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“Confrontation at Latterwood”

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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.

Confrontation at Latterwood

I discovered these letters the other day in the Gloucestershire Archives¹ and thought they would interest readers of *Sheetlines*. I have cut out some of the Victorian verbosity! Colonel Kingscote was significant 'landed gentry'.

31 Jan 1826, Lower Cam, near Dursley

... it may be necessary to premise that I and my brother are engaged on the Ordnance Trigonometrical Survey, under the immediate orders of Lt. Col. Colby of the Royal Engineers.....

My brother in pursuit of his official duties was on Saturday last surveying the High Road near Latterwood Turnpike, when he met with Mr Kingscote, who in a most haughty tone of voice demanded, 'What are you measuring this road for?'

My brother, not conceiving that a question could be put to him in such a manner, and not choosing to answer it, had it been so, observed, 'I presume you do not speak to me'. 'No I don't, I speak to your chain man there – and you – why don't you answer when you are spoken to!' My brother replied 'If you sir had addressed me as a gentleman, I should have answered'.

Here Mr Kingscote made use of language which I do not choose to repeat, but which I certainly cannot but think highly unbecoming – concluded by raising his gun and swearing that he would knock him down. My brother demanded his name and upon Mr Kingscote giving it, observed, 'I thought so – concluding that no one but a man of consideration in the county would act in such a manner'. Mr Kingscote then repeated the offensive language and again concluded by rushing towards him, raising the butt end of his gun and swearing that he would instantly beat his brains out if he said a word!

My brother now seeing his personal safety perfectly at the disposal of an armed and enraged man, immediately ordered his chain man to proceed whilst Mr Kingscote still continued threatening and observed that he only wished to know who and what he was.

I call upon you as a gentleman for that redress, which is in your power to procure and should I fail in procuring a satisfactory result, I shall feel myself compelled to resort to other means of redress

Your obedient servant, *J Robinson Wright*

2 Feb 1826, Kingscote

I am favoured with your letter and am extremely sorry to learn that any altercation has arisen between my nephew and your brother. ... It appears that Mr Wright and his servant had been on my land and Mr Kingscote was therefore authorized to enquire what business they were upon and indeed to demand his name. ... The principal witness states that the first enquiry was made in a civil manner to your brother's chain man and the words were, 'Pray my man where are you measuring this road *from?*' Or to that effect.

¹ Letters between Colonel Robert Kingscote and JR Wright of O.S, D471/C9 Gloucestershire Archives.

After repeating it *three* times he angrily asked him why he did not reply. He then referred him to your brother. Mr Kingscote addressed him by saying 'Pray sir, who are you measuring this road for?' and the witness declares in a civil and quiet manner....repeated a second and a third time when Mr Kingscote certainly became irritated at the incivility he met with, but that he ever changed the position of his gun from that it was originally in at their meeting, or threatened to use it in any way as your letter specifies he as well as the witness positively denies.

That much was said in the heat of passion I doubt not and have no hesitation in saying my nephew regrets it as he has no wish 'to injure either the character or feelings of your brother'... I am sorry it should have occasioned you so much trouble.

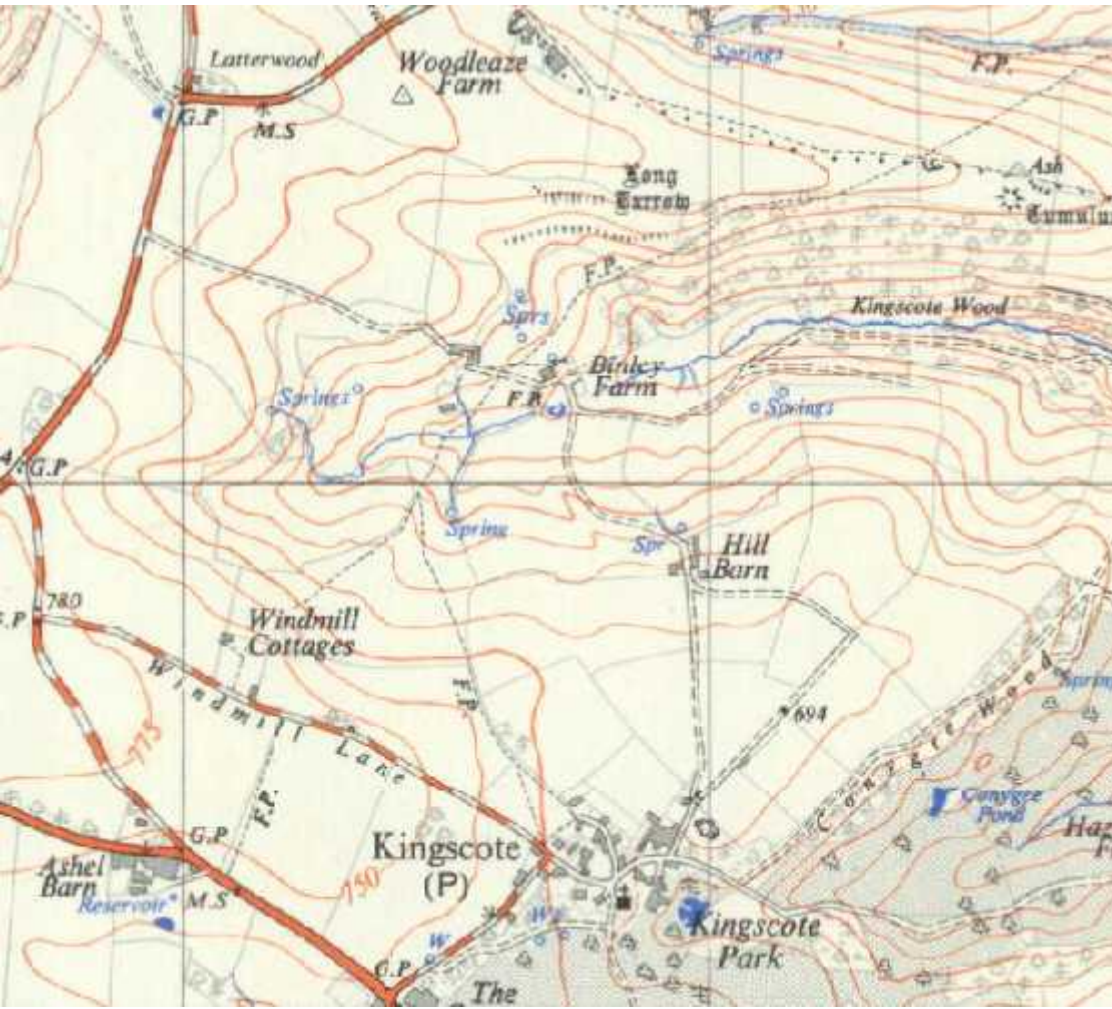
Your obedient humble servant, *R Kingscote.*

2 Feb 1826, Lower Cam, Dursley

I am favoured with your reply and am perfectly satisfied with your explanation, but you must allow me to observe that my former statement was correct, ... I am unwilling however to press this unpleasant subject further but I cannot avoid stating that with regard to the manner in which Mr Kingscote asked my brother his name, you appear to be entirely misinformed.

... I am disposed to make every allowance for expressions used in the heat of passion and as you have expressed Mr Kingscote's regrets for the circumstances I shall not pursue the unpleasant matter any further.

Your obedient servant, *J Robinson Wright*



Roger Carnt

Extract from 1:25,000 Provisional sheet ST89 published 1951, taken from NLS website, with thanks.

Kingscote Park is in the south and Latterwood is at NE corner; the turnpike gate was at the adjacent road junction.