

1996b

One man maps the city centre

Untrained in cartography but with a long-term interest in maps, Andrew Taylor single-handedly created one of the most useful recent street directory maps of Manchester's city centre. He had very limited funds but a good deal of ingenuity and lots of enthusiasm for the hours pounding the pavements on fieldwork. In some respects, his freelance mapping is analogous to the work of Phyllis Pearsall in the mid 1930s when she created her original A–Z street atlas for London.

Taylor had to give up geography in his second year at secondary school due to timetable limitations, but he continued to pursue an interest in cartography. As he said:

... lunchtime at school gave me the opportunity to lose myself in the five-volume *Times Atlas of the World Mid-Century Edition* in the library. I used to spend school holidays hand-drawing extracts from this and other atlases for my own enjoyment. In 1967, *The Times*

brought out a one-volume edition of the *World Atlas* and, by the following year, I had saved enough pocket money to buy a copy.

He moved to Manchester in 1986 and was surprised that there seemed to be no detailed city-centre map. The popular A–Z street atlases covered the whole of the city, but this meant that the map of the central district was typically cramped on a single page. In response, he decided to create his own map of central Manchester.

Starting with the basic street layout and building footprints from large-scale Ordnance Survey plans, Taylor supplemented this raw data with detailed contextual information gathered from other sources, including planning applications and architects' drawings. He also walked the streets himself, noting road restrictions, the names of office buildings, shops and pubs, and recent changes in land use. All of this data was mapped by

OPPOSITE. A. Taylor, *Manchester City Centre* (1996) [Andrew Taylor]

MANCHESTER: MAPPING THE CITY

hand, and he experimented with various methods of labelling buildings and streets using Letraset and lettering stencils. Eventually, he typed every text label onto white paper in suitable font sizes and pasted them onto the base map using glue and forceps. He also tried different methods of shading building types and land uses, including watercolour, coloured pencils, fibre-tip pens and wax crayons. He eventually settled on using Royal Sovereign 'Magic Markers'.

After many months of laborious effort, his first map of the city centre was published in July 1996. It showed the obviously useful detail one would expect on a street directory map, but it also '[n]ames almost 200 office blocks. Marks pedestrian precincts. Marks tower blocks, footpaths and canal walkways.' The comprehensiveness, convenient size and cost made Taylor's map a step above what was otherwise publicly available and comparable in many respects to the best street directory maps produced for Manchester in the early nineteenth century by Pigot and Slater. The accuracy and legibility in naming all the side streets and small alleyways and local landmark details like statues, fountains and monuments, along with the office block names, made it particularly valuable for visitors to navigate through an unfamiliar city. It was perhaps rather less useful for public transport users (for example, the tram stops are not very obvious), and while it provided much detail on road restriction for drivers, car park locations were not prominently mapped.

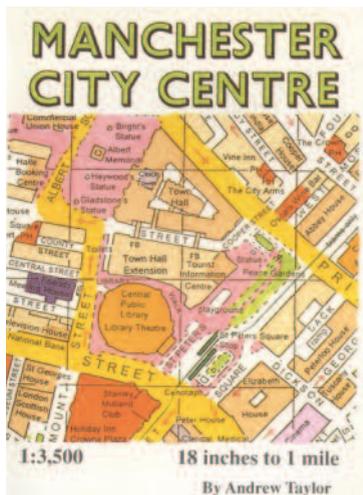
Frustratingly, Taylor's effort to produce the 1996 map were rendered partly obsolete, almost before they had reached the shops, by the massive IRA bomb that was detonated in June of that year. The subsequent re-planning of the area introduced considerable changes to street layouts and land uses. In response, Taylor quickly revised his map and a second edition was on sale to the public in late spring 1998.

Taylor's cartographic technique evolved through trial and error, and through the

multiple print editions his maps developed an increasingly professional look. The underlying high quality of the survey remained unchanged. Later updates also covered a slightly larger area. The eight different editions of his map found a market with tourists and professions alike, filling a niche not well served in the late 1900s and early 2000s by the Ordnance Survey or commercial rivals. Taylor also branched out to produce similarly detailed and useful street directory maps for Liverpool, Preston and York city centres.

Taylor's last map of Manchester was published in 2013, but by this time the market for print street maps was shrinking significantly along with people's willingness to pay for high-quality cartography. Given the plethora of free maps, including those produced by Manchester's tourism promotion company, it was increasing difficult for Taylor to get volume sales. He made a start on compiling a ninth edition of his map, aiming to extend the coverage east and west by several hundred metres to encompass recently development at New Islington and around Salford Cathedral. However, this was never completed because so many people had shifted to using free Google street maps, which display buildings in great detail and pinpoint directions from their smartphones.

The first edition map from 1996 has numerous aspects of good cartographic design as well as a distinctive aesthetic, although Taylor himself is quite self-critical: 'I always feel it was the scruffiest edition.' Yet despite this, Taylor's map was a singular achievement, not least since he was working full time as a biomedical scientist in a hospital laboratory in Manchester. He demonstrated that the motivated amateur still had a place in map-making. Moreover, the eight maps of Manchester city centre that he created at a time of considerable change to the fabric of the city is a sequence that is now a useful historical source. And the first edition Manchester City Centre map from 1996 has become something of a collector's item.



ABOVE. Taylor, Map cover.

OPPOSITE.
Marketing Manchester, *Manchester*
(2006) [Marketing Manchester]

