

## *Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 (Landranger) Map Cover Designs* *Lez Watson*

The mid 1960s saw the Central Office of Information take over the design of all Ordnance Survey publications. As official designers they produced the first of the uniform covers still in use today<sup>1</sup>. The new design appeared on the One-inch map in 1969. This included a radically simple new Ordnance Survey title on a scarlet cover with black lettering, with a large location map surrounded by a slim white border. It was roundly denounced both in the Press and by users for its lack of imagination.

When the first sheets of the new 1:50 000 map series appeared in the spring of 1974, they sported a cover essentially the same as the One-inch map, except the cover colour became 'magenta' - usually called purple by the buying public. This is described by Roger Hellyer as '*Ordnance Survey House Style, 1968*'. The new Ordnance Survey colophon, a north-pointing crossed arrow between the letters O and S, representing both a bench mark and a magnetic needle, was developed by the Central Office of Information<sup>2</sup>. The map was given the series name *Landranger* in 1980.

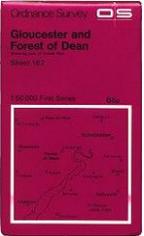
Over time the covers have developed to include colour photographic images in place of the front cover location map, along with a host of tourist and other information obscuring the clean lines of the original product. Today the well known 'purple' map can be seen in action at many locations around Britain by both professional and amateur users.

The *Landranger* paper map product had recently appeared to be nearing the end of its useful life, but paper map production was contracted out to Butler Tanner & Dennis Maps (now Dennis Maps) in 2010 following the OS realisation of the value of 'hard copy' mapping to the general public<sup>3</sup>. Retail-friendly digital products derived from 1:50 000 data are becoming common, especially custom tailored sheets<sup>4</sup>.

The OS underwent a comprehensive rebranding of all its products in 2015. A new 'fresh' colophon was created, and paper maps now come with a free digital download<sup>5</sup>.

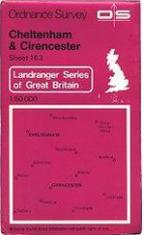
The details below list cover designs, numbered 1 to 7, with stepwise changes given in lower case letters. Details are given in the following order: front cover, price (if stated), rear cover, the spine, inside cover, and date the cover change appeared (where known).

A discussion by Bill Henwood of the evidence for transition from type to type may be found [here](#)<sup>6</sup>.

- 1** **House Style 1968, One Colour Cover (H132.7)<sup>7</sup>**
- 1a  First Series/Second Series. Magenta covers.  
Front: tiles and other text black on magenta; large location map in white edged box; white OS colophon in top right corner.  
Price: 65p.  
Rear: white index map overprinted with sheetlines in black; progress descriptions beside map.  
Spine: black lettering on white.  
Inside, First Series: text at bottom ends with 'SO9 4DH, and from many stockists'.  
Inside, Second Series: the three pioneer sheets<sup>8</sup> have a different text inside including '... The Second Series sheets, of which this is one...' and for no obvious reason the text at the bottom reads 'SO9 4DH', i.e. omitting 'and from many stockists'<sup>9</sup>.  
Appeared March 1974.
- 1b Price: blacked out and increased to 80p; effective 8 February 1975.
- 1c Price: increased to 80p.
- 1d Price: (65p or 80p) blacked out and increased to £1.15; effective 1 December 1975.
- 1e Price: increased to £1.15.
- 1f Rear: progress descriptions blacked out; c1976.
- 1g Inside: new layout; bottom line is 'Maybush, Southampton SO9 4DH'.  
Appeared February 1977.

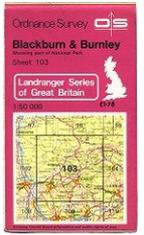
- 1h Rear: progress descriptions removed.
- 1i Price: increased to £1.40; effective 17 December 1977.
- 1j Front: some examples have stickers with '1:50 000 Second Series' placed on First Series covers<sup>10</sup>.
- 1k Price: increased to £1.50; effective 24 September 1979.
- 1l Inside: new layout, including list of 23 Outdoor Leisure Maps.

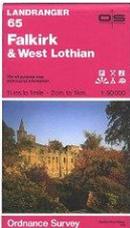
**2 Non-photographic 'Landranger' Cover (H301.1)**

- 2a  White on magenta.  
Front: 'Landranger Series of Great Britain' in white within white sub rectangular text box.  
Price: often not stated but begins at £1.50.  
Spine: black lettering on white.  
Inside: includes list of 23 Outdoor Leisure Maps and 'In June 1979, 76 [sheets] had been redrawn...' in text.  
Also integral cover version (H301.1b).  
Appeared April 1980.
- 2b Inside: 24 Outdoor Leisure Maps listed and 'In May 1980, 86...' in text.
- 2c Price: increased to £1.75 (where shown); effective 17 November 1980.
- 2d Price: increased to £2.00; effective 1 November 1981.
- 2e Rear: text shortened from 'Made and published by the director General of the Ordnance Survey, Southampton' to 'Made and published by the Ordnance Survey, Southampton'.  
Appeared March 1982.
- 2f Price: increased to £2.20; effective 1 November 1982.
- 2g Inside: new layout, including list of 6 Town and City maps, and 'by January 1982' in text.
- 2h Price: increased to £2.40, commonly not shown (sometimes on rear); effective 1 November 1983.
- 2i Front: text above the coverage diagram changed to either '1¼ inches to 1 mile .... 1:50 000' or '1¼ inches to 1 mile/1:50 000'.  
Price: commonly not shown – although they were £2.40.  
Inside: lists 11 Town / City maps.  
Appeared mid 1983 to 1984.
- 2j Front: text above the coverage diagram separated to '1¼ inches to 1 mile 1:50 000'

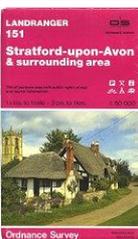
**i Integral Covers (1980-1986)<sup>11</sup>**

Following the successful introduction of integral covers to the 1:25,000 'Pathfinder' map in 1980, the Ordnance Survey tentatively tried them to Landranger maps. A total of 11 maps were produced but these saw only very limited use before the variation was abandoned.

- ia  Integral cover, magenta. 'Landranger Series of Great Britain' in white within white sub rectangular text box. Titles and other text in black.  
Front: Large coverage diagram derived from 1:625 000 Routeplanner mapping.  
Text above coverage diagram: '1:50 000'.  
Spine: black lettering on white.  
Rear: Magenta with white top panel and white index to Landranger series.  
Inside: List of 23 Outdoor Leisure maps, 3 Town Maps, and 'In June 1979, 76...' in text.  
Appeared early 1980 (on First Series sheet 103, edition A/\*).
- ib Inside: List of 25 Outdoor Leisure maps, 4 Town & City Maps, 'and by January 1982' in text.  
Appeared December 1981.
- ic Front: Text above coverage diagram changed to '1:50 000 1¼ inches to 1 mile'  
Rear: Index reduced in size to accommodate ISBN and barcode at bottom right (printed black on magenta).  
Inside: 'inside cover' used as legend panel.  
Appeared March 1984.

- id  Front: white titles on magenta in ‘photographic’ style similar to 3a below. Appeared September 1984, i.e. in advance of the series as a whole.

### 3 **First Photographic Cover (H407.2<sup>12</sup>)**

- 3a  Front: white title on magenta; local views; six tourist symbols; ‘Ordnance Survey’ at foot; English/Welsh bilingual titles commenced.

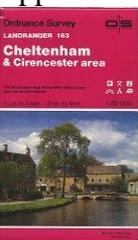
Price: no longer stated, but appears to be £2.50.

Spine: white lettering on magenta.

Inside: new style (similar to previous); 11 Town, City and Neighbourhood maps listed.

Also integral cover version (H407.2a).

Appeared April 1985.

- 3b  Front: ‘Ordnance Survey’ in black at top. Appeared: July 1985.

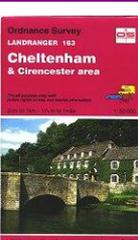
- 3c Inside: illustrated; list of 15 Town, Country and Neighbourhood maps.

- 3d Inside: list of Town, City & Neighbourhood Maps changed to generic paragraph, ending with ‘For details see price list.’

- 3e Inside: ‘cut here’ note around three sides, Town & City Maps paragraph shortened further, ending ‘grounds etc.’.

Appeared *before* August 1988.

### 4 **Second Photographic Cover (H407.3)**

- 4a  Front: white title on magenta; local views; logo magenta on white; tri-lingual texts; tourist symbols in colour.

Spine: white on magenta; new logo – magenta on white.

Inside: new style; tri-lingual; not illustrated. Includes list of sheet numbers and titles in two columns.

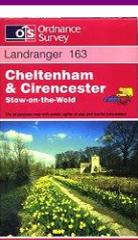
Appeared February 1993.

- 4b Inside: telephone number changed from 0703 792912 to 01703 792912.

- 4c Front: text above photograph changed from ‘1¼ in to 1 mile – 2cm to 1km’ to ‘2cm to 1km – 1¼ in to 1 mile’. Some copies? (only 162 2B2 currently known) erroneously have a combination of the two, i.e. ‘2cm to 1km – 1¼ in to 1 mile – 2cm to 1km’.

- 4d Inside: telephone number changed from 01703 792912 to 0345 330011.

### 5 **Third Photographic Cover (H501.2)**

- 5a  Front: white titles on magenta; local views; logo white on blue and magenta; series and sheet number black on ‘pink’ horizontal band.

Spine: white on magenta; logo in white, blue and magenta; sheet name in title case, centred.

Inside: no change.

Appeared July 1996.

- 5b Rear: cover photograph acknowledgement added.

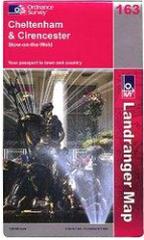
Spine: sheet name in upper case, centred.

Appeared September 1996.

- 5c Spine: sheet name in upper case, left aligned.

- 5d Quadrilingual text on some Welsh sheets (though not always at earliest opportunity).  
Spine: sheet name in upper case, left aligned.  
Inside: telephone number changed to 08456 050505; tri-lingual information in top panel, list of sheet numbers and titles in three columns in bottom panel; Website link shown: [www.ordsvy.gov.uk](http://www.ordsvy.gov.uk).  
Appeared January 1997.
- 5e Front: also carries ® mark beside 'Landranger'.  
Inside: tri-lingual information in top panel, list of sheet numbers and titles in three columns in bottom panel; Website link shown: [www.ordsvy.gov.uk](http://www.ordsvy.gov.uk).  
First seen March 1998.
- 5f Rear: position of sheet 198 changed on index map.  
Inside: website link changed to [www.ordnancesurvey.gov.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.gov.uk) (at variance with the address shown inside).
- 5g Inside: website link changed from [ordsvy.gov.uk](http://ordsvy.gov.uk) to [www.ordnancesurvey.gov.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.gov.uk).
- 5h Front: [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) appears below the OS logo.  
Rear and inside: [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) appears below the words *Ordnance Survey*.

## 6 Fourth Photographic (New Specification) Cover

- 6a  Front: white title on magenta; silver and grey design.  
Front and Rear: on Welsh sheets, 'Arolwg Ordnans' at right-hand side in plain type.  
Rear: on some examples of Welsh sheets, 'Arolwg Ordnans' appears in dark silver instead of the standard dark blue.  
Spine: white on magenta; logo white on blue and magenta; sheet number magenta on silver.  
Inside: illustrations of other map series available - Explorer sheet 259 (old style cover) with 'Millennium Products' logo; Landranger sheet 96 (new style); Touring Map *Peak District* sheet (old style); Road Map sheet 5 (old style); Routeplanner Map 2002.  
Appeared March 2002.
- 6b Front and Rear: on Welsh sheets, 'Arolwg Ordnans' now in same type as 'Ordnance Survey'.  
Spine: sheet number highlighted.
- 6c Inside: new illustration of unidentifiable Tour map behind Touring Map *Peak District* sheet; and new Route 2003 map.
- 6d Front and Rear: on Welsh sheets, 'Arolwg Ordnans' moved from the right-hand side to the left, next to 'Ordnance Survey'.
- 6e Inside: Explorer illustration as before but without 'Millennium Products' logo; Landranger illustration as before; Tour sheet *Suffolk* (new style cover); Road sheet 7 (new style).
- 6f Rear: addition of copyright date at bottom.  
Inside: 2004 Route map illustration.  
Appeared August 2003.
- 6g Rear: location and index maps have red tabs added.
- 6h Inside: Explorer sheet 259 illustration replaced by sheet 205 (new style cover) with 'Access' symbol.  
Appeared September 2004.
- 6i Inside: Route illustration now 2005.
- 6j Inside: Road illustration now sheet 5.  
Appeared January 2005.
- 6k Inside: Tour sheet *Suffolk* illustration now numbered (21); Route 2006.  
Appeared: February 2006.
- 6l Inside: 2007 Route map illustration.  
Appeared October 2006
- 6m Inside: date '2007' removed from Route map illustration.  
Appeared spring 2007.

- 6n Front: addition of World Heritage Site logo where appropriate.  
Rear: index maps now have sea areas in blue; World Heritage Site information.  
Spine: sheet title lettering enlarged; slightly erroneous blue 'Ordnance Survey' lettering on logo<sup>13</sup>.  
Inside: new illustrations for Tour sheet 21 (windmill), Road sheet 7 and Route map covers; Route map has photograph of multi-level motorway interchange.  
Appeared late 2007/early 2008.
- 6o Inside: new illustrations for maps – Explorer sheet OL9, Landranger sheet 180, Tour Map *Devon*, Road Map *South West England*, and Route Map (new motorway photograph).  
Appeared mid 2009.
- 6p Front: photographic local view no longer changed with each new edition.<sup>14</sup>  
Rear: removal of copyright date at bottom (see 6f)<sup>15</sup>.  
Appeared spring 2010.
- 6q Inside: new layout, details and illustrations of Road and Route Maps removed and Landranger (sheet 110), Explorer (sheet 278), and Tour (*Peak District*) retained.  
Appeared June 2010.
- 6r Rear: 'Published by Ordnance Survey, Southampton', with different typography.  
Appeared September 2010.

*In-house printing of Ordnance Survey small scale maps ceased at this point. A new contract was awarded to Butler Tanner & Dennis of Frome, the first Landranger sheet appearing at the beginning of 2011<sup>16</sup>.*

- 6s Inside: new Ordnance Survey offices address in Adanac Drive, Southampton<sup>17</sup>.  
Appeared February 2011.
- 6t Rear: shaded sheet overlaps on index diagram.  
Appeared March 2011.
- 6u Inside: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo appears under the 'Contact Us' text.  
Appeared February 2012.

## 7 Fifth Photographic Cover (Revised Edition Format)

- 7a  Front: white title on magenta; silver and grey design. New logo ("designed to reflect the organisation's work mapping Britain's towns, cities and countryside"<sup>18</sup>) top right corner, below sheet number. 'Now includes mobile download' logo.  
Rear: location map at top, index map extract below. Other information at bottom including copyright year.  
Spine: new white logo, white title on magenta, sheet number black on silver.  
Inside: Series and other map information, including Explorer (sheet 379), Tour (Lake District & Cumbria) and custom made. Mobile download instructions, and scratch off panel.  
Announced February 2015, appeared February 2016.  
*NB In June 2015 the OS discontinued using alphanumeric editions codes on small scale maps, replacing them with 'month year' code representing 'date of publication'<sup>19</sup>. The change was not reflected on the Landranger cover before 2016.*

2 April 2016

<sup>1</sup> John Paddy Browne, *Map Cover Art*. Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1991, 111-113.

<sup>2</sup> Op cit, page 136.

<sup>3</sup> See also article in *Printweek* ([link](#)).

<sup>4</sup> OS website ([link](#)).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Oliver, 'Last year's wine in recycled bottles', *Sheetlines* 103 (2015), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Note that this article uses an earlier design numbering sequence.

<sup>7</sup> 'H' numbers refer to Roger Hellyer's list of cover designs *Map Cover Art* (above).

<sup>8</sup> Sheets 115, 176 and 177.

<sup>9</sup> This and other information on style 1 provided by Bill Henwood.

<sup>10</sup> There are four; 151 2A, published June 1979; 131 2A, 141 2A and 153 2A, all published August 1979.

<sup>11</sup> Integral covers information provided by Ed Fielden, see [http://www.fieldenmaps.info/info/50\\_LR/](http://www.fieldenmaps.info/info/50_LR/) ([link](#)).

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- <sup>12</sup> This and following 'H' numbers from an unpublished extended list of cover designs by Roger Hellyer.
- <sup>13</sup> Eighteen sheets known: nos. 16, 19, 56, 84, 114, 115, 118, 135, 137, 142, 150, 165, 166, 174, 177, 178, 179, and 182.
- <sup>14</sup> Ed Fielden, 'OS efficiency review: two-dozen Travel Map sheets discontinued', *Sheetlines* 87 (2010), 50 ([PDF link](#)) Also barcode numbers no longer advanced at each new edition from this point.
- <sup>15</sup> This easily found change marks implementation of the Ordnance Survey's new small scale map publication policy.
- <sup>16</sup> Ed Fielden, 'Observations on BT&D map printings', *Sheetlines* 92 (2011), 32 ([PDF link](#)).
- <sup>17</sup> For styles 6r and 6s see Ed Fielden, 'Latest map printings', *Sheetlines* 90 (2011), 44 ([PDF link](#)).
- <sup>18</sup> See <http://www.creativereview.co.uk/cr-blog/2015/february/os-rebrand> ([link](#)).
- <sup>19</sup> Sheets carried the previous or most recent *partial* revision date. A few sheets with 'month year' formats - 42, 55, 62, 65, 79, 103 and 127 - began to appear at this time but still with design 6u covers.