

CASE FILE

Real-life Mysteries

Everyone loves a good mystery. Here are some of the most intriguing cases of all time. Many people have tried to explain the truth behind them, but these mysteries are not so easily solved.

Read the amazing stories first. Then look at the CASE FILE for each one so that you can examine the evidence so far. Perhaps YOU will be the one to uncover the truth?

INVESTIGATING THE UNEXPLAINED...

Keep an open mind and your wits about you. Try to look carefully and objectively at the facts. It is easy to get carried away imagining all sorts of things that might hide the truth.

The aim of any investigation is to get proper evidence.

WITNESSES

Interview people who say they have had an unusual or spooky experience. You could record what they say and write it up afterwards.

LOCATIONS

If you visit a place where mysterious things have happened make sure you do not go alone and always ask permission from a grown-up.

INVESTIGATOR'S KIT

Always keep a notebook and pen with you so that you can keep careful notes and draw diagrams if necessary.

Objectively means looking at facts to make up your mind and not being influenced by emotions or fear!

EVIDENCE

Prepare your facts and findings so that you can present them to your friends and family. They will be fascinated.

Mystery Word

There is a complete list of the mystery words used in the book on the final page.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

These are suggested in some of the CASE FILES. Over to you!

pseudoscience

inexplicable

A SECRET

Words by CELIA REES



Once upon a time, a boy received a box of twelve wooden soldiers for his ninth birthday. Being a generous boy, he shared his present with his sisters. Each took a soldier and named him. The boy called his Buonaparte, his older sister chose the Duke of Wellington, his younger sister called her man Gravey (because he looked serious), the youngest named

her soldier Waiting Boy. The children immediately began to make up a game for them, which they called The Young Men's Play. The boy was interested in fighting and battles but the girls invented new roles for their men, creating artists, journalists, poets, publishers, thinkers, explorers, as well as ruffians and rogues.

The children had begun to make up their own world. They called themselves

WORLD

the Genii. The Chief Genius Talli, the Chief Genius Branni, the Chief Genius Emmi, the Chief Genius Annii. All powerful beings, ten miles high, who could bring the dead back to life, build cities in the middle of nowhere, make worlds and destroy them. The Genii, the creators were the Brontës. They would become the most famous literary family the world has ever known.

When they tired of one game, they invented another. They sent the Young Men off exploring, wrecked them off the coast of Africa, sending them ashore to found a new nation with its own geography, history, laws and customs. Dukes and heroes, criminals and villains all living in a magic metropolis, the Great Glass Town.

The children drew maps of this new territory, made up names for mountain ranges, towns and rivers. They named and drew the people who lived there, a cast of characters soon far bigger than the original twelve soldiers. Some were based on historical figures, like the Duke of Wellington and his sons (although as imagined by the Brontës isn't much like the real Duke and his family), others were made up with names to suit characters: Sneaky, or Sneachie (their spelling was variable), Naughty, Goody, Dick Crack-Skull

and Rogue. Another group took their names from the wood that formed them: General Leaf, Captain Tree, and Sergeant Bud.

Branwell and Charlotte began to write about and for these inhabitants of Glass Town in their own version of the popular *Blackwell's Magazine*. Each edition contained a table of contents, editorial, news, gossip, stories, poems, letters, advertisements, even details of the publisher, just like the real magazine but very, very small, only 5.6cm x 2.7cm, just big enough for the toy soldiers to hold in their hands. The pages were written in tiny writing and hand stitched together, the covers made from wrapping paper, sugar bags - anything that the children could find. The small size and tiny print helped to keep the books away from adult eyes. This was a secret world. The children were writing only for themselves and their characters. Not for anyone else.

Branwell and Charlotte competed with each other. *Blackwell's Magazine* was followed by *The Intelligence* and the *Young Men's Magazine*. Both loved writing and they wanted to see their efforts in print, even if they made the publications themselves. They gathered material from the world about them: what they

read in books, newspapers and magazines mixed with local stories: hauntings, ghosts, fairies, gossip from the village.

We don't know if Emily and Anne joined in the writing or produced their own little books because nothing by them has survived from this time. We do know that at some point they got fed up with the other two and struck out to make their own world of Gondal, which was very different from Glass Town.

All of the Brontës continued to imagine and inhabit their alternative worlds until they were adults but when Charlotte, Emily and Anne, decided to write books for everyone to see, they turned away from fantasy. Their novels, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* are all set in the real world. The books were immediate successes. Readers were astonished at how original they were, how accomplished. They didn't realise that the Brontë sisters had been writing since they were children. They had been writing, not for publication, for the approval of parents or teachers, or anyone else, but for the fun of it, just for themselves. They had made characters, worlds for them to live in, adventures for them to have, stories for them to experience. They had learned how to write. ⑤