

## Scottish Prose Non-fiction



**Spotlight:** Timothy Neat

### Biographical Details



Timothy Neat was born in Cornwall in 1943. He has lived and worked in Scotland since the 1960s. He produces work in several disciplines, such as art, writing, art history, photography, and film. Neat is particularly interested in the life, culture, and traditions of the travelling people of Scotland.

### Publications of Interest



- *Part Seen, Part Imagined: Meaning and Symbolism in the Work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret MacDonald* (Canongate, 1994)
- *The Summer Walkers: Travelling People and Pearl-fishers in the Highlands of Scotland* (Canongate, 1996)
- *When I Was Young: Voices from Lost Communities in Scotland - The Islands* (Birlinn, 2000)
- *Hamish Henderson: The Making of the Poet* (Polygon, 2009)
- *Hamish Henderson: Poetry Becomes People* (Polygon, 2009)

### Where to Begin?



- Preface to *The Summer Walkers*
- 'The High Horsemen of Angus', *The Horseman's Word: Blacksmiths and Horsemanship in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Birlinn, 2002)

### Style



- Social History
- Essays
- Biography

### Core Themes



- Tradition
- Identity
- Place

### Contextualising



Although Timothy Neat produces art in a wide variety of media, he is frequently drawn to the same subjects: Scotland's indigenous travelling people and traditional Scottish folk culture. In several of his books his favoured technique is to let his interviewees speak in their own words, which allows him to preserve the authenticity of their experiences and voices. He can therefore be viewed as an 'assembler' of other people's words, requiring the skills of editing, structuring and judicious selection. Reading his work can be very rewarding when considering matters of objectivity and veracity.

### Understanding



Thinking about your chosen Christopher Neat text, consider the following questions, geared towards checking understanding:

- Identify the key ideas and information presented to us by Neat in your chosen text. **Summarise** these in one paragraph *using your own words*.
- What is Neat's **attitude** towards his subject in your chosen text?
- Thinking about the experiences presented by Neat in one or more of your chosen text(s), identify **three** aspects which are **still relevant** to life in contemporary Scotland.

### Analysing

Choose one of the following:



<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Bias</b>	<b>Emotive language</b>	<b>Reportage</b>	<b>Structure</b>
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Explain how it is used by Timothy Neat in his writing.

### Evaluating



Thinking about your chosen Timothy Neat text, consider the following evaluative questions:

1. Do you **agree** with Timothy Neat's point of view that the ancient cultures of the Highlands are **worth preserving**? Justify your answer by giving **three** clear reasons.
2. Why would Timothy Neat choose to **revisit** this subject so often? Explain your thinking.
3. What does Timothy Neat **not** tell us about his subject in the text(s)? What details are missing that you would like to know more about?