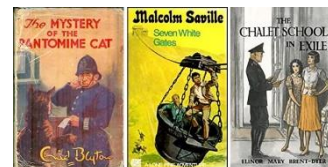


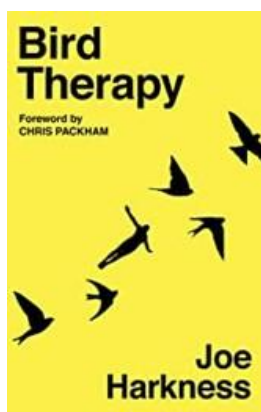
May 9th 2020 – Lockdown 7

I know many of you, like me, are experiencing the ‘time warp’ of losing days as without regular fixtures each day merges into the next. I also know that many are finding it difficult to settle to do anything which is a common experience of trauma, and our current situation has been recognised as community trauma. A lot of it is about uncertainty, with questions buzzing around our heads like annoying flies, a situation not helped by the media with their desire to sell news, most of which is not news at all. We don’t have facts and speculation just creates more anxiety. What we can be certain about is that there is good reason to stay indoors to protect ourselves and others, and that millions of people are working extremely hard to care for us and serve us in these strange circumstances and for that all we can do is say a huge THANK YOU.

I have always been an avid reader, particularly of fiction but not generally historical, I have often joked that I missed out on the history gene as it has never lit my enthusiasm, even at college which was a little difficult! Like countless other people I think my first introduction to reading books for pleasure was an Enid Blyton, Buttercup Farm if I remember correctly.



I dabbled with the Famous Five, but it was the Mystery Series that I revelled in, an early introduction to crime novels maybe. I later moved on to Malcolm Saville and the Lone Pine series and then to Agatha Christie and Mary Stewart, and from there to thousands of others. I enjoy stories that get behind the events to the causes, at whatever level, stories that explore what makes people who they are. A lifelong passion which began in childhood is the Chalet School Series and over the years I have collected not just the originals, but the fill-in books written by other fans of the series. It is a real family saga tracing events in and outside the school around the lives of people who have begun as pupils, grown and returned as staff or are linked to the neighbouring sanatorium which is a key feature within the stories. During the lockdown I determined to sort out the collection which had been unpacked from the boxes when we moved and placed in any order on the shelves. Inevitably this has set me off on another read through, as like many fans of the series, there is something comforting in relaxing with familiar friends and reminding yourself of the story which has come to mean so much to you.



Another book which I have just started is something quite different. Bird Therapy by Joe Harkness is an exploration of how bird watching and nature can help people out of depression. Joe has experienced depression of the deepest kind yet through a re-engagement with the great outdoors and birds in particular he has been able to establish a healthy pattern to his life, and a strategy for living which has helped to create balance and peace within his life. It has reminded me that there is something very peaceful in watching birds and that sometimes we can be surprised by a visitor to the garden. The book comes highly recommended by others who have experienced depression but in these strange times it has something profound to offer as all seek some structure within uncertain and anxious times.

Creation is amazing, and all around us the planet is breathing in a more relaxed way as our pollution has dropped and our demands ceased. As a book title reminded recently – there is Planet B, this is our home, our world and we are partners in creation. At the end of this trauma, whenever that will be, my prayer is that we will have learned something about being positive participators in creation, and we will not automatically go back to doing what we did before but think more about the impact we are having on the planet.



A Dunnock, a regular visitor to gardens but often mistaken for a House Sparrow

Keep safe, and keep physically distancing whilst still engaging in social contact for we are in this together.