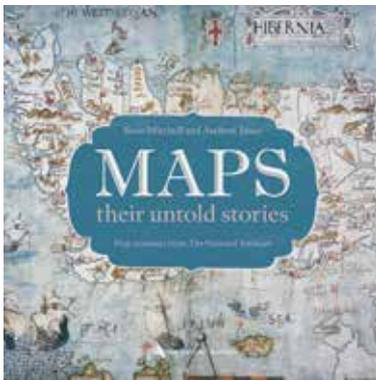


book review

By Chris Kutler, Archaeology UK (www.archiuk.com)

Title: *Maps: Their Untold Stories*
Author: Rose Mitchell and Andrew Janes
Publisher: Adlard Coles Nautical
Price: £30.00
Format: Hardback, 256 pages
ISBN: 9781408189672



I have a confession to make. It has taken me much, much longer to write this review of *Maps: their untold stories* than I expected – much to the frustration of the editor of *The Searcher* I imagine!

The reason for this delay is simple. The book is a wonder to the senses both visually and intellectually and an absolute delight to read. I soon become mesmerised by the beauty of each of the maps illustrated and

became immersed in the text describing the background to the maps and it seemed like weeks had passed before I found my way back from this Narnia of the map world. Now that I have returned to reality and collected my thoughts I can tell you a little about this truly magnificent book.

As a detectorist, this book is fulfilling on a number of levels. However, I feel the main one is that it provides an introduction to the range and diversity of the extraordinary collection of maps held at The National Archives, Kew. To a hobbyist many of these maps are an ephemeral gold mine. The collection goes back seven centuries and is in excess of six million maps and similar items. Further, the book has been written by The National Archive's own map experts: Rose Mitchell and Andrew Janes. They work closely with the public every day and hence fully understand our needs and requirements with respect to maps and this is very evident in the text of the book.

Older maps can be of immense importance to serious the detectorist who researches sites and this book covers aspects of certain maps which are particularly useful for this. There is an illustration of a spoof Treasure Map at the end of the book. However, this is an aside because the book

actually covers what I think of as the real detectorists' 'treasure maps' which are the Tithe Apportionment Maps drawn up in the mid-19th Century.

Additionally, as detectorists we spend our time out in the countryside and there is a complete chapter on Maps of Countryside and Estate. This is the chapter where you will learn a lot of what you need to know when it comes to using old maps to locate once prominent features now lost but still marked out for you to find. The book even gives an example of an unrecorded deserted hamlet clearly marked on a 16th century map and another map shows a lost Royal palace!

However, it isn't just older maps which can bring life to a deceptively barren modern landscape. Covered in the book are more modern trench maps and battlesites depicting the positions and trenches of opposing World War I armies.

To summarise then, I would say *Maps: their untold stories* has fulfilled its aim to educate and inform with respect to the amazing collection of maps held at The National Archives. The book does have a wide audience to fulfill but it is also very relevant to anyone serious about metal detecting and hence should have a place of pride on any detectorists bookshelf.