Some Notes on Ordnance Survey and Valuation Maps 1830s to 1950s

Introduction

This paper begins with a very brief history of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland. It then deals with the County Series of six-inch OS maps dating from the 1830s to the 1930s/1950s and the valuation maps of the same scale and dates. Adjoining areas in counties Antrim and Londonderry are used as an example of what maps are available in PRONI, Belfast and what you need to know to be able to access them. The final section of the paper deals with the large-scale maps of towns and villages (both OS and valuation) that are available in PRONI, Belfast. Again, an example of the maps available for towns and villages in the Ballymoney and Coleraine districts is given.

Short History of the Ordnance Survey

In 1824 a House of Commons Committee recommended that Ireland should be mapped at a scale of six inches to one mile (1:10560).[1] The main reason for this choice of scale was that the maps were to be used to carry out a townland valuation of the entire country for tax purposes.

Initially, mapping began in the north of the country and the first maps (known as the First Edition) were published in 1833. By 1846 six-inch coverage was available for the whole of Ireland on a county basis. The 1830s maps of most of the Ulster counties did not show field boundaries – mainly because the original valuation was based on land quality within a townland. When it was decided in the early 1840s that the valuation would have to be based on individual holdings, it was necessary to have maps which would show field boundaries. A decision had already been taken in 1835 to include field boundaries in future maps. However, by this time most of Ulster had been mapped without the field boundaries. It was therefore necessary to revise the First Edition maps for Ulster. This revision took place during the 1840s and the new maps were printed during the 1850s. These revised maps provided the base maps for the Griffith's Printed Valuation.[2]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century it was decided to carry out a new survey of the entire country and produce maps at a scale of 1:2500. (twenty-five inches to the mile).[3] These maps were published for much of Ulster around 1905/1906. These twenty-five-inch maps were used (through photographic reduction) to produce the Second Edition of the six-inch maps. Again, most of these maps for Ulster are dated either 1906 or 1907. A revision of these six-inch maps took place during the 1920s/1930s. During the late 1940s/early 1950s

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[1] The mapping of mainland Britain began in 1791, during the Napoleonic Wars. The mainland maps were of the scale one inch to one mile (1:63360).

[2] Since the rest of the country had been mapped after 1835, when the decision had been taken to include field boundaries on future maps, these post 1835 (First Edition) maps could be used for Griffith's Valuation. Revisions of these post 1835 maps did not take place until the later years of the nineteenth century and some were never revised. They were simply replaced by the new Second Edition maps which appeared circa 1900.

[3] The reason why a scale of 1:2500 was chosen was because this scale had been adopted by the European Statistical Congress in 1853 as the standard scale for large-scale surveys throughout Europe and was already in use in mainland Britain. Note that a scale of 1:2500 is more suitable for metric measurement. 1:2500 is actually 25.344 inches to the mile. Six-inch maps could then be constructed from these 1:2500 maps by photographic reduction.

another revision took place in certain areas, particularly around towns. As far as I know these revisions were first carried out on the twenty-five-inch maps and the twenty-five-inch maps were then reduced photographically to six inches.

After the 1950s the system changed. The County Series was scrapped and a new series, known as the Irish Grid, was created. The six-inch map (1:10650) was replaced by a map at a scale of 1:10000. Clearly, a scale of 1:10000 is more appropriate for the modern-day metric environment. The maps most useful to the local historian are the County Series from the 1830s to the 1950s. Copies of these are available from both the Ordnance Survey Office in Belfast and PRONI in Belfast. The Irish Grid maps can only be purchased from the Ordnance Survey.

Six-inch Ordnance Survey Maps held in PRONI, Belfast

Copies of the County Series of Ordnance Survey maps can be obtained from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6NY.

In order to get the six-inch map or maps which cover a townland or townlands you need to know the following:

- The county that the townland is in.
- The sheet number of the map for that county which covers the townland that you want to study.
- The PRONI reference number of that sheet.

In order to explain how you would go about this I will use the example of the districts around Coleraine in Co. Londonderry and Ballymoney in Co. Antrim. The grids on the next two pages show the sheet numbers for parts of Counties Londonderry and Antrim.

From the first grid you can see that the sheet number for the immediate Coleraine area is number 7 for Co. Londonderry. The second grid shows that Ballymoney town, and its immediate vicinity, is on sheet number 17 for Co. Antrim.

However, since Coleraine town is near the top of sheet 7, you may need sheets 2, 3 and 6 for Co. Londonderry if you wish to study areas to the immediate north and north-west of the town.

The same applies to Ballymoney where you may need sheets 11, 12 and 16 for Co. Antrim. Often, the most frustrating thing about using these maps is that the townland you want to study straddles two maps. In the most extreme situation a townland can straddle four maps.

Part of County Londonderry

Magilligan 1	Castlerock 2	Portstewart 3	4
5	Articlave 6	Coleraine 7	8
Limavady 9	Keady Mountain 10	Macosquin 11	Aghadowey 12
16	17	18 Garvagh	19
24	25	26	Kilrea 27

Part of County Antrim

Portrush 2	Dunseverick 3	Ballycastle 4	5
6	7	8	9
11	12 Dervock	Armoy 13	14
16 Balnamore	Ballymoney 17	18 Loughguile	19
21	Dunloy 22	23	24

These grids are only to illustrate how sheet numbers work. To really find the sheet number of a townland that you want to study you will need to:

- Either'consult the one-inch townland index maps that will allow you to identify the sheet numbers of the six-inch maps for your area. PRONI has copies of these index maps and there are also copies in the Local History Library in Ballymena. Note that Ballymena also has actual copies of Ordnance Survey maps (and some valuation maps) for the area covered by the library board.

- Or, you can also find the sheet number of a particular townland in the index at the beginning of the appropriate Poor Law Union Book in Griffith's Printed Valuation, circa 1859. This will also tell you if you need more than one sheet to cover your townland.

Next you need to know the reference number of each sheet in PRONI.

For example the PRONI reference number of the six-inch map showing Coleraine is: OS/6/5/7/1.

- OS/6 tells you that this map is part of the six-inch County Series.
- The number 5 indicates the county. Co. Antrim is 1; Co. Armagh, 2; Co. Down, 3; Co. Fermanagh, 4; Co. Londonderry, 5; Co. Tyrone, 6.
- The number 7 is the sheet number.
- The number 1 tells us that it is the First Edition Map – in this case 1834.

The PRONI reference number of the six-inch map showing Ballymoney is: OS/6/1/17/1. It is very similar to the reference number for the Coleraine sheet. However there are two key differences:

- OS/6/1/ tells you that it is a Co. Antrim sheet number
- The number 17 is the sheet number.

As for Coleraine, the number 1 after 17 tells us that it is the First Edition Map – in this case the date is 1833. Incidentally the 1857 map for Coleraine , which is a revision of the 1834 map, has the PRONI reference number OS/6/5/7/2 and reference number for the Ballymoney map is OS/6/1/17/2. Whilst the later maps continue this sequence of referencing it is better to check their exact reference number in the OS/6 catalogue on the shelves of the Search Room in PRONI.

Six-inch Valuation Maps held in PRONI, Belfast

The six-inch maps produced by the Ordnance Survey after 1830 were used as base maps by the Valuation Office. The sheet numbers for the valuation maps for an area are exactly the same as those for the OS maps. However they have a different PRONI reference number. The table on the next page gives details of the various valuations available in PRONI, Belfast from the 1830s to the 1950s along with their PRONI reference number. These include the manuscript field books and the maps used by the valuers to record the location of the individual buildings and plots of land listed in the field books. Individual properties were identified on these maps using numbers and letters (upper case for land and lower case for houses). The table also makes reference to large-scale maps for towns which will be covered later in this paper.

Manuscript Books and Valuation Maps available in PRONI, Belfast			
Townland Valuation of 1828-1840	Manuscript Books VAL/1/B. This valuation concentrated on land quality in each townland. Some houses in rural areas were also valued on separate sheets. Those less than £3 were usually not valued but check, just in case.	Associated six-inch maps VAL/1/A e.g. VAL/1/A/5/7 is sheet 7 for Coleraine.	Associated large-scale town maps VAL/1/D. Many houses in towns were valued.
Tenement Valuation 1848-1864	This is generally known as the **Griffith's Valuation** which is available in printed form. All houses and holdings are listed in this valuation. Note that the original manuscript books, VAL/2/B, contain information not included in the printed version.	Associated six-inch maps (1858-64) VAL/2/A. Note that these are often difficult to read. You may have to use the VAL/12D (see below) and make adjustments.	Associated large-scale town maps (1858-64) VAL/2/D
Annual Valuation Revision Lists 1865-circa 1935	Manuscript Books VAL/12/B. These books record any changes in occupation, etc. after 1864. Each volume covers approximately a ten-year period.	Associated six-inch maps VAL/12/D. Changes are added to these maps in different colours.	Associated large-scale town maps VAL/12/E. Again, different colours are used.
First Northern Ireland General Revaluation of 1935 plus revisions to 1957	After the establishment of the government of Northern Ireland a General Revaluation, took place in 1935. As well as the lists of the Revaluation itself (VAL/3/B), there are also the revision lists in VAL/3/C detailing changes in the ownership of property etc. until 1957.	Associated six-inch maps VAL3/A. Changes are added to these maps in different colours.	Associated large-scale town maps VAL/3/G Again, different colours are used.

For example if you wanted to look at the 1859 Griffith's valuation map for townlands close to the town of Ballymoney, the PRONI reference number of the valuation map would be VAL/2A/1/17A

- VAL tells you that this map is a valuation map. Note that OS maps are always prefixed with OS.
- The number 1 indicates the county. Co. Antrim is 1; Co. Armagh, 2; Co. Down, 3; Co. Fermanagh, 4; Co. Londonderry, 5; Co. Tyrone, 6.
- The number 17 is the sheet number and the A simply means that there is more than one map available for this date.

This map, like many 1859 valuation maps is very difficult to read. When this is the case, I always look at the later 12/D map which is usually (but not always) much clearer. The reference number for this map for the Ballymoney area is VAL/12/D/1/17A. The 17A indicates that there is more than one map available for this date.

If there have been major changes in the layout and numbering of the holdings in the townland since 1859 then you will have to make allowances for that. There were considerable changes on sheet 17 for Ballymoney in the townland of Ballygobbin. Much of the townland was renumbered in 1864. The VAL/12/D map shows the original 1859 numbers stroked out and the new numbers inserted. Also, the acreages of holdings in a part of the townland changed significantly and, quite frankly, it is impossible to, exactly, match that part of the townland up with the 1859 Griffith's Printed Valuation.

Valuers used a number of maps of different dates during the revision period 1864 to 1930. You can find details of these in the VAL/12/D catalogue on the shelves of the Search Room in PRONI. [Now in the eCatalogue.]

Large-Scale Maps of Towns and Villages held in PRONI, Belfast

Clearly, maps at a scale of six inches to the mile could not be used by the valuers to record the location of the occupants of houses in towns and villages. So, from the 1830s onwards the Ordnance Survey produced large-scale maps of towns and villages. These maps vary in their availability and their scales. The recommended scale was 1:1056 i.e. sixty inches to the mile. However, the scale at which a particular town was mapped often reflected the layout and size of that town.

I have listed (below) the maps available in PRONI for the towns and villages in the Coleraine and Ballymoney districts of counties Londonderry and Antrim. These have been copied from a PRONI publication *Northern Ireland Town Plans, 1828-1966* with the kind permission of the Deputy Keeper of Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Note that only some of these maps are OS maps and some are valuation maps. The latter always have the PRONI reference VAL. The Valuation Maps with their associated Valuation Books allow you to identify the names of the occupiers of the buildings in a town. Many of these names can then be linked to the lists of persons and trades in the Town Directories available from the 1850s onwards.

Some of the early maps can be difficult to read and in a few instances a map for a particular year can be missing, as is the case of the 1833 valuation map for the town of Ballymoney. If the numbers on a map are difficult to read then you will have to look at a later map and see if you can match it up to the earlier list of occupants. For Ballymoney, I had to use a later 1880 map as a substitute for the earlier 1859 map where many of the numbers were illegible.

Here is a guide to the scales of the maps given in the table below.

1:500   127 inches to the mile.
1:1056   60 inches to the mile.
1:1250   50 inches to the mile.
1:1320   48 inches to the mile.
1:2112   30 inches to the mile
1:2500   25 inches to the mile.

Articlave (County Londonderry)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/2/D/5/13	1859	1:1320	1
VAL/12/E/141/1	1904-1908	1:1056	1
OS/8/45/1	1907	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/141/2	1908-1935	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/114/1	1937-1957	1:1056	1

Castlerock (County Londonderry)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/12/E/144/1	1911-1935	1:1056	1

Portstewart (County Londonderry)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/2/D/5/10	1859	1:1056	1
OS/8/143/1	1904	1:1056	2
VAL/12/E/153/1	1905-1907	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/153/2	1907-1935	1:1056	2 (sheet 2 missing)

Coleraine (County Londonderry)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/1/D/5/8	1834	1:1320	2
VAL/2/D/5/15	1859	1:1320	1
OS/8/6/1	1882	1:500	20
OS/9/24/1	1882	1:500	20
VAL/12/E/156/1	1882-1907	1:500	16
OS/8/6/2	1904	1:1056	6
VAL/12/E/156/2	1907-1935	1:1056	6 (only sheet 4 available)
VAL/12/E/156/3	1919	1:1056	6
VAL/12/E/156/4	1919	1:2500	4

Garvagh (County Londonderry)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/1/D/5/5	1834	1:1509	1
VAL/2/D/5/13	1859	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/147/1	1904-1908	1:1056	1
OS/8/100/1	1905	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/147/2	1908-1935	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/122/1	1937-1957	1:1056	1

Kilrea (County Londonderry)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/1/D/5/2	1834	1:660	1
VAL/2/D/5/5	1859	1:1056	1
OS/8/116/1	1905	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/148/1	1905-1908	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/148/2	1908-1935	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/123/1	1937-1957	1:1056	1

Armoy (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref.No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/2/D/1/20	1859	1:1320	1
OS/8/44/1	1906	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/15/1	1906-1935	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/3/1	1935-1956	1:1056	1

Ballymoney (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref.No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
OS/9/17/1	1833	1:5280	1
VAL/2/D/1/9	1859	1:2112	1
VAL/12E/14/1	1880-97	1:2112	1
OS/8/29/2	1893-94	1:1056	3
OS/9/17/2	1893-94	1:1056	3
VAL/12/E/14/2	1895	1:1056	1
OS/9/17/3	1896	1:2500	1
OS/8/29/1	1896	1:2500	1
VAL/12/E/14/3	1897-1909	1:1056	3
OS/8/29/3	1904 &1907	1:1056	2
VAL/12/E/14/5	1908-35	1:1056	2
VAL/3/G/8/1	1934-50	1:1056	2
VAL/3/G/8/2	1948-54	1:1250	9

Bushmills (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/1/D/1/7	1834	1:1760	1
VAL/2/D/1/7	1859	1:1760	1
VAL/12/E/17/1	1883-1898	1:1760	1
VAL/12/E/17/2	1898-1908	1:1056	2
VAL/12/E/17/3	1908-1935	1:1056	2
VAL/12/E/17/4	1915	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/12/1	1937-1956	1:1056	2

Dervock (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/2/D/1/10	1859	1:1056	1
OS/8/187/1	1906	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/26/1	1906-1935	1:1056	1

Mosside (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/2/D/1/20	1859	1:1056	1
OS/8/134/1	1904	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/43/1	1912-1919	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/43/2	1919-1935	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/28/1	1936-1956	1:1056	1

Portballintrae (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/12/E/44/71	1928-1935	1:2500	1

Portrush (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/1/D/1/6	1834	1:2112	1
VAL/2/D/1/7	1859	1:2112	1
VAL/12/E/46/1	1859-1898	1:2112	1
OS/8/42/1	1895-1896	1:1056	6 (sheet 4 missing)
OS/9/42/2	1895-1896	1:2500	2
OS/9/38/1	1896	1:1056	6
OS/9/38/2	1896	1:2500	2
VAL/12/E/46/2	1897-1916	1:1056	5
VAL/12/E/46/5	1907-1928	1:2500	1
VAL/3/G/30/1	1949-1955	1:1250	5

Rasharkin (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/12/E/48/1	1907-1935	1:2500	1

Stranocum (County Antrim)

PRONI Ref. No.	Date	Scale	No. of Sheets & Remarks
VAL/2/D/1/9	1859	1:2640	1

VAL/12/E/14/1	1896-1907	1:2640	1
OS/8/158/1	1903-1904	1:1056	1
VAL/12/E/49/1	1905-1935	1:1056	1
VAL/3/G/32/1	1935-1956	1:1056	1

By the 1940s it was decided to introduce a 1:1250 (fifty inches to the mile) series to cover towns and these were then used by the Valuation Office for later valuations. Notice that the 1949-1955 sheets for Portrush are at the 1:1250 scale. As far as I know, initially, these fifty-inch maps were simply photographic enlargements of the twenty-five-inch maps. Four fifty-inch maps cover the same area as one twenty-five-inch map.

Conclusion

The Ordnance Survey and Valuation maps along with the Griffith's Valuation, its subsequent revisions and the later revaluations provide an excellent source which allows you to trace changes in both town and countryside over more than a century.

Some useful reading

Ordnance Survey in Ireland - An illustrated record, Ordnance Survey Office, 1991.

J. H. Andrews, *History in the Ordnance Map: An Introduction for Irish Readers*, Dublin: Ordnance Survey Office, 1974.

J. H. Andrews, *A Paper Landscape: the Ordnance Survey in nineteenth-century Ireland*, 2nd ed. - Dublin: Four Courts, 2002. (First edition 1975).

Trevor Parkhill, 'Ordnance Survey Maps in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland', *Ulster Local Studies*, Vol. 14 No. 2, 1992, pp. 72-82.

Trevor Parkhill, 'Valuation Records in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland', *Ulster Local Studies*, Vol. 16 No. 2, 1994, pp. 45-58. Note that on page 53 of this article – all references to VAL.2D, should read VAL.2A.

Reprint of *Griffith's Valuation 1859 for the Poor Law Union of Magherafelt*, Draperstown: Ballinascreen Historical Society, 1995. (I have written the introduction to this book where I set the source in its historical context within South Derry and explain the terminology used in the various columns in the valuation.)

W. H. Crawford & R. H. Foy, *Townlands in Ulster: Local History Studies*, Belfast: Ulster Historical Studies, 1998. (In this book you can see copies of OS and valuation maps for eight townlands spread across the counties of Antrim, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. My home townland of Forttown is one of those townlands.)

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9th October 2006.