



A Case in Correspondence

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The following story tells of an episode in the life of Mary Russell, in 1992. She was 92 years old, and had decided (for reasons given in 2009's "MyStory") to send her collected memoirs to me, Laurie King.

I described the puzzling arrival of a trunk filled with odds, ends, and manuscripts in my introductions to the first four Russell stories (those introductions are available on the "Mary Russell's World" page of my web site, along with "[MyStory](#)") but Miss Russell's version of events has only recently come to light.

The Robert Goodman named in these varied communications, and their references to internal tremors of Britain's Intelligence community, concern the tenth volume of Miss Russell's memoirs, [The God of the Hive](#). They also underscore the lasting impact of those long-ago events.

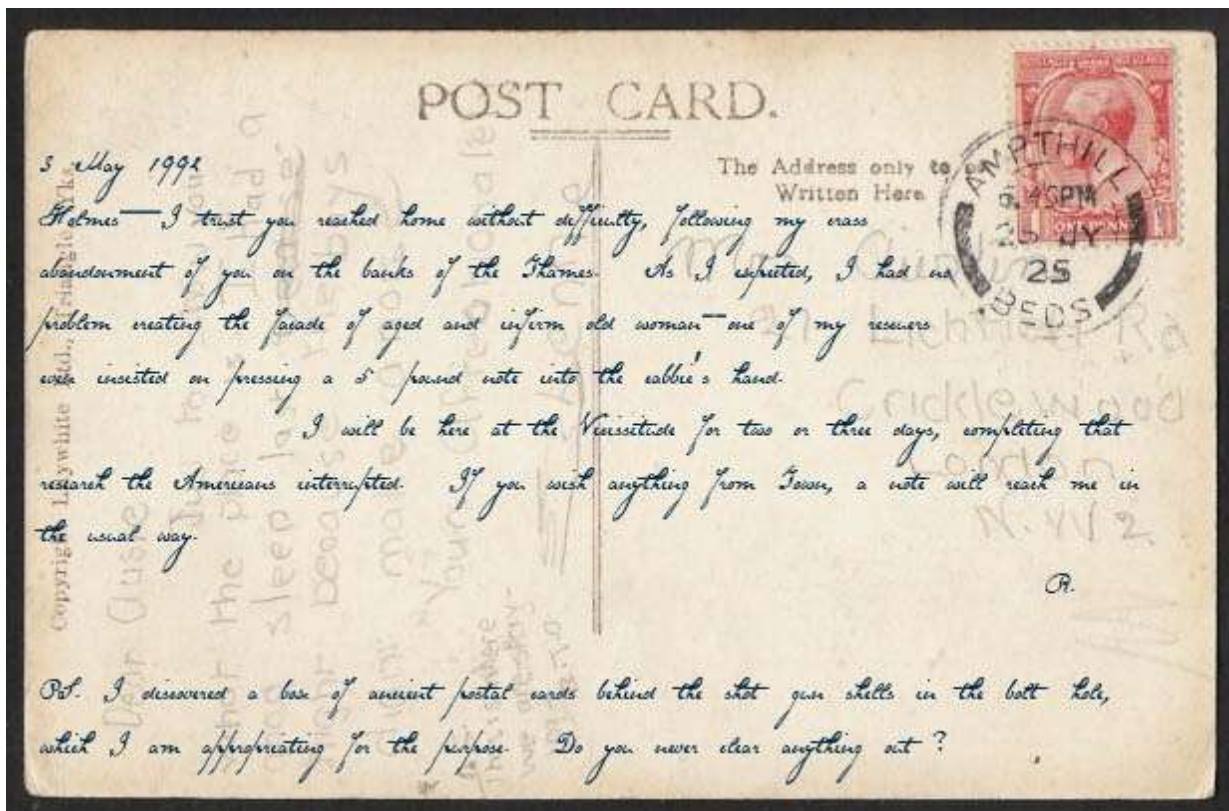
Thanks are owed to Ben (Postcard Heaven) and Carole (Pretty as a Postcard) for their assistance in locating the cards used by Russell and her colleagues; to Zoe Elkaim for organizing them into some kind of order; and to Bob Difley, for his wizardry in restoring them to legibility. Although for true legibility, you can also download a plain script version of the documents on the [web site](#). Thanks, too, to everyone willing to play The Game with gusto.

Laurie R. King

www.LaurieRKing.com



One



1007 d

Mrs L Delaney
Monk's Inn Inn
Poligate, E. Sussex
BN16

Lulu, will you pls have this
taken to the house? Thanks.

R.



POST REAL PHOTO CARD SERIES

FOR CORRESPONDENCE


4 May 1992

Dear Mrs Holmes, I opened the envelope with your post card, but regret to say that Mr Holmes has not returned. Could he have gone to his brother's old flat? Quot has returned to the farm following the excitement of the previous week. The weather reports that we are to expect rain, so when you find Mr Holmes, kindly remind him to carry his umbrella.

Yours
Emma Hudson

FOR ADDRESS

GR
5.45 PM
6 NO
23



Mrs. Mary Russell Holmes
The View out into Hotel for Ladies
Albion Close
London, W2

Bramley, Publisher, The Electric Printing Works, Cross Gates, Leeds

Three



POST CARD.
A. & G. TAYLOR'S SERIES.

TAYLOR'S SERIES
AFFIX
HALF PENNY
STAMP
REVERSE OF DESIGN

For Inland Postage only, this space may be used for correspondence.

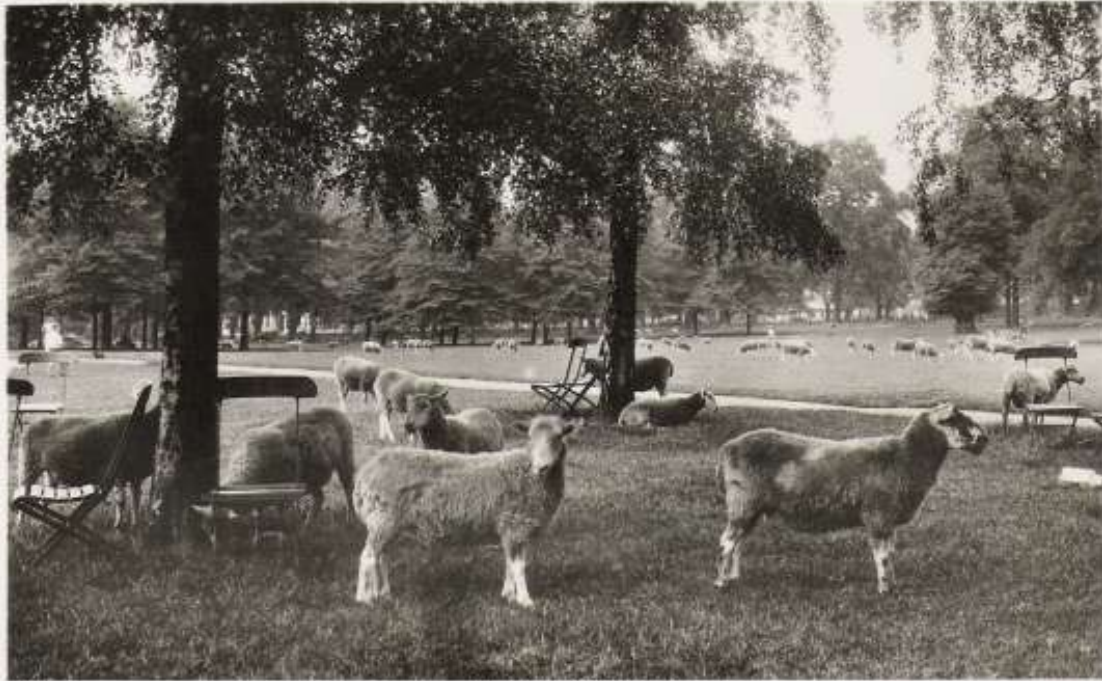
The address only to be written here.

I elly
Hello Billy, I hope you and the family are well? I've lost Holmes again—I don't suppose you have seen him since Friday? I put him into a taxi that afternoon at New, having a pint to dispose of (long story) and expected him to return to Sussex. However, I have just learned that Mrs Hudson has not seen him. Ring me at ellycroft's old number if you have news.

Russell

P.S. The last time I looked in, your namesake grandfather seemed much better. We had a long chat about the Robert Goodman case, one which no doubt you have heard about in fanciful detail, due to its repercussions. You may even know why I chose this card

R.



111.

KENSINGTON GARDENS.

POST CARD.

The Address only to be
Written Here



Copyright by George Eastman, No. 100, East 17th St., N.Y.C.

Dear Mrs H,

5 May

(It is amusing how, even after having you as THE Mrs Hudson in our lives for more than a decade, there persists a moment of astonishment as my mind's eye attempts to link your name with the face of your husband's great grandmother!)

I am glad to hear that the American invasion of Sussex has ceased - no doubt they are still quartering Oxford in hopes of finding our next. If they reappear, do not hesitate to call on Patrick for assistance.

About Holmes, please don't concern yourself, no doubt he thought of some urgent business in Town, I shall let you hear when I find him.

Mrs. J. Hudson
The Villa
Mr. Brady Head
Sussex

M.R.

WILLIAM MUDD INVESTIGATIONS

May (though only just)

Dear Miss R,

*Sorry, haven't seen Mr Holmes since Easter.
Neither has Granddad. If you wish me to stir up
an enquiry first thing in the morning, just say
the word.*

Billy (II)

*P.S. The wife sends her regards and says that you
are to come to dinner soon, now that Billy-the-
Fourth is now quite house-trained, or enough
that there will be no more accidents onto visiting
laps.*

*P.P.S. Were you aware that The Cracker is in
Town?*

6 May

Dear Dr. Watson-Simpson,

I read of your honour recently, my heartiest congratulations. Your grandfather would burst his waistcoat buttons with pride.

I wonder if I might ask a favour of you? Six days ago (Friday) I dropped my husband at Kew expecting him to make his way to Sussex, only to discover on Tuesday that he did not. I have begun the usual enquiries at hospitals and through friends and associates, but with your medical network, might you also put out the word that an aged and no doubt querulous individual has gone missing? I shall be moving about a great deal, but messages at the Vicissitude or at your "Uncle" Mycroft's old flat will reach me.

Mary Russell



Princes Street, Edinburgh

18167

POST CARD.

A. & G. TAYLOR'S SERIES.

TAYLOR'S SERIES
 POSTCARD POST CARDS
 Affix
 Half penny
 Stamp
 VIKINGS IN OSLOWAY

For Inland Postage only, this space may be used for correspondence.

The address only to be written here.

Billy - no doubt he'll be extremely cross when he finds out, but yes, I do appreciate it if you would kindly put out that we're looking for Holmes. A week without a word, at his age, is not to be taken lightly.

MR

P.S. If I haven't heard from him by tomorrow, I'll get into touch with the current M. Who won't be happy with me either, for different reasons.

P.P.S. I wrote to ask Watson's granddaughter to enquire after him amongst her medical colleagues, however I have since heard that she is away in New York for another week.

P.P.P.S. Get word to The Cracker that if he does not settle back under his Glaswegian rock postcards, he should expect a broken nose from the case of a 91 year-old woman. And if Holmes catches him first, the nose will be the last of it.

7 May 1992

Dear 'M',

I write for a reason unrelated to our most recent series of communications, namely, that my husband seems to have gone missing. Holmes was last seen a week ago, on the afternoon of the first, at Kew Gardens. Telephone calls to hospitals and police stations have led to nothing, and I spent much of yesterday at Kew with a photograph, but the only response was from one attendant who thought he recalled a tall old man talking with a sturdy blond man in his thirties--an individual who may even have had green eyes.

This ironic resemblance to Robert Goodman is so striking as to be ~~XXXX~~ unavoidable, but surely bears no significance apart from stirring up the recent conflict between us. I have no intention of removing the document related to Goodman from the memoirs I am sending to my American agent.

In any event, recent newspaper articles suggest that the government are already moving forward with the requisite public revelations.

If you receive news of Holmes, I would appreciate it if you would pass it on to me.

Yours,

M.R.H.

Mary Russell Holmes

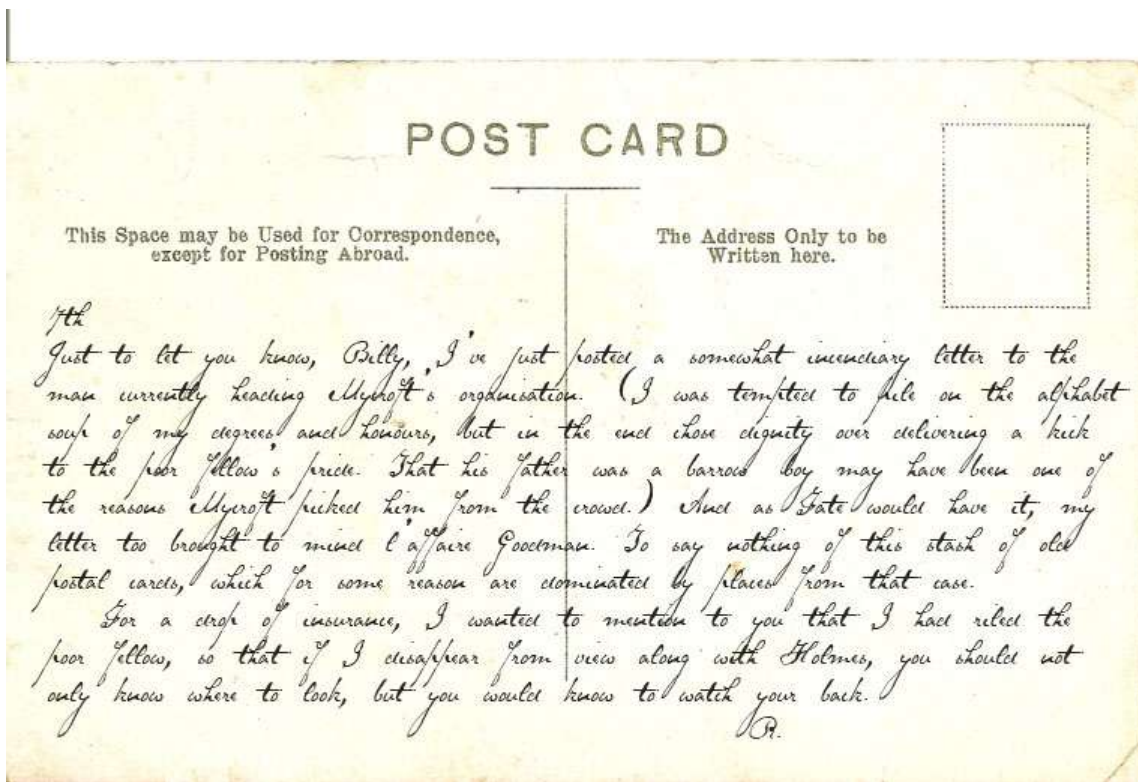


POST CARD

The Cracker's scarpored, so quick he all but left his shoes behind.
I'm working to track back a rumour putting Mr Holmes in a shiny black car Friday tea-time crossing Westminster Bridge. Funnyly enough, I'd just been working a case involving a lost kiddie near the same bridge—calling to mind the Goodman affair for about the third time in three days. If I was your husband, I'd be hunting for hidden meaning, but me? I'd say it's coincidence. Just like coming across this postcard in the wife's desk was a coincidence.

I'll let you know if anything comes of the black-car rumour, so far it's just a third-hand mention of a resemblance.

Bill



8 May 1992
HM Treasury
Whitehall


Dear Mrs Holmes,

The 'recent conflict between us,' which you would present as a mild disagreement between individuals, has on the contrary developed into a major political consideration to the new government. As you no doubt saw in yesterday's Times, The Prime Minister has been forced to address those 'requisite public revelations' at a time that will have severe repercussions. My own recommendation would have been to arrest the two of you, but Mr Major and [REDACTED] do not agree. Personally, I'd have thought your husband would care something for the life's work of his own brother, but clearly his wife's memoirs take precedence over matters of national security such as the history of certain [REDACTED].

M



POST



CARD.

POSTAGE.
 3d. Stamp
 for Inland.
 1d. Stamp
 for Abroad.

PRINTED BY THE WORKS IN SAXONY

This space may also be used for communication in the United Kingdom only.

8 May '92

M-B Have always believed in the freedom of certain kinds of information. Official protestations of embarrassment do not worry me, and have never worried my husband. Threats even less. The Goodman manuscript goes to Mr King.

Perhaps you thought that your outpouring of bluster might distract me from noticing that you had failed to answer my question I meant. Do you know where Holmes is?

Mary Russell Holmes

FOR THE ADDRESS ONLY.

M.

Treasury building

MVI

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For as through the globe
 of one man only were
 made sinners, so through the
 obedience of one man many
 will be made righteous.
 Romans 5: 19

BIRTHS

BRONK - On May 5th, at University College Hospital, London, to Vivian (nee Harris) and Richard, a son, Philip Alexander, a brother for Justin.

CHURTON - On May 4th, to Fiona (nee Peckham) and Gordon, a daughter, Olivia.

COWNE - On May 2nd 1992, at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Nottingham, to Jane (nee Carter) and Mark, a son, Thomas James.

FOSTER - On April 25th, to Stephen and Janet, a son, James Benjamin.

HARDING-ROLLS - On April 30th, to Sophia and Mark, a daughter, Alexandra Catherine Delamare, a sister for Oliver.

JOHANSON - On May 5th 1992 at the Hospital of St John & St Elizabeth, Westminster, to Judith (nee Pratt) and David, a son, William Charles, a brother for Jeremy, Edward, Mark and James.

MAJOR - On May 5th, to Joanna and Jeremy, a son, a brother for Benjamin and Edward.

MONTAGUE - On May 6th, at The Portland Hospital, to Siler and Robert, a son.

MORRISON - On May 5th 1992, to Louise (nee Napier) and Alexander, a son.

OSBORNE - On May 6th, at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading, to Hedy (nee Tait) and Richard, a son, Harry George Eberley.

ROGERS - On April 28th 1992, to Tracy and Stephen, a daughter, Emily Anne.

SAPFORD - On April 22nd, at Irish Wycombe, to Lesley and Andrew, a second son, Harry George David.

SERGEANT - On May 3rd 1992, in Brighton, to Gill (nee Harris) and Guy, a son, James Simon Victor.

SEYMOUR - On May 1st 1992 at The Portland Hospital, London, to Evelyn (nee Whitty) and James, a son, David Alexander Esham.

SMALE - On May 1st, to Heather and Eric, a daughter, Charissa Emily Grace, a sister for Natasha.

TILLMAN - On April 21st, to Gillian (nee St. Mistry) and Peter, a daughter, Katherine Margaret.

TSAGAS - On May 5th, at the Hospital of St. George and St. John, to Cecily and Julie, a son, Mark.

VERRILL - On April 25th 1992, at Queen Mary's Hospital, Brentford, to Katherine (nee Knapley) and John, a son, Henry Peter Spencer, a brother for William and Edward.

WILEY - On May 5th, in Kilmarnock (nee Cabel) and Joe, a daughter, Charlotte Katherine.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

KENNERLEY - Godwin and all the family wish to thank and sincerely recognize who by their kind expressions of sympathy and numerous letters have helped them so much during their recent sad loss.

LADY BEEKEEPER - Sending love for parrots! She's still by the home of lost castles.

DEATHS

ALLAN - On May 4th 1992, peacefully in hospital after a long illness, tranquilly born, David Clark Allan, F.C.W.A., aged 83 years, beloved husband of Christian Ann and loving father of Arthur. The cremation will take place at Ipswich Crematorium (North Chapel) on Wednesday May 13th at 2.30 pm. Family flowers only, but donations if desired for The Parkinson Disease Society, c/o Westnoughts Funeral Service, The Chappels, Hutton Road, Halesworth, Suffolk.

BAILEY - On April 30th 1992, peacefully after a short illness, Crystal Ann, aged 90 years, widow of the late Frederick Harold Bailey of Liverpool. Much loved mother of Tony and grandmother of Colin and Richard. Funeral service at St. Mary's Church, Farningham, Faversham, Essex, on Friday May 8th at 11.30 am, followed by private burial at Liverpool. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to The Chest Heart and Stroke Association c/o Bennetts Ltd, 120 High Street, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4AS.

BASSON - On April 29th, Margaret Lillian Heatherly Bracey, Jewett. Now at peace after a short illness in the autumn of 5 full yrs. Much loved as a wife, mother, grandmother and friend to many.

BEARDMORE - On Easter Monday April 20th 1992, peacefully at Leiston Old Abbey Retirement Home, North, aged 87 years, widow of the Rt Hon. Harold Beardmore R.N. rtd and mother of Norman. She was committed to the deep of Plymouth on May 2nd.

BROOKS - On Tuesday May 5th 1992, George Brooks, peacefully at home in Matias, Cheshire, will be greatly missed by his family and friends. Funeral on Saturday May 9th at 11 am at St Oswald's Church, Matias. Donations if desired to the Cancer Relief Movement Fund, Enquiries to E. Bagges, Funeral Directors, Matias, tel: 09481 2338.

BUTTER - On May 4th 1992, peacefully, Norman (nee Johnson), dearly loved wife of Ralph, mother of David and Christine and grandmother of Mark, Thomas and Olivia. Funeral Service at Lower Breeding Parish Church, near Harsham, Soham, on Monday May 11th at 12 noon, followed by private cremation. Family flowers only, please. Donations, if desired, to League of Friends, Hockham Hospital or Imperial Cancer Research.

CLARK - On May 5th 1992, Betty (nee Mapson) after a long illness borne with very great courage. Much loved wife of David, mother of Alison and James. Cremation private. A Service of Thanksgiving at St Nicholas Church, Beaulieu, Malton, nr. Leitham, on May 13th at 11.30 am. Family flowers only, but donations if desired to King Philipps Fairs Assn. c/o C.W. Lyons Funeral Directors, 70 Military Road, Canterbury CT1 1ND.

COLE - On April 18th, peacefully at Langley Park, Co. Durham, Dr. Eric Cole (Construction Engineers) aged 76 years. Dearly loved father, grandfather and philosopher. Friends please meet for service at Durham Crematorium, Shildon, May 11th at 11.30 am.

DAWK 1992, House Emeri Collet Ugan and Form Schen on 1 3.45p but d Sobel Hosp

ELORI 1992, daup her i Russ

FLETCH May: Hosp Emeri Romy, I Romy Adria and crans Thani Mars on 1 2.30p but d Cane c/o Fr Field

GOODM, 2d 15 after a agnnt Sir B. P.C. Britov Val v roused to grand father Micha camp then i Whym Turner Flowers arrived Wistar Fawnd, a Son, Hill, W 071511 will b Appdu a later

GOODFI 2nd, H year, J Sonnet Goodfr Mary, Tazold at 12 i only Cyberis

HALL - i his han Edman Follow Cambri at 2.30 at 1 Refere Cambri Service at noon to F. C. Munlow Edman 754349

HEWITT - peaceful Henry v loved s father o and drs Emily, Victoria The Sa Edge H Friday i Emdrie Cambri, R.I.P.

HOUGHT 1992, in via, after High Li band of the last and Mrs Tarnant

JERDEIN at home loved by father grandpa at 5.45





S 14617

WATERLOO STATION, VIEW OF GENERAL OFFICES AND CONCOURSE FROM ESCALATOR.

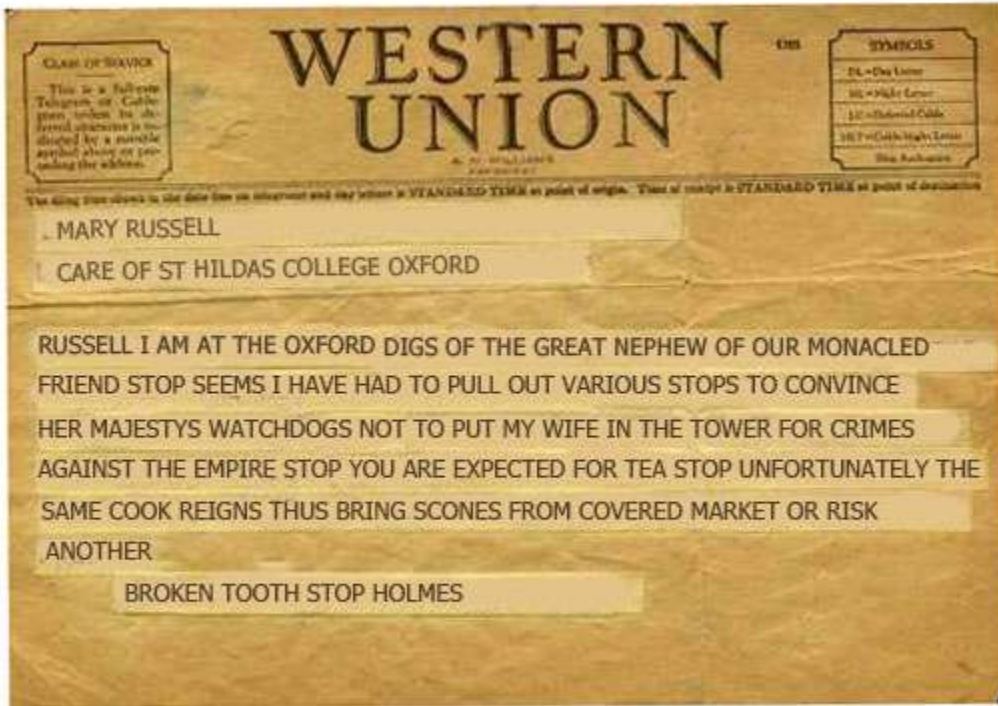
POST CARD

This Space may be Used for Correspondence,
except for Posting Abroad.

The Address Only to be
Written here.

Miss R— tried to reach you by phone but no answer at the flat and that ladies' hotel hadn't seen you. I've rung to the college, but in case you get one of these notes that I'm going to drop about the city, ring me immediately, and I'll take you up to Oxford myself—I have a flash new motor that'll make you green with envy, we'll be there in no time. It may be a matter of grannies and eggs, but it didn't sound to me like you were taking into account that the Times advert may be a ruse, and you could be in danger.

Wm





OXFORD, UP THE CHERWELL

POST CARD.

A. & G. TAYLOR'S SERIES.

TAYLOR'S SERIES

FICTIONAL POST CARDS

POTENTIAL POST CARDS

Affix
Half penny
Stamp

WIKIPIEDIA: EN:OXFORD

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The address only to be written here.

10th morning - the Sunday bells in Oxford, like no others!

Dear Billy, thank you for your concern but the advert was in fact from Holmes, whom I have (finally!) retrieved from the household of a titled mutual friend (whose name I shall not commit to paper) who happened (coincidences do occur!) to be in Kiev as Holmes passed across towards the taxi rank. They got into conversation & Holmes asked him about the political repercussions of my memoirs. And as men do, they decided to pursue their conversation over various libations, in London and then in Oxford. We are currently engaged in vigorous discussion concerning their proposed (lightly farcical and marginally offensive) solution to the situation, but I wanted you to rest easy and know that all is well, that the solution requires merely a trip to #10 to soothe ruffled feathers, and that we have seen no signs of the Americans.

Russell

WILLIAM MUDD INVESTIGATIONS

Dear Mrs Hudson,

Yes, I have heard from Mrs Holmes to say that they are in Oxford for a few days with a friend. I can't think why she didn't write to you, perhaps she did and the boy lost it again. But if I were you I wouldn't object to them not being in Sussex, since her reference to "vigorous discussion" between the two of them has overtones of rug-scorching, paint-blistering temper on both sides. You'd think that at their age, they'd have calmed down a bit.

If I hear further, I'll let you know.

Yrs, Wm Mudd

security. solve problems.

MI6 chief named as secrecy is lifted

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MI6, Britain's secret intelligence service, is to be put on a statutory footing for the first time, as part of the prime minister's plan to be more open about an organisation whose existence has not been officially acknowledged.

Underlining the new mood of openness, John Major referred to Sir Colin McColl as the present head of MI6. He has never been named officially. Earlier this year, the Home Office named Stella Rimington as the new head of MI5, the domestic security service.

The naming of the heads of MI5 and MI6 brings Britain into line with other countries including Russia, which have not been so coy about their intelligence chiefs.

Robert Gates, the American CIA director, appears before Congress and on television. Russia's two intelligence chiefs were named on their appointment.

Official recognition of MI6, to be enshrined in legislation later this year, follows the implementation of the Security Service Act 1989, which put MI5 on a statutory basis for the first time. Under the act, Lord Justice Stuart-Smith was appointed an independent watchdog of MI5, responsible for monitoring warrants issued to the security service for entering homes of business premises.

The proposed law covering MI6 is expected to in-

clude a similar watchdog arrangement. However, as Mr Major made clear yesterday, details of MI6 operations will remain secret. MI6 officers are based in British embassies abroad and gather intelligence for the government's foreign, defence, security and economic policies.

Sir Colin McColl, who took over as head of MI6, or "C", from Sir Christopher Curwen in 1989, is to retire at 60 in September.



Oleg Gordievsky, above, the former KGB head of political intelligence in London, yesterday cast off his usual disguise and appeared on television without his beard for the first time. Mr Gordievsky, who became a British agent, paid tribute to Sir Colin. He said: "He is not just nice, he is a brilliant man, extremely intelligent and a distinguished civil servant. The KGB has a very high opinion of him."

FOR MORE IN
BETWEEN 15



POST CARD

19 May 1992

Dear Mr. King,

I enclose the attached with the trunk of my memoirs, that you might understand something of its history. The Gentleman has shown the Intelligence community 68 years ago. As their varied correspondence shows, its effects still reverberate through the corridors of power. Thus, I would strongly urge when you the solution offered by the Oxford friends referred to in the correspondence that this volume be published as fiction. Personally (although our current Prime Minister would disagree) I suspect any readers of my memoirs will be too intelligent to fall for the ruse.

It hardly, to imagine my autobiography being published as mere entertainment, however I agree that in this case, the world may not be ready for the truth about the organization. And if I may make a further suggestion? A whimsical title might be only appropriate. Something along the lines of, The Green Man, perhaps?

Yours,
M. R. H.