



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

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From the Editor



Hello historical fiction lovers!

The year may be drawing to a close, but our favorite authors keep rolling out the books. The events of 2020 may have delayed some of them, but never fear, they're still on the way.

Yesterday Hannah Byron's *The Diamond Courier* released. Kathryn Gauci has a new release out that we'll feature next week, *The Secret of the Grand Hôtel du Lac*. And coming in January and February we'll have new releases from Deborah Swift, Pamela Nowak, and Chrystyna Lucyk-berger.

That's one good thing about this historical fiction genre – we are not at a lack for good books!

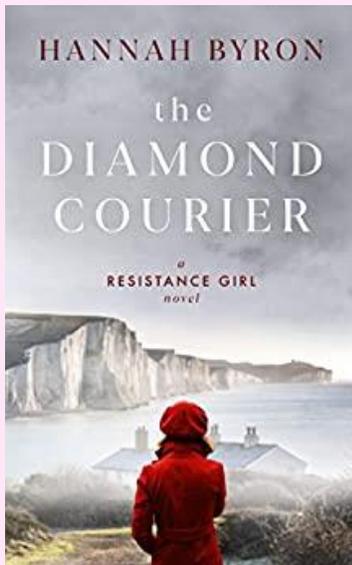
Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Celia Martin, DS Elliston, Sylvia Broady, Gini Grossenbacher, and a lot more!

Trisha

New Releases

The Diamond Courier

Hannah Byron



A young rebel on a quest for independence finds herself squashed between Communist love, Jewish diamonds, and German greed.

Lili Hamilton cannot marry Iain Brodie, her best friend and her Tory father's right hand at Betteshanger Colliery. Given the distance she sees between her parents, she will not, at nineteen, settle for domestic life. But her aspirations as a political journalist are thwarted when she is sent off to a finishing school in Switzerland in 1939.

On her way, she meets Leo Oppenheim in Paris. Not only is Leo the leader of the British Communist Party but also the prodigal son of London's richest diamond merchant.

In a time of historical change, as World War II erupts, and after a mine strike causes a rift between her and her family, and Iain, Lili moves to London, pursuing her Communist ideals and free love. But Leo needs money and has his eye on the largest diamond center in Europe: Antwerp.

Nazi Germany, too, is in dire need of Antwerp's diamonds for its war machine.

On Leo's command, Lili infiltrates the Jewish community in Belgium and befriends both the Goldmunz family and the Nazi leader. Despite the horrors of war, despite witnessing the murder of a comrade, she becomes the diamond courier between Antwerp and London via Vichy France.

Until she is caught in 1943 ...

The Diamond Courier is a young woman's fight to liberate herself from her privileged upbringing, for which she pays the highest price. Will she ultimately choose politics over love?

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Research Round-Up



Researching for historical fiction is such a huge subject that it's impossible to cover in only one post, as evidenced by the countless hours many of us have spent down the rabbit holes chasing elusive details and facts.

Here are five sites that talk about researching historical fiction. Okay – four sites about historical fiction and one site that discusses researching vintage and antique signature quilts. There's a wealth of information in these five sites – along with more great links to follow and read.

See you down the rabbit hole!

[8 Rules of Writing Historical Fiction Research](#)

3. Study old pictures.

Evocative historical writing is made up of more than facts and figures. By examining old pictures—either paintings or photographs—you can glean impressions that inspire your imagination and details that populate your descriptions. Many digital archives are now coming online, making this aspect of historical research easier than ever before. I relied on the New York Public Library's Old New York collection, where you can see a photograph of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum. I also used the Beck Archives Photograph Collection at the University of Denver, where I saw a photograph that informed my description of heliotherapy (a real treatment for tuberculosis) and inspired my fictional Hospital for Consumptive Hebrews. The photograph below of a dormitory at the Hebrew Orphan Asylum was crucial for the setting of several important scenes in the novel.

[Researching Signature Quilts](#)

My first two purchased antique Signature quilts took place in 2000. The Navy-related one was found at a large antique show in Chantilly, VA in January. The New York Album-style quilt was found at the Howard County Maryland Fairgrounds Antique Show late March 2000. I was so excited I quickly transcribed the 42 signatures and started googling. Genealogy-focused websites are also a great place to start.

My first guess for dating this quilt (based on the fabrics in the quilt) was that it may have been made somewhere between 1860 and 1875. One of two things could help me prove this: genealogical research or finding a quilt with a stitched or written date on it that included some of the same fabrics.

[Historical fiction: 7 elements of research](#)

One way to examine fiction, either as writer or reader, is to consider seven critical elements: character, dialogue, setting, theme, plot, conflict, and world building. Every story succeeds or disappoints on the basis of these elements; however, historical fiction has the added challenge of bringing the past to life within each element.

Research is key. What are readers looking for? Where do you start? Below is an explanation of the seven elements of research in the context of historical fiction followed by a series of tips on researching material for your historical novel.

[A Research Primer for Historical Fiction Writers](#)

As all fiction writers understand, the success of any story or novel depends not only on the writer's ease with technique, with the elements of plot and character and dialogue, but also on the sense of authority one conveys. And mastering the content is just as essential as mastering the craft. So just as writers of contemporary (or more autobiographically inflected) novels and stories need to "know" their characters, settings, and subjects, historical fictionists must "know" whereof they write.

[The Copperfield Review](#)

2. Be as specific as you can when researching.

When you've chosen your time period, or when your time period has chosen you (as it occasionally happens), then it's time to narrow your topic to a workable size. This is particularly true if you're dealing with a vast subject, like the American Civil War, for example. To research the entire war would be too huge of a project, that is unless you're Shelby Foote and willing to dedicate 20 years of your life to the task. There is simply too much material to shift through. If you can narrow your focus to something like a single event, a single year, or a single battle then the research will be far more workable and not as burdensome.



Author Spotlight: Linore Burkard



Hello Linore. Welcome back to Pages of the Past. You were a featured author January 31, 2020. Since then, you've published two more books – *Miss Tavistock's Mistake* and *Miss Fanshawe's Fortune*. What has your year been like, publishing two new books in a year?

When you have a lot of stories to tell, as most writers do, it's satisfying to get two out in one year. I hope to repeat this, Lord willing, for many more! It's exciting, it's a lot of work, it's demanding—but when readers love the books and say so in reviews, notes, or email—it's worth it. Lots of daily endeavors are lost in time, but when we publish a book, it's there for posterity, hopefully for readers to be blessed by long after we're gone.

In *Miss Tavistock's Mistake*, Miss Margaret Tavistock – or 'Lady X' as she's known for much of the book, has a subterfuge taking place in her life. Can you tell us a bit about the fair lady and her dilemma?

Margaret is such a fun and lovable character. She's young, impulsive, smart but inexperienced, and just headstrong enough to pull off her subterfuge despite misgivings. Readers may shake their head at her, but they love her just the same—as did I. As the story progresses, she sees the error of her ways more and more, but is caught in the web she spun. There's a little bit of Margaret in all of us—and having a wonderful hero in Captain Rempeare helps remind us that, no matter how much we mess up, forgiveness can be found.

How do such engaging tales come to you?

Every story for me really starts with one or two characters in one compelling scene that captures my imagination. A few big turning points then show up in my brain somehow—things that must happen to make it a full story with a satisfying ending, and the rest comes to life as I write. Writers need to ask

questions (for instance, “How did this happen? Why is this person in this predicament?”), and they should never hold back from starting a novel because they don’t know all the details. The details will come. The art of writing is learning to keep the ones that help move the story forward and lend atmosphere, or develop character and motivation, and to discard the rest. By the time I finish a novel, I have a manuscript of all the outtakes that didn’t stick. I never consider these a waste of time, as they helped me develop the plot or the people in it.

Your book that was released last August (2020), *Miss Fanshawe’s Fortune*, has its own predicament. Can you share with us what’s taking place in Miss Frances Fanshawe’s life?

Frannie was raised genteelly by her mother in expectation of a fortune, but after her mother dies, finds herself in dire straits, and without enough information to claim the money. She is dependent upon the help of Sebastian Arundell, a hero we all grow to love, and so two story questions keep the pages turning. 1. Is Frannie really entitled to that fortune? (Does it even exist?) And 2. Will Sebastian ever see Frannie as a woman worthy of his love?

Both of these books are Books 1 and 2 in the ‘Brides of Mayfair Book’ series. Do you have more books planned for this series?

Book three, *Miss Wetherham’s Wedding*, is in the works as I write. (A really fun plot!) I have ideas for a fourth and fifth book, but other projects I’d like to finish in 2021, such as a contemporary romance, and at least the first book of a trilogy of Contemporary romantic suspense novels.

Many of your books are written in the Regency years. What is it about this era that pulls you to set books in this period?

The Regency was a remarkably unique time in British history, at the cusp of great change, before the Victorian era. It was beautiful, wild, wonderful, dangerous, and more. Jane Austen’s novels portray the “morals and manners” of the period well (and the consequences of immorality). Many readers are unfamiliar with the period, so imagine my delight when a recent book blogger reviewed *Miss Tavistock’s Mistake* and started off with a brief primer on the genre. In one post, she brings readers up to snuff with what a Regency romance should offer—and in doing so, reveals how special a time period it was. Fans get hooked on it because of its many unique earmarks. [Take a look here.](#)

Is there anything else you’d like to share with us that I didn’t ask you about?

I’m happy to announce that my first three Inspirational Regencies are now finally available in one convenient box set (ebook only, right now)! Books make great gifts, and this trilogy is a guaranteed blues buster. Anyone can take a marathon armchair vacation into the Regency with this set, and it makes perfect winter cozy reading. It can be found [here](#). Who doesn’t like humor, adventure and romance with a twist of faith? 😊

Thank you for joining us today, Linore. We appreciate your time. Please leave a few links where our readers can find you and your books and we’ll go follow and friend you.



[Miss Tavistock's Mistake](#)

[Miss Fanshawe's Fortune](#)

You can find Linore here:

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LinoreBurkardReadersGroup>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/linoreburkard/>

Website: <https://www.LinoreBurkard.com/Newsletter>

BIO: Linore Rose Burkard is a serious watcher of period films, Janeite, and hopeless romantic. She writes "Romance to Warm the Heart / Fiction to Stir the Soul." Raised in NY, she graduated *magna cum laude* from CUNY while taking herself far too seriously. She now lives in Ohio with her husband, five children, two cats and a Shorkie, where she turns her early angst into humorous romance novels. Visit Linore at <https://www.LinoreBurkard.com/Books>

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