



**Roger J. P. Kain, Richard R. Oliver, John Chapman.** *The Enclosure Maps of England and Wales 1595-1918: A Cartographic Analysis and Electronic Catalogue.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 420 S. \$200.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-82771-3.



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## A Census of Enclosure Maps: England and Wales 1595-1918

Roger Kain, John Chapman and Richard Oliver are to be congratulated on their definitive study of *Enclosure Maps of England and Wales 1595-1918*. This comprehensive and exhaustive survey of a genre of large-scale mapping follows nicely from Kain and Oliver's similar treatment of tithe maps in *Tithe maps of England and Wales: Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* also published by Cambridge. The present work is the fruit of a five-year research project at the University of Exeter funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and work at the University of Portsmouth financed by The Leverhulme Trust. The utility of the book is extended still further when used in conjunction with the subscription-free Internet based catalogue and database hosted by the History Data Service of the UK Data Archive.[1]

More than a descriptive survey and catalogue, this is an interpretative study of the significance of mapping for enclosure: a major mechanism of landscape, property, and social change in the later early modern period. Enclosure had a profound effect on the landscape of England

and Wales, one which the historically untrained modern eye may not spot in what otherwise might appear to be a timeless, bucolic scene of enclosed fields surrounded by hedges and walls. This volume reminds us that the enclosed landscape is of fairly recent vintage. The role of maps, together with related written surveys in the process can be gleaned from the work.

The present volume is a welcome addition to the interdisciplinary literature of the history of cartography, which should now be regarded as the definitive listing and analysis of enclosure maps of England and Wales to date. While maps may have long been seen as data sources on past economies and societies, which indeed they are, Kain, Chapman, and Oliver further illuminate the current orthodoxy that maps themselves are involved in the process of change they depict. Far more than pretty fodder for the antiquarian curiosities, it is argued, they are cultural artifacts in themselves. Maps were centrally involved in various aspects of power relations, and enclosure maps, by facilitating land reorganisation, are a prime example of this.

The book is divided into three main sections. There is first a historiographical essay on the enclosure movement in England and Wales. This covers aspects such as the motives and causes for enclosure, the development of the procedure over time, and the consequences of this often far-reaching means of re-ordering property and re-casting the landscape. The next section sees a county-by-county analysis of extant enclosure maps. For each county, there is an enumeration of the area and proportion of the area covered by enclosure maps, the number of such maps and the date range. Patterns are drawn out together with attempts to explain them.

The third and final main section gives an overview of the enclosure maps of England and Wales. This synthesis, based on the earlier chapters, provides a chronology of enclosure mapping and gives the proportions of counties covered by enclosure maps and the extent of enclosure mapping within parishes. There is some descriptive analysis of map characteristics based on this large empirical survey of the genre. Generalizations are produced on map scales, use of color and the depiction of elements such as transport and communications, non-agricultural land use, and land ownership and acreages among other facets. An examination is made of the involvement and work patterns of enclosure surveyors. Taking all these and other elements together, the main text of the account is concluded by an attempt to answer the question, "is there a quintessential enclosure map?" On the whole, the answer is that the genre was too diverse to permit such a claim. We can say that this generalization is securely based, founded on the most extensive and thorough study of the enclosure maps of England and Wales to date.

Useful reference information is found in appendices and in the index. An appendix lists surveyors of enclosure maps. The name and address of surveyors are given where known, and the county or counties in which they operate are recorded alongside the number of maps and area mapped as a measure of their output. This is followed by a crossreference to the database available free on the Internet. Finally there is an index of places in England and Wales with extant enclosure maps. This listing by place, county, date, scale and other characteristics much enhances the utility of the catalogue. All in all, this appended data allows the reader to make quantitative assessments on selected aspects of the enclosure process beyond any already given in the book.

The book is well illustrated with 35 figures. All are monochrome, which is a pity since a full appreciation of most maps is only possible with a view of the use of

color, especially for the clarification of new patterns of land ownership. There are many extracts from enclosure maps, title pages from enclosure acts and likenesses of surveyors and enclosure commissioners such as Richard Gee in the frontispiece. Cartouches are exemplified, and scale bars are reproduced, both adding to our overall picture of the appearance and style of this genre of cartography and allowing comparisons with other kind of local large-scale maps, contemporary or otherwise. Choropleth maps summarize themes such as the "percentage of enclosure maps which record road, drain, path, fence and similar measurements as a percentage of all enclosure maps." These topics are then drawn out in the analysis in the text. There are also 162 tables, and for each county there is one summarizing map dates, map scales, and map surveyors.

The book has a retail price of 120 pounds sterling (two hundred dollars) and is only available in hardback. The very high price is understandable given the esoteric subject and the restricted likely constituency. The lack of color illustrations in a book selling at this price is regrettable. However, given the authoritative nature of the source and its exhaustive, comprehensive, and rigorous treatment of enclosure maps, all major libraries and archives are recommended to have a copy.

Accessing the Internet catalog alongside the published book completes the resource. As the format is different, a separate evaluation is appropriate. On the web, one is able to select all the maps for a county to gain an overview. More detail can then be sought on a particular parish or place. I took the example of Barming parish in Kent. A standard set of database fields appears, which print out as three and a half A4 pages. Only a small selection of the categories is reviewed here. All variables appear on the screen, but are left blank when there is no data appropriate to that map. The most obviously useful data appears first. There is a unique record identifier, the date of the map: 1866, the administrative category of the unit: Parish, the Place: Barming and the County: Kent. The library or record office was in this case the PRO and the call mark MAF 1/980 is given. Many other kinds of detail are given in the following broad categories: geographical and map location, area mapped, map date, map maker, and other map characteristics appropriate for a cartobibliography, and finally a long list of features depicted such as railways, and status of land recorded, for instance, enclosure allottees named.

Overall, I found the Web database quite easy to use. The design seems to be robust with a large number of cat-

egories allowing almost every conceivable aspect of the enclosure map to be captured. The help screen provides useful assistance. A few improvements or adjustments might be made and could be achieved without changing the essential structure of the database. A categorization of the very large number database fields into subject groupings might enhance its legibility. Some subjective categories are included in the database such as "Quality of execution of map." More detail on the meaning and criteria used to evaluate this would be helpful, although it is pleasing that some element of judgement appears amongst a great mass of descriptive detail. The value of the resource is enhanced by treatment of non-practical features of the surveyor's art such as cartouches, decorative border, and 'symbolic elements on map'. This latter category is potentially restrictive, in that the whole conception and process of enclosure itself richly symbolizes major changes in the society and economy of England and Wales in the period covered.

In terms of the stated purposes, *The Enclosure Maps of England and Wales, 1595-1918* succeeds very well. A vast resource is digested and presented in the book and related Internet resource which helps the reader to learn about enclosure maps and their historical context and importance. The literature review section examines, for instance, the debate on the efficiency of enclosure against open field farming. As a whole the volume is an important addition to the growing body of literature on the history of cartography and the growing number of cartobibliographies.

The ultimate question raised is "What of the role of maps in enclosure?" The point is made that in past times, maps were not necessarily seen as an essential accompaniment to purposes such as the property overhaul implied by enclosure. It is noted that even though the 1801 General Inclosure Act specified that maps should be made, this was not mandatory. An explicit discussion of a notion of map-consciousness would have aided the conceptual framework for the discussion here. Nevertheless, the point is well made, that we should not take map use for granted in past times in contexts to which the modern mind might automatically turn to them.

On the basis of their complete trawl of enclosure maps, the authors are able to make some bold and authoritative generalizations. These should aid our understanding and underpin future scholarly efforts on this topic. It is possible to assert, for instance, that "enclosure was an established procedure by the later middle ages, but the enclosure map as a distinct genre is a relatively late devel-

opment" (p. 159). The authors also observe that by about 1760, enclosure maps had developed as a distinctive map genre. Such definitive and well-founded statements serve to flesh out our picture of changes in the late early modern period as well as filling a gap in the history of cartography.

There is also useful analysis of the technical quality of the cartography. The importance of interventions such as the 1845 General Inclosure Act with its requirement of maps of a high standard to be accepted and sealed by enclosure commissioners is examined. Map characteristics such as scale, use of color for distinguishing detail, portrayal of transport routes, land-use representation and many other facets are described and evaluated. All of this is useful in completing our knowledge of the genre of maps being examined. The overall finding to emerge from this examination is that "it is not possible to conceive of a 'typical' enclosure map" (p. 202). Until the 1845 Act, there were no regulations to govern enclosure map style and content, though it is made clear that certain conventions did develop and had some influence. The finding that "the style of an enclosure map reflects the style of the surveyor" is one which can usefully be compared against other species of large scale local map, especially tithe and estate (p. 202). It also shores up our impression that enclosure maps as a body did not represent a comprehensive or consistent cadastral survey of England and Wales in the style of contemporary European surveys.

Kain, Chapman, and Oliver do not shy away from controversy. They argue, for instance that "the adoption of parliamentary enclosure had more to do with local fashion and knowledge than is usually admitted in the literature" (p. 17). From the extensive empirical base of their survey, these authors are well qualified to make such bold pronouncements. There are aspects of the enclosure process which the authors are not afraid to admit are mystifying and defy explanation, such as the varying percentages of counties affected by parliamentary as opposed to non-parliamentary enclosure.

There are few shortcomings of this book, except for the understandably high price. A fuller indication of why the topic of enclosure is important and interesting would have enhanced the work. Inevitably, as a resource listing, parts of the work are rather descriptive, though in general, this is well balanced by analysis and reflection. The detailed empirical sections, especially the county analysis of enclosure map characteristics, do not bear reading from beginning to end, but it is not intended for such

a purpose. Enough strands and patterns are drawn out in the reflective essays and summaries elsewhere in the book to maintain the interest of the reader.

Kain, Chapman, and Oliver's volume can be regarded as the definitive survey of the enclosure maps of England and Wales. The free availability of all the detailed data via the World Wide Web catalogue considerably aids the dissemination and extends the value of the resource to

those unable to afford the book. Tithe maps and enclosure maps have now been exhaustively scrutinized and listed. Of the genre of local maps, only the much more diverse and scattered body of estate maps remain to be as comprehensively surveyed. Who has a lifetime to spare?

Note:

[1]. See <http://hds.essex.ac.uk/em/index.html>.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-histgeog>

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