

Recommended by Siim Kallas:

[Ali and Nino: A Love Story](#). By Kurban Said.

Received this recently while travelling, fascinating for an understanding of the Caucasus.

[A Splendid Exchange](#). By William J. Bernstein.

Fundamental for understanding how free trade changed the world.

[Freedom](#). By Jonathan Franzen.

Enormously educational insight into American society today.

[The Commanding Heights : The Battle for the World Economy](#). By Daniel Yergin.

About the failure of state intervention in the economy.

[Why the West Rules – for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future](#). By Ian Morris.

My current reading – the title says it all.

More generally, political biographies of **[Kohl](#)** (this one I recommend in particular) and Francois Mitterand, to understand Franco-German relations both in the past and what is happening now.

Recommended by the Kallas team.

[Longitude](#). By Dava Sobel.

The story of watchmaker John Harrison's 18th-century quest to build a clock which would work and not malfunction onboard sailing ships, so they could navigate safely and determine their position more precisely. The mode here is shipping, but also related to satellite navigation since GPS or Galileo are nothing but extremely precise clocks orbiting the earth, sending us precise time signals.

[Night Train to Lisbon](#). By Pascal Mercier.

Not transport-related but has transport in the title. The Swiss author's very personal perspective of life under Salazar in Portugal and the transition to democracy, seen through the eyes of a professor of ancient Greek (Raimund Gregorius) at a Swiss Gymnasium who suddenly decides to drop everything and journey to Lisbon by night train.

[Biggles Flies North](#). By Capt W.E. Johns.

From which I learned most of what I know about aviation.

[Lord Jim](#). By Joseph Conrad.

A maritime safety classic.

[Achieving the Single European Sky](#). By Pablo Mendes De Leon and Daniel Calleja Crespo (eds.)

A concise history of Eurocontrol.

[Great Railway Maps of the World](#). By Mark Ovenden.

For map geeks and transport geeks. All maps are cool, but especially rail maps!

[The Little Engine That Could](#). By Watty Piper.

The "little engine" is like Estonia – always uphill but finally always makes it.

Rise and Fall of the Dock Labour Scheme. By John Dempster.

A story many would prefer to forget.

Here Comes the Garbage Barge! By Jonah Winter.

Before everyone recycled, there was a town that had 3,168 tons of garbage and nowhere to put it. What did they do? Enter the Garbage Barge! A mostly true and completely stinky story that is sure to make you say, "Pee-yew!" – teaching environmental awareness this book (subtly) drives home the message that we can't produce unlimited trash without consequences.

My Uncle Napoleon. By Iraj Pezeshkzad.

A story of Iran. Insight into one of the most fascinating regions of the world at the present time.

Le petit prince. By Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

The ultimate multi-modal travel book, remains a must for young and old at Christmas.

Corto Maltese. By Hugo Pratt.

My favourite as a student: the comic book adventures from an early-20th-century romantic, travelling the seven seas and deserts, reading Arthur Rimbaud and witnessing the uprisings of the early part of the century. There were several in the series, and I particularly cherish "Les Ethiopiennes".

The Poisonwood Bible. By Barbara Kingsolver.

A second non-travel novel, and probably the book which struck me most in my adult life. About a missionary family, the Prices, who in 1959 move from the US to the Belgian Congo. The Prices' story, which parallels their host country's tumultuous emergence into the post-colonial era, is narrated by the five women of the family: Orleanna, long-suffering wife of baptist missionary Nathan Price, and their four daughters—Rachel, Leah, Adah, and Ruth May.

Richard Scarry's Cars and Trucks and Things That Go. By Richard Scarry.

A steadfast transport must-have in every toddler's library, but also great fun for bigger kids. A great vocabulary guide that names the many things that go (or could). Detail-rich and funny scenes and characters on every page, worth looking long and closely.

How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed. By Slavenka Drakulic.

A poignant and truthful look at what living under Communism was really like, this gripping, beautifully written account describes the daily struggles of women under the Marxist regime in the former republic of Yugoslavia.

Thomas the Tank Engine. By Rev. W. Awdry.

A much loved friend for so many children.

Flyboard Zapata.

For research geeks. Clip lasts for 6 minutes but after 20 seconds you get the point.

Voyage vers l'an mil. By Avraham B. Yehoshua.

Moi, j'ai adoré celui-ci.

Danube. By Claudio Magris.

This Trieste-born novelist takes the reader on a "trip" along the river from its (disputed!) sources to the (disputed) estuary on the Black Sea, uncovering the history of an ancient country that never existed, of Slavic, Germanic, Jewish, Magyar, etc., influences and haunted by common ghosts both inspiring and frightening. Not too much inland waterways policy in this, although some elements of a business case of further developing peaceful navigation.

Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea. By Guy Delisle.

To change to another art form, a very personal account by a Canadian-born comic artist, in beautiful small scenes of his stay in North Korea to oversee a team of local comic artists working on Western animation films. Tragic and sad and yet full of kind humour, great eyes and ears for the small revealing details, friendly, noble, brutal and passionate – *terrible*, as one would say in French, in both senses.

Narrow Dog To Carcassonne. By Terry Darlington.

This is the true story of Darlington and his wife, both retirees, who own a narrow boat which they use to pootle up and down the waterways of the back country. They decide to take the narrow boat through England, across the channel and down through France. This book allows you to travel with and explore life on the canals and waterways of England and France.

A Week at the Airport. By Alain de Botton.

Many of you probably feel like you live in airports already, but Alain de Botton actually did so, as Heathrow's writer-in-residence for a week, with "A Week at the Airport" as the result. Shows airports are a microcosm of modern life, in his typical pseudo-Proustian style.

Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next. By John D. Kasarda.

Similar insights as de Botton on airports, but pitched more as pop economics and urbanism: "Aerotropolis", by John Kasarda (aviation strategy guru at UNC Chapel Hill) and Greg Lindsay (his ghostwriter).

The Last Spike. By Pierre Berton.

A case study of how to build a railway – the world's longest at the time. A book more for history wonks than for transport geeks, but shows how the two are tightly related: if it weren't for CP Rail, large parts of "the country I know best" would now be American (some would argue Alberta already is ...).

The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power. By Daniel Yergin.

If you're into geopolitics and commodities, "The Prize" by Daniel Yergin is an absolutely fascinating history of oil, from the first wildcat strikes some 100 years ago through to the First and Second World Wars, the founding of OPEC and up to the first Gulf War. First published around 1991, the latest edition is from 2009. It's a gripping story.

The Uncommon Reader. By Alan Bennett.

Even transport geeks get tired sometimes and need a break. If this is the case, you will find a wonderful escape in "The Uncommon Reader" by Alan Bennett. This is the story of The Queen discovering, by accident, the local mobile public library van (one of the corgi's ran into it during a walk one day). It tells how The Queen (never a big reader – too many duties, etc.) becomes slowly addicted to reading, first classics, then comedy, through to gay fiction and beyond, and how it profoundly changes her whole life (much to the dismay of her court). This is a charming book.

The Wrecker. By R. L. Stevenson.

A jump back into the 19th century where hunting shipwrecks and their cargo was certainly more difficult without modern technology – a great novel based on a true event. It gives a darkly original vision of culture and capitalism in a wholly modern theatre of transatlantic, Pacific, and globalised travel.

Leo Africanus. By Amin Maalouf.

A novel based on the true life-story of Hasan al-Wazzan, 16th-century traveller and writer. The novel starts on a piracy event and lead to the beautiful tales of an extraordinary man. Very well written, as always with Amin Maalouf.

The Adventures of Tintin. By Hergé.

And finally, The Adventures of Tintin – something for every mode! "**Flight 714**" (for aviation), "**The Secret of the Unicorn**" (for maritime), "**Red Rackham's Treasure**" (for submarine), "**Tintin in America**", and many others (for rail) and even Galileo with "**Destination Moon**".