



Entwistle

Shirley Sim “I saw there was a student with the surname Entwistle on *University Challenge*. This is the first time I have come across the name outside the Chalet School books.”

Book Dust Wrapper Pictures and Illustrations

Barbara Hall “I laughed out loud at Louise Waterman’s interpretation of Jo and Elisaveta on a tandem bicycle. Once seen, it can’t be unseen and that’s how I’ll think of that cover forever!”

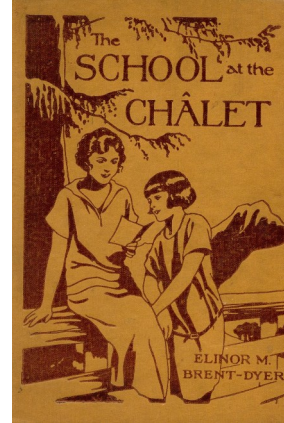
Jenny Marshall “I thought exactly the same as Louise Waterman with *Princess* (Joey and Elisaveta on a tandem bicycle) and *Rescue* (Joey with a basket of laundry)! Oh dear! I

The School at the Châlet and 1925 by Jilly Day

At first sight, a copy of *The School at the Chalet*, a battered brass tea caddy and two eight-year-old girls have nothing in common, but all will be revealed by and by.

I first read *The School at the Chalet* as an eight-year-old. I was lucky enough to read the books in chronological order, and for my generous parents to ultimately buy me the complete series. While I outgrew most other childhood books, the Chalet School remained, and almost 62 years later I still treasure dipping into, and reading, the series.

In 1925 author Elinor M. Brent-Dyer celebrated the publication of *The School at the Chalet*, little knowing it would prove to be the first in a long series, or that her book would still attract new readers and inspire comment a century later. Madge Bettany confidently opened her school beside the most beautiful lake in



Austria, in a "topping little place, right up in the mountains," and the location for the Chalet School certainly sounds idyllic.

I have found it interesting to look back over the century since Brent-Dyer immortalised the real life Pertisau am Achensee as her beloved Tiern See am Briesau. It has been fascinating to read about some key events from 1925, and in particular those with a connection to the Chalet School lands.

Defeat in the Great War ended the long rule of the Habsburgs, while the sprawling lands of the once mighty Austro-Hungarian Empire were carved up and redistributed. Indeed, Austria lost three-quarters of its lands, along with its industrial centres and internal markets. The Treaty of Saint-Germain

Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye

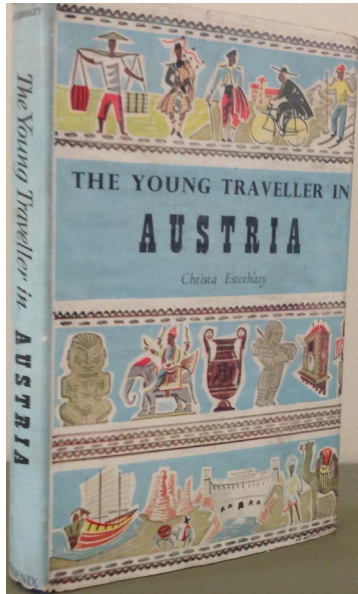
- September 1919
- Treaty between the allies and Austria
- Formally dissolved the Austro-Hungarian empire
- Recognized the independence of Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary



Treaty of St. Germain (cont)

- Galicia was given to Poland
- Bukovina was given to Romania
- Bohemia and Moravia were given to Czechoslovakia
- South Tyrol, Trieste, Trentino, Istria, and some of the Dalmatian Islands were given to Italy





The Young Traveller in Austria by Kay Whalley

The Young Traveller books were a series of 40 books published by Phoenix House Ltd between 1947 and 1967. I have a complete set: the earlier books are mainly set in Europe, Commonwealth countries, or “familiar” countries such as the USA. By 1967 Phoenix had published more unusual and faraway countries such as Japan or South Seas. (Including space! *The Young Traveller in Space* by Arthur C Clark was published in 1954.) Nowadays, they are historical documents: snapshots of their times.

The Young Traveller in Austria by Christa Esterhazy was published in 1956. Mr Salter has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for a year in America. Of course, Mrs Salter will accompany him. Will Claire and Austen stay at

boarding school for that year? They’re not keen, but enter Aunt Peggy, who works for the British Council: “I’m being posted to Vienna for a year. Come and stay with me.” A wonderful experience: learn a foreign language by speaking it, and hearing it spoken all around. But first a family holiday in the Tyrol. To Calais, then by Bundesbahnen Österreich (Austrian Federal Railway) to Innsbruck.

The hotel house boy politely, but rather disappointedly, greets Claire on her first morning with, “Guten Morgen gnädiges Fräulein”! Not “Grüß Gott”! Claire walks towards Maria-Theresien-Straße, noticing that women wear dirndl-type cotton frocks with wide gathered skirts, and sleeveless, tight-fitting bodices. Men wear shorts even though they’re just going to work! At a baker’s shop, an assistant asks her what she would like to buy: “Was darf’s sein, gnädiges, Fräulein?” Claire carefully answers, “A Mohnstriezel, bitte schon.” (A poppy seed striezel.) Her German is not the fluent Chalet School German, and she mixes up how many Groschen there were to the Schilling.

At the hotel, Mrs Salter is waiting to go up the



Chancellor of Germany, was a Prussian Junker. Thekla too is from this Junker class. According to Wikipedia, the Prussians were culturally known for “Prussianism”, which was a code of values derived from those of the Prussian army and were sometimes criticized for how these didn't allow any space for science and the arts. These values are listed as: sincerity, modesty, honesty, diligence, straightforwardness, sense of justice, conscientiousness, willingness to make sacrifices, sense of order, sense of duty, punctuality, probity, cleanliness, frugality, tolerance, incorruptibility, restraint/self-effacement, determination, and reliability, but this code of values doesn't seem to accord very closely with Thekla's character in the books.

The capital of Prussia was Berlin, so Thekla is by no means the first Prussian to be unfavourably represented in the Chalet School books. When Joey and others first encounter Frau Berlin on the train to Innsbruck in *The School at the Chalet*, Gisela characterises the North German people from Berlin as impolite and as unwelcome visitors to the Tirol. Bette says

that according to her father they were the cause of the First World War, to which Joey replies “Oh, well, everybody knows that!” Clearly this national dislike and



distrust of the Prussian people was deep-rooted for EBD. Historically they had also played a significant role in the defeat of Napoleon in 1812/1814, and I do wonder if this influenced Joey Bettany's opinion of them as a group.

In general EBD (and therefore Joey) always seems very tolerant of people from other countries (for example how clear EBD always is of the distinction between Germans in general and the Nazis in particular), much more so than prevailing attitudes at the time, so it struck me as curious how poorly she seems to think of the Prussians and how keen she is to emphasize Thekla's Prussian-ness as part of her character, particularly when Thekla is first introduced. Thekla first appears “off-stage”, with several other characters talking about how awful she is and how snobbish and rude she is being to the

