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and improved”

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The New Popular index damaged, mended and improved

K S Andrews and P S Welham

Introduction

Richard Evans recently reported to the Ordnance Maps discussion group a New Popular back cover index diagram with the erroneous sheet number 123 for Norwich.¹ Alan Bowring perceptively commented that the number looked like a hybrid between 123 and 126. Since this defect has been highlighted, it was decided that the full array of index diagram variables should be exposed. The differences reveal the improvements made to the index diagram and the chronology of printing the paper and dissected versions of the Ellis Martin covers.

Procedure

The changes to the index were identified and then a chart was prepared to correlate each index variable with the established KA cover variant scheme.² Over 1800 covers were examined, avoiding duplicates. The covers were all different with respect to at least one aspect of the following – sheet number, print code, KA cover variant, index variant, and format (paper, cloth or dissected). Minor changes attributed to variations of inking, card, etc were ignored.

Index differences

The back cover index versions differ as already noted in the KA classification, namely the red N beside Orkney and Shetland was added, the fictitious Scottish Popular sheet 89 was sometimes present, the sheet 86/92 overlap hatching could be missing, then the red grid was cleared, and lastly the New Popular index was replaced by an inaccurate Seventh Series index. We report the other differences of detail we have seen to four aspects of the index printed on the New Popular Edition covers. See below for comments on the Seventh Series index on the late covers.

1. Sheet numbering

The Norwich sheet 126 number is usually well printed but is occasionally defective though still recognisably a 6. Sometimes it appears to be 123. The 3 is unlike the other 3s used for the index and, in the opinion of the authors, is a damaged 6 (see figure 1). Heavy inking accentuates the deception, as in the illustration of variant 4.

The Norwich sheet number 126, usually vertically above 137, is sometimes shifted to the left. This variant, number 5, is scarce.

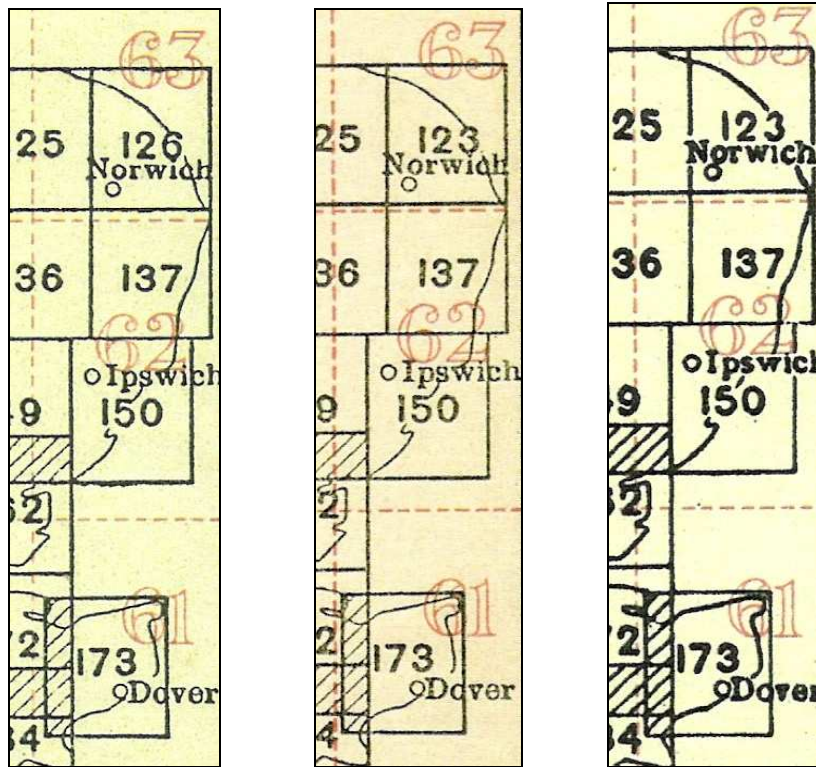
2. Sheet lines

At placenames, the sheet lines can be almost continuous or they can have breaks.³ (See section 4 for gaps at red grid numbers.) There are four versions of the grid that have sheet lines with added breaks at the placenames. The first has a short gap for the L of Leeds, a gap for the N of Norwich and no gap for Dover or Salisbury.

¹ <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/ordnancemaps> reported in *Sheetlines* 86, 8.

² For the KA cover variant scheme see *Sheetlines* 76, 14-28.

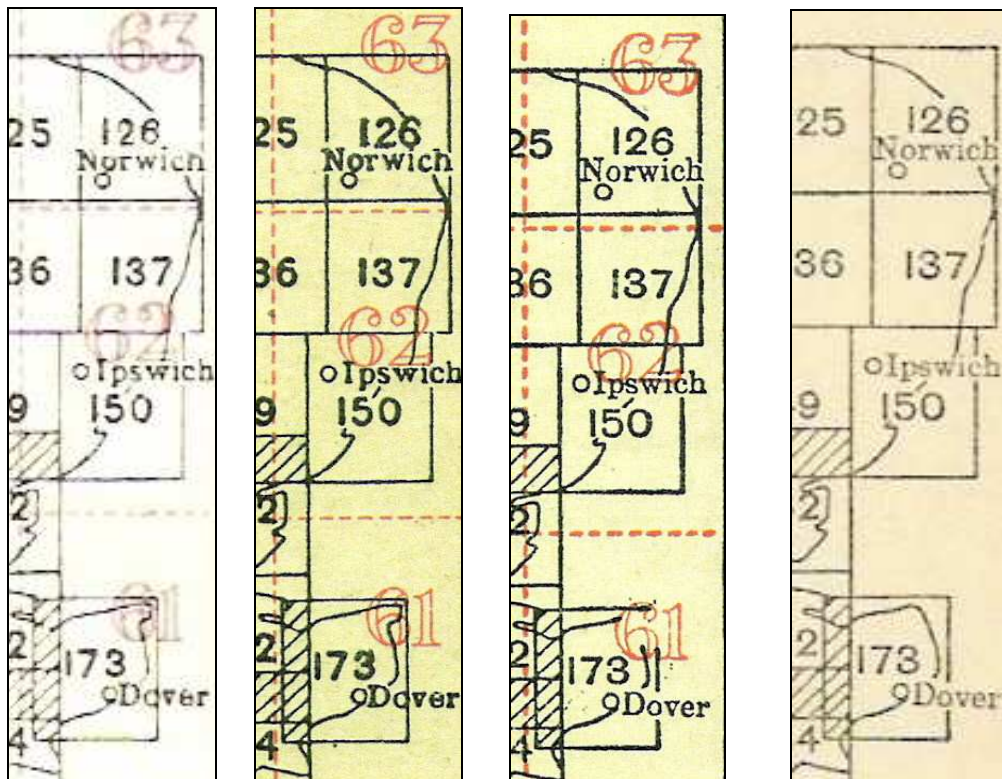
³ Sheet lines that are almost continuous have a break for the 'o' of Fort William, and also for a few other places including Sheffield, Dolgelly and Carmarthen but no break at Carlisle; they break for sheet numbers.



*Variants 1 & 2
sheet lines continuous*

*Variant 3
Norwich 123*

*Variant 4
gap for N of Norwich*



*Variant 5
Norwich 126 left
gap for N*

*Variant 6
126 central
gap for N*

*Variants 7 & 8
gap for Dover
gaps for red 61*

*Variant 9
no Thanet*

Figure 1 Index details to illustrate some of the changes

The next has a gap for the h of Norwich but not the N and there is a gap for Dover but not Salisbury. Then there is a gap for Salisbury also. The last is similar but with a larger break for Leeds.

3. *Placenames*

The o of Bristol can be small, suggesting repaired damage. The location ring for Alnwick can be a Q. There can be an unsightly black blob above Selkirk.⁴ There is a mark ~ beneath the F of Foula on a few covers with index variants 4 and 6.

4. *Great Britain coastline*

Three versions of the coastal outline have been seen. All have gaps in the coast for sheet numbers. The first version has no gaps in the coast for the red grid numbers and includes Thanet. The next has spaces in the coastline and some sheet lines for grid square numbers 16, 21, 23, 25, 34, and 61. The final version has no spaces for the grid numbers and Thanet has been rounded off.

Results and discussion

Fortunately, not all the potential combinations of differences appear in practice, so a relatively limited number of index detail variants was found. The nine indexes are shown in table 1 and the KA cover variants they are found on are indicated.⁵ The text below the index and the presence or absence of hatching for the overlap of sheet 86 with sheet 92, recorded previously, are included in the table since they too are changes to the black printing pass. Other changes reported previously are to the red print so are not listed.

The index variants are tabulated in the only order that gives the changes a logical progression. The hand-lettered Ellis Martin cloth covers have index variant 1 and variants 7, 8, and 9 show a satisfying correlation with the later cover variants.⁶

No order would give a smooth chronology to the cover variants with the intermediate index variants 2 to 6. Nevertheless, the overall picture is less of a scattergram than is initially apparent. Many KA2 and KA3 covers only have the sketch frames different so can be grouped as being concurrent. The early KA4 covers are akin to some covers in groups KA2 and 3. The two tan card variants likewise have plain card equivalents. A further consideration is that some variants have the red 89 on the index as the sole difference (we are discussing the black print). The remaining confusion in the relationship between cover variants and index variants displayed in table 1 can be attributed to large stocks of various batches of generically printed card being used out of chronological order.

The placenames Norwich and Ipswich move relative to the sheet lines and to each other when variants 6 and 7 are compared. This is the point at which there is a major step change; the gaps for Dover and the red square numbers appear, the o in Bristol changes from small to normal, the Alnwick Q becomes O and the 86/92 overlap hatching is overlooked. A general review of the index has evidently occurred.

⁴ This blob has been seen on a few copies of variant 6 on the related cover variants KA2.6 and 3.8. There can be a variable smudge at the intersection of the sheet lines below Selkirk with indexes 2 and 3.

⁵ Some of the cover variants of group KA3 have more than one index variant so the diligent cataloguer should add index variant suffixes to the KA scheme.

⁶ Note that cover KA5.6, which appears to be out of order, is actually cover 5.3 printed with a higher price.

Index detail	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Norwich 126	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Norwich 123			✓	✓					
Norwich 126 left					✓				
Sheet lines cont.	✓	✓	✓						
Gap N of Norwich				✓	✓	✓			
Gap Dover							✓		
Gap Salisbury								✓	
Large gap Leeds									✓
Small o Bristol				✓	✓	✓			
Q for Alnwick		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
With Thanet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Gaps for red squares							✓	✓	
No Thanet									✓
Hatch 86/92	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	no	no	no
Text under index	1 or 2 lines	2 lines	2 lines	2 lines	2 lines	2 lines	2 lines	The open... 5 lines	NOTE:- Orders... 5 lines
Seen on KA covers	1.2 1.3 1.4	A	1.5 3.1 3.2 3.7 4.2	B	3.6 3.8	C	D	5.3 5.6	5.4 5.5 5.7 6.1

Table 1. Index diagram differences and the covers on which to find them

A is covers 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.9, 4.3

B is covers 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1

C is covers 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8

D is covers 3.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2

For index 8 there is another improvement besides the sheet line gap for Salisbury – ‘Anglesey’ moves away from its sheet line and, like other island names, is in clearer print.

Printing Ellis Martin covers

The hand-lettered Ellis Martin covers for cloth maps have pasted-on indexes. Clearly the first maps to be prepared, they have the pre-publication price of 2/6 on the front and the first version of the grid working text pasted inside, printed in heavy black type. The index, also pasted-on, is taken as the first version and this view is supported by the lack of

blemishes, the minimal sheet line breaks, and the coastline without breaks for the red grid numbers.⁷

The paper and dissected hand-lettered covers are uncommon, therefore few examples could be studied. The front covers have the pre-publication price, dating them before September 1945. The grid text, directly printed inside, is still the heavy black type version. The index diagram is also printed directly on the card. It is the one listed as version 3 – it has two separate developments, the Q at Alnwick and the 123 for Norwich. This same index is used on KA3.1 covers, which were the first of the letterpress covers to be printed (they also have the pre-publication prices). KA3.1 with index version 3 is the cover on, for example, cloth sheet 162, Southend-on-Sea, edition 10,045/Ch. published July-August 1945, the same date as the Ellis Martin cloth maps. Two conclusions can be drawn:

- With these significant index differences, the paper and dissected Ellis Martin covers were clearly printed some time later than the indexes that were pasted on the cloth covers.
- The presence of index version 3 on paper and dissected Ellis Martin covers does not imply that they were put on sale later than the cloth versions of those sheets.

Implications for the printing process

The changes from index versions 1 to 2 to 3 reveal that the printing plates were renewed even when no revision was intended.

As can be seen in figure 1, the coast at Great Yarmouth and Broadstairs is close to the sheet lines in variants 1, 2 and 3. The sheet lines move slightly east from variant 4 on, raising the possibility that the index was printed from an image composed by superimposing two or more separate images of the frame, coast, sheet lines, placenames, etc. The progressive clearance of sheet lines where they cross placenames suggests that they too were from separate images.

The omission of Thanet on variant 9 shows (a) the previous diagram was re-used by touching up and (b) it was done without reference to a map.

The Seventh Series index

Only very minor differences can be seen to the Seventh Series index on the New Popular covers. The dots can be faint or missing on the i of some placenames, e.g. Darlington, Ripon, Norwich, etc. No consistency was established, so these were attributed to printing variables. Therefore a single version of the Seventh Series index was judged to be present on the cover variants KA6.2 to 6.6.

The Scottish Popular cover index

Most of these index variants, and no new ones, have been seen on the back of Scottish Popular covers, including the accidental Norwich 123. Variant 5 with 126 displaced to the left has not been observed and variant 1, absent from Scottish Populars, seems to be restricted to the cloth version of the hand-lettered Ellis Martin map covers.

⁷ The pasted-on index has two versions, having one or two lines of text below the box. Both come with minor differences, (a) no sheet line breaks for the second l of Carlisle and the N of Norwich, (b) with just a break at Carlisle, and (c) with both breaks. Strangely, one copy of the pasted-on index out of the 43 seen is index variant 2 – it has the Q at Alnwick. As would be expected, it is on the last EM cloth cover, KA1.4, with two lines of text.

Conclusions

The New Popular index diagram was revised several times. It was subject to incremental improvements to add legibility to placenames where sheet lines crossed them. The clash of the coastline with the red grid square numbers was also addressed. When the red grid was removed from the diagram, sheet line and coastal gaps were filled.

This simple sequence of events is clouded over by the incidence of blemishes to the diagram including the Norwich 123 glitch, when the 126 was damaged, resembling 123, then replaced by a misaligned 126, which was soon realigned.

The distribution of many of the index variants among the cover variants shows a confused pattern, even after allowing for the simultaneous use of some covers from groups KA2, 3 and 4 for sheets of the series in different areas. This suggests a lack of proper chronological use of new and superseded versions of generically printed cards when printing the sheet-specific information on the cover fronts.

Acknowledgements

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