

The earliest Bender?

In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was considerable interest amongst some of us in the introduction of the now ubiquitous Bender fold, consisting of a single-piece card cover, wrapped around the folded map, as with modern Ordnance Survey *Landranger* maps. The earliest British example is the Ordnance Survey's one-inch *New Forest* sheet, issued in September 1938, and the earliest non-OS example that has hitherto been reported, by David Archer, is *Strassenzustands-Karte von Deutschland*, 1:1,000,000, dated 1939. In *Sheetlines* 38 (pp 7-8) I suggested that the fold may have been invented independently in Britain and elsewhere. In fact, the Foldex company introduced a version of the Bender fold which they patented in 1936: it was distinguished from 'Bender' by the successive folds being narrower, so that each one could be 'indexed'.

I have now found a distinctly earlier example of 'Bender' than that of 1939. Once again it comes from Germany and once again it is *Strassenzustands-Karte von Deutschland*, 1:1,000,000, published by Der Deutsche Automobil-Club, but now 'Ausgabe Herbst 1936 – Edition Autumn 1936' (and in French, Italian, Spanish and Polish as well). As with the 1939 map, it is a true 'Bender': like the original issues of *New Forest* the horizontal fold in the cover is at the 'bottom' of the front and back rather than at the top. This style was presumably found unsatisfactory because, as the illustration shows, the map will not stand up by itself in window displays – 'right way up', anyway.

Apart from its role in establishing the primacy of Bender folding, one wonders by what route this 'Mitgliederausgabe' (members' issue) copy found its way to a suburban charity shop in Exeter in 2012!

Richard Oliver



*Left: Strassenzustands-Karte von Deutschland, 1936, propped up from behind
Centre: New Forest, 1938, as originally issued, 'standing up by itself', and thereby demonstrating how having the horizontal fold at the bottom of the front precludes conventional display.*

Right: New Forest, 1938, in a later issue, with the horizontal fold now at the top.