



Make a Note of These

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Hardbacks to look for, selected by **Pat Triggs**.

It would be very easy to fill up our review pages with the latest books by writers and artists who consistently produce excellent books. This season instead we have chosen to spotlight books which might not immediately come to your attention but which we think it would be a pity to miss.

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So, we by-pass **Where's Julius?**, the latest John Burningham with its evocation of Julius' fantasy travels entered but not intruded upon by his beautifully accepting parents - and the Ahlberg's Emil-winning **The Jolly Postman**. We ignore Anthony Browne's **Willy the Champ** (even better than **Willy the Wimp**) and his **Piggybook** (also Julia MacRae), a decisive blast against male chauvinist pigs - young and old - which already has many on the defensive. The pictures are atmospheric and inventive by turn. How many pigs can you find? And this year I won't linger over the latest in James Stevenson's comic strip style accounts of Grandpa's tall tales. **There's Nothing to Do** (Gollancz) say his bored grandchildren and they are treated to another amazing story of looking after baby brother Wainey. Well up to standard. Maybe even the best yet. Nor will we stop to remind you that Quentin Blake's incomparable **The Story of the Dancing Frog** is now in large format paperback (Picture Lions) along with Foreman's **Trick a Tracker** in the extremely buyable Picturemac series.

Instead we suggest you get out your pens and make a note of

Daisy Tales, Tony Bradman and Priscilla Lamont, Methuen, £2.50 each

Four delightful little books for pre-schoolers. Tony Bradman's text - the best yet from this suddenly prolific and ubiquitous writer - is well served by the excellent Priscilla Lamont. Everyday events are captured with warmth, humour and not a little originality - very welcome in this overworked area. **Daisy and the Crying Baby** (0 416 54600 5) has Daisy and friend playing at crying babies and mummies, changing each other's nappies. In the other titles Daisy goes swimming (0 416 54580 7), helps dad do the washing (0 416 54570 X) and has a babysitter (0 416 54590 4).

Janine and the New Baby, lolette Thomas, ill. Jennifer Northway, Deutsch, 0 233 97916 6, £5.25

lolette Thomas was born in Antigua but came to England as a child. This, her first picture book story, was written for her two small children. It tells how three-year-old Janine and her family prepare for the arrival of a new baby. Jennifer Northway's pictures of this warmly credible Black British family are, as ever, a pleasure.

The Monster Bed, Jeanne Willis, pictures by Susan Varley, Andersen, 0 86264 127 6, £4.95

Night-time fears are given an original twist in this rhyming story: Denis the young monster is afraid the humans will hide under his bed and get him. After a very recognisable sequence of going to bed activities Monster mum agrees to

Denis's strategy - the only way to be sure there is nothing under the bed is to sleep there! But a lost and tired small boy wanders into the cave, finds the bed and lies down to rest - checking first that there are no monsters under the bed!

The collaborators here both made a mark with their first books: Jeanne Willis with the entertaining **Tale of Georgie Grub** ([ill. by](#) [3] Margaret Chamberlain) and Susan Varley, Mother Goose winner, with the beautiful **Badger's Parting Gifts**. Here she shows a new and delicious sense of humour in the pictures which extend and amplify the text. Look at the vignette of Denis, peeping with one eye through half open fingers at a frightening book, to see how she makes a character.

Two books about spooky places

I'm not Frightened of Ghosts, Juliet and Charles Snape, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 251 2, £5.95

has the intrepid Lizzie venturing into the deserted old house while the more timid Sam and Robert wait outside. Lizzie, a determined rationalist, explains away events that the more imaginative might put down to supernatural causes. Indeed in the pictures the reader can find a series of cheekily mischievous ghosts getting increasingly puzzled and frustrated by their inability to have any effect on calm and sensible Lizzie.

The Ghost-eye Tree, Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, ill. Ted Rand, Orchard Books, 1 85213 006 7, £5.95

Another intrepid girl - but this time one who is not impervious to fear. Brave Ellie goes back to rescue her brother's favourite hat which is lost as the two of them run, terrified, from the waving arms and eerie noises of the old oak tree. The occasion of the story - two children sent in the gathering dark to fetch a bucket of milk from the end of the town - may be removed in time and place from the experience of most, if not all, children; but the essential feelings, the fear of the dark and the unknown horrors that the mind can so easily conjure up are common to all. A nice sense here, too, of the brother-sister relationship. Beautifully lit and wonderfully atmospheric pictures.

Once there was a House, Gregg Reyes, Judy Hindley, Robert Bartelt, Collins (Make and Play series), 0 00 195626 4, £4.95

Take one large cardboard box... make a window ... and a door? add a roof, a chimney, gutters, drainpipes. Then take some more assorted boxes and plastic bottles, paper roll tubes, some old newspapers - and before you know it you've made a stack of furniture? and a car? and a petrol station.

A pleasant picture story shows a group of children at play - nine pages of easy-to-follow instructions show how to do-it-yourself easily and safely. Imaginative, low cost ideas for home or school.

(For another imaginative view of what to do with a cardboard box try **Ben's Box** (Hodder and Stoughton, 0 340 40124 9, £7.95) a Michael Foreman pop-up. Ben's mum plays with her new toy - a washing machine - while Ben has fantastic adventures in the box it came in.)

Watch the Stars Come Out, Riki Levinson, ill. Diane Goode, Orchard Books, 1 85213 001 6, £6.95

Lines of continuity stretch between past and present as Grandma tells granddaughter the special story her mother used to tell her about how she came to America when she was a little girl. The journey to a new life to meet mother, father and sister who have gone ahead is told with simplicity and economy. The feelings which accompany leaving two younger brothers behind, the long sea voyage, the arrival in a strange country, lie below the surface of the text and in the beautifully detailed pictures to be discovered by a thoughtful reader. The immigrant child lives on in her great granddaughter who has the same red hair, and the same love of watching the stars come out. Stories within stories, and lives within lives.

The Miracle Tree, Christobel Mattingley, ill. Marianne Yamaguchi, Hodder and Stoughton, 0 340 37604 X, £5.95

A story of three people separated by the bombing of Nagasaki: Taro, his beautiful wife Hanako and Hanako's mother.

Over twenty years the threads of their lives separate and unknowingly converge again on the pine tree which gardener Taro has lovingly tended as a symbol of hope. Finally united on Christmas Day their prayer out of pain, suffering and enduring love is for peace.

This short, many-layered story has a poignant bitter-sweet beauty. Its theme, design and sensitive charcoal illustrations will appeal especially to older readers, or listeners.

Alex, the Amazing Aerial Acrobat, Gianni Peg, A & C Black, 0 7136 2719 0, £5.95

If you came across the daredevil adventures of Alex the Amazing Juggler, says the title page, 'stay a while longer and clasp tightly some secure object, for truly my dear reader, you have read nothing yet?' And truly the title page does not lie. Alex is now a member of the world's first Flying Circus; but it's more James Bond than Mouny Python when he and his friends have to rescue the best inventing brains of Tapocca-Tapocca from the evil clutches of Baron von Kraffen who wants to rule the world. Like **The Miracle Tree** this book has a message. 'True progress,' say the rescued scientists, 'is that which enriches life, not that which harms it.' But it's a message contained within a tour de force of comic strip art, amazingly detailed, action-packed, exuberant and full of fun.

So there you are - and we didn't mention the fact that you can now get no fewer than thirteen of Leo Lionni's stories with full colour illustrations throughout. (**Frederick's Tales**, Andersen, 0 86264 140 3, £9.95 include the classic **Frederick**, **Fish is Fish**, **Swimmy** and **Cornelius**. No primary classroom should be without them - and this edition carries an introduction for adults by Bruno Bettelheim.) Nor that you can find seven *new* stories about the Pig family in marvellous Mary Rayner's **Mrs Pig Gets Cross**, Collins, 0 00 184532 2, £5.95. All family life is here in these ideal read aloud adventures.

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