

# THE 1ST EDITION 1-INCH ORDNANCE SURVEY DRAWINGS

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The County Record Office has recently acquired photocopies of the original drawings made for the 1st edition of the one-inch Ordnance Survey map, the Gloucestershire sheets of which were published in 1828-31. The drawings are important for two reasons. They date from 1811-1816, in other words not merely nearly 20 years earlier than the published sheets, but considerably earlier than either Greenwood's or Bryant's maps of the county in 1823-4. Only Isaac Taylor's map of 1777 (available in facsimile in the Gloucestershire and Bristol Atlas, Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc., £3) is earlier than these O.S. drawings, which are considerably more accurate than Taylor.

There are, in fact, many mistakes in the original survey, which were put right before publication. Tracings and correspondence concerning the errors are stored now, like the drawings, in the Maps Library of the British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG; a reader's ticket is required to consult them. Many of the errors are mis-spellings of place-names, although the writer noted that not only was the name of his own house incorrectly given, it was also applied to another house situated half a mile away.

The second reason for their importance is that they are drawn to a scale of two inches to a mile (in a few parts of southern England to three or in military and naval areas to six inches to a mile). At this scale the surveyors could mark individual buildings, field boundaries, minor watercourses and other details omitted from the published version. Also, the original drawings are coloured, and therefore clearer to understand than the monochrome published edition and the photocopies in the Record Office.

A new scholarly edition of the original maps is being published, a portion of the south-east England having already appeared. It incorporates much editorial material not included in the David & Charles reprints, which were of the later 19th century versions of the 1st edition plates on which railways and other features were marked. The editors have expressed interest in the fact that some of Gloucestershire was surveyed

by Thomas Fulljames, the Hasfield architect and surveyor who was also part-time County Surveyor. It had been believed that the work was done exclusively by military engineers.

An example of the editorial material that will be included in the new publication and of a matter of some interest to industrial archaeologists is a letter about the Oxenhall Canal tunnel;-

From: Capt. A.W. Robe R.E. to Romley Wright, Esq.

Ordnance Survey Office  
Tower 16th February  
1830.

In F.2 NE Hereford corrected and drawn by you it is observed that the canal Tunnel between Newent and Dymock is expressed by a Crooked line. As this is a rather irregular instance, Tunnels being generally carried in straight lines between their openings it is referred to you to know if it is properly shown before the engraving is proceeded with.

A.W. Robe, Capt. R.E.

Repy to above.

Bewdley, Worcestershire  
17th April 1830

I am of the opinion that the Tunnel between Newent and Dymock is crooked for the following reasons :-

- I It is so stated to be by all the neighbouring Gentry.
- II It is impossible from either end to discern the light at the opposite one.
- III The "Wells", "Pits", Chimnies" or air pipes communicating with the surface, for the sake of ventilation are not in a straight line.
- IV My Geological researches in this part led me to more accurate information than I might otherwise have obtained for conceiving that Tunnel to be a fine section of the Rock.

I, one evening found out a man, who I understood had been employed either in the original cutting of the Tunnel, or in the examination of the work, or else in the actual measurement with a chain, and from him I received, if my memory does not fail me, either a ground plan of its course or else information sufficiently circumstantial as effectually to prevent any great inaccuracy or misconception. I ought perhaps to observe that

this memorandum was only received this morning.

Romley Wright

P.S. Several Navigators on the Canal also informed me that the Tunnel was very crooked - and also a very bad one.