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“Visit to Cambridge University Library”

Peter Walker and Chris Higley

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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.

***Visit to Cambridge University Library
Peter Walker and Chris Higley***



In the morning of Saturday 23 March around fifteen members met at Cambridge University Library for a 'show & tell' session. The maps tabled were:

Richard Oliver – whilst common to find a 1914 one-inch Aldershot District map stamped as 'Official use only', Richard has now found one without the stamp, implying it was available for sale, contrary to all expectations and understanding of these maps.

Malcolm McIvor – a two-sheet map of the Dinsdale estate in County Durham, one of the earliest examples of printed 25-inch OS maps. A debate ensued as to where they should be deposited (locally to the site, or nationally at CUL).

Peter Walker – the first published OS map, the one-inch of the whole of Essex from 1 April 1805, printed as a county set, combining sheets 47, 48, 1 and 2.

David Webb – a 40 feet long strip map for roads that could be hired from Road Guides Ltd, dating from 1920s.

Chris Higley – a one-inch Third edition map from June 1912 with a 1919 Ellis Martin cover; the map sheet itself is labelled Stratford-on-Avon and Worcester, whereas the cover is labelled just Worcester & District – why make the cover less comprehensive than the sheet? The same approach is seen on several other maps around this time.



Bill Batchelor – shaded relief maps, some so shaded as to be useless (eg 1908 half-inch sheet 5 of Lake District), others beautifully created (eg of North Switzerland, 1982).

Ken Hollamby – an undated AA Scottish Motoring map has a Bartholomew's print code, which can be translated into 7 November 1935, in a print run of 3000 (*see page 28 of this issue*). Also a Philips map for Mex Motor Spirit Thames Valley, post 1914 but before the fuel restrictions of 1917.

Rob Wheeler – 1934 index map of Cambridgeshire, showing that the Isle of Ely had four UDCs whereas (south) Cambridgeshire had none. Also two War Office Outline sheets of the British Isles, one dated 1942 and the other 1971, using two different projections, and both looking inaccurate.

Ian Byrne – Truro & St Austell Popular Ed (c 1936) with owner's name written on the cover: CB Rootham, St John's Coll, Cambridge. He had composed *City in the West* in 1935, so connected with area of the map? Also one of his oil company maps – Shell's Hamburg from 1937/38.

John King – an OS map issued for use in exams of the eastern side of the Isle of Wight, totally lacking in the colour brown – so white space for B roads and contour lines totally missing: this must have been a trial for the pupil who used this (without complaint) in an exam. We also saw a remarkable map for night glider landings in Normandy on D-Day.

Gerry Zierler – maps of parks and similar having unusual scales for OS maps: 12-inch Hyde Park, 15-inch Kew Gardens, 11-inch Kew Gardens, 20-inch Regent's Park & Primrose Hill.

After lunch in the Library tearoom and with snow still falling outside, Anne Taylor took the group into the Map Room. In her introduction she explained that the University Library was a 'Legal deposit library', entitled to a copy of every printed work published in the United Kingdom: she had well over one million maps in her care. The treasures included one of the five known sets of proof maps prepared for John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine*, published in 1611/12.¹

Anne then handed over to her colleague, Andrew Alexander, who had arranged a special display for us. This started with an impressive array of maps of Cambridge, from the earliest in the Braun and Hogenberg Atlas of 1575, through 1:500 and 1:2500 coloured OS maps to the 1989 Soviet city plan. An unusual modern commemorative souvenir also caught one's eye: a jigsaw of the city

¹ Images may be viewed at <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/deptserv/maps/speed.html> – high-quality paper copies are also available to order.

centre with aerial photography and mapping of various eras overlaid in layers to form a palimpsest.

Andrew had judged his audience well. Ordnance Survey map addicts we may be, but any CCS group is likely to contain both transport buffs and hill-walkers. His display was completed with yet more “interesting” Ordnance Survey maps and several transport maps, including large-scale railway company plans and diagrams mimicking Beck’s London Underground map. The Scottish ‘Munros’ and the Lakeland peaks or ‘Tubular Fells’ looked particularly convincing in this format.

Richard Oliver then took the floor to describe exhibits taken from the Charles Close Society’s own archives, which are housed in the Library. Ordnance Survey working records form a major part of this collection and a set of experimental printings of 1:25,000 maps was on display, together with specimens of hand lettering and copper plate engraving, publicity leaflets and instructions to surveyors in the form of the famous ‘Red Book’. Richard let us into the secret of a ‘short-cut’ used in the preparation of his *Concise Guide* by talking about the files of large-scale revision progress records. These provide reliable official dates for survey revision without the need to requisition every single original sheet from the library stacks.

The archive essentially started with the rescue by Yo Hodson of the OS One-inch Seventh Series job files, two examples of which were on the table. These detail the stages in the production process of every printing of each sheet in the series – or so Richard thought until a member recently came up with a printing of Sheet 101, *Manchester*, of which there was no hint in the official files!

Anne hoped that Society members and others would use the CCS Archives for further research (and write this up in *Sheetlines*). She emphasised that members of the general public could gain access to the Library by prior arrangement: there was no requirement to be a member of the University.²

Our thanks go to Anne Taylor, Andrew Alexander, Richard Oliver and Gerry Zierler for providing such a stimulating day.

[photos: David Webb and Bill Batchelor]

² Instructions for members wishing to acquire a reader’s ticket for the CCS Archives appear at <http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/archives> and in the *Almanack*.