

Scottish Prose Non-fiction

Spotlight: Peter Ross

Biographical Details

Peter Ross is a contemporary Scottish author and journalist who has written and published extensively in the prose non-fiction genre. Ross has won multiple journalistic awards as well as winning the non-fiction prize at Scotland's National Book Awards for his book, *A Tomb With a View*. Ross is a fellow of the Orwell Foundation.

Publications of Interest

- *Daundlerlust* (Sandstone 2014)
- *The Passion of Harry Bingo* (Sandstone 2017)
- *Tomb with a View* (Headline Publishing House 2021)
- *Steeple Chasing: Around Britain by Church* (Headline Publishing House 2023)

Where to Begin?

- 'Saving Orwell', *The Boston Review* (October 2017)
<https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/peter-ross-saving-orwell/>
- 'Why I'm exploring Glasgow with a 1930's Guidebook'
<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/may/03/exploring-glasgow-with-vintage-guidebook>
- 'The Forth Bridge', *Daundlerlust* (pp.25-34)
- 'Glasgow Central', *Daundlerlust* (pp.64-71)

Style

- Reportage
- Essays
- Criticism

Core Themes

- Nationhood
- Identity
- Place

Contextualising

The writing of Peter Ross foregrounds Scotland's places and spaces, its people, and its pastimes. Rather than focusing on Scottish stereotypes or clichés, Ross tries to seek out odd or archaic traditions, local heroes, curious characters, or strange spaces to explore and examine in his long-form essays. Ross is interested in heritage and culture, but his work often probes behind the scenes to find the authentic voices in Scottish arts, engineering, sports, and science. In so doing, Ross paints vivid and visceral portraits of Scotland.

Understanding

Thinking about your chosen Peter Ross text, consider the following questions, geared towards checking understanding:

1. Identify the key ideas presented to us by Peter Ross in your chosen text. **Summarise** these key ideas using your own words.
2. What is Peter Ross' **attitude** towards his subject in your chosen text?
3. Compare the ideas in this text by Peter Ross with the **key ideas** in another text on the same subject/topic. What do the authors **agree** on?

Analysing

Choose one of the following:

Perspective	Bias	Humour	Contrast	Structure
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Explain how it is used by Peter Ross in his writing.

Evaluating

Thinking about your chosen Peter Ross text, consider the following evaluative questions:

1. Do you **agree** with Peter Ross' point of view on his chosen topic? Justify your answer by giving **three** clear reasons.
2. Why would Peter Ross choose to write this text? **Explain** your thinking.
3. Is this Peter Ross text persuasive? If so, what **persuasive techniques** can you identify?
4. What does Peter Ross not tell us about his subject in the essay/article? What **details** are **missing** that you would like to know more about?