

DAVID DUNNICO STATUESQUE

who/what is that supposed to be?
public sculpture in Manchester



statuesque

STATUESQUE

answers to unasked
questions about the
statues of Manchester
by **David Dunnico**



The Life Cycle (1995) George Wylie



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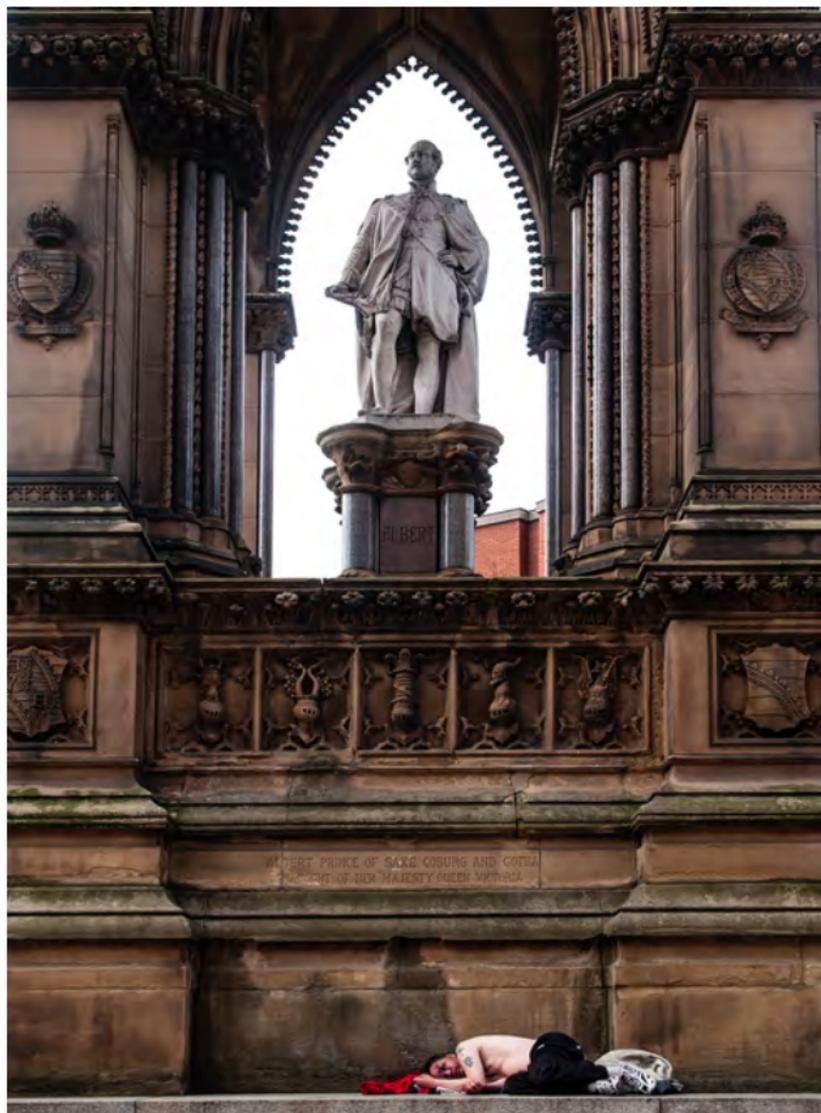
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The Northern Quarter

As it's my book, I use 'statue' and
'sculpture' interchangeably.

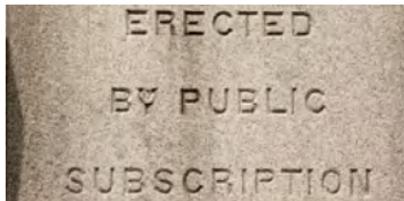
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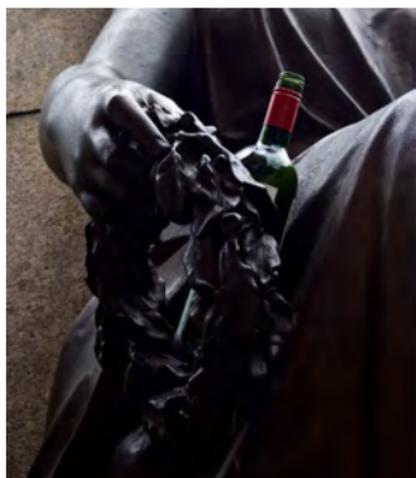
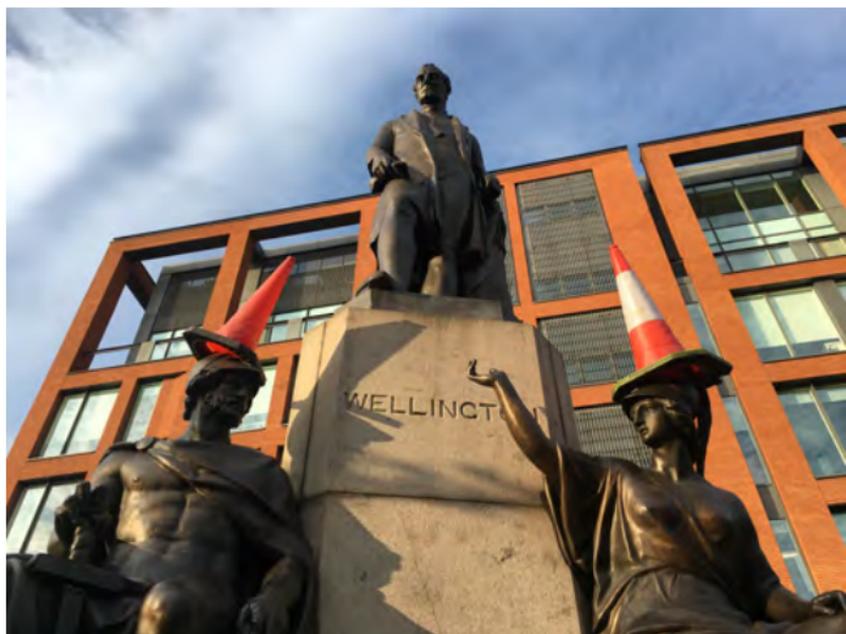
Albert Memorial [Statue: Mathew Nobel Canopy: Thomas Worthington, 1867]
with 'Zippy' Father Christmas in background NEXT PAGE: Front view



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CLOCKWISE: *Duke of Wellington* hand + inscription + graffiti [Matthew Nobel, 1856] *Adrift* [John Cassidy, 1908] *Queen Victoria* [Edward Onslow Ford, 1901] *Sir Robert Peel* [William Calder Marshall, 1853] *Edward VII* [John Cassidy, 1913]



CLOCKWISE: *Duke of Wellington* with cones + nail varnish + bottle

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DAVID DUNNICO

Aphrodite Garden statue outside
a shop in Newton Heath



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Frank Sidebottom [Colin Spofforth, 2013]

BIG FRANK & LITTLE JOHN



[2]

In 2013, a portrait statue of comedian Frank Sidebottom was unveiled on Timperley High Street. [1] Some people had never heard of Frank Sidebottom, the papier-mâché headed alter ego of Chris Sievey (1955– 2010), some who had heard of him questioned if he should be immortalised, but enough of his fans thought he should and raised the money to pay for it. Frank Sidebottom's statue came exactly 175 years after the first portrait statue was unveiled in Manchester. Chemist John Dalton (1766–1844) [2] proved to be such a hit, he had another couple of statues put up or two, a mural, a street, an alley way, a university building and a (closed) restaurant to his name.

Just as Frank Sidebottom was being unveiled, one of our Daltons went missing. 'Anamorphic Mirrors' [3>] is a stainless steel inverted cone and sphere by Andrew Crompton.

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For many years it stood outside the Museum of Science and Industry, surrounded by four paving slabs into which were carved distorted images of local scientists including Dalton.

They were only recognisable when their reflection was viewed in the mirrored surface of the sculpture – hence “anamorphic”. The slabs were created by Richard and Jack Doyle and were discarded when the sculpture was moved to the space in front of St. Peter’s House Church on Oxford Road. Without them it becomes essentially just another piece of steel street furniture, like bins or bike racks.

Much of what was unveiled with a flourish of civic pride is soon cast aside (like broken paving slabs). It’s a perennial ‘silly season’ newspaper story when modern art is mistaken for junk and thrown out by the cleaners. In Manchester it’s a story that’s often been told. The award winning 10-metre high ‘Totem’ by Franta Belsky lasted a decade in the Arndale, only to be dismantled and discarded without telling its sculptor. Hubert Dalwood’s ‘Icon’, disappeared from the Toastrack, the former catering college in Fallowfield owned by Manchester University (Dalton’s old employer).

Redevelopment brings opportunities for cultural cleansing. It’s nearly always cheaper to demolish than restore. Next to the John Rylands Library (there’s another statue of Dalton in their reading room), outside what were the offices of the Manchester Evening News, stood ‘Vigilance’ by Keith Godwin. It was taken down when Spinningfields was put up.

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In 1992, the newspaper reported on a council survey which had warned, “a number of the city’s older memorials could not be readily located”. Hopefully the developers know where Vigilance is if they ever keep their promise to re-site it.

Not all property developers are a chip off the old block. Bruntwood helped double the number of Chopin statues in the city. One has inside the Royal Northern College of Music since 1973, commemorating Chopin’s one and only gig in the city. His death the following year prevented an encore. In 2011, another one appeared almost opposite The John Rylands Library. [4] Bruntwood’s Chairman overheard some people in a restaurant dreaming up the idea.

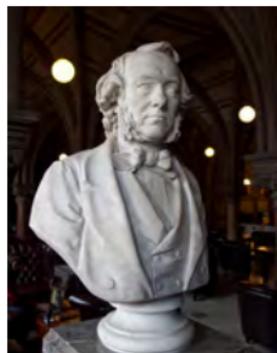




He thought it such a good idea that he put his company's money where his dinner went. The wine must have flowed during the commissioning process, because a very unlike likeness of Chopin is joined by his piano, his muse and for good measure, an eagle and a battle. It's a dogs' dinner which will hopefully end with a big tip.

Whilst two Chopins is one too many, Manchester just can't get enough Daltons. The Town Hall's 1838 sculpture by Sir Francis Chantrey was cloned by William Theed and unveiled in Piccadilly Gardens in 1855. It sat with Victoria, Wellington, Peel and James Watt (another of Theed's) until 1966, when it was replaced by an electricity sub station. It now lives outside the Science Faculty of Manchester Metropolitan University on Chester Street. [5] It wasn't the only copy. Another was stuck on the side of a building on the corner of John Dalton Street and Deansgate until 1933, when it looked like it might fall off.

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[6]

PEACE OF STONE

There are about 15,000 public statues in Britain. Many are of the great and the good, some are great and many are not so good. The great may inspire more ire than awe, most probably inspire indifference. But all statues tell us more about the people who run our cities than the subjects they portray.

Manchester has a bad record of bad sculpture and has used statues to give passing whims a whiff of permanence. In the 19th Century, the city's political leaders commissioned portrait busts of Gladstone, Cobden, John Bright and other heroes of free trade, creating a "Liberal Valhalla" in the Town Hall's sculpture gallery/coffee shop. [6] Not everyone approved and there were "calls to banish the monstrosities in stone trousers – worthies who could not be named by many citizens". Today, effigies of Council Leader Sir Richard Leese, or the retired but never retiring City CEO Sir Howard Bernstein, would more likely put on a bonfire than a plinth, so politicians salve their vanities with stone shrines to their policies, and as the policies become empty promises, it's fitting that the memorials are often empty of worth.

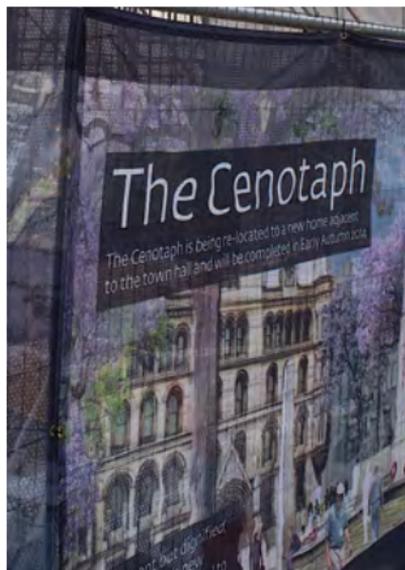
On Bonfire Night 1980, Manchester declared itself the world's first nuclear free zone. Signs, plaques (there's one in the sculpture gallery/coffee shop) and eventually statues, heralded the absence of municipal atom bombs.

In 1985, a 'Sculpture For Peace' competition looked for an "easily understood and durable statue". From the forty-four entries 'Messenger of Peace' by Barbara Pearson was chosen. It showed an all too rare female figure – chosen because in the words of the sculptor, males were, "essentially belligerent" – and some doves – which were soon stolen – Probably by a bloke. The Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Arnold Spencer, got all belligerent declaring, "It was not the Council's opinion that all men were aggressive". At least he did not state the-obvious and say the statue looked rubbish. Twenty years earlier, one of his predecessors had described Elizabeth Fink's memorial to trans-Atlantic flight pioneers Alcock and Brown at Manchester Airport, as looking like, "a bewitched, bewildered and bemused budgerigar". [7]





The City Fathers liked statues, so one of the runners up, ‘Sheep’ by Ted Roocroft, was put out to graze in Castlefield. And 1986 saw a new competition with a familiar theme – ‘Struggle of Peace’. Philip Jackson called his winning entry ‘Struggle For Peace and Freedom’ which seemed to fit the brief right enough, but everything else was wrong. The sculptor’s name on the plinth was misspelt and the plan to site it near the previous year’s winner had to be changed when a children’s playground got in the way. What’s more it didn’t feature any doves, so ‘Doves of Peace’^[8] was commissioned from Michael Lyons. This steel ring of 15 stylised birds is outside The People’s History Museum on Bridge Street, just by a plaque remembering the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.^[9]



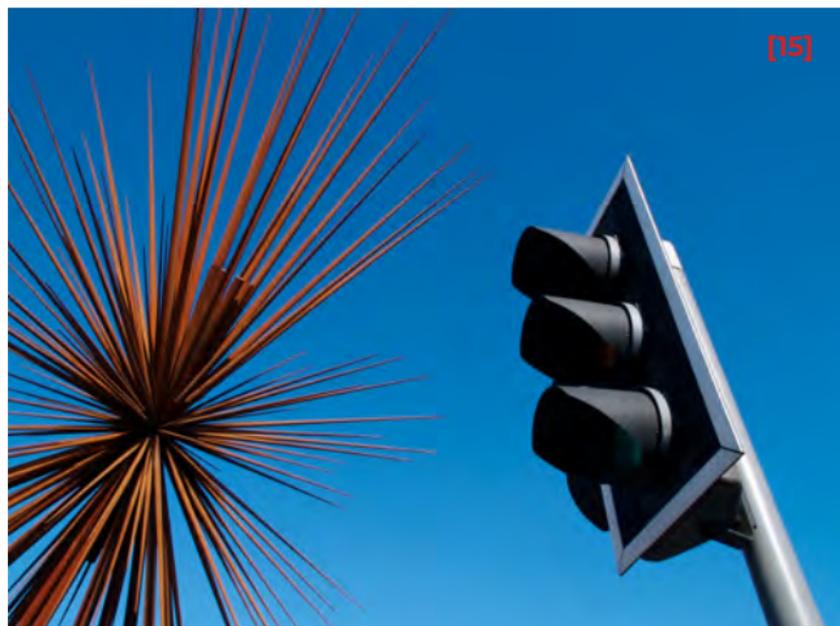
Meanwhile, the Councillors looked down from the Town Hall on to their new Peace Garden where two of the statues were sited. A combination of shady aspect and bad drainage had killed off the grass. The plot recalled the mud of the Somme, only without the poppies. So it was fitting that when the Council moved Edwin Lutyens' Cenotaph **[10]** to make St. Peter's Square an even bigger tram stop, they stuck the war memorial right on top of the Peace Garden. When it was suggested that Collyhurst's war memorial might also be moved, the local Councillor (Pat Karney who is also City Centre Coordinator) threatened to resign. Everyone knew Mr Karney would actually fight to the death to avoid giving up his position.



Over in Piccadilly Gardens, the grass wasn't any greener and for the 20 years has been periodically fenced off and re-seeded. The Gardens include a concrete wall – part of the 2002 redesign by award winning architect Tadao Ando. Some thought it too much like the one people in Berlin pulled down in 1989. Several trees did their best to soften its lines, one was dug up in 2005 to make way for an 11-metre-tall bronze and steel 'Tree of Remembrance'^[11] by Wolfgang Heron, which commemorates civilians killed in the Second World War. Largely because of where it is sited (behind the big concrete wall) it is usually overlooked by people walking past it. It was unveiled on the anniversary of the end of the war in Europe (VE Day), rather than the end of the War with Japan (VJ Day) in case it reminded people of atom bombs, or the Nuclear Free Zone, which had quietly been laid to rest in peace, lest it frighten investors.

The Labour council had steadily moved towards accepting a business agenda and promoting a city centre centred around shopping, tourism and a bit of city living. To reflect this the statues stopped being of people and the sculpture stopped being about ideas and ideals.

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IN WITH A BANG OUT WITH A WHIMPER

In 1996, the year of the IRA bombing, Manchester City Council became a Conservative Free Zone and waited for the following year's general election for a Labour government who would save them from more spending cuts. The Thatcherites were replaced with Thatcher-lite in the shape of Tony Blair, who was joined in Parliament by Manchester's leftish Council Leader, Graham Stringer, when he became the MP for Blackley. The colleagues Stringer left behind in the Town Hall didn't erect any statues in his honour, but did dismantle an £80,000 obelisk that had been plonked at the top of Market Street at Stringer's behest. This 45-foot-tall, 30 tonne pointy piece of pointless marble got in everyone's way, but did give the punks and drunks somewhere to sit. Once dismantled, this municipal Cleopatra's Needle was re-planted in Crumpsall Park. [12]



[14]

Councils such as Manchester had been neutered by Tory policy. They became little more than brand managers, and sculpture became less artwork and more publicity logo. Statues were out of fashion. Well, sort of. A year after Blair's election, Anthony Gormley's Angel of the North, [14] based on the artist's own body (apart from the 54-metre-wide wings) was unveiled and seemingly put Newcastle-Gateshead on the map. Manchester reasoned if it had something as big and as rusty, a sculpture could do the same for them and be a centerpiece for the 2002 Commonwealth Games, which were coming to Manchester after no other city had bid for them.

Manchester went for sculpture rather than statue. But 'B of the Bang' [**<15**] blew up in the face of the Council. Artist Thomas Heatherwick named it after the comment by athlete Linford Christie, that he started running on the 'B' of the bang from the starting gun. The sculpture was a little slower. It came in two years too late for the Commonwealth Games and £1 million over budget.

It originally had 180 spikes, but one was nicked, then others started falling off. In 2009, they gave up trying to fix it and took it to the scrap merchants and weighed in all 165 tonnes of it. They got £17,000.



The Council sued the artist, whilst the artist sued the structural engineers. The Council won and spent their winnings on some sculpture for Beswick by Ryan Gander – This time in non-rusty, shiny stainless steel. The return of the Tories to national government, though not to local government in Manchester, meant a return to cuts and it became harder for public bodies to justify spending money on public art. But Manchester had another go.

In 2010, Manchester Council decamped to One First Street while the Town Hall extension in Albert Square was tarterd up. Albert Square had a collection of the Victorian great and good. There was of course Prince Albert after who the Square was named, along with John Bright, [16] Oliver Heywood, James Fraser and William Gladstone. In 1901, the Manchester Guardian had questioned the point of having statues of worthies, which in the city’s polluted atmosphere became “befouled effigies”.



[17]

The council must have missed the effigies, so spent £150,000 on some stylised, bright, shiny, cavorting figures on polls to go outside their new, temporary headquarters. Being made of easy to wipe fibreglass, they would not become “befouled”. The figures were by Colin Spofforth. [17] They were different to his usual work, which is fairly traditional, figurative and realistic, which is what the public says it likes, and not of a specific named person. His previous works included ‘The Runner’ outside Sports City near where B of the Bang was sited, and the four jazz men inside the Trafford Centre shopping mall. (The garden centre style classical figures on the outside were by Guy Portelli.) Spofforth’s council and developer friendly inoffensive public artworks were in demand. He would go to design Frank Sidebottom. [<1]

They were a far safer bet than modern stuff and Councils were cautious. One Councillor said, “We have made mistakes in the past and we’ve taken a lot of stick over it, but no more!” We want traditional! ...no more of this arty stuff.” But even Spofforth couldn’t always please all of the people all of the time.

He had been commissioned to do a traditional, non-arty figure of a Victorian-ish market trader in Altrincham in Trafford, the council next to Manchester. It met with disapproval from Councillor Cornes, who said: “I think it looks awful, absolutely awful”. Noticing one of the traits of three-dimensional objects, he went on, “It is visible from all angles....” Another critic suggested the £35,000 cost should have been spent on toilets. It was always so.

When Edward VII died in 1910, there was rather less enthusiasm for a commemorative statue than there had been for his Mother Queen Victoria. She was by then sat upon her throne in Piccadilly Gardens (incidentally above some public toilets). In the end a local engineer James Gresham, paid sculptor John Cassidy and the philandering playboy was sited in Whitworth Park. [18] The park and art gallery also owed its existence to the local, friendly engineer and arms manufacturer – Sir Joseph Whitworth. When Edward VII’s son George V died, the city of Manchester avoided another statue and launched a memorial appeal for 500,000 Shillings (£25,000) proposing it should be spent on hospital beds.



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CLOCKWISE: Unnamed and unclaimed sculpture at Greengate, More tat at the Trafford Centre, *Still Point* [Colin Spofforth, 2009] *Skyhooks* [Brian Fell, 1995] *The Dead Blow* [Robert Erskine, 2010]

MEANING(LESS)

Putting up statues like lots of things councils used to do, has largely been privatised. Most recent ‘public’ artworks are not public at all – they are picked, paid for and put up by private developers. They often stand in quasi-public spaces – city streets given over to commerce and retail. There may not be any visible barriers to stop the public wandering in and spending, but the areas are privately owned and controlled. Spinningfields in Manchester is one such example.

The owners include statues and sculptures largely because they help in getting planning permission, they can ‘place make’ and they give the appearance of culture and suggest the development is about more than just conspicuous consumption. Often that’s all the art is there for, so that’s often the limit of its ambition. Sometimes it can be fun and/or striking, such as ‘Skyhooks’ [LEFT] which commemorates Trafford Park’s industrial heyday. But then there’s the thing about people donating statues...

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WELL MEANING

One day in 2018, a bronze statue depicting a rough sleeper was unveiled by a homeless man called Dave. It lies outside St. Ann's Church, in St. Ann's Square in Manchester City Centre.

'Jesus the Homeless' by Canadian artist Timothy P. Schmalz, [19] is a near life-size (36" High x 84" Long x 24" Deep), bronze cast figure of a man, wrapped in a blanket lying on a bench. The blanket covers his head, but leaves his bare feet exposed. They are pierced, showing the figure to be Jesus.

Locating the statue in one of Manchester City Centre's poshest public places might be seen as provocative. Its position right outside a church provoked obvious questions about how Jesus, would react to the homeless crisis.

The reactions of people in Manchester to the statue were mixed. A few argued rough sleeping was not an appropriate subject for a statue, but the most common comment was the money should have been spent on the homeless themselves. “The man in the street” wrestled with the idea that a £25,000 piece of bronze about people on the street, didn’t somehow mean there was £25,000 less for people on the street. (The £25,000 came from an anonymous donor.)

Another comment was that the prone figure of Jesus stopped a rough sleeper bedding down on the bench. (Actually, there is space for someone to sit next to the prone figure.) It was as if no one had noticed the few benches there were in the city centre all featured ‘hostile architecture’. These are designs that include spikes and rails to stop people lying, or curves and uncomfortable seats that stop people lingering. – Manchester like other cities, has given its public spaces to commerce. Shopping and consuming are the only legitimate pursuits in the modern city.

The reaction to the statue was not all negative. Its defenders, said it raised awareness of the problem of homelessness. It certainly seemed to generate more arguments on social media than many of the advertising campaigns that have run about the issue. But the problem with the public’s perception of homelessness is not awareness, but ‘immune-ness’.

Many of the comments were about its effectiveness as a campaign poster, rather than its merit as a sculpture. Religious subjects in art can and do appeal beyond a religious audience and everyone seemed to ‘get’ the idea that the subject was compassion for the vulnerable. But there is more to this statue, or rather there are more of this statue – 120-odd more – in cities from New York to Madrid, Washington to Glasgow, Vatican City to Bruges – and the wonderfully named Townsville in Australia, where the local paper reported police getting calls about a dead body outside a church.

The creator Timothy Schmalz has been very active and successful in encouraging donors to pay for them and churches to site them, all over the world. It (they) is (are) striking to look at and the message is direct and easily understood. In fact, Schmalz is absolutely specific in its message. It’s from the Bible, Matthew 25:35-40 and goes:

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me”.

And he describes himself as:

“Devoted to creating artwork that glorifies Christ. The reason for this devotion, apart from my Christian beliefs, is that an artist needs and epic subject to create epic art”.

PHOTO OF "TINY" REPLICA




HOMELESS JESUS

Miniature Replica : (5"H x 9.75"W x 3.5"D) \$79.99
 Tiny Replica : (2.25"H x 4.75"W x 1.75"D) \$24.99



Inspired by Matthew 25, this sculpture is a representation that suggests Christ is with the most marginalized in our society. The Christ figure is shrouded in a blanket the only indication that it is Jesus is the visible wounds on the feet. The life-size version of the work has enough room that someone is able to sit on the bench. This solid resin-stone cast is coated in a realistic bronze finish and is mounted on a solid matt black base. Timothy personally sculpts every original small masterpiece complete with his signature or monogram. Each replica is detailed by hand to the exacting standards of this modern day master sculptor.

Select Size: [View Selection](#)

USD \$24.99

- | + [ADD TO CART](#)

But, looking at the artist's other work, it's hard to not to say Mr Schmalz has a taste for schmaltz. It also becomes clear that the intent behind this and his other work is to get people into church, so it's a kind of recruiting poster.

But even its Mancunian critics have acknowledged its appropriateness, given the crisis on the city's streets. In 2010, there were 41 people sleeping rough, the year before the statue was installed there were 268. reason. The statue was originally intended to be sited in Westminster, near the seat of government, but the council would not give the necessary permissions. They would in Manchester.

SAINTS & SINNERS

The Homeless Jesus statue is not the only example of ‘serial statue giving’. In November 2019, on the 150th anniversary of his birth, a 2.7 metre (9 feet) tall 800kg bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi [20>] was unveiled outside Manchester Cathedral. It was sculpted by Indian artist Ram V Sutar, donated by an Indian charitable organisation, the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharamour and paid for by the Kamani family, who founded the Boohoo fashion retailer and live in Manchester. At the unveiling, organisers explained the statues’ relevance:

“The main reason for having the statue in Manchester is to share in the multi-faith and multi-cultural city that is Manchester. It’s a direct response to the Manchester Arena attack that happened in 2017, to show that love and compassion can always overcome hatred.”

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[20]

Gandhi's actual links with Manchester are a little tenuous. He passed through in 1931, on a visit to Blackburn to meet workers in Lancashire textile mills. Gandhi in statue form can also be found in Parliament Square in London. There, he keeps company with Nelson Mandela and two of his erstwhile opponents, South African leader Jan Smutts, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who once called Gandhi a 'half-naked fakir'. This statue of Gandhi was unveiled on the 100th anniversary of him leaving South Africa and returning to India, which is seen as the start of his campaign for Indian independence. So, there is a sort of unintended synergy between these figures, which if nothing else shows that even portrait statues can have meanings beyond being a likeness.

Gandhi and Mandela have symbolism beyond their part in the history of their own countries, or post-colonialism. They are seen as universal figures and are imbued with 'saintly' qualities. Of course, neither were.



Who gets a statue is often subject to the whims of fashion. Gandhi has been a popular subject. There are statues of him in Tavistock Square Garden [21] (1968); Saughton Park, Edinburgh (1997); Museum Quarter, Hull (2004); Belgrave Road, Leicester (2009); and Cardiff Bay, Cardiff (2017).

He may be ubiquitous, but in recent years admiration for him has not been universal.

In Manchester, a petition asked the council to refuse planning permission for his statue in view of Gandhi's racist views about black African people. It was suggested a worthier subject for a statue might be Steve Biko, the South African anti-apartheid activist who was murdered by state security forces in 1977. Suggesting Mr. 'X' would make a better statue than of Mr 'Y' repeats the common misconception that councils pick and pay for statues. Biko does not have a statue in Manchester, but he is commemorated in the name of Manchester University's Student Union 'Steve Biko Building' – and in questionable taste in the naming of its "Biko's" Coffee Shop".

The petition attracted support from people who would describe themselves as anti-racist, alongside people who might say, "I'm not a racist but..." So, one comment on the petition read:

"Although there is some evidence that Gandhi was educated and evolved his views after his visit to South Africa, we must be careful to not allow whitewashed versions of history to be presented."

Whilst another described Gandhi as:

"...a genocidal psycho who drank his own piss."



ABOVE: *Statues Fall* [Digital montage by David Dunnico, 2020]

In 2020, the killing of George Floyd by the police in the USA, was the catalyst for world-wide protests under the banner of ‘Black Lives Matter’. The protests inspired in both America and Europe an examination of symbols of racism including statues of slave traders and imperialists such as Churchill [22] and people who had held racist views such as Gandhi (and Churchill). During protests in London both figures had the distinction of having the word “Racist” sprayed on their plinths. Surprisingly Jan Smutts [23] escaped adornment. Statues are assumed to set reputations in stone (or bronze) but interpretations are not.

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[24] London



[25] Manchester

SECOND HAND

A lot of people in Manchester probably don't know the city has a statue of Abraham Lincoln let alone why. There wasn't supposed to be. The statue was made to stand outside the Houses of Parliament in London, and be unveiled on the centenary of the end of the War of 1812 – the last time America and Britain had fought each other (and the British burnt down The White House).

But the clients thought the bronze sculpture by George Grey Barnard did not look “statesmanlike enough” so told Barnard to have another go. In the meantime, the First World War broke out, meaning the new more statesmanlike Lincoln didn't get to Parliament Square until 1920. [24] Manchester bought the surplus Lincoln, presumably for a good price, and installed in Platt Fields Park in 1919. In 1986, it was moved to his present location in Lincoln Square in the city centre. [25] A ‘sort of link’ between the city and the 16th President of the United States was found in the form of a letter he wrote to the cotton workers of Lancashire, thanking them for their support of a boycott of Confederate cotton during the American Civil War.

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[26]



[27]



[28]

VOTES FOR STATUES

People like round numbers, so centenaries such as the 100th Anniversary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, which gave (some) women and all men the right to vote, was marked with several full-length, life size portrait statues of suffragettes. In London's Parliament Square, Millicent Fawcett [26] now stands in a row with Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela – a sort of 'Apology Avenue' – where the British State erects posthumous statues to people the British State previously would have preferred dead. The statue of Fawcett is conventional, the most remarkable thing being that it is by 1997 Turner Prize winning, one-time conceptual artist, Gillian Wearing. There is possibly a metaphor in this about how the once radical can be smothered by the embrace of the establishment... Which brings us to Emmeline Pankhurst.

Just around the corner in Victoria Tower Gardens, Emmeline Pankhurst [27] has stood on a plinth since 1930 (although she got moved in 1958 and a proposal to move her again was made in 2018). It took the centenary of women getting the vote to get a statue of Pankhurst erected in her home town of Manchester. Actually, it was a coincidence that was pressed into service.

What happened was someone noticed Queen Victoria was still the only woman commemorated by a public portrait statue in city centre Manchester. What was needed was a statue of a woman. Why? Well because. Statues are symbolic and make important statements about a city's vision. And cities rather than being places to live, are supposed to be run like businesses, and businesses all have a 'vision statement' to tell them what they are supposed to be doing. Vision statements are usually just talk, and talk is cheap. So any new statue of any woman was going to have to cost the council and its "customers" nothing. Councillor Andrew Simcock was the man with the vision and the stamina to keep repeating that the statue would not cost the customers of Manchester City Council a single penny.

Businesses do a lot of market research in order to sell the same stuff they were selling anyway. Councils do something similar and call it "consultation". So, the public would be consulted about who would be the subject for the statue. A list of 20 inspiring Mancunian women was

drawn up and the public voted, as you would expect, for the most famous one – Emmeline Pankhurst. This was handy as that approaching centenary of women getting the vote meant there would be some Lottery money about. But there were some who thought they had put the wrong Pankhurst up for erection. Emmeline may have been the leader, but she was also the one who sold out to the establishment and turned into a war mongering patriot during the First World War (the end of which was also having its centenary). Rather than copying London, Manchester should have gone with either of her more radical daughters Sylvia or Christabel, but didn't.

The council tax payers were given another vote to select which of four female sculptors would get the job. Hazel Reeves was duly elected. She called her design “Rise Up, Women”. [28] But in case anyone rose up and followed the suffragette's tactic of smashing shop windows, the statue was branded “Our Emmeline” Its ceremonial unveiling took place on 14th December 2018, 100 years to the day after the first General Election where women (aged over 30) could vote.

The statue unveiling in St. Peter's Square was a big and glossy production with video screens, a specially commissioned documentary, stewards, Emmeline Pankhurst's granddaughter on hand do the unveiling, and ‘community engagement’ in the form of marching school children and singing choirs.

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The same day, seven miles northeast of Manchester in the former mill town of Oldham, a statue of suffragette Annie Kenny [29] was unveiled. Kenny worked in an Oldham mill from the age of 10 and was the only working class woman to hold a senior position in Emmeline Pankhurst's Women's Social and Political Union. She was close to Pankhurst's daughter Christabel. This statue by sculptor Denise Dutton had also cost the council nothing – but they didn't seem to make as big a song and dance about it as Manchester had.

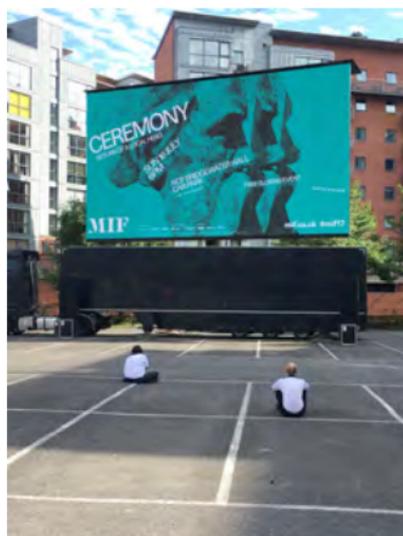
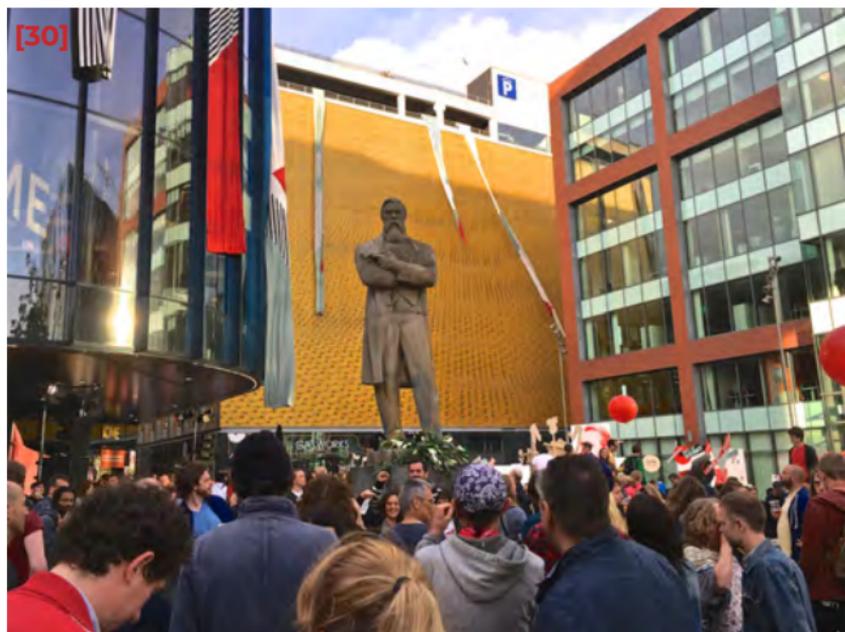


The unveiling too was much more about “Our Annie” than the polished PR of Manchester’s ‘Our Emmeline’ – the radical who wouldn’t frighten the shoppers. But there was a famous local on



hand to pull the cord in Oldham. Actress Maxine Peake was modest and funny in her speech and didn’t try to up-stage Annie Kenny – but she did let the audience know she preferred Christabel to Emmeline.

STATUESQUE



COMING HOME

In 2017, the centenary (told you people liked centeneries) of the Russian Revolution, a statue of Fredrich Engels, the political philosopher who along with Karl Marx developed the theory of communism, was transported on the back of a lorry from Ukraine in the former Soviet Union to Manchester. It was put up in Tony Wilson Place, **[30]** near the Home arts complex and near Colin Sporroth's fibreglass cavorting figures. [\[See page 26\]](#)

The installation of the statue was as much a piece of performance art as a piece of public art. The journey and the unveiling formed part of 'Ceremony' – the closing event of that year's Manchester International Festival. Turner Prize nominated artist Phil Collins's film of the journey across Europe was interspersed with video stories from workers in Manchester to look at what the condition of the working class was like now.

Whilst the unveiling took place in Tony Wilson Square with an invited audience, the slightly shambolic performance was relayed over the road to a car park, where members of the public could watch it on video screens.

The two-tonne, 3.5-metre tall concrete statue had been made in 1970 by an uncredited sculptor. It had been placed at a crossroads in a small village in the Ukraine, which at that time was still very much part of the Soviet Union. By the time Ukraine declared independence in 1991, it had been daubed with blue and yellow paint – the colours of their new flag. The paint is still just about visible. Later, it was removed to an agricultural compound where Collins found it dismantled, like the Soviet Union itself and hidden and protected with raffia sacks.

Many Ukrainians saw the communist statues as symbols of occupation. Before independence, there were an estimated 5,500 statues of Lenin alone in the Ukraine. This was two thirds of the total in the whole for the whole Soviet Union. Plus, there were many other communist figures such as Marx and of course Engels. In the run up to independence, a number of these were toppled in iconoclastic public performances, similar to those seen after the overthrow of Iraq's Saddam Hussein in 2003.

More Ukrainian statues fell after the 'Euromaiden' protests of 2013-14, which overthrew the Russian leaning government and introduced 'decommunisation' laws.

These followed the precedent of ‘de-nazification’ measures undertaken by the allies after the Second World War, and outlawed the display of communist (and fascist) symbols, including stars, the hammer and sickle, and especially statues (apart from war memorials, which were exempted). Streets, towns and whole districts with communist names were renamed.



Other former Soviet bloc countries have behaved differently. Some such as Hungary, gathered together all their Lenins and Marxs and put them in communist theme parks such as Memento Park near Budapest. [31] In Berlin, one of the best and last communist statues, Ludwig Engelhardt’s 1985 double portrait statue of Marx and Engels, [32] is still appealing to the masses (of tourists).

The discussion about whether to keep, remove or relocate statues is pertinent to the controversy in the USA over Confederate statues and the Confederate battle flag,

Given the toppling of such statues elsewhere, why would Manchester want a second-hand statue of Engels? Collins thought bringing Engels back to prominence in Manchester reasserted the city's starring role in the history of radical thought. It was the world's first 'nuclear free city' [See page 18]; the Trades Union Congress (TUC) was founded at the Mechanics Institute on Princess Street; the Suffragettes; the Vegetarian Society and the Anti-Corn Law League all began in Manchester. There was already a statue in Manchester of Robert Owen, a key figure in the development of British socialism – and as we will see, already another one of Engels.

Friedrich Engels had a direct connection with Manchester. He was born in 1820 into a wealthy family in Barmen, Germany, but the 20 years he spent as a radical in Manchester are the reason there are statues of him. He first went to the city in 1842 to look after the family's interests in Ermen and Engels, a textile firm based in Victoria Mill in Weaste, Salford. His father hoped the move would cure the young Engels of his radical politics. It had the opposite effect. Manchester was the world's first modern, industrial city. Here, the new class of capitalist factory owners extracted as much profit as they could from workers, whose life expectancy fell as profits rose.

It was here where the conflict between capital and labour was sharpest. Manchester was then, as it is now, a radical place. Engels described the place at that time as:

“The seat of the most powerful unions, the central point of Chartism [a petition calling for basic rights such as the vote], the place which numbers the most socialists”.

Engels lived a double life - a respectable member of the family firm by day, radical by night.

Engels had already met Karl Marx, with whom he would collaborate and support as a patron for the rest of Marx's life and whose work he would continue for a dozen more years, until his own death in 1895. In Manchester, Engels began the other central relationship of his life when he set up a clandestine home with Mary Burns, a working class woman of Irish descent. She guided him amongst the city's impoverished working class. He added these first hand observations to meticulous research and the beginnings of the political philosophy he and Marx would develop. This would become his classic book 'The Condition of the Working Class in England'. It was published in 1845 in German, but not available in English until 1887. Historian Eric Hobsbawm described it as:

“By far the best single book on the working class of the period. It remains an indispensable work and a landmark in the fight for the emancipation of humanity”.

In the 1960s, a block of high-rise flats in Barton was named Engels House by Salford Council and there are a couple of blue plaques. Collins was not the first to try to bring a statue of Engels “back home” to the city.

Dave Haslam in his book ‘Manchester, England’ tells of Christine Derbyshire from Central Manchester Development Corporation, a 1980s-90s redevelopment quango. She watched demonstrators pulling down monuments to Lenin and Marx and had the idea of getting a surplus Engels from Manchester’s twin city of Leningrad, now back to being called St Petersburg. One possible site for a statue was in front of the disused fire station near Piccadilly train station. The plan came to nothing. Had the plan gone ahead, it would not have been the first time Manchester had bought a second hand statue. [See [Abraham Lincoln, Page 42](#)] But by the time Phil Collins was bringing Engels [to] Home, there was already a statue of Engels next door in Salford...

Engels’ Beard

The buzzword of the defunct CMDC, who didn’t manage to get us an Engels in the 1990s, was ‘redevelopment’. Today, its private sector equivalent is ‘regeneration’ and sculptors in search of public commissions have to make work that “engages with communities”. In the case of an artwork for Salford University’s Adelphi Arts Campus, this meant a five-metre fibreglass sculpture ‘Engels’ Beard’. [33]



[33]



Bouldering Area Rules

- All persons use these facilities at their own risk.
- Please climb within your own capabilities
- Children should be supervised at all times
- Do not stand on or leave anything below a climber.
- Please do not bring dogs, glass or alcohol into the area.
- Do not jump from the boulders.
- Climbing or bouldering on any climbing wall can result in fall. Falling from any height can result in serious injury.

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The design came from Jai Redman of Engine, a Salford arts production company. He too had read in Dave Haslam's book but rather than trawling around Eastern Europe looking for a statue, he decided to make his own. It has not been universally welcomed. Redman's sculpture inexplicably incorporates a climbing wall on its rear elevation. [34] Journalist and lecturer Rachel Broady described the concept as "fodder for regeneration nostalgia" and was quoted in the Salford Star saying:

"At a time when Salford children are experiencing increasing poverty and a rise in Victorian diseases, I think as a city we should look more closely at the work of Engels, instead we're invited to climb his face in what seems to be an ironic beard joke that's gone too far".



There was more irony in Whitworth Park (where Edward VII was on his plinth). The Whitworth Art Gallery installed 'Hippocratic Trees' by Christine Borland and warned people not to climb on this piece of sculpture that looked exactly like a climbing frame.

THE KING OF TAT

You can't buy taste. Mohammed Al-Fayed managed to buy Harrods and turn it into the biggest corner shop in the world. After his son Dodi and Princess Diana were killed in a car crash in 1997, he created a wondrously awful grotto in the basement of Harrods complete with a statue of the couple, entitled 'Innocent Victims' [35] and a shrine. Al-Fayed sold the store complete with the statue.

The statue (unbelievably) was the work of William Mitchell, who was responsible for many pieces of striking modernist public sculpture. He died in 2020 and is particularly remembered for his use of concrete and geometric reliefs. There are a number of his works in Manchester, including (for now) one outside a now derelict row of shops in Eastford Square in Collyhurst.[36]



[36]



In 2018, the new owners of Harrods used the announcement that there was to be a memorial to Princess Diana at Kensington Palace, to return the statue to Mr Al-Fayed. It was becoming a theme.

As he was selling Harrods to the Qatari investment group, he was planning to site a 2.3 metre tall, plaster and resin statue of pop singer Michael Jackson outside the store. The new owners managed to say no before it was in situ.

As Mr Al-Fayed had already had the statue made (and was Chairman of Fulham Football Club) he put it on a big plinth outside the Club's Craven Cottage Ground. Apparently, the statue was now said to commemorate Jackson's one and only visit, where he watched Fulham play Wigan Athletic. Neither home or away fans were on Al-Fayed's payroll, so felt able to voice their opinion on their Chairman's taste and generosity.

As soon as Al-Fayed stepped down as Chairman, the statue was removed. The season after its removal Fulham were relegated from the top division. Al-Fayed blamed one on the other. Michael Jackson – The King of Pop – is now exhibited (in a post modern ironic sort of way) in Manchester's National Football Museum. [**<37**]

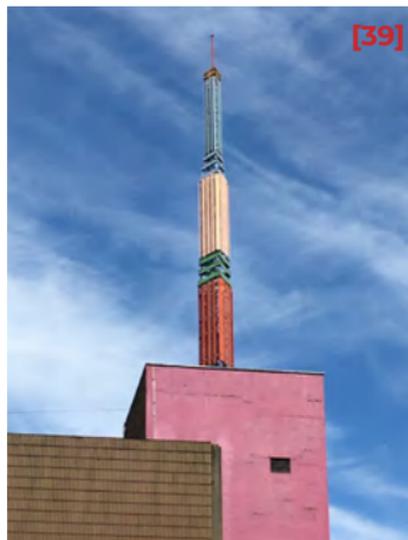


BLOW YOUR HORN

The unveiling ceremony (pun intended) that marked the arrival of the Engels statue was held in an NCP carpark. A month later, in another NCP car park on the other side of the city centre, the city lost one of its own home-grown public artworks.

David Kemp's Tib Street Horn [38] was commissioned in 1996 and unveiled in 1999 on the corner of Tib Street and Church Street, opposite the famous Affleck's Palace alternative store. The sculpture looks like a serpent and a saxophone coiled themselves around the remains of one corner of an old hat factory. It was one of the best-known landmarks in the Northern Quarter, as the area continues its arc from run down industrial seediness, via "vibrant, edgy, trendy creative hub" to bland shopping and city living redevelopment opportunity.

STATUESQUE



Public artworks were one of the things the City Council and The Northern Quarter Association used to make the area to the East of Piccadilly Gardens a distinct neighbourhood (Quarter). Today it is left to graffiti artists do the same sort of thing for free.

Kemp's statue was exactly right in its quiriness and location to be the gateway and symbol of what the Northern Quarter was being pushed as – a creative centre for a post-industrial city. It also hid a particularly ugly example of a car park. Ironically, on top of the other NCP carpark in Church Street is another sculptural landmark. Peter Freeman's 1999 Light Tower [39] had only recently been refurbished and switched back on after years in the dark.

However, the landowner bet on values of land rising as the area became more gentrified. Betting came naturally to them – the owner was a bookie. – Salford born Fred Done and his 'Salboy' property developing wing had previously done for a number of other sites in Manchester and Salford. They got permission to bulldoze the lot and build the usual bland mix of flats and shops that developers do. There was a time when developers would pay for some public art, which never did a planning application any harm. That time seems to have gone. All proposals to keep the sculpture were rejected, but it was allowed to be dismantled and stored until the University of Manchester could find it a new home. So the Tib Street Horn may blow again.

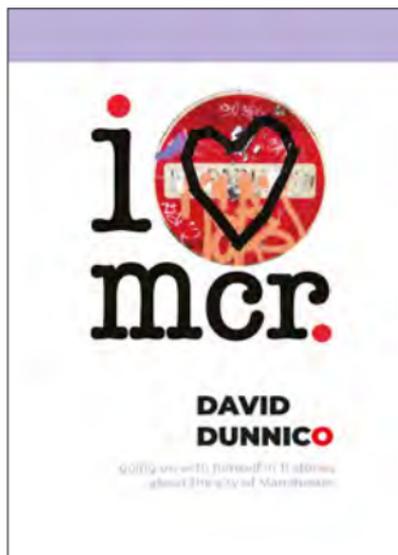
STATUESQUE



Ghost Bikes are unofficial memorial statues. Old bicycles, painted white and left where a cyclist has been killed whilst riding. This one was put there during a vigil held in February 2017, eight days after two cyclists were hit by a car, killing one.

The dead cyclist was Harry Sievey, he was 24-years old and the son of Chris Sievey (Frank Sidebottom)

MORE



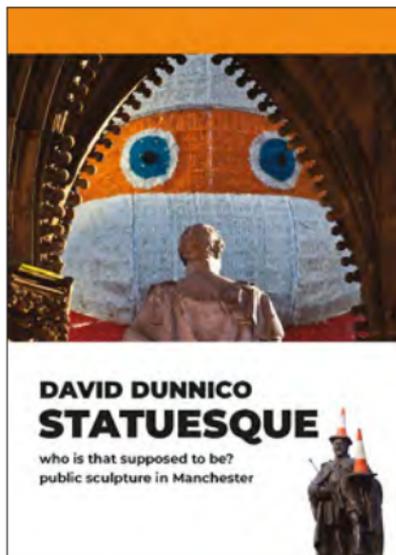
A6, 74 pages, full colour
Absurd stories behind familiar sights in the city



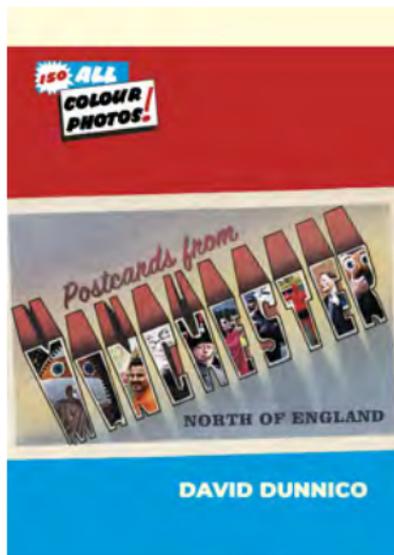
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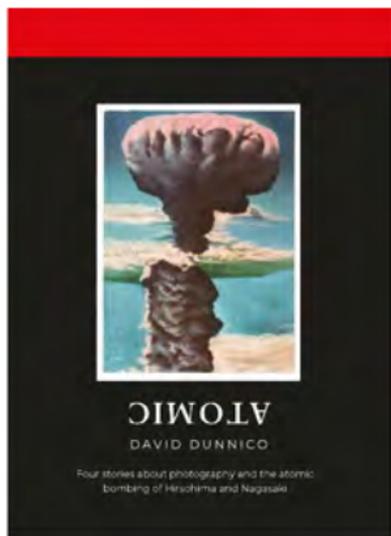


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You are reading it now, so you know what it's about.

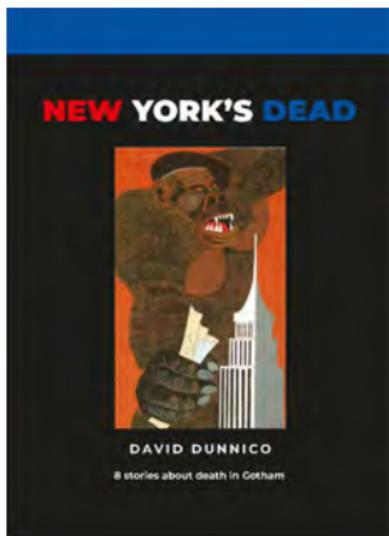


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David Dunnico is an artist and writer from
Manchester in the UK

You can see what he is getting
up to on his blog

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David Dunnico looks Manchester's statues and public sculpture. Part photography, part psychogeography (without all the philosophy) and wholly partisan. He delights in the everyday absurdity of cities – and answers some unasked questions...

Why do we put statues up?
Why do we tear them down?

Why are there 2 statues of Friedrich Engels and 2 of Frédéric Chopin, but none of Graham Stringer?

Another one in his series of *'Little Gem'* pamphlets where he goes on with himself about some aspect of the Manchester condition.