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“What happened at Hendon Central in
1941?”

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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.

What happened at Hendon Central in 1941?

The answer apparently is NOTHING, at least nothing of such topographical significance as to account for the curious discrepancies in detail there are thereabouts between Six-inch sheet Middlesex VII SW (revised 1935-6) and 1:12,500 GSGS 4157 sheet 56/20 SW (A), (revised 1941).

I was lucky enough to secure a copy of the GSGS sheet at the Charles Close Society AGM map market in July 1991, since it contained a large portion of what was then the Borough of Hendon, and my home at the time of its printing was in Alderton Crescent, barely 200 yards from Hendon Central Station on the Underground Edgware line. To my surprise, on a quite superficial examination I found that a length of almost exactly 600 yards of the underground line, from the south portal of the Hendon tunnel through the station south eastwards towards the footbridge by the Public Park was completely omitted, and that although the outline of the station building was shown, the building was no longer filled in with solid black and the word 'Sta' had disappeared. Closer examination showed that although much of the delineation of residential streets on the map as a whole showed houses separately, with garden boundaries, these had been replaced in several areas, of which Hendon Central was one and Preston, near Wembley, another, by simplified blocks of shading with boundaries of individual properties omitted. In addition, the crossroads at Hendon Central (Hendon Central Circus) had been redrawn to show buildings that never existed, even when the roundabout was replaced by traffic lights and a pedestrian subway several years later.

I was of course aware that the Circus was built about the time of the opening of the underground extension from Golders Green. We moved from Hampstead to Hendon in August 1924, timing the move to coincide with the opening of the railway, by which my father was to commute to Hampstead for the next 15 years. During those years I was to become familiar with every yard of the streets and footpaths for half a mile or more around our home, and with the shapes of many of the houses and blocks of shops and flats. I paid a visit to the 'old homestead' quite recently and can confirm that even the conversion of the A.500 'Watford Way' arterial road into the A.41 modern dual carriageway has made no difference to the facades of the buildings alongside either it or the B.551 which crosses it.

So I ask the question 'Who dreamed up the imaginative but largely false reconstruction of Hendon Central Circus portrayed on GSGS 4157 and why?' I have checked the details on the corresponding GSGS 3906 sheet, and the 1935 Six-inch sheet, and I find that the GSGS sheet is an outline reduction at 1:25,000 of the Six-inch, without details of buildings, even in block form, and is by no means a reduced version of GSGS 4157. Hendon Central Circus on GSGS 3906 is the same as on the Six-inch.

Guy Messenger