

Book Recommendations from Paul Brown

Some of the books I've read

I've read a number of helpful books both secular and Christian on the subject of class issues, class struggles etc.

Estates by Lynsey Hanley

This book tells the story of housing estates in Britain. It challenges the stereotype reputations that estates have, and asks a very important question: Why was it that homes built to improve people's lives ended up, in many cases, doing the opposite.

Urban Harvest by Roy Joslin

Written in the early eighties, this book still has a lot to offer over twenty five years later. Joslin examines the history of the class struggle and the failure of the church to keep in tune with the working classes. He argues biblically as well as from experience. A very readable account of the impact of the gospel on the working classes. Roy Joslin was pastor of a Baptist Church in Walworth.

Watching the English by Kate Fox

Kate Fox a social anthropologist, is among other things, co-director of the Social Issues Research Centre in Oxford. Her book is humorous, witty and insightful in equal measure. It seems that every aspect of Englishness is put under the microscope in this book, you see yourself on every other page.

The Likes of Us (A Biography of the White Working Class) by Michael Collins

I loved this book! As Collins (A TV producer and journalist) digs into his own family history in and around Bermondsey, he argues that white working class culture is intimately linked to both the environment and a strong concept of home. It's a fascinating examination of the past, present and future of London's white working class.

Educational Failure & Working Class White Children in Britain Gillian Evans

I loved this book even more!! The book takes the reader on a journey round the estates of Bermondsey meeting people we may well know (You can't be sure because she uses pseudonyms for people and places). It takes us into a world where middle class values are challenged and a working class pride is revealed.

Gillian Evans lived in Bermondsey for many years and is a lecturer in Social Anthropology.

Class in Britain by David Cannadine

A fascinating, comprehensive history of the evolution of Class structure in the UK However you define class - whether it's a complex hierarchy, a society divided into upper middle and lower, or a struggle between 'them' and 'us' - class distinctions reflect reality – life on a council estate is very different from life in a stately home.

Religion and Society in 20th Century Britain by Callum G. Brown

Callum Brown is Professor of Religious and Cultural History at the University of Dundee. This book looks at the ways religious belief and practices have been bound up with wider social and political developments throughout the 20th Century.

Urban Ministry by Conn & Ortiz

A big text book, looking at the role the church has to play in the major cities of the world. Facing the challenges of poverty, racism, exploitation and corruption. The goal of the book is to understand the workings of the city and God's work in it.

Mind the Gap by Ferdinand Mount

Through observing and commenting on the myriad aspects of life, he explodes the belief that we live in a classless society and demonstrates that people today are culturally more deprived than previous generations.

The Underclass: The Developing Debate by Charles Murray

Written by a right wing American who thought he could apply his theories to UK culture. He wound me up so much I nearly didn't finish this!

Faith in the Poor by Bob Holman

Holman, who turned his back on his career as professor of social policy to serve the people of Easterhouse Glasgow, allows people who live in poverty and hardship, to write about their daily struggle to survive in the face of overwhelming difficulties. What emerges from these often moving and painful accounts is that, far from being a 'scrounging, feral, underclass'; we encounter individuals who demonstrate an enormous amount of strength, energy and ingenuity just to survive in a world where it seems everything is stacked against them.

Keir Hardie (Labour's Greatest Hero?) a biography by Bob Holman

The Church and the Artisan Today by Roger Lloyd

The Uses of Literacy (Aspects of Working-Class life) by Richard Hoggart

This is a modern classic. Drawing partly from his own experiences in northern England's vanishing working class communities Hoggart offers a fascinating and vivid view of working class ways. When he weaves this together with his views on consumerist pop culture, this book becomes essential reading both as a historical document and as a brilliant commentary on issues of class, poverty and the media.

The Making of the English Working Class by E P Thompson

London Labour and the London Poor by Henry Mayhew

The People of Providence by Tony Parker

Secrets and Lives: Middle England Revealed by Mary Loudon

Family and Kinship in East London by Michael Young and Peter Willmott

Signs in the City by Colin Marchant

Bermondsey Boy by Tommy Steele

My Two Square Miles of London by Percy Bustin