

= Enid Blyton =

Enid Mary Blyton (11 August 1897 ? 28 November 1968) was an English children 's writer whose books have been among the world 's best @-@ sellers since the 1930s , selling more than 600 million copies . Blyton 's books are still enormously popular , and have been translated into almost 90 languages ; her first book , Child Whispers , a 24 @-@ page collection of poems , was published in 1922 . She wrote on a wide range of topics including education , natural history , fantasy , mystery , and biblical narratives and is best remembered today for her Noddy , Famous Five , Secret Seven , and Adventure series .

Following the commercial success of her early novels such as Adventures of the Wishing Chair (1937) and The Enchanted Wood (1939) , Blyton went on to build a literary empire , sometimes producing fifty books a year in addition to her prolific magazine and newspaper contributions . Her writing was unplanned and sprang largely from her unconscious mind ; she typed her stories as events unfolded before her . The sheer volume of her work and the speed with which it was produced led to rumours that Blyton employed an army of ghost writers , a charge she vigorously denied .

Blyton 's work became increasingly controversial among literary critics , teachers and parents from the 1950s onwards , because of the alleged unchallenging nature of her writing and the themes of her books , particularly the Noddy series . Some libraries and schools banned her works , which the BBC had refused to broadcast from the 1930s until the 1950s because they were perceived to lack literary merit . Her books have been criticised as being elitist , sexist , racist , xenophobic and at odds with the more liberal environment emerging in post @-@ war Britain , but they have continued to be best @-@ sellers since her death in 1968 .

Blyton felt she had a responsibility to provide her readers with a strong moral framework , so she encouraged them to support worthy causes . In particular , through the clubs she set up or supported , she encouraged and organised them to raise funds for animal and paediatric charities . The story of Blyton 's life was dramatised in a BBC film entitled Enid , featuring Helena Bonham Carter in the title role and first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Four in 2009 . There have also been several adaptations of her books for stage , screen and television .

= = Early life and education = =

Enid Blyton was born on 11 August 1897 in East Dulwich , London , the eldest of three children , to Thomas Carey Blyton (1870 ? 1920) , a cutlery salesman , and his wife Theresa Mary (née Harrison ; 1874 ? 1950) . Enid 's younger brothers , Hanly (1899 ? 1983) and Carey (1902 ? 1976) , were born after the family had moved to a semi @-@ detached villa in Beckenham , then a village in Kent . A few months after her birth Enid almost died from whooping cough , but was nursed back to health by her father , whom she adored . Thomas Blyton ignited Enid 's interest in nature ; in her autobiography she wrote that he " loved flowers and birds and wild animals , and knew more about them than anyone I had ever met " . He also passed on his interest in gardening , art , music , literature and the theatre , and the pair often went on nature walks , much to the disapproval of Enid 's mother , who showed little interest in her daughter 's pursuits . Enid was devastated when he left the family shortly after her thirteenth birthday to live with another woman . Enid and her mother did not have a good relationship , and she failed to attend either of her parents ' funerals .

From 1907 to 1915 Blyton attended St Christopher 's School in Beckenham , where she enjoyed physical activities and became school tennis champion and captain of lacrosse . She was not so keen on all the academic subjects but excelled in writing , and in 1911 she entered Arthur Mee 's children 's poetry competition . Mee offered to print her verses , encouraging her to produce more . Blyton 's mother considered her efforts at writing to be a " waste of time and money " , but she was encouraged to persevere by Mabel Attenborough , the aunt of a school friend .

Blyton 's father taught her to play the piano , which she mastered well enough for him to believe that she might follow in his sister 's footsteps and become a professional musician . Blyton considered enrolling at the Guildhall School of Music , but decided she was better suited to

becoming a writer . After finishing school in 1915 as head girl , she moved out of the family home to live with her friend Mary Attenborough , before going to stay with George and Emily Hunt at Seckford Hall near Woodbridge in Suffolk . Seckford Hall , with its allegedly haunted room and secret passageway provided inspiration for her later writing . At Woodbridge Congregational Church Blyton met Ida Hunt , who taught at Ipswich High School , and suggested that she train as a teacher . Blyton was introduced to the children at the nursery school , and recognising her natural affinity with them she enrolled in a National Froebel Union teacher training course at the school in September 1916 . By this time she had almost ceased contact with her family .

Blyton 's manuscripts had been rejected by publishers on many occasions , which only made her more determined to succeed : " it is partly the struggle that helps you so much , that gives you determination , character , self @-@ reliance ? all things that help in any profession or trade , and most certainly in writing " . In March 1916 her first poems were published in Nash 's Magazine . She completed her teacher training course in December 1918 , and the following month obtained a teaching appointment at Bickley Park School , a small independent establishment for boys in Bickley , Kent . Two months later Blyton received a teaching certificate with distinctions in zoology and principles of education , 1st class in botany , geography , practice and history of education , child hygiene and class teaching and 2nd class in literature and elementary mathematics . In 1920 she moved to Southernhay in Hook Road Surbiton as nursery governess to the four sons of architect Horace Thompson and his wife Gertrude , with whom Blyton spent four happy years . Owing to a shortage of schools in the area her charges were soon joined by the children of neighbours , and a small school developed at the house .

= = Early writing career = =

In 1920 Blyton relocated to Chessington , and began writing in her spare time . The following year she won the Saturday Westminster Review writing competition with her essay " On the Popular Fallacy that to the Pure All Things are Pure " . Publications such as The Londoner , Home Weekly and The Bystander began to show an interest in her short stories and poems .

Blyton 's first book , Child Whispers , a 24 @-@ page collection of poems , was published in 1922 . It was illustrated by a schoolfriend , Phyllis Chase , who collaborated on several of her early works . Also in that year Blyton began writing in annuals for Cassell and George Newnes , and her first piece of writing was accepted for publication in Teachers ' World , " Peronei and his Pot of Glue " . Her success was boosted in 1923 when her poems were published alongside those of Rudyard Kipling , Walter de la Mare and G. K. Chesterton in a special issue of Teachers ' World . Blyton 's educational texts were quite influential in the 1920s and ' 30s , her most sizeable being the three @-@ volume The Teacher 's Treasury (1926) , the six @-@ volume Modern Teaching (1928) , the ten @-@ volume Pictorial Knowledge (1930) , and the four @-@ volume Modern Teaching in the Infant School (1932) .

In July 1923 Blyton published Real Fairies , a collection of thirty @-@ three poems written especially for the book with the exception of " Pretending " , which had appeared earlier in Punch magazine . The following year she published The Enid Blyton Book of Fairies , illustrated by Horace J. Knowles , and in 1926 the Book of Brownies . Several books of plays appeared in 1927 , including A Book of Little Plays and The Play 's the Thing with the illustrator Alfred Bestall .

In the 1930s Blyton developed an interest in writing stories related to various myths , including those of ancient Greece and Rome ; The Knights of the Round Table , Tales of Ancient Greece and Tales of Robin Hood were published in 1930 . In Tales of Ancient Greece Blyton retold sixteen well @-@ known ancient Greek myths , but used the Latin rather than the Greek names of deities and invented conversations between the characters . The Adventures of Odysseus , Tales of the Ancient Greeks and Persians and Tales of the Romans followed in 1934 .

= = Commercial success = =

== = New series : 1934 ? 1948 == =

The first of twenty @-@ eight books in Blyton 's Old Thatch series , The Talking Teapot and Other Tales , was published in 1934 , the same year as the first book in her Brer Rabbit series , Brer Rabbit Retold ; her first serial story and first full @-@ length book , Adventures of the Wishing @-@ Chair , followed in 1937 . The Enchanted Wood , the first book in the Faraway Tree series , published in 1939 , is about a magic tree inspired by the Norse mythology that had fascinated Blyton as a child . According to Blyton 's daughter Gillian the inspiration for the magic tree came from " thinking up a story one day and suddenly she was walking in the enchanted wood and found the tree . In her imagination she climbed up through the branches and met Moon @-@ Face , Silky , the Saucepan Man and the rest of the characters . She had all she needed . " As in the Wishing @-@ Chair series , these fantasy books typically involve children being transported into a magical world in which they meet fairies , goblins , elves , pixies and other mythological creatures .

Blyton 's first full @-@ length adventure novel , The Secret Island , was published in 1938 , featuring the characters of Jack , Mike , Peggy and Nora . Described by The Glasgow Herald as a " Robinson Crusoe @-@ style adventure on an island in an English lake " , The Secret Island was a lifelong favourite of Gillian 's and spawned the Secret series . The following year Blyton released her first book in the Circus series and her initial book in the Amelia Jane series , Naughty Amelia Jane ! According to Gillian the main character was based on a large handmade doll given to her by her mother on her third birthday .

During the 1940s Blyton became a prolific author , her success enhanced by her " marketing , publicity and branding that was far ahead of its time " . In 1940 Blyton published two books ? Three Boys and a Circus and Children of Kidillin ? under the pseudonym of Mary Pollock (middle name plus first married name) , in addition to the eleven published under her own name that year . So popular were Pollock 's books that one reviewer was prompted to observe that " Enid Blyton had better look to her laurels " . But Blyton 's readers were not so easily deceived and many complained about the subterfuge to her and her publisher , with the result that all six books published under the name of Mary Pollock ? two in 1940 and four in 1943 ? were reissued under Blyton 's name . Later in 1940 Blyton published the first of her boarding school story books and the first novel in the Naughtiest Girl series , The Naughtiest Girl in the School , which followed the exploits of the mischievous schoolgirl Elizabeth Allen at the fictional Whyteleafe School . The first of her six novels in the St. Clare 's series , The Twins at St. Clare 's , appeared the following year , featuring the twin sisters Patricia and Isabel O 'Sullivan .

In 1942 Blyton released the first book in the Mary Mouse series , Mary Mouse and the Dolls ' House , about a mouse exiled from her mousehole who becomes a maid at a dolls ' house . Twenty @-@ three books in the series were produced between 1942 and 1964 ; 10 @-@ 000 copies were sold in 1942 alone . The same year , Blyton published the first novel in the Famous Five series , Five on a Treasure Island , with illustrations by Eileen Soper . Its popularity resulted in twenty @-@ one books between then and 1963 , and the characters of Julian , Dick , Anne , George (Georgina) and Timmy the dog became household names in Britain . Matthew Grenby , author of Children 's Literature , states that the five were involved with " unmasking hardened villains and solving serious crimes " , although the novels were " hardly ' hard @-@ boiled ' thrillers " . Blyton based the character of Georgina , a tomboy she described as " short @-@ haired , freckled , sturdy , and snub @-@ nosed " and " bold and daring , hot @-@ tempered and loyal " , on herself .

Blyton had an interest in biblical narratives , and retold Old and New Testament stories . The Land of Far @-@ Beyond (1942) is a Christian parable along the lines of John Bunyan 's Pilgrim 's Progress (1698) , with contemporary children as the main characters . In 1943 she published The Children 's Life of Christ , a collection of fifty @-@ nine short stories related to the life of Jesus , with her own slant on popular biblical stories , from the Nativity and the Three Wise Men through to the trial , the crucifixion and the resurrection . Tales from the Bible was published the following year , followed by The Boy with the Loaves and Fishes in 1948 .

The first book of Blyton 's Five Find @-@ Outers series , The Mystery of the Burnt Cottage , was published in 1943 , as was the second book in the Faraway series , The Magic Faraway Tree ,

which in 2003 was voted 66th in the BBC 's Big Read poll to find the UK 's favourite book . Several of Blyton 's works during this period have seaside themes ; John Jolly by the Sea (1943) , a picture book intended for younger readers , was published in a booklet format by Evans Brothers . Other books with a maritime theme include The Secret of Cliff Castle and Smuggler Ben , both attributed to Mary Pollock in 1943 ; The Island of Adventure , the first in the Adventure series of eight novels from 1944 onwards ; and various novels of the Famous Five series such as Five on a Treasure Island (1942) , Five on Kirrin Island Again (1947) and Five Go Down to the Sea (1953) .

Capitalising on her success , with a loyal and ever @-@ growing readership , Blyton produced a new edition of many of her series such as the Famous Five , the Five Find @-@ Outers and St. Clare 's every year in addition to many other novels , short stories and books . In 1946 Blyton launched the first in the Malory Towers series of six books based around the schoolgirl Darrell Rivers , First Term at Malory Towers , which became extremely popular , particularly with girls .

= = = Peak output : 1949 ? 1959 = = =

The first book in Blyton 's Barney Mysteries series , The Rockingdown Mystery , was published in 1949 , as was the first of her fifteen Secret Seven novels . The Secret Seven Society consists of Peter , his sister Janet , and their friends Colin , George , Jack , Pam and Barbara , who meet regularly in a shed in the garden to discuss peculiar events in their local community . Blyton rewrote the stories so they could be adapted into cartoons , which appeared in Mickey Mouse Weekly in 1951 with illustrations by George Brook . The French author Evelyne Lallemand continued the series in the 1970s , producing an additional twelve books , nine of which were translated into English by Anthea Bell between 1983 and 1987 .

Blyton 's Noddy , about a little wooden boy from Toyland , first appeared in the Sunday Graphic on 5 June 1949 , and in November that year Noddy Goes to Toyland , the first of at least two dozen books in the series , was published . The idea was conceived by one of Blyton 's publishers , Sampson , Low , Marston and Company , who in 1949 arranged a meeting between Blyton and the Dutch illustrator Harmsen van der Beek . Despite having to communicate via an interpreter , he provided some initial sketches of how Toyland and its characters would be represented . Four days after the meeting Blyton sent the text of the first two Noddy books to her publisher , to be forwarded to van der Beek . The Noddy books became one of her most successful and best @-@ known series , and were hugely popular in the 1950s . An extensive range of sub @-@ series , spin @-@ offs and strip books were produced throughout the decade , including Noddy 's Library , Noddy 's Garage of Books , Noddy 's Castle of Books , Noddy 's Toy Station of Books and Noddy 's Shop of Books .

In 1950 Blyton established the company Darrell Waters Ltd to manage her affairs . By the early 1950s she had reached the peak of her output , often publishing more than fifty books a year , and she remained extremely prolific throughout much of the decade . By 1955 Blyton had written her fourteenth Famous Five novel , Five Have Plenty of Fun , her fifteenth Mary Mouse book , Mary Mouse in Nursery Rhyme Land , her eighth book in the Adventure series , The River of Adventure , and her seventh Secret Seven novel , Secret Seven Win Through . She completed the sixth and final book of the Malory Towers series , Last Term at Malory Towers , in 1951 .

Blyton published several further books featuring the character of Scamp the terrier , following on from The Adventures of Scamp , a novel she had released in 1943 under the pseudonym of Mary Pollock . Scamp Goes on Holiday (1952) and Scamp and Bimbo , Scamp at School , Scamp and Caroline and Scamp Goes to the Zoo (1954) were illustrated by Pierre Probst . She introduced the character of Bom , a stylish toy drummer dressed in a bright red coat and helmet , alongside Noddy in TV Comic in July 1956 . A book series began the same year with Bom the Little Toy Drummer , featuring illustrations by R. Paul @-@ Hoyer , and followed with Bom and His Magic Drumstick (1957) , Bom Goes Adventuring and Bom Goes to Ho Ho Village (1958) , Bom and the Clown and Bom and the Rainbow (1959) and Bom Goes to Magic Town (1960) . In 1958 she produced two annuals featuring the character , the first of which included twenty short stories , poems and picture strips .

= = = Final works = = =

Many of Blyton 's series , including Noddy and The Famous Five , continued to be successful in the 1960s ; by 1962 , 26 million copies of Noddy had been sold . Blyton concluded several of her long @-@ running series in 1963 , publishing the last books of The Famous Five (Five Are Together Again) and The Secret Seven (Fun for the Secret Seven) ; she also produced three more Brer Rabbit books with the illustrator Grace Lodge : Brer Rabbit Again , Brer Rabbit Book , and Brer Rabbit 's a Rascal . In 1962 many of her books were among the first to be published by Armada Books in paperback , making them more affordable to children .

After 1963 Blyton 's output was generally confined to short stories and books intended for very young readers , such as Learn to Count with Noddy and Learn to Tell Time with Noddy in 1965 , and Stories for Bedtime and the Sunshine Picture Story Book collection in 1966 . Her declining health and a falling off in readership among older children have been put forward as the principal reasons for this change in trend . Blyton published her last book in the Noddy series , Noddy and the Aeroplane , in February 1964 . In May the following year she published Mixed Bag , a song book with music written by her nephew Carey , and in August she released her last full @-@ length books , The Man Who Stopped to Help and The Boy Who Came Back .

= = Magazine and newspaper contributions = =

Blyton cemented her reputation as a children 's writer when in 1926 she took over the editing of Sunny Stories , a magazine that typically included the re @-@ telling of legends , myths , stories and other articles for children . That same year she was given her own column in Teachers ' World , entitled " From my Window " . Three years later she began contributing a weekly page in the magazine , in which she published letters from her fox terrier dog Bobs . They proved to be so popular that in 1933 they were published in book form as Letters from Bobs , and sold ten thousand copies in the first week . Her most popular feature was " Round the Year with Enid Blyton " , which consisted of forty @-@ eight articles covering aspects of natural history such as weather , pond life , how to plant a school garden and how to make a bird table . Among Blyton 's other nature projects was her monthly " Country Letter " feature that appeared in The Nature Lover magazine in 1935 .

Sunny Stories was renamed Enid Blyton 's Sunny Stories in January 1937 , and served as a vehicle for the serialisation of Blyton 's books . Her first Naughty Amelia Jane story , about an anti @-@ heroine based on a doll owned by her daughter Gillian , was published in the magazine . Blyton stopped contributing in 1952 , and it closed down the following year , shortly before the appearance of the new fortnightly Enid Blyton Magazine written entirely by Blyton . The first edition appeared on 18 March 1953 , and the magazine ran until September 1959 .

Noddy made his first appearance in the Sunday Graphic in 1949 , the same year as Blyton 's first daily Noddy strip for the London Evening Standard . It was illustrated by van der Beek until his death in 1953 .

= = Writing style and technique = =

Blyton worked in a wide range of fictional genres , from fairy tales to animal , nature , detective , mystery , and circus stories , but she often " blurred the boundaries " in her books , and encompassed a range of genres even in her short stories . In a 1958 article published in The Author , she wrote that there were a " dozen or more different types of stories for children " , and she had tried them all , but her favourites were those with a family at their centre .

In a letter to the psychologist Peter McKellar , Blyton describes her writing technique :

I shut my eyes for a few minutes , with my portable typewriter on my knee ? I make my mind a blank and wait ? and then , as clearly as I would see real children , my characters stand before me in my mind 's eye ... The first sentence comes straight into my mind , I don 't have to think of it ? I don 't have to think of anything .

In another letter to McKellar she describes how in just five days she wrote the 60 @,@ 000 @-@ word book *The River of Adventure* , the eighth in her Adventure Series , by listening to what she referred to as her " under @-@ mind " , which she contrasted with her " upper conscious mind " . Blyton was unwilling to conduct any research or planning before beginning work on a new book , which coupled with the lack of variety in her life according to Druce almost inevitably presented the danger that she might unconsciously , and clearly did , plagiarise the books she had read , including her own . Gillian has recalled that her mother " never knew where her stories came from " , but that she used to talk about them " coming from her ' mind 's eye ' " , as did William Wordsworth and Charles Dickens . Blyton had " thought it was made up of every experience she 'd ever had , everything she 's seen or heard or read , much of which had long disappeared from her conscious memory " but never knew the direction her stories would take . Blyton further explained in her biography that " If I tried to think out or invent the whole book , I could not do it . For one thing , it would bore me and for another , it would lack the ' verve ' and the extraordinary touches and surprising ideas that flood out from my imagination . "

Blyton 's daily routine varied little over the years . She usually began writing soon after breakfast , with her portable typewriter on her knee and her favourite red Moroccan shawl nearby ; she believed that the colour red acted as a " mental stimulus " for her . Stopping only for a short lunch break she continued writing until five o 'clock , by which time she would usually have produced 6 @,@ 000 ? 10 @,@ 000 words .

A 2000 article in *The Malay Mail* considers Blyton 's children to have " lived in a world shaped by the realities of post @-@ war austerity " , enjoying freedom without the political correctness of today , which serves modern readers of Blyton 's novels with a form of escapism . Brandon Robshaw of *The Independent* refers to the Blyton universe as " crammed with colour and character " , " self @-@ contained and internally consistent " , noting that Blyton exemplifies a strong mistrust of adults and figures of authority in her works , creating a world in which children govern . Gillian noted that in her mother 's adventure , detective and school stories for older children , " the hook is the strong storyline with plenty of cliffhangers , a trick she acquired from her years of writing serialised stories for children 's magazines . There is always a strong moral framework in which bravery and loyalty are (eventually) rewarded " . Blyton herself wrote that " my love of children is the whole foundation of all my work " .

Victor Watson , Assistant Director of Research at Homerton College , Cambridge , believes that Blyton 's works reveal an " essential longing and potential associated with childhood " , and notes how the opening pages of *The Mountain of Adventure* present a " deeply appealing ideal of childhood " . He argues that Blyton 's work differs from that of many other authors in its approach , describing the narrative of *The Famous Five* series for instance as " like a powerful spotlight , it seeks to illuminate , to explain , to demystify . It takes its readers on a roller @-@ coaster story in which the darkness is always banished ; everything puzzling , arbitrary , evocative is either dismissed or explained " . Watson further notes how Blyton often used minimalist visual descriptions and introduced a few careless phrases such as " gleamed enchantingly " to appeal to her young readers .

From the mid @-@ 1950s rumours began to circulate that Blyton had not written all the books attributed to her , a charge she found particularly distressing . She published an appeal in her magazine asking children to let her know if they heard such stories , and after one mother informed her that she had attended a parents ' meeting at her daughter 's school during which a young librarian had repeated the allegation , Blyton decided in 1955 to begin legal proceedings . The librarian was eventually forced to make a public apology in open court early the following year , but the rumours that Blyton operated " a ' company ' of ghost writers " persisted , as some found it difficult to believe that one woman working alone could produce such a volume of work .

= = Charitable work = =

Blyton felt a responsibility to provide her readers with a positive moral framework , and she encouraged them to support worthy causes . Her view , expressed in a 1957 article , was that

children should help animals and other children rather than adults :

[children] are not interested in helping adults ; indeed , they think that adults themselves should tackle adult needs . But they are intensely interested in animals and other children and feel compassion for the blind boys and girls , and for the spastics who are unable to walk or talk .

Blyton and the members of the children 's clubs she promoted via her magazines raised a great deal of money for various charities ; according to Blyton , membership of her clubs meant " working for others , for no reward " . The largest of the clubs she was involved with was the Busy Bees , the junior section of the People 's Dispensary for Sick Animals , which Blyton had actively supported since 1933 . The club had been set up by Maria Dickin in 1934 , and after Blyton publicised its existence in the Enid Blyton Magazine it attracted 100 @, @ 000 members in three years . Such was Blyton 's popularity among children that after she became Queen Bee in 1952 more than 20 @, @ 000 additional members were recruited in her first year in office . The Enid Blyton Magazine Club was formed in 1953 . Its primary object was to raise funds to help those children with cerebral palsy who attended a centre in Cheyne Walk , in Chelsea , London , by furnishing an on @-@ site hostel among other things .

The Famous Five series gathered such a following that readers asked Blyton if they might form a fan club . She agreed , on condition that it serve a useful purpose , and suggested that it could raise funds for the Shaftesbury Society Babies ' Home in Beaconsfield , on whose committee she had served since 1948 . The club was established in 1952 , and provided funds for equipping a Famous Five Ward at the home , a paddling pool , sun room , summer house , playground , birthday and Christmas celebrations , and visits to the pantomime . By the late 1950s Blyton 's clubs had a membership of 500 @, @ 000 , and raised £ 35 @, @ 000 in the six years of the Enid Blyton Magazine 's run .

By 1974 the Famous Five Club had a membership of 220 @, @ 000 , and was growing at the rate of 6 @, @ 000 new members a year . The Beaconsfield home it was set up to support closed in 1967 , but the club continued to raise funds for other paediatric charities , including an Enid Blyton bed at Great Ormond Street Hospital and a mini @-@ bus for disabled children at Stoke Mandeville Hospital .

= = Jigsaw puzzles and games = =

Blyton capitalised upon her commercial success as an author by negotiating agreements with jigsaw puzzle and games manufacturers from the late 1940s onwards ; by the early 1960s some 146 different companies were involved in merchandising Noddy alone . In 1948 Bestime released four jigsaw puzzles featuring her characters , and the first Enid Blyton board game appeared , Journey Through Fairyland , created by BGL . The first card game , Faraway Tree , appeared from Pepys in 1950 . In 1954 Bestime released the first four jigsaw puzzles of the Secret Seven , and the following year a Secret Seven card game appeared .

Bestime released the Little Noddy Car Game in 1953 and the Little Noddy Leap Frog Game in 1955 , and in 1956 American manufacturer Parker Brothers released Little Noddy 's Taxi Game , a board game which features Noddy driving about town , picking up various characters . Bestime released its Plywood Noddy Jigsaws series in 1957 and a Noddy jigsaw series featuring cards appeared from 1963 , with illustrations by Robert Lee . Arrow Games became the chief producer of Noddy jigsaws in the late 1970s and early 1980s . Whitman manufactured four new Secret Seven jigsaw puzzles in 1975 , and produced four new Malory Towers ones two years later . In 1979 the company released a Famous Five adventure board game , Famous Five Kirrin Island Treasure . Stephen Thraves wrote eight Famous Five adventure game books , published by Hodder & Stoughton in the 1980s . The first adventure game book of the series , The Wreckers ' Tower Game , was published in October 1984 .

= = Personal life = =

On 28 August 1924 Blyton married Major Hugh Alexander Pollock , DSO (1888 ? 1971) at

Bromley Register Office , without inviting her family . Pollock was editor of the book department in the publishing firm of George Newnes , which became her regular publisher . It was he who requested that Blyton write a book about animals , The Zoo Book , which was completed in the month before they married . They initially lived in a flat in Chelsea before moving to Elfin Cottage in Beckenham in 1926 , and then to Old Thatch in Bourne End (called Peterswood in her books) in 1929 .

Blyton 's first daughter Gillian , was born on 15 July 1931 , and after a miscarriage in 1934 , she gave birth to a second daughter , Imogen , on 27 October 1935 . In 1938 Blyton and her family moved to a house in Beaconsfield , which was named Green Hedges by Blyton 's readers following a competition in her magazine . By the mid @-@ 1930s , Pollock ? possibly due to the trauma he had suffered during the First World War being revived through his meetings as a publisher with Winston Churchill ? withdrew increasingly from public life and became a secret alcoholic . With the outbreak of the Second World War , he became involved in the Home Guard . Pollock entered into a relationship with a budding young writer , Ida Crowe , and arranged for her to join him at his posting to a Home Guard training centre at Denbies , a Gothic mansion in Surrey belonging to Lord Ashcombe , and work there as his secretary . Blyton 's marriage to Pollock became troubled , and according to Crowe 's memoir , Blyton began a series of affairs , including a lesbian relationship with one of the children 's nannies . In 1941 Blyton met Kenneth Fraser Darrell Waters , a London surgeon with whom she began an affair . Pollock discovered the liaison , and threatened to initiate divorce proceedings against Blyton . Fearing that exposure of her adultery would ruin her public image , it was ultimately agreed that Blyton would instead file for divorce against Pollock . According to Crowe 's memoir , Blyton promised that if he admitted to infidelity she would allow him parental access to their daughters ; but after the divorce he was forbidden to contact them , and Blyton ensured he was subsequently unable to find work in publishing . Pollock , having married Crowe on 26 October 1943 , eventually resumed his heavy drinking and was forced to petition for bankruptcy in 1950 .

Blyton and Darrell Waters married at the City of Westminster Register Office on 20 October 1943 . She changed the surname of her daughters to Darrell Waters and publicly embraced her new role as a happily married and devoted doctor 's wife . After discovering she was pregnant in the spring of 1945 , Blyton miscarried five months later , following a fall from a ladder . The baby would have been Darrell Waters 's first child and it would also have been the son for which both of them longed .

Blyton 's health began to deteriorate in 1957 , when during a round of golf she started to complain of feeling faint and breathless , and by 1960 she was displaying signs of dementia . Her agent George Greenfield recalled that it was " unthinkable " for the " most famous and successful of children 's authors with her enormous energy and computer @-@ like memory " to be losing her mind and suffering from what is now known as Alzheimer 's disease in her mid @-@ sixties . Blyton 's situation was worsened by her husband 's declining health throughout the 1960s ; he suffered from severe arthritis in his neck and hips , deafness , and became increasingly ill @-@ tempered and erratic until his death on 15 September 1967 .

The story of Blyton 's life was dramatised in a BBC film entitled Enid , which aired in the United Kingdom on BBC Four on 16 November 2009 . Helena Bonham Carter , who played the title role , described Blyton as " a complete workaholic , an achievement junkie and an extremely canny businesswoman " who " knew how to brand herself , right down to the famous signature " .

= = Death and legacy = =

During the months following her husband 's death Blyton became increasingly ill , and moved into a nursing home three months before her death . She died at the Greenways Nursing Home , London , on 28 November 1968 , aged 71 . A memorial service was held at St James 's Church , Piccadilly , and she was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium , where her ashes remain . Blyton 's home , Green Hedges , was auctioned on 26 May 1971 and demolished in 1973 ; the site is now occupied by houses and a street named Blyton Close . An English Heritage blue plaque commemorates

Blyton at Hook Road in Chessington , where she lived from 1920 to 1924 . In 2014 a plaque recording her time as a Beaconsfield resident from 1938 until her death in 1968 was unveiled in the town hall gardens , next to small iron figures of Noddy and Big Ears .

Since her death and the publication of her daughter Imogen 's 1989 autobiography , *A Childhood at Green Hedges* , Blyton has emerged as an emotionally immature , unstable and often malicious figure . Imogen considered her mother to be " arrogant , insecure , pretentious , very skilled at putting difficult or unpleasant things out of her mind , and without a trace of maternal instinct . As a child , I viewed her as a rather strict authority . As an adult I pitied her . " Blyton 's eldest daughter Gillian remembered her rather differently however , as " a fair and loving mother , and a fascinating companion " .

The Enid Blyton Trust for Children was established in 1982 with Imogen as its first chairman , and in 1985 it established the National Library for the Handicapped Child . Enid Blyton 's *Adventure Magazine* began publication in September 1985 , and on 14 October 1992 the BBC began publishing *Noddy Magazine* and released the Noddy CD @-@ Rom in October 1996 .

The first Enid Blyton Day was held at Rickmansworth on 6 March 1993 , and in October 1996 the Enid Blyton award , The Enid , was given to those who have made outstanding contributions towards children . The Enid Blyton Society was formed in early 1995 , to provide " a focal point for collectors and enthusiasts of Enid Blyton " through its thrice @-@ annual Enid Blyton Society Journal , its annual Enid Blyton Day , and its website . On 16 December 1996 Channel 4 broadcast a documentary about Blyton , *Secret Lives* . To celebrate her centenary in 1997 exhibitions were put on at the London Toy & Model Museum (now closed) , Hereford and Worcester County Museum and Bromley Library , and on 9 September the Royal Mail issued centenary stamps .

The London @-@ based entertainment and retail company Trocadero plc purchased Blyton 's Darrell Waters Ltd in 1995 for £ 14 @.@ 6 million and established a subsidiary , Enid Blyton Ltd , to handle all intellectual properties , character brands and media in Blyton 's works . The group changed its name to Chorion in 1998 , but after financial difficulties in 2012 sold its assets . Hachette UK acquired from Chorion world rights in the Blyton estate in March 2013 , including The Famous Five series but excluding the rights to Noddy , which had been sold to DreamWorks Classics (formerly Classic Media , now a subsidiary of DreamWorks Animation) in 2012 .

Blyton 's granddaughter , Sophie Smallwood , wrote a new Noddy book to celebrate the character 's 60th birthday , 46 years after the last book was published ; *Noddy and the Farmyard Muddle* (2009) was illustrated by Robert Tyndall . In February 2011 , the manuscript of a previously unknown Blyton novel , *Mr Tumpy 's Caravan* , was discovered by the archivist at Seven Stories , National Centre for Children 's Books in a collection of papers belonging to Blyton 's daughter Gillian , purchased by Seven Stories in 2010 following her death . It was initially thought to belong to a comic strip collection of the same name published in 1949 , but it appears to be unrelated and is believed to be something written in the 1930s , which had been rejected by a publisher .

In a 1982 survey of 10 @,@ 000 eleven @-@ year @-@ old children Blyton was voted their most popular writer . She is the world 's fourth most translated author , behind Agatha Christie , Jules Verne and William Shakespeare . From 2000 to 2010 , Blyton was listed as a Top Ten author , selling almost 8 million copies (worth £ 31 @.@ 2 million) in the UK alone . In 2003 *The Magic Faraway Tree* was voted 66 in the BBC 's Big Read . In the 2008 Costa Book Awards , Blyton was voted Britain 's best @-@ loved author . Her books continue to be very popular among children in Commonwealth nations such as India , Pakistan , Sri Lanka , Singapore , Malta , New Zealand , and Australia , and around the world . They have also seen a surge of popularity in China , where they are " big with every generation " . In March 2004 Chorion and the Chinese publisher Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press negotiated an agreement over the Noddy franchise , which included bringing the character to an animated series on television , with a potential audience of a further 95 million children under the age of five . Chorion spent around £ 10 million digitising Noddy , and as of 2002 had made television agreements with at least 11 countries worldwide .

Novelists influenced by Blyton include the crime writer Denise Danks , whose fictional detective Georgina Powers is based on George from the Famous Five . Peter Hunt 's *A Step off the Path* (1985) is also influenced by the Famous Five , and the St. Clare 's and Malory Towers series

provided the inspiration for Jacqueline Wilson 's Double Act (1996) and Adèle Geras 's Egerton Hall trilogy (1990 ? 92) respectively .

= = = Ghost writing = = =

After Blyton 's death author Pamela Cox was asked to continue two of the author 's series , St. Clare 's and Malory Towers . To date Cox has published three St. Clare 's novels , Third Form at St. Clare 's , Sixth Form at St. Clare 's , and Kitty at St Clare 's , and six in the Malory Towers series , New Term At Malory Towers , Summer Term At Malory Towers , Winter term At Malory Towers , Fun And Games At Malory Towers , Secrets At Malory Towers , and Goodbye Malory Towers .

= = Critical backlash = =

Blyton 's range of plots and settings has been described as limited and continually recycled . Responding to claims that her moral views were " dependably predictable " , Blyton commented that " most of you could write down perfectly correctly all the things that I believe in and stand for ? you have found them in my books , and a writer 's books are always a faithful reflection of himself " . Many of her books were critically assessed by teachers and librarians , deemed unfit for children to read , and removed from syllabuses and public libraries .

From the 1930s to the 1950s the BBC operated a de facto ban on dramatising Blyton 's books for radio , considering her to be a " second @-@ rater " whose work was without literary merit . The children 's literary critic Margery Fisher likened Blyton 's books to " slow poison " , and Jean E. Sutcliffe of the BBC 's schools broadcast department wrote of Blyton 's ability to churn out " mediocre material " , noting that " her capacity to do so amounts to genius ... anyone else would have died of boredom long ago " . Michael Rosen , Children 's Laureate from 2007 until 2009 , wrote that " I find myself flinching at occasional bursts of snobbery and the assumed level of privilege of the children and families in the books . " The children 's author Anne Fine presented an overview of the concerns about Blyton 's work and responses to them on BBC Radio 4 in November 2008 , in which she noted the " drip , drip , drip of disapproval " associated with the books . Blyton 's response to her critics was that she was uninterested in the views of anyone over the age of 12 , claiming that half the attacks on her work were motivated by jealousy and the rest came from " stupid people who don 't know what they 're talking about because they 've never read any of my books " .

Although Blyton 's works have been banned from more public libraries than those of any other author , there is no evidence that the popularity of her books ever suffered , and by 1990 she was still described as being very widely read . Although some criticised her in the 1950s for the volume of work she produced , Blyton astutely capitalised on being considered a more " savoury " English alternative to what was seen by contemporaries as an invasion by American culture in the form of Disney and comics .

= = = Simplicity = = =

Some librarians felt that Blyton 's restricted use of language , a conscious product of her teaching background , was prejudicial to an appreciation of more literary qualities . In a scathing article published in Encounter in 1958 , the journalist Colin Welch remarked that it was " hard to see how a diet of Miss Blyton could help with the 11 @-@ plus or even with the Cambridge English Tripos " , but reserved his harshest criticism for Blyton 's Noddy , describing him as an " unnaturally priggish ... sanctimonious ... witless , spiritless , snivelling , sneaking doll . "

The author Nicholas Tucker notes that it was common to see Blyton cited as people 's favourite or least favourite author according to their age , and argues that her books create an " encapsulated world for young readers that simply dissolves with age , leaving behind only memories of excitement and strong identification " . Fred Inglis considers Blyton 's books to be technically easy to read , but to also be " emotionally and cognitively easy " . He mentions that the psychologist Michael Woods believed that Blyton was different from many other older authors writing for children in that she

seemed untroubled by presenting them with a world that differed from reality . Woods surmised that Blyton " was a child , she thought as a child , and wrote as a child ... the basic feeling is essentially pre @-@ adolescent ... Enid Blyton has no moral dilemmas ... Inevitably Enid Blyton was labelled by rumour a child @-@ hater . If true , such a fact should come as no surprise to us , for as a child herself all other children can be nothing but rivals for her . " Inglis argues though that Blyton was clearly devoted to children and put an enormous amount of energy into her work , with a powerful belief in " representing the crude moral diagrams and garish fantasies of a readership " . Blyton 's daughter Imogen has stated that she " loved a relationship with children through her books " , but real children were an intrusion , and there was no room for intruders in the world that Blyton occupied through her writing .

= = = Racism , xenophobia and sexism = = =

Accusations of racism in Blyton 's books were first made by Lena Jeger in a Guardian article published in 1966 , in which she was critical of Blyton 's *The Little Black Doll* , published a few months earlier . Sambo , the black doll of the title , is hated by his owner and the other toys owing to his " ugly black face " , and runs away . A shower of rain washes his face clean , after which he is welcomed back home with his now pink face . Jamaica Kincaid also considers the Noddy books to be " deeply racist " because of the blonde children and the black golliwogs . In Blyton 's 1944 novel *The Island of Adventure* , a black servant named Jo @-@ Jo is very intelligent , but is particularly cruel to the children .

Accusations of xenophobia were also made . As George Greenfield observed , " Enid was very much part of that between @-@ the @-@ wars middle class which believed that foreigners were untrustworthy or funny or sometimes both " . The publisher Macmillan conducted an internal assessment of Blyton 's *The Mystery That Never Was* , submitted to them at the height of her fame in 1960 . The review was carried out by the author and books editor Phyllis Hartnoll , in whose view " There is a faint but unattractive touch of old @-@ fashioned xenophobia in the author 's attitude to the thieves ; they are ' foreign ' ... and this seems to be regarded as sufficient to explain their criminality . " Macmillan rejected the manuscript , but it was published by William Collins in 1961 , and then again in 1965 and 1983 .

Blyton 's depictions of boys and girls are considered by many critics to be sexist . In a Guardian article published in 2005 Lucy Mangan proposed that *The Famous Five* series depicts a power struggle between Julian , Dick and George (Georgina) , in which the female characters either act like boys or are talked down to , as when Dick lectures George : " it 's really time you gave up thinking you 're as good as a boy " .

= = = Revisions to later editions = = =

To address criticisms levelled at Blyton 's work some later editions have been altered to reflect more liberal attitudes towards issues such as race , gender and the treatment of children ; modern reprints of the Noddy series substitute teddy bears or goblins for golliwogs , for instance . The golliwogs who steal Noddy 's car and dump him naked in the Dark Wood in *Here Comes Noddy Again* are replaced by goblins in the 1986 revision , who strip Noddy only of his shoes and hat and return at the end of the story to apologise .

The Faraway Tree 's Dame Slap , who made regular use of corporal punishment , was changed to Dame Snap who no longer did so , and the names of Dick and Fanny in the same series were changed to Rick and Frannie . Characters in the Malory Towers and St. Clare 's series are no longer spanked or threatened with a spanking , but are instead scolded . References to George 's short hair making her look like a boy were removed in revisions to *Five on a Hike Together* , reflecting the idea that girls need not have long hair to be considered feminine or normal .

In 2010 Hodder , the publisher of the Famous Five series , announced its intention to update the language used in the books , of which it sold more than half a million copies a year . The changes , which Hodder described as " subtle " , mainly affect the dialogue rather than the narrative . For

instance , " school tunic " becomes " uniform " , " mother and father " becomes " mum and dad " , " bathing " is replaced by " swimming " , and " jersey " by " jumper " . Some commentators see the changes as necessary to encourage modern readers , whereas others regard them as unnecessary and patronising .

= = Stage , film and TV adaptations = =

In 1954 Blyton adapted Noddy for the stage , producing the Noddy in Toyland pantomime in just two or three weeks . The production was staged at the 2660 @-@ seat Stoll Theatre in Kingsway , London at Christmas . Its popularity resulted in the show running during the Christmas season for five or six years . Blyton was delighted with its reception by children in the audience , and attended the theatre three or four times a week . TV adaptations of Noddy since 1954 include one in the 1970s narrated by Richard Briers . In 1955 a stage play based on the Famous Five was produced , and in January 1997 the King 's Head Theatre embarked on a six @-@ month tour of the UK with The Famous Five Musical , to commemorate Blyton 's centenary . On 21 November 1998 The Secret Seven Save the World was first performed at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff .

There have also been several film and television adaptations of the Famous Five : by the Children 's Film Foundation in 1957 and 1964 , Southern Television in 1978 ? 79 , and Zenith Productions in 1995 ? 97 . The series was also adapted for the German film Fünf Freunde , directed by Mike Marzuk and released in 2011 .

The Comic Strip , a group of British comedians , produced two extreme parodies of the Famous Five for Channel 4 television : Five Go Mad in Dorset , broadcast in 1982 , and Five Go Mad on Mescaline , broadcast the following year . A third in the series , Five Go to Rehab , was broadcast on Sky in 2012 .

In October 2014 it was announced that a deal had been signed with publishers Hachette for " The Faraway Tree " series to be adapted into a live action film by director Sam Mendes ' production company . Marlene Johnson , head of children 's books at Hachette , said : " Enid Blyton was a passionate advocate of children 's storytelling , and The Magic Faraway Tree is a fantastic example of her creative imagination . "

= = Papers = =

Seven Stories , the National Centre for Children 's Books in Newcastle upon Tyne , holds the largest public collection of Blyton 's papers and typescripts . The Seven Stories collection contains a significant number of Blyton 's typescripts , including the previously unpublished novel , Mr Tumpy 's Caravan , as well as personal papers and diaries . The purchase of the material in 2010 was made possible by special funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund , the MLA / V & A Purchase Grant Fund , and two private donations .