



# 'IN AND OUT OF TIME'

— an annotated  
list of 'time-  
slip' books:

by  
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In & Out of Time

While acknowledging that all 'time-slip' stories are part of the fantasy genre I have chosen only books that cross time to recognisable historical periods which sets them apart from true fantasy and science-fiction. The books chosen are mostly personal favourites but I have given preference to titles published after 1980. The list is a recommended one and is in no way intended to be comprehensive.

My thanks are due to Bet Davie from Takapuna Public Library for suggesting titles and to Diana Moorehead at the same library for sharing with me her fantasy book-list - 'A question of time'.

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AIKEN, Joan The shadow guests. Cape, 1980 & Puffin

Cosmo returns from Australia after the mysterious disappearance of his mother and brother to stay with his cousin Eunice in an old house in England. He is beginning to settle in when poltergeists produce alarming effects but it is the appearance of members of the Hellfire Club from the eighteenth century who test his courage. Recommended for 11+ age group.

BARBER, Antonia The ghosts. Cape, 1969 & Puffin (with title 'The amazing Mr Blunden')

An excellent book in which the ghosts of a boy and girl buried a hundred years ago seek the help of a brother and sister to save them from being murdered for their inheritance. By learning how to manipulate time the brother and sister go back a hundred years to effect a rescue. The timeslip here is particularly well managed and the book is a most exciting one. 10+

BOSTON, Lucy The children of Green Knowe. Faber, 1970 & Puffin

A boy who comes to stay in the house 'Green Knowe' meets the children who have lived there in times gone by. A haunting story reflecting the strong influences of a much loved historic home. 9+

CARPENTER, Richard Catweazle. Methuen, 1970 & Puffin

A wizard makes a leap forward from the eleventh century to the present day, and his antics, when coming to terms with twentieth century technology make amusing reading. Not surprisingly, he is anxious to return to his own home and time. 8+

DAVIES, Andrew Conrad's war. Blackie, 1978

Conrad loves playing 'war games' and dreams that he is taking part in World War Two with his father as ally although said father disappoints his son in real life with his pacifist views. The sickening reality of war in the all too vivid dreams causes Conrad to change his own views. Nice touches of humour from an author who has delighted children with his 'Marmalade Alkins' books. 10+

DOHERTY, Berlie Children of winter. Methuen, 1985

Three children sheltering from a storm in a barn 'timeslip' back to the seventeenth century and the Great Plague. They identify with their ancestors who were placed in the same barn all those years ago to escape the terrible contagion and survived. 9+

EAGER, Edward Half-magic. MacMillan, 1954

Four children who find a magic coin discover anything they wish for happens and they get transported to faraway places and times. One of several 'magic' books which have been kept in print with good reason. Written with high humour and embellished with lively drawings these stories have delighted children for several decades. 8+

FARMER, Penelope Charlotte sometimes. Chatts, 1969 & Puffin

Charlotte spending her first night at boarding school wakes up to find herself at a similar establishment in 1918 and addressed as 'Clare'. The complexity of maintaining two identities is well handled and the denouement is both believable and satisfying. 9+

GLEESON, Libby Eleanor, Elizabeth. Angus & Robertson, 1985

Twelve year old Eleanor, resentful of having to move from city to country comes to terms with her new environment when she begins to identify with her grandmother Elizabeth through a reading of the Victorian tomboy's acceptance of her role in life. 12+

GREAVES, Margaret Cat's magic. Methuen, 1980

Louise is an orphan who finds living with her Aunt Harriet a dull existence. However the acquisition of a magical cat allows her to step back in time and she becomes involved in some dramatic adventures. 9+

HAMILTON, Virginia Sweet whispers, Brother Rush. Philomel Books

This haunting story tells how a fourteen year old girl left too often in charge of her retarded brother, Dab, meets the ghost of her dead uncle and is made aware of how genetic problems can expose a family to mental and physical anguish. 14+

HUNT, Peter A step off the path. MacRae, 1985

Four children who set off on a camping expedition meet descendants of King Arthur's Round Table, while those left at home are given a simultaneous account of their friends' adventures. A difficult book but rewarding for able readers who will revel in the rich and imaginative writing. 12+ Also by this author 'The maps of time'.

KING, Clive Stig of the dump. Hamish Hamilton, 1965 & Puffin

Barney finds a stone age boy, Stig living in a cave. After introducing Stig to the modern world he accompanies him back in time to Stig's home. A favourite with younger readers. 8+

LAMPLUGH, Lois Falcon's tor. Deutsch, 1984

Fourteen year old Aidan concussed in a riding accident on the English moors wakes up to find himself not only in a different household but in a different time slot as well. It is the period of the First World War and he is accepted as the son of a well-to-do family and expected to live out his life as such. He eventually slips away but the insight into a forgotten world of privilege and leisurely life style makes an impression on him and the reader. 12+

LIVELY, Penelope The revenge of Samuel Stokes. Heinemann, 1981 & Puffin

When a new housing estate is built on the site of a garden created in the eighteenth century by one, Samuel Stokes, strange things happen. Samuel Stokes forces his way into the twentieth century using modern media to undo this preposterous outrage. 10+

Penelope Lively uses the timeslip device very often and most effectively and the following books are all excellent examples of the genre.

The driftway. Heinemann, 1974  
 The ghost of Thomas Kempe. Heinemann, 1973  
 Going back. Heinemann, 1975  
 The house in Northam Gardens. 1974  
 A stitch in time. Heinemann, 1976  
 The whispering knights. 1974

LUNN, Janet The root cellar. Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1981 & Puffin

Orphan Rose does not like staying in her cousin's old ramshackle house but when she runs away down the cellar steps she finds herself amongst the household's servants during the American Civil War. The friendship between Rose and the maid Susan as they search for Susan's admirer Will gone to fight for the north gives this book its emotional and historical appeal. 10+

Z MACDONALD, Caroline Elephant rock. Hodder & Stoughton, 1980

Ann backtraps in time and becomes her dying mother as a young girl. The timeslip is most deftly worked into the plot and gives poignancy to the theme of acceptance of loss through death.

Z MACDONALD, Caroline Visitors. Hodder & Stoughton, 1984

Terry's only interest in life is watching TV. When the picture falters, his irritation turns to curiosity as he begins to realise that beings from the past are trying to make contact with him through the small screen. 10+

MASEFIELD, John The box of delights. Heinemann, 1984 (1935)

Recently republished in an abridged version this book has also been televised for children. The box has the power to send people back and forth in time. The story is something of a hotch-potch but the lyrical writing makes it worthwhile. 8+

Z MEDBURY, Ged Time twister. Reed Methuen, 1986

Jason and his brother and sister find that by operating a video game they can move back and forth in time. A fast moving novel that uses the world of computer science to good effect. 12+

MAYNE, William Earthfasts. Hamish Hamilton, 1966 & Puffin

Two boys who hear strange sounds coming from under a hillside are amazed by the emergence of a drummer boy from two hundred years ago. But it is the white-flamed candle he carries which sparks off an eerie sequence of events. A well constructed and superbly written novel that able readers will appreciate. 10+

NORTON, Mary Bedknob & broomstick. Dent, 1972 & Puffin

Three children, with the aid of an unlikely witch, Miss Price, travel through time and space in a series of adventures. 8+

Z ORWIN, Joanna The guardian of the land. Oxford, 1985

Sent to stay in Kaikoura after an illness, David with a young Maori friend, Rua, drifts back into pre-European times and takes on a Maori identity. He makes a further journey back in time and assumes the role of a young whaler. The search for an ancient pendant sacred to Rua's tribe is at the heart of the plot but an appreciation of Maori lore is explored as the two boys grow to understand the values and beliefs of Maori custom. winner of the 1986. 9+

PARK, Ruth Playing Beattie Bow Nelson, 1980 & Puffin

An absorbing and powerful insight into the city of Sydney in 1873. By playing Beattie Bow, the heroine, Abigail, finds she can timeslip from present to past and learns how to come to terms with her own life through experiencing the problems of a family so long ago. 12+

PEARCE, Philippa Tom's midnight garden. Oxford, 1958 & Puffin

The doyen of 'timeslip' books. When the clock strikes thirteen, Tom steps into a garden and back into the life of Hattie, a Victorian child. A masterly story which ties the threads together when Tom meets the real-life Hattie as an old woman. 10+

ROBINSON, Joan G. When Marnie was there. Collins, 1967 & Armada  
Lions

Timid Anna sent to stay with an unknown couple is lonely until she meets with an unusual girl of fifty years ago. Their companionship turns the enforced stay into an adventurous holiday. An excellent story. 9+

UTTLEY, Alison A traveller in time. Faber, 1939 & Puffin

A classic amongst 'timeslip' stories. A sensitive girl sent to convalesce at an old farmhouse finds the rambling rooms peopled by Elizabethans intent upon rescuing imprisoned Mary Stuart. 11+

WALSH, Jill Paton A chance child. MacMillan, 1978 & Puffin

A disturbing and powerful story that takes the reader back into nineteenth century industrial England and the abuse of children who worked in mines and mills. The timeslip which follows a boy through a disused canal where he stumbles on these hapless children is merely a device to portray the terrible life and conditions of the poor and helpless in Victorian times. An excellent tie-in to studies of the period. 12+

WELCH, Ronald The gauntlet. Oxford, 1958

A boy who finds a gauntlet, dons it and falls asleep on a hillside to awaken and find himself kitted out for battle in fourteenth century Wales. Children with a relish for medieval history will enjoy this. 10+

WILLIAMS, Jay & ABRASHKIN, Raymond Danny Dunn time traveller.  
MacDonald, 1965

In this book, one of a popular series, the professor invents a chronocycle and takes Danny and his friends back 200 years to the America of Benjamin Franklin. 8+

WISEMAN, David Jeremy Visick. Kestrel & Puffin

Matthew's apathetic view of history changes when an inscription on a tombstone in the local churchyard involves him in the life of a young mining boy who died a hundred years before in tragic circumstances. 10+

Also by this author 'Thimbles'