



Sheetlines

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“Thumbnail sketches on one-inch map
covers from 1945 (part 2)”

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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.

Thumbnail sketches on one-inch map covers from 1945

Part 2. The later sketch maps on New Popular covers

K S Andrews

In part 1 of this article, which dealt with the first wave of sketch maps on New Popular covers, four types were identified.¹ The initial sketches on the eleven hand-lettered Ellis Martin covers had a 3-box frame, with sheet 161 having small Caslon-style placenames (type 1), the other ten sheets having cover sketches with larger Caslon lettering (type 2). These sketches were retained for the subsequent letterpress covers. The remaining sheets were given cover sketches in 2-box frames, 60 with the larger Caslon placenames (type 3) and 43 with Times (type 4). The boundary between sketch types 3 and 4 was diffuse in the time dimension but geographically a zigzag line was drawn from Cardigan Bay to the Mouth of the Humber, type 4 being to the north of it. This next part of the article relates the fortunes of these 114 sketches until the New Popular Edition was withdrawn.

Early sketch map maintenance

For the printing process, as postulated in part 1, each sketch map drawing was photographed and the negative, made to the dimensions desired for the printed sketch, was applied to a chemically-coated zincographic plate to make acid-resist lines prior to etching. The negative was spoilt by this process and the drawing, if still available, would need to be photographed again if a replacement block was needed. If this method was used, this sort of maintenance would be very difficult if not impossible to detect, although there are many instances of late printings of a sketch being better impressions than previous, especially for the water-lining.

With the limited number of covers available for comparison, two sheets, 82, *Keswick*, and 89, *Lancaster & Kendal*, have the only sketches seen to have been re-drawn during this first phase when groups KA2 and KA3 covers were used. These sketches were both seen in two versions. The sketch for *Lancaster & Kendal* may have been replaced because the eponymous Kendal and Lake Windermere were omitted at first (see figure 2). The sketches were all on the common cover variant KA3.6 but from different print runs as shown by different spacings in the layout of the title and sheet number of each pair.² One sketch of each pair was on a cover with a price rise label, which supported the idea that it was later. It is assumed that only one sketch map block was in use for a sheet at any one time.

Sketch map standardisation

With the New Popular Edition fully issued at the end of 1947, and the covers presenting four different sketch types, at some point the OS resolved to standardise. Maybe the wartime ethos of make do and mend had faded and staff were under-employed. The second phase of sketch maps has the following characteristics.

- The sketch maps of types 1 and 2, and nearly all of type 3 were re-drawn to match those of type 4 style with Times lettering for placenames, the exception to this aspect of the standardisation process being the retention of nine type 3 Caslon-lettered sketches for south Wales and Hereford.

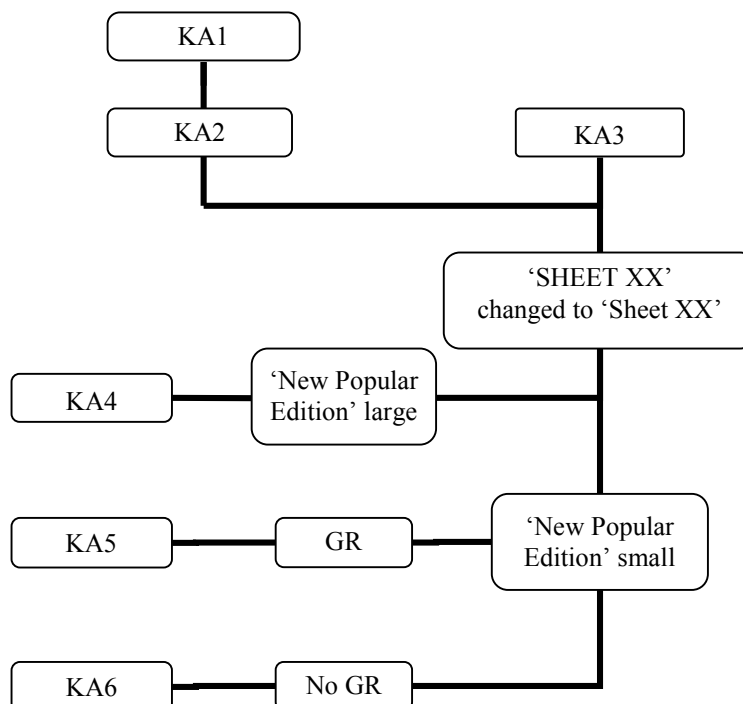
¹ For part 1 see *Sheetlines* 78, 38-42.

² For a detailed report on New Popular cover variants, see *Sheetlines* 76, 14-28.

- The sheet number line on the cover was changed to sentence case, i.e. ‘SHEET XX’ became ‘Sheet XX’.
- The sheet number line was moved down to be a consistent spacing just above the sketch.
- As deduced below, the sheet number line was included on the 62 new type 4 sketch map printing blocks necessitated by the standardisation policy, presumably to reduce opportunities for error.

Although introduced together, these steps, like other cover changes, were introduced only as new batches of covers were needed for the paper, cloth and dissected versions of the sheets. The start date for the phasing-in of this standardisation process cannot be given with certainty but can be estimated by studying the evidence. An edition of sheet 169 published 7.49 was issued in cover KA2.7, an edition of sheet 180 published 5.49 had cover KA3.6 and an edition of sheet 160 published 7.49 had cover KA3.9.³ These are the three latest-issued dated map revisions found so far in old-style covers and represent the swansong of the ‘SHEET XX’ sheet number format. The latter half of the year 1949 is therefore a likely date for the demise of the cover groups KA2 and 3 and the introduction of standardised sketch maps with ‘Sheet XX’.

Covers with these new features begin to appear as cover group KA4 and the author has seen about half of the edition in this group, for areas randomly scattered geographically. This partial coverage indicates that the next cover change was soon under way, the principal new features being the de-emphasis of the title ‘New Popular Edition’ on the generic design, and the printing of the sheet title using a font with fewer, smaller serifs. These are the plentiful group KA5 covers. Group KA6 covers (those without ‘GR’ in the medallion) were used after the death of King George VI and are less common because the Seventh Series was being issued. A diagram is given below to illustrate the cover groups.



³ Publication dates are from Richard Oliver, *A guide to the Ordnance Survey one-inch New Popular Edition*, Charles Close Society, 2000.

Differences on the new sketches

All 62 of the type 4 sketch maps made as replacements have been compared with their predecessors. The new type 4 sketches drawn to replace types 1, 2 and 3 did not just differ by having Times lettering for the placenames. Generally speaking, they were very similar maps with substantially the same selection of placenames but, on the other hand, certain areas were heavily revised, viz. sheets 124, 126, 130 to 136 and 164 to 172.

Large urban areas

The practice of the extent of the largest urban areas being roughly represented on sketches continued. Urban areas that were not quite so large were shown with location rings but were also named with italic capitals. On the bottom rung of the hierarchy were settlements shown with location rings and named in sentence case. The boundary of London on *London NW* and *NE* remained unchanged on the new sketches but on *London SW* and *SE* it was extended. These latter two sketches were quite radically redrawn with rivers re-routed and towns relocated, downgraded or dropped in favour of others. On *London SW*, 'REIGATE' became just lowly 'Reigate' and 'Sutton' gave way to upstart 'CROYDON'. On sheet 171, *London SE*, 'TUNBRIDGE WELLS' became 'Royal Tunbridge Wells', the new name used on the sheet from 1951, its regal status compensating for loss of capitalisation, 'DARTFORD' was reduced to 'Dartford' and, on the margin, 'MAIDSTONE', fully mapped on the adjoining sheet, was omitted. On sheet 132, *Coventry and Rugby*, 'LEAMINGTON' was corrected to 'ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA'. The sketch for sheet 166, *Frome*, was redrawn to proper sheet lines with elegant 'BATH' now upgraded from a location ring to a hatched large urban area. However, on sheet 156, *Bristol and Stroud*, 'BATH' still had merely a location ring, like, perversely, the larger 'BRISTOL' on two of the three sketches on which that city was shown. On sheet 131, 'Birmingham' was changed from italic capitals to upright capitals to match London, though the hatched area was drastically reduced.

Towns and villages

As noted above, some blocks of sketches were heavily revised but to list all the changes would be tiresome. The following selection may, however, be of interest.

On sheet 159, *The Chilterns*, 'Henley on Thames' became hyphenated on the new sketch but the sheet inside did not catch up by showing hyphens until revision D/ of 1957.

For sheet 165, *Weston-super-Mare*, 'Burnham' became 'Burnham on Sea' as recorded on all New Popular sheets.

Sheets 177 and 178 share a peculiarity. The original type 3 sketches each had an anonymous locating ring. On the type 4 replacements, these examples of *terra incognita* were identified as Durston and Wareham respectively.

South Wales

When the rest of the New Popular Edition was becoming standardised on type 4 sketch maps with the Times typeface for placenames, a block of covers for south Wales and Hereford mysteriously resisted change and retained its type 3 sketches with Caslon toponyms on the nine sheets 138 to 142 and 151 to 154. These covers are therefore unique in having Caslon sketches beneath a sentence case sheet number line. Of the covers needing new Times sketches, this block of nine may have been delayed until the Seventh Series cover

requirements were settled in 1950. There were two late printings in this area, published in 1951, which were for sheets 142 and 153. Richard Oliver reports on them that, in his collection, edition 1263 of sheet 142, *Hereford*, has a new Times sketch whereas edition 1250 of sheet 153, *Swansea*, retains its Caslon.⁴

Dol-y-gaer – the kraken exposed

The sketch maps give the impression that the placenames chosen to define the sheet were selected using criteria of relative importance tempered by a desire to give a pleasing layout. This latter consideration led to some quite obscure locations being thrust into the spotlight. The dam for the Taf Fechan reservoir was built by 1927, when the abandoned village of Dol-y-gaer disappeared beneath the waters, to be seen again only as a ruin during exceptional droughts. On the New Popular sheet 141, *Brecon*, it appears only as *DOL-Y-GAER STA*, a short platform on a single track railway with infrequent services to Brecon and Newport. Showing the village on the sketch map instead of the string of reservoirs mapped on the sheet indicates the age of the map used as a guide by the artist/cartographer. This use of a dated reference may also explain the inconsistencies of spelling between the sketches and the sheets listed in part 1. As noted in a previous article, the spelling of Welsh placenames tended to be subjective prior to standardisation.⁵ This, together with the *Frome* sketch alignment error and the placing of Rosebush on the *Cardigan* sketch demonstrate that the cross-checking between sketch and New Popular sheet was inadequate.

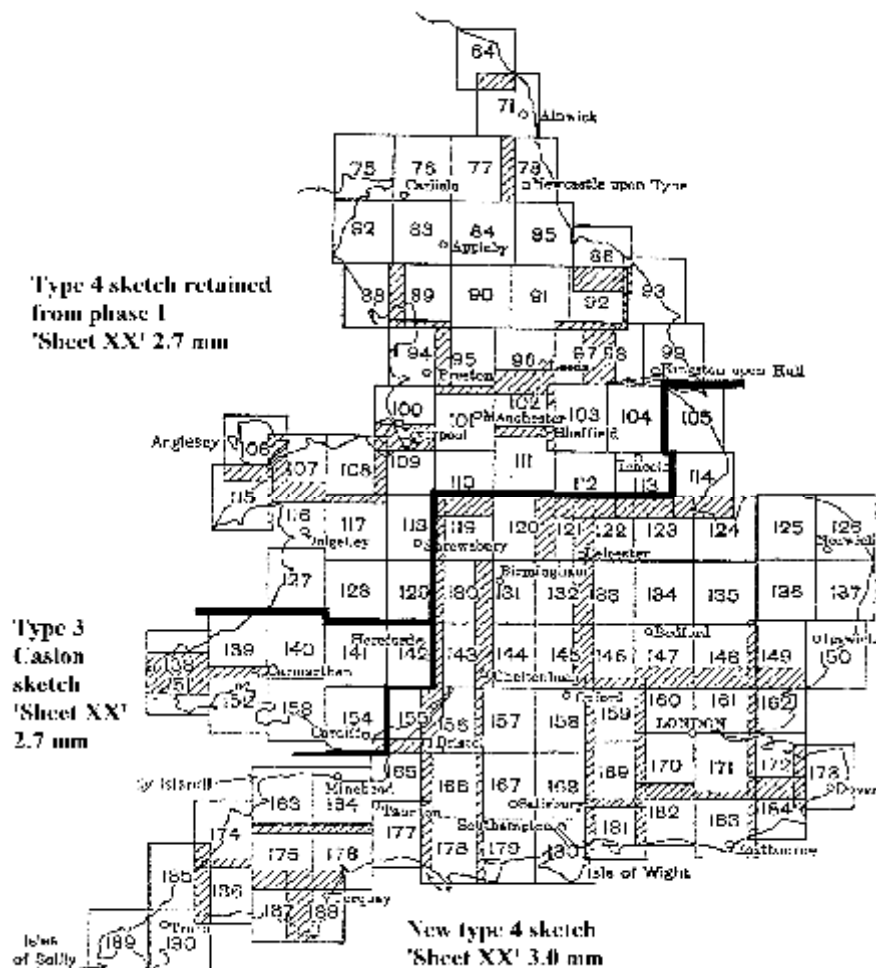
The Sheet – Sheet split

This section title exaggerates the difference but illustrates the fact that, for some reason, the sheet number lines in sentence case on the covers were not of a uniform size. Two slightly different sizes are apparent to the observant student, some being 3.0 mm high, others 2.7 mm. The larger sheet number line is apparent on covers with the 62 new sketch blocks, different print batches of the covers of a sheet retaining its characteristic dimension. The smaller sentence case sheet number line appears consistently above the 43 type 4 sketches printed using blocks made before standardisation was implemented. The nine type 3 sketches retained for south Wales and Hereford also have the smaller sheet number line lettering. The split is illustrated on an index diagram in Figure 1.

It is assumed by the author that, due to the great diversity of cover requirements, the relatively short print runs and the frequency of changes, letterpress continued to be preferred to lithography for printing sheet-specific data on the covers. Since ‘Sheet XX’ printed in point size 12 is 2.7 mm high, point size 14 is 3.4 mm and point size 13 is not generally available, it is therefore clear that the covers with ‘Sheet XX’ 3.0 mm high were not printed with moveable type but using sketch map blocks made from drawings that included the sheet number line. The block production process evidently photo-reduced ‘Sheet XX’ on the drawing to 3.0 mm which did not match any available moveable type, so, where the sketch block did not have an integral sheet number line, point size 12 moveable type was chosen as being the most suitable.

⁴ Reports are welcome of any other late Times sketches in south Wales.

⁵ For an article on Welsh toponymy, see *Sheetlines* 74, 17-23.



Index diagram from Roger Hellyer, 'Ordnance Survey small-scale maps indexes : 1801-1998', Kerry: David Archer, 1999, by courtesy of the publisher

Figure 1: The New Popular Edition showing geographical boundaries of sketch types and 'Sheet XX' size after standardisation

Renewal of sketches in the north

As noted above, new sketch blocks were made for sheets 82 and 89 before standardisation. Blocks were also renewed after standardisation. The covers affected belong to a group of seven sheets in the north, 76, 82 to 84 and 88 to 90. Three different sketches have been seen for sheets 82, 84 and 89, and two for the others. The reader is referred to figure 2, where examples of sheet 89, *Lancaster & Kendal* are reproduced. It can be assumed that a sketch in this area beneath 'Sheet XX' 3.0 mm high is a replacement for an earlier version with 2.7 mm lettering.

Conclusions

Detailed study of the New Popular sketch maps has led towards the following conclusions, listed in chronological order.

1. The first sketch map was drawn for sheet 161. The lettering on the drawing for this prototype was too small when reduced to the size of the printing block.
2. The Caslon lettering was made bigger for the other Ellis Martin cover sketches.

3. The bold 3-box sketch frame was not liked and a calmer 2-box frame was introduced.
4. Times placename lettering was introduced for the sketches needed for an area to the north identifiable by drawing a line on a map.
5. In 1949, sketch design was standardised. Most of the old Caslon sketches were replaced with Times and 'SHEET XX' became 'Sheet XX', which was put on all new drawings and thus incorporated on new blocks.
6. For the northern area where Times-lettered blocks already existed but had no integral sheet number, 'Sheet XX' was set with moveable type which was slightly smaller.
7. Oddly, south Wales and Hereford retained their Caslon sketches. Hereford, and possibly others, switched to Times shortly before the Seventh Series was launched.

SHEET 89

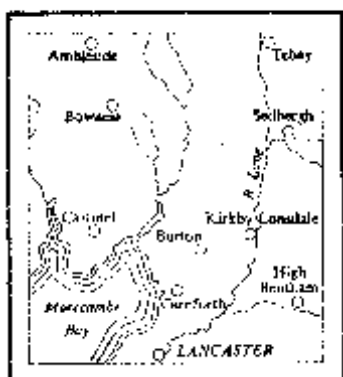


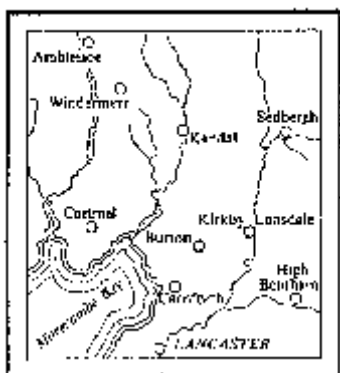
Figure 2a: 'SHEET 89' sketch version 1

SHEET 89



Figure 2b: Version 2 with 'Morecambe Bay' tilted, 'Bowness' replaced by 'Windermere' and the lake drawn. 'Tebay' replaced by 'Kendal'. R. Lune not named

Sheet 89

Figure 2c: Version 2 under 'Sheet 89'
2.7 mm (point size 12 moveable type)

(Figs 2c & 2d courtesy of Peter Gibson)

Sheet 89

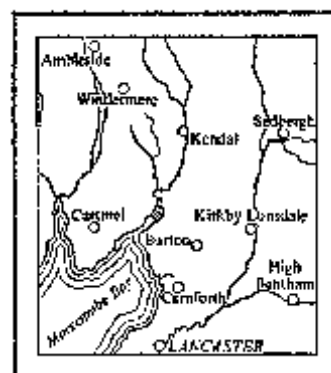


Figure 2d: Version 3 with 'Windermere' moved, the lake and Leven estuary reshaped and 'LANCASTER' lower. 'Sheet 89' 3.0 mm (integral to block)

The author apologises for the high proportion of speculation in this article but hopes the reader will charitably allow that, to quote the Danish fantast Hans Christian Andersen, '*out of reality are our tales of imagination fashioned*'. Part 3 of this article will address the Seventh Series cover sketches of England and Wales.

The assistance and encouragement of Richard Oliver and Peter Gibson, who reported in detail on his map collection and detected the sheet number line size issue, is gratefully acknowledged. Anne Taylor and her staff at Cambridge University Library Map Room are also thanked for generous access to the Messenger and CUL collections of New Popular maps in covers.