

# Turmoil and transition: The Manchester Geographical Society, 1973-1997

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## Abstract

This article summarises the history of the Manchester Geographical Society up to the loss of its premises in 1973, and then investigates subsequent changes, notably to its membership, organisation, income, and patterns of expenditure. It is based on personal experience and the Annual Reports and the Council Minutes of the Society.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Keywords

Manchester Geographical Society, geographical institutions, history of geography.

The first history of the Manchester Geographical Society was written by Nigel Brown (1971), covering the period to 1950, and the second by Myee D. Leigh (1980), who updated Brown to 1979. A third was prepared by Professor Walter Freeman (1984a), who wrote what is essentially a history of the 'Old Series' of *The Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society*. None could be described as taking a critical look at the Society, as is the intention in this paper. This article will summarise the history of the Society up to the loss of its premises in 1973, and will then investigate subsequent changes, notably to its membership, organisation, income, and patterns of expenditure. It is based on personal experience and the Annual Reports and the Council Minutes of the Society.<sup>1,2</sup>

## The Society to 1973

This period of the Society's history can be summed up under seven headings. First, the Society's origins gave it a strong commercial/travel orientation. Second, it ran a lecture series, concentrating on travel rather than academic topics. Third, its early links with higher education were reflected in its role in the appointment to the University of Manchester of a Lecturer in 1891, and a Professor (H.J.

Fleure) in 1930. Fourth, relations with the University became limited from the mid-1930s. Nigel Brown, did not pull his punches about what happened on the Society's Council at that time:

The new generation of lay councillors were beginning to make their presence felt. During the next fifteen years this group was ... to imperil the worth of the body which they governed ... and they left it little more than a travel club ... the 'new generation', acutely aware of their own geog-raphical shortcomings and fearful of their own eclipse, would have as little connection as possible with the university ... (Brown 1971, 84-5)

This antagonism between the Society and the academic staff in the Manchester University Department, persisted, on and off, for the next fifty years. There was usually a link of sorts, but what should have been a symbiotic relationship was often virtually non-existent; there was no doubt fault on both sides. Unfortunately matters went beyond this 'local difficulty', and the influence of the Society in the geographical world at large was negligible.

Fifth, the Society published a journal with a mix of exploration, travel and academic material; it got thinner, appeared irregularly, and eventually ceased publication in 1962. Sixth, it amassed a large library, which was

given on permanent loan to Manchester University in 1970. Finally, it was forced to sell its own premises in St. Mary's Parsonage in 1973. The sale of this property generated a substantial amount of capital, which meant that, after a long period of financial difficulty, the Society at last had substantial capital funds. This is the significant break point at which this article will take up the story in more detail.

### The Society from 1973

The basic issue which should have faced the Society's Council when it was in receipt of the money from the sale of the old premises was how should it go about fulfilling its aims. The aims of the Society are very simple, and have remained unchanged in its Constitution throughout this period:

The object and work of the Society shall be to further the pursuit of geographical knowledge and to encourage the study of geography at all levels.

The six main issues which dominated discussions by the Society's Council, were (in roughly chronological order): the relaunch of the Journal; the Society's Centenary; the organisation and management of the Society; membership and the role of the lecture series; finances; and links with the local Universities and support for geography.

### The Society's Journal

A Journal is essential for the prosperity of the Manchester Geographical Society. (Fleure 1934-5, 3)

The proposal for the first relaunch of the Society's Journal as *The Manchester Geographer* (TMG) was made by Professors H.B. Rodgers, T.J. Chandler (Manchester), and H.P. White (Salford) in 1977; detailed proposals were agreed by Council in October 1978. This was to be the Society's first change in expenditure since the sale of its premises, though it was not a new activity for the Society. The Society agreed to provide a capital input of up to £1000 in the first instance, (even though the Journal Reserve totalled £5000 at the end of 1979). A Journal 'Editorial' Committee was formed on which, rather strangely, the Editor had no vote. The Committee probably intended to stop

Council interfering; in practice it never undertook any editorial role. Professor H.P. White (Salford) was elected Editor at the 1979 AGM. The Journal Committee proposed to Council that TMG should have a very broad editorial policy, namely to:

carry material and articles with specific reference to the North West, or written by North West authors, and also papers which will have an appeal to laymen as well as academics. (August 1979).

A separate Journal Secretary was appointed, and a Journal Account was created. Potential sales were estimated at 570 copies per issue. In 1981 the Journal Reserve of £5,000 was transferred to the Journal Account, followed by a further £2000 the following year. TMG began with two issues a year, but this was reduced to one in 1983 (Volume 4) due to the poor inflow of material. Sales never reached the projected levels, and fell from 114 for Volume 1/2 to only 64 for Volume 4 (each plus a further 35-70 distributed free to authors and others). As the print runs had been 500-800, this left hundreds of copies in the Society's office.

The first references to technical problems and errors appeared in the Council minutes of March 1982, and these became a regular feature of Council business. At the meeting in October 1982, there were complaints about an article which 'was heavily loaded with geographers' jargon', and the question of proofreading was raised for the first time. The Editor wrote to two members of the Journal Committee:

I am afraid that I find it very sad that your first job on receiving the journal appears to be to count the spelling mistakes and printing errors. If you were prepared to do the same job at an earlier stage it would be more constructive, and would be a great help to me.

Instead, one member of the Journal Committee deposited 'corrected copies' in the Society's office, though two other members of Council offered to be proofreaders at its next meeting.

Miss Leigh proposed a special issue for the Society's Centenary in 1984; this appeared as Volume 5, and contained Professor Freeman's 'history' (Freeman, 1984a). The Editor resigned in February 1984, and the whole issue of the Journal was discussed at a special meeting of

Council in April 1984. Its small circulation and sales were noted, and that publication was usually behind schedule. The cost from inception was given as £9,197, with income of only £1,194, giving a 'LOSS' (in capitals in the minutes) of £8,003. The President said that he wanted a Journal for the members:

... nor are we prepared to have a Journal Mountain and disregard the expense. [this was the time of European surplus mountains]

There was disagreement over the content: Professor Rodgers said that:

... the more the Journal concentrates on the North West, the less [sic] copies we are likely to sell.

Conversely, the former Editor (though not present at the meeting) had argued for a concentration on the North West to give *TMG* a clear focus; if this was agreed he said he would resume the editorship. This proposal was agreed by Council in July, though a level of ill feeling was reflected in the minutes:

The Honorary Secretary made it clear that journal policy was not at the discretion of the Editor ...

Matters remained quiet until the Council meeting in July 1985, when the President read out a long prepared statement condemning *TMG* on all fronts. He said that it had made no impact, its content was out of touch with the membership, few members were taking it, it had not brought in new members, the two [Manchester and Salford] departments appeared uninterested in it, local schools and colleges took no interest in it, there was an ever increasing stockpile which might lead the floor of the office in the Corn Exchange to collapse [sic], and that it was unintelligible and full of jargon; he proposed that it should cease publication. After the meeting Professor Rodgers wrote to the Editor:

You saw the depth of feeling against the Journal. The whole position may become a cliff-hanger. We need to do something - and quite fast.

For the December Council meeting Professor Rodgers wrote a memo on 'The Objects of the Society and the Role of the Journal'. He noted that it was the Society's duty (according to its Constitution) to pursue geographical know-

ledge and encourage the study of Geography, which must, at the higher levels, include the publication of research. He noted that the Society had neglected this duty for many years. He said that *TMG* met a regional need, and that its primary purpose was external to the Society. Moreover he pointed out that the Journal was a crucial part of the Society's charitable objectives; that it took up less than 10% of the Society's income, and that such expenditure was vital to maintain tax-free charitable status. He hinted that some Council members seemed to think that the Society existed solely to increase its own wealth.

At the December meeting of Council, Professor Rodgers' paper was discussed, and after a long discussion, the matter was referred back to the Journal Committee; *TMG* had survived. Several members of Council remained opposed to the Journal, and appeared to be unclear about the Society's aims, apparently believing that the Society existed for the benefit of its members, rather than to promote geography. The large subsidy given to the lectures (on average about 29% of the Society's actual expenditure in 1975-79, and about 16% in 1980-85) was not regarded as a 'loss'. The Journal accounted for 28% of actual expenditure in 1980-86, and this was stressed in the Annual Reports from 1983 to 1985 where the completely separate Journal Account ended with the final capitalised line 'TRUE DEFICIT ON JOURNAL'.

There was one further attempt to disrupt the Journal in the form of a personal attack on the Editor in the April 1986 Council meeting. But the arguments over the Journal were essentially over; its opponents were by then in a small minority. It is important to stress that the arguments were not only between academic geographers and the lay members of Council, but were in fact mostly between the lay members; there were only two academics on Council for most of this period.

Professor Rodgers became the Editor in 1986, and the Journal soon became a routine item in the Council minutes. The separate Journal Account was closed in 1990, and its administration undertaken by the Office. It was

always intended that the editorship should rotate round the departments, and in 1990 D J Case became Editor, replaced by D C Gibbs in 1991 (both from the then Manchester Polytechnic). In 1995 R.J. Huggett (Manchester University) was elected as Editor, but was unable to produce copy, and resigned in early 1996; TMG was then three years behind schedule (the last issue having been Volume 14 in 1993).

*The Manchester Geographer* certainly had a chequered career. It was intended to discharge the function of the Society as an academic charity, and to provide a new outlet for the publication of high quality local research. The Council originally voted to put £1000 into its production, but the cost of its first 17 issues (Volumes 1-14) totalled about £18,500. However, this represented only 6.6% of the Society's total expenditure in the period 1980-95 (11% of actual expenditure, as most of the income remained unspent – see below). TMG was launched at a difficult time, began with a vague editorial policy, never had a good inflow of articles, was rarely produced on time, and sales never reached the optimistic levels suggested by its proposers. In academic terms it did not establish itself as a quality journal. Moreover, it was opposed by a small but influential group on the Society's Council for most of its first seven years. But it had its supporters, notably Miss Leigh, who chaired the Journal Committee for most of the period.

At the end of 1996 it was proposed by the present Editor and this author to relaunch the Journal again under a new title, *The North West Geographer*, deliberately aiming to attract more contributors, greater sales and a wider readership. The first of the planned twice-yearly issues appeared in 1997. Like other regional geographical journals, *The North West Geographer* will still face problems (McKendrick, 1997), but its future looks promising.

### **The Society's Centenary (1984)**

The Council first considered its forthcoming centenary in 1980, and really got excited about it. It was typical of Council members at the time

that their first suggestion was that the membership be consulted on 'What do they want – a dinner or lunch?' (July 1980). The first detailed proposals were made in March 1982, and they occupied an ever-increasing proportion of the minutes over the next two and a half years.

The Centenary was finally celebrated on 16 October 1984 with a lunch. The principal guest was Lord Hunt (as President of the Royal Geographical Society), plus Sir George Bishop and Dr John Hemming (RGS), Sir William Downward (Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester), Lord Rhodes (Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire), the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Manchester and Salford University Heads of Department, and Mr Maxwell Lee (Geographical Association). There was a visit to the public exhibition of the Society's atlases in the John Rylands Library, and finally a joint lecture with the RGS and GA given by Professor Goudie on desert landscapes. A further lecture, connected with the exhibition, on the evolution of atlases was given a week later. In addition there was the Centenary edition of the Journal, containing Professor Freeman's history, and reprints of seventeen articles from the 'Old Series' Journal (Freeman, 1984a).

The idea of creating a scholarship was raised at Council in October 1983, and a formal proposal to fund two part-time postgraduate Centenary Scholars was made by the present author in June 1984:

Such a proposal ... would allow the Society to take a more positive and direct role in geographical research, would yield articles for the Journal, lectures for the Society, and would bring the two departments (which are so remote from the Society at the moment) a little closer ...

The cost was estimated at about £1000 a year; the detailed scheme was agreed in 1985 and the first Scholars were appointed in 1986. Council had hoped to involve the Manchester Chamber of Commerce but despite several contacts, they failed to show any interest when a suitable candidate emerged. To date there have been eight Scholars, who have undertaken research on local topics as diverse as the Chinese



community in Manchester, industrial geography, the geomorphology of the River Mersey, speleogenesis, and biogeography. Due to increasing post-graduate fees, the number of scholars at any one time was reduced to one in 1995.

### **The organisation and management of the Society**

In 1973 the Society had a very large Council which it had inherited from days when it had many more members. In that year the Council could have been attended by 40 people (6 Past-Presidents, 4 Trustees, the current President, 5 Vice-Presidents, 9 Officers and 15 elected members); in practice, around 20 attended. This situation became faintly ludicrous by 1985 when the Society had only 102 members and up to 33 members on its Council. Changes to the Constitution were made in 1987-88, reducing the size of Council to 17, principally by removing the Past-Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Trustees. In retrospect, the changes now seem relatively modest, but at the time they were very contentious. The Council meeting which finally agreed them lasted almost three hours. The Trustees were dispensed with in 1990, and Council made responsible in their stead.

But what was virtually civil war was waged on Council between its conservatives and modernisers during 1984-86. It was closely connected with the debates over the Society's expenditure, how best it should fulfill its aims, and centred on the future of the Journal. The quality of the Council minutes deteriorated during 1984-85, in particular the recording of discussions about the Journal tended to give the Honorary Secretary's views verbatim, and omit or shorten other contributions. Matters were further complicated at the 1985 AGM when the President was asked to act as Honorary Secretary in the absence of any other candidate. Matters got worse in December 1985 when the minutes of the Council meeting (not taken by the President, who was absent) were so bad that an emergency meeting in January 1986 decided that they must be entirely rewritten by a newly appointed Minutes Secretary. At the Council

meeting in January, the President tried to have the post of Minutes Secretary annulled, suggesting that those who had proposed it 'had been under some external influence' which he refused to specify. He offered to carry on as Honorary Secretary, but it was pointed out that no member should occupy two of the Society's Officer posts simultaneously.

Matters had clearly gone well beyond differences of opinion, and there was considerable ill-feeling between many members of Council, which culminated in an extraordinary personally offensive attack on the Editor at the extra April 1986 Council meeting. Both Professor Rodgers and the Chairman said that they would leave if there were any repetition of such an attack, and Miss Leigh very tellingly commented that:

the Society appeared to be disintegrating both at the top, and at the bottom with falling attendances.

In retrospect, this was the 'MGS reaching rock bottom.' (H.B. Rodgers, personal communication, 1996). The meeting had been tape-recorded, and a verbatim transcript was circulated, with a rebuttal of the accusations. Perhaps a measure of how ill informed some members of Council had become can be seen in the minutes of the 1986 AGM where it was recorded that:

the Society was not wealthy, but had a healthy ... membership.

In reality the Society then had assets of over £150,000, and a membership of only 102! At the Council meeting in October 1986, the present author volunteered to be Acting Honorary Secretary for a year, to be replaced at the 1987 AGM by Professor Rodgers. But in the event Professor Rodgers had other commitments, and the present author was elected as Honorary Secretary. The Society's secretary, Miss Whalley, died in 1987 and was replaced by Mrs Julia Concannon.

### **Membership and the role of the lecture series**

The Society's membership, which had been close to a thousand at the end of last century had declined steadily to around 215 in the late

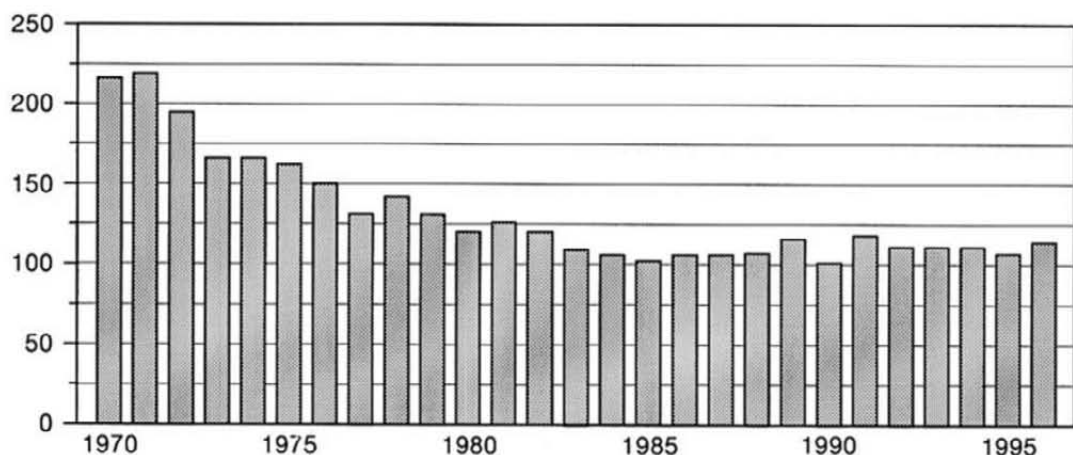
1960s. By 1972 the total was 195, and it fell steadily to only 102 in 1985 (Figure 1). The main decline clearly followed the loss of the Society's own premises, and the demise of its popular Tea Club. The Annual Reports for 1973-82 show a high turnover of members; in that period 147 Ordinary Members were lost (24 died, 58 resigned, 65 lapsed), whilst only 98 new members were elected. Meanwhile, Life Members fell from 19 to 12, Corporate Members from 9 to 1 (even the Manchester Chamber of Commerce resigned in 1973), and Student Members from 11 to none. An all-time low of 101 was reached in 1990. Council discussed the matter from time to time, and several advertising initiatives were undertaken. The Society has clearly failed to increase its membership since 1980, though the decline has been arrested; most members join solely for the lecture series, and attendance at lectures remains high. Just over a dozen members are academics: this is in sharp contrast with other Manchester societies (the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society and the Manchester Statistical Society) which attract many of the business and professional people of Manchester, including a wide range of academics.

During the 1970s and 80s the 6-30pm lectures rolled on, indeed they *were* and continue to be the Society for most of its members. The

first change was the move from the Literary and Philosophical Society premises (forced by their demolition) to the Friends' Meeting House in 1980. The lecture titles often had that 'Ruritanian' look to them: in 1981, for example, they included 'Romanian Village Life', 'Impressions of India', 'I Bought the Village Chapel', 'Working in the Far East', 'A Light-Hearted Businessman's Trip to Scandinavia', and 'Birds Beyond the Mill'. Two lectures open to the public were introduced in 1981, though visitors had to 'sign in'. Some afternoon lectures followed in 1986-7; by then half the lectures were 'Open'. The complete change to lunchtime/afternoon lectures came in 1989, prompted partly by the reluctance of members to come into Manchester in dark winter evenings. It is arguable that the Society's lecture series is a relic from pre-television days, and may now have a limited appeal. The post of Programme Secretary has been the most stable in the last twenty years, with only two occupants, both of whom have frequently been thanked for organising excellent programmes.

The Academic Lecture Series began in 1989. The second lecture in this series (which was also the joint lecture with the RGS and GA), given by Professor Denys Brunson, attracted an audience of over 170 (the largest for many years), though another brought in only 22. Overall, attendance at these lectures was relatively small, so from

Figure 1: MGS membership 1970-96.



Note: Excludes Honorary Members and Vice-Presidents.

1993-4 they were held in each of the three departments, leaving only the joint lectures with the RGS and GA at the old time of 6-30 in the Friends' Meeting House. One major debacle was a lecture by Chris Bonington in 1991 which did not attract the anticipated audience, and lost £1250.

## Finances

During 1975-76 the Society received a total of just over £66,000 from the sale of its premises, which meant that it was in future going to operate from capital growth and interest rather than the rents on which it had relied before. But the Council seemed to have little idea what to do with the money, or to take any advice on its investment. The money was placed on Bank Bid Deposit from July 1975 until August 1979, by which time the money on deposit totalled £81,000. Following advice from a member of Council who was a banker, it was then agreed to invest in 'safe' Local Authorities'. By the end of the year £57,000 was invested in City of Manchester bonds, but still there was still £35,000 on deposit; it was not until 1981 that £25,000 of Treasury and Exchequer Bonds were bought. The Society's windfall could probably have been better managed throughout the 1970s and 1980s. A curious feature was that the

Council continued to maintain and even increase its 'Decorating and Reseating Reserve' for ten years until 1983, even though it had no premises, and never intended to acquire any. It was not until 1989 that, under a new Treasurer, professional financial advice was taken, and not until 1992 that the management of the Society's investments was placed fully in professional hands.

Meanwhile, the Society's income grew rapidly. The Annual Accounts show an increase in investment income from £513 in 1971 to £8,623 in 1977, and to £12,024 in 1981. Due to the high interest rates of the 1980s, the Society's capital continued to grow, in 1990 yielding the highest investment income of £21,635. The Society's assets passed the £200,000 mark in 1991. Then with falling interest rates, investment income fell to £10,649 in 1996.

But for many years the Council did not consider any substantial increase in expenditure, with the result that the amount unspent (Excess of Income over Expenditure, plus Transfers to Reserves) grew from close to zero in 1971, to over £10,000 in 1980, and remained at that level for the next seven years. In the thirteen years from 1976 to 1987, the Society was not spending, on average, about 61% of its income (Table 1; Figure 2).

*Table 1: MGS Expenditure, selected years, 1975-95.*

	1975		1980		1985		1990		1995	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Lectures <sup>1</sup>	554	17	632	4	1292	8	2408	10	2457	17
Grants	40	1	788	5	1410	9	3649	16	6760	46
Journal <sup>2</sup>	0	0	1000	7	1000	6	1000	4	0	0
Total Charitable	18	—	16	—	23	—	30	—	63	—
Other	1027	32	1805	13	2876	17	7352	32	3131	21
Unspent <sup>3</sup>	1650	50	10129	71	9992	60	8667	38	2359	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3271</b>		<b>14353</b>		<b>16570</b>		<b>23076</b>		<b>14707</b>	

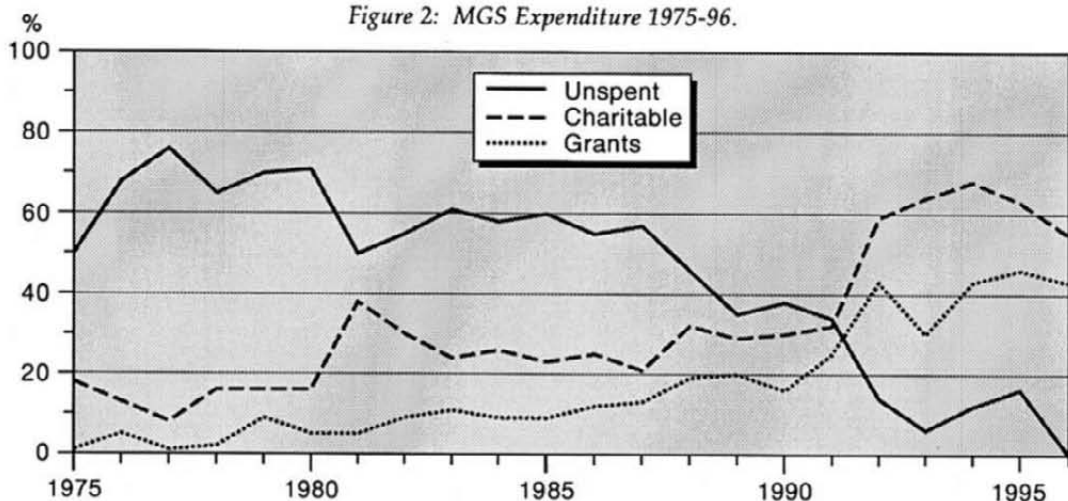
Notes:

1 'Lectures' includes Hire of Hall, Fees & Meetings.

2 the £1000s are transfers to the separate Journal Account which ran until 1991.

3 'Unspent' includes excess income over expenditure and transfers to reserves.

Figure 2: MGS Expenditure 1975-96.



However, the amount unspent has fallen steadily since 1987 due to a steady and incremental change in the Society's patterns of expenditure. The amount spent on lectures (Hall, Fees and Meetings) remained constant, given the variations in total expenditure, but the percentage spent on grants has risen from only £40 (1%) in 1975, to £1,410 (9%) in 1985, and to £6,760 (46%) in 1995. The percentage of the Society's expenditure which could be said to be 'charitable' has risen from an average of 21% in 1975-87 to an average of 64% in 1992-95. The crucial years were 1991 and 1992 for the big increases in grants and charitable expenditure as a whole. Table 1 also puts expenditure on the Journal into a clearer context: throughout the whole period the Journal, on average, accounted for only 6.6% of expenditure.

How all these changes in expenditure were brought about is detailed in the next section. That the Society poorly managed both its income and expenditure during the earlier part of the period under study is a charge that can certainly be made. It is also arguable that it was not fulfilling its charitable objectives as well as it might have done until the late 1980s. This is no suggestion of deliberate neglect, nor of any misuse of funds; rather that the Council simply did not realise or respond to the dramatic changes in the Society's circumstances, and did not seek or take adequate professional advice.

### Links with the Universities and support for geography

As we have seen, the poor links with the University of Manchester go back to the 1930s, and despite recurrent attempts to improve matters, the situation was as poor as ever in 1975 when there were no (University) academics at all on the Council. In 1975 the lecture programme maintained the tenuous links, with lectures from Professors Rodgers and Chandler. But in 1976 there was a proposal to give grants for the purchase of books by the then two Departments; in that year grants totalled £410, though they were reduced to only £80 in 1977. Professor Rodgers (who had been a member since the 1950s) was elected as President in 1979, followed by Professor White as Journal Editor a year later. But the academic representation on the Council remained at two (out of a possible 35), and it was not until after the difficulties of 1984-86 that any other academics joined the Council. In 1987, one academic from each of the then three departments was elected to Council (Professors Douglas and Gleave, Mr Lee; all three subsequently became Presidents of the Society); they were followed by others from 1991, so that at the 1996 AGM the Council was made up of 7 academics (2 of whom were retired) and 8 non-academics. It is important to note that none of the academics formally represents his department; all are present as



members of the Society. The present number of academics on Council is a good reflection of the current interests and expenditure of the Society. It is notable that since 1992 the Society has had three successive academics as President.

The Council eventually began to consider increasing its expenditure by giving more support to geography. In addition to the support outlined above, this included grants for books and maps for the two (then three) departments, the funding of the Journal, support to various projects and expeditions, and the Centenary Postgraduate Scholarships. Other innovations have included more lectures open to the public (from 1986), the Academic Lecture Series (from 1989), occasional workshops and conferences (from 1990), two research funds (for University staff from 1990, and for students in 1996), and two prizes for the best students in each department (from 1992). The funding and subsequent publication of the Society's Library catalogue in was undertaken in 1989-92, making the collection known and accessible again after a gap of 22 years (Lloyd, 1991, 1992). The cataloguing and publication were partly funded by the sale of the less useful bulk of the Society's books. On the other hand, the Society ceased to support expeditions in 1996, as so many other sources of expedition funding had become available. The most recent innovation is the creation of a fieldwork guidebook called *Exploring Greater Manchester*, based on experience gleaned from all three departments. It covers topics including urban, social, historical and physical geography. Its twenty exercises are aimed at a wide audience:

If you live, learn, work, research or teach in Manchester, why not explore its potential by trying one of these exercises? (Gardiner *et al.* 1998, 3).

The Society now keeps both the types and amounts of its expenditure under constant review, advised by its Academic Committee.

## Conclusion

Writing about both the Manchester and Royal Scottish Geographical Societies, Freeman noted that their survival depended on:

the attraction of members, the continuity of publication, the maintenance of cooperation with universities ... and schools, and of friendly relations with other geographical societies. (1984b, 62)

For most of this century, the Manchester Geographical Society has failed on all these counts; it has lost members, failed to publish its Journal continuously, and has not maintained close links with other bodies. In particular, the many changes which occurred in Manchester, the North West, in the other geographical societies, and within the discipline of Geography passed it by. However, the changes to the Society in the years since the loss of its premises in 1973, and in particular since the mid-1980s, have been dramatic; the Society's activities in the 1990s would have been unimaginable to its Council of 1973.

After a period of inaction, the financial security which resulted from the sale was ploughed into a series of initiatives. The relaunch of the Journal was the first main change; however it prompted a virtual civil war within the Society's Council, but its resolution ended a period of conservatism and non-academic isolation which dated from the 1930s. The Society changed from an introspective body spending much of its money on lectures for its own members (and not spending most of the rest), to one which encouraged the study of geography in many ways, allowing the Society better to fulfill its aims, notably through the University departments. There is clearly room for both academic and popular activities within the Society's remit. The Society does now continuously monitor its activities and expenditure, responding to changing needs of geography in the region. But increasing the number of members remains a challenge. However, the Society, which was in danger of disintegrating at the time of its Centenary in the mid 1980s, can now look forward to the rest of its second century with considerable confidence.

## Notes

- 1 The present author has been a member of Council since 1983, and has thus been closely involved with many of the changes; his role is that of a 'participant observer'. Readers should thus beware that this history is a personal view, though every attempt has been made to present an unbiased picture. This article is not an 'official history' of the Society, and has not been approved by the Council of the Society.
- 2 The principal officers of the Society are normally referred to by their titles, the holders are listed in the Appendix.

## Acknowledgements

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**Erratum:** Page 17 Table 1  
The figures in line 4  
'Total Charitable'  
are %s, and should be in  
*italics*, and placed one  
column to the right

<b>Elected at AGM</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Editor</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
June 1973	L Lupton	M D Leigh	Leach & Sarver	E D Pugh	W E Pearce
June 1974	L Lupton	M D Leigh	Leach & Sarver	E D Pugh	W E Pearce
June 1975	L Lupton	M D Leigh	Leach & Sarver	E D Pugh	W E Pearce
June 1976	W E Pearce	W H Poland	Leach & Sarver	E D Pugh	F W Alexander
June 1977	W E Pearce	W H Poland	Leach & Sarver	E D Pugh	F W Alexander
June 1978	W E Pearce	W H Poland	Leach & Sarver	K B P Tootill	F W Alexander
June 1979	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	W H Poland	<b>H P White</b>	K B P Tootill	P V Taylor
June 1980	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	W H Poland	<b>H P White</b>	K B P Tootill	P V Taylor
June 1981	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	W H Poland	<b>H P White (1)</b>	K B P Tootill	P V Taylor
June 1982	K B P Tootill	W H Poland	<b>H P White (1)</b>	R W Dawes	B R Bedford
June 1983	K B P Tootill	W H Poland	<b>B P Hindle</b>	R W Dawes	B R Bedford
June 1984	K B P Tootill	W H Poland	(2)	R W Dawes	M G Woodruff
June 1985	W H Poland	(3, 4)	<b>B P Hindle</b>	R W Dawes	M G Woodruff
June 1986	W H Poland	(4)	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	R W Dawes	M G Woodruff
June 1987	W H Poland	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	R W Dawes	J Keohane
June 1988	J Keohane	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	D Heap	<b>M G Lee</b>
June 1989	J Keohane	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>H B Rodgers</b>	D Heap	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1990	M D Leigh	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>H B Rodgers (5)</b>	D Heap	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1991	M D Leigh	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>D C Gibbs</b>	D Heap	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1992	<b>M B Gleave</b>	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>D C Gibbs</b>	D Heap	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1993	<b>M B Gleave</b>	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>D C Gibbs</b>	D Heap (6)	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1994	<b>I Douglas</b>	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>D C Gibbs</b>	<b>C Young</b>	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1995	<b>I Douglas</b>	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>R J Huggett</b>	<b>C Young</b>	<b>M G Lee</b>
May 1996	<b>M G Lee</b>	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>J H McKendrick</b>	<b>C Young</b>	<b>W R Allman</b>
May 1997	<b>M G Lee</b>	<b>B P Hindle</b>	<b>J H McKendrick</b>	<b>C Young</b>	<b>W R Allman</b>

Notes:

1. B P Hindle Assistant (in effect Acting) Editor from July 1981.
2. B P Hindle resigned as Editor February 1984, resumed July 1984.
3. W H Poland acting as Honorary Secretary.
4. B P Hindle Minutes Secretary from December 1985 and Acting Honorary Secretary from October 1986.
5. D J Case Editor from June 1990.
6. C Young Acting Treasurer from November 1993.

**Bold type** indicates University academics (both current and retired).

Honorary Programme Secretary: M D Leigh elected 1976-83, D L Ferguson elected 1984-97.