“Jenny Twigg and her daughter Tib”

John Cole

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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.
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Whilst searching for a subject in Lionel Hooper’s par excellence *Sheetlines* index (1981 - 2003) I was a trifle surprised to find just four entries on names. There are of course many, many more than that, but to list all such would have been well nigh impossible – let me quote just four examples: incorrect name positioning on the six-inch map (John Cruickshank, *Sheetlines 50*), Aidan de la Mare’s delightful ‘Bag’s Tree’ and ‘Naked Man found in New Forest’ (*Sheetlines 59* and 64) and the digital drifting names observed by Rob Wheeler (*Sheetlines 69*). And not just OS maps: one of perhaps many untold ‘gems’ on the Soviet maps of other lands appeared under the heading of ‘Where to park your lorry in Cambridge’ in *Sheetlines 74*.

I think it is safe to claim that were a poll to be held about what fascinates most on any map, then names would surely be near or even at the top. This is a light-hearted glance at the subject enhanced by kind permission to reproduce John Dancy’s article on object name books.

Ordnance Survey distinguishes descriptive and distinctive names. ‘Palace’ is an example of the former; ‘Buckingham Palace’, the latter. Many years ago both were required to be entered in the name book but when, after the 1939-45 war, new books were compiled referred to the National Grid as opposed to the ‘County Series’ mapping, only distinctive names appeared. The old name books I was lucky enough to see (many of which dated back to the 1880s) were of considerable interest, containing as they did not only forms but also correspondence relating to names. Sticking vividly in my memory is a somewhat angry letter from a Royal Engineer surveyor to Southampton after OS Headquarters had protested about certain name forms on Dartmoor. The response was that A E Barrington, the then High Bailiff, who had authorised the majority of names was not at all concerned with OS procedures and what he said went! Authorising a name, its existence and spelling was not always straightforward and actual positioning less so, since the authority did not sign for the location on the map which was left to OS. District names in city and large town are an example and John Cruickshank listed some shortcomings, as mentioned. Street names in contrast would seem straightforward but Alan Lord in *Sheetlines 66* cites the case of five differing spellings of a St Thomas’s Road, observing that ‘St Thomas evidently not the only one to have his doubts’. Common usage of a name was, and probably still is, the great OS standby. Fine in built-up and most rural areas, but not quite so easy on remote moorland or isolated coastline.

And before giving way to John Dancy’s excellent article, here is my own selection of the bizarre to be found on maps, with one-inch Seventh Series sheet number and grid reference: Make me Rich (78, 1977), The Poind and His Man (78, 0681), Blue Man-i’-th’-Moss (92, 7699), Glower o’er Him (85, 3628), Cold Knuckles (85, 2212), Stand Alone (85, 2808), Madwoman’s Stones (111, 1388), The Devil’s Dressing Room (120, 1704). And from large scales: Tink-A-Tank (a path – SP2864NW), Stippy Stappy (a terrace of houses – SW7250) and Toodleoodle Wood (SX3456). Or going a long way back in time, ‘Quare’ standing for query on Speed’s 1610 map of Wiltshire but taken by Norden on his 1685 map for the village name which should have been North Burcomb!

And as for Jenny and her daughter – still at 1274 on *Landranger 99.*

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1 On the New Popular it is Make ‘em Rich.