



Homage to O. Henry

Part 3: The Writer

By Anthony Tuck

O. Henry, regarded as the "greatest short story writer the world has ever known", was the nom de plume of William Sydney Porter. Born in Greensboro, North Carolina, in September 1862, he moved to Texas for his health and worked on a ranch, in a land office and in an Austin bank.

Accused of embezzling money from the bank, rather than face the charge he fled to Central America. Learning his wife was ill, he returned and after her death served a prison term. While imprisoned he began to contribute short stories to magazines. After his release he settled in New York, where his life was undramatic. He tended to be very shy, except with casual acquaintances of park benches, but soon his ever-flowing stories were known around the world. He died in June 1910.

Collected O. Henry volumes *The Four Million*, *Cabbages and Kings* and *The Voice of the City* can often be found in the local charity shops, where I found some of mine! As to whether O'Henry was innocent or guilty of the charge of embezzlement, I recommend a collection of his short stories, *The Gentle Grafters*. Read, enjoy and judge for yourself.

GARDENING

Cut and come again

By Zena Robson

I have been enjoying watching the small birds feeding from the balls of fat I have hung up in my leafless shrubs and trees. However I will need to get on with cutting back the ivies that grow up and over a fence at the bottom of the garden as I was too late last year and the birds had already started nest-building in it and I couldn't disturb them.

Pruning time is coming up for quite a few things - cut back winter flowering heathers as they finish to stop them going woody and sprawly; winter flowering Jasmine will probably need some attention so cut out dead and weak growth and tie in new shoots to the shape you want - don't do this with the summer flowerer but remove an old stem completely at the bottom otherwise all you will get is twiggy greenery and no flowers.

Summer flowerers that flower on new growth like *Buddleias* and *Lavateras* can be pruned back hard during February and into March, it really depends on the weather. Give them a good feed and mulch to help them get over the shock. I tend to hang back over *Caryopteris* and *Fuchsias* as they are more tender, so it's mid to late March for them. Be careful that you know when things flower - hacking into a *Philadelphus* now will mean no flowers at all!

On with the new

Seed sowing starts about now and if you haven't made any decisions about what to try this year then get your hands on some of those catalogues that are plopping through letter-boxes and lurking in magazines. But be warned - you need to practise self-restraint unless you have unlimited time and a greenhouse that can convert into a second home! Look for something new - I'll be looking for annual climbers that I haven't tried, as well as some of my old favourites like *Convolvulus* 'Royal Ensign' and *Nemophila* 'Penny Black'. I especially like things that will attract hoverflies and lacewings to deal with the inevitable greenfly.

YOUNG ARCHER

Martin Junior School's magazine

By Diana Cormack

A new after-school club, started in Martin Junior School last term, is proving to be very successful. The club is run by teacher Mrs Mistry, who has been helping the children to put together their own school magazine. The organisers of the magazine, called *Bits and Bobs*, are a group of ten and eleven-year-olds who will be going on to secondary schools in September.



The Editorial Team. Right to left: Anna Chapman, Lloyd Simmonds, Alexandra Collins, Mouna Patel, Sophie Baxter. Photo by Jane Conway.

Here is a poem from the magazine, written by James in class 5O:

Paint box Music

If I could write blue music,
It would be jazz music,
It would be cool and rap music,
It would be rap and hip hop music.

If I could write gold music,
It would be fold music,
It would be chocolate harp music.

If I could write green music,
It would be fresh music,
It would be slow and peaceful music,
It would be calm and quiet music,
It would be Spring music.

birthday, it's nice to welcome a new publication to East Finchley. Who knows, in a few years time, some of these young writers could be contributors to *THE ARCHER*.

Editors Sophie Baxter and Anna Chapman see the magazine as a way of celebrating and sharing literacy work in the school. Their mission statement is "to bring you plenty of news, views, fashions, sport and music every half term" and the first edition certainly lived up to that intention. It began with the other members of the team writing about themselves and their interests, as well as what they would be responsible for in the publication.

Bumper fun for all

The first bumper edition ran to 64 pages, with contributions from children throughout the school. There was also an opportunity to enter competitions, some well-written poems, and amusing jokes.

A lot of hard work went into *Bits and Bobs* and the second issue is well into production. At a time when we are just about to celebrate our ninth

Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Day

By Sonia Singham

The day before Lent begins is called Shrove Tuesday or, as many people call it today, Pancake Day. The name Shrove Tuesday has its origins in the Middle Ages when it was the last day of Shrove Tide. Christians were called to church to be "shriven" - to confess their sins and be forgiven - before Lent. It was the last day of feasting before forty days of fasting before Easter.

Eggs were one of the forbidden foods during Lent and were used up by making pancakes - hence Pancake Day.

Ancient race

One of the most famous customs is the Pancake Race at Olney in Buckinghamshire which dates back some 500 years. In the days when the "shriving bell" was rung to summon the people to church on Shrove Tuesday, one woman was busy using up her eggs, milk and flour by making them into a pancake. In her haste to get to church she ran there still in her apron and clutching her frying pan.

The custom still continues today. Only women may take part in the race, wearing a hat, scarf or apron. Each lady has to toss the pancake at least three times during the race, which starts at the market square. The first to reach the church door receives the prize of a prayer book from the vicar and a kiss from the bellringer.

A friendly rivalry has sprung up between the towns of Liberal in Kansas, USA and Olney. There is a travelling trophy between the two towns which is an engraved pancake griddle and is held by the winning town each year.

Children often say this rhyme on Pancake Day:

Mix a pancake, stir a pancake,
Toss it in the pan.
Mix a pancake, stir a pancake,
Catch it if you can.

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