



# *Sheetlines*

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

“Finest index map in the world”

*Rob Wheeler*

*Sheetlines*, 95 (December 2012), pp.46

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlescloseociety.org/files/Issue95page46.pdf>

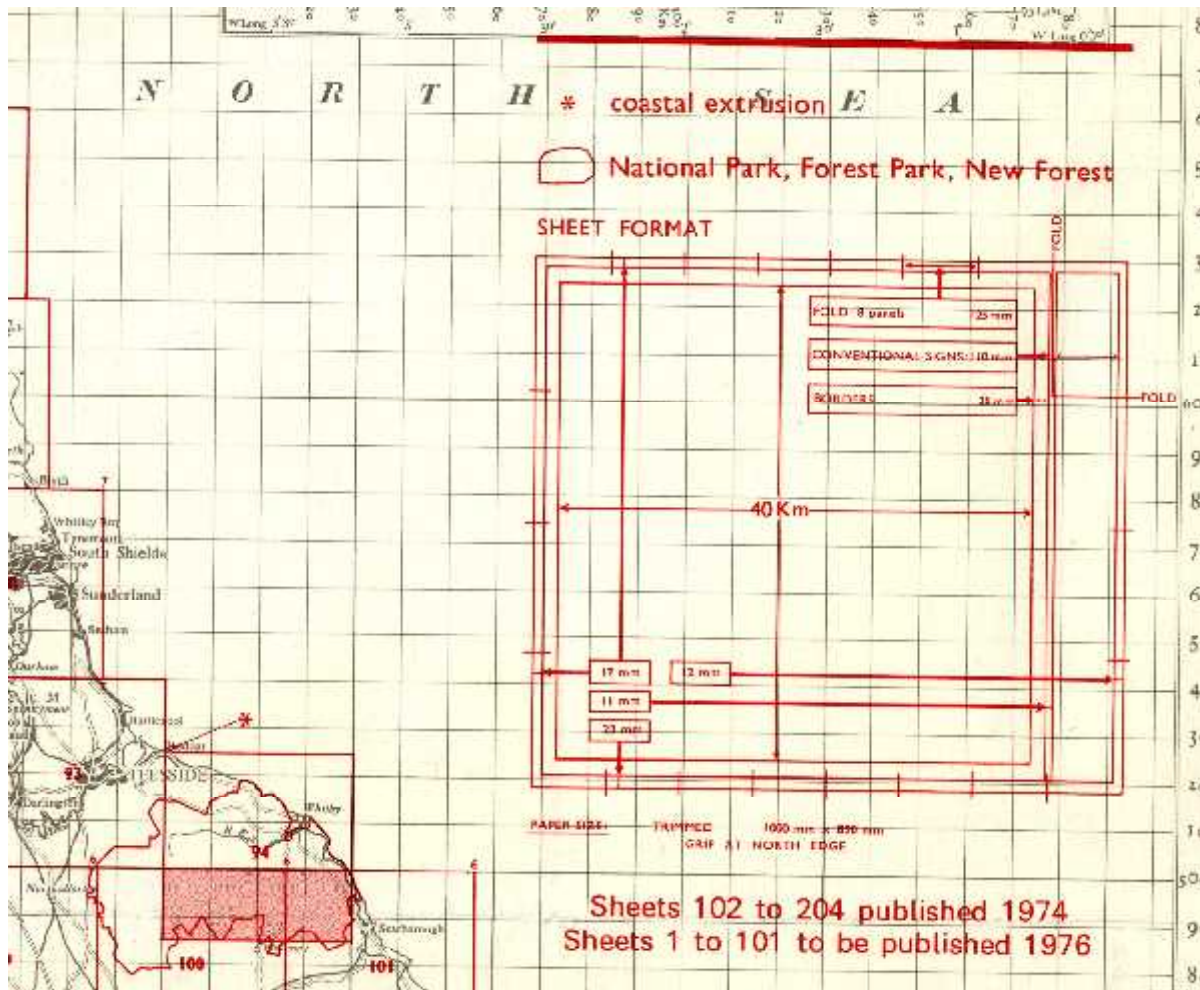
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Published by  
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY  
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps  
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The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history 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 finest index map in the world?*



Readers of the Ten-mile cartobibliography<sup>1</sup> will be aware of the 1:1,250,000 index maps produced for the launch of the 1:50,000 series. Some may even recall seeing a copy pinned up in a map shop. I had always supposed this to be a very uninformative map – after all, one can see the arrangement of the 1:50,000 sheets on their back covers. However, when I came to look closely at a specimen of the index recently, I realised it was not so much an index as a specification.

Thus each sheet edge on the index is unobtrusively labelled with the kilometre figure of its grid coordinate. Since all sheet corners have whole-km grid references, this defines the extent of the sheet precisely – except for extrusions, and these are marked by an asterisk on the index.

A separate panel tells one the exact size of the conventional signs panel, the width of the margin, and the folding scheme. There is even a note 'Grip at North edge' which indicates the manner in which the sheets have gone through the printing press – though why the user might wish to know this, I cannot say.

I would never claim the OS 1:50,000 as the finest series in the world at that scale. But it may have had the most informative index sheet. Or does anyone know a fuller example?

*Rob Wheeler*

<sup>1</sup> Roger Hellyer, *The 'Ten-mile' maps of the Ordnance Survey*, Charles Close Society, 1992, 141.