



The best bookshops in Glasgow, Scotland



Steven Harkins takes us on a tour of the best bookshops in Glasgow, Scotland. *If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, further information about contributing follows this article.*



Image Credit: Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Wikipedia Public Domain)

This list takes in three bookshops that are all in close proximity to each other in Glasgow, a part of the world made famous recently by the unveiling of Partick Thistle football club's grotesque **sun-monster mascot, Kingsley**. Kingsley was designed by Turner Prize nominee David Shrigley, who started supporting his local team whilst studying at Glasgow School of Art. Between the art

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school and the University of Glasgow is an area dense with bookshops that are full of character.



Voltaire and Rousseau, Glasgow.
Photo Credit: Steven Harkins.

The first bookshop on this mini-tour of Glasgow's West End is **Voltaire and Rousseau**. The shop is located on Otago Lane, just a short walk from Kelvinbridge underground station. The entrance to the shop leads to a small room in which every book is £1. The range of books in this area alone is both random and varied in equal measure: a leather-bound gold-embossed edition of Sophocles's *Antigone* lies between some cheap paperback novels. In the main

shop, a huge assortment of books on a wide range of topics greets visitors, piled up high and covering almost every surface in the shop.

Customers are sometimes obliged to play an impromptu game of Jenga in order to get their chosen book from the middle of a pile without causing a collapse. It may not be the most ordered book shop in Glasgow, but it certainly has the most character, which explains its enduring popularity. After mastering the challenge of selecting a book, customers must then approach the bookseller by stepping over a



Voltaire and Rousseau, Glasgow.
Photo Credit: Steven Harkins

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October 30th, 2015



Book
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Immigration
Judges
and U.S.
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Book
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Detention
The
Migration
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Policy
and its
Human
Impact
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Book
Review:
The
Courage
to Act: A
Memoir
of a
Crisis
and its
Aftermath
by Ben

sleeping cat without waking

him: a test perhaps devised by Rousseau himself who **remarked** that not liking cats was a test of the 'despotic instinct of men'.

Despots disliked cats, he contended, because 'the cat is free and will never consent to become a slave'. Rousseau may well have approved of this shop that takes his name, although he did also famously write the line: 'I hate books; they only teach us to talk about things we know nothing about'. Voltaire and Rousseau may not be the best shop in which to find specific or modern texts, but it has a great range of classic academic books at low prices: very useful when the shop is located so close to Glasgow University.



Thistle Books, Glasgow. Photo Credit: Steven Harkins

Thistle Books is located down the next lane. This is a much smaller shop, but its sense of order contrasts with the chaos of its neighbour. Thistle Books is combined with Alba Music, which has an excellent collection of sheet music. All of the books are well organised and it has a decent selection of academic texts on the subjects of literature, history and philosophy.

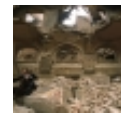
The final stop in this little bookshop tour is **Caledonian**

Books, located on the Great Western Road only a short walk from the other two bookshops. Like Thistle Books, it is very well organised, but with more floor space. It also specialises in philosophy, art, literature and history.

This is a great shop for antiquarian books with some brilliant originals from the Left Book Club. With their distinct bright orange covers and the enticing message 'NOT FOR SALE TO THE PUBLIC' printed on the front, who could resist the rebellion of buying a copy? The books are in great condition and some even

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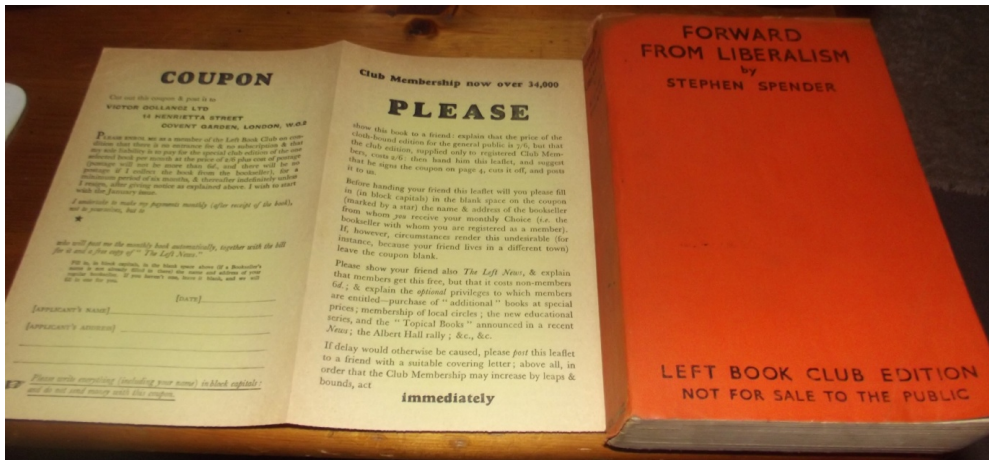
Book
Review:
Bosnia
and the
Destructive
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Heritage
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et al

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contain the original Left Book Club coupons from 1937, encouraging readers to get their friends to join the club.

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Left Book Club originals, Caledonian Books, Glasgow. Photo Credit: Steven Harkins


These three shops are situated very close together and are a 'must-see' for bibliophiles visiting Glasgow. For the very bravest of souls, Kingsley, the now world-famous mascot, can also be found nearby.

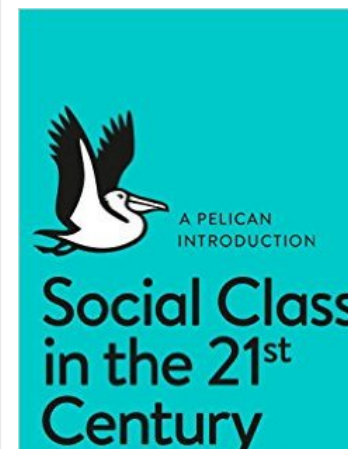
Steven Harkins is currently researching a PhD at the Department of Journalism Studies at the University of Sheffield. He has also written for *Critical Discourse Studies*, the *British Medical Journal*, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, *Spinwatch* and the *Caledonian Mercury*. He has been a member of the American Sociological Association, British International Studies Association and was part of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's expert communications group on poverty in the media. He was also part of the C-SAP working group on the Teaching About Terrorism project.

Do you have a favourite bookshop? If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, then this is your chance to tell us all about it.

As part of a **regular feature** on LSE Review of Books, we're asking academics and students to recommend their favourite two or three bookshops in a particular city, with the aim of building an

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Bookshops could be academic, alternative, foreign language, hobby-based, secret or underground institutions, secondhand outlets or connected to a university. We'd like to cover all world regions too.

If something comes to mind, we're looking for around 150 words per bookshop, detailing why each place is a must-see. Our editorial team can then find suitable photos and links to accompany the piece, though you're welcome to supply these too. We only ask that you focus on just one city or region, and two or three bookshops within it.

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