

*There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away...
--Emily Dickinson*

MULTI-PERIOD SAGAS

Rutherford, Edward. *London.*

A novel that traces the history of London and England from Roman times to the present through the fortunes of five families.

_____. *Princes of Ireland: The Dublin Saga.*

An account of the history of Ireland from pre-Christian times to the rebellion of 1534. *Rebels of Ireland: The Dublin Saga* continues the story up to the founding of the Irish Free State.

EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. *The Mists of Avalon.*

The story of King Arthur from the perspective of the women behind the legend.

Cornwell, Bernard. *The Last Kingdom.*

Cornwell vividly re-creates the battle for control between Danes and Saxons in King Alfred's England through the eyes of an English warrior with divided loyalties. The first volume in The Saxon Chronicles series.

Heyer, Georgette. *The Conqueror.*

The life of William the Conqueror, the illegitimate son of the Duke of Normandy, who conquers England and changes the course of British and Irish history.

Llywelyn, Morgan. *Lion of Ireland.*

The story of Brian Boru, the medieval Irish chieftain, who unites Ireland under his rule and defeats the Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf.

Whyte, Jack. *The Skystone: The Camulod Chronicles.*

The first volume in Whyte's nine-volume retelling of the legend of King Arthur.

HIGH MIDDLE AGES

Follett, Ken. *The Pillars of the Earth.*

An epic saga of the building of a Gothic cathedral in twelfth-century England.

Penman, Sharon Kay. *When Christ and His Saints Slept.*

The first volume in a trilogy centered on medieval power couple Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine. The trilogy includes *Time and Chance* and *Devil's Brood.*

_____. *The Sunne in Splendour: A Novel of Richard III.*

Wars of the Roses England comes to life in this sympathetic portrayal of one of England's most vilified kings.

Seton, Anya. *Katherine.*

The classic story of the love affair between Katherine Swynford and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

THE TUDOR ERA

Barnes, Margaret Campbell. *Brief Gaudy Hour: A Novel of Anne Boleyn.*

The rise and fall of the captivating but doomed Anne Boleyn, mistress to Henry VIII, and mother to Queen Elizabeth I.

George, Margaret. *The Autobiography of Henry VIII: With Notes by His Fool, Will Somers: A Novel.*

In this fictionalized autobiography, Henry VIII presents his side of the story, accompanied by some critical commentary from his court jester.

Gregory, Philippa. *The Other Queen: A Novel.*

Gregory brings us the story of the intrigue-filled captive years of Mary, Queen of Scots, who proves to be unlucky in both politics and love.

Llywelyn, Morgan. *Grania: She King of the Irish Seas.*

The activities of Irish pirate-chieftain Grace O'Malley bring her into conflict with the forces of Queen Elizabeth.

Miles, Rosalind. *I, Elizabeth: A Novel.*

Elizabeth I looks back on her life, both public and private, from the perspective of old age.

Weir, Alison. *Innocent Traitor: A Novel of Lady Jane Grey.*

Acclaimed historian Weir presents a fictional account of the tragic nine-day Queen.

THE STUART ERA

Brooks, Geraldine. *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague.*

When plague strikes the village of Eyam in Derbyshire, the inhabitants go into voluntary quarantine to prevent the spread of the disease.

Gregory, Philippa. *Earthly Joy.*

The life of John Tradescant, naturalist, world traveler, collector of exotic plants and gardener to Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria.

Plaidy, Jean. *The Loves of Charles II: The Stuart Saga.*

The multiple romances of a very romantic king.

Winsor, Kathleen. *Forever Amber.*

A sensuous Restoration romance novel that was banned in Boston when first published in the 1940s.

THE GEORGIAN ERA

Cornwell, Bernard. *Sharpe's Trafalgar.*

Working-class British officer Richard Sharpe takes a break from the British Empire's land wars to put in an appearance at the Battle of Trafalgar. The fourth in a multi-volume military adventure series.

Flanagan, Thomas. *The Year of the French.*

In 1798, the Irish, with help from France, rise in rebellion against English rule.

Forester, C. S. *Mr. Midshipman Hornblower.*

On the eve of the Napoleonic Wars, young Horatio Hornblower joins the British Navy and promptly wins the approbation of his superiors, and promotion, with his feats of derring-do. The first volume in Forester's acclaimed eleven-volume Horatio Hornblower series.

Gregory, Philippa. *A Respectable Trade.*

In 1780s Bristol, England, newly-wed Frances Scott Cole is shocked to discover that part of her husband's wealth comes from the slave trade.

Haeger, Diane. *The Secret Wife of King George IV.*

Although he knows she can never become his queen, the Prince of Wales enters into a secret marriage with devout Catholic Maria Fitzherbert.

Heyer, Georgette. *An Infamous Army: A Novel of Wellington, Waterloo, Love and War.*

A love story set against the backdrop of the Battle of Waterloo.

O'Brian, Patrick. *Master and Commander.*

The first volume in the Aubrey/Maturin naval adventure series set during the Napoleonic Wars. The series formed the basis for the recent Russell Crowe movie *Master and Commander.*

Pope, Dudley. *Ramage's Devil.*

Captain Lord Ramage of the British Navy takes his bride to France on their honeymoon but they find themselves in trouble when hostilities break out between the two countries. The thirteenth volume in the Ramage series.

Willig, Lauren. *The Deception of the Emerald Ring.*

A light, airy, and witty tale of romance, espionage, and the Irish rebellion of 1803 in Dublin. Part of the Pink Carnation series.

THE VICTORIAN ERA

Flanagan, Thomas. *The Tenants of Time.*

The Fenian rebellion of 1867 fails but the Irish find hope in Charles Stuart Parnell's Home Rule campaign and the Land League's fight for tenant rights.

Fraser, George McDonald. *Flashman at the Charge*.

The indefatigable Harry Flashman, fictional Victorian military anti-hero and rogue, recounts his adventures during the Crimean War. The fourth volume in the witty Flashman Papers series.

Plaidy, Jean. *Victoria Victorious*.

The story of the Queen who ascends the British throne in 1837 at the age of eighteen, reigns for 64 years, and gives her name to an era.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Barker, Pat. *Regeneration*.

When decorated British officer and poet Siegfried Sassoon is driven by the carnage of the Great War to publicly protest, the army consigns him to a treatment facility for shell-shocked soldiers. The first volume in Barker's trilogy set during World War I.

Delaney, Frank. *Ireland*.

In 1950s Ireland, a young boy becomes enchanted with the history of his country through the tales of a seanchai (traditional Irish storyteller).

Dobbs, Michael. *Never Surrender:*

A Novel of Winston Churchill.

German tanks roll through Europe. Britain suffers defeat at Dunkirk. Is it time to negotiate with Hitler? Part of Dobbs' series on Churchill.

Llywelyn, Morgan. *1916*.

As the Great War rages in Europe, a small group of Irish rebels seize control of the center of Dublin and assert Ireland's right to independence. The first volume in The Irish Century series.

Plunkett, James. *Strumpet City*.

Set in Dublin prior to the Easter Rising, this novel chronicles the lives of both rich and poor, the growth of the trade union

movement under James Larkin, and the great strike and lockout of 1913.

WORLD HISTORICAL FICTION GUIDES

Reference Books

Adamson, Lynda G. *World Historical Fiction: An Annotated Guide to Novels for Adults and Young Adults*. Oryx, 1998.

Burt, David S. *What Historical Novel Do I Read Next?* Gale, 1977-2003. 3 vols.

Hooper, Brad. *Read On ... Historical Fiction: Reading Lists for Every Taste*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Johnson, Sarah L. *Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Online Resources

Novelist

A reader's advisory database accessible through the electronic resources section of the Boston Public Library's home page at <http://www.bpl.org>.

Historical Fiction Network

(<http://www.histfiction.net>)

Lists top historical fiction authors and titles and includes links to additional resources on the Web.

Historical Novel Society

(<http://www.historicalnovelsociety.org>)

Provides access to selected reviews and articles from the society's journals, *Historical Novels Review* and *Solander*, as well as information on forthcoming historical fiction titles.

Reading the Past

(<http://readingthepast.blogspot.com>)

A historical fiction blog by Sarah Johnson, author of *Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre*.



Compiled by Eileen Sherman,
Reader and Information Services,
Boston Public Library, October, 2008.

Cover illustration: English stained-glass windows, fourteenth century, from *Medieval Designs* by Gregory Mirow, Dover Publications, 1997.