

Book of the week

'Rule of Night'

Trevor Hoyle

Pomona Books £8.99

Originally published in 1975 and now reissued by intriguing new Hebden Bridge-based Pomona Books, 'Rule of Night' is a powerfully authentic account of working-class life and gang violence in early-1970s Rochdale. Sixteen-year-old Kenny Seddon has a girlfriend (Janice) and a football team to follow (the Dale), but he can't hold down a job and he's filled with hatred for the world around him. The only thing that lifts him out of his rut of existential despair is the promise of an evening's criminal activity, whether it be selling pills to Teds and Northern Soul boys, or mugging Pakistanis for pennies. With steel washers for a knuckle duster and a sharpened spindle in his pocket, he'll take on anyone from disgruntled Bury fans to longhaired bikers to youths in bowler hats who've taken 'A Clockwork Orange' a bit too literally.

In an afterword written for the new edition, Hoyle reveals what prompted him to write the novel. He wanted to discover what makes someone like Kenny tick, to find the human being inside the hooligan. This is precisely

what he has done, with an extraordinary degree of success. It's testament to Hoyle's skill as a writer that despite the shocking pleasure Kenny takes in hurting others, despite his disgraceful treatment of women and people of other races, despite his unthinking callousness, monumental insensitivity and relentless brutality, we still care about what happens to him, we still become emotionally involved, because the author has made him real. With the much feared return of football violence and the election of BNP politicians in Lancashire towns, Kenny Seddon is a character as relevant to our times as to three decades ago. *Nicholas Royle*

A POMONA BOOK
rule of night
TREVOR HOYLE

