



Books of the Year 2013

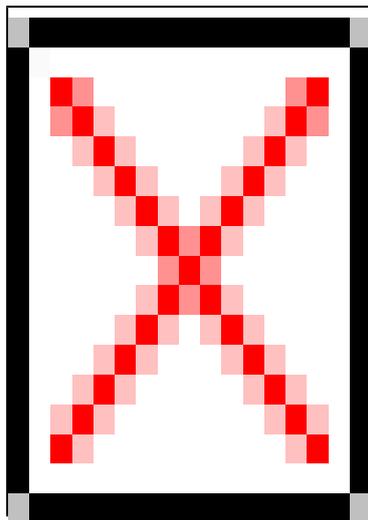
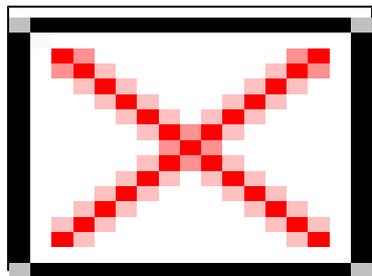
[203](#) [1]

Byline:

Outstanding books of 2013

Our first issue of 2013 asked key people in the children's book world what they were expecting the new year to bring: digital developments; the rise of the self-published author; 'steamy' fiction for teens; exceptionally beautiful printed books to compete with the ebook; and bards on street corners where just some of their predictions! These are challenging times for everyone, but authors, illustrators and publishers are still there producing wonderful books. As the end of the year approached, we asked Books for Keeps friends and contributors to tell us about their favourite books of 2013 (in 100 words). The variety and breadth of the list is a reason to be cheerful going in to 2014.

Joy Court Chair of CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Medals and Editor of the **School Librarian**



What to choose? Hilarious picturebook brilliance like **This is Not My Hat** or **The Day The Crayons Quit** or really impressive debuts like **The River Singers**, **The Last Wild**, **The Wall**, **Monkey Wars** and **All The Truth That's in Me**? But what about established authors in unforgettable form? Any year which has the like of **Blood Family** (Fine), **More Than This** (Ness), **Tinder** (Gardner) and **What If?** (Browne) is positively golden. But you cannot forget the stunning productions which demonstrate just why the physical book is so desirable: **Goth Girl**, **Blackberry Blue**, **Unfortunately The Milk**, and **Oliver and the Seawigs** to name but a few .. Oops! No word count left...

Fiona Waters Editorial Director of **Troubadour**, **The Travelling Book Company**

I've chosen **Anthem for Jackson Dawes**, Celia Bryce, Bloomsbury, 9781408827116 £6.99 pbk

Too many books about children challenged by disability or disease are sentimental, obvious and one dimensional; a rare few are remarkable and remain in the mind long after the book has been put down like **Freak The Mighty** by Rodman Philbrick, and **Wonder** by RJ Palacio. And now there is **Anthem for Jackson Dawes**. Jackson is a rebel, a very attractive rebel, and also utterly infuriating. Initially Megan just finds him too much especially as she has to put all her energy and determination into surviving her first cancer treatment. He drives her nuts, as he does the nursing staff, for he is also a patient, but slowly he grows on her and his warmth and energy and general craziness help her through the nightmare and the fear. But this book is truthful and there is no happily ever after, rather a recognition of the difference

some people can make to our lives.

Jane Churchill ? **Book It! Director, Cheltenham Literature Festival Fiction Advisor, Gallimard Jeunesse**

The most memorable read for me in 2013 was **All The Truth That's in Me** by Julie Berry, a striking and atmospheric tale of strength of will against the odds, told in a unique and resonant voice which is haunting me still. For sheer *joie de vivre* are two novels for younger readers both a remarkably creative marriage of text and image: **Dixie O'Day in the Fast Lane** by Shirley Hughes & Clara Vulliamy, a heart-warming adventure with a loveable pair of canine heroes and **Oliver and the Seawigs** by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre involving an eccentric cast of characters and some very mischievous sea-monkeys!

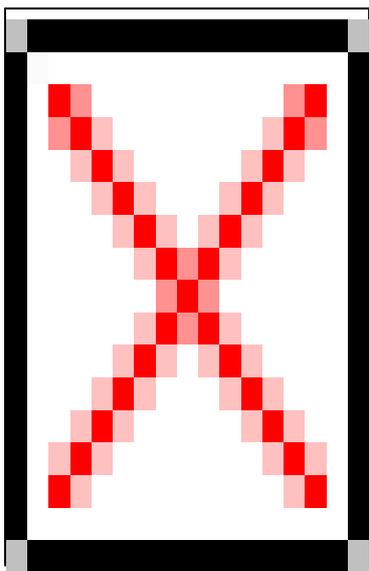
Clive Barnes is Chair of **Ibby UK**

In the Land of the Giants is the winner of this year's **CLPE Poetry Award**. It's intelligent and irreverent, thought and laughter provoking; a view of childhood and language that's inimitably askew and oddly familiar. Here's what I said in my review in March: "Never showy or superior, equally comfortable with or without rhyme, Szirtes observes and transforms, beginning with the everyday and ending somewhere else, inviting us into the poems, showing us what we thought we knew and revealing that we knew more than we thought. In this collection, there are over sixty poems to enjoy and share. Don't miss it."

Fen Cooper is a director at **Letterbox Library** www.letterboxlibrary.com [2]

Letterbox Library is famous for its selection of inclusive children's books, so here are our Diversity Stars for 2013: **One, Two, Three! Run!** one in a board book series; picture books **Max the Champion** and **Desmond and the Very Mean Word**; the early chapter book, **Being Ben**. In each, the story is led by a voice traditionally under-represented in children's literature; none do so self-consciously; all are utterly joyful. A child with Down's syndrome bounces and scrambles in the first; Max's sports-infused world embraces disabled budding athletes in the mix; Desmond re-imagines a powerful episode in the young Desmond Tutu's life; the super-endearing Ben, who is mixed race, and his hearing-impaired best mate had us in stitches! All made our bookshelves just that bit brighter.

Andrea Reece is a consultant, reviewer and Managing Editor of **Books for Keeps**



Hilary McKay, Berlie Doherty and Geraldine McCaughrean, three favourites, each had new books out this year, and what books they are: McKay's **Binny for Short** is funny, touching, full of characters who will live with you forever; Doherty's **The Company of Ghosts** is haunting in every sense of the word, and full of unforgettable images; Geraldine McCaughrean's **The Middle of Nowhere** is also full of phrases, images and ideas that pull you up short, and is a brilliant adventure too. Finally, I was also very impressed by Natasha Carthew's debut **Winter Damage**.

Elizabeth Hammill OBE initiated and co-founded **Seven Stories**, the centre for children's books, and is a Founder Patron and Collection Trust trustee.

Jon Klassen is an artist of startling originality. His rare ability to show how less can be more, how simple can be subtle, and his imaginative use of light and dark illuminate three unorthodox picture books: a laugh-aloud, fishy tale of underwater thievery (**This is Not My Hat**); an elegantly told fairy tale in which an ingenious girl knits her monochrome town into vibrant life (**Extra Yarn**); and a powerful fable about a child's fear and mastery of the dark (**The Dark**). The character, life and times of the 19th century father of the modern picture book Randolph Caldecott are vividly realised and his 'revolutionary' artwork, is imaginatively displayed in a superlative juvenile biography (**Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing**)

Alex Strick is a disability advisor and co-runs **Outside In** and the new **Inclusive Minds** venture

My favourite books of the year are (unsurprisingly) eminently inclusive. I love the exuberance of **One Two Three Run** (and indeed the whole 2013 series) by Carol Thompson, which demonstrates how even board books for babies can include disabled children in a natural, and appealing way. Meanwhile Ros Asquith always delivers on creating a beautifully diverse backdrop and **The Great Big Book of Feelings** is certainly no exception. Finally, **She is Not Invisible** (Marcus Sedgwick) is mesmerizing, and also proves how a bit of research can transform authenticity levels, as it says so much about visual impairment, but always *in passing* - never distracting, detracting or being the least bit worthy

Tony Bradman is an author and reviewer, chair of the **Siobhan Dowd Trust** and director at the **Copyright Licensing Agency**

Some wonderful children's books have been published this year, but the one that has really stayed with me is Anne Fine's latest YA novel, **Blood Family**. It's the story of Edward, a boy who is rescued from a violent abuser and is then taken into care. What sets it apart from other YA 'issue' novels is Anne Fine's unblinking determination to explore the long-term effect of such a background on a young person, and it all makes for a very unsettling, but truly memorable reading experience. Anne Fine is one of our best writers (please note I didn't qualify that by saying 'best children's writer') and she brings two things to bear on this story - her enormous skill as a novelist, and her deep understanding of human nature. Not to be missed.

Sarah Mears is Children's Services Development Manager at Essex Libraries and Chair of ASCEL

Lockwood and Co: The Screaming Staircase is an exciting new series set in an alternative London plagued with 'Visitors' - terrifying ghosts who bring death and destruction in their wake. This is a lengthy read but one which will absorb young readers aged 12+. Who would have thought a packet of crayons would be so difficult? **The Day the Crayons Quit** is a great picture book raising some interesting questions about colour and perception. On the surface, **A Horse for Angel** is a straight forward horse story but there is a sense of the magical pervading the book making this a deeper and more profound read.

John Iona, **SLA School Librarian of the Year** and librarian at Oasis Academy Enfield

Sugarlump and the Unicorn is a lovely book that is a pleasure to read to younger children. It tells the tale of the Sugarlump, a rocking horse who finds himself left un-played with when his young owners grow up and go to school. The story is told using Donaldson's familiar approach of rhythmic rhyme-scheme and simplistic, but carefully constructed, writing which makes it perfect for reading aloud and encouraging children to sing along. My three girls love Donaldson's books, and this witty and charming story is one of my favourite books to read to them this year.

Lyn Hopson, Librarian, Don Valley Academy, on the 2013 Honour List for **SLA School Librarian of the Year**

Every Day is an exceptional book, thought-provoking, poignant and ultimately up-lifting. It has a very unusual premise, its narrator, 'A', wakes up every day in a different body. He never knows if he will be a boy or girl, sporty or studious,

rich or poor. This existence, although unimaginably lonely and isolated, nonetheless gives A a unique insight into the complexities of people's lives and a wisdom beyond his years, so that he is a hugely sympathetic character. This book encourages you to think about the nature of love, of what it is that makes us connect to another person, and of the need to look beneath the surface. It also shows teenage life in all its variety and complications. I loved it and think older teenagers will too, I've recommended it to quite a few already!

Sally Cameron is an Honour List SLA School Librarian of the Year and Librarian at Marymount International School Rome, Italy.

We teach our students that 'reading is thinking' and **She is Not Invisible** gives you much to think about. It delivers vivid characters, lessons in coincidence and an intriguing mystery in a strangely-beautiful multi-layered delight. Laureth, who is sixteen, and her seven year-old brother run away to search for their missing father. Their only clue is his lost notebook which turns up in New York, their only resource is the credit card they stole from their mother. We learn how places smell, sound and feel and how challenging things can be for Laureth who is blind...

Hilary Cantwell **SLA School Librarian of the Year** and JCSP Librarian, St. Pauls Community College

The Weight of Water by Sarah Crossan is an unusual but accessible book written in verse form. This format captures eloquently the emotion, character and atmosphere of Kasiena's life: a young Polish girl who travels to England with her mother in search of her father. At home her mother is heartbroken and at school friends are scarce. Kasienka finds strength in her swimming, she uses it to escape the problems of day to day life. It is here she meets William, someone who gives her hope. Crossan tackles deftly the subjects of immigration, isolation and bullying. This is a story of courage and resilience which is so often required by young people trying to find their way in the world.

[All the Truth that's in Me](#) [3] Julie Berry Templar

[Anthem for Jackson Dawes](#) [4], Celia Bryce, Bloomsbury, 9781408827116 £6.99 pbk

Being Ben, by Jacqueline Roy, ill. Margaret Chamberlain, Walker, 978-1406333060, £3.99

[Binny for Short](#) [5], Hilary McKay, Hodder Children's Books, 978-1444900545 £9.99 hbk

Blood Family, Anne Fine, Doubleday, 978-0857532404 £12.99

[The Company of Ghosts](#) [6], Berlie Doherty, Andersen Press, 978-1849397292, £6.99 pbk

The Dark, Lemony Snickett, ill Jon Klassen, Orchard Books, 978-1408330029 £11.99

[The Day the Crayons Quit](#) [7], Drew Daywalt, illustrations by Oliver Jeffers, Harper Collins Children's Books, 9780007513756

Desmond and the Very Mean Word, by Archbishop Desmond Tutu & Douglas Carlton Abrams, ill. A. G. Ford, Walker, 978-1406343915 £11.99

Every Day by David Levithan, Electirc Monkey, 978-1405264426, £7.99 pbk

Extra Yarn, Mac Barnett, ill. Jon Klassen, Walker, 978-1406342314 £11.99

[The Great Big Book of Feelings](#) [8], Mary Hoffman, Ros Asquith, Frances Lincoln, 978-1847802811, £11.99

A Horse for Angel Sarah Lean, Harper Collins Children's Books, 9780007455058

[In the Land of the Giants](#) [9] George Szirtes, ill. Helen Szirtes, Salt Publishing, 978 1 84471 451 3, £6.99, pbk

[Lockwood and Co: The Screaming Staircase](#) [10], Jonathan Stroud, Doubleday, 9780857532015, £12.99 hbk

Max the Champion [11], by Sean Stockdale & Alexandra Strick, ill. Ros Asquith, Frances Lincoln 978-1847803887, £9.99 hbk

The Middle of Nowhere, Geraldine McCaughrean, Usborne, 978-1409522003, £9.99 hbk.

One, Two, Three?Run! by Carol Thompson, Childs? Play 978-1846436154 £3.99

Oliver and the Seawigs [12], Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre, Oxford, 978-0192734556, £8.99 hbk

Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing, Leonard S Marcus, 978-0374310257 Farrar Straus Giroux, £16.99

Sugarlump and the Unicorn by Julia Donaldson, illus Lydia Monks, Macmillan, 978-0230769885 £9.99 hbk

She is Not Invisible Marcus Sedgewick, Orion, 978-1780621098, £9.99 hbk

This Is Not My Hat, Jon Klassen, Walker, 978-1406343939, £11.99

The Weight of Water [13] Sarah Crossnan, Bloomsbury, 978-1408830239, £6.99

Page Number:

5

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[6] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-company-of-ghosts>

[7] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/202/childrens-books/reviews/the-day-the-crayons-quit>

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[11] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/201/childrens-books/reviews/max-the-champion>

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[13] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/198/childrens-books/reviews/the-weight-of-water>