



Sheetlines

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“William Driscoll Gosset”

Richard T Porter

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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.

William Driscoll Gosset

Richard Oliver³ notes that Gosset may be a man who has not had his due; I cannot provide this for his OS career, but a few further notes may be of interest.⁴

He was born 13 April 1822 (so being just 30 in 1852, as Oliver supposes) and married his cousin, Helen Dorothea Gosset, in June 1852. From OS he was posted to Ceylon and, as Surveyor General in October 1856, had a team of surveyors sent out to the island.

Immediately after completing his surveys in Ceylon he was posted to British Columbia as Colonial Treasurer: here he was both praised and reviled. A letter (15 November 1858) from Robert Burnaby, who had met him on the boat, said that Gosset “is to my mind an odious man, full of self conceit and irritability ... He is a very clever man, but ... Ceylon has finished him off.” There is a good deal more, and a portrait, on the website.

According to *The Times* of 22 May 1899⁵ he died on ‘the 19th inst.’ at 70 Edith-road, West Kensington, aged 77.

Richard T Porter

TWO ENGRAVERS.—REQUIRED, on the Ordnance Survey, ENGRAVERS, capable of doing map work and writing on maps. Applicants for employment to state their age, and forward specimens of their work, addressed to this office.
By order of the Superintendent,
W. DRISCOLL GOSSET, Captain Royal Engineers.
Ordnance Map-office, Southampton, Dec. 31, 1852.

The *Times* archives are available at <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk> and this example is taken from 7 January 1853. Online access to the complete searchable archive is free of charge for an introductory period – CJH.

³ *Sheetlines* 81, 20, 21, etc.

⁴ Taken from <http://www.royalengineers.ca/Gosset.html> on a Canadian website of The Royal Engineers Living History Group which reproduces text from T W J Connolly, *History of the Royal Sappers and Miners*, second edition, London: Longmans, 1857.

⁵ Page 1.