



Sheetlines

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

“Irish historic towns atlas”

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Sheetlines, 98 (December 2013), pp.54-55

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/files/Issue98page54.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.

Irish historic towns atlas – latest developments

Irish historic towns atlas (IHTA) is part of a Europe-wide project whose aim is to publish a series of national historic towns atlases. They trace the topographical development of towns and cities, each atlas consisting of an essay with thematic maps, a topographical gazetteer and a series of loose sheet facsimiles.

Ireland has so far published 25 town atlases. The principal maps in each fascicle are either Ordnance Survey or based on them.

Two new books that help you to explore the atlases

IHTA has now published two books to enable users of these atlases to make better use and understanding of the material they contain.

Reading the Maps A guide to the Irish historic towns atlas by Jacinta Prunty and HB Clarke, Dublin: The Royal Irish Academy, ISBN 978-1-904890-70-6

Reading the Maps is intended to serve all users of the Irish historic towns atlas, samples from the first twenty-two atlases are used to illustrate comparative, thematic and case studies of Irish urban history. Various town-types, from monastic to modern, show the origins of urban culture portraying similarities and differences across the island of Ireland. The book is heavily illustrated with maps and views taken from the IHTA series along with sets of questions and observations that can be drawn from the detailed information. *Reading the Maps* is geared towards teachers and users of the atlas from primary through to postgraduate students, but do not let that put you off this very helpful book.

Maps and texts Exploring the Irish historic towns atlas, edited by HB Clarke and Sarah Gearty, Dublin: The Royal Irish Academy, ISBN 978-1-908996-14-5

This volume, *Maps and Texts*, is concerned with making comparisons to discover what is unique about Irish towns and what is generic. It considers various categories of urban life, how they interacted and changed over time and why that might be so. Based on three seminars that examined the contents of 25 Irish historic towns atlases, *Maps and Texts* tries to broaden the ways in which historic town atlases might be used and considers the structure of society as a social process in the making of urban Ireland.

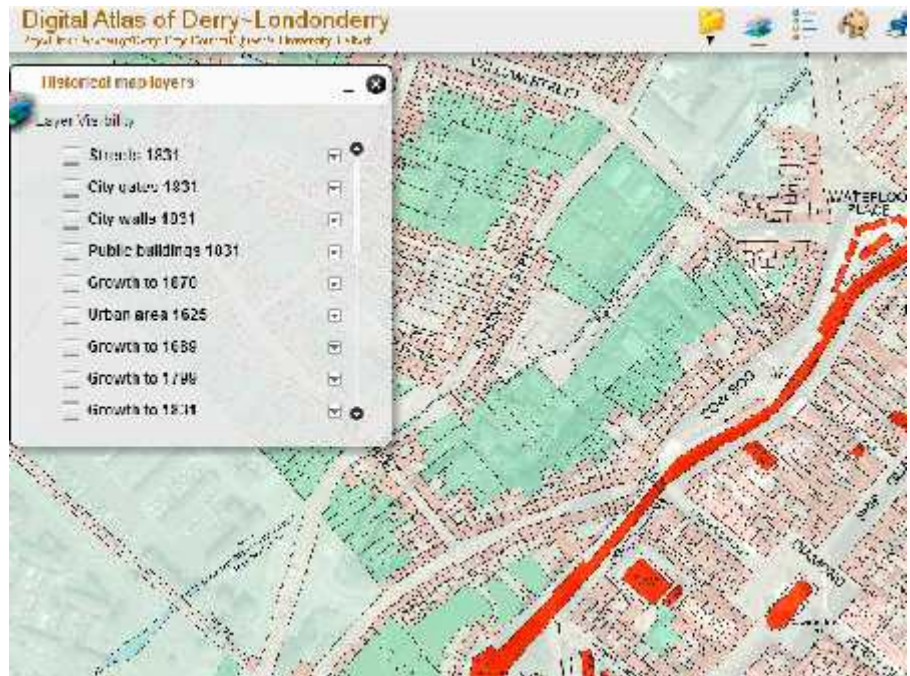
Maps and Texts comprises twenty individual essays by different contributors offering readers three different perspectives on urban life in Ireland, firstly comparing similar towns, secondly aspects of urban life, finally a broader view into various approaches and tools for understanding towns and their history, shape and diversity. The book is well illustrated with maps, reconstructions, views and photographs.

Whether you are into Irish town maps or not both these books will prompt you to look at our towns and cities in a different way. And if you have any of the Irish historic towns atlases you will be getting them out and looking at them afresh. The Irish historic towns atlas project covers the whole of the island of Ireland. Further information can be found at www.ihta.ie or www.ria.ie

The Irish historic towns atlas is part of a wider European project, with atlases containing broadly similar information available for a number of countries. For British towns, visit www.historictownsatlas.org.uk

Digital atlas of Derry~Londonderry, a web-GIS based project

The city of Derry is 'UK city of culture' 2013. To mark this, the Royal Irish Academy is producing a series of online resources based on its atlas of Derry~Londonderry by Avril Thomas, published in 2005. The digital atlas of Derry~Londonderry is a joint collaboration between the Royal Irish Academy, Derry City Council and Queen's University Belfast.



It is an experimental web-GIS resource that uses content from Irish historic town atlas No15 Derry~Londonderry. A selection of early plans and thematic maps from the atlas are layered and historical details of streets and key sites within the walled city are available in pop-up boxes.

As for all towns in the IHTA series, this contains an essay, an index of topographical information, a bibliography, appendices and a series of thematic maps and historical illustrations. The site went live in September at www.ria.ie/digitalatlasderry

The above project derives from two previous mapping research projects, one is a comparative study of a group of medieval new towns founded in the late thirteenth century in England and Wales under King Edward I, the second is a study of the late medieval urban landscapes of Chester.

Mapping medieval townscapes: a digital atlas of the new towns of Edward I;
http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/atlas_abrb_2005/

Mapping medieval Chester: place and identity in an English borderland city c. 1200-1500 www.medievalchester.ac.uk

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