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“Visit to The National Archives”

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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.

Visit to The National Archives

Alan Fair

Twenty members of the Society attended a most successful and interesting afternoon at The National Archives, (TNA) Kew, on 29 October. We were welcomed by Rose Mitchell, map archivist, assisted by Andrew Janes and Eunice Gill. Introducing TNA, Rose talked about the organisation, their maps and their relationship to OS. There is an enormous accessions programme and of particular relevance currently are examples of experimental mapping, experimental materials and overseas work. TNA is not a deposit library and maps held typically have been annotated with specialist data, for example maps prepared by local authorities to show WWII bomb damage. Many maps are produced by other agencies, such as the Hydrographic Office. The records extend to many other documents such as Annual Reports, manuals and instructions, levelling records and old triangulation records.

Andrew then gave a most enlightened presentation, taking us on an exploratory trip through the on-line catalogue. The depth and reach of the modern technology, professionally harnessed, greatly simplifies the work of the researcher in locating documents. But all tastes catered for; how nice to hear there is a paper document *How to search for maps* available on request. Copying facilities are available and use of own digital camera with no flash allowed.

Eunice then gave an illuminating presentation outlining the accessioning process. OS recommend material for preservation and prepare records for transfer before being responsible for transport. Mirroring OS functions, TNA staff approve the selection of records and oversee the accessioning process. The programme for 2009/10 includes levelling records, triangulation records, public boundary archives and rights-of-way archives.

The second half of the visit was given over to inspection of maps and documents. Many of the latter gave insight into the preparation of the former. Field note books prepared by surveyors give insight into map preparation, the levelling, the triangulation, the integration of man-made features, ('is that an earthwork or a strip lynchet?'). Innumerable gems, including documents written by Charles Close. The one thing seared in my memory from this most interesting afternoon must be the professionalism, attention to detail and the sheer enthusiasm of the staff. To them, grateful thanks for a good show