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“Buying an Ordnance Map, 1825”

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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.

Buying an Ordnance Map, 1825

R C Wheeler

By 1825, distribution of OS maps was being done through the Gardner agency, and buying a map should have been as straightforward as buying any other item. Somehow, I doubt that Charles Hayward, the Town Clerk of Lincoln, saw it that way.

On 1 April, 1825, he would have seen an advertisement in the *Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford Mercury*.

OFFICE OF ORDNANCE

March 25, 1825

The public are hereby informed that the ORDNANCE MAP of LINCOLNSHIRE will be ready for delivery to those subscribers who have paid the advance of One Guinea and a Half per copy, on the 30th instant, according to a form which will be prescribed in a circular letter to be written to those subscribers; and they are therefore requested to send their addresses to the Secretary to the Board of Ordnance, addressed as follows:- “To the Secretary to the Board of Ordnance, Pall-Mall, London”.

By order of the Board,

W GRIFFIN, Secretary

Perhaps he responded; perhaps the Secretary had sufficient initiative to work out how to address a circular letter to the Corporation of Lincoln. Either way, Hayward took action in less than a fortnight.

1825, April 12- Writing to the Secretary of the Ordnance Office respecting the delivery of the Map of Lincolnshire for the use of the Corporation¹
(Same day – Paid Smith, Ellison & Co £3-3-0 on account of the Ordnance County Map.)

¹ Italic entries are taken from his yearly accounts with the corporation, preserved with the bundles of Mayors' and Chamberlains' Vouchers in Lincolnshire Archives. Entries in brackets relate to other vouchers in those bundles.

Smith, Ellison were the principal Lincoln bankers and on 21 December 1820 they had ‘opened a book ... to receive the subscriptions for the Ordnance Map of this County about to be published’.² If this is the residue of the subscription, why is it *on account*? After this, nothing happens until the following year.

1826, Feb^y 18 – Attending at the Ordnance Office in Regent Street for the Map of Lincolnshire when I found the same too voluminous for my carriage, and conferring on frame or portable case for use and receiving prices accordingly. 6s8d

Hayward was in town on other business. Only a lawyer would ‘confer’ with a shop assistant, but it makes the 6s8d charged for calling in seem less exorbitant. Why was it ‘too voluminous’? – was he asking for the whole of Lincolnshire mounted on a roller?

1826, May 1 – Letter to Agents to apply at the Ordnance Office for map of Lincolnshire. 5s

The ‘Agents’ here appears to be a reference to his legal agents in town. The delay since 18 February is curious.

*1826, May 14 – Carriage of Box with Map of Lincolnshire 2s
Postage from Mr Gardner with account 10d
Paid him remainder of Corporation subscription
for same and case. £4-5-6*

This is of course before the introduction of the Penny Post so postage is paid by the recipient – a great boon for historians, who have a record both of incoming and of outgoing letters. The subscription price of 4½ gns was not exactly cheap but by the time the Corporation had paid Gardner for a handsome case and Hayward for his sundry letters and conferences, the map cost them just about 8 gns, if the payment on 12 April 1825 was the first made, or 9½ gns if the Corporation had paid its 1½ gns in advance as it was supposed to.³ That leaves out the charge from Hayward’s London agents.

Within two months of the arrival of the map, Hayward had submitted his resignation. He must have been approaching sixty and perhaps found the rising tide of public business⁴ more than he could cope with in addition to his private practice. But it is still interesting how rigidly his language reflects the notion that he is buying a County Map from a Government Office. Was he solely to blame for this? What exactly was the division of responsibility between the Board of Ordnance in the Tower, its Secretary’s office in Pall Mall, and Gardner in Regent Street, so far as subscribers were concerned?

² Margary, Vol V, xvi.

³ In that case, it is difficult to understand how Hayward could have paid Gardner the *remainder of Corporation subscription*.

⁴ There was a legal dispute with the Witham Navigation, a running battle over the Fossdyke navigation, and much acrimony over the radicals’ proposal that expiring Corporation leases should not automatically be re-granted to the sitting tenants at the customary (very nominal) rents. Nevertheless, Hayward was able to serve as Mayor in 1828-29.