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Book Review

Manchester – Mapping the City

T. Wyke, B. Robson & M. Dodge,
Berlinn, Edinburgh, 2018, 272pp, £30
ISBN: 9781780275307

This large format volume is part of a series which includes the mapping of other cities, including Oxford, Glasgow, and Berlin's home town of Edinburgh. The three authors, based at Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University, have brought together 54 chapters dealing with the mapping of Manchester, chronologically from 1728 to 2016; the total number of maps and map extracts is well over 100. Most of the maps depict streets and buildings, but there are land surveys, engineering plans and even birds-eye views. It is impossible to give a full list of the maps described, but they include the first detailed street plan by Casson & Berry (1746), the competing Laurent & Green maps (1793-4), directory maps, drink maps, Goad fire insurance plans, ... through to a map of the city region from 2016. The events and places explored include the Peterloo Massacre, the Bridgewater Canal, Trafford Park, Belle Vue Zoological Gardens, garden city developments, the 1996 IRA bomb, Salford Quays and even football stadiums. The book is not just about the history of maps but explores issues such as town planning, housing and transport. The coverage often includes the inner city of Salford, but there is little detailed coverage of Greater Manchester's satellite towns.

One surprising omission is that of the large-scale Ordnance Survey plans at 1:1056 (5-foot) of 1844-49 and the 1:500 plans of 1888-89; the former makes a brief appearance on page 43. These plans are of interest because of their sheer scale and detail; an interesting feature of the 5-foot plans is that they were clearly surveyed several years before the dates printed on the maps.



At a recent lecture to the Society Martin Dodge admitted that several types of map were not included, largely for lack of space; he noted that the authors had had to select only one in three of the available maps. Those types omitted included geological, topographic, thematic, everyday, ephemeral, fun, community and protest maps. It is of course possible that a companion volume might include some of those map types. The standard of printing (done in Latvia) is extremely high, with good quality paper and vivid colours.

All in all this volume is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in the changing geography of Manchester.

Paul Hindle