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map”

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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.

A record copy of the one-inch Irish hill map

by J.H.Andrews

The 205 sheets of the Ordnance Survey's first one-inch hill map of Ireland appeared in two forms, with and without hills. The outline edition was issued with unusual haste, between 1854 and 1860, because it was thought to be urgently needed as a base map by the Irish Geological Survey. The hill version began promptly enough, in July 1855, but with its heavier demands on both indoor and outdoor staff its progress was inevitably slower and the final sheets were not published until 1895. The result was a certain loss of continuity in the management of this complex map. The sketching of the hills in the field was done on different scales, and with no less than twenty-five engravers of different generations employed on the hachures there was sometimes a personal element in the texture of the finished product. For some sheets the hills were engraved on the original plates, for others on a duplicate plate, and this led to variations in the topographical up-to-dateness of different sheets and occasionally of the same sheet.¹ There are also some irregularities among the footnotes. The usual practice in the hill map was to print a date of publication (a rare amenity in the Survey's nineteenth century Irish output) but on at least eight sheets this information was inexplicably omitted even from the latest printings. The most striking anomaly affected the last three sheets, numbers 136, 145, and 146, which were overtaken by the advent of colour printing: in 1894 it was decided to publish these sheets with hills in brown, and with both hachures and outline printed from transfers to zinc instead of from copper plates.² In the general picture these are all minor blemishes, and the map as a whole remains the most effective hill-shaded representation of Ireland ever completed.

The history of the hill map is partially documented in one of the manuscript volumes at the Ordnance Survey office, Dublin, known as 'records of alterations'. These purport to give for each sheet the dates of publication and the successive changes made by the engravers to its original and duplicate plates. Of 179 post-publication entries unambiguously assignable to the hill plates, 140 record the insertion of new railways, 14 the insertion of new or altered administrative boundaries, and 12 the removal for security reasons of forts and other military detail. The rest relate mainly to minor omissions and mis-spellings. Unfortunately, however, the record of alterations is far from complete, especially as regards marginal information. For instance, the printed dates of sheets 176 (March 1891), 179 (October 1890) and 181 (January 1891) are known to be late additions to the plates in question, because they are absent from the impressions of these sheets supplied to the National Library of Ireland, but there is no mention of this change in the record. The volume also omits all reference to the price of the map, and to the reservation of Ordnance Survey copyright, both of which were added to all or most of the existing plates in the 1880s. Another problem for the researcher is that the earliest entries in the record of alterations were evidently not written until some time after the first sheets of the hill map had been published: they must therefore have been copied in from some other source (now unavailable) and seem in consequence more likely to be erroneous or defective.

Further study of the map will necessarily depend on a comparison of surviving impressions and especially of complete sets in public repositories, for which an accession date is likely to be

¹ J.H.Andrews, *A paper landscape: the Ordnance Survey in nineteenth century Ireland* (Oxford University Press, 1975), pp.273, 278-80.

² Ordnance Survey Office, Dublin, files 854 (1894) and 1765 (1894). Some surviving impressions of the last sheets meet these new specifications, but (as Dr Richard Oliver kindly points out) all those in the British Library's copyright deposit have hills in black.

available. The present note draws attention to one such set, a handsomely bound volume preserved in the Survey's Dublin office. Its history begins on 11 February 1903 with a letter from the officer in charge of the Irish division, Lieutenant Colonel G.H.Sim, to the executive officer in Southampton, Lieutenant-Colonel R.H.Hellard.³ Sim was a relative newcomer in Dublin. He had been in charge there for a few months in 1899 and after service in South Africa had begun a longer second term of office in June 1902. He clearly recognised the historic importance of the Survey's first complete military map of Ireland, and the danger that it might be underrated, forgotten and even lost amid current preoccupations with the revised one-inch. He wrote:

I should like to have a record copy of the old 1" map of Ireland as well [as certain six-inch maps currently under discussion], bound, and one of the revised outline as soon as it is finished. I find impressions of the unrevised outline have not been kept, but perhaps it is not necessary to keep them as well as the hills edition, on which the outline is the same.⁴ If you think it is I can have record impressions pulled of the old edition. Will you want a 1" record copy for Southampton as well[?]

Hellard agreed to the binding of a record map but tactlessly declined the offer of a second copy for the Survey's head office. The most charitable explanation for his indifference is that Southampton had been keeping all the Irish hill sheets as they came out, but this policy can hardly have extended to every state of every plate. He added: 'As to 1" sheets it will be time enough to pull impressions of any sheet for record purposes when someone asks for a copy but some of the spare unrevised copies of each sheet should have been preserved for record instead of cancelling them.' It is not known how the Dublin office reacted to this rather unhelpful comment, for the rest of the file is entirely concerned with the technicalities of the binding process as performed by a local firm. In assembling the proposed volume Sim evidently made no effort to show the state of the plates in 1903 or at any other single date. More probably he used the latest available impression of each sheet, and with sheets 136, 145 and 146 he perpetrated a gross anachronism by superimposing the hachures of the obsolescent hill edition on the revised outline of 1899-1900 with its new vocabulary of conventional signs and modernised coverage of territorial divisions. However it seems unlikely that Sim had more than a very limited range of states to choose from. Otherwise he would have been better able to avoid the kind of inconsistency exemplified by the Galway-Clifden railway, which was engraved in 1896 on sheets 93 and 94 (both originally published in 1878) but which in the record atlas appears only on sheet 94.

The present note is too short for any further analysis of Sim's collating procedures, except to point out that unhappily two of the best-known methods of dating early Irish ordnance maps had ceased to be applicable at this comparatively late period. In the first place watermarks - at any rate the marks of these particular sheets - no longer included a date. Similarly, dates no longer accompanied the hand-written initials of staff-members inspecting printed sheets, nor are the possessors of these initials as easily identified as in the days when every sheet was examined by the chief engraver. Altogether eleven sets of initials have been noted in the record atlas. This at least seems to confirm that not all the sheets were printed at the same time, though if the duty of inspecting sheets was now shared among several individuals the initials may be less helpful in establishing a chronology than might be hoped.

Clearly, much arduous labour awaits any cartobibliographer who attempts a serious study of this fascinating map. Meanwhile amends have finally been made for Colonel Hellard's apparent lack of interest in it. In 1989 the Ordnance Survey of Ireland authorised a new facsimile edition of the complete volume by a private publisher, Phoenix Maps of Dublin. This time progress has been faster than in the nineteenth century: all 205 facsimile sheets were published on the same day, 14 December 1989.

³ Ordnance Survey Office, Dublin, file 7941 (1903).

⁴ [In fact, there are slight differences between the outline detail on the outline and hills editions (J.H.A.).]