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“Local authority revision of OS large-  
scale plans”

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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.

## ***Local authority revision of OS large-scale plans – a personal reminiscence***

***Peter Dryburgh<sup>1</sup>***

In the mid to late 1960s and early 1970s I was a Junior Planning Officer, firstly with Lincoln County Borough Council and subsequently Lindsey County Council. We relied heavily in our work on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps using mainly those at 1:1250 and 1:2500 scales to record planning data and to identify sites. However, in many cases these were not up-to-date. Particularly in the rural areas, updates had not been carried out by OS for many years; even within the City Council, the receipt of updates as haphazard as budget constraints often dictated how many SUSI updates<sup>2</sup> we could purchase (nothing changes much in terms of local authority finance!)

It was our practice to update the OS maps (known as plotting sheets to us) through copying details from application plans once a development was complete. Occasionally, we might undertake an on-site survey for smaller sites. Our materials were Indian ink, a pen stylus, scale rules, tee square and set squares. The old-style stylus was difficult to use as it involved squirting a small amount of ink between two blades and then refining the gap between the blades to produce a fine line. A certain amount of trial and error went on using scrap paper before you would apply the stylus to the plotting sheet. It was certainly a blessing when Rotring starting producing their drawing pens which allowed one to use varying thicknesses of line through proper nibs,

The master copy of several plans could be on film or tracing paper: it was essential in those cases to ensure that the film was clean and that grease did not get onto the area were working on otherwise blots could occur or the film would not take the ink. Mistakes or blots were rectified by the use of a single-sided razor blade when the offending error was 'scraped' from the film.

In some cases, such as the Conservation Area around the Castle and Cathedral areas we would trace from 1:500 OS maps, update them and make the buildings stand out from property boundaries by the use of broader lines around them and hatching different roof slopes. In many cases the resultant master copy would then be reproduced and further detail added through the use of colour or hatching to show building materials, road and footway surfacing, building types, ages etc. No computer graphics in those days!

*Note from Rob Wheeler:* Quite a few plans with revision by Kesteven County Council have passed to Lincolnshire Archives (LAO), but are not yet catalogued. One 1:2500 sheet within the City has recently come to light and will be deposited in LAO. I am not aware of any Lindsey sheets. Usually, on these revisions, the line-work follows OS practice; only by careful examination of the lettering can one see that this is not OS work.

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<sup>1</sup> The author retired in 2004 as Head of Planning and Building Control at North Kesteven DC.

<sup>2</sup> SUSI: Supply of Unpublished Survey Information.