“Further exploration”

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Further exploration

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In *Sheetlines 71* I gave somewhat qualified praise to the B editions of the twelve *Explorer* maps which wholly or partly cover Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This was based on a comparison with the B editions and A editions of 1997 which I had ‘revised’ from 1:10,000 scale maps revised 1995-2000 held in the local library. An extension of this exercise covering sheets 102, 104, 105 and 111 indicates that I ought to put the record straight with a considerable increase in praise for the revision levels observed.

In my previous article field boundaries (mainly deletion) were noted to be revised on a rather ad hoc basis but on sheets 102 and 111, possibly for different reasons, this is far less apparent and indeed it would take a very keen eye on both maps to spot deletions or additions of such detail which had not been picked up. There can be little doubt with hindsight that the A editions were something of a ‘confidence trick’, albeit a justifiable one, in that Ordnance Survey simply did not have the resources or staff to undertake a revision of the constituent *Pathfinders* which by 1997 were, more often than not, badly out of date. Cosmetic improvements involving sketched lakes and large rural buildings were resorted to; most, if not all, being corrected on the B editions. But in spite of it being a major task, especially on sheets 102 and 111, field boundary revision had by 2003 been all but completely updated as well.

Sheet 102 had included a *Pathfinder* – one of only two in Cornwall to be fully revised by the late 1980s. But the *Pathfinder* to the immediate north contained over 50 km² originally revised in 1961 where a vast amount of field boundary clearance had taken place in the following twenty years. This area of *Explorer* 102, when published in 1997, remained in its 1961 condition with the exception of some built up area improvements.¹

Sheet 111 included two *Pathfinders* where some 68 km² were in their 1905 state; a further eight circa 1932, and eight more part 1905/32. Whilst a number of squares had received attention prior to 1997, more than half (apparently) were in their original condition. The actual extent of this revision task carried out on the 2003 *Explorer* has to be seen to be believed!

Whilst revision of names was not fully investigated, it was obvious that many changes had taken place, especially where farms and isolated rural buildings or large houses were concerned. These can doubtless be attributed to the Address-Point programme of OS which is kept very much up to date. Yet another advance is that fire breaks, as opposed to tracks, are clearly shown in woods simply by a break in the colouration, though this is not mentioned in the general information section of the legend.

Are there any drawbacks, and are *Explorer* B editions as good as this in other parts of the country? Well, I have some doubts about vegetation classified from air photos rather than ground inspection. What may well appear as dense non-coniferous wood on a Cornish air photo is often no more than dense scrub. It was also noted that there had been much deletion of areas of scrub, bracken, heath or rough grass which could be questionable in certain instances. Also, tidal revision is probably a low priority. Alteration (if any) would not be apparent to the majority of tide lines at 1:25,000 scale in Cornwall, bar long sandy beaches or

¹ Roughly an area bounded by Penzance, St Ives and Marazion.
river estuaries, instances being pointed out on Explorers 106 and 107 in Sheetlines 71. In an extension of that exercise a single change was spotted on the beach at Bude (Explorer 111) where a river course has altered.

Finally, the contours mentioned in Sheetlines 57 have not been deleted at Hayle Towans on Explorer 102. They are deleted on the 1:10,000 maps, the land coloured yellow and annotated ‘dunes’.