

### ***Book reviews***

***Laurence Worms and Ashley Baynton-Williams, British map engravers, London: Rare Book Society, 2011, ISBN 978-0-9569422-0-3, B5 hardback, £125***

What I suspect regular users will soon abbreviate to *BME* is for Ordnance Survey students similar in three ways to John Andrews' recent *Maps in those days*.<sup>1</sup> It covers far more than the OS, but contributes much to its story whilst at the same time being by no means complete in this regard.

The dust-jacket blurb says that over 1500 members of the map-trade in the British Isles are listed. I have counted 87 engravers who were employed by the OS at some time. Given *BME's* scope, from the mid-sixteenth to the late nineteenth centuries, this is quite a high proportion, particularly as some of those who find a place here are not normally associated with map engraving, for example Thomas Bewick, William Blake and James Gillray. A minority of entries are for men who are not usually classed as engravers at all: they include some lithographers – all the main map-producing ones in nineteenth-century London seem to be here – various surveyors, including Saxton, Speed and the Greenwoods (but not the mysterious A Bryant), and some who can only be described as organisers, such as Col Robert Kearsley Dawson. Pedantic objections to this widely-drawn and not always clearly-apparent scope are overcome by the sheer volume of inclusiveness in what its authors admit is a less than complete guide to the British map trade; this is far more than a catalogue of facts about intaglio artists.

The standard entry includes a listing of cartographic output – sometimes only one or two examples, much longer but necessarily selective for the more prolific men and firms, and minimal for most OS engravers – a biography, known addresses, and known apprentices. Six diagrams show some threads of apprenticeship, in one instance stretching over nearly four hundred years, and demonstrating the wider context that moulded the OS style of work. It is no surprise to learn that *BME* has been a quarter of a century in the researching.

Though extensive, the data for OS engravers is not comprehensive, even for those individuals who do find a place. The main sources seem to have been street directories, census records, and the maps themselves, but additional data can be found in national records, notably those of the Board of Ordnance and the Treasury. A big problem in respect of engravers working for large organisations, both official such as the OS, and commercial such as Johnston and Bartholomew, is that many of them are not named at all on their maps. OS policy varied, from the 'Benjamin Baker and assistants' of the early maps, through apparently detailed recitation in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, to complete silence by 1900. A sample of 16 six-inch and 24 five-foot maps yields 23 names, of whom only 16 are in *BME* – but then eight of the six-inch and 19 of the five-foot sheets

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<sup>1</sup> J H Andrews, *Maps in those days*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009; reviewed in *Sheetlines* 91 (2011), 60-1.

do not name the engravers, and no amount of delving will supply these gaps.<sup>2</sup> Exploration of map imprints was evidently partial, and further work may well produce examples of men who worked for the OS for a comparatively short time, in between longer periods for commercial firms – or, indeed, overseas.

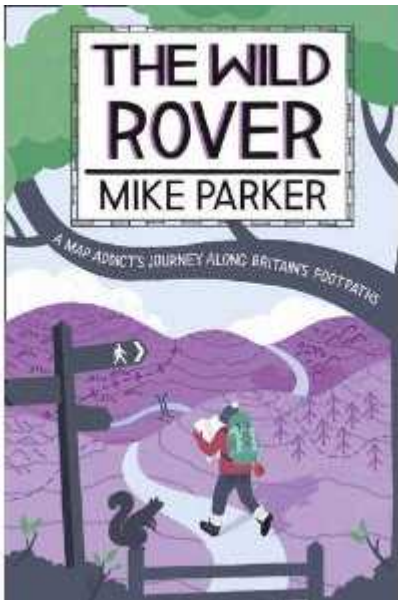
It may be pleaded, justly, that the employees of an organisation such as the OS are on rather a different footing from the freelancers who constitute the bulk of the entries in *BME*; the OS was a mass-production organisation, and mass-production methods are appropriate to many aspects of its study. Many of the relevant documentary records are not immediately obvious, and a comprehensive search of map footnotes is likely to be a protracted business. Thus I hope that the splendid start made by *BME* will inspire someone to compile as complete a list as possible of the ‘missing’ OS engravers: this will certainly throw up a great many names that never appeared on a map. Not to be neglected are census records and the implications of addresses for income and lifestyle. Here is a project for some reader of genealogical rather than geomatic bent.

*BME* will probably not find as wide a readership as *Maps in those days*, being both more specialised and costlier, but it is a magnificent achievement, and a model for further, more specialised work.

*Richard Oliver*

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***Also noted:***



CCS member Mike Parker has followed his highly successful *Map Addict* with this lively and entertaining account of British footpaths and rights-of-way.

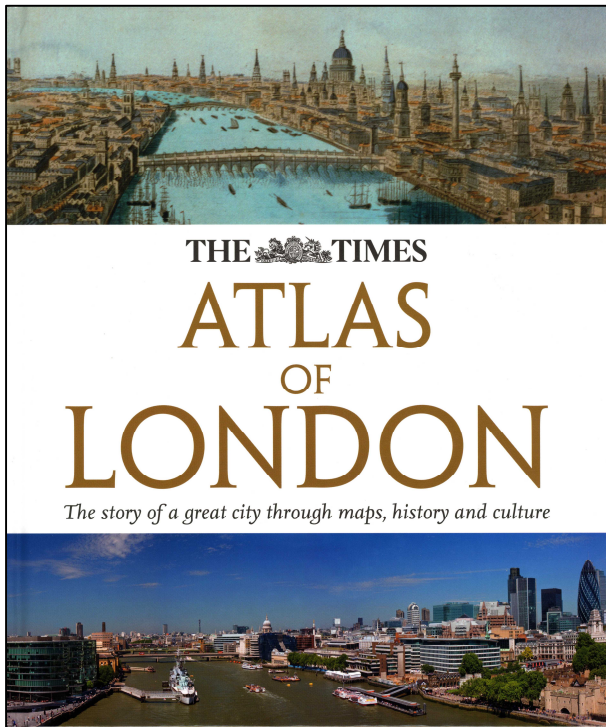
In his typical humorous and inquisitive style, Mike examines the history of the growth of the popularity of walking and exploring the countryside.

With many personal anecdotes and perceptive insights, *The Wild Rover*, published by HarperCollins at £12.99 provides a rollicking read.

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<sup>2</sup> Sheets examined: six-inch: Dublin 18\*, 22\*, 23\*; Kildare 35; Yorkshire 43\*, 58\*, 73\*, 89\*, 169, 186, 202, 203, 215, 217, 218, 294; five-foot: Kingston upon Hull 7, 8, 11, 12; Leeds 10\*, 11\*, 14\*, 15\*, 19\*; Manchester 22-24, 27-30, 32-35, 37-40. Sheets marked \* name engravers. This sample was dictated by maps – mostly reissues – immediately to hand.

***The Times Atlas of London, London: Times Books, 2011, 304 pages royal quarto, hardback in slip case, ISBN 978-0-00-743422-0, £50***



Lovers of London and maps have been treated to several excellent publications in recent times. Simon Foxall's *Mapping London* and Peter Whitfield's *London: A life in maps* have been particularly well received. Now Times Books has produced yet another treat with this magnificent volume, the latest title in the prestigious Times Atlas series.

Unlike Foxall's and Whitfield's books, this is indeed an atlas, with 1:65,000 maps of greater London and 1:10,000 street maps of inner London. But hardly an atlas for every day navigation – and certainly not one for carrying around. The large page size (12½ inches by 10 inches), heavy paper and substantial binding create a sturdy tome weighing some 2.5 kilos. But

resting securely on the coffee-table, this is a book that will be referred to and pored over with delight for years to come. The book offers a cornucopia of maps, pictures and stories about many aspects of London, as promised by the sub-title '*the story of a great city through maps, history and culture*'.

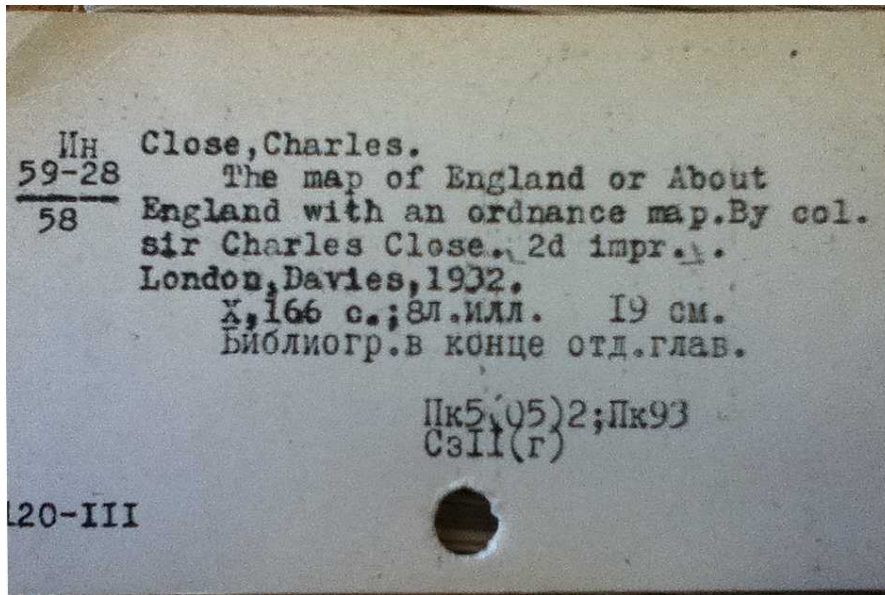
The modern mapping is by Collins Bartholomew, another part of the HarperCollins empire, and, oddly, is the only less-than-totally-satisfactory feature of the book. Given the wealth of colour and detail on other pages, the outer London maps, in shades of pale grey, pale green and white, lack impact and, worse, lack any indication of terrain or land form.

The book is arranged in sections, starting with reproductions of famous historic maps such as Ogilby's Britannia, Snow's Cholera map, Booth's Poverty map, Beck's tube map and many others. London in Context, the next section, looks at the physical geography – with maps, old and new, charting such features as flood risk, geology and climate – and social and economic affairs, illustrated with statistics, photographs and charts. Successive sections deal with the growth of London, reproductions of historical views, a comprehensive chronology and a gazetteer of place-names and their meanings.

The main part of the book is organised geographically by borough, interspersed (slightly confusingly) with thematic features. Thus we get, for example, the sequence Croydon, Public transport, Ealing, Universities, Enfield, Roads and so on. However, the borough chapters are a delight, each a double-page spread with statistics and stories of famous residents, notable buildings and interesting events, lavishly illustrated with maps and photographs. Particularly fascinating are the series of 'then and now' maps and views.

A book such as this is inevitably out of date almost as soon as it appears, but care has been taken to include the very latest developments (such as Stratford City, opened just a week before publication date!) whilst a chapter on Future London describes buildings and transport links still to appear.

*John Davies*



### ***Charles Close in Moscow***

*In the card index in the Russian State Library in Moscow, John Davies spotted this evidence that the Soviet Union had long studied Ordnance Survey maps!*



*Right: Staff gather to hear the Duke of Edinburgh's speech at the opening of OS new head office on 4 October*

*Above: The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh opening Ordnance Survey's previous head office in 1969. (photographs courtesy of Ordnance Survey)*

