

# The Best Bookshops in Nottingham, UK

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**Penny Montague** takes us on a tour of the best bookshops in Nottingham, UK. 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: First Light at the Lake, University of Nottingham ([blinkingidiot](#) via [Foter.com](#) / [CC BY-ND](#))**

Nottingham is probably best known for its legendary figure of Robin Hood, but the city has much to offer a modern-day visitor. In addition to the accolade of having more eateries per square mile than any other city in Europe, it has also recently been honoured as a UNESCO City of Literature. It should therefore be unsurprising that Nottingham boasts a range of bookshops to satisfy any reader.

Nottingham was home to the rebel writers Lord Byron, D.H. Lawrence and Alan Sillitoe, and has been a centre of revolution and radicalism for centuries. That spirit of rebelliousness is still evident in **Five Leaves**, which opened in the winter of 2013, in defiance of the economic downturn's devastating effect on many independent outlets. Since then it has become a popular literary hub for the city's creatives. The bookshop is in the city centre, opposite the Tourism Information Centre, but is a few steps away from the main thoroughfare down an alleyway. After spending a few hours in Nottingham, one will discover that some of the city's best destinations are tucked away in alleys or caves – Five Leaves is another of these hidden treasures. Although known as a political bookshop, it stocks a range of material including books on art, spirituality, philosophy, LGBT issues, fiction and poetry. A likely key to its success is the highly curated nature of its offerings; its staff members are passionate and knowledgeable readers in a diverse range of genres, and it shows. I rarely leave this shop without buying an armful of books and magazines. After hours, Five Leaves also hosts book launches, poetry readings and other events each month, another reason for it quickly becoming integral to Nottingham's creative quarter.



On Market Street, a couple of minutes away from Five Leaves, is **Page 45**. This welcoming emporium of comic books and graphic novels opened in 1994 and is run by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable team who seek to prove that there is a comic or graphic novel for everyone. (Mine was the *Rivers of London* graphic novel, based on the popular urban fantasy series of novels.) The superhero comics for which the medium is most known are positioned at the back of the shop, encouraging casual visitors to explore other lesser known genres offered in this format. For instance, a display of books on mental illness, including the popular *Hyperbole and a Half*, had pride of place beside the till during my recent visit. The range of books offered includes manga comics, graphic versions of epics such as *The Odyssey* and *Siddhartha*, science-fiction and fantasy spin-offs and many more. Neil Gaiman has called Page 45 the best graphic novel shop he has ever visited, and I would agree.



**Jermy and Westerman** is a ten-minute walk from the Victoria Shopping Centre up the steep Mansfield Road (or a few minutes away on the bus), but it is well worth the trip. Its outer facade appears fairly uninspiring, but on entering one will find a cornucopia of rare and used texts. The ground floor offers a wide selection of fiction and poetry, classics and newer publications, whilst the first floor is a maze of rooms filled from floor to ceiling with bookcases. Even the staircases perform double duty as book receptacles, and boxes of new arrivals scattered around the shop patiently await attention. The shop stocks a plethora of texts, from biographies to science fiction to history books and many more subjects at very affordable prices. I could not leave without buying a weighty tome on vampire mythology for only £4. It would be an unusually rare book that could not be found here, and if they don't stock it, Geoff & Richard Blore, the dedicated father and son team who opened the shop in 1978, will endeavour to help you find it.



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*Note: This bookshop guide gives the views of the author, and not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics. Thank you to Penny Montague for providing the images for this guide.*

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**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 exciting online series for our book-loving community of readers the world over.

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.

**Email us now if you'd like to contribute:** [lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk](mailto:lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk)

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