“The five-foot Town Surveys in Lancashire”

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The five-foot Town Surveys in Lancashire
Rob Wheeler

The recent appearance of the 1:1056 (five-feet-to-the-mile) town scales for England on the NLS website makes it opportune to examine this series. It becomes apparent that its history is more complicated than has hitherto been presented. This paper sets out to describe the changes to the maps that took place in the first few years and to see how this fits in with the high-level policy decisions. It goes on to draw out some implications for the quality of the detail on the contemporary six-inch.

The Sequence of a 1:1056 Survey

1. Operations will have started with a chain survey. This will have been integrated with the six-inch survey of the surrounding area, but for presentation at 1:1056 it will have been necessary to fix far more points, so the party conducting the chain survey must have been made aware of the exact area to be presented at the larger scale.

2. The triangles will have been plotted at 1:1056. Once it had been demonstrated that closure errors were acceptable, another copy will have been made of each sheet showing the buildings, fences, streams, and other such features - an outline plan.

3. A tracing of this plan will have been sent to the Field Examiner. His job was to check it for errors, to add details of land utilisation, and to determine and position names. The resulting Field Examination Trace was in effect a draft of that part of the finished map.¹

4. Details from the Field Examination Trace were then added to the existing plan that had been traced: (a) the outline was gone over in ink; (b) colour and ornament were added; (c) the names were written in.

5. A reduction was made to 1:10,560 with appropriate generalisation - for example, the width of streets often needed to be exaggerated at the smaller scale. Likewise the names would be thinned out and simplified. It was possible for the first of these stages to take place as soon as 4(a) was complete.²

6. The sheet was signed off by the Divisional Officer as ‘fit for publication’. How this was understood prior to December 1846, when authority for engraving was given, is an interesting point: was it assumed that the sheets would be engraved sooner or later; or was the map being certified as fit to go into a manuscript map library as a ‘good’ depiction of the town in question? This stage could come before or after (5).

7. When, at last, there was a prospect of the plans being engraved, it often happened that some form of revision took place. The changes were incorporated on the fair copy, and this was signed off again. Such supplementary revision was not normal practice within the Survey but was perhaps allowed for this series because it was so easy for a surveyor to be sent to check on the progress of building work of which he may already have been aware. Evidence of this supplementary revision can be seen in various places where the published

¹ WA Seymour (ed), A History of the Ordnance Survey, 1980, 169-171 - which admittedly describes a slightly later period, but is summarised, along with (4) in the key to the progress diagrams at TNA OS/3/412. I am most grateful to Richard Oliver for additional information on these diagrams beyond that contained in The Ordnance Survey in the nineteenth century [henceforth OSC19], 2014, p187, fn130.
² This is apparent by comparing the 5-foot and the 6-inch progress diagrams.
1:1056 shows a later state of development than the reduction to the six-inch scale. The ‘date of survey’ stated on the maps relates to (7) where this stage took place, otherwise to (6). A date like ‘1844-46’ on Clitheroe Sheet 2 probably indicates that the sheet was first signed off in 1844; part was then revised and the 1846 sign-off date applies to this part.

8. Eventually the sheets for a town were ready to be published. Almost the final stage in engraving the plates will have been the insertion of a publication date.

For any sheet we thus have a ‘survey date’ and a publication date. We also know from a set of progress diagrams how advanced the drawing of each sheet was in April 1845. Those diagrams indicate that all sheets of all Lancashire towns had reached stage (2) at the very least. The build-up of activity in England following the completion of work in Ireland took place predominantly in the financial year 1841-2, so the initial chain survey is likely to have taken place some time between 1842 and 1844. There is, however, a poor correlation between how advanced a town was in 1845 and its ‘survey date’; there is an even poorer correlation with its publication date. The delays between the different stages listed above varied greatly from town to town.

During the early years of the 1:1056 plans, conventions and drawing practices were subject to change. One finds (with one exception addressed later) that practice is fairly uniform across a town. There appears also to be a steady development that can only be regarded as change with time. Effectively this gives us a handle on (4): not a date as such, but at least a position within a sequence.

**The evolution of style and content**

It is instructive to start with Lancaster, which bears a survey date of 1845, earlier than any other large town. (A case can be made that Haslingden was earlier, but small towns provide less certain evidence.)

The survey extends out as far as the municipal boundary but generally no further. The exceptions are, first, that where a group of houses or some such feature stands just outside the boundary it may be included. Secondly, where the Parliamentary boundary diverges from the municipal boundary, embracing a larger area, sheets which were needed anyway could be surveyed up to the neatline within the Parliamentary area. These exceptions apply to quite a few towns and are to be understood when the expression ‘to the municipal boundary’ is used. That (municipal) boundary lacks mereings - “4ft RH” and suchlike. The Irish maps never had mereings, and the early Lancs six-inch sheets lack them.

The view seems to have been taken that gates, being moveable objects, ought not to be shown. Indeed the Haslingden sheets do just leave a gap between gate piers. At Lancaster, the gaps are annotated ‘Gate’. The other annotation (or should one term it a descriptive name?) is ‘Grate’, applied to every sewer grate (ie drain) in the streets. In consequence the sheets are quite densely populated with ‘Grate’ and ‘Gate’ in tiny lettering. This was perhaps more appropriate to a map that was intended to remain in MS than to one that was to be engraved. ‘Lamp’ and ‘Lamp Post’ also appear, the former being for lamps projecting from

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3 There might be a case for putting the latter date too in inverted commas. Instances are known where Old Series sheets only appeared on sale the year following the declared publication date.

4 Except Bacup - unless this is just a careless omission.

5 OSC19, Appendix 1(A).
buildings. Lamp Posts are rare: apart from round the stations (of which more later) there seem to be just two in very prominent positions. I suspect that the surveyor was uninterested in lamp posts generally, and the two that are recorded without abbreviation were ornate multi-armed specimens lighting important public spaces. If any historian of the town reads this, I should appreciate their thoughts.

The Lamp Posts (mere L.P.s) around Green Ayre station are instructive. When the maps were signed off in 1845, this railway was absent. The presence of a rail link to the Castle station shows that this part of the plan cannot be earlier than 1849. On Sheet 5, it appears that the whole area north and west of Cable Street has been redrawn. Figure 1 shows the area with red highlighting for descriptive names which appear only on the original part: Grate, and Gate with just a gap. Highlighted in green are Gate with a line or a crossed band; these are not used on the original work. In amber are L.P. and L.; these are uncommon on the original work but widely employed in the new work.

Figure 1. Lancaster Sheet 5 showing the change of drawing styles across Cable Street.

The other railways also seem to have benefited from later revision, possibly more than once. This is most apparent on the Lancaster & Carlisle line which is described as ‘London & North Western Railway’; this company only leased the Lancaster & Carlisle from 1859.

The treatment of railway tracks under roofs is often quoted as an aspect where the town scales show variability. The fact that the depiction of railway property may be of a different date from the rest of the map makes it difficult to analyse this characteristic. That said, the five-foot plans seem fairly consistent in showing tracks in passenger stations, though whether the rails are drawn as solid or broken lines does vary. Tracks in goods sheds or
engine sheds may or may not be shown. The cynical might wonder whether it depended primarily on whether the surveyor was in a hurry and whether the shed door was open!

The other characteristic of these plans often remarked on is the depiction of the interior of public buildings. Not only does one see the internal arrangement of rooms, but also fixed furniture, like seating. Nor is the detail restricted to ground level: in churches, the outline of galleries is often shown by a broken line; likewise vaulting or prominent ceiling beams. Indeed one even encounters cases where the plaster rose at the centre of a ceiling is shown. Whether this represents the quirk of particular surveyors, or whether it changes with time, is almost impossible to analyse without an independent description of the buildings in question so that one can see omissions as well as inclusions.

Turning from Lancaster to Manchester (signed off 1848) we find a different style of map. All sheets are filled to the neatline. Coverage corresponds broadly to the municipalities of Manchester and Salford but extremities of these with scarcely any settlement are excluded, whilst a couple of sheets cover areas wholly outside the two boroughs. Administrative boundaries are mered. Gates are shown by a crossed band symbol - something like an elastic band wound round the gate piers and crossed in the middle. The standard features of street furniture are abbreviated to letters, along with F(ire) P(lug) and S(top) C(ock). S(ewer) G(rate)s are only found in yards on the outskirts. There can be little doubt that the principal streets of this great town did have modern arrangements for taking away surface water; the surveyor simply appears to have been uninterested in them.

We can base a simple typology of these maps on the treatment of administrative boundaries:
1. Unmered.
2. Helpful Hints.
3. Lacks only the ‘change of mereing’ symbol
4. Fully mered.

‘Helpful Hints’ indicates the practice of explaining what a boundary does when it disappears under an embankment, for example, by annotating the section ‘Drain’ or ‘Culvert’, say, or ‘Defaced’ (Figure 2, left. Preston Sheet 3. The culvert under the Deepdale Road seems to be marked as such because the municipal boundary follows it - whether centre or side is unclear. Certainly the surveyor normally shows less interest in culverts. The boundary running down the road is a ward boundary.). In between there will be sections where the mereing is deemed clear enough not to need spelling out. The typology can be broken down further as:
1a. Like Lancaster: descriptive names generally given in full.
1b. Gate symbol appears: a crossed band, a single line, or both. L and LP appear extensively.
2a, 3a, 4a. ‘Grate’ remains.
2b, 3b, 4b. Grate abbreviated, usually to SG but Warrington uses G as do most Yorkshire
towns.

Of twenty-four Lancashire towns, five cannot be classified by this method, generally because they do not have any usable administrative boundaries. Of those that can be classified, those up to 2a stop at a boundary - which in the case of non-corporate towns may simply be an arbitrary line - whilst those from 2b onwards are filled to neatlines. This is quite a striking result: it means one can deduce from the appearance of a sheet at the centre of the town where the mapping will stop on sheets at the periphery.

It is also instructive to look at the fifteen towns which had been completely drawn by April 1845 or which only lacked the writing in of the names. We have to exclude Oldham because NLS lacks the initial ‘edition’ and two small towns (Fleetwood and Clitheroe) whose style is ambiguous. Of the remaining twelve, eleven were intended to have detail stopping at a boundary (Manchester being the exception). Six were indeed published in that form. The other five had originally been intended to stop at a boundary but were extended to neatlines and (as the previous paragraph makes clear) had a later style of drawing. It would appear that, in order to ensure unity of style between the new work and the old, the first lot of fair drawings was scrapped and the towns in question were completely redrawn. Such extravagance must have had a cause, and that leads on to the next section.

**High-level policy**

By April 1845, more than three hundred sheets at 1:1056 were complete or in course of preparation, as opposed to one hundred and eighteen sheets at six inches to the mile; and the disparity must have been apparent for at least the previous year. Superficially, it might appear that three quarters of the Survey’s effort had been devoted to a product which had not received Treasury authorisation. That exaggerates the problem, because there was much more work in a six-inch sheet. Nevertheless, it is worth asking how this came about.

Seymour’s account gives the impression that sanitary reform was the great driver. It is based on observations in the First Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the State of Large Towns, made in 1844; and on the fact that that the ‘survey dates’ of the five-foot plans start in 1845 (with just a couple in 1844). But we know now that the work on these plans was under way much earlier.

Military officers - even Engineers - tended to be motivated more strongly by military matters than by sanitation. We need to remember that the horrors of the French Revolution were still to the forefront of people’s minds, the risks being emphasized by a further round of popular revolutions in 1830. Closer to home, the attack on Newport (Monmouth) by some ten thousand Chartists in 1839 had been widely regarded as an attempt at insurrection. Defence against such threats benefited from maps, and the six-inch scale was inadequate in towns. Were these fair-copy five-foot plans seen by the Board of Ordnance as the modern equivalent of the Great Map in the Tower that had been a product of the original Kent

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6 Liverpool has been excluded because of the large amount of railway revision. Oldham and Stockport are excluded because NLS only has later ‘editions’ of these.
7 A small group of towns have circular boundaries: it is a moot point whether these should be mered ‘Und’ or not.
8 Accrington, Burnley, Colne, Rochdale, Todmorden.
9 Seymour (ed), p113.
survey? It might be pertinent that the municipal boundary represented the limits of the authority of a town’s magistrates, so there was logic in extending mapping thus far and no further. Or it may simply be that Irish practice had been continued without much thought as to whether the rules needed to be changed in the new circumstances. Colby’s style of leadership was not such as to encourage his subordinates to question the appropriateness of their orders. Perhaps he had simply taken his eye off the ball, so to speak, until it became all too apparent that the tail was wagging the dog.

The first sign of this being addressed came in April 1843, when the Ordnance asked Colby if he was having Manchester surveyed at an ‘enlarged scale’; Colby replied that this was being done with a view to six-inch publication. He further explained in June 1843 that this was because the six-inch was too small a scale in urban areas to allow field examination. These exchanges were taken by Colby as implicit authority for the towns scale. It is remarkably convenient that the question concerned Manchester, where the central area was so very congested that there could be no doubt about the need for surveyors to work at a larger scale. Indeed one wonders if the question had been planted by Colby.

As for sanitary applications, a number of towns started to ask for tracings of their plans, and Colby seems to have been deliberately unhelpful. Perhaps he was hoping that the accumulated demands would bolster his argument that the plans should be engraved. What does not seem to have happened was any change that would make the plans more useful for sanitary engineering.

In this context it may be worth describing the work of the engineer George Giles in designing a sewerage system for Lincoln. Giles used as his base map JS Padley’s twenty-inch plan of Lincoln (1:3168) which he enlarged to 1:1584 for his design work, although he presented his proposals at the twenty-inch scale. His plan was contoured at a twenty foot interval and frequent spot heights will have been taken along the streets. The spot heights were essential in determining the depth of sewers: deep enough to drain the adjoining properties but not so deep as to occasion unnecessary expense, while maintaining a steady gradient. The contours provided a general picture of the relief. Had they been drawn in the over-detailed manner prompted by the General Police & Improvement (Scotland) Act of 1862 they would have been much less useful. In addition, Giles used larger-scale plans of two selected areas, but for propaganda rather than design, as a way of showing the density of ‘nuisances’ - privies, dust holes and pig-sties - on ground ill-suited for them. When Lincoln’s sewers came to be constructed some decades later, large-scale plans - in due course the OS 1:500 - were found useful as a means of recording the private sewers connected to the Corporation system. Giles described the existing sewerage of the city but had no interest in mapping it: it was all to be superseded and much of it - ditches discharging into stagnant pools in the fields immediately outside the built-up area, for example - was not really amenable to the OS style of mapping.

If one asks what sort of OS map would have met Giles’ needs, it is apparent that the early 1:528 plans stand out as tailor-made for such a task. Not only were they well-supplied

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10 DR Mills, Effluence and Influence, 2015.
11 The plans of Selkirk on the NLS website show contouring within the built-up area that is completely unreadable.
with spot heights along the streets but for every house the level of the lowest floor is given, so that the sewers could be capable of draining every cellar. These plans also give the functions of outbuildings - stables, cow-houses, piggeries and privies being important from a sanitary perspective. That said, the 1:1056 plans were well-suited to act as a base map, so the move to have them engraved was entirely sound. None of the ‘street-furniture’ features will have been particularly useful to a sanitary engineer. So why do we have such an assembly of ‘Grates’ on early plans like Lancaster’s? It may be that the surveyor found their corners useful as precisely-defined points to which any subsequent survey work could be tied: a 19th-century equivalent of the ‘Revision Point’ of post-WW2 surveying.

Post-publication revision

Before proceeding to a comparison of detail between five-foot and six-inch scales, we need to be sure we are comparing like with like, especially as most of this work has been done using late printings. So we need to understand what changes were made to these sheets after they were first engraved. The most important of these is that up to about 1867 new railways were added to both scales, along with any changes to adjoining detail; and there is normally no indication of this in the marginalia. It might be expected that this revision would be mapped at the 1:1056 scale within areas where this was the scale of survey and that this revision would in due course find its way to the published maps. This does seem to be the case, with a couple of small exceptions which might be explained by the reviser not realising he had moved into a 1:1056 area. To guard against this type of change, the user needs to be aware of the dates of the local railways; comparison against an early state of the six-inch is another way of checking.

A second cause of revision was presented by the great monuments to civic pride which some towns erected. At Lancaster, sheet 19 was revised to show Ripley’s Hospital, a very grand orphanage opened in 1864. In Yorkshire, the town halls at Halifax (1860) and Leeds (1858) were added, but Manchester Town Hall (1868-77) never appeared; probably the completion date was too late. Revision of this nature sometimes spread well beyond the building that stimulated it. At Halifax, construction of the town hall had involved the creation of two new streets; the revisions encompassed a whole block around the town hall, another block where the markets had been rebuilt, and a third block around the railway station. At Leeds, a couple of new buildings facing the town hall were added.

The third category is represented in Lancashire by the Liverpool revision of 1864. Here all railways seem to have been revised along with adjoining docks and other buildings, the revisers working back from the railway line until they encountered unchanged detail. The docks had extended to the north since the original survey, and this may have motivated the work. Unusually, marginal notes were added, of the form “New Railways & Houses inserted 1864”. The exact wording was tailored to the circumstances of each sheet; thus Sheet 5 (which lacks railways but where revision must have spilled over from an adjoining sheet) has merely “New fences &c inserted 1864”.

Perhaps it is wrong to elevate this solitary example to a category, but there was a general

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12 Most of the later engraved versions are less detailed, omitting in particular spot heights for individual houses. But Alnwick and Berwick-on-Tweed offer engraved versions at the full specification.

13 Such as those on http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/agsmario/default.aspx
problem in revising railways in urban areas that the details of trackwork had often changed and these changes - for example the addition of a siding - might extend some distance along the line and overlap with other changes. Thus revision that started on one sheet might extend to several adjoining sheets. This was not a problem at the six-inch scale, where depiction of railway trackwork was more sketchy. One sees something of the sort in Leeds, where five-foot sheets 13 and 14 have railway revision, perhaps associated with adding the interchange station at Holbeck. That revision may have extended to sheets 10 and 17, but in the absence of marginal notes (or a cartobibliography) it is difficult to establish what was changed when.

Finally, one can encounter security deletions: Strangeways Prison in Manchester is an example. There may also be changes to administrative names and boundaries. This sounds a formidable list; but many sheets survived their entire lives without any changes to content. Of the sheets that were revised, almost all the revision concerns railways and adjoining land. As long as the user is wary of this, it is reasonable to use late states from the NLS website for comparison purposes.

**The quality of six-inch detail**

For most towns, the area shown as surveyed in the 1845 progress diagram corresponds to the area depicted in the published five-foot plans. In some cases the number of actual sheets has increased as a result of what had been envisaged as insets now having their own sheets. At Blackburn a portrait sheet was replaced by two landscape sheets (7 and 11) but without any change in the area mapped, and similarly at Wigan.

One completely new sheet (Clitheroe 3) was added; and, as mentioned earlier, certain towns which had been surveyed to municipal or arbitrary boundaries had their sheets filled to the neatlines. All the indications are that this extension to the mapped area took place after the reduction to 1:10,560. In other words, these extensions offer an independent check on the quality of the six-inch detail. All these sheets show instances like Figure 3, from Clitheroe sheet 3.

![Figure 3. Clitheroe Sheet 3.](image)

This shows a villa on the road leading west from the town, with its depiction on the five-foot to the left and on the six-inch to the right. Note the difference in the line of the

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14 A copy of Sheet 13 with a June 1866 epd is known, which establishes a *terminus ante quem* for the changes.

15 I have omitted here changes that do not affect content. Rouletted building-fill was added from 1850; “All Rights of Reproduction Reserved” was added from early 1888; and the price was raised from 2s to 2s6d in September 1888 - see dated stamps on several Liverpool sheets. Price was sometimes omitted and the details of survey, etc, were occasionally simplified earlier in the 1880s.
northern boundary of the grounds. Note also the change in proportions of the house’s various projections; it would appear that the outline of the house was sketched for the six-inch survey rather than being measured. The change in the house’s garden is a consequence of the six-inch quite properly employing garden ornament, whereas for the five-foot the garden paths were surveyed. Finally, note the 220ft spot height on the six-inch, but not on the five-foot. It is quite understandable that the five-foot should have heights not on the six-inch, but not the other way round. Where benchmarks appear on both, one often finds a discrepancy in the final digit: perhaps a fresh adjustment of circuits had taken place between the dates of the two maps.

The key points to note are the error in alignment and the irregularity in the treatment of building projections. The other changes are oddities resulting from separate surveys or a difference in dates but are not errors as such.

Figure 4 shows a similar alignment error affecting a church in Manchester. Here the error seems to have occurred despite the six-inch being derived from the five-foot.

Figure 5 (following page) shows a more drastic error where one of the Colne sheets has been filled to the neat line. A tramway that crosses a river by a bridge - whose parapet is carefully depicted on the five-foot - is shown on the six-inch as tunnelling under the river.

How do these errors arise? For the alignment errors and the irregularities in building projections we must look for a mechanism that affects both ordinary six-inch surveys and reductions from the five-foot. I suggest that the problem arose from the method used to transfer detail from the fair drawing to the copper plate. The detail was traced using lamp-black; the tracing was then placed on the copper plate which had been given a coating of wax and was rubbed with a burnisher to transfer the detail to the wax. This provided guidance to the engraver. That last sentence was almost certainly written by Henry James,

16Report of the Ordnance Survey Commission, BPP (HC) 1857-8 [2396] XIX, 585. The description appears on p46 of the report and is then largely repeated in Capt H Riall Sankey’s article in Engineering, 6.1.1888,
who was not prone to understate the Survey’s technical achievement; and guidance suggests something less than a crisp image. I suggest that on occasion the quality of the image was sufficient to show where a building needed to be engraved but that the engraver needed to consult the fair drawing for the fine detail and even the exact alignment; and this was done ‘by eye’. As for the tunnel at Colne, the appearance of ‘tunnel’ rules out any explanation affecting just the engraver; the field examination trace was perhaps misinterpreted, and someone mistakenly added the word in the hope of offering clarification.

Figure 5. Colne Tunnel.

Another puzzling discrepancy is found at Accrington (Figure 6) and concerns the terrace

Figure 6. Accrington Sheet 3: Abbey St. The benchmark is useful in relating the two depictions.

on the east side of Abbey Street. The five-foot plan shows these houses with extensive buildings behind them - presumably lower service buildings accessed via the lane at the rear. The six-inch shows the rear of the terrace uncluttered by these buildings. It is as though the rear of the terrace had been surveyed from the far side of the rear wall or fence, ignoring single-storey rear projections. It certainly could not have been obtained by any process of generalisation of the five-foot. It might be regarded as giving a clearer picture of the structures than a reduction of the five-foot would have, although omission of the rear lane and of the gap in the terrace allowing access to it might seem a little excessive. Although this sheet of the Accrington five-foot was extended to the neat lines after 1845, Abbey Street appears to have been inside the earlier boundary line. Perhaps this indicates a wider problem with small places that were not municipalities: the surveyors doing the six-inch survey may have been uncertain where they should stop and so the fringe of the urban area may have been covered by surveys at both scales. Of course, we should also consider the possibility that the discrepancy might be explained by ‘top-up’ revision to the five-foot; but the terrace in question gives the impression of being well-established and it seems unlikely that all the owners should have simultaneously embarked on a programme of rear extensions.

**Conclusions**

The results on quality of detail can scarcely be described as tidy. We have problems with alignments and building projections cropping up occasionally and these might be attributable to the transfer process used. We have a misunderstanding over a ‘tunnel’ that can only be described as weird. And we have a piece of independent six-inch survey where we expected a reduction from the five-foot, and done in a manner that perhaps tries to be helpful at the expense of Colby’s aspirations for scientific rigour.

These examples came from looking at a very few of the five-foot plans extended in scope between 1845 and their date of publication, and corresponding in total to about one-fiftieth of a six-inch sheet. It is highly unlikely that this is the only weird misunderstanding or the only depiction which sacrifices scientific rigour in a bid to be helpful. Users of the early six-inch surveys therefore need to exercise a degree of caution.

As for the historical account, it is clear that the Lancashire five-foot surveys were something of a tail wagging its dog. It was perhaps eighteen months after their commencement before Colby recognised the problem and modified his instructions. The sanitary movement may not have motivated these plans but it provided a welcome justification and in due course led to their being engraved.

**Afterword: a reversal of policy?**

Strictly, Yorkshire falls outside this account, but it would be misleading to fail to mention what happened at York and Wakefield.

The intention in 1845 was that York should be published in twelve sheets, filled to the neatlines. Indeed, the fair-drawing was complete in 1845, except for the writing of names on the two central sheets. But as published in 1852 (with survey updated to 1849-51) there were twenty-one sheets, completed to the Parliamentary boundary or slightly beyond it. Effectively, the Survey had reverted to something like its original policy.

Wakefield does not appear in the 1845 progress diagram: presumably it had not yet been started. The only evidence we have for the intended layout is the form of the sheet
numbering. Sheets 1 to 8 and 10 to 13, all with a date of survey of 1848, are filled to the neatlines and form a tidy rectangular grid. But there are also Sheets 2A (placed SE of sheet 2) and 5A (placed SE of sheet 5), surveyed 1850. These form a jogged column compared to the earlier pattern, and extend only to the municipal boundary. Thus we seem to have a policy change that can be dated to the bracket 1848 to 1850. There is also a third sheet in this jogged column bearing the number 9 and the survey date 1848. Its positioning accommodates the municipal boundary exactly; but it is filled to the neatlines. This prompts the observation that the southern part of 5A, up to the railway line, likewise extends detail to the eastern neatline. Thus it would seem that in 1848, while survey was still in progress, it was decided that survey to 1:1056 standard should extend right to the municipal boundary and indeed beyond. That would imply a requirement for sheets 2A and 5A. It was deemed possible to change the sheet numbers from 9 onwards so that sheet 9 could have a normal number but it was not possible to alter the earlier sheet numbers. Why not? Did the sheet number become sacrosanct as soon as it was applied to the fair drawing? It is all a bit of a mystery.

More generally, was there a universal policy change, or were particular pressures applied in the case of these two towns? When Hull was surveyed in 1853, sheets were filled to the neatline and there was no requirement to embrace the whole of the municipal or parliamentary area - in other words the policy that had been followed generally since 1845. So perhaps there were particular reasons driving the treatment of York and Wakefield.

All illustrations courtesy NLS

Peter K Clark Awards
As a result of a generous gift by our first Chairman, the Society is offering awards to assist with research expenses for those engaged in original research into Ordnance Survey and associated mapping. They are intended to cover necessary travel and accommodation costs for visits to libraries and archives, and the costs of making copies of material. They may extend to the cost of analyses and equipment where the research concerns some aspect like the physical constitution of papers and inks. It is expected that the results of research will be published in Sheetlines or (where more appropriate) some other journal.

Applications for grants should be sent to the Hon Sec. They will be considered by the committee in meetings in February and October. It is recommended that applications should reach the Hon Sec by mid-January or mid-September so that clarification or expansion may be sought. Applications should state the nature of the research to be undertaken and the anticipated results, the nature of the costs for which reimbursement will be sought and their expected amount, and the form of publication planned.

No applications will be considered for the retrospective payment of costs already incurred. The committee will be seeking to maximise the benefits that can be achieved from a finite sum available, so applicants are advised to pay particular attention to cost-effectiveness in their proposals.

17 Which according to the 1:1056 is also the Parliamentary boundary; but the 6-inch disagrees!
18 This is based on the sheet on the NLS website which was transferred to zinc in 1882 and given new marginalia, so the survey date is perhaps not as trustworthy as if it were taken from an early printing.