



## Children's column - a plethora of pop-ups

Nicolette Jones

Opinion - Children Thursday, 20th November 2008

*Among the pop-up books being published for Christmas, Nicolette Jones writes, are the following: Inventions: Pop-Ups from the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci (Walker); The Gruffalo Pop-up Theatre Book (Macmillan); Jan Pienkowski and David Walser's Pop-Up Nutcracker (Puffin); Robert Sabuda's Pop-Up Peter Pan (Simon & Schuster); Marion Bataille's ABC3D (Bloomsbury); Adam Stower and Nick Denchfield's Diary of a Monster-Catcher (Scholastic); Francesca Crespi's Pop-Up Book of Christmas Carols (Frances Lincoln); Christmas Is Coming: A Pop-Up Celebration (Templar);*

Robert Crowther's *Ships* (Walker); *Commander Nova's Pop-Up Alien Space Station* by Nick Denchfield and Steve Cox (Macmillan); *Cosmic: The flashing, exploding, 3-D guide to stars and planets* (DK); Richard Platt and David Hawcock's *Moon Landing* (Walker); and the *Horrible Histories Terrible Tomb of Tutankhamun* by Terry Deary, Martin Brown and (again) Nick Denchfield (Scholastic).

This tide leads me to reflect on the genre. The pop-up is a metaphor for all stories: when we read, from between the covers something surprising, something bigger than the book, always emerges. In the mind's eye, it is in 3-D. Flat pictures also show three dimensions, ever since the invention of perspective. So a pop-up is, arguably, a tautology - a bringing to life of something already brought to life by words or images. It may even contradict the essence of reading, suggesting to children that what emerges from two-dimensional pages is not enough.

On the other hand, as objects, as paper sculptures, pop-ups can be impressive and ingenious. Michael Dawson, for one, former collector and dealer at Ampersand Books, recognises their value as works of art (see [www.ampersandbooks.co.uk](http://www.ampersandbooks.co.uk), though the Ludlow-based collection and business were sold in April to Stella and Rose's books, [www.stellabooks.com](http://www.stellabooks.com)). Perhaps pop-ups are more appreciated by adult collectors than by children. Certainly, say, *ABC3D* seems better suited to a coffee table than a primary classroom. Pop-ups have the element of surprise on their side, like jack-in-the-boxes, and so have impact when opened as gifts. But do they last? Do children treasure and lose themselves in them? (I do know of one child who slept with a favourite pop-up under her pillow.) Or are they often, on second reading, like a joke with a punch line you have already heard? And what is the perfect age between young enough to enjoy them and old enough not to tear them to bits?

These I hope are questions that publishers of pop-up books can answer. But there is another question for the trade: how are they displayed in bookshops? There is always the extra expense of a display copy if they are shown open. But do booksellers have the space? Are they being wasted, spine-out?

Please send us photos of your best bookshop pop-up displays for Christmas. There are, after all, plenty of books to choose from.

Source article: <https://www.bookbrunch.co.uk/page/article-detail/childrens-column-a-plethora-of-pop-ups>