



Sheetlines

The journal of
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps

“The Black Letter Prayer Book”

Bill Henwood

Sheetlines, 116 (December 2019), pp41-43

Stable URL: <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/sheetlines-articles/Issue116page41.pdf>

*This article is provided for personal, non-commercial use only.
Please contact the Society regarding any other use of this work.*

Published by
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps
www.CharlesCloseSociety.org

The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, and initiator of many of the maps now sought after by collectors.

The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.

The Black Letter Prayer Book – a revelation?

Bill Henwood

One of the byways of Ordnance Survey history is the reproduction by photo-zincography of a variety of historical documents, done mainly in the 1860s when Sir Henry James was Director General. The best known and most frequently seen of these are the county facsimiles of the Domesday Book.¹

Among the others, the Black Letter Prayer Book of 1636 seems especially curious and has been referred to by several authors.² Although it had been replaced by the 1662 Book of Common Prayer more than two centuries earlier, copies would still have been around when it was photo-zincographed, and the question “why was it done?” has been asked before.³ In *The Ordnance Survey in the Nineteenth Century*, Richard Oliver hints at the reason, describing it as having been “originally prepared in 1869-70 for the Ritual Commissioners”.⁴ But neither this nor other secondary sources appear to quote its full title, which answers the question:

Fac-simile
of the
Black-letter Prayer-book
containing
Manuscript alterations and additions made in the year 1661
“out of which was fairly written”
The Book of Common Prayer
Subscribed, December 20. A.D. 1661. by
The Convocations of Canterbury and York,
and annexed to
The Act of Uniformity, 13 & 14 Car. II., C.4, A.D. 1662

So, this was no ordinary Black Letter Prayer Book. It was the annotated copy attached to the Act of Uniformity, which in the 1860s was being stored in the House of Lords Library at the Palace of Westminster.⁵

¹ Bill Henwood, ‘An unnecessary distraction?’ *Sheetlines* 84, 13-16; Rob Wheeler, ‘Sir Henry James’ Domesday Book’, *Sheetlines* 113, 42-7.

² These include: Tim Owen and Elaine Pilbeam, *Ordnance Survey – Map Makers to Britain since 1791*, Southampton, 1992, p59; I Mumford in WA Seymour (ed.), *A History of the Ordnance Survey*, Folkestone, Wm. Dawson & Sons Ltd., 1980, p164; Richard Oliver, *The Ordnance Survey in the Nineteenth Century*, Charles Close Society, 2014., pp309, 311.

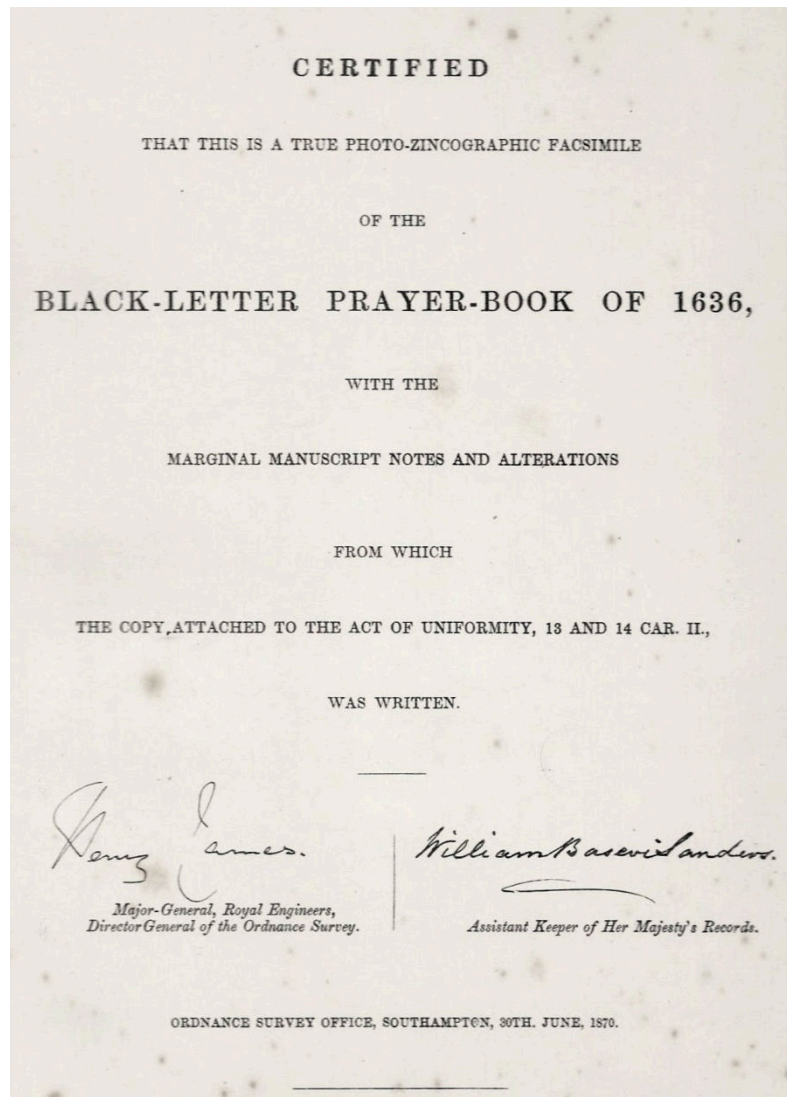
³ ‘*Ordnancemaps topics: Black Letter Prayer Book*’ (question by Hugh Brookes, answer by Richard Oliver), *Sheetlines* 66, 50.

⁴ Oliver (2014) p309.

⁵ The copy to hand is dated 1871 and was jointly published by Longman & Co., London; Basil M Pickering, London; Parker & Co., Oxford; and Macmillan & Co. Cambridge. An edition was still available over 50 years later: *Catalogue of Maps and other Publications of the Ordnance Survey 1924* (Ordnance Survey, 1924), p17. Owen and Pilbeam op. cit. p59 illustrates the title page. This shows annotations but their significance is not explained.

Sheetlines is not the place to try to unravel the politics of the Church of England in either the mid-seventeenth or later-nineteenth centuries. Suffice to say that with the rise of the 'high church' Oxford movement, elements of the C of E became concerned about excessive ritual creeping into the liturgy. A Royal Commission, established in 1867 to find out what was going on and what needed to change, sought the production of primary documents, including the annotated Black Letter Prayer Book.⁶

James has been criticised for his foray into the facsimile reproduction of historical documents, possibly at the expense of the progress of map production. The production and printing of the facsimile annotated Black Letter Prayer Book, which comprises more than 500 pages, measures 10 inches by 16 inches, and weighs over 3.5kg in its original binding, must have involved much time and effort. But its full title reveals that it was done for a very specific official purpose, and not on a mere whim or as a vanity project.



⁶ The terms of reference, workings and conclusions of the 1867-70 Commission are summarised in the report of a 1906 Commission. Transcription by Thomas JW Mason (2001) at <http://anglicanhistory.org/pwra/rced9.html>



The form of solemnization of Matrimony.

Item, the banes must be asked three severall Sundayes or Holy dayes in the time of Service, the people being present after the accustomed manner.

And if the persons that ^{are to} should be married, dwell in divers Parishes, the Banes must be asked in both Parishes: and the Curate of the one Parish shall not solemnize Matrimony betwixt them, without a certificate of the Banes being thrice asked, from the Curate of the other Parish.

At the day ^{of time} appointed for solemnization of Matrimony, the persons to be married shall come into the body of the Church, with their friends and neighbours. And there ~~the Priest shall say thus,~~ ^{standing together, y^e Man on y^e right hand, & y^e woman on y^e left; y^e Priest shall say,}

Deare beloved friends, We are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of his congregation, to joyne together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony, which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in paradise, in the time of mans innocency, signifying unto us the mysticall union that is betwixt Christ and his Church: which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of S. Paul to be honourable among all men, and therefore is not to be enterprised nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfie mens carnall lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained. ^{First it was ordained for} ~~One~~ ^{his Holy Name} was the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and praise of God. Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sinne, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency,

¶ 4

might

First, the Banes of all, that are to be Married together, must be published in y^e Church three severall Sundayes, or Holydayes in the time of Divine Service, immediately before y^e Sentences for the Offertory; y^e Curate saying, after y^e accustomed manner [I] publish y^e Banes of Marriage between M. of ^{B.K.} of
If any of you know cause, or just impediment, why these two persons should not be joyned together in holy Matrimony, ye are to declare it: This is y^e first, [second, or third] time of asking.]