

The fifth master: a plea for the publication of John O'Donovan's Letters to the Ordnance Survey

by John Paddy Browne

Sir Charles Close's *The Early Years of the Ordnance Survey* devoted several pages to the work done on behalf of the Ordnance Survey, between 1830 and 1842, by John O'Donovan who, working under the directorship of Thomas Colby, but more intimately under Colby's lieutenant, Thomas Aiskew Larcom of the Royal Engineers, was largely responsible for the Ordnance Survey's approach and treatment of Irish place-name orthography during the OS's early years in Ireland.

The Ordnance Survey's purpose in Ireland is well enough documented elsewhere, and anyone with an inkling of the Irish survey will have already encountered O'Donovan and have heard about 'his' letters.

O'Donovan occupies almost two positions in Ordnance Survey history: on the one hand he is regarded as a hard-working, scholarly expert in his field; on the other he is seen as something of a tragi-comic figure, enduring appalling hardships in the pursuit of his work, but at the same time a source of anecdotes, a spinner of amusing yarns, good for a laugh.

He was all these things, of course, and more besides. His letters to Larcom (which he didn't have to write) were as a sort of complement to his official task, the official task being to track down all known variants of all proper place-names to be shown on the new six-inch maps then being made, and to advise on the most correct form for publication. This task took him into libraries, where he studied the great secular and ecclesiastical histories, and over mountains, moorland and bogland in search of native Irish speakers who could offer him correct pronunciations of obscure names from which he could deduce original meanings, and from that contrive a spelling - albeit a compromise - which would satisfy both the Irish map user and the British authorities who were making the maps.

The trouble with compromises, however, is that they please nobody, and O'Donovan's work for the Ordnance Survey has been somewhat clouded by the insistence of his masters on the introduction of phonetic spellings and the intrusion of alphabet letters which do not exist in Irish lexicography: k, q, v, w, y, for example. Hence the Irish word for a town, *baile*, becomes 'bally' on the maps, and *cille*, a church, becomes 'killy', as in Killybegs or Killarney.

These compromises were logical conclusions drawn up by the expert (O'Donovan) and his sympathetic chief (Larcom), both of whom failed to anticipate the revival of the Gaelic language which was to follow in a few years. By that time the deed was done, and it has taken the full force of the Gaelic revival to establish again something approaching authenticity in the spelling of Irish place-names on such things as signposts and shop-fronts. The great mass of Irish people, nonetheless, seem content with corrupt forms like Derry (*Doire*, a place of oaks) and Glenshane (*Gleann Sion*, valley of storms).

But the science of place-name orthography is not what concerns me here. The Name Books which Colby had devised for the survey of Ireland, and which established principles for name-collecting still adhered to by today's Ordnance Survey, are evidence of the thoroughness of O'Donovan's research and scholarship. Today's Ordnance Survey Name Books may be skeletal in comparison with O'Donovan's Books, and far less interesting, but we may yet have cause to lament their passing as new technological methods and economic exigencies render them more

and more obsolescent. If and when this happens, yet another Ordnance Survey era will have ended.

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Had Close succeeded in shipping all the paraphernalia of the Irish Survey operation back to Southampton following the introduction of Irish independence, it is very likely that the O'Donovan Name Books, and possibly even the letters to Larcom, might well have joined the shades of the Colby letters which Close was able to edit for his *Early Years*, but which perished in the blitz of 1940 while still in Ordnance Survey custody.

The Second World War, however, barely reached the Irish Free State (as it was then), and so the great mass of O'Donovan's written work survived, and continues to survive in the Dublin archives of the Ordnance Survey and the Royal Irish Academy. Larcom, an assiduous collector of his own papers, bequeathed the huge bulk of his work to a number of Irish institutions. These two sources, the O'Donovan and the Larcom papers, are an as yet almost untapped fountainhead of monumental importance, not only to the better understanding of the Ordnance Survey's work in Ireland, but to the understanding of a whole way of life.

For O'Donovan's letters to Larcom, written with a freedom and informality of speech rarely, if ever, found in any official correspondence, puts flesh on the bones of a massive scientific operation. If ever prose could be said to be 'visual', it is O'Donovan's literate, witty and descriptive correspondence with his chief, Larcom. Written mostly from the field where, for a miserly wage, he explored the wildest recesses of human habitation, O'Donovan brought his great powers of concentration and learning to bear on what Charles I had called 'the barbarous and uncouth names of places in Ireland'.

O'Donovan had not yet published his magnum opus, the *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*, the monastic history of Ireland now commonly known as *The Annals of the Four Masters*, the translation of which earned O'Donovan the epithet 'The Fifth Master'. But he had published a good deal of other scholarly work for a number of popular and learned journals; and in 1837 his single most important Ordnance Survey contribution appeared as the historical section of the magnificent *Memoir of the City and North Western Liberties of Londonderry, Parish of Templemore*, the volume which was to be the model *Memoir* for the whole range of Colby's six-inch maps of Ireland. Shocked by the expense and expanse of this *Memoir*, Colby's superiors ordered him to revert to his 'main purpose', which was to produce maps and to forget about compiling historical and social surveys of Domesday proportions. The Londonderry *Memoir*, thus, remains the only work of its kind published by the Ordnance Survey.¹

Larcom, however, ever something of an independent spirit, allowed O'Donovan and his team of research colleagues to continue to collect the sort of detail which filled the Name Books: the amount of corn harvested from a field; the thickness or diameter of a mill-wheel; the occupation of a local house owner; and so on.

And Larcom encouraged the unique exchange of letters with O'Donovan until, at one point, he had to rebuke O'Donovan for defacing official documents with 'ribaldry'. In these let-

¹ Two of the memoirs were finally published in 1986, that for Coleraine by the Coleraine Historical Society, and that for Desertmartin and Kilconaghan, edited by H. Richardson (*Ed*). [Mike Miller later pointed out that the memoir for the parish of Antrim was published, edited by Brian Trainor, in 1969. Since 1990, a large number of these memoirs have been published by the Institute of Irish Studies: see *Sheetlines* 30 (March 1991), pp 26-8, e.g.]

ters one can almost hear O'Donovan thinking aloud, as it were, while he unfolds the mysteries of some obscure place-name. Or the reader can visualise him trundling through drenching rain over mountain roads, searching for an old native speaker or a place to stay for the night, beset by snarling dogs and petty country landowners. Or read about his adventures as he takes an open coach ride - again in pouring rain, always pouring rain - in the company of drunks until he is pitched off the top of the coach when the careless driver allows the horses to stray into a ditch.

Often he has had to complain to Larcom about his pay. To prevent theft, O'Donovan's salary was sent to him in banknotes cut in half, each half being sent by separate mails. Frequently O'Donovan had moved on to another place before the second half had reached him. From this paltry wage he had to pay for his own accommodation, his transport, and for ferry crossings to islands and peninsulas. He complained bitterly about his wages being stopped when he fell ill

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with cold and pneumonia brought about by the continuous soakings suffered in the cause of his work. 'Why did I work till 12 o'clock for six years previously? i.e. double the agreed time?' he asked Larcom in a particularly melancholy letter.

In recent years a play by Brian Friel, *Translations*, enjoyed a long and critically successful run at the National Theatre. The play centres on the Ordnance Survey's nineteenth century operations in Ireland, and one of the central characters is a man called Owen who is clearly based upon O'Donovan. When Owen discusses an obscure place-name with his chief (the ironically named Lieut Yolland, who is manifestly Larcom and not the real Yolland, who was despatched to Ireland when he argued too much with Director General Hall later on in Ordnance Survey history), and forces the place-name to yield up its secrets, he, Owen, is re-enacting a scene from one of O'Donovan's letters to Larcom.

The success of *Translations* could have been a pivot upon which a full-scale edition of the O'Donovan letters might have been published. As it happened, it fell to Dr Patricia Boyne to publish a warm and entertaining biography of O'Donovan.² Dr Boyne's section on the Ordnance Survey and O'Donovan's letters is like Close's selection in *Early Years*, succinctly edited and illuminating, but frustratingly all too brief. One ends up wanting to read more. She herself says that the publication of the letters is long overdue, but that the task would be an enormous one.

Indeed it would. Any editor tackling such a job would have to contend with Larcom's appalling handwriting and O'Donovan's awesome scholarship. But what a contribution to Ordnance Survey studies it would make!

John O'Donovan, 1806-1861

Q, 7:8:90.



² Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861)*, Kilkenny, Ireland: Boethius, 1987.

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Reviews

Ordnance Surveyors' Drawings 1789 - c.1840, by Yolande Hodson, with an introduction, summary listing and indexes by Tony Campbell, Reading, Research Publications Ltd, 1989, pp.154 plus map, A4, paperback, ISBN 0 86257 101 4. [Price about £30]

This has been produced to accompany the issue by Research Publications of their microfiche edition of the Ordnance Surveyors' Drawings (OSDs) held in the British Library Map Library. The whole set of fiches costs £1000 or so, though there are also five regional subsets. They are likely to be in some demand from more affluent libraries (assuming any are left, in the U.K. anyway), though presumably less so from private individuals. The fiches are exactly the same as those as the BLML keeps for casual reference to the originals, and they suffer from exactly the same drawback: they are monochrome negatives, so that much detail is either obscured or lost, and so the fiches are of rather limited use. I cannot understand why colour fiches were not produced, particularly as the BL photographers seem to secure much better results in colour than in monochrome, and anyone who has dabbled in photography will know that colour work can be turned round in a matter of hours whereas monochrome work seems to involve protracted negotiations with Mount Olympus. (I hasten to add that BL is not alone in this: a large number of the tithe maps in class IR 30 at the PRO have been microfiched in monochrome, which to a large extent negates the object of avoiding reference to the originals, as so much detail is lost.) There is a further drawback, in that this edition (and thus the accompanying book) confines itself to the 'pure' Ordnance Surveyors' drawings in BL pressmark OSD, which do not cover part of East Anglia, the North Midlands, or anywhere north of the Preston-Hull line; it omits the hill-sketches, revision drawings and post-1837 regular section drawings in BL Maps 176, and although most of this supplementary material appeared on the published one-inch Old Series sheets, by no means all did, and in any case there is an immense gain in having drawings without overlaid hill-sketches. Still, no doubt the price would have been even higher.

Enough. I suspect that, had Research Publications not stepped in, the Charles Close Society would have done so during the next few years, as, though the OSDs are hardly an obscure source, the only lists hitherto available have been the much-thumbed ones on the reference shelves at the BL, and so a published listing ought to have had high priority. Though the supplementary material still awaits a decent published listing, at least the OSDs have been treated properly. Not least, all known dates pertaining to them have been drawn together, thus greatly facilitating further analytical work, and reconstruction of the progress of field survey. There is an index of surveyors and drawings attributable to them. Most valuable are the 'Notes on individual OSDs'. The following is an edited sample of what to expect:

212... Aldridge, Dudley, Stourbridge, Walsall, *Wolverhampton*... '136.92 Square Miles. (chiefly in Staffordshire) Robt Dawson R.M.S. July 2d 1816'... Reduced July 3d 1817... This plan was lent to Dawson in 1820, LB f.17... This is the earliest plan to use gothic lettering for archaeological features, e.g. Watling Street; the trigonometrical station at Bar Beacon is marked; watermark: JAMES WHATMAN TURKEY MILL 1809.

There are two marked differences between how CCS *would* have published these lists, and how Research Publications *have* done so: the price, and the presentation. We could have done it for

£15, probably made a better job of it, and certainly have made a profit. As it is, it is a straight reproduction of various computer printouts, with every matrixed dot duly half-congealed. One would have thought that, in this age of 'IBM-compatible', Research Publications could have solicited the disks and at least have ensured a consistent (daisywheel) type was used throughout. This is overpriced academic publishing with a vengeance.

Richard Oliver

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The County of Kent in 1801: a reproduction of the first published Ordnance Survey map of Great Britain, with a foreword by J.B. Harley, Lympne Castle, Harry Margary, in association with Kent County Library, 1990, 32 x 24 cm, £7:50 paperback (£8:30 direct by post), ISBN 0 903541 42 4

(This is probably the jammiest review you'll read this year, but one way of testing its veracity will be to shell out and see for yourself.)

There are several ways of generating more heat than light on aspects of early Ordnance Survey history. The two best guarantees of conflagration are the foundation date, and what was 'the first Ordnance Survey map', the Faden-produced map of Kent of 1801, reproduced here, or the wholly Ordnance-produced map of Essex of 1805. I have to say that I incline towards 1783 as the founding date (though it seems I am in a minority), on the grounds of organic continuity; all that happened in 1791 was that the *trigonometrical* work was put on a more regular footing, whereas field survey - some of it in Kent - had been going on since 1784. I also incline towards the 1805 map of Essex as 'the first' OS map, on the grounds that it was wholly produced by Ordnance employees, whereas, when all is said and done, Faden was an outsider, even if he was Geographer to the King. Here, Harry Margary has nailed his colours to the mast, and has pronounced 'Faden 1801' to be 'the first'.

It is, of course, not the first time that 'Faden's Kent' has appeared in facsimile: Harry Margary included it in Volume I of *The Old Series Ordnance Survey*, published in 1975. Unfortunately, stocks of Volume I are now so low that it is only to be had if you buy its five siblings,¹ and it was a good idea to issue the Kent map independently. Incidentally, it is effectively a 'floppy atlas', and, as the scope for yet *more* floppy road atlases must surely be limited, perhaps this will be the first of many floppy facsimile atlases. Though, as a participant in the enterprise, I say it who shouldn't, one of the disadvantages of the Margary *Old Series* facsimile has been its publication in bound volumes, which are unsuited for use away from one's home or library. *The County of Kent in 1801* will not commend itself to cyclists and walkers, but it may well join the more mass-produced floppy atlases on the back shelves of cars. (Cyclists and walkers will presumably stick to the David and Charles offerings, which have long ceased to be conveniently bender-folded, and for a large tract of country are more expensive anyway.) There is one practical advantage for those of us who already own Volume I of *The Old Series Ordnance Survey*, in that it enables easy comparisons to be made with the Ordnance Survey's own rendition of Kent, mostly published between 1813 and 1819; trying to compare different openings in the same volume is never satisfactory. There is a useful foreword by Brian Harley, which includes some imaginative passages on the making and using of the map.

This is warmly recommended to those who have missed Volume I of *The Old Series Ordnance Survey*, or are anxious to have a floppy atlas with a difference.

¹ [This was true in 1990, but since then not only Volume I, but also most of the others, have gone out of print completely. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

Richard Oliver

David and Charles Touring Companions: Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1990. 'Assembled by a team of specialist experts under the editorship of Alan Kind'. Paperback, £2:50 per guide.

It will be recalled that a few years ago Ordnance Survey, in collaboration with Jarrold of Norwich, started publishing a series of 'Landranger Guides'. I have never bought any, and have not studied the verbal part of the proceedings, but connoisseurs of post-Serpell emanations from Southampton will be unsurprised that the 'reproductions' of maps therein are dyspeptic travesties. I knew nothing of this present enterprise until I went into a central London bookshop and was confronted with a whole shelf of them. They are designed for use with OS 1:50,000 *Landranger* maps, and the index on the back suggests that they are available for

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Sheets 75, 79-81 and 85-204. I bought three, out of curiosity, for Sheets 113, 122 and 187, which are the three areas I know best.

'Touring Companions bring to life footpaths, disused railways, canals, castles, ancient highways, ruins, museums, wildlife sites and town centres... explore the rich heritage of Britain's towns and country with confidence...' reads part of the blurb on the back. It's perhaps as well I bought a local one, as a most remarkable excursion is given on p.5 of the guide to Sheet 187. It sets off along a bridleway (motorised cheats will find anti-vehicle barriers at one point), then obliges one to park. Funny, were we in a car? It is this sort of thing which rather undermines this reader's confidence, as does the discovery of the village of 'Ravensby' on p.28 of the guide to sheet 122. Ravensby is not a place one *banks* on. The emphasis on such things as railways and industrial archaeology is no doubt a sign of the times, but what are we to make of the sketch of a *Lady of the Lake* class engine in the depths of Lincolnshire, as appears on p.25 of the guide to Sheet 122? (Mind you, Valerie G.Scott and Tony Scott, *County Maps and Histories: Hertfordshire* (Quiller Press, 1989), manages to have the Great Northern owning Tring cutting, so I suppose it's a fair, if unconscious, *quid pro quo*.) And it is a pity that the 'expert' - is that not what the back cover promises? - who writes about there being 'no clear traces' of the Caistor Canal on Sheet 113 (p.18) was not aware that it stopped dead at Moortown, well into Sheet 112; if there really were traces of it on Sheet 113, one's confidence in the abilities of the OS would be much shaken.

The most commendable feature of the series is that National Grid references are extensively used, and a whole one of the 32 pages of each guide is given over to explaining them. (David and Charles have been welcome users of the National Grid in the past, as in some of the *Forgotten Railways* volumes, for example.) Unfortunately, they are not used here with the rigour that is desirable: references to villages (notably Cranleigh, Sheet 187) are often to the placing of the name on the map, rather than to the village centre. There is a very bad error in the Sheet 122 guide, p.31, where a war memorial in a field near Sibsey is placed 400 metres west of its true position; worse, it is not shown on the 1:50,000 (though it is on the 1:25,000: no mention of such a scale here). I am all in favour of the National Grid, and the Irish Grid, being used far more extensively by the non-specialist public than they are (by accommodation guides, for a start), but they must be used with rigour; they can be worn lightly, but they must be scholarly.

All in all then, something to avoid; or perhaps buy a local one, and see how many errors you can find.

Richard Oliver

The History of the Countryside, by Oliver Rackham, London, Dent, 1986, pp.xvi, 445, illus., 23 x 16 cm, £8.95 paperbound, ISBN 0 460 12552 4a. (A hardbound edition has also been published.)

Although this was published four years ago, and many readers will already have acquired a copy, it is still perhaps worth drawing attention to. Oliver Rackham is a specialist in woodlands, but this book goes far beyond that (though elms get a chapter to themselves), and includes chapters on roads, fields, animals and ponds. There are plenty of maps, including some from OS originals; they are not used uncritically, as on p.354 the mapping of some meres in the Norfolk Breckland in 1904 is described as 'impossible'. There is also, on pp.18-19, the most judicious summary of early OS coverage that I have come across, though it's a pity that six-inch mapping in Britain is made to begin in 1853. There is also (on p.274) the only instance which I have come across of the Bartholomew half-inch being cited as a historical source. The writing is a model of accessibility to lay readers, and it is to be hoped that someday something equally readable will be published on OS maps. This is very strongly recommended to all those who not only collect and use maps, but also feel the urge to go beyond the paper to the real landscape.

'Bill Badger'

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Mapping the Landscape: essays on art and cartography, edited by Nicholas Alfrey and Stephen Daniels, Nottingham, University Art Gallery and Castle Museum, 1990, pp.70, illus., A4, £5.95 paperbound, ISBN 0 9516215 0 5.

This was produced to accompany the exhibition of the same title which ran during June and July of this year as part of the Nottingham Festival. The exhibition was somewhat inconvenient in that it was split between the Castle Museum and the University Art Gallery, separated by either half an hour's walk for those in a hurry or the city bus service for those not. That apart, the exhibition was a good one, and the cream of the exhibits are illustrated here, though unfortunately in monochrome. It is also unfortunate that there are two blank pages at the end, which might have been usefully employed for reprinting more of the captions to the exhibits.

That said, this can be strongly recommended to those who enjoy A Fresh Approach; in this case, the art history approach. I am not aware that art historians have previously turned to the Ordnance Survey, so there is all the excitement of seeing a familiar landscape in a new style. There are six essays: 'Goodly Prospects: English Estate Portraiture, 1670-1730', by Stephen Daniels; 'Imagining Australia and the South Pacific', by Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones; 'Paul Sandby and the Military Survey of Scotland', by Jessica Christian; 'Landscape and the Ordnance Survey, 1795-1820', by Nicholas Alfrey; 'The English Outlook: A Mapping of Leisure, 1918-1939', by David Matless; and 'Totalities and Talk: Post Modern Panoramas', by Ian Jeffrey. (Sandby, by the way, was a native of Nottingham.) I have to admit that the art history approach is one of those things I am by temperament not wholly in sympathy with, and so readers will doubtless make due allowance when I say that the results, at any rate in those matters where I feel competent to judge, are Interesting rather than Definitive. On the other hand, there will be a great many who will not favour my 'political' approach to OS history: we have to move forward by experiment.

Still, there is much of interest here, notably Nicholas Alfrey's placing Robert Dawson the elder, the OS's leading hill-artist, and also William Smith, the geologist, in the context of

English landscape painting. He draws attention to an interest in landscape made the more poignant before 1815 by the threat of French invasion. Sometimes the results are interesting, as in this quotation from David Matless's essay:

A map is at the centre of J.W.Tucker's 1936 painting *Hiking*,... an image incorporating all elements of the preservationist open-air ethos. The girls wear a uniform attire, and carry their packs and accessories. The picture is one of health and composure¹ at leisure, the girls fit for their purpose of discovery, overlooking their valley found. And at the heart of their pursuit is the guiding map. The picture is suffused with a somewhat magical light, a magical air, whose source might almost be the illuminated map itself, around which the girls gather and pore, in the same way that a group might gather around the viewing table of a camera obscura.

This was the picture which appeared on the poster advertising the exhibition (framed by an extract from the 1961 *Wye Valley and Lower Severn* Tourist Map), from which it was apparent that the ladies were looking at the *half-inch* map of the Cotswolds: were they really hiking, or hitching? Still, that's Mr Tucker's worry. The main point is the *organisation* of leisure, which can take the form of the map ordering the landscape: 'the view named and ordered with grid lines of survey and co-ordinate laid over as the map was unfolded.' As I say, I don't necessarily agree; but *Mapping the Landscape* is worth seeking out.

Richard Oliver

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Topographical accuracy of the Old Series one-inch map: artistic licence in the drawing office

by R.C.Wheeler

In reading accounts, both contemporary and modern, of the problems of accuracy faced by the Ordnance Survey in its early years, one can easily form the impression that the problem began and ended with the surveyors. This may indeed be true as far as the accuracy of co-ordinates is concerned, but what concerns most modern users of Old Series maps is the accuracy of the detail: whether railway X met railway Y or whether the new barn is shown at Ambridge Manor Farm. Having recently been able to inspect the surveyors' drawings covering the village of Aylestone, Leicestershire, I was surprised to discover how large a part the drawing office had to play in such matters.

The area was surveyed about 1815 by H.Stevens, as part of Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing 263, now in the British Library, Map Library.¹ Although his drawing shows some evidence of distortion on a larger scale, his depiction of the streets of the village is fairly accurate and his location of buildings entirely credible if one presumes that offsets from the streets are only estimated by eye.

¹ [This appeared as 'composture' in the original: I was indebted to Mr J.J.Smith for pointing out that 'composture' is defined in *Chambers's Dictionary* as 'a mixture, esp. for manure'. This also defines my typing. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

¹ Attribution to Stevens by Yolande Hodson.

The final revision drawing is signed by Henry Still and dated July 1833. Because the village had to be repositioned slightly it was wholly redrawn, with the addition of a few private roads and tracks and other changes that suggest a total resurvey. Though a little more distorted than the earlier drawing and, as a one-inch single-colour drawing, less susceptible to a critical examination of its fine detail, it appears generally satisfactory.

The published map, sheet 63 NE, appeared in 1835, and shows a number of changes from this drawing, all for the worse:

1. Considerable distortion has been introduced. The angle between two roads, measured as 57 degrees from the 1885 six-inch map, and appearing as 42 degrees on the 1815 drawing and 34 degrees on that of 1833, has been reduced to 27 degrees on the published map. A junction which ought to occur 76 per cent of the way along a lane, and which appears 73 per cent and 69 per cent along on the two drawings, is shown just half-way along on the published map. These features, being associated with old hollow ways, are unlikely to have been altered between 1815 and 1885.

2. Property boundaries have been introduced so that gardes may be shown around the houses. Few such boundaries are shown on the 1833 drawing for Aylestone, in contrast to the nearby villages which were not resurveyed and retained the boundaries from the 1815 survey. One of the boundaries on the published map runs diagonally to those known to exist in 1869² and appears to be pure invention (or, more politely, a cartographic conventional sign).

3. As a result of the extra lines needed to depict these boundaries, the built-up area has been allowed to creep up some of the streets.

4. Other changes have occurred for no apparent reason. For example, the driveway to Aylestone Hall, which should come out on a corner (the gatepiers still exist) has been moved fifty yards away, whilst the bizarre treatment of road boundaries at the corner of the roads to Blaby and Wigston is at best a strange interpretation of the 1833 drawing.

Aylestone seems to have suffered more than most villages nearby. It is also possible that Sheet 63 NE was atypical in the way it was prepared for engraving. The emphasis on texture

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is evident not only from the treatment of gardens but also from the way the entire flood plain of the River Soar is shaded with dashed horizontal lines. It is possible that the less elegant style employed in, say, sheet 63 SE is associated with more faithful copying of the detail on the final revision drawings.

‘Was the Ordnance Survey always right?’

Since writing his note for *Sheetlines* 25, Guy Messenger has made further investigations into the railways of West Cornwall, and reports that the surveyors’ drawings for the Redruth and Chasewater Railway and the Tresavean Branch of the Hayle Railway (in the Cornwall Record Office, Truro), show unquestionably that OS Old Series sheet XXXI is drawn incorrectly south of Redruth in all states from 1835 onwards. Very little is now to be seen where the two lines crossed, though the alignments can be partly traced.

² Sale Plan, in Leicestershire Record Office, ref. DE/40/16/6/1.

The 1:50,000 map of Ireland

Since the review in *Sheetlines* 27 of the first sheet, 78, *Kenmare*, two more sheets of the 'Preliminary Edition' of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland 1:50,000 have appeared, 54, *The Slieve Blooms*, and 56, *Wicklow*, each embodying some specification changes. Sheet 54 retains the awkward four-vertical-panel semi-Bender fold of Sheet 78, but Sheet 56 appears, like the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland's sheets, as a conventional Bender, something that was evidently only decided on after printing had started, as the excellent OSI digital logo now straddles the 'bend'. The sheet line layout has been modified, to the extent indeed that the sheet to the north of Sheet 78 is now 71, not 70, as shown on Sheet 78, and with the result that there is more overlapping, particularly along the junction with the OSNI-produced sheets. There remain 89 sheets in the series.

On both Sheets 54 and 56 the depiction of roads has been somewhat modified: the symbols applicable to those in Northern Ireland have been omitted, motorways are to be shown by a solid blue band, National Primary and Secondary Roads are now red, not green, in common with Regional Roads, and long distance paths are now solid (and in this commentator's view, a little over-prominent) green when marked, and dotted when unmarked. Military firing ranges are now shown, by a thick dot-dash line which cannot be missed: a contrast with Ordnance Survey of Great Britain's vague 'Danger Area' sprinkled about. A number of additional features are now shown: youth hostels, caravan and camping sites (in red), picnic areas, TV masts, electricity pylons, steam and hydro power stations (in black), nine- and eighteen-hole golf courses (black pennants with red fill), parking and viewpoints (blue), and post and information offices (green). (Rural phone boxes would be more useful: the writer has only once in 25 years used a one-inch or 1:50,000 map to find a post-office, and that, a few months ago, was hardly an emergency.) Trig stations and churches now appear in the key: the church symbol is much lighter. Forest Recreation Areas are now shown by a fine continuous line instead of a heavy pecked one. On Sheet 54 the names for towns seem over-bold, but on Sheet 56 they are more restrained. Sheet 56 is practically co-extensive with the one-inch district sheet, which will presumably be withdrawn once stocks are exhausted. Three more sheets, 16 and 25 (around Sligo) and 79 (Killarney) should be published shortly; presumably the *Killarney* one-inch district sheet will also be dropped.

It took some time for stocks of these sheets to reach Britain: they can be obtained from the Map Shop, Upton-on-Severn, and in London from McCarta, 122 Kings Cross Road,¹ and Stanfords, in Long Acre. I bought two from McCarta, priced at £3:50, and one from Stanfords, for £3:00. This exciting venture deserves all possible support, and members finding other stockists might care to write to *Sheetlines*.²

'D.141414'

¹ [This was correct in 1990, but McCarta no longer have a shop.]

² [But they never did! However, both the 1:50,000 of Ireland and that of Northern Ireland are much more widely sold in Great Britain now than they were seven years ago. (R.R.O. April 1998)]

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A late edition of two 1:2500 County Series Hertfordshire sheets

Following up a reader's enquiry I recently came across Sheets XLIV.1 and XLIV.2 of the 1:2500 County Series for Hertfordshire published in 1953.

The sheets, which cover central Watford, appear to have been republished from the Revision of 1940 (not listed in the Publication reports), but with boundaries revised in 1952. The sheets are both listed in the Ordnance Survey Publication Report for 1-31 January 1953, but appear to have escaped copyright deposit in the Map Library. The originals can be seen at Watford Central Library. XLIV.1 is titled 'Partially Revised 1940', and is described bottom left as 'Surveyed 1871-72. Partially revised 1940 (with later additions). Boundaries Revised Aug. 1952. Re-levelled 1912.' XLIV.2 is titled 'Revision of 1940', and is described bottom left as 'Revised 1940 (with later additions). Boundaries revised July 1952. Re-levelled 1912.' Both bear a 1953 publication date; both lack any print-run code or edition letter.

According to the Ordnance Survey Annual Report for 1954-55, Watford was scheduled to be one of the latest towns to be resurveyed at 1:1250, suggesting that these sheets were probably republished for a special purpose.

I would be interested to know if any reader could shed any light on the reason for the publication of these sheets or knows of a later publication of a 1:2500 County Series sheet.

I am grateful to Judith Knight, Librarian at Watford Central Library, for supplying me with photocopies of the sheets.

Geoff Armitage
British Library, Map Library

(Watford seems to have been resurveyed at 1:1250 in 1957-8: see *Sheetlines* 24. County Series revision seems to have ended in 1944-5, with publication of outstanding sheets completed by 1947-8. At least this Watford duo is canonical: at the Grange Museum, Neasden, in 1984 I came across copies of 1:2500 Middlesex Sheets XVI. 2 and XVI.3, titled 'Edition of 1959', and XI.10 titled 'Edition of 1958'. They were probably unofficial productions, based on the revision of *circa* 1912-14: OS practice from 1907 to 1933 was to title new County Series large scale plans 'Edition of 19xx'; thereafter they were titled 'Revision of 19xx'. It would be most useful if readers could report other large-scale curiosities of this sort. *RRO.*)

Sir Henry James writes ...

Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton
21 June 1866

My Dear Sir

I am much obliged to you for pointing out the omissions in Sheet 7 of the one-inch map. They have all been surveyed and are now being engraved. It is very difficult as you may imagine to keep up the insertion of the new railways, but we have men constantly engaged all the year round on this duty.

Very truly yours

Denham Robinson, Esq

Henry James

[The reference is perhaps to state 20 of sheet 7 (see Harry Margary, *The Old Series Ordnance Survey*, Vol. IV (1986), p.xxxviii. Letter published by courtesy of Dr Tim Nicholson.]

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Letter from the Editor

Once again, *Sheetlines* has a new editor, its fourth in nine years. This is not quite as good as C.T. Snow's tenure of the *Manchester Guardian* for 57 years, but better than some tabloid editors, who are lucky to hold down their posts for 57 days. Before going further, I must pay tribute to the efforts of my three predecessors, Yolande Hodson, Richard Dean, and Ian O'Brien. When the Charles Close Society was formed, it was thought that it would settle down at around sixty members, and the 'newsletter' would be just that, but in fact we have about four times that number of members, and *Sheetlines* has been the vehicle for much more than announcements of forthcoming meetings, and, indeed maintaining its quality is essential for maintaining the membership of the Society.

For the present, *Sheetlines* will continue to follow the pattern which has evolved over the previous 27 issues: I hope to preside over a mixture of Amusement and Instruction, and to publish the highest quality work in a form as accessible as possible for the widest possible audience, and to publish contributions from the widest possible range, with a view to *Sheetlines* being something that can have both academic standing and yet be appealing to a non-academic audience. However, that only be achieved satisfactorily provided that I don't have to write the bulk of it myself. Whilst I am delighted to see my views accepted as orthodoxy (though I have to concede that my biggest success in that direction has been in a quite different sphere of endeavour from that of the Ordnance Survey), 'What do they of England know who only England know?' (Browning, I think).³ Contributions of *any* length or level of interest are welcome, as are letters, news, and queries. (Surely what immediately follows must annoy *somebody*.)

Hadrian's haul

'An increase in the rate of progress and an increase in the efficiency of the results can only be obtained by an increased annual expenditure. Is it not manifest, then, that an increase in the annual vote is imperatively and urgently needed, unless the Ordnance Survey is to become what it is fast becoming - a reproach and a scandal - instead of what it once was - a credit - to the country and a model for the imitation of all civilised nations?... It is for parliament and the public to consider whether such a survey as the national interests require can be executed on the terms at present imposed on the Department.' (*Leader in The Times, 10 June 1892.*)

'It should be noted that an enlargement has no greater accuracy than the original from which it is enlarged.' (*Note on GSGS 4040B, 1:50,000 map of France enlarged from 1:80,000.*)

'Whence so great a failure?' (*W.E.Gaine, ex-OS employee, 1853*)

Those who were at the AGM in May will not need reminding that the proceedings were somewhat delayed by a lengthy unscheduled discussion on the recently published map of Hadrian's Wall, and that hopes were expressed that the new editor of *Sheetlines* would find someone to write a suitably denunciatory review. There have been a number of difficulties in the way of realising that, and so it will be commented on, and denounced, by the editor himself.

The facts of the matter appear to be as follows:

(1) As a result of the report of the OS Review Committee (the Serpell Committee) of 1978-81, Her Majesty's Government has ordered that OS is to recover as much as possible of its

³ [I thought wrong. Michael Holroyd tells me it's Kipling. (R.R.O., April 1998)]

costs, having regard to the need to perform certain 'core activities' (which do not include 'historical' maps). Part of this is to be accomplished by 'commercial' publishing ventures. It has recently been given Executive Agency status, and the latest target is 65 per cent of costs.

(2) In 1964 a 31:680 scale map of Hadrian's Wall was published, the base-map being the

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1:25,000 First Series. This map was republished in 1972, but recent archaeological developments, and the completion of the 1:25,000 Second Series, have rendered a new edition desirable.

(3) A new map, at 1:25,000 or 1:31,680, extended at the western end was proposed by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments, but evidently vetoed by OS on grounds of cost.

(4) The new map which has been published is based on 1:50,000 *Landranger* mapping, either at the same scale, or else enlarged.

(5) It has been alleged that, quite apart from no longer having the convenience of the greater detail, such as field boundaries, afforded by the larger scale, a number of serious errors were present in the first printing of the new map, to such an extent that English Heritage refused to sell it at any of its shops.

(6) It is *reputed* that certain OS managers have expressed the view, in effect, that what do the **** mistakes matter, the **** punters bought the thing, and OS made a decent bit of wodge out of it.

(7) It appears that, errors or not, the map has been so successful that it has been reprinted, with the errors corrected, and so the whole episode is really a matter of history.

(8) It appears also that a certain amount of fun has been got out of the affair by those newspapers and others who believe as an article of faith that no government civil organisation is capable of doing anything competently.

(9) The whole matter gains piquancy from a general presumption, underpinned by wide experience, that Ordnance Survey maps are *always* wholly accurate. No other publisher labours under such a burden, and it is safe to assume that had any 'commercial' firm published this map, with twice as many errors, no-one would even have bothered to yawn.

So much for the facts. If the errors really were as serious as has been suggested, then it appears that 'chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread', 'When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie' and 'who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?' (Tennyson, *Maud*). The blame must be pinned on the drive for 'full cost recovery', which of necessity means a madcap drive for economy and for **MONEY**: 'When only the ledger lives'. Unfortunately, 'not all men lie', and the reputation of the Ordnance Survey, 'There is none like her, none' has been built up upon a quite remarkable ability to seek out Absolute Truth, so far as that is attainable by mere mortals. True, there have been occasional *faux-pas* on the way - one recalls the case of the rights of way across live firing ranges on Salisbury Plain - but it is hard to think of a case of an OS map being *banned* from sale. It is all very well to insist that the taxpayer be relieved of the burden of subsidising the national survey, but that is merely a delusion to please the simple-minded: the money now comes by a different route, but still it must be paid. It ought not to be forgotten - though assuredly it is - that OS developed as the *sine qua non* of national mapping on the argument that though it might cost a little more in taxation, the money would be saved several times over by the ability to buy the information cheaply. Unfortunately there are many people, in higher positions in public life than their abilities appear

to justify, who, as Sir Henry James once observed, look only at the superficial cost, and their attitudes are the prevailing ones at the moment. (Lest it be thought that this is purely an attack upon the present ministry, let it not be forgotten that it was a Labour government that appointed the Serpell Committee.)

So, never forget, though Ordnance Survey maps may be 'Designed for professionals - available to everyone', in practice, at the moment, there appears to be a philosophy abroad any old

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rubbish will do for the riff-raff in the council houses so long as they keep paying up. Once a reputation is blasted, an occupation's gone. Until the blind rush for 'full cost recovery' without sufficient regard for the maintenance of quality is halted, it is to be feared that 'Hadrian' will not be merely an unfortunate episode.

[The following was added in *Sheetlines* 29: *Hadrian's cartography, or where have Newcastle's hills been all this time?*: Whatever may be said about the content of the map - apparently a ceremonial tearing and scattering to the winds of a copy was televised recently - it is worth seeing as an example of cartography: for once we have really brown and legible contours, and in built up areas too! They shame the diluted orange of the 1:25,000 and the spilt-keg-beer of the 1:50,000, both of which vanish completely in built up areas and, on the 1:25,000 particularly, are often shy in open country.]

A new star in the firmament

The Charles Close Society aims to cover the activities of the Ordnance Surveys of not only Great Britain, but also of both parts of Ireland. The all-Ireland 1:50,000 map has for long been one of those things that was, outside the 'six counties', *posse* rather than *esse*. Now three sheets of the 'twenty-six counties' have appeared, and, with the 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 Second Series of Great Britain complete, there is the excitement of another new series developing, to keep us in a state of anticipation. This is all the more praiseworthy, in that the Irish economy has recently been through a rough patch, and Ordnance Survey of Ireland only recovers just over a third of its costs. However, it has been recognised that there is a demand for a map of this sort, even if not a 'commercial' one (Serpellists, please note) and a start has been made.

And what of Great Britain? One might think, what with the rake-in from the Hadrian affair, and the profits from some of the co-publishing ventures, and the supposed greater freedom conferred by Executive Agency status, that some new maps, instead of Monday's-cold floppy road atlases might be forthcoming. What I particularly have in mind is a 1:100,000 or 1:125,000 map suitable for cycling, in particular. Unfortunately, it seems there is no 'venture capital' for such things, not even, apparently, for a 'quick fix' solution - pending a more thoughtful official attitude to national cartography - of enlarging the 1:250,000 and adding digitised contours from the 1:50,000.⁴ I never did believe the Irish were mad; it's the British, trying to cover up for their being out of step with everybody else.

Richard Oliver

⁴ [Unfortunately a national 1:100,000 or 1:125,000 appears to be no closer to fulfilment now, following OS's 'Cartographic Concepts Review' of 1993-4, than it was in 1990. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

Puzzle corner

Why is Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* March no.5, recorded on H.M.V. 78 r.p.m. record number D.1900, illustrated here, likely to be of particular interest to members of this society? And why is the record label a happy coincidence?



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Notes, news, queries and editor's jottings

Executive Agency status for Ordnance Survey

On 1 May OS assumed Executive Agency status: according to *OS News* for May 1990, OS 'will have more flexibility in [its] financial arrangements, greater managerial responsibility and more demanding performance monitors.' Targets for 1990-1 include recovering 65 per cent of costs, surveying 930,000 house units, making 97,000 basic scale maps available in digital form, and publishing a microfilm within four months of every large scale plan that meets criteria.

The 1:25,000 Second Series (Pathfinders)

The completion of the first publication of these maps in November 1989 was announced in *Sheetlines* 26. *OS News* for June-July 1990 reports that at the OS stand at the recent Bath and Wells show unit sales of these maps equalled the 1:50,000, at the South of England show they outsold by two to one and by almost three to one at the Three Counties Show. 'Pathfinder awareness is certainly on the up and up as a result of our advertising campaign; however, the chief complaint is the fact that so many sheets are out of date. This must be rectified quickly to preserve customer confidence in the product!' (It is perhaps worth interposing that the *Path-*

finders each cover 200 sq km, whereas the *Landrangers* each cover 1600 sq km; so for an equal area to be covered, the larger scale must outsell the smaller by eight to one.) So far as out-of-dateness is concerned, revised sheets are now appearing in some quantity: the Editor calculates that in the first 22 of the series' life, to December 1987, only about fifteen sheets were issued in revised editions: since then, ten (including one 'C' edition) were published in 1988, seventeen (including a 'C') in 1989, and nine have appeared in the first half of 1990. The position at present appears to be as in the following lists: corrections will be welcomed. (For reasons of space, only the consecutive numbers are given.)

As 'B' editions: 75, 177, 230, 280, 287, 294, 369, 471, 472, 536, 549, 561, 562, 573, 581, 627, 648, 665, 699, 707, 708, 715, 720, 722, 738, 762, 791, 808, 827, 891, 894, 895, 915, 1030, 1129, 1161, 1176, 1191, 1193, 1263, 1268, 1284, 1288, 1296, 1303, 1307, 1326, 1357.

As 'C' editions: 1160, 1358.

(Source: mostly OS monthly publication reports, 11/1980 - 8/1990.)

The back-to-back 1:1M scale combined 1:25,000/1:10,000 index has now been replaced by a 1:625,000 back-to-back index to the 1:25,000 alone. The base-map is the digital one produced for the *Routeplanner* two or three years ago, and, whatever one's reservations about that, the result here is excellent. 1:25,000 sheet lines and consecutive numbers are in green, National Grid numbers are in black, and everything else is screened. The only improvement would be to add 1:50,000 sheet lines as well: I gather this was considered, but not proceeded with, due to design problems.¹ The cover design, with a simple pen-and-ink sketch, is by far the best that has come out of Southampton in years; I for one hope that this will in due course supplant the current picture-postcard style.

Collectors of articles on OS subjects will be interested to learn that there is a short one on the completion of the 1:25,000 Second Series in *The Countryman* for August-September 1990.

Levels on 1:2500 county series plans

Students of Godfrey Edition sheets Shropshire 34.10 and 34.14 (around Shrewsbury), may have noticed that there is an unusually high density of levelling not only in the town but, most exceptionally, in some open parts as well. Further investigation has shown that this additional levelling falls within the area around the town mapped at 1:500 scale in 1879-80, and that such a density of levels on six-inch or 1:2500 mapping appears to be a sure indicator of a 1:500 survey. The usual practice was to map at 1:500 only the built-up parts of the town, though OS were willing to carry it further afield provided the town concerned paid the extra cost. Can anyone confirm whether there was a repayment element in the Shrewsbury survey? And has anyone come across such levelling (extending into fields, as well as running along roads), elsewhere?

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How to coin it

Mr J.W.G.Cocke draws attention to a letter in *The Times* of 13 July, from a Mr Charles F. Wilson, of Tunbridge Wells. Mr Wilson points out that 'we surveyors do not sneer at the new 5p piece, for its diameter has the unique capability of being equal to 60 feet on the original 1:1056

¹ [These were evidently overcome later; early in 1994 a combined 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 index was published. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

Ordnance maps and 70 feet on the contemporary 1:1250 plans. Surely the Royal Mint must employ cartographers?’

Irish Half-inch Sheet 5

Between 1912 and 1918 Ireland was covered by a 25-sheet half-inch series. Sheets 1-4 and 6-25 are still available; but what happened to Sheet 5? This was the only sheet which did not include any territory of the Republic of Ireland, and which therefore did not fall to be published from Dublin by Ordnance Survey of Ireland; it was the sole responsibility of the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (though at one period Sheets 4 and 9, which fall largely within Northern Ireland, were also maintained by OSNI). Sheets 4, 5 and 9 were revised and republished around 1939, but the negatives, kept at Southampton, were destroyed in 1940.² Sheets 4 and 9 seem to have been reconstituted by OSI, but Sheet 5 could last only as long as its printing plates were serviceable: it was reprinted in 1958 and 1962,³ but there seems to have been a period when it passed out of print, with no immediate replacement. In 1968-70 a Half-inch Second Series of Northern Ireland was published, on Irish Grid sheet lines which did not join up with the 25-sheet all-Ireland series, but this met with little success and has been allowed to fall out of print.⁴ The practical result is that there has been no uniform half-inch coverage of Ireland since the mid-1960s; and, indeed, now the largest uniform scale covering Ireland is the 1:250,000.

Ordnance Surveyors' Drawings in the British Library, Map Library

The pressmarks for these have recently been subject to some modification. The irregularly-shaped drawings numbered from 1 to 351, recently issued on fiche by Research Publications, remain ‘OSD’; the outline drawings for sheets 48-50, 66-7, 71, 79-82 and 87-90 (red portfolios) are now at Maps 176.n; the various hill and revision sketches (blue portfolios) are now at Maps 176.o.

1:63,360 Tourist sheets

It is understood that *Ben Nevis and Glen Coe*, *Loch Lomond and the Trossachs* and *New Forest* are to be withdrawn: the present reproduction materials, derived from the One-inch Seventh Series, are worn out, and their sales are not such as to justify replacement by new reproduction material derived from the 1:50,000 Second Series. This observer has to confess that, whilst experiments are always interesting, he never could work up much enthusiasm for *New Forest*, and does not mourn its passing. The only remaining Tourist sheet, and indeed the only remaining current topographical map, to be based on One-inch Seventh Series material is *Exmoor*, an ‘A4’ edition of which has just been issued; *Dartmoor*, *Lake District*, *North York Moors* and *Peak District* have all been republished since 1982, on a base derived from the 1:50,000 Second Series, and *Cotswolds*, published in 1983, had no Seventh Series-derived predecessor.

² [This is the original text: I am advised by Roger Hellyer that Sheet 2 was also maintained by OSNI, and Sheets 2, 5 and 9 (but *not* Sheet 4) were revised. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

³ [Both the 1958 and 1962 printings carry the Irish Transverse Mercator Grid. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

⁴ [This was the position as I understood it in 1990; since then at least three of the four sheets have been reprinted, by photographing ordinary sales copies, and with a result similar to that obtained by colour photocopying. The result strikes this observer as more interesting than pleasing. (R.R.O., April 1998.)]

Though *Exmoor* remains the last ordinary topographical sheet to be based on the Seventh Series, a number of Geological and Soil Survey maps remain in print with obsolete topographical bases: the ultimate is perhaps England Geological Sheet 64 (base-map surveyed c.1849-50), observed on sale in London recently.

Desktop Publishing at Ordnance Survey

An interesting article on OS's adoption of this appears in *OS News* for July 1990. Although desktop publishing has been 'in the air' for some years, it is only in the last year that it has been adopted at Southampton. The first job - desktop mapping rather than publishing - was production of adjoining sheet diagrams for the front covers of 1:25,000 *Pathfinders*. The system used by OS not only enables high resolution final artwork to be produced on camera and film, but allows colour-proving, which hitherto has involved the full panoply of making

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printing plates (which may have to be replaced before commercial production is put in hand), and makes incorporating late changes far easier. The Plandex - the index to 1:2500 and 1:1250 availability - is also now being produced by this method; users of it will be relieved to learn that that the system 'can improve and enhance those parts which were beginning to show their age.' It is a considerable relief to the draughtsmen who previously had 'a time-consuming task... and hardly uplifting,... requiring a good deal of concentration.' Town centre maps for the *Road Atlas* and the *Motoring Atlas* are being produced by this method, as are the growing family of County Street Atlases; the system is such that it is only necessary for street names to be typed once for them both to be positioned within road casings, following the curve, and to be fed into a database for producing a gazetteer. When the editor of *Sheetlines* visited OS recently he saw a number of specimens of 'desktop' work, and can report that the quality is fully equal to that of maps and letterpress produced by more conventional means.

County Street Atlases on CD-ROM

Development work on this has been in hand for the past year or so, and demonstrations, based on part of the Sussex Street Atlas, were given to potential customers in Chichester and Maidstone in July. It is understood that the reaction was most favourable, particularly from the emergency services, who would be delighted to have it now, though the first CD-ROM atlas is unlikely to appear much before next spring. Features of the system include the ability to locate an address by typing in the name, to link it to a database, and to modify it by colouring in polygons to show, for instance, streets and districts temporarily closed off.

Recent Meetings

Meeting at Birmingham, 16 June 1990

It had been expected that this would be oversubscribed, but the opposite proved to be the case, and the meeting was cancelled.

Meeting at Sherborne, 26 May 1990, 'Maps and Local History.'

This was held under the auspices of the Centre for South-Western History. Proceedings started with a general sketch of south-western cartographic history before the coming of the Ordnance Survey from Professor William Ravenhill, from which it was apparent that the south-

west was in the forefront of cartographic development. This was followed by Katherine Barker, who described her work on an estate map of Sherborne of c.1570, previously dismissed as largely fanciful, but now shown to be an accurate record of the landscape. John Chapman then described enclosure maps and awards, with the assistance of a number of illuminating distribution maps: the south-west was again in the forefront, the first enclosure act to be passed being that for Radipole, Dorset. Contrary to what is often believed, a great deal of enclosure was only carried out after 1815. After lunch, Robert Dunning spoke on "'Our maps are music': variations on a cartographic theme by a county historian", a title deriving from a book on place-names published by Batsford *circa* 1950. He described his view as that of a historian using maps, and illustrated this by reference to documents, maps divorced from documents (and therefore often lost), and actual landscapes, including slides of decayed roads. Jennifer Gambier then described her recent postgraduate work on the tithe mapping of Dorset. Mapmaking just before the start of the railway age was still a local affair, most surveyors working within twenty miles of home. Dr Graham Haslam, archivist to the Duchy of Cornwall, then described the Duchy's mapmaking activities, mainly between 1750 and 1850: the Duchy's estates were widespread across England, and mapping them was an integral part of managing them. The proceedings concluded with Richard Oliver giving what was advertised as a description of OS work in the south-west since 1918, but which, on account of a miscalculation of time, proved to say more about the estuary of the Humber than those of the Exe, Tamar or Torridge.

Actual maps were somewhat less in evidence than slides of them, but some good examples,

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including a coloured copy of the 1570 estate map of Sherborne, were on display in the foyer.

The Ordnance Survey Bi-centenary, 1791-1991 ('OS 200')

As most readers will by now be aware, this is to be celebrated next summer. There will be a number of exhibitions and special publications. The Ordnance Survey is to issue about fifty boxed sets of the final printings of the One-inch Seventh Series, put into store at the suggestion of the then OS finance director, Miss Betty Drewitt, when the remainder of the stocks of these maps were scrapped in the late 1970s. The price is expected to be 'in four figures', and I understand that interest from overseas is expected. OS also intends to publish a 'popular history'. There will also be an OS reception at the Tower of London, and a number of promotional items are in contemplation, including, according to *OS News* for July 1990, 'three sizes of umbrella'. There will be a special issue of stamps, using map extracts, on 17 September 1991.

There will be an exhibition of OS instruments at the Science Museum, and nearby will be the joint Charles Close Society/Royal Geographical Society exhibition in the latter's house, which will take the one-inch map as its theme. Charles Close Society bi-centenary publications are noticed elsewhere in this issue. What promised to be, cartographically, the OS exhibition to beat the lot, that of the British library, Map Library, will unfortunately not take place. The BL has the largest collection of printed OS maps, and it was intended to concentrate mainly on large scales mapping, and thereby complement the other exhibitions. Unfortunately, this plan has had to be abandoned: all BL exhibitions must have outside financial support, and none was forthcoming in this instance.

The Central Chilterns one-inch sheet

A recent clear-out of teaching sets at Bedford College turned up some 53 paper-flat copies of a one-inch *Central Chilterns* sheet. The map proper is in ordinary 'Popular' style. It measures 18 by 27 inches within the neatlines, the south edge being the same as Popular Sheets 106 and 107, and it extends six inches westward into Sheets 94 and 105, and twelve inches eastward into Sheets 95 and 106. It bears the print code '2000/29'. There is no table of conventional signs, the border is a plain one, and it has all the signs of having been produced as a repayment service. For whom?⁵

Henry Tipping Crook, C.E.

Does anyone know anything about this gentleman? He is of course notorious as the author of *The Maps of the Ordnance Survey as they are and as they ought to be*, of 1892, and as a star witness before the Dorington Committee that year: but what of the man himself? Does anyone know when he was born, when died, or of an obituary? Anyone able to help is asked to contact the editor.

[This elicited two responses, including a photocopy, with portrait, of an obituary: Crook died in January 1935, aged 81. He was a volunteer member of the Royal Engineers, Vice Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire in 1917, a magistrate and President of the Manchester Geographical Society in 1923-6. For further information see *Sheetlines* 33, pp 12-13.]

Richard Oliver

'Unresolved' notes and queries

At the CCS AGM in May, the hope was expressed that those people who can provide answers or further information to these will write to the editor of *Sheetlines*. Meanwhile, I have been through the whole of the back issues of *Sheetlines*, and have managed either to resolve or answer the following:

Sheetlines 7, p.15, as to whether benchmarks on them can be used to date buildings: all they really prove is that building, post, tree or other recipient of the benchmark antedates the passage of the OS levellers. Surviving benchmarks tend to be on the likes of ancient parish churches, which are safely pre-OS; and many were cut in the course of tertiary levelling, contemporary with,

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or slightly later than, the first detailed OS large-scale mapping.

Sheetlines 9, as to whether any OS catalogue was published after 1924: no-one has ever found one, and the general feeling is that the 1924 issue was the last of its kind. (The previous one had been issued in 1920.) No doubt the various *Descriptions* of large and small scale maps, the various leaflets, and graphic indexes to six-inch and 1:2500 mapping largely supplanted it.

Sheetlines 15, p.1, and *Sheetlines* 16, p.15: there was indeed a predecessor to *Ordnance Survey Maps... A description of their scales, characteristics, etc* of 1899: the 'Southampton Cir-

⁵ [No answer to this question was forthcoming; the only response was an expression of dismay by a leading member of the Society, who had obtained a rather tatty copy for 10p or so some years before, and who now found the map to be far less uncommon than he had hoped! In the event, most of the 53 copies offered for sale in 1990 went to private collectors, and the map probably remains hard to come by. As 2000 copies were printed, it is possible that others survive in university geography department collections and the like. (R.R.O., April 1998)]

culars' at Ordnance Survey of Ireland, Dublin, contain a predecessor, produced under Sir Charles Wilson, and bearing the print-code '200-2/88'. It cost 6d, and apparently had no cover. Most of it consists of lists of abbreviations and the writing styles to be used for large-scale plans; the actual description of the maps is the bare minimum.

Sheetlines 18, p.16, maps in Bridges' Patent Mounting: the editor has English Ministry of Transport half-inch Sheet 18 of 1923 in this style.

How accurate was the First Land Use Survey?

In *Sheetlines* 19, p.12, Wilbur Cocke, one of the volunteer workers, recounted how he undertook edge-matching, when a field split between two six-inch sheets was differently classified on each. 'I alone dealt with numerous such instances. As we only dealt with the edges of the sheets, goodness knows how much incorrect information was recorded on the inner parts of each sheet.' Perusal of published one-inch Sheet 115, which was surveyed at about the same time as One-inch Fifth Edition Sheets 115 and 125, indicates several questionable points:

(1) Woldingham Garden Village (not so named on the LUS), was built as a hospital camp during the first world war, and sold off as housing afterwards, but instead of being classified as 'Houses with gardens', it is 'grass'.

(2) A 'Landing Ground' shown on the Fifth Edition south-east of Addington Lodge is shown on LUS as 'Arable'; rapidly changing land-use is, I suppose, possible, but it does rather stretch credulity.

(3) Forts and mobilisation centres are inconsistently treated: Reigate Hill and Alderstead are shown as grassland, Fosterdown as heath or wood, Woldingham as house with garden (in this case probably correctly), and Betsom's Hill, Halstead and Farningham as 'agriculturally unproductive' (again, correctly).

It would be interesting to learn of similar questionable points on other LUS sheets.

R.R.O.

OS maps on Place's waterproof paper

A few more examples have recently been found, supplementing the lists in *Sheetlines* 23 and 27:

One-inch Tourist Map - *The Cairngorms* - 200/33 - cover type 2

One-inch Scotland Popular Edition (GSGS 3908) - Sheet 6 - WO 500/33 - flat

One-inch Scotland Popular Edition (GSGS 3908) - Sheet 13 - 1000/35 - flat

One-inch Scotland Popular Edition (GSGS 3908) - Sheet 22 - 1000/35 - flat

One-inch Scotland Popular Edition (GSGS 3908) - Sheet 54 - WO 1035 - flat

One-inch Scotland Popular Edition (GSGS 3908) - Sheet 70 - WO 350/33 - flat

One-inch Scotland Popular Edition (GSGS 3908) - Sheet 73 - WO 3100/33 - flat

There is also a correction for the list in *Sheetlines* 27: for One-inch England and Wales Popular Edition 53, read One-inch Scotland Popular Edition 53. (Thanks are owing to Philip Tyler.)

Roger Hellyer

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New Maps

Phoenix Maps

Since the announcements in *Sheetlines* 26 and 27, copies of some of these have come to hand. Natural comparisons for the large-scale maps are with the Godfrey Edition, and for the small-scale with the work of Harry Margary and David and Charles. The maps are printed by Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and, except for the one-inch, are issued in the cumbersome semi-bender fold hitherto favoured by Phoenix Park for its small-scale offerings. One immediate difference is that cartographic notes are confined to a small standard note on the cover, and there are none of the historical notes, directory extracts, 'extra maps' and other trimmings of the Godfrey Edition.

The whole of the one-inch first edition with hills (published 1855-95), is offered, in 205 sheets at £IR 3:50 each, and is, incidentally, the largest scale at which there is at present uniform coverage of Ireland in both scale and style. Perhaps someone has realised this, as it is suggested in the Phoenix Maps leaflet that these sheets 'would give an added dimension to a holiday in Ireland'. This may be an implicit reference to the hill-shading, as the sheets covering the '26 counties' of the one-inch 'Black Outline', revised 1898-1913, are still on sale. The changes in road classification are such that neither Phoenix Maps nor the 'Black Outline' can be used satisfactorily without the 1:250,000 (all Ireland in four sheets) as a back-up. The quality of the seven sheets which I have (62, 101, 102, 111, 112, 120, 121), is somewhat variable: 62 (Achill Island) looks very good, whereas 121 seems to have been reproduced from a 'worn' copy. The maps are printed on pale pink tinted paper, which leaves me unconvinced. Altogether, though I salute the principle, I question the practice: a leaf might have been taken from David and Charles' book, and the sheets gathered together in quartets (and quintets and sextets around the coast), thus making them more attractive to the general public: presumably the environs of towns and cities will sell, but how many takers will there be for the likes of Sheets 38, 50 and 72? The Bender-folding is slightly oversize for fitting snugly into a coat pocket. Nonetheless, if you want Irish one-inch, don't hesitate to buy. But don't expect, either, the quality of Harry Margary.

The reissues, at £IR 5:00 each, of six-inch (reduced to 1:12,000) and 1:2500 (reduced to 1:4300) and a solitary 1:500 (reduced to 1:1700) of Ennis are altogether more successful, and the creamy tinted paper used is less objectionable, though I should still have preferred white. The 'image quality' is similar to that of the Godfrey Edition. Ordering the six-inch first editions of three sheets around Dublin, I was apprehensive as to quality - if anything these maps would be better enlarged than reduced - but in fact the end-result is strikingly successful, and is recommended almost unreservedly; apart from being cumbersome, the semi-Bender fold used is too wide for the average coat pocket.

There are also six reissues - five county maps and a pocket plan of Dublin by Rocque - of pre-Ordnance Survey mapping: John Taylor's map of 1816 of the environs of Dublin is accompanied by a booklet by John Andrews (self-recommending for many of us), and at £IR 7:00 is good value for money. A folded map plus a booklet appears to me the model for future enterprises where text is needed to accompany a map.

Though Phoenix Maps' enterprise is not perfect, neither is anybody else's, and I hope that they will produce more. In particular, further six-inch would be welcome. A start might be made with a further ring of them around Dublin.

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The Godfrey Edition

The four hundredth map, *Meole Brace 1901*, was published on 30 July. The publication of smaller towns is now proceeding apace: since April 'Godfreys' have been issued for Barnsley, Berkhamsted, Denny, Dorchester, Doune and Callendar, Dunipace, Dundee, Durham, Gillingham (Dorset), Harrogate, Knaresborough, Maryport, Penrith, Runcorn, Ryde (I.o.W.), Shaftesbury, Swanage, Tamworth, Watford (Herts), Wellington (Shropshire), and Wimborne Minster, and there have been additions to the Black Country, Liverpool, London, Manchester and Wirral series. The Summer 1990 catalogue also lists Malvern Wells and Rickmansworth as in preparation. Notable recent issues have included *Ryde 1907*, which includes an extract from a six-inch first edition of the environs of the town on the back (we could do with more six-inch first editions) and *Carlisle (NW) 1924* and *Carlisle (NE) 1924*, which respectively include New Series second edition Sheets 17 and 18 on the reverse. A number of the maps of smaller towns now carry location maps at 1:50,000 scale on the back, variously enlarged from the Old and New Series One-inch. The maps are £1.50 each, but those willing to take a long-term view can subscribe to the next 100 maps of all areas for £90.

Richard Oliver

Fallacies corrected

The Scottish Popular Edition (with National Grid) and the New Popular Edition: The following amendments, for which I am grateful to a number of users, to the second (1989) edition of my guide to these are to be noted:

Scotland, Sheet 25: add new edition A/: M.V. 6/56, grid type C, price and colour 7E.

Scotland, Sheet 28: add new edition B: M.V. 6/53, grid type C, price and colour 7D.

Scotland, Sheet 77, edition 2347: column 8 should be 7C.

Scotland, Sheet 81, edition 2350: sheet name changed to 'Kelso & The Cheviot'.

England, Sheet 130, edition 1226: add m5:50 in column 12

England, Sheet 144: column 12 now to read m2:49r.

England, Sheet 149: add m8:49 in column 12.

England, Sheet 160, edition 1203: a colour-printed version of this has now been reported in a private collection: add '1203' in column 1, and correct column 8 to '7B', and column 11 to 'PC/RGS'.

England, Sheet 169, edition F/: a 7F printing is reported, with the edition letter more heavily written, and the bar below shorter, making it look like 'E'. (A dealer's list once actually described it thus.)

England, Sheet 175, edition C/: on 7E the edition letter is below the scale; a 7F edition is reported with the edition letter above the scale.

England, Sheet 176, edition 1275: add m12:51 in column 12.

England, Sheet 181, edition D/: in column 8, 7E should be 7F.

England, Sheet 182, edition E/: in column 8, 7E should be 7F

Richard Oliver

A previous puzzle

As yet no solution has been offered as to the identity of the map used for the 1965 1:25,000 First Series 'magnifying glass' cover (*Sheetlines* 26, p.2). However, it is known that the original artwork for this, on enamelled zinc, shows quite clearly that a genuine extract was used, with the real names scraped out, and false ones put in their place. Investigations continue!

A thought until the next issue

'Every map-classification runs into trouble sooner or later...' (from J.H.Andrews, *Plantation Acres: An Historical Study of the Irish Land Surveyor*, Ulster Historical Foundation, 1985, ISBN 0 901 905 35 6, £16:50: strongly recommended.)

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Scottish Popular Edition covers, 1924-40
by 'Viator'

Dr Forbes Robertson wrote to *Sheetlines* 24 (pp.25-6), asking about pre-war One-inch Scottish Populars with thistles on the covers. The development of Scottish Popular covers between 1924 and 1939 is as broadly follows:

1924-30: standard covers measured 95 x 175 mm on paper and cloth folded copies; they were somewhat wider on dissected copies. The front covers (see illustration, Fig.1) were characterised by rows of red and black thistles to left and right of the Scottish arms and text, and were pasted directly onto the map. The index on the back was printed in black.

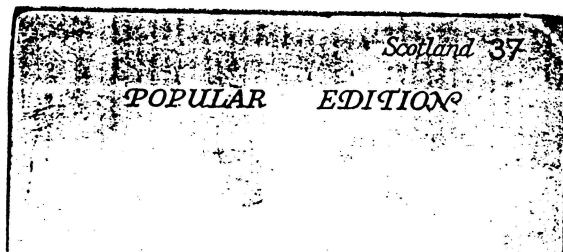
1927-8: a long Michelin-type cover, about 115 x 265 mm, was used on newly-published sheets; the thistles were omitted in favour of a plain frame. After about nine months the standard 'thistle' cover was reverted to.

1930-39: The standard cover was 114 x 200 mm, and was hinged, enabling information to be printed on the inside. The front outside (see Fig.2) was similar to the 'thistle' cover, except that the thistles were omitted: the sheet name continued to be printed in red. The back cover had the usual index, with the title in a strapwork cartouche. Until about 1936 the land and parts of the cartouche were highlighted in reddish-brown. The early front inside covers carried the conventional signs, and the back inside covers carried a summary list of OS maps. This was soon changed: the front inside carried the announcement (at first with some lettering in red, and then all in black), and the back inside was blank.

1939-40: Paper and cloth folded maps were now issued in benderfold covers; both they and dissected maps of this period can be distinguished by the sheet name now being in black.

The foregoing has been put together rather hastily on the basis of the Editor's collection: refinements would be welcomed. One peculiarity, to which *Sheetlines* is indebted to Rod Monnington, is illustrated in Fig.3: front and back covers are cream, and are blank save for the information on the front. The map inside is Sheet 37, *Inverness*, printing 836. Has anyone seen any other specimens of this style, or similar? [Addendum, originally published in *Sheetlines* 30: 'Viator' has now been able to examine the original of the strange cover for Sheet 37 illustrated on p.22, and finds that in fact it is an extremely skilful 'home-made' production, clearly the work of someone who was of much more than average ability in penwork; possibly, indeed, OS-trained.]

Figure 3: The upper part of (one presumes) a distinctly non-standard cover.



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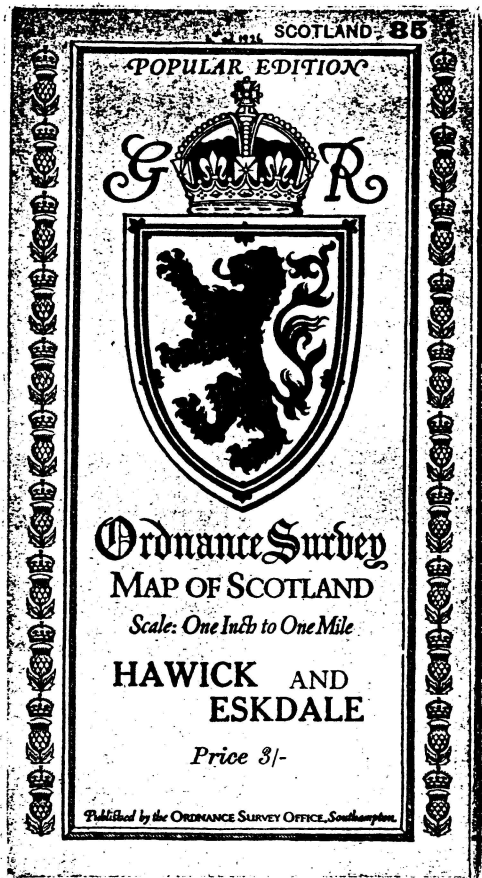


Figure 1
Standard Scottish Popular Cover
1924-30.

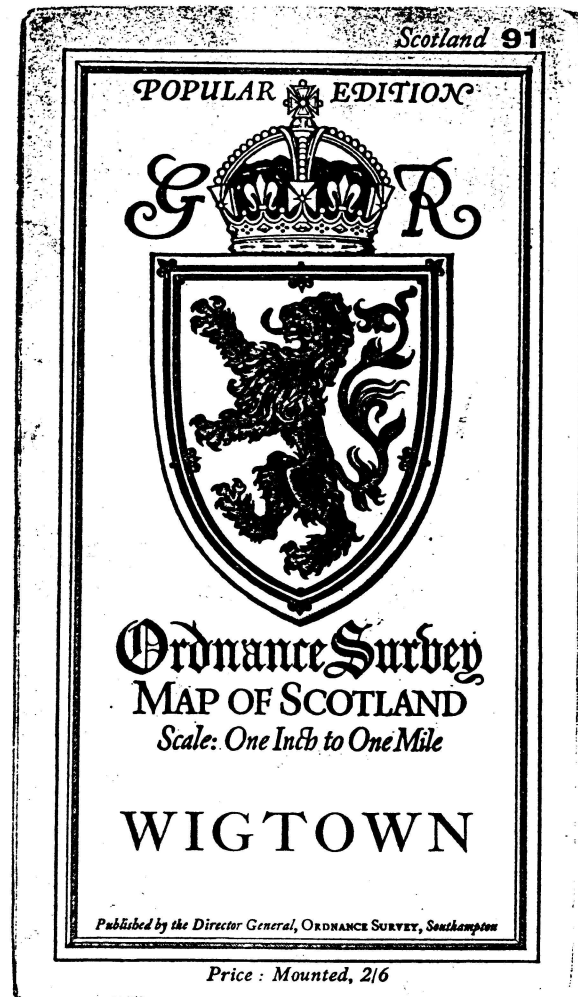


Figure 2
Standard Scottish Popular Cover
1930-39.

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Steeple and spires The use of church symbols on Ordnance Survey one-inch maps

by Richard Oliver

(C.C.S. Working Paper no.2)

I should probably not have essayed this paper¹ but for the reproduction in *Sheetlines* 21 of a section from the *Instructions to One Inch Field Revisers* of 1901,² giving chapter and verse on how to classify churches with towers and spires. In fact similar instructions were issued in 1896,³ 1936,⁴ 1961,⁵ and other times, and indeed will be a necessity for so long as churches with *steeple*⁶ (which can mean either a tower or spire) are distinguished from those without. As the then editor of *Sheetlines* remarked, one could never pass a church again without wondering how the OS classified it. In fact, I had been collecting photographs of borderline cases for some years past, and the reception given to their presentation at the 1990 C.C.S. AGM made my reverse an earlier decision not to publish my findings.

The classification of churches 'with tower', 'with spire' and 'without either' was first introduced in the mid-1890s, as the one-inch maps of Great Britain were revised, and is related to the military-influenced redesign of the one-inch at that time. Though some mapmakers, such as Henry Beighton on his one-inch map of Warwickshire of 1729, had included small illustrations of churches, and they sometimes appear on tithe surveys (about twenty per cent of the tithe surveys of Suffolk carry pictorial representations of parish churches), at scales as large as 1:2376, of the 1830s and 1840s, the early Ordnance Survey practice was to show Anglican parish churches by a cross, and usually to ignore to rest, though there are odd exceptions, such as the 'Quakers Meetg' at Owstwick in the north-west corner of sheet 85 (early 1820s); and in any case, most non-Anglican churches and chapels at this time were of modest dimensions and discreet appearance. In the early 1850s dedications and the status of the living (e.g. vicarage or rectory) were added to newly published northern English sheets; this information seems rather unnecessary, particularly as it appeared on the parent six-inch, but presumably, in the modern official phrase, 'a requirement was identified'; one wonders who by. The status of the living was evidently thought to be overdoing it a bit, as it was never used on the one-inch maps of Scotland and Ireland, and was dropped on the New Series of southern Britain, which began publishing in 1874, but dedications were retained on new publications until 1887, at the start of a period of experiment with one-inch design and content, when they were replaced by 'Ch', and with other denominations' churches and chapels, when shown, indicated by abbreviation. In practice, the

¹ As the only previous C.C.S. Working paper appeared in *Sheetlines* 1, I felt that it was time for it to have a companion.

² Copy in British Library, Map Library, Maps 207.d.14.

³ *Instructions for the Revision of the one-inch map in the field*: copies in Ordnance Survey Library, Southampton and at Ordnance Survey, Dublin.

⁴ *Instructions for the Revision and Drawing of the One Inch (Fifth Edition) Map* (Southampton, Ordnance Survey, 1936).

⁵ *Instructions for Small Scale Revision (The Green Book)*, copy in BLML Maps 207.aaa.15.

⁶ The title of this paper is taken from 'Afterglow' on *England*, by Amazing Blondel, on Island Records, ILPS 9205: long since deleted. It is not accidental.

religious structure being somewhat different in Scotland and Ireland, the use there of symbols for churches was always more liberal than in England and Wales.

The showing of churches with towers and spires was asked for by two witnesses before the War Office committee of 1892 which investigated military mapping.⁷ One said that 'map reading requires good landmarks', and the committee duly recommended that churches with towers and spires be shown by the familiar symbols used ever since (Fig.1.a,b,c). In fact, they first seem to have made their cartographic debut on the two-inch Manoeuvre Map of Cannock Chase of 1894, which was prepared by photo-enlargement of the 'Advanced Edition Published by Photozincography' of the New Series, and only appeared on the one-inch proper with the publication of the first sheets of the second edition of the New Series in March 1895. It might be thought that the work done then would not need revising, save in the obvious cases of new and demolished churches, but in fact the instructions to revisers have been as subject to revision as the maps, which no doubt accounts for the changing classifications of some churches on successive editions of some one-inch and 1:50,000 sheets. The 1896 instructions laid down that when a spire on a tower occupied less than three quarters of the total height of the steeple, 'and the top of the tower forms a platform and is accessible', the church should be shown with

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tower. 'In towns the most conspicuous churches only need be shown. *Chapels* having towers or spires are to be shown as if they were churches.' The 1901 instructions omit the recommendation on conspicuous churches in towns, and add three quite remarkably unrealistic thumbnail sketches for guidance; the captions indicate that steeples were to be classified as towers when a 'low spire' was a quarter of the total height of the steeple, as with spire when the spire was about a third of the total height, but as a tower 'when an incomplete tower is capped with a tiled roof resting on a string course and presenting an obviously unfinished appearance.' As the then editor commented in *Sheetlines* 21, 'How is the church symbolised when the height of the spire is between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ the height of the tower?!' 'Ch' in roman continued to be used for Anglican churches, and lower case abbreviations for other denominations, on the second, Third and Fourth Editions of the New Series and their Scottish and Irish equivalents. (The comparative infrequency of mentions for non-Anglican churches makes 'Ch' look more of a tautology than was in fact the case.) The redesign of the one-inch under Sir Charles Close *circa* 1912-13, which emerged from the sausage machine of history and financial stringency as the 'Popular Edition', got rid of the descriptions 'Ch', 'Chapel', etc, and treated small non-Anglican churches on an equality with Anglican ones, showing them all by symbol only: an unknowing student might suppose that between the revision of 1901-12 for the Third Edition of the New Series and that of 1912-23 for the Popular there was huge church-building activity: in fact it merely reflects a specification change. Some inner-urban churches continued to be omitted, which possibly explains the apparently systematic omission of Quaker meeting houses (though perhaps the military management of the Ordnance Survey felt that something had to be done about pacifist Quakers). The instructions to revisers continued to change: 'Belfries are not, but domes are shown as spires.... Disused Churches will be shown by symbol and "Ch. (disused)"... the reviser will

⁷ *Report of Committee on a Military Map of the United Kingdom*, London, War Office, 1892, pp.7, 21, 25.