



# From the horse's mouth - Books of the Year 2014

[204](#) [1]

Byline:

The editors' picks for 2014

**Demon Dentist, Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Maggot Moon, I Am Not a Loser, Black Dog, Unfortunately the Milk, Oliver and the Seawigs** ? just some of the (very different) books that won prizes or featured on the bestseller lists in 2013. But what books are we likely to be talking about in 2014? We asked leading children's books editors to tell us about their hot tips. They were each given a word count of 100 words, as you'll see, not everyone managed to keep to that.

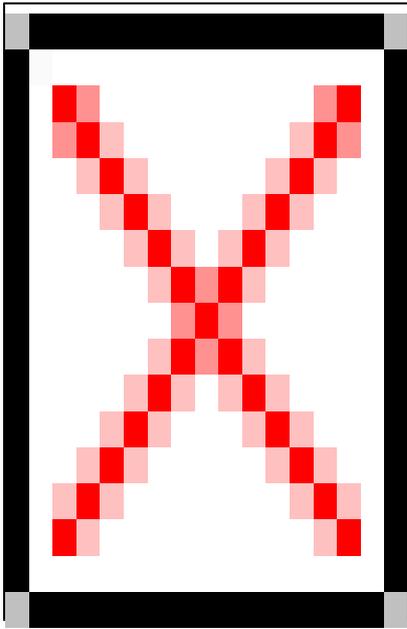
David Fickling won the **Branford Boase Award**, for debut author and their editor, for a record third time last year, and set up **David Fickling Books** as an independent. He's typically enthusiastic about their launch list. ?Every one of the DFB books coming out really are ALL brilliant! But here's just a few to whet your appetite, in no particular order, **Close to the Wind** by Jon Walter is a simple, resonant and utterly heart shattering debut. It's about war but on the most human level. **Shadow of the Wolf** by Tim Hall - THE debut of 2014, is the best version of Robin Hood I've ever read or seen. **Jampires** by Sarah McIntyre is a deliciously sweet toothed picture book. Keep an eye on your doughnuts with little sticky fingered Jampires about this Halloween! **Thirteen Chairs** by Dave Shelton: thirteen chairs, thirteen ghost stories and thirteen reasons to keep the light on at night. Dave was last year's Branford Boase winner, and will be next year's Carnegie winner! We are so pleased to be including in our first list some absolutely fantastic bind up books from **The Phoenix Comic** - prepare for serious tummy laughs and mind-bogglingly brilliant illustrations. The following is definitely NOT a children's book and we absolutely love it: **The Murdstone Trilogy** by Mal Peet - a howlingly comedic and darkly tragic tale that at first glance seems mere satire but reveals itself to be a beautiful modern retelling of **Faust**, eat your heart out Evelyn Waugh! We are so proud and thrilled to have a writer of Mal's calibre on our opening list.?

Fiona Kennedy at **Orion Children's Books** is another regular on the **Branford Boase Award** list. She says, ?I'm excited about all our books from Tania Unsworth's clever debut **The One Safe Place** in January to Marcus Sedgwick's fourteenth novel **The Ghosts of Heaven** this Autumn. Look out for Irish author Sarah Moore Fitzgerald's second book **The Apple Tart of Hope** ? about never giving up. It's a story that makes sense of the world and is beautifully, beautifully written. We are privileged to publish a rare non-fiction title for us, **Malala: the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Changed the World**, about the fascinating sixteen year old girl behind the global icon. They are all books for keeps.?

**Hot Key Books**, still relative newcomers, won the two major awards for children's fiction last year, the **Carnegie Medal** and the **Costa Children's Book Award** with **Maggot Moon**. MD Sarah Odedina believes that 2014 will be another wonderful year. ?We have a varied and fabulous list for the year with a range of books that are amongst the best in their genre. For our oldest readers **The Madness**, Alison Rattle's second book, is a tour-de-force about the emotional and psychological breakdown of a young woman whose love for a young man takes a dangerous direction; for younger readers **Ophelia and the Marvellous Boy** by Karen Foxlee is a wonderful and rich story told in a completely compelling and gorgeously classical voice. Karen is a real talent whose work ranges from the YA to books for younger readers and it is thrilling to be her UK publisher.?

Emily Thomas, Publisher enthuses about **As Red as Blood** by Salla Simukka. ?At the 2013 Bologna Book Fair it was impossible not to be intrigued by the buzz around this Finnish thriller. It has the specific allure of the Nordic crime

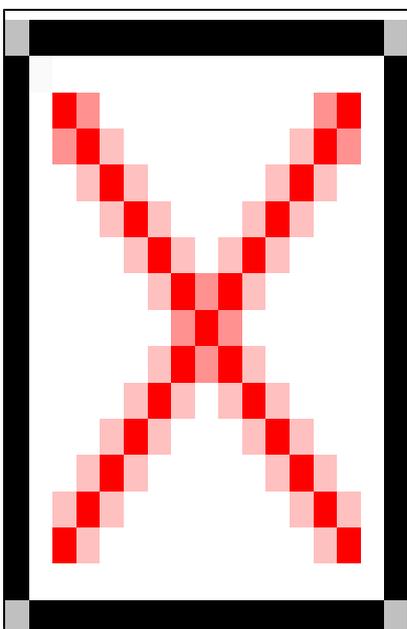
novel and a teenage heroine, Lumikki, to more than rival Larsson's Lisbet Salander. I was hooked, and snapped up UK rights to the trilogy, which has now sold in more than 40 countries. It is tense and exciting but incredibly lyrical too.



Co-incidentally I also recommend another crime novel ? though this one more in the Stephen King vein ? **Run** by master of the genre, Gregg Olsen. Gregg has an economical yet hugely descriptive narrative style, and brings us another magnificent female protagonist ? a fifteen year old in search of a very specific killer, one whose blood runs through her own veins, her father. Courageous, yet vulnerable, Rylee's terrifying quest, is edge-of-your-seat riveting! I cannot wait for this to hit the shelves.?

Emma Matthewson, Editor-at-Large highlights **Finding Jennifer Jones**, ?The unforgettable sequel to Anne Cassidy's **Looking for JJ**, it has been ten years in the making. And it is seven years since Benjamin Zephaniah's last novel. The much anticipated **Terror Kid** is timely and important, powerfully outlining a teenage boy's idealism being exploited. Also two fantastic debuts: **Little Celeste** magically explores how Shelley copes with the faltering attention from her imperfect mother. **JumbleCat** is a very funny story about a grumpy cat. Finally, only read James Dawson's brilliantly chilling **Say Her Name** if you have nerves of steel...?

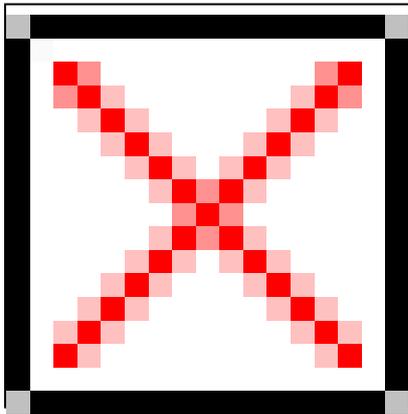
Sara O'Connor, Digital and Editorial Director says, ?**The Awe of Mercury** by Elon Dann is a mind-blowing book, written by a wordsmith who studied particle physics. It is not for the faint-hearted but, if you can handle a challenge, it is one of the cleverest books I have ever read. And the second book in Edward Carey's **Iremonger** series, **Foulsham** is even more heart-stopping and heart-warming than the first.. While the rubbish heaps of London are coming to life, Clod must turn the whispering objects around him into allies to rescue Lucy and escape his horrible Iremonger family.?



?It's an invidious question for an editor: which book are you most excited about this

year?? says Rebecca McNally, Publishing Director at **Bloomsbury Children's Books**. ?I could give you a list with at least one per month! But there's one debut author who is remarkable for two things: first, her extraordinary storytelling; second, her youth (she'll be 19 in February). Lucy Saxon's **Take Back the Skies** has a fabulous title, a plot that hurtles forward with irresistible energy, a heroine to rival ALL THE HEROINES, and in it we begin exploring a world for which Lucy has already planned 6 books. What's not to love??

Annie Eaton, Fiction Publisher at **Random House Children's Books**, also found it an invidious question, and stresses that this a couple of highlights coming this year. ?Two that deserve to reach a really wide audience - adults as well as young readers - are **The Whispering Skull**, the second book in Jonathan Stroud's compulsive **Lockwood & Co** series (the first one comes in paperback too) and Cameron McAllister's **The Tin Snail**, a wonderfully engaging debut about the creation of everyone's favourite little car, the 2CV. And I'd also like to flag up **The Nameless One**, the first in a brand-new **Edge Chronicles** trilogy, and fresh repackaging of this perennially popular series for a whole new generation of young readers!? Her colleague, Fiona Macmillan adds, ?We are so lucky and proud to be publishing some wonderful illustrated books in 2014 including **Dixie O'Day and the Great Diamond Robbery**, the second in a new series from Shirley Hughes and her daughter Clara Vulliamy; an engaging new pre-school character from William Bee called Stanley in two books, **Stanley the Farmer** and **Stanley's Garage**; a glorious new edition of the evergreen **Dinosaur Roar** to celebrate its 20th anniversary and lastly what is sure to become a classic gift title for all Shirley Hughes fans **A Year of Stories and Things to Do**.?



**Faber Children's Books** are launching a picture book list this year, and Publisher Leah Thaxton says, ?If I must be pinned down, I'll pick **The Hog in the Fog**, by Julia Copus, the first on our brand new, dedicated picture book list. Julia has an extraordinary ear; the book is bliss to read aloud and utterly captivating. New illustrator Eunyoung Seo provides bewitching artwork. This book represents all my hopes for the Faber picture book list - I hope it charms the wider public as much as it has delighted us. Early reports are very good ? ?Read us the Harry hog book again, Daddy!?

As always, the **Walker Books** picture book list is full of delights. ?Walker Books continues to extend its international reach with hugely exciting buy-ins from the US, Canada, and Japan? says Picture Book Publisher Deirdre McDermott, ?These include **What's Your Favourite Animal?** by Eric Carle and Friends, **Jane, the Fox and Me** and **The Big Princess**. We're truly thrilled to publish Chris Haughton's third (very blue) picture book **Shh! We Have a Plan** as well as a new title from the legendary John Burningham, **The Way to the Zoo**. I personally can't wait for Jon Klassen's third brilliant picture book **Sam and Dave Dig a Hole**, his latest collaboration with his pal Mac Barnett to be published next October!?

Walker Fiction Publisher Denise Johnston-Burt is excited about **Trouble**, Non Pratt's debut novel for teenagers, ?A funny, unflinching story which marks Non as an exceptional writer. It has been inspirational and heart-breaking working on **The Great War**; this anthology of stories inspired by objects from the Imperial War Museum includes David Almond, John Boyne and Tracy Chevalier. Marcia Williams brings customary wit and verve to the famous novel in **Les Miserables**. Jan Pienkowski's **Polish Tales** is the book he was always meant to create. Matilda Tristram's **Santa's Beard**, illustrated by Nick Sharratt is hysterical and unlike anything else that will be published ever.?

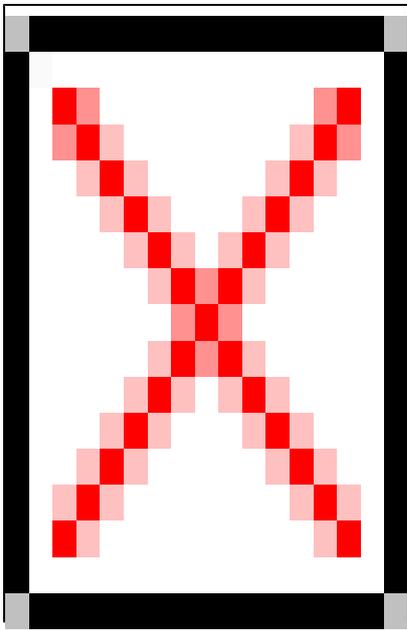
**Amy and Matthew** by Cammie McGovern is "the sweetest YA romance I've ever read" says Rachel Petty, Senior Commissioning Editor at **Macmillan Children's Books**, "Amy, the heroine, has Cerebral Palsy and doesn't think that anyone could ever fall in love with her, until she meets Matthew, who has problems of his own. It's powerful, moving and eye-opening." Rachel is also excited about another romance, **Fangirl** by Rainbow Rowell. "Rainbow writes gorgeous romances about real, flawed, oddball characters who you want to hang out with in real life, this one is about a girl who writes fanfiction."

**The Sword of Kuromori** by Jason Rohan, an action-packed fantasy adventure set in Japan, is first choice of Stella Paskins, **Egmont Press** Publisher, "The characters are great, the dialogue is sparky, and the blend of hi-tech, folklore and exotic Japanese monsters gives it a real point of difference. My other pick is YA and it's **Messenger of Fear**, the first of a chilling new YA series by the incredible Michael Grant. A young girl learns she is to be apprentice to the eponymous Messenger, who metes out justice to those who've done wrong but gone unpunished. Beautifully unsettling, it's going to be a real treat for **Gone** fans, as well as appealing to a whole new audience." Her colleague, Publishing Director Sarah Hughes adds, "Nothing beats watching an author and his characters grow. 2014 is going to be Barry Loser's year. Barry and his mates are the creations of the charming and self-effacing Jim Smith. They have already won over the judging panel for the **Roald Dahl Funny Prize** and two new books in 2014, together his brilliant World Book Day title **I am nit a Loser**, will see this brilliant character delighting thousands more fans. Another of my personal favourites for next year is a cracking middle-grade debut from Sophia McDougall, **Mars Evacuees**. Pacy, exciting and full of wit, it's a cracking start to a major series."

At **Frances Lincoln Children's Books**, Janetta Otter-Barry says, "My pick of the year goes to the beautiful and unique nursery rhyme collection, **Over the Hills and Far Away**. Over 150 rhymes from across the English-speaking world have been lovingly and carefully collected by Elizabeth Hammill, distinguished co-founder of **Seven Stories, National Centre for Children's Books**. The rhymes are illustrated by 76 of the world's finest illustrators, from international stars Sean Tan, Mo Willems and Robert Ingpen to classic and contemporary British illustrators such as Shirley Hughes, Michael Foreman, Axel Scheffler and Emily Gravett. All the illustrators have donated their work and all royalties will be given to **Seven Stories**." Another treat for the very young, also from Frances Lincoln is Publisher Sue Tarsky's choice, Susan Steggall's beautifully rendered **Following the Tractor**. "Handmade paper, intricate detail, much-loved vehicles, sound words, signature visual sub-plots and following a tractor as it plows, sows, harvests and tugs through the four seasons on a busy farm all add up to a total entertainment picture book, packed with treats for sharing and learning."

Helen Carr of the O'Brien Press has four recommendations: "Nicola Pierce creates vibrant characters in a brilliantly realised historical setting in her dramatic WWII novel **City of Fate; Finding A Voice** is Kim Hood's powerful debut about the unlikely friendship between Jo and Chris and how they help each other to find their own voices in the world. I'm thrilled to be working on **A Crack in Everything** by Ruth Long. The first in a new YA series set between the modern world and the Faerie realm while **The Secret Gift**, the third book from Ian Somers, is the best one yet and a fantastic end to **The Gift** Trilogy!"

"It's Christmas all year round for me in 2014" says Charlie Sheppard, Editorial Director Fiction at **Andersen Press**, "I'm working on a gorgeous Christmas treasury with Tony Ross. **The Nights before Christmas** is a collection of twenty-four classic festive stories, poems and extracts to give as the perfect Christmas present or use as an advent calendar in book-form. With Grimm, Andersen, Dickens, Wilde, Frank Baum and Kenneth Graham to name but a few, there's something in here for everyone to enjoy and treasure."



And a debut novel I'm particularly excited about is Sara Crowe's **Bone Jack**. Don't

miss it. Sara is a great talent we're thrilled to have on the list. Her mixture of dark folklore and psychological drama is absolutely mesmerising with prize-winning potential. Andersen Press Editorial Director Rona Selby highlights more picture books from their list. Amongst the books which I am particularly proud to be publishing this year are **The Yes**, with a wonderfully original text by Sarah Bee and superlative illustrations from Satoshi Kitamura, and **Those Magnificent Sheep in their Flying Machines**, a round-the-world romp from **Roald Dahl Prize** winner Peter Bently and the inimitable David Roberts. Also mould-breaking is Jeanne Willis's and Tony Ross's **Chicken Clicking**, a timely and funny cautionary nursery story for the internet age, perfect for teaching small children how to stay safe online.

Fiction Publishing Director at **HarperCollins Children's Books**, Ruth Alltimes says, 'We have a fabulous list this year. But here are three of my favourite debuts. **Shoutykid**, by Simon Mayle introduces Harry 'Shoutykid' Riddles to the world - from the moment we met him we were shouting about his laugh-out-loud story told in letters and emails, we know his readers will too; **The Luck Uglies**, by Paul Durham is a thrilling adventure packed with secrets and swagger, so breathtaking it's hard to believe it's a debut; and in **Nathalia Botface and the Most Embarrassing Dad in the World**, by Nigel Smith we've found something we have long been seeking - a snort-inducingly funny read for girls!' Editorial Director Nick Lake plumped for one book, **Tape** by Steven Camden. 'Steven Camden is an acclaimed spoken word artist and with his debut novel shows that he is just as spellbinding a storyteller on the page. **Tape** starts out with character, and detail, and humour and sadness and builds slowly into something so magical it takes your breath away. It is the kind of book that quietly takes over your heart, and makes a family of the people who read it. I urge you all to go on this time-travelling journey, where two people are connected by a crackly recording on a boom box - and by an awful lot more.'

**Usborne** celebrated their 40th birthday in 2013, and have lots to be excited about in their 41st year. Rebecca Hill, Usborne Fiction Director, says, 'Two very different things are exciting me in 2014: the power of Hope, and sandwiches! **A Boy Called Hope** by Lara Williamson is a bold story about family life in all its shapes and sizes, in which 11-year-old Dan is desperate to be reunited with his absent father. Refreshingly funny and painfully moving, I love Lara's unique voice. Everyone should experience the joy of this book. A time-travelling sandwich is the delicious creation of Matt Brown, in **Compton Valance, The Most Powerful Boy in the Universe**. This burptastic book is disgustingly funny, seriously stinky and had me giggling and guffawing for days.'

**Piccadilly Press** celebrated thirty years of publishing last year and, now part of the Bonnier Group, have much to look forward to as well. 'There are three books on the Piccadilly list that I think have 5 star quality' says MD Brenda Gardner, 'The first is Holly Goldberg Sloan's **Counting By 7's**. This is Holly's second book and features Willow Chance a twelve year old genius obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds comfort in counting by 7s. This book already been given starred reviews in all the major magazines and newspapers in the USA and is on the New York Times bestseller list. We are bringing Holly to the UK for publication in May and we are all super excited.'

My second choice is by a debut author, Harry Oulton, and is called **A Pig Called Heather**. Heather's best friend is a girl called Isla who lives with her father on a farm in Scotland. A heart-warming story of friendship sprinkled with humour, this is **Babe** crossed with **The Incredible Journey**. And the third book is under going a title change at this very moment so this is just a peek behind the curtains. It is by Arabella Weir and stars a girl called Tabitha who decides to re-invent herself when the family fortunes dip. The new Tab at the new school is going to be popular! And she is! Though it will involve a lot of hilarious mishaps.?

Thanks to all the publishers who gave us these peeks behind the curtains. We look forward to reviewing all of the books mentioned.

Page Number:

3

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Aug '20):** <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/204/childrens-books/articles/from-the-horse%E2%80%99s-mouth-books-of-the-year-2014>

**Links:**

[1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/204>