

Burton-on-Trent Ordnance Survey maps at 1:500 scale

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The Ordnance Survey Town Plans of England and Wales were the most detailed topographic mapping by Ordnance Survey covering towns in England and Wales from the 1840s to the 1890s. By the 1890s, the large-scale town plans covered nearly 400 towns in Great Britain, including 62 towns in Scotland. They were usually as part of the 1:2500 survey of the surrounding countryside¹.

“Public health concerns provided the initial rationale for the Ordnance Survey large-scale town plans. The major cholera epidemic of 1832, along with continuing outbreaks of typhus, were strong in people's minds, along with the growing awareness that cartography had provided the vital links to discovering the causes of these diseases. During the 1840s, the Poor Law Commissioners recommended that the Ordnance Survey should create detailed town plans in conjunction with their mapping of counties, for encouraging local authorities to make sanitary improvements. Following the Public Health Act of 1848, Local Boards of Health were formed in urban areas, and were given powers to ensure clean water supplies to their districts, as well as control sewers, clean the streets, and regulate slaughterhouses.”²

A recent study of town plans by Richard Oliver and Roger Kain has produced a comprehensive catalogue. Included are the sheets for Borough of Burton-on-Trent (Fig 1):

CBTM ³	Date	Map type
20458	1857	General Purpose
20800	1865	General Purpose
19792	1878	boundaries
20459	1878	General Purpose
20460	9/1879	General Purpose
20461	1883	uncertain
20462	1895?	estate

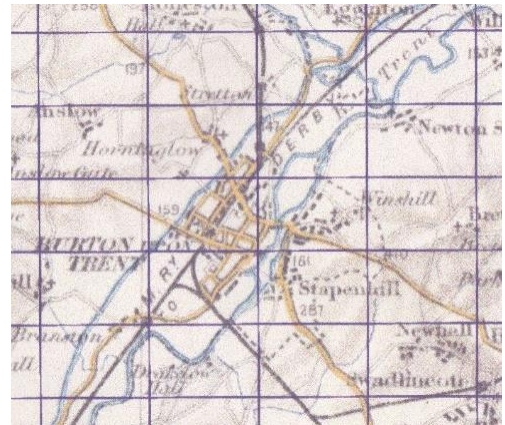
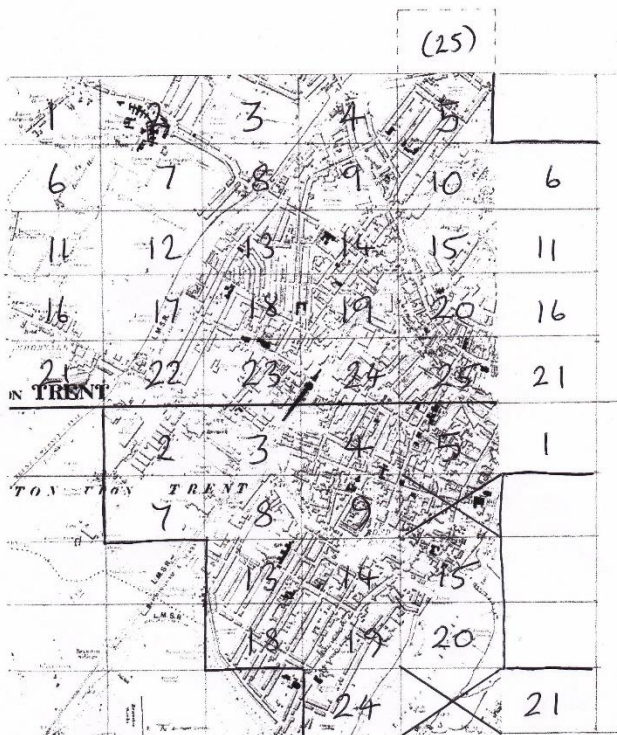


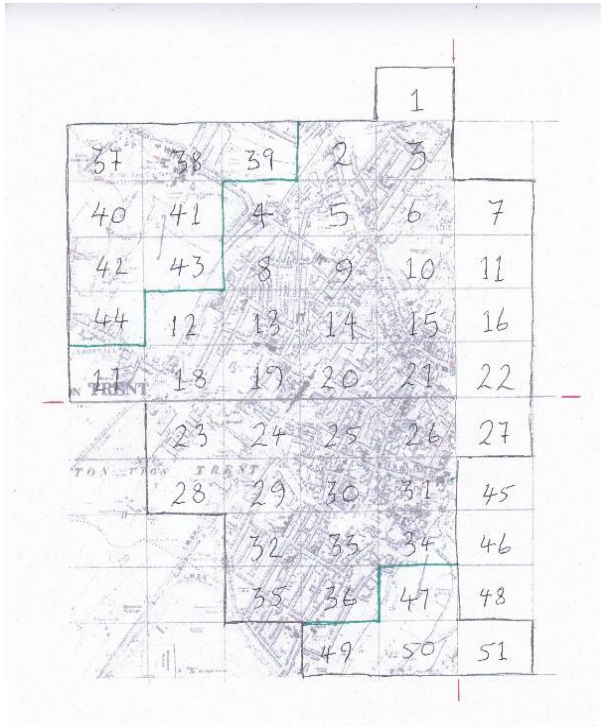
Figure 1 Location map



I have spent many happy hours over the years in the Burton Library Local Studies room⁴ researching map-based topics. The room contains a collection of 1:500 sheets covering the towns built-up area. They provide an excellent snapshot of the town at a time of the mass expansion of brewery companies in the mid-Victorian period⁵. The coverage of the County sheets is illustrated in figure 2.

Each sheet was zincographed and published by the OS at Southampton, carrying a number added by hand, thus showing the set to have

comprised originally 36 sheets (Fig 2). They were later complemented by a second set of 15 sheets published by James Wild⁶.



This second set of sheets were published to cover the huge expansion of housebuilding to accommodate incoming brewery and other workers and families in the late Victorian years. Although undated it's likely they were commissioned about a decade after the OS sheets.

Figure 2

Table. Burton upon Trent 1:500 mapping, publication details.

	Publisher	Sheet no.	Surveyed	Published	Adjacent 1:2500 sheets	Survey date/s & notes
XL 8.25	missing	1				
XL 12.1	JW	37	nd	nd	N W	
XL 12.2	JW	38	nd	nd	N	
XL 12.3	JW	39	nd	nd	N	
XL 12.4	OS	2	1882	1884	N W	
XL 12.5	OS	3	1882	1884	N E	
XL 12.6	JW	40	1882	1884	W	
XL 12.7	JW	41	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.8	OS	4	1882	1884	N W	
XL 12.9	OS	5	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.10	missing	6	1882	1884	-	on loan
XL 12.11	JW	42	1882	1884	W	
XL 12.12	JW	43	1882	1884	-	two copies
XL 12.13	OS	8	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.14	OS	9	1882	1884	-	two copies
XL 12.15	OS	10	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.16	JW	44	nd	nd	W	
XL 12.17	OS	12	1882	1884	N W	
XL 12.18	OS	13		1884	-	reprinted 30/1901
XL 12.19	OS	14	1882	1884	-	with GBO orders corrections 1886
XL 12.20	OS	15	missing	1884	-	date torn off
XL 12.21	OS	17	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.22	OS	18	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.23	OS	19	1882	1884	-	reprinted 1894
XL 12.24	OS	20	1882	1884	-	
XL 12.25	OS	21	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.2	OS	23	1882	1884	W	
XL 16.3	OS	24	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.4	OS	25		1884	-	date torn off
XL 16.5	OS	26	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.7	OS	28	1882	1884	S W	
XL 16.8	OS	29	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.9	OS	30	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.10	missing	31				
XL 16.13	OS	32	1882	1884	W	
XL 16.14	OS	33	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.15	OS	34	1882	1884	S E	
XL 16.18	OS	35	1882	1884	S W	
XL 16.19	OS	36	1882	1884	-	
XL 16.20	JW	47	nd	1884	-	
XL 16.24	JW	49	nd	nd	S W	
XL 16.25	missing	50				

XLI 9.6	OS	7	1884	E	1882
XLI 9.11	OS	11	1884	E	1882
XLI 9.16	OS	16	1884	E	1882, two copies
XLI 9.21	OS	22	1884	E	1882
XL1 13.1	OS	27	1884	E	1882
XLI 13.6	missing	45		-	
XLI 13.11	missing	46		-	
XLI 13.16	missing	48		-	
XL1 13.21	JW	51	nd	S E	

¹ Oliver, Richard, 2013. *Ordnance Survey Maps: a concise guide for historians*, third edition, 31, London: Charles Close Society.

² <https://maps.nls.uk/os/townplans-england/info.html>.

³ Oliver, Richard R. and Kain, Roger J.P., 2015. *The Catalogue of British Town Maps*.

<http://townmaps.data.history.ac.uk/> An online catalogue of over 8,000 records of maps held in British libraries and archives. [/browse?town=Burton%20upon%20Trent]

⁴ staffordshire.gov.uk/Libraries/branchlibraries/BurtonLibrary/BurtonLibrary

⁵ Compared with, say, Wood's map of the town published 1837 and, even earlier and in more detail, William Wyatt's map of the manor of Burton, 1758 to 1780, comprising nine township maps. Staffordshire Record Office, D(W)1734/2/3/131 - /140.

⁶ Geographer to the Queen, 11&12 Charing Cross Road, London