# Twenty-five Years of ‘We’re Going on a Bear Hunt’ – transcript.

## Michael:

It is incredible that the book has lasted this long. Not because I’m surprised at whether it’s a good or a bad book. Just any book in the children’s world that lasts for more than ten years is wonderful. It’s quite an ephemeral world; you know books come out and they can last a year or two. So ‘Bear Hunt’ has survived and this is amazing that it is twenty-five years old. That means there’s a whole generation of people if you think about it who are grown up, so there are now parents who read it or had it read to them when they were children. So it’s beginning to go in a big circle where parents who probably know it but don’t know they know it can sing it and chant it as they’re reading it to their little ones. Well I have to say it was the way in which the book was conceived that has made it last that long. It satisfies a lot of people hopes, wishes and fears. If a book does that it can last forever. ‘The Odyssey’ is still in print; you know I’m not suggesting ‘We’re Going on a Bear Hunt is ‘The Odyssey’. It is an odyssey but that’s another matter.

I think my most memorable ‘Bear Hunt’ moments happened early on when the book came out and I would arrive at a school somewhere and start performing it. What happens is if you perform it with three and four year olds and you’re not careful they all stand up and start moving. So you can have about two hundred children going through the cave and going through the mud and you can see teachers panicking. And all around the room they’re going “Down, down! On your bottoms” while you’re going “sqcccuelch, splashhhh. We’re going to catch a big one” and so on. So I had to learn how to make it so that – it’s a kind of control really but you have to do it so it comes down to size; so some of these little gestures that I do like stumble, trip and tip-toe that really is in order to keep two hundred children sitting on their bottoms as the teachers would say.

## Voiceover:

‘We’re Going on a Bear Hunt’ celebrating twenty-five years. Jointhebearhunt.com, Walker Books.