

CORRESPONDENCE

THE NEW ONE-INCH ORDNANCE MAP

An article in the *Geographical Journal* for October 1931 gave a description of the excellent new type of 1-inch map which has recently been adopted. It may perhaps be interesting to note that but for the War a map, generally of this type, would have been adopted towards the end of the year 1914, seventeen years ago. In the Report of the Progress of the Ordnance Survey for the year ending 31 March 1914, the then Director-General remarked: "It was mentioned in my report of last year that it was not likely that any of the sheets of the new type of 1-inch map would be published before the year 1914. Many of these sheets are now in an advanced state of preparation, but none will be actually printed before this Report is issued. It is expected however that some will be available during the course of the summer. In addition to improving the representation of the hill features, care has been taken to make the classification of the roads a suitable one for modern needs. . . . A special 1-inch map of the Killarney District was published during the year in a style somewhat similar to that of the new series."

This Report was signed on 28 April 1914, and, as we all know, the War broke out a little over three months from that date. From the moment of the outbreak of the War, the new map was put utterly aside, and it may be doubted whether any of the plates, of the sheets that were almost ready for printing, were preserved. After the War it became necessary to expedite the preparation of a revised edition of the 1-inch map, and a less pictorial and less elaborate style was adopted—a style that could be more rapidly produced. But the pictorial style was abandoned with regret, especially by those who had worked to perfect it. The "Popular Edition" thus made its appearance, clean and clear, with the roads easily legible, but with reliance only on contours to show the ground-forms. The contours were however increased to a 50-foot interval for the first time, and these 50-foot contours are again employed on the new map.

However we are not left to guess what the style of the "lost map" was. In reasonable anticipation of the issue of the map, an advance specimen was printed in the 'Text Book of Topographical and Geographical Surveying,' second edition, 1913, and this (Plate XXIV) will be found after page 184 of that work. From a study of this Plate it appears that the hill-features were shown by a combination of "layer" tones, hachures in a yellowish shade (much the same as on the new map), and grey shading on the south and east sides of the hills (again, much the same as on the new map). The principal difference is that, on the "lost map," the lowest "layer" tone was a light green from sea-level to the 300-foot contour.

It is interesting to note the general similarity between the two maps, separated by an interval of seventeen years. This similarity is evidence of a general continuity in the working of the Department responsible for both, a continuity all the more effective because the present Director-General was, for a time, in the pre-War period, responsible for the preparatory studies resulting in the pre-War pattern, which was never issued owing to the outbreak of the War.

It is understood that there will shortly be issued an edition of the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch map, which is on generally the same lines, except that, in the absence of hachures, the old hill-shading plates have been used, partly as hill-shading, and partly as shadow. The roads and the more important alterations have been brought up to date. This new form of the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch map will probably first be produced as a district map of the Cotswolds; afterwards the sheets will be issued on the new grid and projection, as the stocks of the old form become exhausted. The new map has many merits, and should prove most useful for a great variety of purposes, notably for motoring. It is a pleasant map to look at, and easy to read.

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The new 1-inch map has come in for a chorus of praise from the professionals. Now perhaps the amateur may be allowed to raise his voice; for to him also a new edition is an event of no little interest. It is by no means certain that the man in the street, or rather the man in the open country, is going to give this map such an enthusiastic welcome. To one at any rate, who has walked thousands of miles in these islands Ordnance map in hand or pocket and so may claim to be heard, the latest move of the Survey appears to be in a retrograde direction in some respects. In spite of all that has been said the new edition is not as clean a map as the old Popular. In making a comparison it is not fair to use the Plymouth sheet of the latter, as it is not a good specimen. The contour lines of the sheets vary considerably in colour and definition; but in some of the best examples they give as good an idea of the relief to an intelligent map-reader as is possible without layers. Genuine escarpments are shown at once by the closeness of the lines. The theory that small features occurring between the 50-foot lines do not appear does not amount to much; for who expects them to appear on a 1-inch scale unless they are crags, when they can be shown by the crag symbol? The hachures of the new map seem to add practically no helpful information. Very little idea, even with the aid of the new layering, is given of the relative heights of Caradon Hill (1213 feet), Kit Hill (1091 feet), and Green Hill on Dartmoor (1553 feet). The great objection to hachures has always been that they obscure lettering. In the new map we have not only this drawback but also a quite inadequate and apparently unsystematic layering, neutralizing the yellow of the small roads, muddying the green of the woods, and dulling the blue of the rivers which in any case is not so brilliant as in the Popular sheets. In walking across a country like Dartmoor you want to be able to see at a glance where the rivers are so as to avoid needless ups and downs, and where the tracks run so as to make rapid progress when necessary. And it must be remembered that a map has often to be consulted in wind and rain, possibly in twilight, which is a very different matter to looking at it on the wall of the Society's Ambulatory. The Popular sheets are far more satisfactory in these circumstances than the new map can be; and it is with feelings of dismay that many will hear of their being superseded.

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