

Ordnance Survey Maps

The Ordnance Survey (OS) was founded in 1791 to provide accurate mapping as a counter to the threat of a French invasion.

The Oxfordshire area was first surveyed in the early 19th century and, with regular revision since then, Ordnance Survey maps have become a remarkable record of the changing landscape.

Heritage Search mapping platform

Most large or medium scale printed Ordnance Survey maps are freely available online through [Heritage Search](#). This includes surveys at the 1:1,250, 1:2,500 and 1:10,000 / 1:10,560 scales, covering the period, 1876-1996.

In addition to Heritage Search, we have listed below for each scale or category of Ordnance Survey map what supplementary map sheets and finding aids are available.

A wide range of historic printed Ordnance Survey maps are also viewable on the [National Library of Scotland](#) website, accessible through their [graphical index](#).

1:500 (10.56 feet to 1 mile)

As part of the OS County Series mapping, only towns with a population of over 4,000 were surveyed at this generous scale; in Oxfordshire, that meant Abingdon, Banbury, Henley and Oxford only (1873-82).

The detail of buildings and street furniture is extensive, making these town plans immensely useful to historians. The plans were never revised beyond this first edition of 1873-82.

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search) - Oxford only
 - select feature layer: "OS County Series Oxford town plans"
- [Online](#) - (National Library of Scotland) - Abingdon, Banbury, Henley and Oxford

1:1,250 (50 inches to 1 mile) National Grid survey

Chart paper editions 1955-89

National Grid mapping at this scale was introduced for towns with a population of over 20,000 in the 1940s.

Oxfordshire coverage of published editions includes Abingdon (1980-6), Banbury (1965-c.1984) and Oxford (1955-89).

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search) - Abingdon, Banbury and Oxford only
 - select historic map layer: "Postwar 1:1250"



Interim and bespoke paper editions 1970-97

Published chart paper editions were temporarily updated by SIM (Survey Information on Microfilm) paper printouts, showing latest surveyed changes (1970-95).

We also hold selected Superplan printouts (1995-1997) which were the digitally sourced on-demand replacement for SIMs.

Access

- Paper format (original sheets) [ref. D: MC18-MC19]
- Available at Oxfordshire History Centre only (finding aid on spreadsheet)
- There are no digital versions of these map sheets, so users need to request the paper originals for consultation in the Searchroom.

Ordnance Survey Landline digital 1998-2019

Seamless digital mapping of Oxfordshire, for 1998, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009-12, 2015-16, 2018-19.

Access

- Digital, via [ArcGIS](#), available at Oxfordshire History Centre only.

1:2,500 (25 inches to 1 mile) County Series

The County Series comprises the following editions:

- 1st edition (1866-83)
- 2nd edition (1897-1900)
- 2nd revision or 3rd edition (1909-20)
- 3rd (incomplete) revision or 4th edition (1919-39)

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search)
 - select historic map layer: “Pre-war 25 inch”

Supplementary land use information is available for most Berks and some Oxon 1st edition sheets up to October 1879, via ‘Books of reference’ on microfilm [ref: MR2].

1:2,500 (25 inches to 1 mile) National Grid survey

Chart paper editions 1955-92

Begun nationally in 1948, the first survey of Oxon was completed 1962-80, and Berks 1964-82. The Banbury survey was begun in 1965 and Oxford in 1955.

We hold all later chart paper editions (now digitised), as published, up to 1992 when the paper series was discontinued and superseded by born-digital mapping.

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search)
 - select historic map layer: “Post-war 1:2500”



Interim and bespoke editions, 1977-99

Published chart paper editions were updated by SIM (Survey Information on Microfilm) printouts, showing latest surveyed changes (1977-93).

We also hold selected Superplan printouts (1994-9) which were the digitally-sourced on-demand replacement for SIMs.

Access

- Paper format (original sheets) [ref. D: MC10-MC13, MC15]
- Available at Oxfordshire History Centre only (finding aid on spreadsheet)

There are no digital versions of these map sheets, so users need to request the paper originals for consultation in the Searchroom.

Ordnance Survey Landline digital 1998-2019

Seamless digital mapping of Oxfordshire, for 1998, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009-12, 2015-16, 2018-19.

Access

- Digital, via [ArcGIS](#), available at Oxfordshire History Centre only.

1:10,560 (6 inches to 1 mile)

County Series

- Editions
 - 1st edition (1866-83)
 - 2nd edition (1897-1900)
 - 2nd revision (1909-21)
 - 3rd revision (1919-42 Berks; 1932-9 Oxon)

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search)
 - select historic map layer: "Pre-war 6 inch"

National Grid Provisional edition (c.1948-65) and Regular edition (c.1953-70)

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search)
 - select historic map layer: "Post-war 1:10 000"

1:10,000 National Grid

This series provided the Metric replacement for the old 6-inch maps (1972-96).

Access

- [Online](#) (Heritage Search)
 - select historic map layer: "Post-war 1:10 000"



1:25,000 (2½ inches to 1 mile)

Provisional edition (1945-61), Second Series (1965-94) renamed Pathfinder from c.1980, Explorer (1994-).

Access - paper format

- Paper format (original sheets, flat up to 2000) [ref: A: MC14]
- Paper format (original sheets, folded from 2002) [ref: OZ 942]
- Available at Oxfordshire History Centre only (finding aid on spreadsheet)

Access - digital

- [Online](#) (National Library of Scotland) - 1:25,000 Provisional edition (1937-61)

1:50,000

Metric replacement for the old 1-inch maps - First Series, 1974-6; Second Series (1974-) renamed Landranger from 1979.

Access

- Paper format (original sheets, flat up to 2004) [ref: A: MC14]
- Paper format (original sheets, folded from 2005) [ref: OZ 942]
- Available at Oxfordshire History Centre only (finding aid on spreadsheet)
- Oxfordshire History Centre does not have this series of maps available digitally

1:63,360 (1 inch to 1 mile)

Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings

Draft field drawings, known as the Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings, were prepared of the very first survey between 1808 and 1818 at a scale of 2 inches to 1 mile (1:31,680)

Access

- Microfiche format (available at Oxfordshire History Centre) [ref: MR2]
 - Finding aids - Bibliographical fiche and index map [ref: MR2]
 - Coverage - Southern England
- Paper format (available at Oxfordshire History Centre) [ref: A: MC3.6.1B]
 - Finding aids - index map [ref: A: MC3.6.1B]
 - Coverage - Oxfordshire
- [Online](#) - British Library provides access via the [Web Archive](#) to the full colour Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings for the whole of England and Wales.

Old Series

The early field survey (Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings) was used as the basis for the Old Series or 1st edition 1-inch to 1-mile maps first published in 1830.

Access

- Oxfordshire History Centre only holds one or two isolated examples of the Old Series sheets.



- A full coverage reproduction is available in:
 - *The Old series Ordnance Survey maps of England and Wales : scale: 1 inch to 1 mile ; a reproduction of the 110 sheets of the survey in early state in 10 volumes - Vol.4, Central England* (Harry Margary, 1986) [ref: OZ 942/(MAR)]
- Old Series maps have also been republished as colour facsimiles under the imprint of Timeline or Cassini (2005-07), re-projected to fit the modern 1:50,000 scale. [ref: OV 942.34]

New (and later) Series

A New Series was published from 1847 and revised editions appeared regularly until metrication brought the Seventh Series to an end in the 1974-6.

Access

- Oxfordshire History Centre holds some original New Series (and later) paper sheets.
- Paper format (original sheets) [ref: A: MC14] (finding aid on spreadsheet).
- New Series (1897-1909) and Popular Series (1919-20) maps have also been republished as colour facsimiles (Cassini, 2007), re-projected to fit the modern 1:50,000 scale. [ref: OV 942.34]
- [Online](#) (National Library of Scotland). Coverage for Oxfordshire includes:
 - New Series 1882, 1886-91
 - Revised New edition, 1895-6
 - 3rd edition, 1903-5
 - Popular edition, 1919-20
 - 5th edition, 1938-41
 - New Popular Series, 1946-8
 - Seventh Series, 1953-72

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