



Sheetlines

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“Kerry musings”

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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.

Kerry musings

David Archer

"I'm not finding anything these days."

"So why don't you look for something else?"

"I would if I could think of something."

So runs a typical conversation that I have had with OS map collectors over the past seventeen years. All the interesting maps have gone, nothing is coming up and they are becoming bored searching and not adding to their collections. They get a lot of pleasure in just looking for the maps they want, but do need to find the occasional choice item to maintain their interest. My suggestion is to start one or more mini-collections of material that is fairly readily available. If you cannot find what you want, want what you find.

Most collectors usually have a rough, if not firm idea of what sort of collection they are building. Once things start getting tough, they initially widen their scope within their area of interest, and only later do they consider something different. For example, some start to build

a set of the Popular Edition of England and Wales, then when they are twenty maps short, they start on print codes for those they have and, when new ones become scarce, they start on the different formats: paper, cloth, dissected, book fold. If they can't find what they really want, they want what they do find, making the most of what is available. The alternative is to give up looking. Stop collecting Ordnance Survey maps? Never.

So, what else could one collect that is inexpensive, easily recognisable, available from a variety of sources, and will probably not dry up in the near future, even if everyone starts looking for it? Preferably something that embraces the whole range of OS maps, of all eras.

A lot of our members will tell you that the current OS output is an excellent subject to collect. Rod Sladen's presentation at the 1997 AGM gave an indication of the great variety found in the 1:50,000 series. This family of maps will be of tremendous interest to collectors in the future as it probably has more depth of interest than any series so far. By which I mean different specifications, different cover designs, a vast number of one-offs, errors and prematurely withdrawn maps galore. It has also lasted longer than any of the one-inch coloured series, with no sign of being replaced.

Or, you might consider labels and stamps. This is an area that has not been overworked so far. Gummed labels have appeared on many series when used to change the price of a map, and appear on Thirds, Populars and Fifth Editions to change cover titles. For example *Perranporth* stuck over the printed cover title *Truro and St. Austell* on English Popular Edition sheet 143. The most common sort of labels are those placed by retailers. Most members will have seen lovely small labels, in a variety of colours giving the seller's name and address. Much larger ones are found inside the folded map, pasted onto the cloth backing. One of my favourites is a very nice red and blue text on white for *Forster Groom & Co., Ltd., Military and Naval Publishers and Booksellers* which advertises a variety of their products including 'Maps specially drawn & printed for manoeuvre purposes ... Regimental dinner invitation cards ... the "War Office" Stylo pen ...' Other largish labels can be found for *Cornish Brothers*, Agents by appointment for the sale of Ordnance Survey maps; *John Smith & Son (Glasgow), Ltd.*, Official agents for Ordnance Survey maps and *William Porteous & Co.*, Glasgow, Survey and motoring maps. Though be warned, this could easily lead to collecting maps in agents' covers. The Seventh Series is very fertile ground for a variety of labels (including *Ordnance Survey/Superseded stock/Non net*) in different colours and styles, often with one partially stuck over another, and for various rubber stamps (*Field H.Q. Library*), notably price changes. I have always refrained from collecting these as there are just so many that space might become a problem, but cost would not be great.

Most rubber stamps are on covers rather than maps and have a variety of shapes and designs. The white covers, up to about 1920 seem to be the most fruitful source of interesting possession stamps, usually in an oval design: *Ordnance Survey/Drawing & Reproduction/Map Library*; *General Staff/Bermuda/17 Oct 1908*; *General Staff/Western Command/18 Aug 1909* and *Officer in Charge, Electric Lights & ???/Humber Defences*, with a stamped text *Capt. C.B.R.B/ O. i/c E.L. & T. Humber Defences*, and *Secret* stamped in red. Other white covers have an unadorned text: *Board of Trade/Timber Supply Dept./Reconstruction Branch*; *Army Motor Service*. Various stamps can be found on maps, *Supplied for the public service* and *Mobilization* are fairly common. *Colouring Department/O.S.O. Southampton/6 APR 1937* with two sets of initials in manuscript is a style that is harder to find.

When in a bookshop, having looked in the map box and scanned the topography shelves, a very fruitful and inexpensive source of goodies is the box of guides and pamphlets. Why not start a collection of period OS advertisements in booklets? The rear outside cover of *Stonehenge today and yesterday* 1927, is an advertisement for Ordnance Survey archaeological publications. *The Rambler's Handbook*...1933 has on the top half of page six the Fifth Edition hiker illustration with advertising text on the lower half of the page. Interestingly, virtually the same advertisement appears on the first page of *The Midland Ramblers' Handbook* 1938. Five years on and no change in advertising copy. Why? What other publications did the OS use? You are almost certain to find something no other member has, and will be helping to amass a collection that can be used to study the history of OS advertising.

Ward Lock guides have OS adverts and coloured OS map extracts, as mentioned previously in these pages. In fact, collecting publications containing map extracts could be quite fruitful. Consider the *Homeland Handbooks*. These small booklets with orange covers appear to have commenced in 1897 and continued well into the twentieth century. They originally had small black and white extracts of OS maps but by 1927 Bartholomew maps were favoured. Observant purchasers might have noticed that whilst the unidentified OS extracts were from the 360 sheet one-inch series (the dreaded marbly jobs), in later editions of the booklets, suggestions for current mapping of the area was given as either the Third Edition large sheets or Popular Edition. With over 95 volumes in the series there should be plenty to both look for, and find.

Many members will have a copy of the 1946 edition of the small booklet *Map reading for the countrygoer* (have a look on your shelves now). This contains a full-page OS advertisement and also, a list of six footpath maps which one can collect (*Charnwood Forest* being the most difficult to find), prompting the collecting of other footpath maps, some of which were produced by the OS. The 1964 edition is without adverts but does have a list of the National Forest Park Guides. Some early 1950s guides have a pocket at the back, containing a largish coloured Ordnance Survey map of the area. This easily found, and usually inexpensive series has distinctive green covers with a black and white drawing, but not all have OS map extracts.

Got the idea? Mini-collections are out there just waiting to be formed. The fun is in collecting something that few people have ever considered. And should you enquire after my current collecting interests, well, I'm gathering information and examples of linen makers' marks, found on the back of cloth maps. A little esoteric, but full of opportunity. It might even be found to have some relevance to Ordnance Survey maps.