

# A Historical Reading List for World Book Day

From the Time Tunnellers and friends



DIGGING FOR THE STORY IN HISTORY

Of course, we at the Time Tunnellers absolutely *adore* books! More than anything, we want to curl up in a chair with a cup of something hot and discover an exciting new story from a brilliant writer. Here are some recommendations for cracking new reads from the guests authors we've welcomed over the past years. We hope you find something to suit you here!

## ***Rivet Boy***

by Barbara Henderson

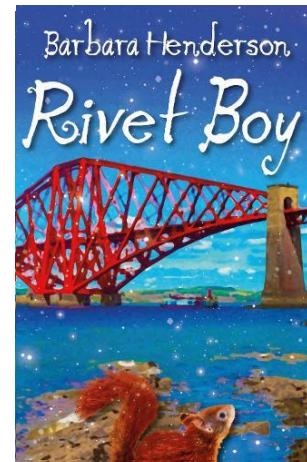
**Recommended by:** Lindsay Littleson, author of 'The Titanic Detective Agency'

**Summary:** When 12-year-old John Nicol gets a job at the Forth Bridge construction site, he knows it's dangerous. Four boys have already fallen from the bridge into the Forth below. But John has no choice-with his father gone, he must provide an income for his family-even if he is terrified of heights.

John finds comfort in the new Carnegie library, his friend Cora and his squirrel companion, Rusty. But when he is sent to work in Cain Murdoch's Rivet Gang, John must find the courage to climb, to face his fears, and to stand up to his evil boss.

**Lindsay says:** "Packed with historical detail, real-life peril, and adventure!"

**Read Lindsay's book:** The Titanic Detective Agency



## ***The Buried Crown***

by Ally Sherrick

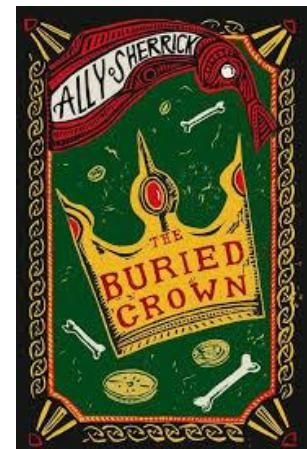
**Recommended by:** Vanessa Harbour, author of 'Safe'

**Summary:** Londoner George has been sent to live in the countryside while his brother and guardian, Charlie, trains to be a pilot – but he's very far from safe.

An ancient burial ground nearby contains a priceless treasure, a magical Anglo-Saxon crown Hitler is desperate to possess.

Alongside Kitty, the granddaughter of a Jewish archaeologist, George must find and protect the crown from the Nazi invaders before it's too late ...

**Vanessa says:** "It's wonderful, you must read it!"



★ Time Tunneller Recommended

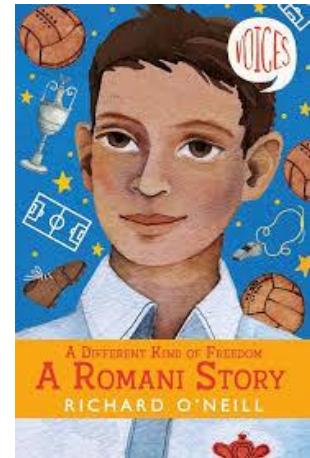
## ***A Different Kind of Freedom: A Romani Story***

by Richard O'Neill

**Recommended by:** Time Tunneller Susan Brownrigg, author of 'Wrong Tracks!'

**Summary:** This action-packed story is told through the eyes of young Lijah, as he navigates life and discovers football and the legendary Rab Howell.

*"Quick history of Rab Howell: born in a wagon on a camp like yours about thirty years ago. He played for United and England, and was one of the best players I ever saw."*



In this heart-stopping adventure, Richard O'Neill shows us an important and intriguing time in Britain that's sure to fascinate young readers.

## ***The Diary of a Young Girl***

by Anne Frank

**Recommended by:** Joseph Lamb, author of 'The God of All Small Boys' and Tom Palmer, author of 'Resist'

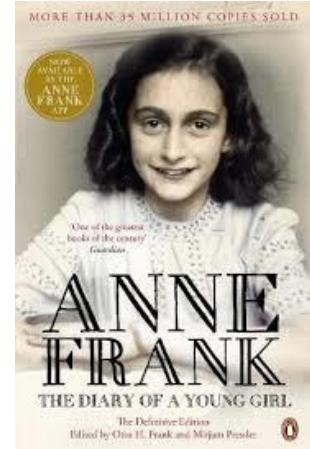
**Summary:** In 1942, with the Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding.

For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, the Franks and another family lived cloistered in the "Secret Annexe" of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death.

In her diary, Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period.

**Joseph says:** "It's a very very special book to me, especially as we share the same birthday!"

**Tom says:** "I think it's the most amazing historical story, and Anne was an amazing writer."



## ***Granny Came Here on the Empire Windrush***

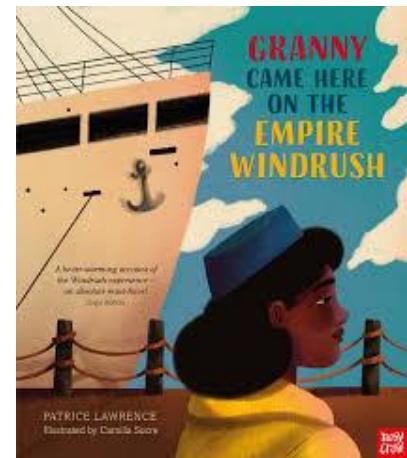
by Patrice Lawrence

**Recommended by:** Masie Chang, author of 'Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu'

**Summary:** When Ava finds a mysterious old suitcase - Granny's "grip" - Granny begins to share her own history, and how she came to England on the Empire Windrush many years ago.

She tells her story through the precious items that accompanied her on the original voyage, each one evoking a memory of home, and as Ava listens to how Granny built a life for herself in England, determined to stay against the odds and despite overwhelming homesickness, she realises that there is a hero very close to home that she wants to celebrate more than anyone - her very own brave and beloved granny.

**Masie says:** "It's got lots of historical facts, and a fictional story that's really interesting."



### ★ Time Tunneller Recommended

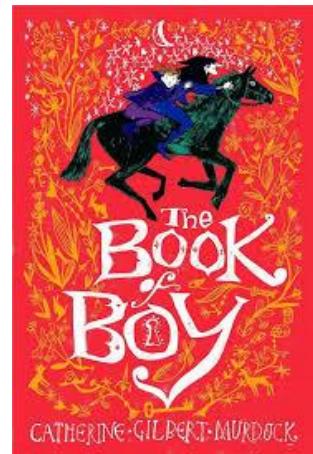
## ***The Book of Boy***

by Catherine Gilbert Murdock

**Recommended by:** Time Tunneller Ally Sherrick, author of 'Rebel Heart'

**Summary:** The year is 1350. Boy, a hunchbacked, sweet-natured goatherd, is content in his quiet country life. But when a shadowy pilgrim with a dangerous past arrives on the farm, his world is turned upside down.

Secundus is a man on a mission, and upon first sight of Boy, enlists him as his servant, ripping him away from tranquility and plunging them both into a perilous medieval treasure hunt ... but there is more to the pilgrim's quest than meets the eye.



## ***Queen of Freedom***

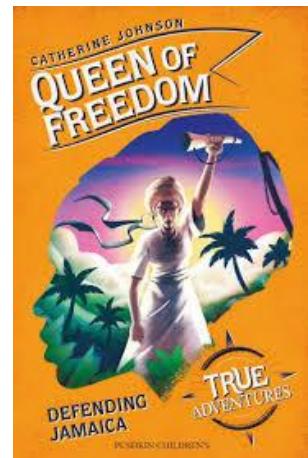
by Catherine Johnson

**Recommended by:** Candy Gourlay, author of 'Wild Song'

**Summary:** Set in Jamaica in the 1720s, this is the incredible true story of Queen Nanny, leader of the Maroons, a community of escaped slaves who have settled high up in the Blue Mountains. The Maroons are hunted by British soldiers, known as redcoats, and are either killed or returned to a brutal life of slavery.

Nanny is a courageous guerrilla fighter, with a skill for strategic thinking and tactical fighting, who does everything she can to protect the freedom of the Maroons. Her reputation for Obeah magic, a spiritual system of belief and healing from her homeland, enables her to spread rumours of dark magic, which terrifies the redcoats and helps to keep them at bay.

**Candy says:** "It's a page turner, and it's all true!"



## ***The Swallows' Flight***

by Hilary McKay

**Recommended by:** Elizabeth Wein, author of 'Stateless'

**Summary:** Erik and Hans are German boys. Ruby and Kate are English girls. They grow up in worlds that would never meet, until war tumbles their lives together.

Then one September afternoon there are choices to be made.

How is courage lost, and found? Who is really the enemy? And what does friendship truly mean, in the middle of a war?

**Elizabeth says:** "A story about young people during the Battle of Britain."



★ Time Tunneller Recommended

## ***The Secrets Act***

by Alison Weatherby

**Recommended by:** Time Tunneller Jeannie Waudby, author of 'One of Us'

**Summary:** Pearl and Ellen work at top-secret codebreaking HQ, Bletchley Park.

Pearl is the youngest. A messenger at sixteen, she's untidy, lively, bright, and half in love with the wrong boy.

Ellen is a codebreaker. Reserved, analytical and beautiful. She never expected to get close to a girl like Pearl – or fall for a chap like Dennis.

But when tragedy strikes, their logical world is upended, with both friends caught in a spy plot that rocks the very heart of the war effort.

**Jeannie says:** "It just really stayed in my head."



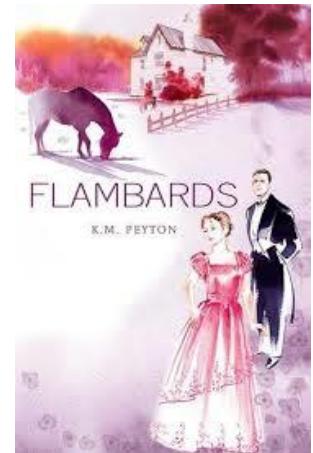
## ***Flambards***

by K. M. Peyton

**Recommended by:** M. A. Bennett, author of 'The Mummy's Curse'

**Summary:** When Christina is sent to live in the grand country house, Flambards, she doesn't know what to expect. Once there, she meets two young men, Mark and Will, trying to cope with their bad-tempered father. She also discovers a passion for horse-riding and a love for life in the country.

As time goes by Christina begins to embrace her new life and all the social engagements that it involves, but with both brothers vying for her attention Christina knows it's just a matter of time before she has to choose ...



## ***The Chessmen Thief***

by Barbara Henderson

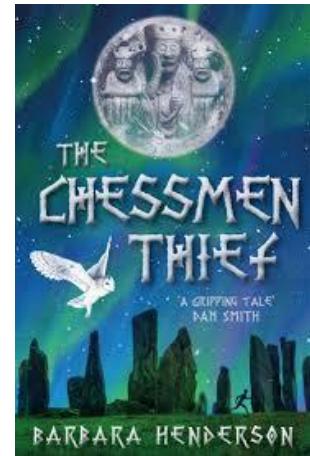
**Recommended by:** Victoria Williamson, author of 'Hag Storm'

**Summary:** From the moment 12-year-old Kylan hatches a plan to escape from his Norse captors, and return to Scotland to find his mother, his life becomes a dangerous game.

The precious Lewis Chessmen—which he helped carve—hold the key to his freedom, but he will need all his courage and wit to triumph against Sven Asleifsson, the cruellest Viking in the realm.

One false move could cost him his life.

**Victoria says:** "A brilliant Viking adventure."



### ★ Time Tunneller Recommended

## ***The Executioner's Daughter***

by Jane Hardstaff

**Recommended by:** Time Tunneller Barbara Henderson, author of 'Rivet Boy'

**Summary:** Moss hates her life. As the daughter of the Executioner in the Tower of London, it's her job to catch the heads in her basket after her father has chopped them off. She dreams of leaving, but they are prisoners with no way out.

Then Moss discovers a hidden tunnel that takes her to freedom, where she learns that her life isn't what she believes it to be and she doesn't know who to trust.

**Barbara says:** "The book that got me into historical fiction."



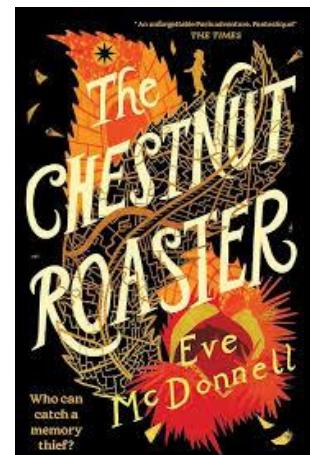
## ***The Chestnut Roaster***

by Eve McDonnell

**Recommended by:** Alison Weatherby, author of 'The Secrets Act'

**Summary:** 12-year-old Piaf has the ability to (and burden of) remembering everything that has happened since the day she was born.

When she discovers everyone in Paris has forgotten the entire last year, 1887, including the disappearance of several gifted children, Piaf and her twin brother Luc embark on a dangerous journey that brings them to the depths of Paris's underground twin, the Catacombs, to capture the memory thief and find the lost children.



★ Time Tunneller Recommended

## ***The Diamond of Drury Lane***

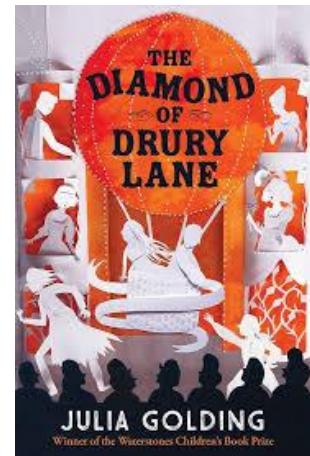
by Julie Golding

**Recommended by:** Time Tunneller Catherine Henderson, author of 'The White Phoenix'

**Summary:** 'I am Cat Royal – Orphan, Adventurer, Actress ...

'Reader, you are set to embark on an adventure about one hidden treasure, two bare-knuckle boxers, three enemies and four hundred and thirty-eight rioters. I was brought up in Drury Lane, so I have become accustomed to a life less than ordinary. But this turn of events, I have to say, surprised even me. Follow me, and I will show you in *The Diamond of Drury Lane*.'

**Catherine says:** "A thrilling adventure set in the world of the theatre."



## ***The Little Match Girl Strikes Back***

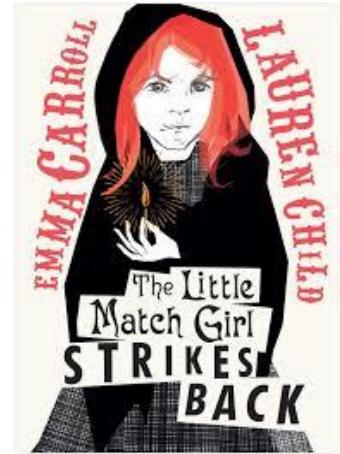
by Emma Carroll

**Recommended by:** Eve McDonnell, author of 'The Chestnut Roaster'

**Summary:** Bridie works hard to feed her family, selling matches on the streets of Victorian London. After an incident leaves her with only three matches left, the magical strike of each one sees her tumble into visions of a brighter future.

Realizing she has the power to change her own fortune, Bridie leads the match factory workers out on strike, achieving the remarkable through their unity and courage.

**Eve says:** "I love a good mashup of history and magic, and this book does exactly that."

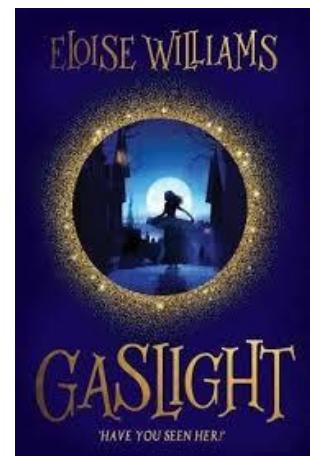


## ***Gaslight***

by Eloise Williams

**Recommended by:** Claire Fayers, author of 'Welsh Fairytales, Myths & Legends'

**Summary:** All Nansi knows is that her mother disappeared on the day she was fished out of Cardiff docks. Now, in 1899, she can't remember anything else. With no other family to turn to, she works for Sid at the Empire Theatre, sometimes legally, sometimes thieving to order, trying to earn enough money to hire a detective to find her mother. Everything changes when Constance and Violet join the theatre, both with their own dark secrets.



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## *Coram Boy*

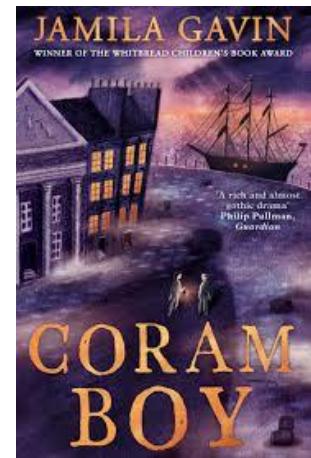
by Jamilia Gavin

**Recommended by:** Time Tunneller Matthew Wainwright, author of 'Through Water and Fire'

**Summary:** Otis takes babies and money off desperate mothers, promising to deliver them to the Coram Foundling Hospital in London. Instead, he murders them and buries them by the roadside, to the helpless horror of his mentally ill son, Mish.

When Melissa, beloved of Alexander Ashbrook and daughter of his governess, becomes pregnant, her mother arranges for Otis to take the child. But Mish manages to save Melissa's baby, Aaron, and he grows up with Toby, the son of an African slave, inseparable friends, in the Coram Foundling Hospital in London.

**Matthew says:** "A darkly gothic tale set at the time of writing of Handel's Messiah."



## *A Nest of Vipers*

by Catherine Johnson

**Recommended by:** Frances Durkin, author of 'The Histronauts' series

**Summary:** Cato Hopkins is the youngest member of Mother Hopkins's 'family' - a group of skilled fraudsters and pickpockets. There's Addy, who can become a very convincing boy when she needs to; the beautiful Bella, who can charm any rich young man out of his fortune; Sam, an escaped slave and Cato himself, a young boy, who Mother Hopkins has taught everything she knows.

But old age is slowing Mother Hopkins down, and she wants to carry out one last con, a con to outdo all the cons that have gone before. And so the gang set about bringing ruin upon Captain Walker, a proud and cruel slave captain, who deserves to be taught a lesson or two.

**Frances says:** "Packed with historical details. A fun story full of danger and excitement!"



## ***The Iron Way***

by Gillian Cross

**Recommended by:** Julia Gray, author of 'I, Aida'

**Summary:** The coming of the railway is the most spectacular and exciting thing Jem has ever seen. But not everyone is so enthusiastic. People don't like change, and they certainly don't like the rough gangs of navvies hanging around.

But for Jem and his sister, Kate, there's nothing they can do - they're caught up in the middle of the hatred and uneasiness that is surrounding the village. Can they dissolve the tension before it erupts into violence?

