



Horniman welcomes ELMER and Friends exhibition

As if by magic... Mr Benn, Elmer the Patchwork Elephant and Not Now, Bernard appear at the Horniman for its latest exhibition aimed at younger visitors under seven – **ELMER and Friends: The Colourful World of David McKee**.

ELMER and Friends features beloved characters created by the late author and illustrator David McKee spanning 50 years, with original artworks displayed alongside cosy reading areas and dressing up opportunities. Visitors can step into this colourful world when the exhibition opens at the Horniman on **Friday 21 October 2022**.

ELMER and Friends is a major retrospective of David McKee's striking illustrations and celebrates over 30 years of Elmer the Patchwork Elephant. First stop is Elmer's world, where visitors can walk through Elmer's jungle, encountering characters and stories along the way. As well as illustrations from the Elmer series there's original artwork from McKee's other children's classics **Not Now, Bernard** and **Mr Benn**, an original storyboard of **King Rollo** and the opportunity to visit the fancy dress costume shop featured in Mr Benn.

A dedicated area of the exhibition has been co-produced with Seven Stories' Young Producers highlighting its organisational commitment to working collaboratively with children and young people.

Elmer the Patchwork Elephant is a picture book favourite for young children. They will also recognise the cautionary tale Not Now, Bernard, while their adults can take a trip down memory lane and revisit the realm of childlike King Rollo and join Mr Benn as he leaves his house at 52 Festive Road, London to embark on another adventure.

Elmer remains one of the most widely read children's book series of all time, selling over 10 million copies worldwide since it was first published by Andersen Press in 1989. Written and illustrated by celebrated children's author and artist David McKee, the Elmer books have

been translated into more than 50 languages and now new books, toys and clothing add to the world of Elmer the Patchwork Elephant.

Wendy Elliott, CEO at Seven Stories, said: 'We can't wait for families to explore this vibrant exhibition at the Horniman Museum and Gardens. Seeing David's striking artwork close-up on display is very memorable and we know that families, schools and fans of children's literature are going to be blown away by the whole exhibition.'

Paul Black, PR and Brand Director, Andersen Press, said: 'We're very excited to see ELMER and Friends come to London with the Horniman, and for us to have the opportunity to celebrate the work and life of our good friend David McKee with families in the capital.'

Cressida Diez-Finch, Exhibition and Design Manager at the Horniman, said: 'We are delighted to welcome young families to the Horniman to enjoy David McKee's artwork in a fun, vibrant setting. Far more than 'just' a Patchwork Elephant, Elmer and his friends gently introduce principles around tolerance, kindness, patience and sustainability, making it a great fit for the Horniman.'

Tickets to see **ELMER and Friends: The Colourful World of David McKee** cost: Child £3, Adult £5.50, Family of 3 (1 adult) £9, Family of 4 (up to 2 adults) £13.50. Prices include voluntary Gift Aid donation. Book online at horniman.ac.uk

Horniman Members and Benefactors enjoy free, unlimited visits to the exhibition as a special additional benefit of their annual membership. For information on how to become a Member see horniman.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/membership/.

ELMER and Friends: The Colourful World of David McKee is open from **Friday 21 October 2022** and runs to **Sunday 16 April 2023**.

ELMER and Friends: The Colourful World of David McKee is a touring exhibition from **Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books**. Seven Stories is supported by Arts Council England.

ELMER and Friends: The Colourful World of David McKee is supported by: Community Foundation, Newcastle Culture Investment Fund; Arts Council England; National Lottery Heritage Fund; and Andersen Press.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- **About Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books** - Seven Stories exists to make literature more accessible and put stories at the heart of every childhood. They do this through their museum and visitor centre in Newcastle, and through extensive events and programme for the public, schools and community outreach audiences. Seven Stories is a registered charity and an Arts Council accredited museum, and they have a growing Collection which includes work from some of the best-selling and most influential authors and illustrators of the last 100 years including Enid Blyton, Philip Pullman, Nick Sharratt and Judith Kerr. They provide the only exhibition space in the UK wholly dedicated to the work of children's writers and illustrators. They bring books to life through a creative programme of innovative exhibitions and exciting events, and they invite visitors to discover the 'stories behind the stories' we all know and love, and to feel excited and inspired to tell their own stories, in their own ways. The Visitor Centre is based in a seven-storey listed building in the popular Ouseburn neighbourhood of Newcastle upon Tyne. A specialist children's bookshop, a cafe and a coffee shop are also based on the site. Special events for all ages are listed on the website. Visitor Centre website: sevenstories.org.uk / [Digital Exhibition website](#) / Twitter: @7stories / Facebook: [Facebook.com/7stories](https://www.facebook.com/7stories) / Instagram: @7stories
- **About Elmer - Elmer** remains one of the most iconic and widely read children's book series of all time, selling over 10 million copies worldwide since it was first published by Andersen Press in 1989. Written and illustrated by celebrated children's author and artist **David McKee**, the **Elmer** books have been translated into more than 50 languages and now new books, toys and clothing add to the world of **Elmer the Patchwork Elephant**.
- **David McKee** was a British illustrator and author. He was born in Devon and studied at Plymouth Art College. In the early part of his career, McKee regularly drew and sold humorous drawings to magazines and newspapers such as The Times Educational Supplement, Punch and the Reader's Digest. He wrote and illustrated over 200 picture books for Andersen Press and penned a number of children's classics including *King Rollo*, *Mr Benn*, *Not Now Bernard* and *Elmer the Patchwork Elephant*. David passed away in 2022.
- **Andersen Press** is a leading independent children's publisher, and home to some of the biggest names in the world of children's books, including the much-loved picture book characters Elmer the Patchwork Elephant and the Little Princess. Andersen Press is the publisher of many award-winning authors and illustrators including Melvin Burgess, Rebecca Stead, Susin Nielsen, Julian Clary, David Roberts, Tony Ross, David McKee, and Jeanne Willis. The company was founded in 1976 by Klaus Flugge.
- **Arts Council England** is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. artscouncil.org.uk
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** has won [Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022](#), the world's largest museum prize.
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium, alongside a World Gallery of anthropology and a flexible arts and exhibition space, The Studio. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. horniman.ac.uk
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** has won [Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022](#), the world's largest museum prize.

- **Coronavirus impact: Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations are more needed than ever. horniman.ac.uk/support-us/
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent **Climate and Ecological Manifesto**, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman’s environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman’s manifesto commitments and progress so far at horniman.ac.uk/climate.