One of the most prolific authors of all time, Enid Blyton (1897-1968) wrote between 600 and 700 books - so many that even she wasn't sure of the exact number! She wrote for children of different ages and in a range of genres - fantasy, school story, adventure, mystery.

Explore our Enid Blyton exhibition online in *Mystery, Magic and Midnight Feasts: A Digital Exhibition*

**The Writer**

Among her best known creations are the *Famous Five* series, which began with *Five on a Treasure Island* in 1942, the school series *Malory Towers* (from 1946) and *Noddy* (1949 onwards). By the 1950s she was writing so fast she could complete a novel in a week, as well as producing her own magazine. In 1974 she was the fourth most translated author in the world.

As well as being immensely popular, Blyton has also long been a controversial figure. Her writing has been often criticised for being too simple, and for reflecting outdated attitudes and values. Nevertheless, a large number of her titles remain in print, and she is frequently attributed with getting children hooked into reading.

**Creative Process**

Blyton's first husband, publisher Hugh Pollock, encouraged her to learn to type. From the 1920s onwards she produced all her work on a small portable typewriter, balanced on her knee. She wrote fluently and fast, apparently without needing to draft and redraft her text.

The typescripts now held by Seven Stories show that Blyton's description of her method was broadly true, showing evidence of small-scale corrections, in Blyton's hand, but no major rewriting. Clearly she read through the scripts carefully before sending them off to her publisher, often changing odd words here and there. Though speedy, she was far from careless.
Without doubt, the most exciting discovery we have made is of what appears to be a previously unpublished novel, entitled *Mr Tumpy’s Caravan*. Owing to the similarities in title, we had assumed this typescript, which runs to 180 pages, was an early draft of *Mr Tumpy and His Caravan*, a picture strip book published in 1949. However, we contacted an expert at the Enid Blyton Society, Tony Summerfield, just to make sure - Tony is extremely knowledgeable about Blyton’s published works, and has compiled the authoritative bibliography of her works, so we were confident in his advice. We were absolutely delighted when he, with equal excitement, informed us our typescript was most definitely not an early draft of *Mr Tumpy and His Caravan* but was an entirely new, previously unknown work! It also appears to be quite an early piece - the address given on the title page is Old Thatch, a house Blyton moved out of in 1938, so the novel was definitely written before that date. Which makes it even more interesting, as it gives some insight into how Blyton’s creative talent developed.

All of the material purchased by Seven Stories in 2010 came from the Estate of Gillian Baverstock, Blyton’s elder daughter. Despite Enid Blyton’s huge output and immense popularity, there is no other substantial archive of her work in a public institution anywhere in the UK. Seven Stories is hoping to add to its Enid Blyton collection in the future. If you have first, or early, editions of Blyton books, in good condition, or unusual Blyton memorabilia, that you’d like to offer to Seven Stories, please get in touch.

---

**In Her Own Words**

In her autobiography, Enid describes how she wrote:

“I have such easy access to the imagination, and the flood of ideas pours out so fast and so furiously that it is all I can do to type quickly enough to keep up with them…I could write a whole book at one sitting if only I didn’t have to eat or sleep.”