

23. DIARY LATE 1990s, AMERICAN TEENAGE GIRL, 'BRIGHTON'

This is a handwritten diary (really a journal) of over 100 pages. The writer is female and appears to be around 15 years old. The handwriting is easy to read. The first entry was written in June 1997 and the last on January 19th 1998. The diarist recorded her feelings and experiences on most of the days in between. The diary came up on E-Bay – the seller bought a desk at an estate auction and the diary was inside the desk.

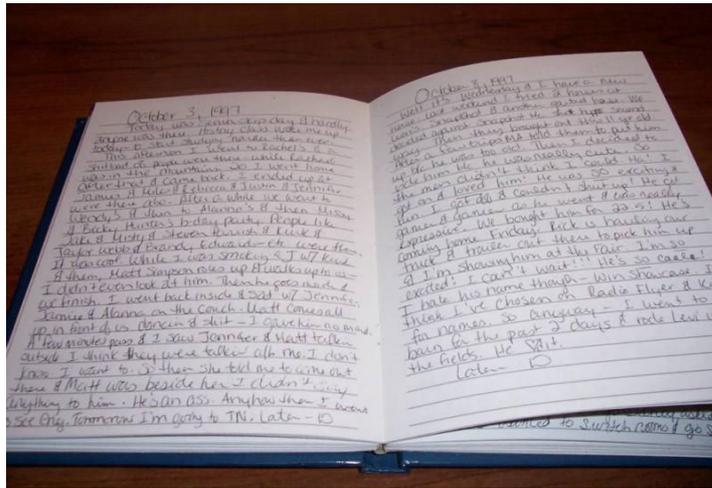
Given that this diary was written in 1997-8, the author is very probably still alive. Her identity has therefore been protected and we will know her by the pseudonym 'Brighton'.

In most respects this is the daily record of a regular teenager

although Brighton comes from a well-to-do family ~ horses are an expensive pastime and she appears to have two or three in stables. Nevertheless, her interests are not that unusual ~ school, boys and horses (not necessarily in that order).

However, here and there Brighton's writing shows considerable powers of observation and an unusual degree of insight, and these are what make it different. It's worth noting that her intelligence and literary skill do not always stand her in good stead. She seems far more intelligent than most of the boys that interest her, yet because she is so aware of her own failings and uncertainties, she is often unsure about how to proceed and when to abandon a lost cause.

Whoever chooses this diary will need to analyse Brighton's family and



romantic relationships and research her passion for horses and the competitions she regularly takes part in, travelling considerable distances in the process. This diary might be usefully paired with an essay on the life of another intelligent young woman, Joan Wyndham, whose diary ('Love Letters') we discuss in Week 7, or with 'Tyler's' early 1980s Diary, No.22 in this collection.