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“The use of one-inch maps by a railway
promoter”

R C Wheeler

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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.

The use of one-inch maps by a railway promoter

R C Wheeler

We know little enough about who purchased Ordnance maps in the first half of the nineteenth century. The evidence is scattered and usually encountered by chance, so I hope readers will be tolerant if I offer another fragment of evidence from Lincolnshire. The user (or intended user) in this case was W C Calthrop, the Secretary of the implausibly-named Lincoln, Wainfleet Haven and Boston Railway, which was established in 1845, withdrew its

⁹ The reason could not have been sensitivity to the figurative form 'gone west', for which the earliest OED reference is 1915.

proposals from the 1846 Parliamentary session, almost wound itself up in May 1846, but continued to exist as a legal entity for another twelve years.¹

The company offices were at Spilsby, Lincolnshire. Its engineer, Thomas Page, was based in Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall. Its London solicitors were Messrs Scott & Tahourdin of 25 Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Spilsby office managed without a map until the end of 1845. By then, gloomy rumours were circulating that the project was chimerical, and shareholder relations were at the forefront of the Secretary's mind. He wrote to Page on 31 December:

...Can you spare some of the Ordnance Maps, if so, send down two complete, with the line [of railway] marked in – if you please.

The following day, he explained himself more clearly:

Please send the Ordnance Maps as requested with the line marked on. If you could get them bound fast, the Nottingham portion included to make the square, it would be better.

The proposed railway extended from sheet 83, through sheet 84 and into sheet 69. The 'Nottingham portion' must be a reference to sheet 70, which includes a little of Nottinghamshire. Clearly Calthrop wanted a square map but he probably had not taken account of the size of four full sheets joined together. The subject was still on his mind when he wrote to Page yet again on 2 January 1846:

Please don't forget the Ordnance Maps – people thro' whose property the line passes come here to look at the map and it appears foolish not to have one and the Ordnance shows more fully than your map the relative position of various plans.

The plans referred to will be the ones required for legal deposit showing each parcel of land through which the line was to pass, out to the limits of deviation.

A few days later, the engineer sent his report on the practicability of a harbour at Wainfleet to a Directors' meeting. Calthrop's confidence returned and the maps slipped from his mind. As much as anything, he seems to have needed a solid ink line on an official map to convince himself, as well as others, that the project was real.

The subject was forgotten until April 1846 when Calthrop was putting the accounts together and collecting in the Company's property. James Wyld, of Charing Cross, submitted an account for Ordnance Maps supplied. Calthrop wrote to Scott & Tahourdin (as also to Wyld):

Do you know for whom they were ordered, as I do not know what has become of them.

Clearly Calthrop had never received his map of the line. It is interesting that used Ordnance maps were considered sufficiently valuable to be worth chasing in this manner. Wyld's shop would be the most convenient source for Page to obtain his maps from; is this the earliest reference to this firm which would come to be the principal London agency?

So, when contemplating an Old Series sheet with just a single railway inked in, spare a thought for Calthrop. It may be that your sheet was the sole tool that some distraught Secretary had to convince his neighbours and shareholders that the project he represented was real.

¹ Its minutes and the Secretary's out-letter book are in Lincolnshire Archives, Misc Don 588/7.