
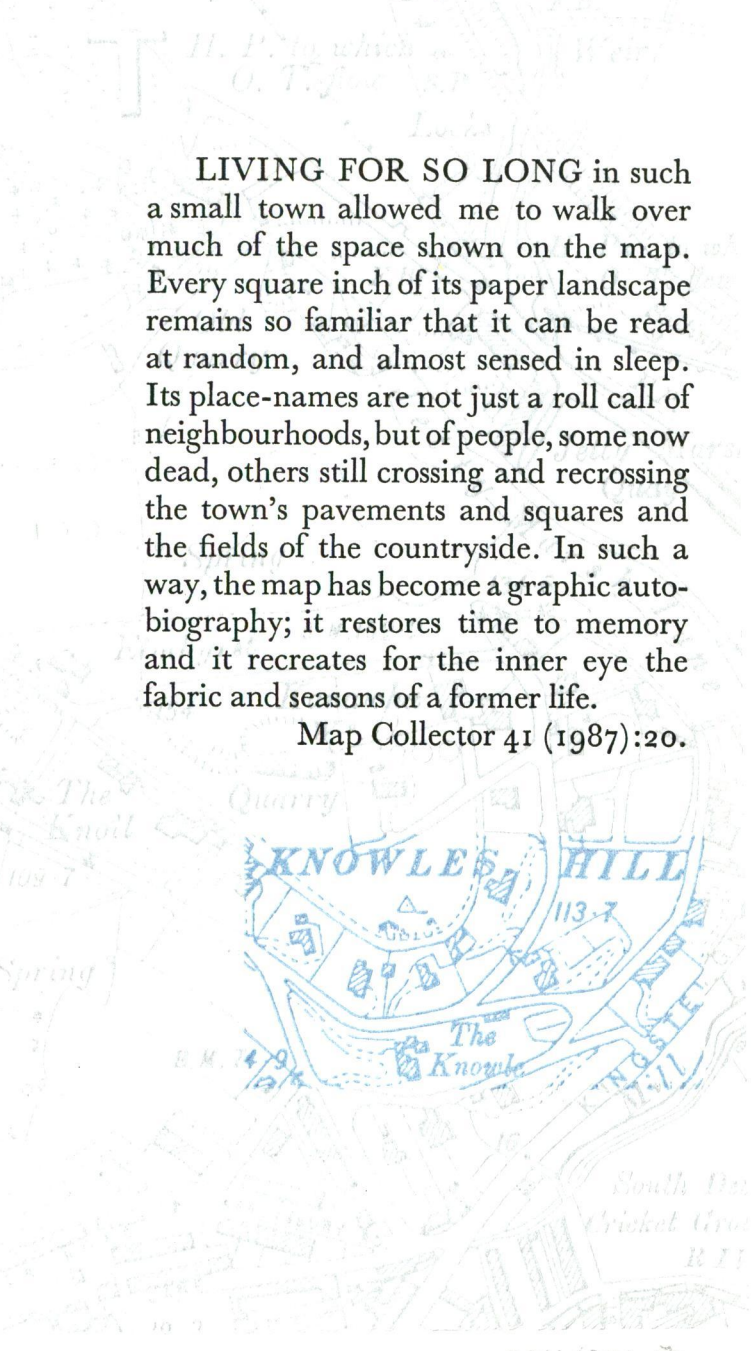


# MY FAVOURITE MAP & J. Brian Harley



THEN, finally, there is the personal biography that lies hidden in the map. Sheet CIX, SE triggers for its present owner the memory of events lived in that place. Personal experiences and cumulative associations give to its austere lines and measured alphabets yet another set of unique meanings. Even its white spaces are crowded with thoughts as I whimsically reflect on its silences. Hung in a room of novels, poetry and music, the map ceases to be solely a document of social relevance or the utilitarian product of government policy: it is there to be read as a personal history, an affirmation that I still belong. To touch these English roots through my map, I have no need of recourse to characteristic sheets, to mathematical grids and graticules or representative fractions, nor do I require an opisometer to repace the pathway across the hill. Sheet CIX, SE is now transformed into a subjective symbol of place, scanned without the artifice of geometry, measured by eye without questioning its accuracy, and understood without awareness of its technical pedigree. The map is interpreted through the private code of memory.



LIVING FOR SO LONG in such a small town allowed me to walk over much of the space shown on the map. Every square inch of its paper landscape remains so familiar that it can be read at random, and almost sensed in sleep. Its place-names are not just a roll call of neighbourhoods, but of people, some now dead, others still crossing and recrossing the town's pavements and squares and the fields of the countryside. In such a way, the map has become a graphic autobiography; it restores time to memory and it recreates for the inner eye the fabric and seasons of a former life.

Map Collector 41 (1987):20.