

Royal Mail news

New Enid Blyton stamps
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Enid Blyton Stamps featuring characters from five of Enid Blyton's best-loved childrens' books go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 9 September 1997. The issue commemorates the centenary of the birth of Enid Blyton.

The 20p stamp features a child looking at an illustration of Noddy and Big Ears. The 26p, 37p, 43p and 63p values depict scenes from *The Famous Five*, *Secret Seven*, *Faraway Tree*, and *Malory Towers*.

The stamps are concerned with famous series of books rather than individual titles, eg there are 21 Famous Five books and three books about

the Faraway Tree. The five stamps cover the following postal rates: 20p inland 2nd class basic rate, 26p inland 1st class and EU basic rates, 37p airmail postcard rate, 43p basic airmail letter rate, and 63p airmail letters, second weight step.

ENID BLYTON Enid Mary Blyton was born in a small, two-bedroom apartment above a shop in East Dulwich on 11 August 1897. She first started writing stories as a teenager and later as a teacher, wrote short plays and verse for teacher's magazines. Her first book, *Child Whispers*, a collection of poems, was published in 1922. Over 40 years she wrote some 700 books

Presentation pack and stamp cards

A presentation pack (price £2.25) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices.



which have delighted children around the world; her works have been translated into no fewer than 27 languages. Using a manual typewriter (before the days of word processors!), placed on a board over her knees, her output was an astonishing 6000-10,000 words a day!

For some years her work was considered politically incorrect and schools and libraries did not encourage children to read her stories. In recent times her reputation as a childrens' storyteller has been restored and some 8 million of her books are sold each year. The National Conference for Research into Children's Literature has described her books as 'a thumping good read'.

Some of the inspiration for Enid Blyton's characters came from her family. Her daughter's rag doll, for instance, gave rise to Naughty Amelia Jane. Many of her books were written at her home, Green Hedges, near Beaconsfield where she lived for 30 years. The house was demolished in 1973, but a scale replica can be seen at a nearby model village. Although she pretended to have an idyllic family life, Enid Blyton's personal life was far from happy as a TV documentary earlier this year showed. Like many people whose craft has brought laughter and happiness to millions, she hid her sadness in her writings. Enid Blyton died in a nursing home on 28 November 1968.

The designer The stamps are the work of Christian Birmingham, who designed the 1995 Rugby League stamps. Born in 1970, he graduated from Exeter College of Art and Design in 1991 and the following year joined Startworks, a group of young artists. He has worked for several design groups, and has illustrated childrens' books *The Dancing Bear*, *The Magical Bicycle* and *Butterfly Lion* as well as books on the scientists Marie Curie and Pasteur.

Technical details

Printers Joh Enschedé
Stamps

Process Gravure

Size 30 × 41 mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 × 15

Phosphor One band 20p ●
two bands others

Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

Gum PVA

Enid Blyton's *Secret Seven*Enid Blyton's *Faraway Tree*Enid Blyton's *Malory Towers*

Enid Blyton competition
Stamp Active and the Benham Group have created a competition for young people to promote stamp collecting and interest in design. **See Stamp Scene** for details.

The Faraway Tree stories were written for young children. 'In an enchanted wood', writes children's dramatist David Wood, 'ordinary children meet extraordinary characters like Moon-Face, Silky the elf and the Saucepan Man...' Older children identified with *The Famous Five* or *The Secret Seven* stories. 'These', writes Mr Wood, 'are ordinary children inhabiting a world more like the readers' own – albeit somewhat idealised – sharing adventures and solving mysteries.' *The Malory Towers* books are archetypal school stories with 'themes to which every schoolchild can relate – hero-worship, bullying, the best friend...'

Perhaps her most famous creation was Noddy, a sweet-natured boy in a blue hat. Earlier this year, Trocadero plc, owners of Enid Blyton Ltd, decided to give Noddy an American accent to star in a cartoon series in Canada and the USA. Big Ears, the little yellow car and most of the figures from the British books, videos, and TV episodes will feature in the £5 million, 40-part series which will be screened in Spring 1998.

These are the first British stamps to feature Enid Blyton's work. Noddy and Big Ears, in a floral 'Tribute to Enid Blyton', featured on Jersey's 4d Battle of Flowers stamp in 1970 (SG 38).

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 9 September, price 25p.

Orders for the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Beaconsfield, price £2.64 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.25 overseas (no VAT), must be received at the Bureau by 9 September. Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers, on the day of issue, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Beaconsfield postmark). The outer envelope should be marked 'FD9715' (Bureau), or 'FD9716' (Beaconsfield).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps. Sponsored special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 rest of world).

Collectors may submit covers bearing just the 20p Enid Blyton stamp for all first day, philatelic and sponsored handstamps in use on 9 September, the 1st class rule for special handstamps being waived for the day ●

NPM news To mark the golden wedding anniversary of HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, the National Postal Museum is staging a 'Golden and Glorious' exhibition showing some of the Royal stamp issues since 1947. The exhibition opens on 5 August and will run for one year. The displays will concentrate on the 1953 Coronation and 1972 Royal Silver Wedding issues.

No British stamps were issued in 1947 for the wedding itself but it was

marked by a slogan postmark. A proposed stamp a year later for the birth of the first grandchild to King George VI never materialised but did reach artwork stage. However, all subsequent, major Royal occasions have been commemorated on stamps. Often special portraits are commissioned and even more attention is paid by the Post Office, artists and printers alike to such issues. Hence the wealth of artwork for the Coronation stamps and the number of variations in the Royal Silver Wedding essays.

The Museum has, over the years, issued a number of postcards reproducing unadopted designs for Royal stamps, for example the proposed Edward VIII Coronation stamps, and the 1953 Coronation issue. Still available is a set of four, issued in April 1997, showing essays for the 1972 Silver Wedding issue. The four cards are available to callers at the NPM shop, or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £1 per set.

NPM POST OFFICE CARDS The Museum will issue four new cards relating to the Post Offices stamps on 12 August 1997. The cards feature the interiors of sub-offices at Shipbourne, 1935; Rosehill, 1947; Shorne, 1939; and Cobham, 1939. The photographs are from Post Office Archives; the cards bear reference numbers NPM97/14-17. They will be available to visitors to the NPM shop, or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £1 per set. A special handstamp will be used on 12 August; items for reposting should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1LP requesting 'Museum special 12 August'. The Museum's regular Maltese Cross postmark will also be available, request handstamp no 1985.

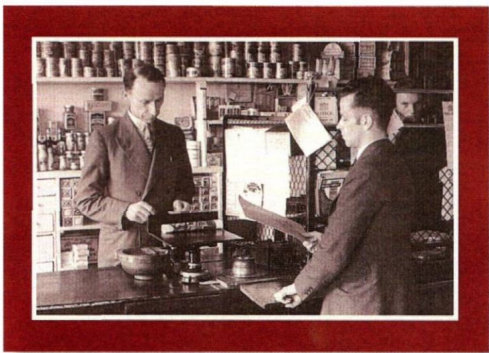
An exhibition of the work of Terence Millington, designer of the Post Offices stamps, will be on show in the Museum's ground floor temporary exhibition gallery from 12 August for several months.

ROYAL STAMPS ON SHOW The Museum is delighted that HM The Queen has agreed that stamps from the Royal Collection will be on show at the NPM from late September until the end of the year. The display will show stamps from the Mediterranean area, including issues from Gibraltar, Cyprus, Malta, Crete, Long Island and the Ionian Islands. This follows the earlier display of Mauritius at the NPM last Autumn (see *Bulletin* October and December 1996). Sadly that display was curtailed when the Museum closed for repairs last November. It is hoped that collectors who were disappointed not to see the Mauritius display will enjoy the new Mediterranean exhibition ●

Aerogramme quantities The numbers sold of some 1996 aerogrammes were: Scottish Football 47,250; Scottish Edinburgh Festival 49,225; and Olympics 110,850 ●

The National Postal Museum in King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP, is a short walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Open Monday to Friday 09.30-16.30. Closed public holidays. Admission is free.

Enquiries 0171 600 8914



Post Offices card 97/16 The interior of Shorne Sub-Post Office, 1939

