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“OS Covers - A glossary of terms”

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The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, and initiator of many of the maps now sought after by collectors.

The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.

## O.S. COVERS - A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

by John Cruickshank & David Archer

The following is a brief glossary of terms useful in describing OS covers, including some that are more or less standard, and some put forward as suggestions. The need for such a standard nomenclature became apparent at the CCS study day on covers in March 1986, and this list was developed at the suggestion of the study group, although the terms included and their definitions are personal choices. We have aimed to indicate a number of general points about the development of OS covers without going into detail.

The complete description of a cover requires the description not only of the front but also of the back and inside surfaces, and a system for doing this is being developed by Guy Messenger and the study group. This is intended to be published in due course. (Those present at the 1986 AGM will have seen a draft scheme for the Scottish Popular 1-inch map distributed there by Guy.) The present list is very much an interim document pending the full development of this, but we hope it may provide a useful basis for informal discussion of cover styles.

The definitions include a limited number describing the folding and mounting of maps, since this affects considerably the form of cover used. Deliberately, the definitions and discussion have been limited to official OS practice: the range of covers and modifications produced by retailers, private map mounters and amateurs for OS maps is infinite! Terms in the list have been grouped together under a number of headings to permit a more coherent discussion than would otherwise have been the case. Familiarity is assumed with current OS products. Older products have been described in more detail.

### *THE MAP*

**PAPER (FLAT):** The original flat map as it came from the press. Often confused with the next term.

**PAPER FOLDED:** What it says.

**MOUNTED:** The paper map has been pasted onto a backing material, often, but not always, some form of cloth.

**MOUNTED AND FOLDED:** Again what it says. To be distinguished from the next item.

**DISSECTED:** The paper map cut into rectangles before mounting on cloth, with a small space between each section, giving a map that folds easily and repeatedly without further damage to the face of the map. Expensive, but much favoured before maps became regarded as disposable items. Now only a memory among those who regard destruction of a map as a crime.

**MOUNTED IN SECTIONS:** Dissected.

N.B. - The above terms have not always been used consistently, particularly in OS promotional material.

**BACKING:** The material used for mounting a map. Varies greatly, from the beautiful high quality linen used for the coloured 1-inch map at the turn of this century, through the rather rougher linen used for later dissected sheets to the cheap muslin used for post-war mounted and folded sheets. Also includes many other materials, including boards for display.

**WATERPROOF:** Place's waterproof paper was an abortive attempt to sell an indestructible map. (See Tim Nicholson's article in *Sheetlines* no.14.) To be distinguished from maps sprayed with varnishes.

**WEAR AND WATER RESISTANT MATERIAL:** A more recent and similarly abortive attempt to achieve the same end. Applied to a number of the Outdoor Leisure 1:25,000 maps.

## FORMATS

**LANDSCAPE:** The map is wider than it is tall, (e.g. 1-inch Popular Edition).

**PORTRAIT:** The map is taller than it is wide, (e.g. 1-inch 7th Series.) N.B.: The current 1:50,000 sheets are officially described as landscape, despite the area mapped being square: the printed sheet is rectangular due to the position of the reference panel at the side.

## METHODS OF FOLDING

In describing folding patterns, particularly non-standard ones, it is useful to differentiate primary folds (of the flat map) from secondary ones (usually the concertina folding) and tertiary ones (the final fold of the whole map plus cover in a Bender fold).

The following list is far from complete. Many different folds have been used by the OS, particularly for sheets not of standard dimensions, and during the period of continuous experimentation at the turn of the century.

**BENDER FOLD:** The fold used by the OS for almost all current maps. It sounds like a descriptive name, but in fact Bender was the man who invented it. Introduced in 1938 for the New Forest Tourist Map and some other suitably shaped sheets. Most of the post-war sheet formats were chosen with this fold in mind. Widely copied by commercial map publishers, particularly from the 1960s on.

**CROSS BENDER FOLD:** The same, but with the cover attached to the top of the map, which is concertina'd from top to bottom. Used for maps wrongly proportioned (e.g. too tall) for a conventional Bender fold, including the current 1-inch tourist maps of the Lakes and the Peak.

**SEMI-BENDER FOLD:** A variant devised in 1937 to allow Bender covers to be used for 1-inch Popular and half-inch maps. The primary folding concertinas the flat map, which is then only folded in three within a hinged Bender cover. A further variant is used on recent Irish maps, using a sort of adhesive Bender cover. The worst of all possible worlds.

**MICHELIN FOLD:** A fold used for the pre- and post-war 4th Edition quarter-inch maps, producing a rather awkwardly tall cover, (supposedly convenient for keeping in the elastic straps inside the roof of a car). The map is folded in half transversely, face outwards, and then concertina'd from side to side. Still used by Michelin for their French road maps. The same fold had in fact previously been used for small sheet series 1-inch, half-inch and quarter-inch maps from about 1904 until their demise, although the differing sheet size produced a very different size and shape of cover. It seems logical, although anachronistic, to include these earlier maps in this category.

**MARGINS IN FOLD:** Similar to the Michelin fold, but before concertinaing the upper and lower margins are folded back behind the face of the map, thus producing the smallest possible folded size allowing all parts of the map to be seen without unfolding. Used with hinge covers for the small sheet half-inch map and a few other contemporary sheets, but abandoned rapidly, possibly because the folded map is twice as thick at one end as at the other, and thus was (and remains) extremely awkward to store in any number.

**ANSELL FOLD:** A fiendishly complicated fold for maps dissected and mounted back to back, supposedly enabling one to follow a route from section to section round to the reverse without any loss of continuity. Much in vogue in military and geographical circles during and after the first world war, and used by the OS for the 10-mile maps in the 1930s, and immediately after the second war. A fairly clear description is in Winterbotham's *A Key to Maps*. (I can never get them to work, and I suspect the First World War got stuck in the mud of Flanders because someone tried to use one! J.L.C.)

[Image omitted here]

**LARGE SHEET SERIES FOLD**, (anyone know a better name?): The Large Sheet Series half-inch and 1-inch maps, and most subsequent small scale issues until the introduction of the Bender fold, were (when of standard size) folded with two transverse folds into three sections above each other before concertinaing. Whether the folds are inward, outward, or one of each, varies greatly depending on the series, the mounting of the map, the date of folding, and on how users have modified the pattern. Generally, the pre-First World War mounted and folded LSS maps had both folds outward, the adhesive covers used after the first war (and for dissected sheets before) required one inward fold (usually the top one), but the other was usually outward. (Scots half-inch sheets are an exception because of their smaller E-W dimensions.) The return to hinge covers in 1930 allowed both folds to be outward, (although they often seem to be inward). Winterbotham, (in *A Key to Maps*, p.137), lauds the double outward version, which is also illustrated in the artwork reproduced in John Paddy Browne's article, (*Sheetlines* no.6, p.2). The numerous non-standard-format sheets were folded in a variety of ways that one suspects were evolved empirically. Note that pre-First World War maps with hinge covers have the two covers fixed to each end of the middle section of the map, using tabs formed by cutting the margin of the map, while post-1930 versions have one fixed to the top section and one to the middle section, using tabs on the side of the cover.

*STRUCTURE OF THE COVER*

**HINGE COVERS:** The front and back covers are separate pieces attached by tabs acting as hinges to separate areas of the sheet. The most frequently used type until the introduction of the Bender fold. Most recently used in Britain for the post-war Scottish Popular map and the New Popular dissected sheets. Until very recently used for the final Northern Ireland 1-inch series, and still used for the (archaic) N.I. half-inch.

**BOOK-FOLD COVER:** The cover is a single piece, folded like the cover of a book, with the map usually attached to the inside of the back. When combined with an insert, the difference between a map with an insert in the front cover and a booklet with a map inside the back cover becomes a bit vague, (see several of the Historical Maps).

**ADHESIVE COVER:** The front and back covers are separately pasted on to the back of the map, so that when the map is folded the covers end up on the outside. The standard pattern after the First World War until 1930.

**BENDER COVER:** The cover used for a Bender-folded map. The current standard.

**INTEGRAL COVER:** The 'cover' is a panel at one end of the flat map that ends up on the outside when the map is folded. Much used for printings during the First World War; more recently for 1st Series 1:25,000.

[Image omitted here]

**ENVELOPE:** Maps with fragile or easily soiled covers are often distributed in individual envelopes. The pre-World War I maps had specially printed brown paper envelopes reproducing the design of the red, white or white location map covers inside, (now often very brittle and rather scarce: some examples carry Unwin's imprint as main agent). The 1:25,000 until recently was sold in a plastic envelope; the northern Ireland 1:50,000 still is.

**ENVELOPE COVER:** A cover that wraps right round the folded map and tucks into itself. Not often used by the OS: the only examples we know of are the 6-inch town plans of the 1920s.

**SLIP CASE:** A form of envelope, usually of stiff cardboard covered in paper or cloth. Not regularly if ever used by the OS themselves.

**BOXES:** The quarter Inch Third Edition were sold as boxed sets as well as individually. Otherwise boxed sets were assembled by retailers.

### *MATERIAL OF COVER*

Can be just about anything! Paper was used for some book-fold covers in the 1930s; a laminate of cloth and paper, (sometimes recycled paper from superseded maps), was generally used until shortly before the First World War; various weights of card have been the usual ever since. Thicker boards were occasionally used, (e.g. the Ansell-folded ten-mile maps of the 1930s).

**LAMINATED:** As currently used this implies the application of a plastic surface film to a card cover, giving a robust shiny surface. However, note the above comment on pre-First World War covers, and note that a shiny surface can also be achieved by coating with a varnish, such as is current practice. Note that the laminated covers of early 1:50,000 maps disintegrate much less in bad weather compared with the current ones, which when new feel very similar.

### *COVER DESIGNS*

**RED COVER:** A heterogeneous group of early OS covers, (including some prototypes), used from about 1897 to early 1906. Dimensions vary, depending on date and fold used for the map. Some are hinged, others are bookfold. The very earliest are plain or have a label indicating the nature of the map; however, most have a lettered front of similar layout to the early White Covers. The detailed sub-grouping of this series is at present being sorted out by Guy Messenger, and will appear in due course.

**WHITE COVER:** A group of covers, (usually hinged), of fairly uniform external appearance used from 1905 to about 1910, (and considerably later on Irish series). The front cover is in the same style as the later red covers, with the Royal Arms at the top and a simple letterpress description of the map divided by two horizontal lines. The letterpress inside is printed on labels glued to the covers, and varies considerably.

**WHITE LOCATION MAP COVER:** Covers used from 1910 until after the First World War. The first appearance of location maps on the front of OS maps. There are a considerable number of detail variants, (again, see Guy Messenger for the current list). Not often used for Irish maps, although a version certainly exists for the famous Killarney map and for some early half-inch sheets. Pre-war versions are usually hinged, post-war versions are adhesive.

**BUFF LETTERPRESS COVER:** A number of minor series, (including the Outline 1-inch map), did not have their own Series Covers designed after the First World War, but were sold in buff adhesive card covers of varying designs, rather similar to those of the pre-war White Covers, with updated Royal Arms.

**BUFF LOCATION MAP COVER:** A number of maps, particularly Outline with Coloured Roads district maps, were sold after the First World War in buff adhesive covers, with designs similar to White Location Map Covers.

**SERIES COVER:** Following the review of OS marketing in 1914 and after the First World War, each major series of maps was to have its own distinctive colour printed style of cover, encouraging retailers to display them prominently and customers to recognise them. This policy still continues. A full description of each series design is beyond the scope of this article, but in general the suite of decorative series designs, (almost all by Ellis Martin), introduced in 1919 and 1920 remained in use until the Second World War. Many detail modifications took place, but most are not obvious at first sight. A major post-war innovation in Series Covers has been their periodic redesign during the life of a map series to catch the eye, and perhaps suggest the existence of a more up to date inside. (Not everyone checks edition codes before buying!) The current pictorial 1:50,000 covers, each carrying a local view, break the previously clear distinction between Series Covers and Tourist Covers.

**TOURIST COVERS:** Similarly, Tourist maps were at first put within uniform series of covers. These rapidly gave way to covers separately designed for each sheet, and usually (for the inter-war designs) described by the artist's name with some description of the design. A bewildering number of designs and variants exist that at present have defied classification, (see Tim Nicolson). Post-war Tourist Covers fall into more easily classified groups, but individual designs for each sheet have remained the norm.

**PICTORIAL COVER:** Has a picture on it. Examples include the current 1:50,000, 1:25,000 and Outdoor Leisure maps, and most of the inter-war Tourist covers. By convention does not include the inter-war one-inch, half-inch and quarter-inch covers, despite the pictorial element in their design.

**ELLIS MARTIN COVER:** Ellis Martin designed by far the largest number of covers between the wars, (see *Sheetlines* no.6), including most of the Series and a lot of the Tourist covers. Generally they bear the initials EM somewhere in the design, except for some post-war versions where this was erased, (e.g. the current Roman Britain map).

**PALMER COVER:** Arthur Palmer designed many Tourist and a few Series covers between the wars, (again see *Sheetlines* no.6).

**WILLIS COVER:** A few inter-war Tourist covers designed by J.C.T. Willis, later Director-General 1953-7.

**HOY COVER:** E.T.Hoy designed the Manx cat cover for the Popular one-inch map of the Isle of Man, (see *Sheetlines* no.8, p.15).

## DECORATION

What should be printed on a cover (and where) is a continuing question. The earliest OS covers seem to have nothing; printed information about the map, about how and where to buy it, and other available series appeared very early on. Certain design elements recur:

**SHEET TITLE:** Usually (but not always) present. Usually (but not always) the same as that printed on the map itself. Note that the title on the map was usually guillotined during folding of post-war maps.

**ROYAL ARMS:** Frequently used as part of the design. Every time the monarch changes a completely new official version of the arms is issued, (not just for the OS, but for all government departments), and therefore cover designs must be adjusted. Note however that existing stocks

of covers are not destroyed, and so may well remain in use well into the succeeding reign, and that Ellis Martin drew his own designs independently of the official ones. Victoria's arms look much like Edward VII's except that the crown is different. George V used three different patterns, all very square in outline, as well as a quite different version only seen on Irish maps, (see *Sheetlines* no.12, p.4), and another on Northern Ireland maps. Edward VIII didn't last long enough to get a coat of arms on a map cover, (although his cypher appears quite a lot). George VI arms appear on almost all the immediate post-war designs until their replacement (often unnoticed) by the curved-edge current set. Note also that since the war Scottish maps have usually carried the Scottish royal arms rather than the United Kingdom arms, (of which a Scottish version does exist), and that two patterns of the Elizabeth Scottish arms have been used.

**ROYAL CYPHER:** An alternative to using the arms, in vogue for designs during the 1930s and 1940s. The two Georges tend not to be differentiated by number, (there are some exceptions, including the Willis Channel Island Tourist covers, early 1-inch 5th Edition covers, and the earliest 6th Edition 1-inch covers), and Edward VIII is just ER. The accession of Elizabeth (the IInd or Ist, depending on your nationality) is marked by the erasure of the GR cypher.

**LOCATION MAP:** The sketch map usually, but not always, on the front, showing the area covered by the map. A regular feature from about 1910 to the present.

**INDEX DIAGRAM:** The diagram of adjoining sheets, (which may show a limited area or the whole series). Most commonly on the back cover, but occasionally on the front or inside.

**CARTOUCHE:** Any lettering enclosed in a frame. In the context of OS covers, usually refers to the bit of artwork that appears on the back cover of 1930s and 1940s maps when the 1-inch index diagram had become a shambles changing from year to year, or when they had nothing better to put there.

**LOGO:** Trendy advertising word to describe that OS monogram that appears on just about everything OS nowadays.

**LABEL:** Just that! Adhesive labels have been printed intermittently from the beginning of OS covers to add to or to modify information on the cover. The range is huge and largely uncatalogued. The commonest are price changes, but at times labels have changed the title of the map, (see *Sheetlines* no.7, p.13), warned of deficiencies of the map, (e.g. the first printing of the 1:50,000 sheet 115 of Snowdonia), and even completely covered the front or back cover with an alternative design, (see the Irish maps sold after Home Rule, and some others). Labels were also used on the inside surfaces of some covers, instead of printing directly on the cover material, as in the pre-World War I White and White Location Map covers, and also the earliest pattern of 1-inch 6th Edition covers. Some Irish sheets after Home Rule had these labels covered with a blank label to obscure the old ordering instructions! Many non-OS labels also appear, usually applied by the retailer.

**TYPEFACES**, (usually referred to as **ALPHABETS** during the era of hand-lettering): A change in the style of lettering is an easy way of making an elderly design look more up to date. Changes are therefore frequent! There is no widely available satisfactory catalogue of the differing typefaces or their names, (though the OS have produced internal documents at various times, and a book, *Ordnance Survey Alphabets*, was published in the 1930s). The situation is complicated by the vogue for hand-lettered designs between the wars, which produced minor variations between covers ostensibly of the same pattern.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**PRINT CODES:** Between 1956 and 1968 the one-inch and 1:25,000 covers bore a code on the hinge attaching them to the map, indicating the date of printing and where it was printed. The

system was abandoned after the move back to Southampton. The pattern of the code and which way up it is printed varies from cover to cover: see *Sheetlines* no.13 for some notes on codes on 1-inch Seventh Series covers.

**SPINE TITLE:** Bender-fold covers have usually (but not always, particularly when on Paper Folded maps) had the title of the map printed on the fold, so that it is visible when several are shelved together. Which way up the lettering should be is arguable, and in 1964 the convention was changed. Initially the lettering was legible with the cover front upwards; now it is the other way.

**INSERTS:** For most maps, the inside surfaces of the covers provide plenty of space for printing any additional information desired. However, occasionally so much information is required that a leaflet is stuck in. Many of the earlier Red Covers carry inserts describing the ordering procedure for the maps; pre-Second World War Scottish maps often include an insert giving a Gaelic glossary, (which was also sold separately); most quarter-inch 4th and some 3rd Edition maps contain inserts with town plans. The booklets inside the covers of historical maps fall into this group. Note that the *Description of Ordnance Survey Small Scale Maps* usually refers to these inserts merely as 'letterpress'.

Enormous thanks are due to Guy Messenger and Richard Oliver for constructive criticism (at length), and for correcting many errors of fact and omissions. Opinions expressed are our own, and not necessarily universally accepted. Further discussion is invited!

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