



Sheetlines

The journal of
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps

“OGS Crawford’s annotated maps”

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Sheetlines, 107 (December 2016, pp 23-25)

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/files/Issue107page23.pdf>

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Published by
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps
www.CharlesCloseSociety.org

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.

OGS Crawford's annotated maps

Bill Perry¹



Volunteers in the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Archive and Library have been working for some time on entering the Society's map collection onto the computerised catalogue. They have recently turned their attention to a collection of six-inch Ordnance Survey maps of Wiltshire annotated by OGS Crawford (1886–1957) with details of archaeological features and finds, and locations referred to in Anglo-Saxon charters and medieval documents. How these maps came to be in the Society's collection is an interesting story.

Crawford (*above, photographed in 1912*) studied geography at university, and from this he developed an interest in archaeology, taking part in excavations in the Sudan. He subsequently served as an RFC observer in World War I,² and came to realise the potential of aerial photography in identifying archaeological remains when he later saw RAF photographs of Celtic fields in Hampshire, and became one of the pioneers of the use of this technique. He teamed up with Alexander Keiller (heir to the family marmalade business and well known for his excavations and restoration of the stone circle at Avebury), who was a pilot and could afford to pay the bills, to photograph large areas of southern England from the air.^{3 4}

In 1920 Crawford was appointed the first Archaeology Officer of the Ordnance Survey, a post he continued to hold until after World War II. During the war he realised that the Ordnance Survey's then premises in Southampton were highly vulnerable to air attack and urged that original maps and records should be moved to a place of safety for the duration of the war, as was being done with important museum and art collections. However, he was unable to persuade the Ordnance Survey's Director-General to agree to this. Crawford, who had a reputation for being a somewhat irascible personality, then promptly took all 'his' maps to his home in Nursling, a village some four miles north of Southampton, where he stored them in his garage. His premonition about possible air attack was soon realised; the Ordnance Survey building and almost all its contents were destroyed in a major air-raid on Southampton less than twelve months later.⁵

Following his retirement Crawford kept his collection of annotated maps and on

¹ The author is a trustee of Wiltshire Museum, Devizes. This article first appeared in *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine*, vol 109 (2016) and we are grateful to the author and the Society for permission to reproduce it. The author can be contacted at bill.perry@wiltshireremuseum.org.uk.

² OGS Crawford, *Said and Done: the Autobiography of an Archaeologist*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1955.

³ OGS Crawford. and A Keiller, *Wessex from the Air*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928.

⁴ K Hauser, *Bloody Old Britain, OGS Crawford and the Archaeology of Modern Life*. London: Granta Books, 2008.

⁵ J Charlton, 'The Tale of Mr Crawford and his cap', *British Archaeology*, March 1999.

his death left the Wiltshire ones to the Society (it is not known where those of other counties went). Had he not taken them home in 1942 they would have been lost along with most of the pre-war records of the Ordnance Survey. While most of the sites he marked are now recorded on the County Sites and Monuments (or Historic Environment) Record, in many instances Crawford's annotations are more detailed, with references as to the source of the information; examples are shown below. Work on fully cataloguing this interesting collection of over 300 maps is almost complete and the full list, with descriptions of the areas they cover, will be available on the Wiltshire Museum website⁶ (Catalogue Nos. DZSWS: Map 320.1 onwards). Most of the archaeological books which Crawford wrote are also held in the Library together with a complete run of the journal *Antiquity* which he founded. Regrettably we do not have either the originals of his photographs or his personal papers. These went to his old university in Oxford where they are divided between the Bodleian Library (papers) and the Institute of Archaeology (photographs).

My thanks to Stella Maddock, Wendy Lansdown and Angi Britten who are working on the cataloguing of the Society's map collection and to Peter Saunders for helpful comments on a draft of this article.



Left:

Marginal note by Crawford on OS six-inch Wiltshire Sheet XLIV NE (1901 edition)

Opposite page upper:

Annotations on six-inch Wiltshire Sheet LX NW (1901 edition), Normanton Down

lower:

Annotations on six-inch Wiltshire Sheet LIV SW (2nd ed. 1901), Stonehenge

⁶ <http://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/>

