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“Shooting towers and speed track”

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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.

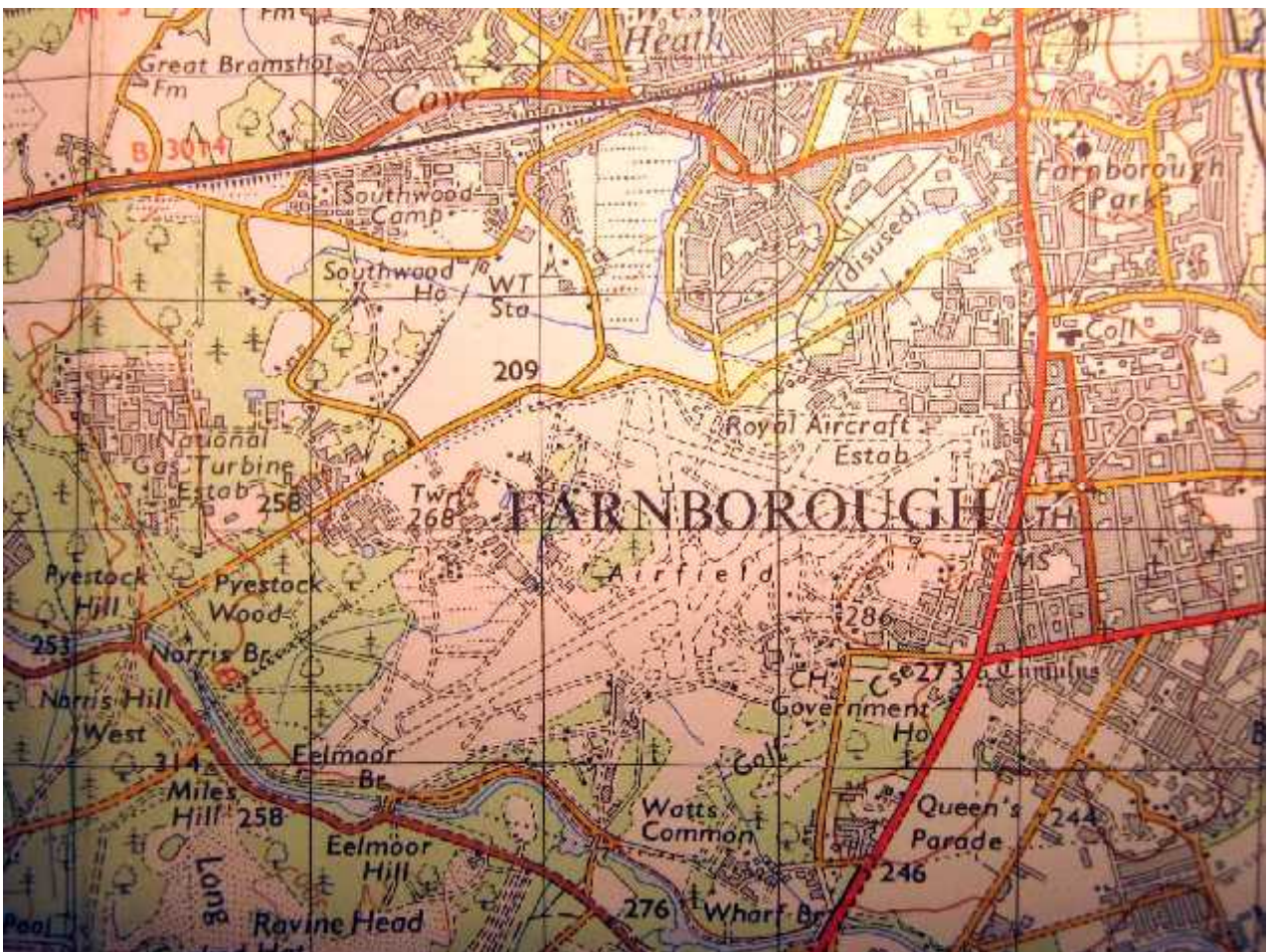
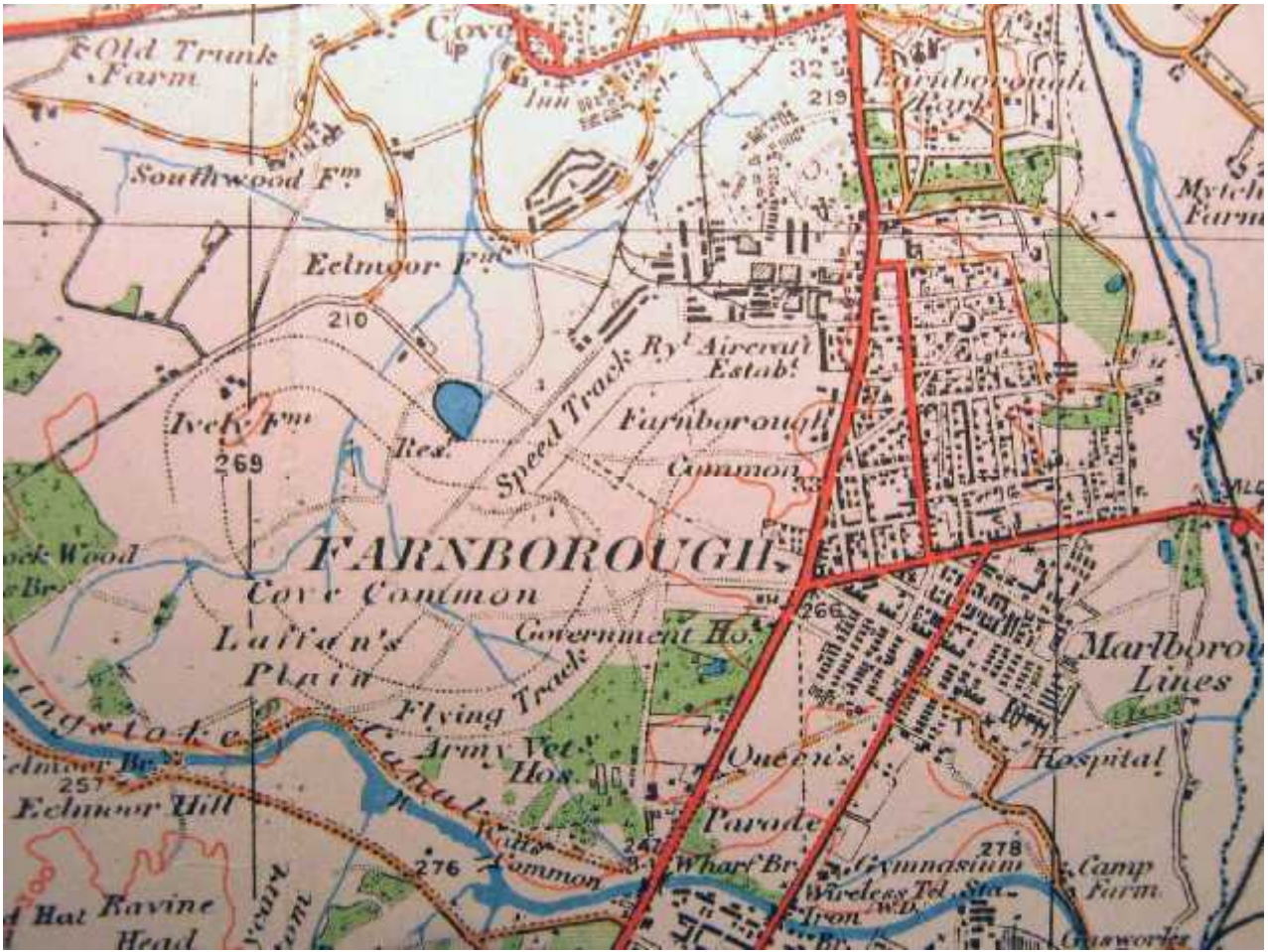
The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.

Shooting towers and speed track
Aidan de la Mare



I would be grateful if anyone could help me by identifying some features that I have found on Popular Edition maps. In the bottom right hand corner of sheet 106 *Watford* of 1920 (*above*) there are three spots that are annotated *Shooting Tower*, two near Brent Reservoir and one at Perivale. These are in squares G13, H13 and J11; there is also *Shooting Towers* below the words *Golf Course* in square G12. They are also present on the *London (Country Round London)* tourist map of 1921. They are absent from the Third Edition and from the Fifth Edition, so they seem to have had a short existence, perhaps resulting from some military activity during the First World War.

I have not been able to find out what these were, but a clue may be found on the three-inch *London* (NW section) map of 1933 which does not show the towers, but has *Shooting Ground* just north of the Brent Reservoir on the site of one of the towers. Curiously, the Fifth Edition 106 does introduce a new shooting tower two miles west of Barnet, and this is carried forward onto the New Popular 160 at TQ 215970, but it does not survive on the Seventh Series. Can anyone shed any light on these, or perhaps find a photograph of them?



The other question is about the odd features that are found at the site of Farnborough Aerodrome that can be found on Popular Edition 114 *Windsor* of 1920 (my copy 5000/23) in square J2 (*opposite, upper*). This consists of a straight *Speed Track* and a kidney-shaped *Flying Track*, adjoining the group of buildings that are served by a railway link, and annotated *Ryl. Aircraft Establ.* This can also be found on the earlier *Aldershot District North* of 1914, but without annotation or railway connection. But on Fifth (Relief) Edition *Aldershot District North* of 1932 the whole thing is swept away, and the site reverts to its Third Edition form, except for a railway connection that ends in a piece of rough ground, and a small area entitled *Aerodrome*. And even that disappears from the New Popular and early Seventh Series, although the rail connection remains. It is not until the last printings of the Seventh Series (my copy B/*) that the full extent of the Royal Aircraft Establishment is revealed (*opposite, lower*). So what were these tracks, where they for road vehicles or aeroplanes, and if so why did they need tracks for aeroplanes?



Ordnance Survey Office,

Southampton, July 1st 1926

Dear Sir,

Mr. Ptoke has told me about a Roman site on the southern slopes of Bredon Hill which he visited with you some years ago. Would you be so kind as to give me some further information about it, both for general purposes & especially for the new edition of the OS. Map of Roman Britain now being prepared? This map will show all certain Roman sites, as well as miscellaneous remains indicating permanent settlements

If, as seems probable, your site is that of a villa one would like to mark it as such; but it would not be safe to do so unless the evidence includes foundations, roof-tiles, tesserae or such like objects.

Could you also describe the ~~site's~~ exact position of the site by means of points marked on the 6 inch map, so that I may be able to locate it more precisely?

Believe me

Yours truly

O. G. S. Crawford

Archaeology Officer

A Holland location Coy. C.B. 75a.

Bill Riley found this letter written by OGS Crawford in 1926 tucked inside a copy of Crawford's autobiography *Said and Done*, published in 1955