



# *Sheetlines*

The journal of  
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY  
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps

“The New Forest Tourist map of 1966”

*Rob Wheeler*

*Sheetlines*, 107 (December 2016, pp 46-50)

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/files/Issue107page46.pdf>

*This article is provided for personal, non-commercial use only.  
Please contact the Society regarding any other use of this work.*

Published by  
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY  
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps  
[www.CharlesCloseSociety.org](http://www.CharlesCloseSociety.org)

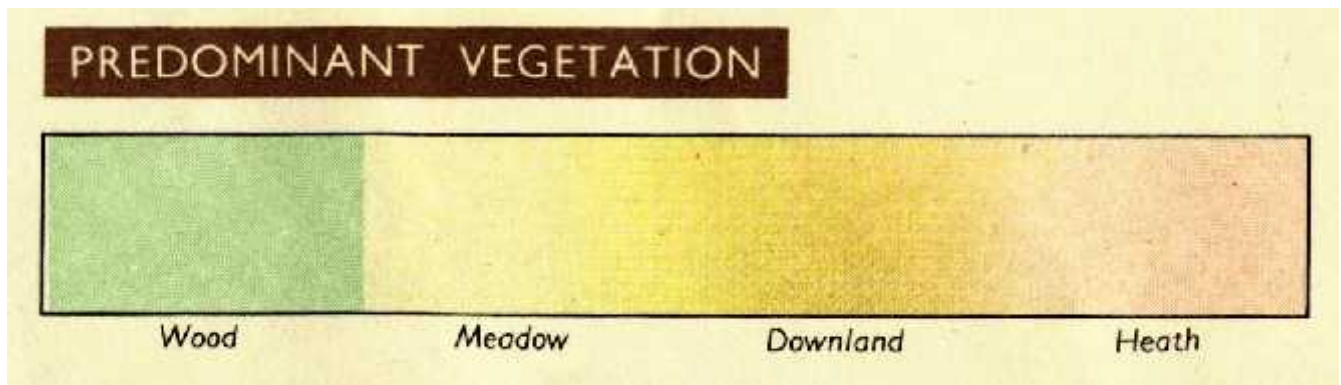
The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, 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.

## *The New Forest Tourist map of 1966*

*Rob Wheeler*

Of all the maps OS has published at the one-inch or 1:50,000 scale since 1945, the most revolutionary is probably the New Forest *Tourist* sheet that appeared fifty years ago. In a reversion to nineteenth-century practice, contours were dropped, relief being indicated by hill-shading alone (plus spot heights). There was also an attempt to show land-use by background colour. The relevant legend is at figure 1, which shows a spectrum extending from meadow through downland to heath. Woodland is also shown but this appears to be a discrete category with a sharp edge.



*Figure 1. Land use spectrum*

This 'spectrum' immediately poses questions of definition. What about arable? What does the mid-point between downland and heath actually look like on the ground? One could conceive of such a spectrum having a rigorous definition, based on the nutritional value per unit area, excluding arable or leys, with 'meadow', 'downland' and 'heath' being the three stages most characteristic of the area and readily understood by the ordinary map user; but where was the data for this to come from?

Was this seen as a prototype with wider application, or as a one-off? And what about other novel features, like the brown graticule markings and outer border? Finally, a technical question: how was the map printed? It was in the hope of finding answers to some of these questions that I investigated what evidence might be lurking in the CCS Archives.

Perusal of the catalogue suggested that OS 123, more particularly 123 1/1 and 123 1/4, was promising. That is not to say that relevant material might not be lurking elsewhere, merely that none of the other catalogue entries seemed specific enough to be worth looking at. What follows is based purely on a few papers in OS 123 and on careful inspection of the map.

From those papers, the technical question turns out to be the easy one to answer: the map was printed in 6 colours from the following 18 negatives.

*Black:* Outline; House fillings (screen); vegetation<sup>1</sup> (screen);

<sup>1</sup> Specifically tree-symbols, which had their own printing plate in the 10-colour version of the Seventh Series but were printed in screened black on the 6-colour version. See R Oliver, *A*

*Green*: New Forest boundary; woods (screen);

*Brown*: 2nd class roads; graticule; border tint; hill-shading;

*Magenta*: 1st class roads; Rights of Way; Tourist Info; Background;

*Cyan*: Water; Water tints (screen); Background;

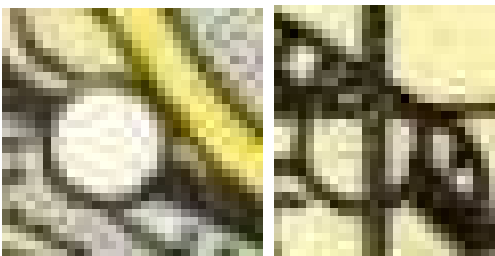
*Yellow*: 3rd class roads; Background.

There were also two hold-out masks, for hill-shading and for Background.

The magenta/cyan/yellow combination is unusual at this date and seems to be driven by the Background negatives. This term is evidently being used for the land-use background colour which must have been prepared (painted?) in full colour and was now being printed by the 4-colour process (only without a black element).

I mentioned hold-out masks in a piece three years ago<sup>2</sup> about the Routemaster series. Poor registration in that series combined with over-enthusiastic use of masks to make it fairly easy to spot what was masked against what. The New Forest sheets have very good registration, and masking is used quite cautiously - typically against things like road fill which are cased, so the result would have looked respectable even if registration had been poor. Without the notes in the archive it would have been difficult to establish just what masks were used. In examining the map, it is useful to look for objects that are pure white, implying an absence both of hill-shading and of background colour.

Certain stations closed to passenger traffic (eg at Fawley) are one such object. How does one generate a mask against a white object without manual intervention? In this case the trick was to mask against the red stations shown on the previous state of the one-inch, before the negative had been updated to reflect closures. So, actually, the New Forest sheet has *three* station categories: open to passenger traffic (magenta fill); closed since 1957 (white fill) and closed earlier (background fill). An example of the third category is Wilton (GWR) at 090320 (*figure 2*).



*Figure 2: Two categories of closed station; Hytbe (far left) and Wilton*

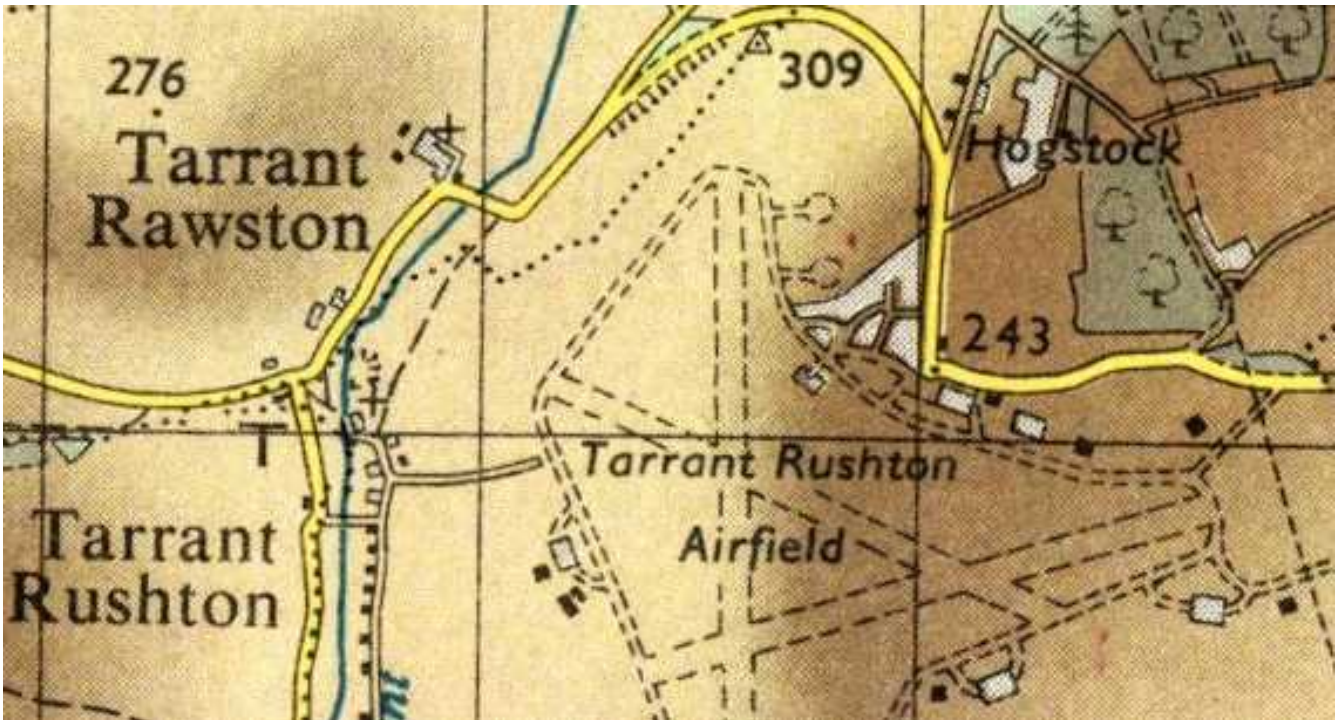
Piers form another class of white objects. I presume that the background colour stopped at the high water mark. Road fill has been mentioned as one of the negatives masked. Building fill was not normally masked but for some inexplicable reason most of the buildings on Tarrant Rushton airfield *are* masked, and hence appear to be bathed in sunlight (*figure 3*). Tourist information is not masked, doubtless because, being uncased, it would be vulnerable to the slightest error in registration. A consequence of this, which few users will have spotted, is

---

*Guide to the Ordnance Survey one-inch Seventh Series, 2004.*

<sup>2</sup> Rob Wheeler, 'Masked Balls', *Sheetlines* 98, 38.

that symbols in the sea are magenta, while symbols on meadow land come out as red. Symbols which straddle the high water mark change colour: I suspect that the boat at Christchurch (*figure 4*) caught someone's eye at proof stage and a piece of background was manually cleaned off so that the boat could be all magenta.



*Figure 3 above:  
Sunlit buildings at Tarrant Rushton. The normal appearance of buildings can be seen to the west of the airfield*

*Figure 4 left: Boat symbol at Christchurch*

Why were there separate masks for hill-shading and for background? Almost certainly this was because woods were consciously excluded from the land use spectrum but there was a desire to show relief across woodland; hence they needed to be masked from background but not from hill-shading.<sup>3</sup>

Turning from technical matters to the question of where the data came from, the files show the OS's concern that the new *Tourist* sheet should be up-to-date.

<sup>3</sup> Figure 5 of Richard Oliver, 'Two interesting maps for OS225', *Sheetlines* 107,6 shows how much easier it is to mask unfilled roads against layers and woodland in the digital era. What has changed is that an unclassified road is now an entity, whereas in the 1960s it was merely two parallel lines on the detail negative.



It was noted that the component sheets had small-scale revision dates of 1956/7 and were due for cyclic revision in 1969. Producing a new map without revision was considered unacceptable, so adjustment of the 1964 revision programme was proposed to make effort available for some form of intermediate revision at the expense of certain remote areas currently scheduled for revision but which did not need it until their maps were due for replacement. The low water mark in Poole Harbour was seen as important to tourists, so new aerial photographs should be obtained. On the other hand, the Isle of Wight was seen as unimportant (meaning probably that tourists staying on the Island were most unlikely to buy a New Forest *Tourist* map) so no revision should be undertaken there.

The thinking a little later can be summarised from a note: 'Terms of Reference for Surveyors':

1. Some areas had large-scale survey material available.
2. The New Forest proper should be revised to full cyclic revision standards. Additionally, heath should be distinguished from rough pasture.
3. Certain areas outside the New Forest proper should also be revised to special (unspecified) standards.
4. The rest of the sheet should receive partial revision, to show
  - a. large housing schemes,
  - b. large public car parks outside towns,
  - c. important secondary roads,
  - d. inns and isolated large hotels,
  - e. places of special interest such as pony trekking establishments, flying clubs, sailing clubs, angling areas, stately homes, gardens open to visitors, and 'anything that the surveyor thinks would be of interest to a tourist'

The wording here is sloppy: perhaps it represents notes after a meeting rather than properly drawn up specifications. For example, 4(e) is evidently the specification for the Tourist Info negative and would apply throughout the sheet. Flying clubs are not usually regarded as tourist sites and one wonders whether it was the 'Model Aircraft Flying Area' near East Boldre that those involved were thinking of. The heath / rough pasture distinction at (2) remained on the published map, within the New Forest boundary.

In the event, full cyclic revision was undertaken in 1965 for the area of Sheet 180 (including the Isle of Wight) and for the New Forest proper. The rest of the map, according to the legend, had limited revision, 'which included major roads'. Inspection of the map shows that this revision extended to quite modest housing schemes; perhaps (4) above remains valid as a description of what was done.

These 'terms of reference' provide evidence for an interest in heath as a feature of tourist interest. There is no other evidence for any interest in land utilisation. Nor is there any sign of discussion of the overall appearance of the map. To some extent that may be because those discussions involved different people and the relevant papers have not been preserved, but insofar as discussion of map design had an impact on revision requirements we might expect to have some mention of it. The absence of any mention suggests that the

dramatic innovations in the appearance of the map were only decided upon when the revision was already under way.

So where did data come from for the 'Background' image? In the absence of any documentary evidence, the only way to decide how the land utilisation was derived is to look at the map. One noticeable characteristic is that built-up areas are generally characterised as 'meadow'. This is appropriate for (eg) Salisbury, but Bournemouth is generally understood to have been developed on what had been heathland. The rough pasture around SZ0695 is instructive: the Old Series shows it as part of Canford Heath; the 1st Land Utilisation Survey marks it as heath; but the *Tourist* map, now that has been encroached upon by urban sprawl, shows it as meadow. It does rather look as though known heath and known downland were coloured accordingly, anything else that was low-lying, urban or suburban was coloured as meadow, and a gradual blurring of colours across the intermediate areas was introduced to avoid difficult questions about where one category stopped and another started. In other words, it appears to have been a fudge, and was not seen as part of a larger programme for the one-inch series.

There is a piece of (negative) documentary evidence for this assertion. The process of transferring the graticules and the associated outer border from black to brown, together with the introduction of a brown screen between inner and outer borders, was costed. The cost of 'the border treatment' (which may or may not include the graticules) was to be set against 'Experimental'. The implication would seem to be that this feature was being considered for wider application. There is nothing about how the costs of the 'Background' image - surely much greater - were to be categorised. The implication is that it was a one-off.

Of course, there were broader issues in play. Space travel was a hot topic; earth observation satellites were being talked about; and commercial map producers were exploring the idea of maps that showed terrain 'as it would look from space'. With its hill-shading and vegetation tints, the New Forest *Tourist* sheet appears to belong to this movement. Even if it was driven by someone whose primary interest lay in graphic design, he must surely have been given the nod by the senior officers of the Survey.

Political dialogue at the time presented a divide between the 'white heat of a scientific revolution'<sup>4</sup> and the 'natural Luddites', whose ignorance of science and engineering made them singularly unfit to govern.<sup>5</sup> The 1964 General Election can be regarded as the rejection of an Establishment seen as 'natural Luddites'. The Ordnance Survey might be a technical organisation but it was a part of that Establishment and its maps had a distinctly dated look. The New Forest *Tourist* map may have been half-baked, but was it valued as evidence that the OS was embracing the white-hot technological revolution? Does that explain why it took the form it did? The apparent date when the novel design was introduced would appear to be 1965, and this might fit a perceived need for a new image.

---

<sup>4</sup> Harold Wilson, Labour Party Conference, 1963

<sup>5</sup> CP Snow, Rede Lecture, 1959