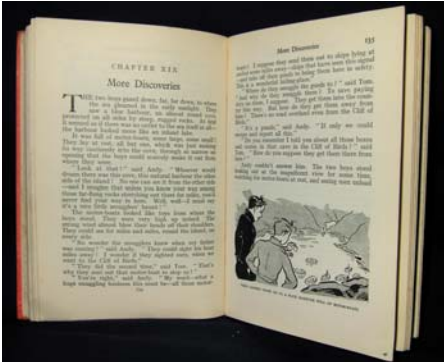
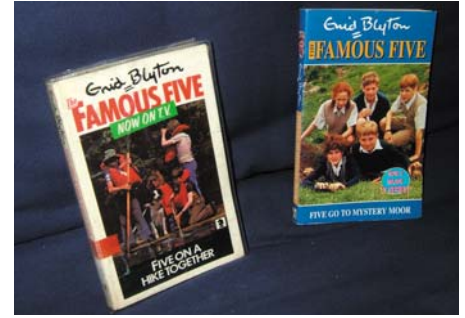




Trio of paperback editions of 'The Naughtiest Girl' series of books published in the 1960s by Armada and Hamlyn.



A first edition copy of 'Five Have Plenty of Fun' published in 1955.



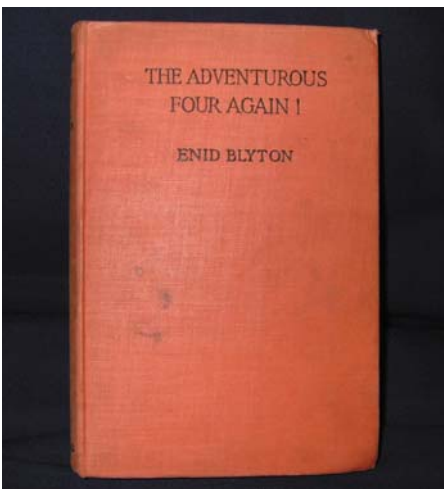
There have been two television productions of The famous Five adventures. These two paperbacks were published to tie in with the TV series, the first in 1979 and second in 1996.

Enid Blyton: A Market Guide

Part 1. Adventure Stories

By Zita Thornton

It was writing 'The Adventurous Four' in 1941 that gave Enid Blyton the idea for her Famous Five series.



'The Adventurous Four Again' followed in 1947. This is a second edition published in 1950. Bought at a car boot sale for £1.



This fifth impression of 'Five Go To Smuggler's Top' was published in 1951. It contained a full colour illustration by Eileen Soper who illustrated all the Famous Five books. Most of the drawings were in black and white, sometimes with the addition of blue.

Whilst sorting out a spare room in my mother's house recently, I came across a most enticing box. It contained some of my childhood books. The most memorable were those written by Enid Blyton. Ruthlessly, I decided that my groaning bookshelves could take no more and I decided to sell. However, when I found myself buying more than I was selling I realised that I had become a collector. From the early 1920s to the mid 1960s, Enid Blyton wrote over 700 books for children of all ages. Her vast output included fairy tales, animal stories, adventure books, school stories, poems and plays. These included familiar favourites such as the *Famous Five* and *Noddy*, which have never lost their appeal and are still published today. To cover all those genres in one article would do an injustice to this prolific author so I have decided to write the article in two parts. Part 1 looks at her adventure books aimed at the reader from around 7 or 8 years old. Part 2, in the next issue, will cover her stories for younger readers.

The Famous Five

One of the most enduring and collectable series of books written by Enid Blyton, the adventures of the *Famous Five*, have continued to capture children's imagination even into the twenty first century. The stories were a development of an idea first published in 1941 as *The Adventurous Four* when Andy, the Fisherboy, helped Tom and his twin sisters to solve wartime mysteries in Scotland. Two further books were published in 1947 and 1948 and a short story in 1952. Meanwhile, Blyton honed the idea of a group of children setting out to solve mysteries with minimal adult supervision, and devised the *Famous Five*. *Five On A Treasure Island* was published in 1942. The group this time included Timmy the dog, along with Julian, Dick, Anne and cousin Georgina, known as George, who is said to have been based on Enid Blyton herself. Blyton wrote a new *Famous Five* book every year for 21 years, as well as seven short stories. Her illustrator, Eileen Soper, updated the images as well as the ages of the group, but this was not apparent in Blyton's writing. By the time the last book *Five Are Together Again* had been written, over 6 million *Famous Five* books had been sold with further sales from paperback editions.

The Five Find-Outers

The formula of the group of five solving mysteries was so successful that in 1943 Blyton began a series of books featuring the Five Find-Outers. This time five children and their dog Buster, solved mysteries around the village of Peterswood, and generally got in the way of local P.C. Sophilus Goon. Blyton wrote 15 books in the series from the first *The Mystery of The Burnt Cottage* to the last *The Mystery of Banshee Towers* in 1961.

The Adventure series

In 1944 *The Island of Adventure* launched another group of five, four children and a parrot, in a series of books which took their name from the site of the adventure. *The Castle, Valley, Sea, Mountain, Ship, Circus* and *River of Adventure* followed over the next 11 years. As with the *Famous Five* books, these are now very much sought after. According to *Millers Collecting Modern Books* the first in the series, valued at £10-£15 ten years ago, is now worth 50 times that.

The Secret Adventures

Although not as desirable today as some of the other adventure series of books, the Secret series, starting with *The Secret Island* was Blyton's first departure from fairy tales for younger children. Published in 1938, from a serial first published in the magazine *Sunny Stories*, the secrets of *Spiggy Hole, Mountain of Killimooine* and *of Moon Castle*, followed and were published as paperbacks in the mid sixties.

The Secret Seven

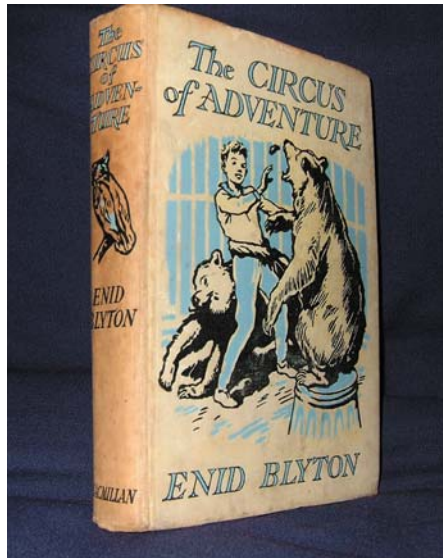
As a child I thought that *The Secret Seven* adventures, were inferior to the *Famous Five*, but that is probably because Blyton wrote them for a different market. These books which featured a younger group of children, were aimed at readers of 6 or 7 years old, using simpler language and vocabulary. Once again, this was a development of earlier ideas. Inspired by a secret society formed by the children of one of her publishers, Blyton wrote *The Secret Of The Old Mill*, published in 1948. Seven year old Peter, his younger sister Janet, and their dog Scamper, who themselves had already featured in an earlier story *At Seaside Cottage* in 1947, formed a secret society with Pam, Colin, Jack, Barbara and George. A year later *The Secret Seven* was published. Once again, Blyton wrote a book a year until the last one, *Fun For The Secret Seven* was published in 1963. With this series of books, different illustrators were used. They were George Brook, Bruno Kay and Burgess Sharrocks.

The Barney Stories

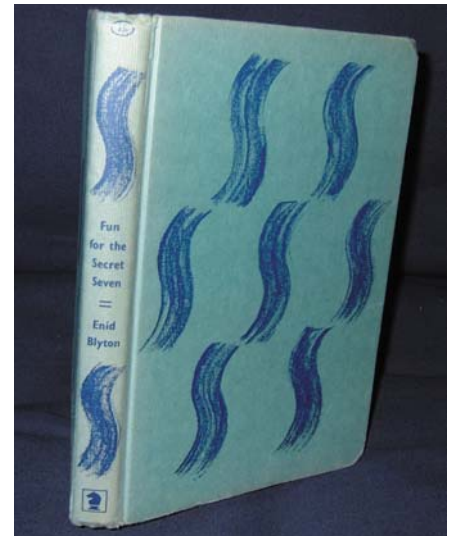
Blyton wrote the first mystery for older children, *The Rockingdown Mystery* featuring Barney the circus boy and his monkey Miranda, as a one off adventure as part of the Collins Junior Mystery series in 1949, but wrote further books after demand from her readers. There were six in all, whose titles all started with the same letter and included *The Rilloby Fair Mystery*, *The Ring O' Bells Mystery*, *The Rubabdub Mystery*, *The Rat-A-Tat Mystery* and the last one in 1959 *The Ragamuffin Mystery*. As well as writing her series of mystery and adventure books, Blyton wrote many one-off stories for different publishers for children of different ages, managing to keep up by taking less than a week to write each novel. However, it is perhaps the nature of collecting that it is the accumulation of a series that seems to most appeal to collectors.

Adventures in school

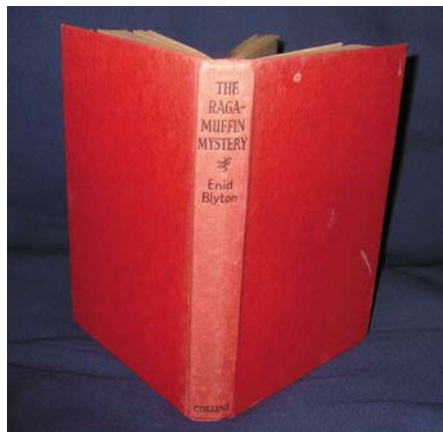
I could not finish a feature on Blyton's adventure books without including the school stories. The first pupil to daringly break all the rules, was Elizabeth Allen, heroine of the appropriately named *The Naughtiest Girl In The School*. She starred in three books between 1940 and 1945. At the same time, the O'Sullivan twins were getting up to mischief at *St Clare's* throughout six books. However, my favourite was Darrell Rivers who moved through the school from the first term to the last at *Malory Towers*, the boarding school scenario giving her plenty of scope for adventure. There was one other school book *Mischief at St Rollo's*, which Blyton wrote in 1943 under the pseudonym of Mary Pollock. In 1952 it was published under her own name.



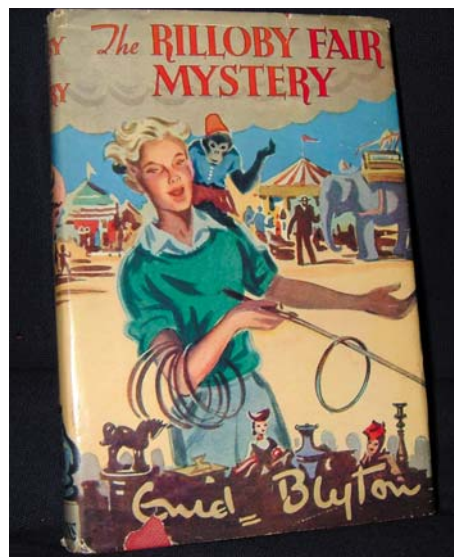
My 1956 reprint of 'The Circus Of Adventure' sold on ebay for £7.50.



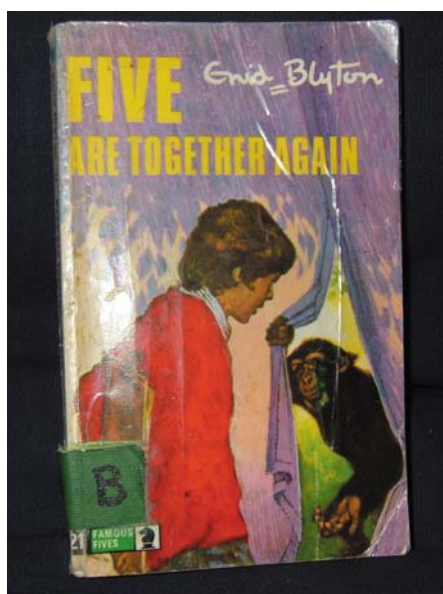
The SS design on the cover of *Secret Seven* books was introduced in 1961. This is a first edition of 'Fun For The Secret Seven' published in 1963. Bought on ebay for £3.22.



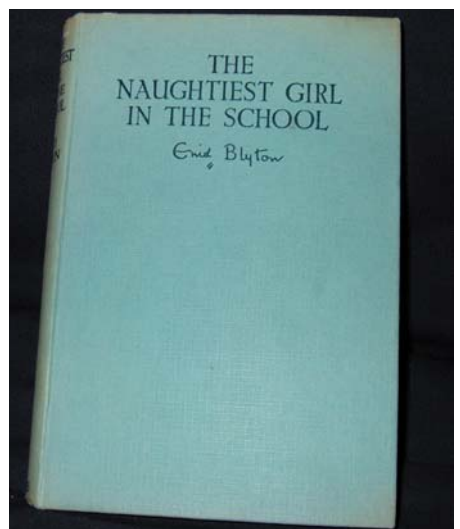
'The Ragamuffin Mystery' was first published in 1959. This edition 1963. Enid Blyton dedicated it to all the Welsh children who begged her to write a mystery set in Wales.



'The Rilloby Fair Mystery' was first published in 1950. My Collins 1961 edition only achieved £2.50 on ebay.



Enid Blyton's last famous *Five Adventure* 'Five Are Together Again' was first published in 1963. A paperback edition was published in 1971 but this paperback edition was published in 1975.



Ninth impression of 'The Naughtiest Girl In The School', published in 1953, the first in the *Naughtiest Girl* series. Bought at a car boot sale for £1.

