



# *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***

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single map in the possession of a novice collector must be in want of a companion. And the chances are that further acquisitions will initially be of the same series, usually standard one-inch, quarter or half-inch editions, well known, easily found and easily understood. By which I mean, they are numbered one to whatever, so that a collector knows what is involved in collecting a set; an index diagram will be readily available, one knows how many sheets are needed to cover a given area and which sheets are adjacent to those held. These days, if one wishes to go into an edition in detail, there is usually a Charles Close Society publication ready to elucidate.

But the Ordnance Survey has existed for over two centuries and has had many leaders, many having wanted to try something new. Something deviating from the norm. Often, such deviations are poorly recorded, if at all. Neglected in catalogues and annual reports, with little documentation finding its way to official archives, the surviving examples are the major source from which to piece a story together. Consider three such groups of Ordnance Survey output; none have had even a skeletal list published in *Sheetlines*, nor do we know how many there were in each group. A far cry from the one-inch Seventh Series, about which we know so much.

Maps printed on Place's waterproof paper are probably the best known of the three groups, and have had something written about them by several members, as a search in the index to *Sheetlines* will reveal. An OS experiment lasting for about seven years from 1929, maps are found within and without covers. But which maps? Quarter-inch Third Editions, one-inch Populars, Scottish Populars, Fifth Relief, Tourist maps, and military maps, especially GSGS 3907 and 3908. But only for the Populars of England and Wales do we have a full list.<sup>1</sup> Roger Hellyer has suggested that most military printings of this era resulted in some copies on waterproof paper being produced. From Roger, such a suggestion is just short of being a fact, but is not a list. We want a list. A list of all maps printed on Place's waterproof paper.

The main stumbling block is identification. Maps in covers are fairly easy, and fall into two groups. Some had special covers designed for them and are quite distinctive. Others, have modified standard covers, where the high price is a giveaway, and additionally there is usually a label, or traces of, with red text and Place's logo, as on the inside covers of the first group. When issued in covers, somewhere it states that the maps were 'On Place's Waterproof Paper', or similar wording. But identifying flat sheets is more difficult. As with looking for watermarks on Old Series maps, until you find the first one, you are not sure what you are looking for. Slightly waxy stiff paper, I was told. But a lot of OS maps are on stiff paper, and yes, one might even say waxy at times. So, if one is

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<sup>1</sup> Yolande Hodson. *Popular maps : the Ordnance Survey Popular Edition one-inch map of England and Wales 1919-1926*, The Charles Close Society, 1999. Check-list 7 : Sheets printed on Place's waterproof paper. 101 of the 146 maps in this edition are listed.

not sure what one is holding, it will be so difficult to identify a likely suspect and compile a list. That more examples probably exist flat than in covers adds to the problem.

Consider next, repayment jobs. Maps produced and printed, or just printed, by the Ordnance Survey, for someone else. The Charles Close Society paid the Ordnance Survey to print the first two maps in our reprint series. 'Printed by the Ordnance Survey', where the Ordnance Survey's role was essentially that of a jobbing printer looking for an income, as with work for Cassini maps. The OS has always undertaken paid work. Look at the publication dates of the Old Series, and Lincolnshire stands out as being strangely early. Why? Because the county was given priority when the Ordnance Survey and local gentry agreed the sheets would be partly financed by subscription, with a similar arrangement for the Isle of Lewis in the Scottish one-inch First Edition. Repayment jobs that were also part of a standard series. Towns wishing to have a mid-nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey 1:528 plan were asked to pay, and some did. Much later, we have Third Edition District maps in special covers for Oxford and Cambridge University OTC, followed by sheet 112 of the Popular Edition, produced for Marlborough College, with the addition of hachures. The OS printed 14 maps for the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain, as well as maps for various footpath societies. Standard OS maps, are found with Automobile Association covers in the mid-1960s, *The Heart of Hardy's Wessex* in 1974 had its own cover and coloured overprint, whilst the Camping and Caravanning Club had maps produced and printed regularly from the late 1970s to late 1990s (and beyond?). Attractive dark green Jaguar covers housed a set of nine Routemaster maps in the 1980s, with a Blackwell's 1:50,000 and Heffers town map being issued in the 1990s, a period that saw the introduction of 'MiniScale customised mapping' for various customers. The 2012 map *The future Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park* brings these few examples almost up to date, allowing us to argue that a policy of using resources to bring in a little extra cash has always existed, and continues to the present, if only occasionally for special events.

But having found an example, the inevitable questions arise as to whether the copy found is part of a set or series, and how many were there? I once found a Routemaster map in a glossy pictorial Zirtek (hay-fever tablets) cover. Were all nine sheets issued in this format? I wrote asking the marketing director and he kindly sent me a set of ten, which were unwanted and taking up space behind his desk. The tenth sheet being for Northern Ireland, which, I suppose might exist for the Jaguar set and be lurking in a private collection.

How many such productions were there? Who were they produced for? Will the records ever be deposited in a public archive? Or will we have to issue lists and ask for additions? My assumption is that there was no obligation to deposit this material in the copyright libraries. Thus, one cannot visit the usual places to view it. One has to rely on finding examples, which, as I say, poses the question : is what one finds a one-off example or part of a set? My assumption is that all nine sheets would exist for a job using the 1:250,000 Routemaster maps, as for Zirtek and Jaguar, but do 204 Landrangers in white Audi covers exist? Searching

for modern repayment maps can be time consuming, as they appear in a variety of formats, in glossy Landranger size covers, integral covers, paper folded on matt or glossy paper. One has to look at anything that seems likely, but the rewards are often great, as with the stunning cover artwork for the early *Cyclecity Guides*.

Finally, we might consider the little known Ordnance Survey location postcards. These were first produced in the late 1970s with orders still being accepted in early 1994, when I lost interest in them, so have no idea when they finished. Anyway, for a good few years, the Ordnance Survey would produce postcards, 'based on any OS series, with enlargement or reduction of the map, and the addition of logos, routes and customer's information, as optional extras. Customers have included schools, public utilities, small businesses and private individuals ....'<sup>2</sup> I know of nearly 350 different cards, but have no details after February 1994. As with repayment jobs, postcards do not appear in legal deposit collections, were often ignored in official publications and have not been listed by the society.

I must admit that I did collect these, but stopped, as after a while they all look the same, and one cannot remember what one has. Problems arise from the same front often having different versions of the back, and vice versa, with numerous cards being corrected and re-issued due to mistakes. (Map errors are a fourth open ended and un-listed group.) Great fun for collectors? Not really, tiresome beyond belief. One cannot collect these cards without a good detailed list, at which point, one stops enjoying the cards and sees them as something to be checked. Just like exam extracts, another unlisted group,<sup>3</sup> OS postcards are so difficult to remember. I suppose that with a flat map, there is a good chance it will contain something memorable, such as a town, but with cards, even town centres all look the same en masse, and many are town centres. A positive thing is that they cost little, but buying by post increases the cost, and the expense of attending postcard fairs in order to find a couple of 50p cards is just not on; though one could 'register' wants with postcard dealers and have them send new stock on approval. I might well return to location postcards, as they are fun to track down, and very addictive. Bright, colourful and glossy, with a host of different logos.

So, what might the society do about all the open-ended groups of OS products? A good start would be to get a good list together for each group and put it on the society website. It will then be there for anyone in the world to see, and notify additions and corrections. There is no longer any point in using *Sheetlines* for such a venture, as there are various lists abandoned to old issues, worthy but forgotten. We do have a 'Provisional cartobibliographies' section on the website, but the information is almost complete and far more polished than the embryonic lists I am suggesting. So why put something sketchy on the

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<sup>2</sup> Ordnance Survey, Repayment Services leaflet *Location postcards*, 30 August 1988. Question : Why Repayment and not Payment Services?

<sup>3</sup> The fullest list that comes to mind is of extracts from a few military series : Roger Hellyer and Richard Oliver. *Military maps: the one-inch series of Great Britain and Ireland*, The Charles Close Society, 2004, 257.

website? Because for many groups, it would be fruitless to trawl the legal deposit collections hoping to find a significant number of examples : the majority known are held by private individuals. I have a collection of different OS labels and stickers found on maps, a part of the history ignored by libraries; a lot of us have collections of errors on maps and covers, whilst OS maps in books need to be listed, as do OS maps used in advertisements. Such a listing must be a co-operative venture to succeed. Something for anyone to add to. A website list is a start, but unlike standard numbered series, where a lot can be predicted, pencilled in and confirmation sought, open-ended groups really would benefit from Ordnance Survey help. One would hope that the files for the repayment jobs and location postcards still exist, and that the society might encourage the OS to deposit them in a national archive, even with an embargo of fifty years, if necessary.

Open ended series, consisting of the unexpected, and offering surprises, are very relaxing to collect, as there are no pressures. Not knowing what exists, the discovery of a new map is a pleasure in itself, unlike one-inch series, where one does know what exists, and nothing surprises. There must be scarce maps and the more common ones, but they have not been identified, and so every new map is greeted with the same pleasure. One does not say “Ah, that fills a gap”, but “Ah, another one to add to the collection”. I do not feel under pressure to complete a ‘set’, and if one is missed somewhere, well, it does not upset me, as I assume there are hundreds of them, and that I will never have them all, so the odd one missed is just one amongst many.

### **Rowley Award 2014**

At the 2014 AGM, the first biennial Rowley Award, and a cheque for £50 was accepted by Richard Oliver on behalf of Paul Bishop and himself, for their article *Representation of ha-has on OS six-inch mapping* in *Sheetlines* 95.

Combining a study of Ordnance Survey maps and field research, it was felt that this was a good example of a new and emerging approach to the study of OS maps, and one which it is hoped will inspire new authors to put pen to paper or finger to keyboard. Many members have varied interests for which they use Ordnance Survey maps, or which have developed from their interest in OS maps. Others are more interested in the maps themselves, and have observations and information that others would welcome.

So, why not write about something in your collection, your likes or dislikes concerning OS maps or data provision, what you use OS maps for, an event in OS history or something similar? Any piece will be considered, as long as it is concerned with Ordnance Survey maps and is the author's (or main author's) first or second article for *Sheetlines*. Articles which the judging panel believe set an example, and will hopefully encourage others to start writing are sought for the 2016 Award.

David Archer and Alison Brown would like to thank Bill Batchelor and Chris Higley for being on the first panel of judges. As Richard was not eligible for a financial reward, having written at least two pieces for *Sheetlines*, he was given a map for his collection.