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“AA Touring map of Scotland”

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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.

The AA Touring map of Scotland

Ken Hollamby

This article started as what I thought was a simple request to Christ Fleet, Senior Map Curator, at the National Library of Scotland. I had purchased a copy of *The Automobile Association Touring map of Scotland* printed and published by John Bartholomew & Son Ltd. of Edinburgh. As Bartholomew maps do not carry dates I was interested in dating the map. Chris replied that it could be 1927 or 1936 and to look for a print code such as B36 which would date it to July-December 1936. The print code on my map is 1221 so back to the drawing board. The National Library of Scotland holds the Bartholomew archive including the Bartholomew's printing register and from that I learnt that copies of the map were printed in 1927, May 1930, August 1932, September 1933, August 1934, August 1935 and finally, 7 November 1935, the date of my map.

Chris then asked Karla Baker the Bartholomew Archive curator to look further into their archives and the rest of this article is from the long and informative email that I received from her.

The story of the first edition of this map appears to go back to 1910, when the Automobile Association published the first edition of their title *Scotland for the motorist*. This title is basically a guide book. It includes information about the AA, about destinations in Scotland and an assortment of maps and illustrations. In the back of this book there is a section map of Scotland, produced by Bartholomew, on the scale of twelve inches to the mile – the same scale as the *Automobile Association Touring map of Scotland*. There were several subsequent editions of this book but the crucial edition is the one for 1927.

By August 1926, the AA wrote to Bartholomew about *Scotland for the motorist* regarding updating the section map. Up to this point, this map had appeared in the back of the guide book in atlas form, but by 1926, the AA had decided to produce a stand-alone flat sheet version too. The first reference that the archive has of this comes via a letter to Bartholomew from AD Allen, touring manager of the AA, dated 26 November 1926. He writes:

‘...it would be informative if we could have a progress report and some idea of when the mounted, folded, dissected edition is likely to be published’

This ‘mounted, folded, dissected edition’ is *The Automobile Association Touring map of Scotland*. Throughout early December 1926, letters fly back and forth between the two firms particularly focusing on the way the new map was to be folded. On 1 December 1926 one of Bartholomew's directors, GS Robinson writes to Allen:

‘I have had a rough proof of this map in black pulled from the stone and had some dissected, mounted and folded to what I consider would be the most suitable size for this new map, and am sending this herewith in order that you may give consideration to the special covers that you would require for your own edition’.

On 10 December 1926, Allen replies:

‘...we should have liked something rather larger than the model fold you submitted. This errs on the small side. The result of our experiments, however, shews the great difficulty in providing an alternative and the folded tracing I am sending you is our best effort. This though has the material disadvantage that Glasgow comes near the fold. Unless, therefore, while keeping within the size of the England and Wales map, you can improve on our trial, you may take it that we will adopt your sample’.

On 13 December 1926, Robinson replies:

‘With regard to the folding, I have had two sheets folded to different sizes and send these herewith, along with the original folding suggested, as well as your rough tracing. Personally, I am inclined to the smaller size as originally sent you, but this is a matter for you to decide, and we can arrange for the map being dissected and folded to whichever size you prefer’.

Finally, on 15 December Allen replies to say:

‘I appreciate the trouble you have taken in sending alternative foldings but on considering these we come back to the fact that your original small fold – which I now return – seems to do better justice to the map itself and, for this first edition at least, we will adopt it’.

At the same time these discussions were occurring, the two firms were also considering the cover for this new map. The first reference crops up in a letter to Robinson from Allen on 10 December 1926:

‘If you have an artist who could submit a sketch based on the pictorial cover of our England & Wales would you care to let me have your suggestions?’

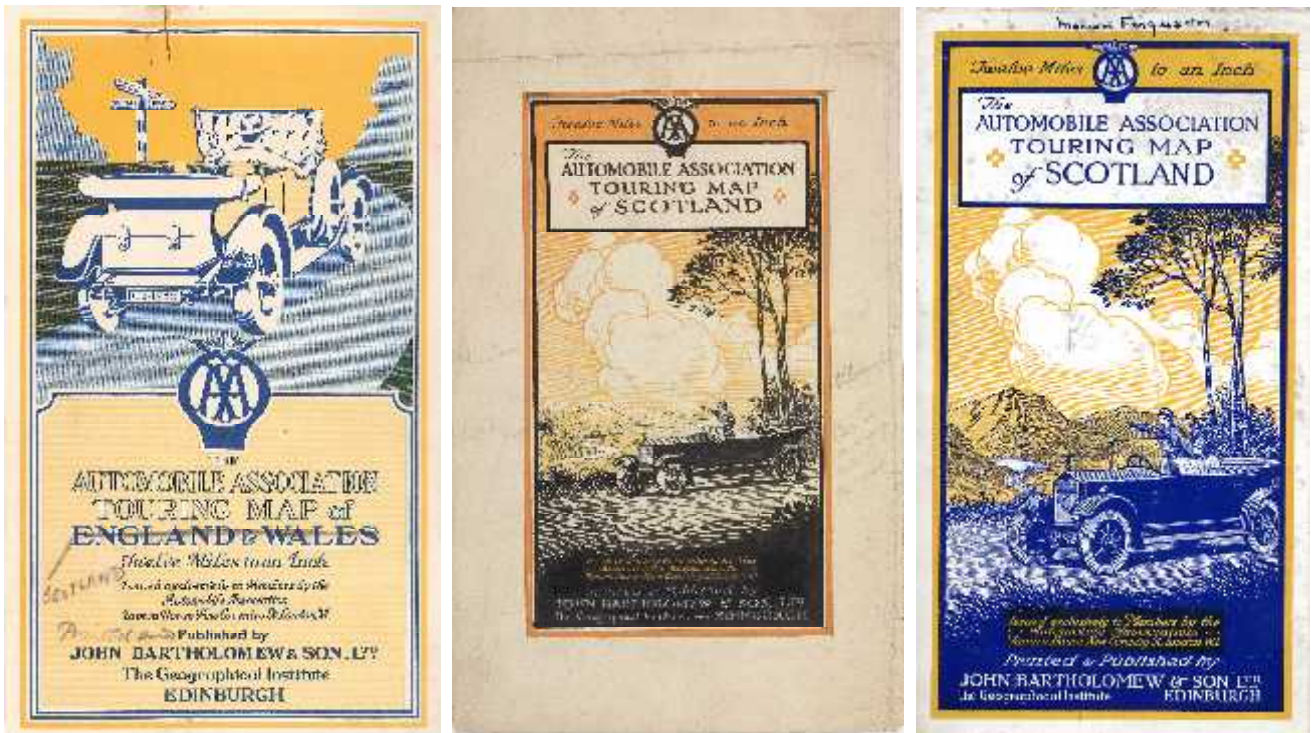
Bartholomew waited until the fold issue had been resolved (as this would affect the size of the cover) before contacting an external company, John Swain & Son, Ltd (based in Glasgow) to produce a sketch of the cover artwork. There followed correspondence about the detailed design of the artwork resulting in final approval on 9 March 1927.

In terms of printing statistics, the AA ordered 2000 copies of the first edition on 17 December 1926. They stipulated 1750 copies to be mounted (ie linen backed), dissected etc with covers, 200 copies printed on paper and left as a flat sheet and 50 copies mounted on cloth and left as a flat sheet. They subsequently ordered an extra 250 copies in black and white only. These copies were to be sold to AA members but also distributed amongst their patrol vehicles for their own use. At the same time, Bartholomew printed 6000 copies which they sold directly to the public – with the permission of the AA. The only difference was that AA members could buy their copies cheaper than the public could buy from Bartholomew’s.

The next printing of this map was ordered on 30 July 1929. 6000 copies were printed on 8 January 1930. By this time, Bartholomew’s records refer to this title

as a 'publication' which means they printed and published it themselves – or in other words, it was never reissued by the AA. Indeed, after the 1930 edition the print run was slashed to 2000 copies in 1932; 3000 copies were printed in 1933; 3000 in 1934 and 3000 in 1935.

My thanks to Chris Fleet and Karla Baker of the National Library of Scotland for turning what seemed, at the time, a simple question, into an interesting piece of cartographic history.



left: Annotated proof of the cover of The Automobile Association Touring Map of England & Wales sent as an example to John Swain & Son Ltd in Glasgow on 16 December 1926

centre: The cover proof of The Automobile Association Touring Map of Scotland sent by John Swain & Son Ltd to the Automobile Association on 21 December 1926

right: The final published cover design of The Automobile Association Touring Map of Scotland. This example is from the 1935 reprint

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