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Jessie MacWilliams

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Jessie MacWilliams (1917 - 1990) British mathematician, best known for her work on error-correcting codes with Neil Sloane at the Bell Labs.

Born in Stoke-on-Trent, MacWilliams earned a bachelor's and a master's degree from Cambridge, then moved to the United States to continue her education at Harvard. After Harvard she began working at Bell Labs, where she assisted Sloane and co-authored with him *The Theory of Error-Correcting Codes*.

Because of her work with Sloane, one might guess MacWilliams has <http://planetmath.org/ErdHosNumber> Erdős number 3, but there's actually an even shorter path: With Jacobus Hendricus van Lint, MacWilliams wrote a paper on "Generalized quadratic residue codes" for *IEEE Trans. Inform. Theory* **24**. Lint in turn wrote with Erdős "On the number of positive integers $\leq x$ and free of prime factors $> y$ " in *Simon Stevin* **40**.