



Sheetlines

The journal of
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps

“Not the M1”

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Sheetlines, 95 (December 2012), pp.18-19

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlescloseociety.org/files/Issue95page18.pdf>

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Published by
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps
www.CharlesCloseSociety.org

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.

Not the M1

Several readers have responded to Philippa J Corrie's letter in *Sheetlines* 94 about an apparent error on the half-inch sheet 37 *Leicester* issued by the Society in our *Maps from the Past* series.



The label M1 that Philippa Corrie spotted on the dual carriageway across Dunsmore Heath on sheet 37 (*above*) is simply an error. It is beside a stretch of road that has never been a motorway, and remains now part of the A45.

The western end of the M45, which carried that number from its opening in 1958 and still does, joins the A45 at a roundabout west of Dunchurch, and east of the spurious 'M1'. The whole length of the M10, the M1 between it and Watford Gap, and the whole length of the M45 from there formed the original motorway from London northwards, and opened in 1959.

The M1 was always planned to run to Yorkshire, and its continuation from the M45 turn-off is shown as pecked 'under construction' on sheet 37. It opened to Kegworth in 1964.

The 'Midlands Links Motorways', connecting the M1, M5 and M6 which had all originally stopped short of the heart of the West Midlands conurbation, were a slightly later part of the grand strategy. So the southern end of the M6 did not open from the M1 at Catthorpe westwards until 1971.

James Mackay

The M1 was always planned to go from London to Yorkshire. It was never intended to go to Birmingham. It would appear to be an error by Ordnance Survey and its cartographers.

On my versions of sheet 133, 1953 (reprinted with the addition of major roads 1961) and 1968 (fully revised 1967, major roads revised 1968), the M45 is clearly shown and labelled. The M45 has never been demoted. Once again, it appears to be an Ordnance Survey error.

On a version of sheet 132 (1967 version C fully revised 1966), the M45 and A45 are correctly shown. The M45/A45 was the route from the M1 to Birmingham until the M6 was constructed. The M45 could be demoted in status but at its

junction with M1 it only has south-facing slip-roads. The M1/M45 junction would have to be rebuilt and a new length of road constructed from M1/M45 junction to A428 at Crick.

David C Kimber

The OS regarded the half-inch as a derivative series which would not require any survey work beyond that which had been done for the one-inch maps. So in principle this map should not show anything one could not see by looking at the latest one-inch sheets.

In practice, because information on dual carriageways had been *collected* for one-inch survey but not *shown* hitherto, this is the first OS map to show the lengths of dual carriageway on the A46 Six Hills road. More critically, it was felt impossible to omit the new M1, opened in November 1959, but policy did not allow a surveyor to be sent out for the sake of a half-inch map. Consequently, the motorway appears to have been inserted on the basis of the contract specification.

Unfortunately, after the contract had been let in 1955, it was decided to extend the M1 another two miles, from its junction with the M45 to the present Crick junction with the A428. It can be seen from the extract below that the OS marks these two miles as still a 'Motorway under construction'. Careful inspection shows the M45 to cross the A5 on the level rather than passing underneath it as it actually does: presumably that had been the point at which in 1955 it had been intended that traffic from the Leicester direction should join the new motorway.

So we have the odd situation that both Shell and BP could issue accurate strip-maps of the new motorway in time for its opening but the country's official mapping agency was getting it wrong almost a year later. Perhaps that was one reason the map was never published.

Rob Wheeler

