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“Bartholomew’s maps for the War Office.”

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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.

Bartholomew's maps for the War Office

Roger Hellyer

1. Maps of foreign countries

Between 1900 and 1903 John Bartholomew & Co. were contracted by the War Office to provide maps for three different functions.¹ Two were foreign jobs: one was to print the first four sheets to be published in IDWO 1539, a 1:1,000,000 map of Africa. These were sheets 68, 69, 80 and 81 entitled *North-West, North-East, South-West and South-East Somaliland*. The map was laid out on graticule sheet lines, each sheet measuring four degrees of latitude by six degrees of longitude. The mapping was compiled in the Intelligence Division, War Office in 1901; this was sent to Bartholomew's to prepare the stones from which were printed 510 copies of each sheet between 11 June and 16 July 1902.² Some thirty letters relevant to this map are in the Bartholomew Business Record, dating from 16 May 1901 to 7 July 1902. The further sheets in IDWO (later TSGS, then GSGS) 1539 were printed by W. & A.K. Johnston and the Ordnance Survey.

The other foreign job undertaken by Bartholomew's was IDWO 1643 *Map of the northern portion of South America prepared to illustrate the case presented on the part of His Britannic Majesty's Government in the matter of the boundary between British Guiana and the Republic of Brazil*, a 1:10,000,000 map drawn and printed for the Intelligence Division, War Office. Bartholomew's recorded the printing date as 8 January 1903.³

2. English maps

As is well known, the Ordnance Survey only began to publish a half-inch map of any part of the United Kingdom in 1903, so the War Office's need for mapping at that scale before that date could best be met by using Bartholomew's maps. According to a letter to the War Office dated 1 August 1901, the Edinburgh firm had already completed a national half-inch map of Scotland which was in 29 sheets, and were in the process of producing one of England and Wales (in 37 sheets) which they expected to have complete in 1902. The War Office were purchasing copies of maps in both series, but they also had another, more specific, requirement in special maps of three areas which were not conveniently covered by the sheet lines of those series. The first, initially referred to as '½ in. England 4 sheets' was by 1 June 1900 more accurately described as '½ in. Map of London

1 All the references to the maps, letters and other Bartholomew source materials mentioned in this paper are in the Printing Record or the Business Record in the Bartholomew Archive held in the National Library of Scotland, as listed below.

2 Bartholomew Printing Record, NLS Acc. 10222/PR/33b folios 137a, 165, 166, 167.

3 Bartholomew Printing Record, NLS Acc. 10222/PR/34a folio 56b.

District. Limits 5m. W. of Portsmouth & 5m. W. of Harwich. In 4 sheets. Usual Contour Colouring.' The others were of their military training areas, Salisbury Plain and Aldershot. These were all purely topographical maps, with no added security detail. The War Office allocated the IDWO number 1511 to *Salisbury Plain District*, and IDWO 1587 to *Aldershot District*. The London map was the first map to be printed – and, at that time, without an IDWO number.

London District

Unfortunately the incoming correspondence received by Bartholomew's has not survived, merely copies of the letters they sent, held in the Letter Books in their Business Record. From them we learn that the War Office first approached Bartholomew's about the London map on 8 March 1900 with an order for 1,000 copies of each sheet. Bartholomew's reply the next day underlined the phrase that to print so small a number would be a 'somewhat expensive matter' given the preparation of the stones and cost of printing. On 1 June the War Office was quoted that for a printing of 5,000 copies 'the price per sheet mounted on Jaconette & cased in usual style would be 11d each or 3/8d for the 4 sheets. For Copies on paper only in sheet form the price would be 4½d each or 1/6d for the 4 sheets.' The eventual order, confirmed 12 July, was for 7,800 copies of two sheets (probably the western sections) and 11,000 of the other two.⁴ Bartholomew's suggested the southern quarters should be a little larger than the northern, 'because dividing them equally would have made a very awkward division as regards London & the north Kent coast.' On 5 September Bartholomew's sent another patched up proof, showing how 'we can, without breaking the outside border, show the whole south bank of the Thames between Gravesend & Grain' and went on to suggest 'should you prefer it, we can, by printing right up to the edge of the paper, show the opposite bank also.'

On 18 October Bartholomew's wrote to the War Office about the design of the cover:

'We are now well advanced with the printing of the above Map & in a position to make a start with the mounting of the sheets. Before proceeding we should like if the form of cover to be used could be settled so that we may be able to complete the order. For field use we

⁴ The number of copies required as recorded in Bartholomew's jobs register on 30 July 1900 is slightly different: '1008 (the job number) | War Office | ½" England 4 sheets : 7,800, 11,000 | 8,400, 11,600 copies. | See order.' This seems to confirm that the shorter print runs were for the western sheets. Later entries in the jobs register record a reprint order between 3 and 9 June 1901, from H.M.S.O., of 7,000 copies; another between 5 and 25 November records an order from the War Office for 7,700 sheets, marked 'delayed'. This total was supported by a letter sent on 15 November 1901 placing a curiously precise order for a further '3526 Copies N.E. Sheet & 4174 Copies of S.E. Sheet ½" England', which indeed totals 7,700 sheets.

think there is little doubt that these Maps would be better & more easily manipulated without a cover but simply with a cloth paste down on front & back as we have done on copies of two of the sections enclosed. On the copy in brown skiver we have sketched on the design & lettering etc we should suggest for back & front & we should be glad if you would submit this for approval. If brown is decided on as the colour to be used we should give cloth of that shade similar in quality to the red cloth on other section map enclosed, unless the brown skiver should be preferred. We are sorry we have no sample we can enclose.

'We shall be glad to have sample Map returned with any suggestions as to design etc, & also the decision come to as regards the form of cover. At same time we should be glad to learn the ?number of? (damaged) the Maps will be required, so that we may arrange as to the mounting. We should also like to have the formal official order.

We remain | Yours faithfully | John Bartholomew & Co.'

It is interesting that 'for field use' Bartholomew's were recommending against the use of their usual bookfold covers, but even so the War Office seem not to have been entirely satisfied with what was suggested, and wrote on the 20th asking for changes. On 3 November Bartholomew's sent an altered specimen cover, and, once that was approved, undertook to send ten complete sets of the maps as requested by the War Office. They enquired as to the delivery of the entire consignment, now that the mounting of the maps on cloth was in progress, whether in one or part deliveries 'We are going on with the mounting now & will make a part delivery in a few days if wished.' The printing of the components of the four maps was completed by 28 November 1900. Bartholomew's also responded to another matter raised by the War Office, who had made the suggestion that Bartholomew's could also put the map on sale themselves. They replied 'we cannot very well do this ourselves without leading to confusion with our ordinary series which is advertised & known to the bookselling trade' and suggested that any surplus stock be offered to 'leading volunteer officers in London District intimating that they may get copies of these sheets at ?certain (damaged) prices in certain quantities. We cannot think of any other outlet for these.' To judge by the number of extant copies of the London maps many found their way into the public domain even though never placed on sale.

On 26 December Bartholomew's wrote again to the War Office, sending a set of the maps mounted in another cover variant:

'Herewith we have pleasure in sending with our Comp[limen]ts a set of ½" London Dist. Maps mounted ?& disse?cted (damaged paper) in a special way that has been suggested to us as most useful for Field etc use, which we think may interest you. You will notice that when

going from one Section to Another, all that is required is to fold it over. We trust You may find them useful.'

There is no evidence that the War Office took up this offer, which must have involved some form of long (Michelin) fold: the extant copies of the London maps seen all have short form 'War Office Series' covers, which takes the form of cards pasted to the front and back of the map when folded in four sections north to south and nine west to east.

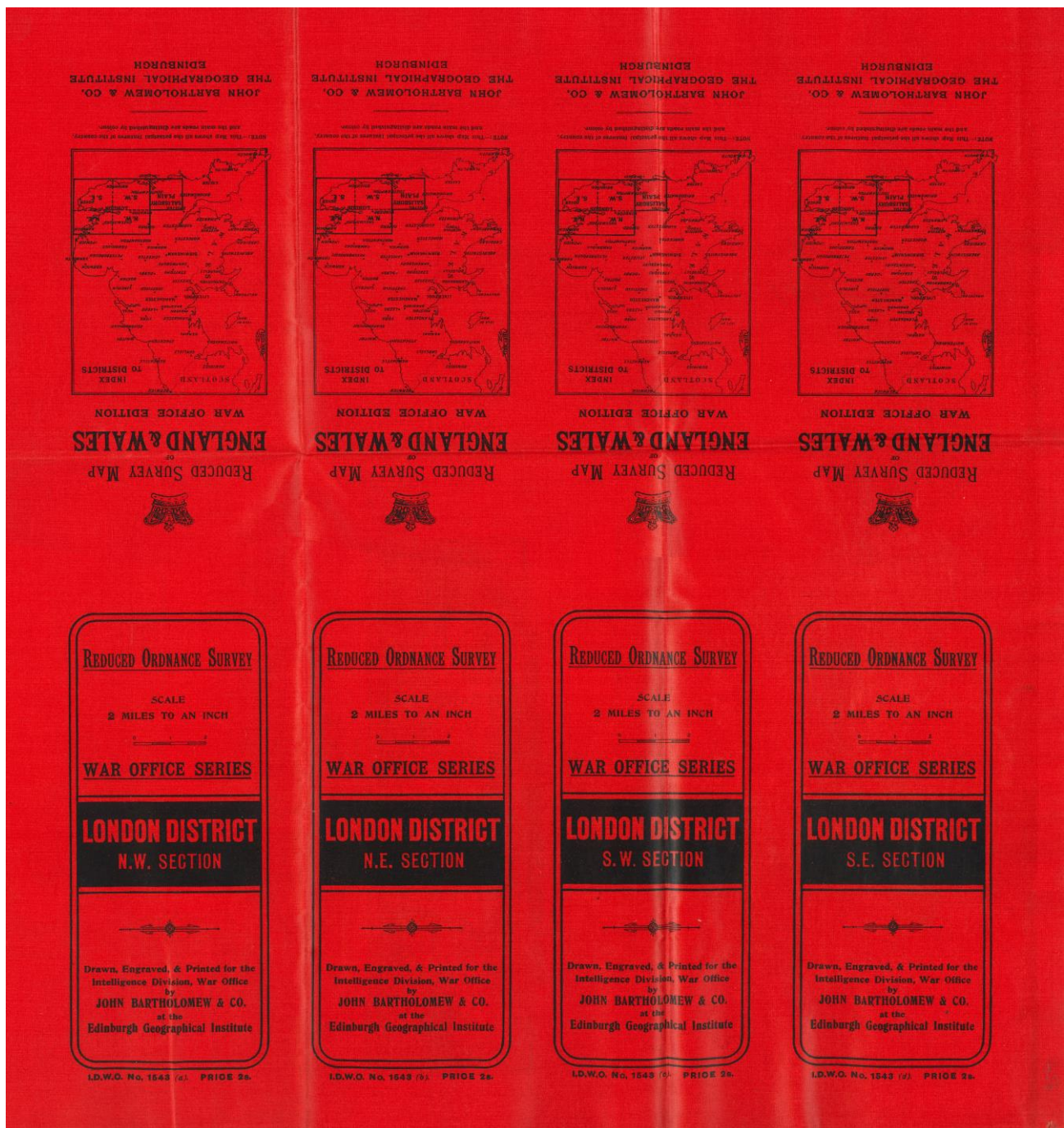


Figure 1. The covers for IDWO 1543 (a, b, c, d) as printed, prior to separation

But still the War Office had not taken possession of the map stock. When they did is unclear: on 28 February 1901 they requested that Bartholomew's hold the stock for a few more weeks. Bartholomew's wrote

again on 1 May enquiring as to when they could send the maps. But evidently they had gone by 17 July: from a letter sent that day to Alexander Knox, Map Curator at the War Office:

‘With reference to the London District Maps, now delivered, kindly say if we are to receive an official order from H.M.S.O. & send in our a/c in usual way to them. The Maps were delivered to The Director of Military Intelligence, and we sent a/c to him as in the case of “Salisbury Plain” Map, which was paid direct by War Office.’

The later correspondence does not reveal how this matter was resolved.

It was on 14 May 1901 that a short printing of another 100 copies of each of the London sheets was ordered. These were to have an IDWO number added: 1543(a-d). Without the incoming correspondence we have no clue why the War Office requested an IDWO number to be added to so small a number of copies – or for that matter why the original printing was unnumbered. This is Bartholomew’s reply on 17th May, sent to Captain E.H. Hills, Intelligence Division, War Office, S.W.

‘Dear Sir | “½" London District Maps”

We are favoured with Yours of 14th, and note You wish an additional 100 Copies of Each of 4 Sections. As requested we shall imprint the Note on these, and as we have no Extra Covers we shall require to specially print them. We Enclose a set with numbers marked on, and shall be glad to know if these are Correct before printing off the 100 Copies of Covers etc. Yours faithfully | John Bartholomew & Co. | G.S.R[obinson]

| P.S. Please return Encl^d. Copies.’

Bartholomew’s wrote twice sending proofs, first ‘specially drawn in by hand’, then printed, asking for them to be returned to them ‘passed for press’. The specimen in the Printing Record of the four covers with the IDWO numbers added (see *figure 1*, previous page) is hand-dated on the reverse ‘112 Sheets 10/6/01’. The only information we have about the delivery of the map to the War Office comes from this sentence at the end of their letter about the Salisbury Plain map (q.v.) dated 6 September 1901 ‘We shall also be obliged by your returning the box as soon as possible, as we will shortly be sending off the London Dist. maps’, though it is also possible that this referred to the reprint order of 7,000 sheets of the unnumbered map.

One copy only of this numbered map is known to exist: IDWO 1543(c) *London District : South-West Section* is in the Bartholomew Printing Record at Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 178b, dated 14 August 1901 (see *figure 2*), with its cover at Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 187b, dated 30 August 1901. Many more copies of the map without the IDWO number survive: for instance the two eastern sections are in the NLS Map Library, and copies of all four are in the Charles Close Society Archives at CCSA.RRO_636_7.

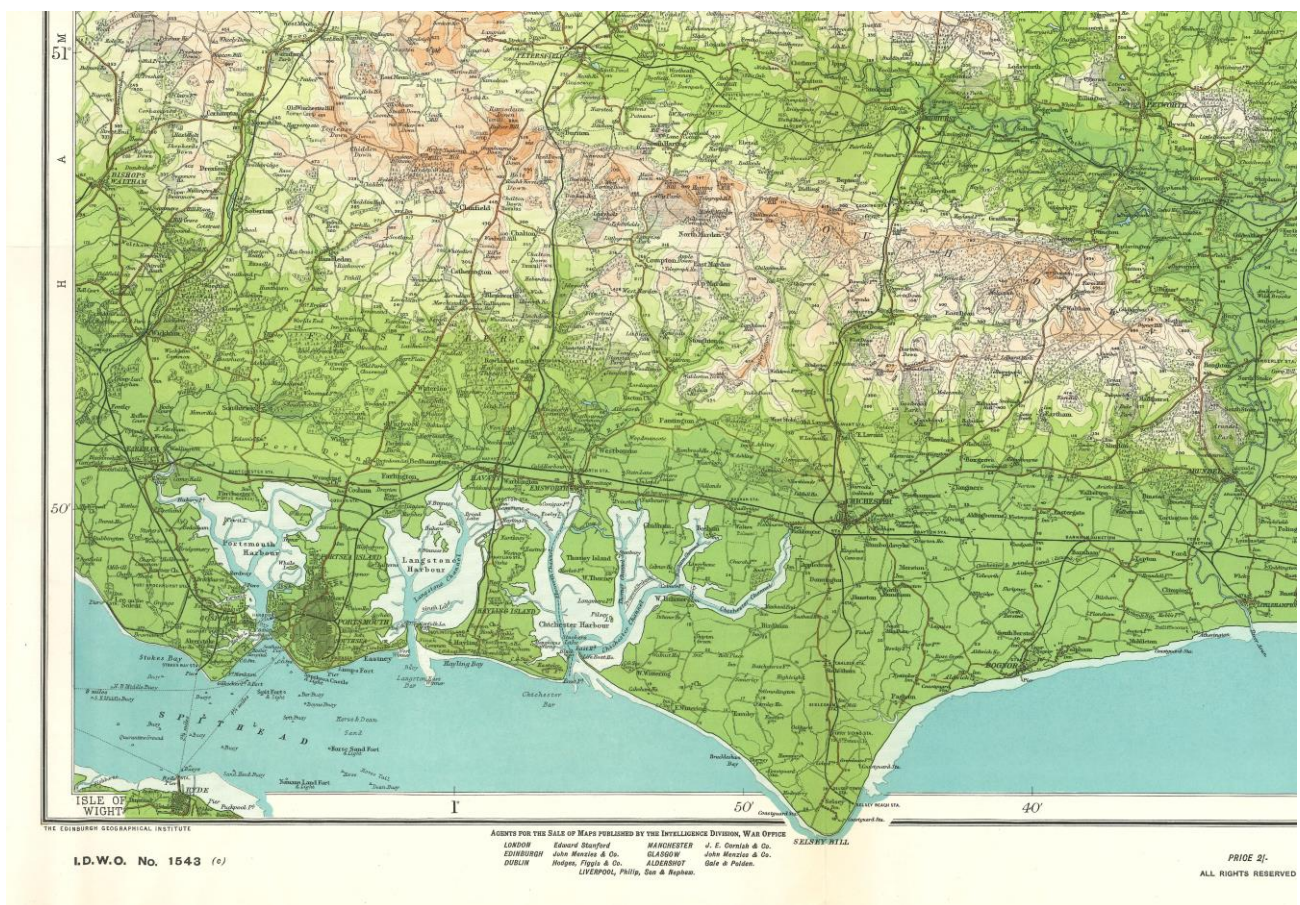


Figure 2. The SW corner of IDWO 1543 (c) London : South-West Section

Salisbury Plain District

The War Office wrote to Bartholomew's about supplying 'a special edition of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Map of Salisbury Plain for military purposes' on the first day of 1901. They seem to have made the same proposal to Bartholomew's as they had with the London map: that the Edinburgh firm should print enough copies for them to put the map on sale themselves. Again Bartholomew refused on the grounds that it would cause confusion with the sale of their regular series. They told the War Office that for a map covering about 55 by 40 miles they could print 1,000 copies at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d per copy or 2,000 at 1/- per copy. And on the 10th 'We are adding the additional names on the Map as requested.' By 12 January it had been decided, by adding patches to the original, to produce a map 'the same size as the S.W. Section of the London District Map.' This reached the south coast, where 'We purpose breaking the border so as to include "Bournemouth". The price for Map this size would be $1\frac{2}{3}$ d per Copy.' 1,000 copies were ordered, according to the jobs register, on 10 January; these were printed by 30 April and sent off on 10 May 1901. Almost immediately, Bartholomew's received an order for 2,000 more copies, which caused something of a problem because, as Bartholomew's told their client on 1 June, the map 'has been effaced from

the stone, but we are getting it put down again.’⁵ This they must have done very speedily. They were ready to go ahead by 12 June, but were again awaiting the return of proofs ‘passed for press’. The job was completed on 29 July 1901, but they felt compelled to write again on 6 September, concerned that:

‘On 24th ult. we dispatched, in one Box, per Steamer Paid, 2,000 copies map of Salisbury Plain Dist., and shall be glad to hear that you have received them safely (as we have had no acknowledgement.) We shall also be obliged by your returning the box as soon as possible, as we will shortly be sending off the London Dist. maps.’

Copies of the *Salisbury Plain District* map are in the Bartholomew Printing Record at Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 171b and the NLS Map Library.

Aldershot District

The first approach about the Aldershot map seems to have been made on 9 July 1901: Bartholomew’s reply on 1 August to a letter written the day before includes an apology that the earlier one had been mislaid. Bartholomew’s text does not mention Aldershot by name, but the War Office seem to have enquired about the cost of another special half-inch sheet, and by suggesting that they could judge the cost for themselves against that of the London and Salisbury Plain maps, the inference is clear. Once work started, the progress of the Aldershot map seems to have been straightforward throughout. An order for 10,000 copies was placed on 2 January 1902, and by the 6th Bartholomew’s sent a patched up proof of the area for the War Office to consider. By the 25th the map’s dimensions had been agreed. Bartholomew’s sent a monochrome proof copy of the new map and the ‘back & front’ (cover cards) on 17 March which they asked to be returned ‘passed for press’. On 22 April the order for 10,000 contour coloured copies was confirmed, and by 30 June the first 2,000 were mounted and ready for delivery. There is a finished copy, complete with cover cards and mounted on cloth, in the Bartholomew Printing Record at Acc. 10222/PR/33c folio 196, dated 4 July 1902, and another in the NLS Map Library.

So ended the War Office’s connection with Bartholomew’s. Richard Oliver gives a detailed account of their transition to the use of the Ordnance Survey’s half-inch mapping in 1903.⁶ The first special maps at this scale produced by the Ordnance Survey for the War Office were published in August 1903, and in addition to the series mapping in different formats of all three countries, a constant stream of half-inch special area and

⁵ The entries numbered 1289 and 1290 in the jobs register during the week beginning 3 June 1901 record that the orders for this and the London District map came, not from the War Office, but H.M. Stationery Office.

⁶ Roger Hellyer and Richard Oliver: *Ordnance Survey small scale maps*, London: Charles Close Society, 2023, pp 39-41.

manoeuvre maps followed, including replacement maps of the Aldershot and Salisbury Plain areas.⁷ Universal coverage by the Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom was not achieved until October 1919, when at last they had the printing capacity available to complete the publication of the map of Ireland.

Table of printings of the special area maps prepared by Bartholomew's for the War Office

<i>Map Title</i>	<i>No. of Sheets</i>	<i>Job No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>IDWO</i>	<i>No. of Copies</i>	<i>Cost</i>
London NW	1 of 4	1008	30.08.1900	none	7,800	£1,833 6s 8d
London NE	1 of 4	1008	30.08.1900	none	11,000	part of above
London SW	1 of 4	1008	30.08.1900	none	8,400	part of above
London SE	1 of 4	1008	30.08.1900	none	11,600	part of above
London	4	1290	03-09.06.1901	none	7,000	£335 8s 4d
London	4	?	14.08.1901	1543(a-d)	100 x 4	?
London NE	1 of 2	1421	15-24.11.1901	none	3,526	?
London SE	1 of 2	1421	15-24.11.1901	none	4,174	?
Salisbury Plain 1	1	1110	10.01.1901	1511	1,000	£65 2s 0d
Salisbury Plain 1	1	1289	03-09.06.1901	1511	2,000	£110 13s 4d
Aldershot	1	1454	03.01.1902	1587	10,000	£479 3s 6d

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Chris Fleet, of the National Library of Scotland, who ensured that all the relevant documents from the Bartholomew Archive were available to me.

Bartholomew Archive papers, held by the National Library of Scotland

Bartholomew Business Record

Acc.10222/BR/282: Jobs register, January 1900 to December 1925

Acc.10222/BR/316: Order and cost book, November 1897 to March 1903

Correspondence files – copies of letters sent, not received

Acc.10222/BR/764: Letter book 12, March 1899 to March 1900

Acc.10222/BR/765: Letter book 13, March 1900 to May 1901

Acc.10222/BR/766: Letter book 14, May 1901 to April 1902

Acc.10222/BR/767: Letter book 15, April 1902 to March 1903

Bartholomew Printing Record

Acc. 10222/PR/32a folio 31b: London SE and SW covers, index - 28.11.00

Acc. 10222/PR/32a folio 32a: London NE and NW covers, index - 28.11.00

Acc. 10222/PR/32a folio 72a: London NE and NW covers, index - 18.2.01

Acc. 10222/PR/32a folio 72b: London SE and SW covers, index - 18.2.01

Acc. 10222/PR/32a folio 110: Salisbury Plain map - 30.4.01

Acc. 10222/PR/32a folio 110b: Salisbury Plain covers, index - 30.4.01

Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 145b: London, 4 sections, covers, index (IDWO 1543) - 10.6.01

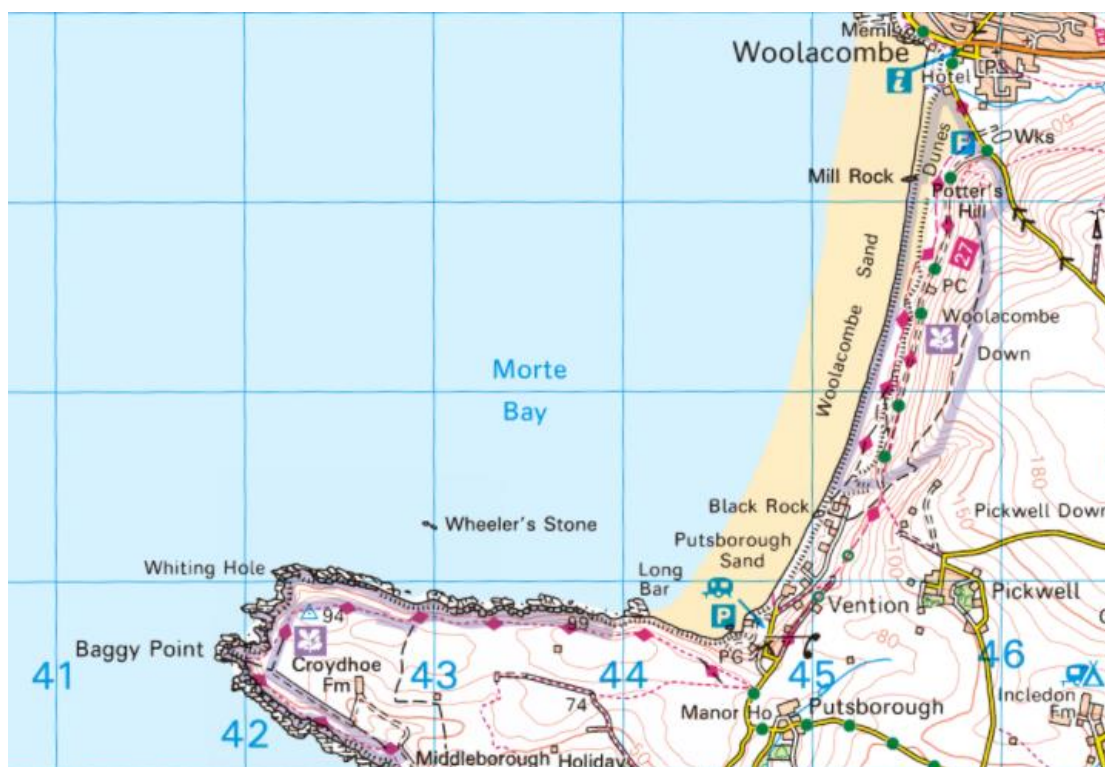
Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 171b: Salisbury Plain map - 29.7.01

Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 178b: London SW map (IDWO 1543(c)) - 14.8.01

⁷ *Op. cit.* pp 178-179, 201-202, 213, 225.

Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 184a: Salisbury Plain covers, index - 21.8.01
Acc. 10222/PR/32b folio 187b: London SW (IDWO 1543(c)) covers, index - 30.8.01
Acc. 10222/PR/33b folio 137a: NW Somaliland - sheet 68 - 11.6.02
Acc. 10222/PR/33b folio 165: NE Somaliland - sheet 69 - 16.7.02
Acc. 10222/PR/33b folio 166: SW Somaliland - sheet 80 - 16.7.02
Acc. 10222/PR/33b folio 167: SE Somaliland - sheet 81 - 16.7.02
Acc. 10222/PR/33c folio 196: Aldershot map on cloth in covers - 4.7.02
Acc. 10222/PR/34a folio 56b: British Guiana-Brazil boundary - 8.1.03

A Poet Laureate writes ...



As far as the Ordnance Survey is concerned the landscape between here [Woolacombe] and Braunton is mostly yellow. Or something between vanilla and magnolia. And the map lied, because within those large blocks of standard OS shading the eye eventually discerns an unlimited spectrum of colour within the sand: cream, corn, gold, mustard, salmon, straw, umber, amber, peach, pearl, brass, skin, bronze, bisque, buff, tan. And discerns striations of tone and texture lying at intervals from the shoreline, like tree rings, with some strips of sand already dried by the wind and the morning sun and others still damp and heavy from last night's tide. And discerns gradations of sand, from fine powder to coarse scratchy granules. And relief patterns in the surface caused by draining water or eddying breezes, domes and depressions, furrows and bevels, ribs and ripples, levelled plains that could have been finished with a plasterer's trowel followed by a few hundred yards of chaotic ground that looks like the aftermath of a stampede.

Simon Armitage : Walking Away – Further Travels with a Troubadour