

The Special Emergency Edition in Lincolnshire

Rob Wheeler

Introduction

As is well known, a Special Emergency Edition (SEE) of the six-inch map was produced in 1938-9 for Air Raid Precaution planning,¹ based on one-inch revision material, recent 1:2500 revision not published at the six-inch scale, and *ad hoc* surveys conducted somewhat in the manner of one-inch revision. It has been described as ‘of considerable value as a record of the approximate state of urban expansion on the eve of World War II’.² The results were incorporated in a Provisional Edition, published from 1943, and described here as the *early Provisionals*.³ From 1947, a further version was published, based additionally on post-1945 Air Photos; these are referred to here as *main-series Provisionals*.

The SEE was never placed on public sale and was not subject to copyright deposit. The Society maintains a list of where each SEE may be found,⁴ from which it will be seen that there are a few sheets known to have been produced where no copy at all has been located. ARP revision material may be encountered, photo-reduced to 1:25,000, in the wartime GSGS 3906, but legibility of detail is likely to be an issue here. The data was also incorporated in the one-inch Second War Revision of GSGS 3907; if all that is needed is a view of urban development of the eve of WW2, this may suffice.

Given the difficulty of gaining access to a copy of the SEE, anyone interested in a particular location who has established that a SEE was produced may well wonder whether it is worth the trouble of seeking out a copy. The answer to that question may be different for different parts of the country. For Lincolnshire, on the basis of a sample of 33 sheets, it would appear that, except for a few sheets (which can be identified from information available on the web) the SEE provides very little information that cannot be deduced from the published six-inch states. The rest of this paper is devoted to explaining this assertion.

The Nature of ARP Revision

In Lincolnshire, there was no recent one-inch revision, and there is no firm evidence that any use was made of the revision made around 1920 for the Popular Edition. Where there was recent 1:2500 revision not incorporated in the latest six-inch, the surveyor was provided with a six-inch document⁵ that had

¹ In a letter of 17 November 1942 (TNA OS1/385 Enc 34) Cheetham expands this to ‘ARP and other civilian “war” use’. I am grateful to Richard Oliver for sending me his notes on this file and other material.

² Richard Oliver, *Ordnance Survey Maps: a concise guide for historians*, 2005, 42.

³ In 1943 the internal name for this was to be ‘the Provisional (Emergency) Edition’ – TNA OS 1/385 Enc 52A. I shall not use this term here.

⁴ <https://www.charlesclosesociety.org/SEE>

⁵ This term is deliberately vague because of the various ways unpublished 1:2500 revision might have been incorporated. One possibility is a print of the previous published six-inch, cut up into ‘plots’ as for one-inch revision, with the 1:2500 revision material used to draw amendments in ink, just as would be done in the field.

been updated in the office with new developments, drawn in the generalised manner that the surveyor was expected to adhere to.⁶ One can see an example of this in the eastern half of Lincs 22SW, which had benefited from full revision earlier in 1938.⁷ Note in figure 1 the three stubs of streets extending north from St Michael's Road: the new streets are shown on the new 22.14 but not on 22.10 and the points where the stubs end is merely the northern boundary of 22.14. The surveyor must have been sent round the new developments to look for additional houses but found relatively few, except in Revesby Avenue (*figure 2*) where the 1:2500 revision had shown a line of houses to north and south whereas the SEE shows a complete horseshoe.



Figure 1:
Lincs 22SW, St Michael's Road



Figure 2:
Lincs 22SW, Revesby Avenue

Few sheets had the advantage of recent 1:2500 revision. In most cases, the ARP reviser seems to have been sent out merely with a print from the latest six-inch, sometimes with a revision date of 1929-32 in urban or suburban areas but of around 1904 for most of the county. Most of his work consisted of marking new buildings – shown unfilled but shaded. The standard of survey and of drawing is variable, perhaps reflecting whether the surveyor was keeping to schedule or dropping behind. There are instances where one finds that an addition has moved from one side of a field boundary on the SEE to the other side on the main-series Provisional: does this indicate a gross error on the part of the surveyor? It may be better regarded as part of a wider phenomenon of new buildings on the SEE of which there appear to be no traces after the War. Figure 3

⁶ See Rob Wheeler, 'ARP Revision, 1938', *Sheetlines*, 100, 33-36.

⁷ The OS Annual Report for 1938-39 states that small-scale revisers were diverted to ARP revision from August 1938. This appears to mark the start of revision on the ground.

shows one of the odder examples. What we have here is the new Caistor by-pass (coming through the 'R' of 'Caistor'). Its eastern end appears to be fenced off: is it still under construction? And there is a new building with (seemingly) traffic on all sides. Is this a house or a petrol station that was about to be sacrificed to make a very spacious junction? Or is it a temporary building associated with the construction works. And what about the smaller new building by the southern boundary of the field? This too vanishes after the war. Normal OS practice was that temporary buildings should not be shown, but that rule might have been changed at the behest of the ARP organisation.

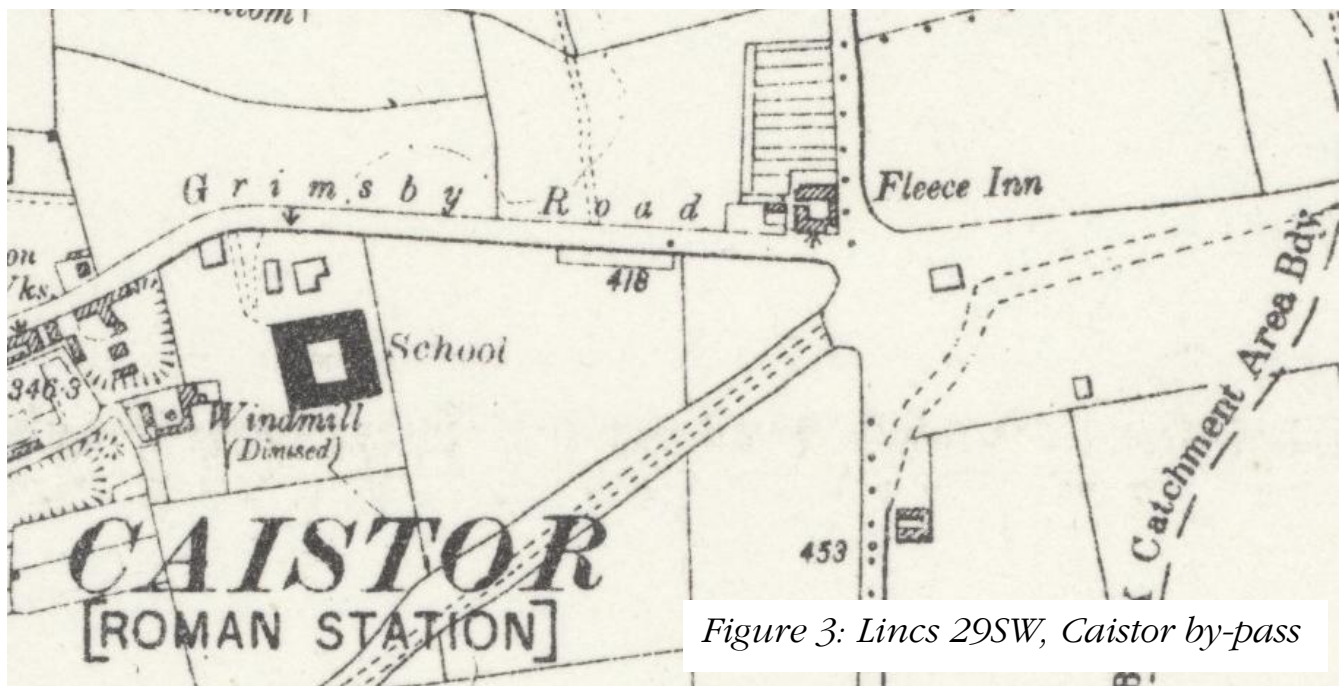


Figure 3: Lincs 29SW, Caistor by-pass

Not all the additions were unfilled. Public buildings were shown in solid black. Most of the new ones are schools but one finds the occasional church or hospital. Figure 4 shows the new northern block at Rauceby Mental Hospital. We know what we expect a 1930s mental hospital to look like and the new wing looks 'wrong'; comparison with the main-series Provisional shows that it is a remarkable poor sketch – but that is the level of accuracy one tends to find with large buildings on the SEE.

As well as additions, one encounters deletions. Most of them are linked to additions: an existing building has been demolished so that something new can be built, or it has been part-demolished, so that an extension can be added. However, one does occasionally find deletions well away from any new activity. I spotted an average of less than one 'pure' deletion per sheet, but it is more difficult to spot a deletion than an addition, so they may perhaps be commoner than this. The poor quality of printing of some of the SEEs occasionally raises doubt whether one has a genuine deletion or a blemish in the printing. Figure 5 shows the disappearance of outbuildings (probably stables) at Scawby Hall. The edge of the road has been made good, which leads one to suppose this is a genuine deletion, but the remains of a belt of trees survive next to the carriage

sweep in such a messy state that the user might suppose there had been damage to the plate.



Figure 4 (left) Lincs 106SW, Rauceby Mental Hospital

Figure 5: Lincs 27NE, Stables at Scauby Hall on SEE

The addition of road names was evidently in the surveyors' brief.⁸ Names on new developments are the most obvious additions, but in Lincolnshire the surveyor of, say, 117SE in 1903, had taken the view that names in villages need not be shown if they could be regarded as merely descriptive (eg *the Boston road*). The SEE treats these as normal street names, so "BOSTON ROAD" appears both in Kirton and in Sutterton. More interesting are places like Mablethorpe on 57NE, where Washdyke Lane has become Golf Road – so much more select!

New additions might sometimes be named: "Grimsby Municipal Airport" on 30SE and "Biscuit Factory" on 22NW are among the more notable. Alterations to existing names raise more difficulties. Adding "(School)" to "Riseholme Grange" (61SE) might perhaps be useful; adding "(Grimsby Corporation)" to "Isolation and Tuberculosis Hospital" (30NE) seems a very low priority.

Deletion of names is the aspect that requires most care in the interpretation of SEEs. There seems to have been an edict that the buildings added must not be confused by having names written over them. Thus, if the surveyor had drawn a new building where there was a name on the map, the draughtsman was expected to clean the name off and re-position it. However, there was a shortage of drawing effort. Re-drawing parish names was perhaps considered too much trouble: on 30NE, the "W" of "WALTHAM" combines unhappily with a row of houses, and the first "A" is hollowed out to make space for another house. Lesser names were sometimes redrawn, and sometimes dispensed with altogether.

But one also finds names deleted from the SEE which do not impinge on new detail. For example, on 117SE "Gas Works" is deleted in Kirton. An internet search suggests that the gas works closed in 1937; so it looks as though the ARP reviser

⁸ Street names are mentioned in this context in the OS Annual Report for 1938-39.

recognised this, and marked the name for deletion, even though the buildings were still there. Likewise, the *Queen's Arms* by Scawby station (27NE), whose name vanishes on the SEE, disappears from Kelly's Directory between 1926 and 1937. Supporting evidence like this is more difficult to find in most cases, but the removal of names which do not impinge on new detail should be regarded as *prima facie* evidence that those names had ceased to be applicable.

The Early Provisionals

The draughtsmen producing the early Provisionals had almost no new information they could use. That word 'almost' needs some clarification.

First of all, there are a very few cases where full revision had been undertaken after the 1938 ARP Revision. For example, the two northern quadrants of 67NW had been revised in 1940. Consequently, the northern half of the Provisional is drawn to peacetime standards (with diagonally-hatched buildings) on the basis of that work. This is noted in the sheet's heading as "Revision of 1905 with additions in 1938 & 1940." The wording is strange. "Revision of 1940 (part) and Revision of 1905 with additions in 1938 (part)" would have been more accurate. What matters is that one can identify such sheets from their heading (and from the description in the NLS catalogue). In cases like this, the SEE itself is the only⁹ source for the 1938 snapshot of the part that benefited from later revision.

In contrast, for the vast majority of sheets all that needed to be added were MOT road numbers, new administrative boundaries (sometimes) and the National Grid.¹⁰ So far as is known there were no surviving reproduction materials for the SEE, and its poor print quality precluded using any of the printed sheets. Consequently, the sheet was redrawn, going back to the most recent proper pre-war edition.¹¹ The precision with which the 1938 additions were added is exemplary; it seems likely that a print was taken from the security enamel of the old edition and that the additions of the SEE were traced onto transfer paper and thereby added to that print, any deletions being removed by scraping; the result would then be photographed. Certainly, any difference between SEE and the early Provisional in the depiction of a building is far smaller than the errors acceptable in the 1938 survey. It is also very rare to find instances where an addition on the SEE does not appear on the early Provisional.¹²

One of the difficulties with this process was the SEE deletions. Additions stand out; deletions do not; and going back to the pre-war edition meant that deletions were restored unless a conscious decision was taken to repeat them. Sometimes this was done: in the bottom-left corner of 118NW the SEE had deleted a cottage with a BM on it (though had left the BM height); the early Provisional repeats this

⁹ Plus potentially the reduction to 1:25,000 in GSGS3906, if it is legible.

¹⁰ The very early provisionals lacked the National Grid, but none of the Lincs sheets is as early as this.

¹¹ In OS 1/385, this is called 'the Sales edition', a potentially confusing term.

¹² There is an instance on 31NW, where a house is omitted on N Sea La just west of the LB on the South side. On 36NW there is a water tower at Kirton in Lindsey which vanishes subsequently; since this is named, it is unlikely to have been omitted through carelessness.

depiction. In contrast, at Scawby Hall the draughtsman of the early Provisional either failed to notice the deletion or decided it was safer (or less trouble) to treat it as a printing blemish.

Where names of new features had been added on the SEE, the early Provisional normally repeats them, though occasionally one finds ‘obvious’ updates.¹³ For example, although the buildings at Grimsby Municipal Airport are retained from the SEE, the name vanishes. (The student of security deletions may care to note that the main-series Provisional restores the landscape to its 1905 state, even though RAF Grimsby – which the site had become – ceased to be a flying station before the end of the war.) So deletion of the name on the early Provisional seems to reflect an awareness that there was no longer a Grimsby municipal airport. The Archaeology Division too may sometimes have had a say. Along the coast the ancient sea bank had long been referred to (and recorded on the maps) as ROMAN BANK. Where a road ran along the top of it, that road adopted the name. At the northern edge of Skegness (84NE), the road had been straightened at a kink; the SEE had noted that the new road was known as ‘Roman Bank’, the old line being referred to as ‘Old Roman Bank’. This might be very useful to an ARP warden trying to understand a report of where a bomb had fallen but it clearly would not do on a peacetime map to have a 20th-century ‘Roman Bank’ – especially as the original one was regarded in academic circles as being medieval rather than Roman. So both names were left off the Provisional.

It was the SEE’s deletion of names from the previous edition that caused the biggest problems. Without the surveyors’ manuscripts – which almost certainly did not survive – the compilers of the Provisionals had no certain way of deciding whether a name had vanished because it had been thought too troublesome to re-draw or had been deleted deliberately. This applied particularly in cases where new additions were close to an existing name but did not quite impinge on it. The easiest course of action for the compilers was to leave the name as it had been on the pre-war edition and there appears to be about one instance of ‘sloping shoulders’ in this way in every four sheets examined.

Additions made on the SEE to an existing name were another problem. “(School)” (61SE) and “(Grimsby Corporation)” (30NE) both vanish; perhaps the compilers had reason to believe they were no longer applicable.

Main-series Provisionals

Compared to what had gone before, the main-series Provisionals were a massive undertaking. For Lincolnshire there was generally little new information other than that provided by the RAF air photographs and the compilers made a good job of extracting information from them. One finds not just new buildings (left unfilled to indicate the provisional nature of their survey), but also changes to drainage ditches and field boundaries. The depiction of new housing development varies noticeably across a sheet: perhaps it was easier to see garden

¹³ One type of ‘obvious’ update undertaken on sheets with railways was to replace pre-Grouping by post-Grouping company names.

fences on some photos than on others. When I had the opportunity to compare the depiction of an RAF hutted camp against detailed official plans, it appeared that the positioning of the buildings on the six-inch was inaccurate to the point of sloppiness.¹⁴ One rarely encounters such irregularity in the depiction of housing estates and one may suspect that the draughtsmen took more care when they knew that irregularities would stand out.

There must have been something of a production line process and the existence of an early-Provisional version of a sheet seems to have been regarded either as a disruption or an irrelevance. Main-series versions normally credit the air photos alone – ‘Additions in 1947’ – and it was perhaps felt that a rushed ground survey from a decade ago could offer little in comparison to air photos. The white additions of the earlier map might conceivably have been used to check that new buildings had not been missed on the air photos. However, one can find examples where this was patently not done. For example, in Louth (48SW) the SEE shows ribbon development along Elkington Road. The buildings correspond more or less to houses that one can see today, and those houses appear to be of the 1930s rather than the 1950s. The early Provisional repeats the depiction of those houses, whereas the main-series sheet fails to show them.

The real problem with the main-series Provisionals comes with deletions. Looking at air photographs for buildings that had vanished seems to have been a low priority. Thus the cottage with a BM on 118NW reappears. In Scawby village (27NE) the SEE reviser had noted a couple of cottages on the west of the High Street which had been replaced by buildings further back on the plot. The main-

series Provisional returns Scawby village (not to mention the stables at the Hall) to its 1907 state.

The main series is more reliable in showing names of new streets but there are nevertheless instances of sloppiness: for example, on 118NW, the SEE had correctly recorded a GRANVILLE AVENUE at Wyberton; the main series changes this to GLANVILLE. New road developments of a grander sort are infrequent, but at Sutterton (117SE) a roundabout appears on the SEE where the A16 crossed the A17; this is duly copied on the early Provisional but the main series restores the roads to their 1903 state (*see fig 6*). This is despite inserting new buildings adjacent to that junction. Incidentally, one of the new buildings was an octagonal concrete water tower. The SEE shows it as circular – an entirely excusable generalisation – and this is repeated on the early Provisional. The tower was something of a landmark until it was

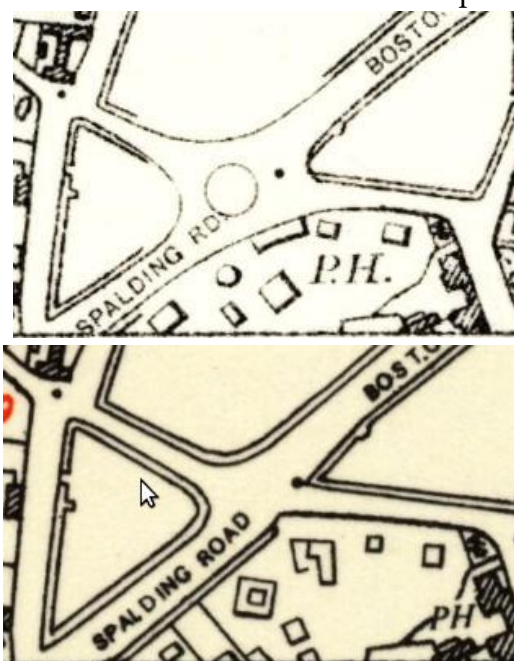


Figure 6: Lincs 117SE, Sutterton roundabout and water tower.

¹⁴ RC Wheeler, ‘The depiction of RAF stations on the Provisional (National Grid) six-inch’, *Sheetlines* 97, 46-47.

demolished a few years ago. The main series inexplicably shows it as a hollow quadrangle.

The names that had been deleted on the SEE re-appear, almost without exception, on the main-series Provisionals.

Conclusions

The first lesson to emerge from this exercise is about the main-series Provisionals. Incorporation of new building was prone to omissions. Deletion of features that had vanished (even when this should have been perfectly apparent from air photographs) seems to have been accorded a low priority. Realignment of road junctions might not be shown, even when adjacent buildings were being plotted. One also gains the worrying impression that draughtsmen knew the types of development where errors would be spotted by supervisors and gave such developments a degree of care that they failed to give to more nondescript additions. Housing estates look just as they ought; so do permanent public buildings like hospitals; but for the scatter of huts on a RAF domestic site or, it seems, the miscellaneous buildings around Sutterton water tower, sloppy drawing would only be spotted if comparison was made against the photographs – and it seems that such a check was not routine. In doubtful cases, anyone interested in a particular site may need to consult the air photographs.

For those sheets where an early Provisional exists, this should be consulted in conjunction with the main series. Where a feature or name has vanished from the early Provisional (compared to the pre-war regular edition) this should be regarded as *prima facie* evidence that the feature had gone or the name had ceased to be applicable by the date of the ARP revision, even when the feature or name reappears on the main series.

Except for those sheets where full revision took place in or after 1938, the SEE provides very little information that cannot be deduced from the early Provisional. Instances where a new addition on the SEE was not copied on the early Provisional are very rare. More common are the cases where a name appears to have been deliberately deleted from the SEE (as opposed to being deleted because it impinged on new additions) and was restored on the early Provisional; this cannot be regarded as definitive evidence that the name was no longer applicable in 1938 but it may be of use in conjunction with other evidence. Such instances are encountered on average on one in four sheets. Altogether, on the 33 sheets examined, there were just 18 instances where the SEE appeared to provide additional information.

How similar the results would be from a similar exercise in a different county must be regarded as an open question. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that this paper indicates the processes that should be looked for.

<p><i>Correction:</i> Please note that on <i>Sheetlines</i> 107 page 41, ‘At (5) it adds an open-sided structure’ should read ‘At (6) it adds an open-sided structure’.</p>
