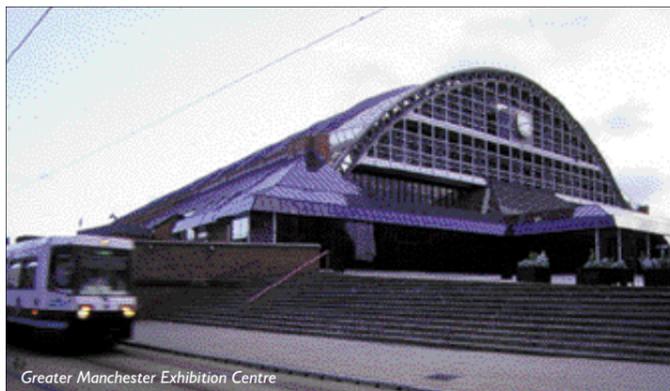




Arndale on Cross Street



Greater Manchester Exhibition Centre



The Shambles

QUICK TOUR OF THE CITY

By coincidence, another specialist publication on Manchester appeared recently – a handy pocket guide that nicely complements Clare Hartwell's book.

Discovering Cities: Manchester is one of a series published by the Geographical Association and aimed primarily at post-16 geography students and their teachers undertaking urban fieldwork in the area. Essentially it is a guide to the geographical, historical, economic and political factors that have shaped the city's growth, particularly in recent years.

But this is no dry-as-dust primer. Its author, Christopher M Law, is a member of the Division of Geography at Salford University, and he certainly knows his Manchester.

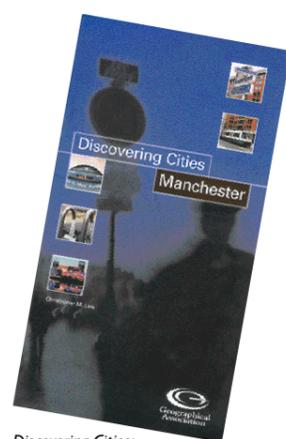
It is a brief book – only 50 pages long – but packs in an extraordinary amount of historic and contemporary information. Its author is a man who understands both the city and his subject, and combines the two to make an interesting, informative and readable book. It has many

pertinent things to say about development and planning since the 1980s, although mostly reports rather than comments as a good primer should.

Law does not attempt to treat the subject in depth - that would be impossible in such a short publication - but it is much more than an appetiser. After dealing with the city's history and geography, and its planning problems and solutions, he devotes nearly half the book to local area tours, around the city centre, through Castlefield, the eastern and northern quarters, and Salford Quays. Unfortunately, many of the excellent illustrations are not captioned, and while it is possible for the assiduous reader to work out what most things are, this could be difficult for strangers to the city.

There is a comprehensive bibliography, from Frederick Engels and Mrs Barton to

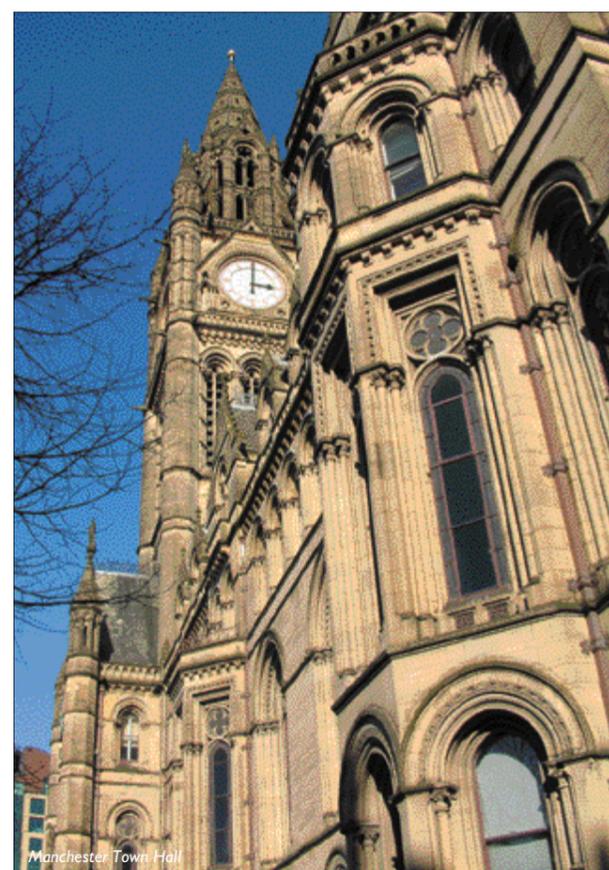
contemporary accounts of the city's architecture and pop culture, although sadly it was published too soon to include Clare Hartwell's book.



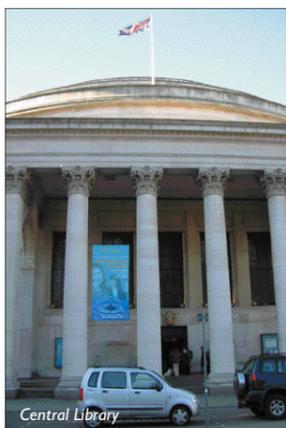
Discovering Cities: Manchester is published by the Geographical Association of Sheffield (ISBN 1-899085-97-1).



CIVIS



Manchester Town Hall



Central Library



Royal Exchange



Castlefield



Whitworth Art Gallery



The Lowry Arts Centre

OBITUARY

Benny Rothman: ramblers' champion...

The man who led the famous mass trespass over Kinder Scout in 1932 – an event that led directly to the foundation of the Ramblers' Association – died in January aged 90.

Benny Rothman was born in Cheetham, Manchester, in 1911, won a scholarship to the Central High School for Boys, but left to work as a mechanic to help the family's finances. In the 1920s he joined the Young Communist League, but coupled politics with a love of the outdoors, enjoying biking and camping trips to the Peak District and Snowdonia.

The idea for the mass trespass came while he was camping at Rowarth with the British

Workers Sports Federation at Easter 1932. A group of members were turned back from Bleaklow by threatening gamekeepers, and realised that if there had been more of them they could not have been stopped.

At the time the highest and wildest parts of the Peak District were out of bounds to the growing numbers of walkers from surrounding towns and cities. Only a dozen footpaths existed through more than 200 square miles of the area, and none of them crossed the 2,088ft summit of Kinder Scout, which was once common land.

Benny and his mates decided to take direct action and advertised the mass trespass for

April 24, 1932. They expected about 200 people but nearly 500 turned up including the composer Michael Tippett and Ewan MacColl, who composed the walkers' anthem The Manchester Rambler. Ominously, large numbers of policemen arrived as well.

On Kinder the trespassers confronted about 30 gamekeepers, and after a struggle Benny and five fellow ramblers were arrested and later jailed for up to six months for 'riotous assembly'. But it proved to be a milestone in the long campaign to gain access to mountain and moorland - the right to roam movement had its first martyrs, and within three years the Ramblers' Association was formed. In 1949 the

National Parks and Countryside Act opened access to the Peak District moors - including Kinder Scout - and the movement reached its successful conclusion with the passing of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

After the Kinder affair Rothman became a full-time political activist in Burnley and Manchester, but disappeared from the public arena until the 1980s, when he led protests against Conservative countryside legislation: he is credited with winning concessions for ramblers during water privatisation. And in 1992 when he was 80 he led a commemorative ramble up Kinder Scout on the 60th anniversary of the mass trespass.

