



Happy Christmas Reading 2017

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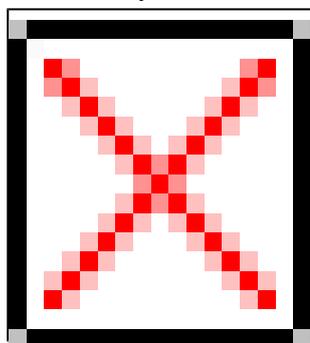
Books for Giving 2017: Ferelith Hordon plays Santa

Going into a bookshop at this time of year is like going into an old-fashioned sweet shop, says **Books for Keeps** editor **Ferelith Hordon**, the shelves are full of gorgeous, mouth-watering treats. What to choose, for a child, for the family? Find out here.

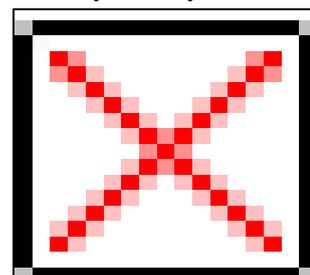
Presents for the very young

No batteries, no switches, there's nothing to go wrong in a book for baby or toddler, just endless pleasure. Even so, a bit of activity is great especially if it involves noises. **Bim, Bam, Boom** by Frédéric Stehr and **Say Zoop** by Herve Tullet hit the mark here; bright board books that demand the reader noisily joins in. If a bit more play is wanted then **Dear Zoo Book and Puzzle Blocks** is ideal, reintroducing an old favourite and adding nine sturdy cubes too illustrated with Rod Campbell's much-loved characters.

What about a story? One that chimes with the season is the lovely **One Christmas Wish** from Katherine Rundell and



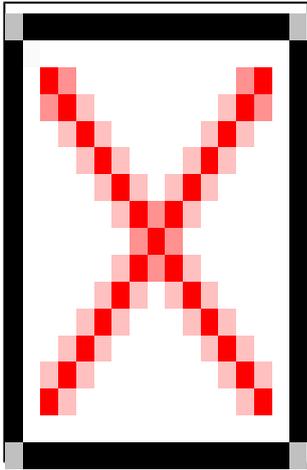
Emily Sutton. Here a young boy's Christmas is changed when he finds a set of magical Christmas Tree decorations. Full of humour and adventure and with delightful illustrations, this is a book that will become a favourite for many Christmases to come. Then there are the Christmas books that bring familiar friends into the house? Mick Inkpen's **Wibbly Pig** is always welcome, and he is having a ticklish Christmas in **Tickly Christmas Wibbly Pig**. Lauren Child's **Lola** knows exactly what she wants for Christmas; it must be **A Dog with Nice Ears**. Her parents are adamant 'Absolutely NO dogs'. **Lola**, however, has a way of getting what she wants. As ever this is visually inventive and verbally dextrous. It is good to make new friends. **A Christmas for Bear** by Bonny Becker, illustrated by



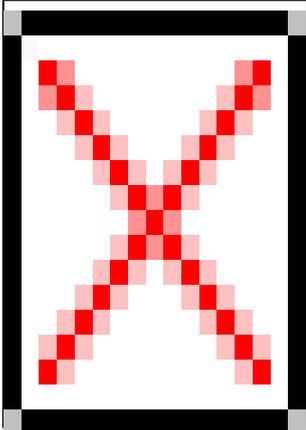
Kady MacDonald Denton introduces a grumpy bear and an eager mouse. The tree has been decorated, the food prepared but where are the presents? Mouse is anxious 'does Bear mean it, there will be no presents? The gentle humour of the text finds a perfect accompaniment in illustrations that bring the characters to life. Older siblings will enjoy Chris van Allsburg's classic **The Polar Express** now in a new anniversary edition accompanied by a CD, the story read by Liam Neeson.

For under the tree

The noise, tinsel, even chocolate can get a bit overwhelming; time to retire with a good book. Here is a sackful of



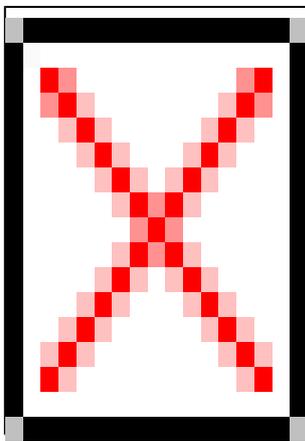
suggestions, no wrapping paper required, bringing laughter, adventure, friendships. **The Wild Fluffalump**, a new book by Mwenye Hadithi and Adrienne Kennaway transport its young audience to the sunshine of Africa. Vibrant colours and a catchy rhyming text bring real warmth to the story. What is a Fluffalump? It's puffy, fluffy, wriggly and squeaky. The animals make suggestions, but none of them gets it right ? though the illustrations provide clues making this a fun book to read with the young. Another book to share is **Singing in the Rain**. There is a CD to encourage singing along as well as the chance to read for oneself. However it is the lively, joyous illustrations by Tim Hopgood that will establish this as a family favourite. Another destined to become a favourite is **The Adventures of Egg Box Dragon** by Richard Adams of **Watership Down** fame and illustrated by Alex T Smith. Egg Box Dragon may be made of cardboard but he has a very special skill ? he can find things and when there is a royal crisis, Egg Box Dragon can help. Here is a lively story perfectly illustrated to delight bedtime reading. Already firm favourites at bedtime, Shift McGifty and Slippery Sam have a particularly festive adventure in their new collection ? **Shifty McGifty and Slippery Sam ? Jingle Bells** in which they help out Father Christmas himself. Sparkling text and illustrations, an irresistible duo ? no wonder these books are so popular with children. A new character sure to win fans is Mr Penguin, created by Alex T Smith. Adventurer and Penguin, part Poirot, part Indiana Jones, he tackles his first mystery in **Mr Penguin and The Lost Treasure**, and great fun it is too. For older children winter nights provide the perfect time for



that new book. Jessica Townsend catapults us into adventure with **Nevermoor**, beautifully packaged, sparkling with imagination , while **Aubrey and the Terrible Ladybirds** combines a serious message about the environment and a young hero who can talk to animals. For an exciting mix of history and magic, **Witchborn** by Nicholas Bowling is another to grip the imagination. No magic but a very contemporary dilemma and an absorbing read comes from Gill Lewis in **Sky Dancer** while the stylish **Optimists Die First** introduces two very different protagonists with humour and realism.

Books for Sharing

Christmas is about sharing, especially at bedtime. Michael Morpurgo has chosen a cornucopia of traditional tales in **Greatest Magical Stories** retold by a galaxy of writers and lavishly illustrated. Poetry of course is perfect for sharing: Axel Scheffler's lively illustrations capture the curious verses of Frantz Wittkamp adapted by Roger McGough in **Fish Dream of Trees**

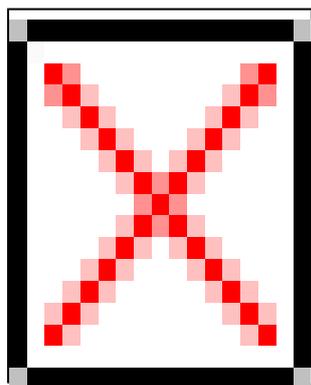


. For infinite variety there is **Poems for Every Day of the Year**, edited by Allie Esiri. This gorgeous anthology introduces classics, traditional rhymes, jingles, ballads ? something for everyone. Also perfect is the classic **A Child's Garden of Verses** here beautifully illustrated by Michael Foreman and with a special introduction by Alexander McCall Smith. These are gifts to treasure.

Facts, facts and more facts

Information may be available at the touch of a button, but there is a special pleasure in browsing, turning pages, picking subjects at random. The **DK Children's Encyclopedia** is ideal for this presenting topics in a cheerful and accessible way, encouraging repeat visits and further exploration. Exploring the heavens is the aim of **Starfinder for Beginners**. Here each constellation is linked directly by its relationship to the Plough making identification much easier; a novel and interesting approach likely to inspire a lasting interest. Dinosaurs are always fascinating: **Dinosaurs and other Prehistoric Creatures** by Matt Sewell is a lovely addition to the canon presenting engaging, colourful images with an accessible text. **The Ways of the Wolf** brings to life the wolf and its environment through the informative text and atmospheric illustrations and will really entrance young naturalists. And for the potential quiz-whizz there is **Facts! One for every day of the year** ? a lively miscellany of facts, yes, one for every day of the year, to intrigue and delight even the most curious, and stylishly illustrated.

Gifts to surprise and delight



Christmas would not be complete without an interactive maze. Something new is **Find Me: Hide and Seek** from Anders Arhoj or **Follow Finn** imagined by Peter Goes- a bewildering journey through a fantastic landscape. Jim Kay works his magic on **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban** bringing to the stories new energy and detail through his extraordinary talent. Take a look at Philip Ardagh's sumptuous **The World of Moominvalley** everything you want to know about Moomins and their world, the perfect companion for the new edition of **Finn Family Moomintroll**. Beautifully remastered and packaged this is a gift in itself to delight existing fans as well create new friends. From illustrator Jackie Morris comes two books. Her **Ice Bear** and **Snow Cat** now appear in large format celebrating her extraordinary art. Also highly recommended is **Lines** by Suzy Lee who creates the icy world of a solitary skater in exquisite lines, a silent picture book that speaks directly to the imagination.

Finally, the all-important stocking fillers

Sam Usher's picture book **Snow** is now available as a charming miniature; a gem is **The Poet's Dog**, a classic by Patricia Maclachlan, and for the very brave, **Barry Loser's Christmas Joke Book** will have you groaning but laughing?

Ferelith Hordon is active member of **CILIP YLG** and has served as Chair of both YLG London and of the National Committee. She is editor of **Books for Keeps** and of **IBBYLink**, the online journal of **IBBY UK**.

Take the [list of recommended reads](#) [3] with you when you go Christmas shopping.

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