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“Theodolite diaphragms”

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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.

Theodolite diaphragms

The extract from Close's *Text book* (1913)¹ reminded me of Brevet-Major Martin Hotine's remarks when he received the eight-inch Reflecting Theodolite from Cooke, Troughton and Simms in September 1932. Deep in the Tanganyika bush, observing a key section of the Arc of the Thirtieth Meridian, he lamented certain small defects in the instrument:

Par exemple, a micrometer web arrives broken and there is no spare, although there is a complete spare micrometer eyepiece which we shall probably never use. Doubtless I ought to be able to catch a spider and even make the result readable, though such experience as I have with spider webs in the field does not fill me full of hope about making two of them parallel under a magnification of about 40. Actually I shall leave it alone for the present and do without the advantage of your system of duplicate webs at 4-minute spacing. I shall hope no more get broken ...²

This perhaps exemplifies Hotine's comment in an earlier letter to McCaw (19 May 1932): 'As you know I have next to no patience'.

Richard T Porter

¹ *Sheetlines* 77, 56.

² Hotine to G T McCaw, 5 October 1932, in G Survey File 2, formerly AD 50 in the Survey Data Library, Directorate of Overseas Surveys (later Ordnance Survey International); now being accessioned by The National Archives. Also reproduced in Richard T Porter and James R Smith, *A special eight-inch reflecting theodolite*, Southampton: Ordnance Survey International Library, 2002, 69. Martin Hotine was in charge of the retriangulation of Great Britain, 1935-39.