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“Kerry musing”

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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.

## ***Kerry musing***

***David Archer***

Between 1986 and 2008, we issued 54 catalogues of Ordnance Survey maps, and whilst taking calls for the first catalogue I offered to record any sold or not listed item as a 'want', and would let people know when a copy was available. Wants lists worked very well both for us and for our customers, but they did involve more work and keeping quite detailed records. By the third catalogue we realised that if we were to make a success of our business, a telephone call should result in a sale rather than a recorded 'want'. At which point we decided to buy everything that came our way, and wherever possible, to stock the full range of Ordnance Survey maps, no matter how unlikely they might be to sell. Every customer had different requirements, early or late states of a sheet, this or that cover, top quality or a cheap scruffy map. We therefore needed lots of maps in order to offer a wide choice and intentionally built a stock that included a large number of duplicates. If someone wanted a particular sheet in a certain cover and condition, or around a particular date and we did not have it, we could hopefully offer a close alternative, which was usually taken.

Having such a large stock had its disadvantages, as we were easily distracted by a customer's search for something, or our own self-inflicted distractions, any of which could take a lot of time, albeit enjoyable time. If a customer wanted a map to show a given feature at a certain date, we could usually pull out both the required state and the one before, showing the feature absent. We had good fun following a trail, and frequently sold both maps. For my own interests, this often resulted in partial research on a topic, which was interrupted by a second diversion, leaving the first unfinished. A butterfly mind indeed.

I can remember looking at the *Snowdon District* relief style map, 1925 (6038, published 1938), where, in square C7, sitting off-shore, the words 'Road Tunnel' are in a wonderful bright orangy-red italic lettering which always catches the eye. So unlike any other colour used by the OS and totally distracting from the subtle colours used for the rest of the map. It should never have been allowed and is fantastic. Scanning the north coast of Wales the eye always stops at these two words, 'Road Tunnel', and is then attracted by the red roads of the same colour, which pulsate, giving a 3D effect and look as if they have been neatly added by hand. An armchair hill walker gets nowhere other than following the road from Conway (Conwy) to Bettws-y-Coed, and is immediately distracted by the roads going west from Capel Curig with no consideration for the superb depiction of the mountains hereabouts. However, this seems only to work in the context of the relief style, as what appears to be the same colour is used on my copy of Fifth Relief Sheet 131, *Salisbury and Winchester* (5038, published 1938) where the red roads are far too prominent and look like a child's scribbling with a thin lipstick, distracting the eye from any other feature. But the level crossings and station symbol in-fills are spot on and give the same pleasure as the bright reds in the *Dandy* and *Beano* of old.

The *Snowdon District* set me off on yet another diversion from earning a

living. What other maps used this unusual red I wondered? And for no particular reason, I began by going through the quarter-inch Third Edition maps, starting with England and Wales Sheet 3, 1921, where I noticed that the road between Sedbury Hall (Scotch Corner) and Gilmonby on most printings had been coloured red, by hand. Well executed, but not too difficult to spot as the colour is not quite right. Ploughing through more copies of sheet 3, on the later 6000/29 printing, the road from Scotch Corner was now *printed* red with a road number, but two new red roads, the A1085 and A1042 at Redcar stood out as they both lacked black road casings.<sup>1</sup> Thus, I was immediately diverted from shades of road colours to shall we say 'problems' with road colouring and numbering, and having been alerted, I began searching for more examples on quarter-inch maps, which came readily enough. On England and Wales Sheet 6A, 7500/30, I was undecided whether the road going south east from Barrow upon Humber in square B10 to Brocklesby was hand coloured, but a red road number was lacking. Square B10 also produced a red 'A1204' at Bonby, square C9 a red 'B1400' at Cleatham and a red 'B1207' at Sturton, all placed beside uncoloured roads. Oh, the time I wasted on this. Wasted?

So, after two sheets, I had red roads lacking black casings; a hand coloured red road, with another possible hand coloured road lacking a number; plus red road numbers lacking road colouring. Interesting, I thought.

Turning to sheet 1, which in all its printings was common to both the England and Wales and Scotland sets, new sightings appeared along familiar lines. At the top of the 2000/33 printing, north of Duns, is a red 'A6112', alongside an uncoloured road, whilst the same road from Coldstream north to Swinton has been treated similarly. Again, on the first state of this printing, to the east of Dalbeattie the A745 and quite a long stretch of the A710 are shown uncoloured with red road numbers. But even if the red road numbers are all over the map, they are lacking from the legend, just a black 'or' is shown, rather than 'A71 or B730' above a red road. And to muddy waters further, the earlier 5800/30 *did* have red road numbers in the legend. Two copies of a second state of the 2000/33 printing then appeared, both with slightly smudged hand coloured roads around Duns, Coldstream and Dalbeattie, but the corrected legend appears not to have been done by hand. Even more interesting.

Knowing what I was looking for, other Scottish examples appeared thick and fast. On Scotland Sheets 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 I found examples of red road numbers beside uncoloured roads. As originally issued sheet 2, 2000/32, has Arran without any red, but a later state of 2000/32 has red roads and road numbers hand coloured; whilst both states have a red road number and arrow pointing to an uncoloured road west of Campbeltown, indicating only a partial correction of the first state. I did not find any altered copies of sheets 4, 5, 6 or 7 and told Chris Board of my findings in late 1997. Whilst looking for something else, Chris found a file at the Public Record Office, as was, that noted Scotland Sheets 1, 2 and 3

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<sup>1</sup> The Danby Wiske station symbol, open 1884 to 1958, was now uncoloured, but I ignored this new distraction.

were to be corrected, or whatever the term used, by hand, 50 copies of each to be done, with sheet 1 already finished. Scotland Sheets 4, 5, 6 and 7 were to be reprinted.<sup>2</sup> Alas, neither of us followed this up.

It was certainly a wise decision to reprint, rather than correct sheet 4, as Colonsay has two red road numbers placed across the road casings and could not have been corrected by hand. Expediency also reigned during the hand colouring exercises, as a quick bit of road revision was undertaken on sheet 1, where a slightly smudged red road lacking a number was added going north from Kirkoswold to Craglin, in square J6, whilst to the west of Nether Howecleuch in square D2, a quite noticeable road re-alignment was added to the existing road, making for a very confusing road layout. A mini Spaghetti Junction.

Fast forward from the early to the late nineteen thirties and another occasion where such shenanigans went on. If you are able to, open a copy of the one-inch *Southampton District* map of 1928, and look at square E7. If the road running east-west from Portswood to Bitterne is red, it is hand coloured over the original orange. Very well executed, with a slight colour difference. If your copy has the original orange road, lucky you.

That the OS decided on manual corrections to *Southampton District* and only fifty copies each of the three quarter-inch sheets might show how few were sold, or could be corrected easily, ruling out a reprint. But why were Scotland Sheets 5, 6 and 7 reprinted, especially when sheet 7 could have easily been corrected by hand? Hand colouring was all done on the quiet, with no acknowledgement, whereas the OS could have taken the lead from a producer of Melton Mowbray pork pies and have advertised the maps as being a superior hand-finished product.<sup>3</sup>

As I say, all this was about twenty years ago, and today, I only have a handful of quarter-inch maps and minimal notes, so would find it difficult to continue my investigations, which were quickly superseded by some other three-day wonder, and I am left wondering whether the OS did in fact hand colour 50 copies of Scotland Sheet 3, what were the problems thus corrected, and what might one find elsewhere with a bit of study? Please let me know.

Alas, I am now in the same position as a lot of our members who have spotted something that needs investigation: where does one get easy access to multiple copies of the same sheet? It used to be easy for me, as we stocked ten, twelve or maybe fifteen copies of some sheets, but would now find it too complicated to track down five copies of the same map. Perhaps the answer lies in crowd research amongst our members. If I set out what my study entails and

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<sup>2</sup> This piece is based on the following states of each sheet: Scotland Sheet 1 2000/33, Sheet 2 2000/32, Sheet 4 2500/33, Sheet 5 2450/34, Sheet 6 2000/33, Sheet 7 2000/33. I have no copy of sheet 3. I understand from Roger Hellyer that all are final printings of each sheet. Does anyone have sheets 4, 5, 6 and 7 with these print codes or later, and roads coloured as required, or lacking road numbers, e.g. Sheet 4 square F4, Sheet 5 D9, Sheet 6 A2 and Sheet 7 D10?

<sup>3</sup> Has any member evidence of other colours having been applied to standard series maps by hand?

what information I want, perhaps details could appear in *Sheetlines*, on the society website or *ordnancemaps*, and members could notify anything they found. On-going research, which anyone can add to, a bit like the half-inch meeting that Guy Messenger organised at Uppingham all those years ago. An even better whizz than having members spend hours inspecting maps for very small differences, would be if we could get access to something members saw on a visit to the Ministry of Defence at Hermitage in 1997. We were shown a piece of kit, as the military call anything from a tank to a teaspoon, which superimposed a satellite image on a map of the same area and checked for any differences. If this could be done for two supposedly identical maps, an awful lot of discoveries would be made without all the eye strain.

In a way the OS were lucky, as it would have been far harder to *remove* detail by hand if a reprint was ruled out. On England and Wales half-inch Sheet 38, *Southampton*, 1906 we find a label: *The road from CHALE along the coast to FRESHWATER is not now in good repair and should not be coloured as 2nd class.* They could of course have scratched out the colour, but five inches of orange colouring on an exceedingly thin road?<sup>4</sup> No. And if they had removed the road colour now and again, nothing would look as strange as the 'A' printing of the *Cairngorms* tourist map of 1964 with bright red road numbers beside white roads. Yes, all roads are not only uncoloured, but are a *cold white*, whereas on the early quarter-inch maps the soft relief colours show. Perhaps the OS wanted to avoid a repeat of *Snowdon District*, where the red roads really do look to have been hand coloured, and were a distraction from the spectacular scenery shown.

Which is where I started.

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*David Andrews spotted this in the July 1968 edition of Readers' Digest*

WHEN the Queen opened the Ordnance Survey's new building at Southampton, the military Director General's aide-de-camp was in full dress uniform. The Queen was ushered into a lift to take her, the Director General, and some of his staff up to the conference room.

To everyone's horror, the lift refused to work. A technician was about to be sent for when the Queen spotted the problem: "If your aide would take one pace forward, General, his spurs would stop holding the doors open."

—John Wright, Chichester, West Sussex

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<sup>4</sup> As was done for the unwelcome letters R.A.F. on Leuchars airfield on early printings of Scottish Popular Sheet 64, *Dundee and St. Andrews* leaving a distinct scuffed area. Enlarge square 12E of <http://maps.nls.uk/view/74400681> and look between Aero of Aerodrome and the green wood.