

Charles Lewis

Surveyor and Auctioneer in
Nineteenth Century Havant

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Charles Lewis was a significant figure in Havant in the 19th Century. As the town's first – and indeed only – resident surveyor and cartographer he was responsible for the two earliest surviving large-scale maps of the Havant area: the 5 inch-to-the-mile map compiled in collaboration with his brother John Theophilus in 1833 and the Tithe Map of 1842. But he was also at one time or another an auctioneer, valuer, estate agent, insurance agent, enclosure commissioner and lithographic printer. One trade directory of the 1830s even lists him as an architect, although I can find no evidence for this.

He resided in Havant from about 1833 until his death in 1885, except for a brief period when he lived first at Fishbourne in West Sussex, then at Warblington. But even during this time he retained a house in the town and attended the occasional meeting of the Havant Vestry.

He was born in 1801 in the Kingston area of Portsmouth, the youngest of four children. Of his father, John, I have been able to discover very little, but in 1795 he was fortunate – or shrewd – enough to marry one Barthias Crasswell (née Rogers) a widow whose first husband, Anthony Crasswell, had been a farmer at Kingston. His lands were in the area around what is now Crasswell Street (near Portsmouth and Southsea railway station) a district that was beginning to be developed at the start of the 19th Century.

Indeed between 1807 and 1812 there are a number of advertisements in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, placed by Charles's father, offering plots of land in Kingston for building purposes.

In 1810 he acquired more assets when his own father (also called John) died. Fortunately a copy of John senior's will survives, and it shows him to be a man of some means. His principal occupation was tenant landlord of the Stokes Bay Inn near Alverstoke, but he also owned property in Gosport, was a dealer in timber and other building supplies and owned several bathing machines on the beach at Stokes Bay. As the only son (although there were a number of daughters) Charles's father would have inherited the bulk of this estate.

Unfortunately I can find nothing about the fate of either of Charles's parents, but the family must have retained some long-standing links with the Gosport area, for when Charles married in 1833 the ceremony took place at Alverstoke – despite him then being a resident of Winchester –

and his bride, Martha Horwood Tayler, came from Blenheim Cottage, Bridgemary.

My knowledge of Charles's early life and career are also a blank, and the record of his marriage and the appearance of his name alongside that of his brother's on the Havant map, both in 1833, are the earliest references to him that I have been able to find.

This Havant map was just one in a series of a dozen produced for sale to the general public that the Lewis brothers compiled between 1828 and 1836. The eight dating from before 1833 bear John Theophilus's name alone, but since all of them are identical in style, and as the lettering is identical to that on Charles's solo maps (and very different to that on John's estate and tithe maps) it is certain that Charles must always have had a major input into the cartography (if not the actual surveying) of the entire series.

Fortunately we know quite a lot about these maps from advertisements that the brothers placed in the *Hampshire Telegraph*. In July 1837, for example, they listed all of them together with their dates of publication. Many are of areas in south-east Hampshire for as well as Havant we have Alverstoke (1832) Fareham (1832) Portsea Island (1833) and Hayling 1830. Also in Hampshire are Alton (1829) Bishops Waltham (1831) and Fordingbridge (1832). Others are Petworth (1830) and Kirdford (1836) in Sussex; Witley/Thursley (1829) in Surrey and Woburn and the adjacent parishes (1831) in Bedfordshire.

From other advertisements for the Petworth and Portsea maps we also know how much they cost. A plain black and white copy was 10s. 6d. (52½p); with boundaries and principal roads coloured in by hand 12s. 6d. (62½p), and the de luxe edition, with colouring and mounted on canvas with mahogany rollers 20s (£1). Copies would have been available from the Lewises themselves or from local booksellers.

When it was published the Portsea Island map also received a favourable mention in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, which praised its accuracy and concluded "*We are only surprised that we have for so many years been without such a useful publication*".

It is impossible to be certain just how successful these maps were, although judging by the number of copies of both the Havant and Portsea Island maps that survive these two at least probably sold quite well. By contrast however, I have been unable to trace a single surviving copy of either the Bishops Waltham or Witley/Thursley maps.

The other interesting aspect of this series of maps is the fact that they were reproduced by the comparatively new process of lithography, and that the Lewises did their own lithographic printing.

Although it was invented in Germany at the very end of the 18th Century, lithography did not become at all common in Britain until after 1825, and it is in fact in this year that we find John Theophilus advertising his services as a lithographic printer in Winchester, the earliest instance in Hampshire. Lithographic printing remained important for both brothers throughout the 1830s, but especially for John Theophilus, who executed topographical and antiquarian subjects, portraits and commercial stationery as well as maps.

Making lithographic prints of their own surveys would certainly have helped to keep down their costs, but just how unusual was the combination of these two very different skills, especially at such an early date? I have certainly not come across any other examples, but even if it was not totally unique it would certainly have been very rare.

Charles must have arrived in Havant shortly after his marriage because in September 1834 he is recorded as attending a meeting of the local Vestry, something that only rate-paying residents were permitted to do.

But why did he choose to settle here? Perhaps he simply sensed a good business opportunity. Havant was, after all, a moderately prosperous and expanding market town of just over 2,000 people with no surveyor of its own, the nearest being in Chichester, Portsmouth or Fareham. But if there was one particular reason, the most likely was the close proximity of William Padwick. In 1827 Padwick, a local lawyer, had purchased the Lordship of the Manor of Hayling from the Duke of Norfolk for the considerable sum of £38,614 and thereafter tried to recoup his money by ruthlessly extracting every last penny that he could from all the various rights and privileges that he had acquired with the Lordship, most of which had long since lapsed under the Dukes' lax regime. This involved him in continuous – and very frequently acrimonious – litigation, and, as accurate maps were often essential pieces of evidence in court cases of this nature it would have been extremely useful for Padwick to have a competent surveyor close at hand.

There are unfortunately no surviving maps that Charles alone produced for Padwick (although there are a few that he compiled in collaboration with his brother or that John compiled on his own). But we do get some insight into the professional relationship that the two men must have

retained over the years from the report of a court case in 1852.

Ironically this time it was Padwick who was being sued by Charles himself, to recover payment for a number of services he had performed and for which he believed Padwick had not adequately recompensed him. These included drawing up a plan of Havant and travelling all the way to Dorchester to give evidence on Padwick's behalf in yet another of his legal actions.

But if Havant was a good place to set up as a surveyor, 1833 was also a very good time, because there was soon to be a tremendous increase in the demand for a surveyor's services, mainly from two sources: tithe mapping and the railways.

Under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 all tithes which had previously been paid in kind were to be converted into cash payments, and in order for these payments to be calculated accurately it was decreed that every parish in the land should be mapped, with the exact area of each landholding measured and its value assessed. A Tithe Commission was set up to supervise this immense undertaking with the intention that it should be carried out by civilian surveyors (as opposed to the military surveyors of the Ordnance Survey) under the strict supervision of the Commission, with every map drawn to a uniform scale of 1 inch to 3 chains (66 yards). In the event these criteria were relaxed, and the maps produced varied both in scale and quality, and in some cases even pre-existing maps were used.

Tithe mapping constituted the major part of Charles's work between 1839 and 1843, during which time he surveyed seven parishes: Havant, North Hayling, South Hayling, Farlington, Wymering, Warblington and New Fishbourne (Sussex). The only local parish he did not survey was Bedhampton where a map drawn up just a few years previously was deemed adequate. This was more than most other surveyors employed by the Tithe Commission (who usually did only one or two parishes) produced, although a few were much more prolific. In Hampshire for example the Fareham surveyor James Blackman did seventeen, whilst Richard Gale of Winchester did no less than twenty-three.

In total Charles surveyed 16,251 acres, and if one assumes that he received the average payment from the Tithe Commission of 9d. (3½p) per acre he would have earned just over £600 for his work. He probably employed an assistant – he certainly advertised for one in the *Hampshire*

Telegraph in 1839 – but he would have been able to claim expenses for him.

Tithe maps were drawn up in triplicate, one copy for the office, one for the parish clerk and one for the bishop of the diocese (EJ Evans and AG Crosby, *Tithes: Maps, Apportionments and the 1836 Act: a guide for local historians*, British Association for Local History, 3rd ed. 1997). Consequently virtually all of them have been preserved – certainly all of Charles's survive and his copies for Havant, North Hayling, Farlington and Warblington are at the County Records Office. In the case of Havant a further copy was made for Sir George Staunton at Leigh Park and this, too, survives.

The survival rate for his other maps is, however, regrettably low. The three maps that he compiled in his role as an Enclosure Commissioner [considered below, p.9] have been preserved, but of his work as a private surveyor I have come across only three instances in the archives. Eventually the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps would render the private surveyor virtually redundant, but as these maps did not cover south-east Hampshire until the late 1860s estate work would have formed an important part of Charles's output for some 35 years, and so the great majority of his maps must either have been lost or remain in private hands.

The other major source of work for surveyors in the late 1830s and 1840s was the railways, especially during the so-called Railway Mania of 1844–47 when the demand for surveyors far exceeded supply and all sorts of unqualified – or even unscrupulous – people entered the profession.

Charles had no direct involvement with railway work locally and the only reference I have come across to his connection with railway surveying is an advertisement in the *Hampshire Telegraph* in October 1845 for:

A competent land surveyor to undertake a survey of 20 miles of railway line in Oxfordshire (line already laid out) apply Charles Lewis, Havant.

Where he might have been employed however was as a valuer. When a railway company obtained an Act of Parliament giving it permission to construct a line it also acquired powers of compulsory purchase and was, consequently, obliged to pay landowners compensation for any land that it took. So if a local landowner had to negotiate terms with a formidable company like the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (which extended its line from Chichester to Portsmouth via Havant in 1847 and

which often employed the eminent London surveyor, Charles Driver, to do its valuation work then the services of a local surveyor could be invaluable in helping a landowner to obtain a fair price for his land. There is no evidence of Charles doing this in respect of the railways, but he did something very similar regarding the construction of the Palmerston Forts on Portsdown Hill in 1863. In this instance it was the War Office who had the compulsory purchase powers, and when one particular landowner, a Mr Mellersh, disputed the sum he was being offered he called upon Charles as an expert witness when the matter was being decided at Fareham Petty Sessions.

Once his tithe work had been completed in 1843 Charles decided to add an auctioneering business to his surveying work, and he conducted his first auction at North Hayling in February 1814. Again there was a gap in the market because the Havant area had no specialist auctioneer of its own.

Today we tend to think of auctioneering mainly in terms of art and antiques, but from the late 18th Century onwards auctions became an increasingly popular way to dispose of land, buildings and moveable goods, usually of the deceased or bankrupt. In 1788 there were just 14 auctioneers in the whole of Hampshire, but by 1880 that number had risen to 44, and by 1880 there were no less than 100, many of them, like King & King of Portsmouth, very large concerns indeed. This rapid growth meant that most people, like Charles, came into the business from other trades or professions, the most common being cabinet-making and upholstery (presumably because furniture was one of the most common items that auctioneers had to handle).

Auctioneering forms an increasingly important part of Charles's work from the mid 1800s, and although he was never as important as, say, King & King or Frederick Weller of Chichester, he was for forty years by far the leading auctioneer in Havant and the immediate locality. About 80% of the auctions that he conducted were in Havant, Hayling, Warblington, Bedhampton and Waterlooville, although he did hardly any in Emsworth – at least after the mid 1850s when the firm of Laker's was established there. He also did very little over the border in Sussex, where Laker's and the Chichester auctioneers dominated. In fact most of the rest of his work was in places like Blendworth, Rowlands Castle, Catherington, Denmead and Horndean. In 1868 he did open a branch office in Gosport, but it was quite unable to compete with the many local firms and it closed just a few years later after having done almost no business whatsoever.

Moveable goods (mainly furniture, farm livestock and equipment and the stock in trade of bankrupt businesses) accounted for some 60% of the items he auctioned, land and buildings the rest. The properties were mostly residential villas and cottages, the occasional inn, and, in one instance, a windmill (at Denmead). The land was usually small plots, often for building purposes, sometime whole farms, but rarely sizeable estates. When, for example, the Leigh Park estate came up for auction in 1860 and 1875 it was handled by the big London firm of Fairbrother & Lye. The only exceptions were in 1852, when he handled the sale of the 100 acre Blendworth House estate, and in 1863 when he was entrusted with the disposal of the 450 acre Ashton estate in Bishops Waltham. (In 1839 his brother had compiled the Bishops Waltham tithe map, so perhaps the Lewises had some special connection with the town).

One final field in which he was engaged was as an Enclosure Commissioner. He was responsible for overseeing the enclosure of three small areas on Hayling Island: Stoke Common (1867) North Hayling (1870 and Verner Common (1876), and was also the surveyor for another enclosure at North Hayling in 1840 with Charles Osborn as the Commissioner. It is worth noting however, that he was not appointed to handle the enclosure of the remaining common lands in Havant in 1864. This was done by Richard Pink of Hambledon. However this is probably because by far the largest area to be enclosed was Havant Thicket with its sizeable acreage of woodland, and to assess its value the expertise of a qualified timber surveyor would be required. Pink was such a surveyor; Charles was not. Charles continued working until his death in 1885. True, from 1866 the firm had been known as Lewis & Son, when his son Anthony entered the business at the age of 21, but we know that he continued to be an active partner almost until the end because as late as January 1885 he was the auctioneer appointed by the High Court to sell off a property in East Street, Havant, as part of a legal settlement. And when he did finally pass away, on August 18th the *Hampshire Telegraph* stated that "*although he was slightly indisposed for some little time his death was rather unexpected*".

He died at the house in West Street where he had lived for over forty years and which, since 1866, had been known as Horwood House. It stood on the south-east corner of the junction with Brockhampton Road, but was demolished and replaced by a block of flats called Enderleigh House in the 1960s.

He and his wife Martha (who died in 1872) had, in all, twelve children, no

fewer than ten of whom were daughters. Their eldest son, Charles, emigrated to Canada and died of typhoid fever in Luther, Ontario, in 1881, aged just 55. Their second son Anthony, as mentioned above, joined his father's business in 1866 and took it over completely in 1885. He became another well known and popular Havant citizen who involved himself in just about every local activity from the Rifle Volunteers and Ancient Order of Druids to the Cricket and Athletics Clubs. Like his brother, however, he died prematurely, being killed in a shooting accident in the garden of his house in West Street (where Boots is now) in 1893 aged 48.

Although he had married in 1882 his bride had been a 51 year old widow (who pre-deceased him by just over a year) so there were no children, and with his death the firm of Lewis & Son came to an end.

Of the ten daughters only two married, although they all survived beyond middle age. (The only one whose date of death I have been unable to trace is the second daughter, Mary, but she was certainly recorded on the 1871 census as a 33-year-old spinster living at Horwood House. What becomes of her after this, however, is unclear. Kate, the sixth daughter, married William Colley, a draper from Streatham, and she moved with him to London, while the seventh daughter, Sarah, married Alfred Stent (of the prominent local parchment-making family) and remained in Havant to raise several children. Of these the eldest, Alfred Lewis Stent, is certainly the best known, and there is an article about him in Vol.5 of *The Making of Havant*, 1982.

Four of the unmarried sisters – Martha, Elizabeth, Dora and Laura – became needlewomen who, in around 1875 went into business making and selling what was variously described as "fancy needlework" or "art embroidery" firstly in Portsmouth then (after c.1892) in Lewisham in south-east London. At this stage, however, Laura decided to return to Havant where the other sisters – Fanny, Bertha and Emma – seem to have remained all their lives, existing on private incomes and participating in the affairs of the Congregational Church. At least one of the sisters was always resident at Horwood House and the last surviving one, Laura, finally passed away there in 1932.

Charles and his wife together with Martha, Fanny, Emma and Laura, are buried in the Nonconformist area of New Lane cemetery. This has recently been cleared of vegetation and their graves in the far north-east corner are once more visible, although Charles's headstone remains recumbent, the inscription hidden. A rather unfortunate fate for the resting place of one of Havant's leading citizens in the Victorian era.

Appendix

John Theophilus Lewis, the eldest child of John and Barthias, was, like Charles, born in the Kingston district of Portsmouth, less than three months after his parents' marriage at St Mary's Portsea in June 1795. The earliest reference to him that I can find is in 1822, when his name appears among a long list of subscribers to Nathaniel Lipscombe Kentish's ambitious scheme for:

A map of Hampshire to be made upon an entirely new principle, quite original, upon a larger scale than any map of the same extent ever before published, accompanied by a complete topographical description of the county compiled from the best and latest Authorities.

Advertisement *Hampshire Telegraph* 18 November 1822

Despite the backing of people as eminent as Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of York the project was soon abandoned, but a map of the area around Winchester that Kentish had surveyed was reproduced by lithography and published in 1823. Although the lithographer's name does not appear on the map John must surely have been the man responsible, given that he was the only lithographic printer in the whole of Hampshire at that time.

In 1835 he moved from Winchester, where he had been residing for at least ten years to set up a lithographic printing business in Chichester but he also continued with surveying work. In 1838 he undertook the mapping of the Duke of Bedford's estates in Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire (he must, presumably, have had some connection with the 6th Duke, who died in 1839 because he had also produced the 5 inches to the mile map of the Woburn area in 1831) while in 1839 he compiled the tithe maps for both Selsey and Bishops Waltham.

In 1840 John Theophilus Lewis moved to Southampton where he went into partnership with one James Walker, his pupil, and the advertisement placed in the *Hampshire Telegraph* announcing this fact informs us that he was the son of another James Walker, a solicitor of East Street, Havant.

Lewis & Walker were responsible for the tithe maps for Upper Clatford and Alverstoke (both 1840) and Shanklin (1842). According to Southampton trade directories for the early 1840s they were also timber surveyors, and there are a few advertisements in the local press for John acting as an estate agent and auctioneer. He also issued, in 1843 a map of Southampton, fully coloured, at a scale of 20 inches to the mile. That

same year his wife Elizabeth (née Lucas) died, and by 1845 he had left Southampton. What becomes of him for the next few years I have been unable to discover. (James Walker also vanishes without trace.) On the 1851 census he is recorded at an address in the Bitterne area of Southampton but unfortunately is listed only as a "visitor". However in 1854 his death is recorded in Poplar, in the East End of London. He was only 59, and may well have been a victim of the cholera epidemic that was then sweeping the capital. But why might he have been in Poplar? Intriguingly, his profession on the 1851 census is given not as surveyor or lithographer but civil engineer, and if he was still in that line of business three years later he could well have been engaged in the construction of the nearby Royal Victoria Docks, completed in 1855.

One gets the impression of a multi-talented but restless man who – unlike his brother – could never settle in any one place or pursue any one interest for very long.

John Lewis (Snr)
d. 1810

John = Barthias Crasswell = Anthony Crasswell
Née Rogers

Anthony
(1785-1844)

6 Daughters

John Theophilus
(1795-1854)

Elizabeth
(1797-?)

Barthias
(1799-1878)

Charles = Martha Horwood Taylor
(1801-85) (1811-72)

Charles
(1836-81)
m. Elizabeth

Mary
(1838-1891?)

Fanny
(1841-1922)

Anthony
(1845-93)
m. Jane Pyke

Sarah
(1849-1936)
m. Alfred Stent

Dora
(1854-1920)

Martha
(1837-1922)

Bertha
(1840-1920)

Elizabeth
(1842-1920)

Kate
(1847-1919)
m. William Colley

Emma
(1851-1920)

Laura
(1856-1932)

Heritage Booklets

- 1 A Brief History of Havant
- 2 A Brief History of Stockheath
- 3 A Brief History of the Railway in Havant and 'The Battle of Havant'.
- 4 The Arrival of the Railway in Emsworth
- 5 A Collection of Articles on Hayling
- 6 A Timeline of the Borough of Havant
- 7 Bedhampton War Memorial
- 8 Belmont Park
- 9 Charles Lewis, Surveyor and Auctioneer in Nineteenth Century Havant
- 10 Edgar Borrow
- 11 Havant Congregationalists in the Edwardian Era 1901–1914
- 12 Havant Dissenters' Cemetery
- 13 Havant Memorial Cross
- 14 Havant United Reformed Church
- 15 Havant War Memorial Hospital and the Royal Doulton Nursery
Rhyme Tiles
- 16 Hayling Brick Industry
- 17 History of Leigh Park and the Hamlet of Leigh
- 18 HMS Havant
- 19 Leigh Park Farms
- 20 Malting and Brewing in Havant
- 21 Memories of Hayling
- 22 The Great War of 1914 to 1918
- 23 The Havant Bonfire Boys
- 24 The Havant Cemeteries at New lane and Eastern Road
- 25 The Hayling Bridge and Wadeway
- 26 The Hayling Island Branch Line
- 27 The Inns and Public Houses of Durrants, Redhill, Rowlands Castle,
Finchdean, Forestside and Stansted
- 28 The Inns of Bedhampton
- 29 Havant's Inns, Posting Houses and Public Houses
- 30 The Public Houses and Inns of Waterlooville, Cowplain, Lovedean,
Purbrook and Widley
- 31 The Rookery and Somerstown
- 32 The Spring Arts and Heritage Centre
- 33 Wartime Memories of Havant

Copies may be obtained at:

The Spring Arts and Heritage Centre, East Street, HAVANT, PO9 1BS
023 9247 2700

Some can also be viewed on line at:

www.thespring.co.uk/museum/heritage-booklets/