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“A new Guernsey official map”

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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.

A new Guernsey official map

Gerry Zierler



Last year saw a new map of the Bailiwick of Guernsey from the States' map contractor, Guernsey Digimap Services - hosts of the 2009 visit by CCS members.

A new map and (to the writer anyway) at a new scale for the island of Guernsey too, 1:15,000. My thought on first opening this map was that it is a reduction of an OS-style six-inch map. Please forgive this fleeting thought, GDS, for the new issue is a splendid map!

The result of this choice of scale is a very clear representation of the small field system of the Guernsey countryside, not attempted in the earlier 1:25,000 maps, produced by The Guernsey Geographical Information Service. In the towns too, the scale allows the naming of principal streets, though this might have worked better with a more careful choice of font.

Opened out from its 225mm by 135mm card covers, this is a big sheet of 1200mm by 840mm. This has allowed not only the whole of Guernsey on one side, but room for four further large scale maps on the reverse. These are of Alderney, Herm and Sark, each at 1:10,000, and of St Peter Port town centre at a novel 1:3000, or as the helpful descriptive notes state, 'approximately 22 inches to the mile'. Scale bars are however in 'kilometers' [sic!].

But caveat emptor! The front cover is most alluring, but a bit of a cheat. This is a colourful fudge, graded between (left) an enlarged extract from the map and (right) aerial photography of the same area, around Grand Havre. The back cover is a location map, of the English Channel showing Guernsey and Alderney to be roughly equidistant from Weymouth and St Malo. Les Îles Normandes? Non! Not even the words 'Channel Islands' here – and the bigger island of Jersey is relegated too: this is strictly a map for the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

It is interesting to compare this new publication with what has gone before from OS. My own collection threw up two 1:21,120 (3 inches to the mile) folded OS maps, from 1934 and 1966, the latter almost unchanged in format since the former except for very heavy layer colouring, and looking decidedly dated even for that period. (The 'War Office & Air Ministry' published sheets in the 1950s at 1:25,000 and at 1:50,000 as GSGS (Misc) 1769 and 1768 respectively. I know I have them somewhere but they wouldn't appear in time for this report – sorry! Any takers?).

CCS visitors to Alderney will remember our excitement at finding the 2004 OS sheet still in stock in St Anne. No doubt the shopkeeper was equally excited at selling them all, five or more years later! At 1:10,560 scale (six inches to the mile)

this map provides a closer comparison with that of this island on the 'B' side of the new Bailiwick map. Whilst the OS offering was a very pleasing product and certainly much more colourful, it may be the denseness of the colour which made it, in the writer's view, much less readable. This is particularly true of the solid green covering most of the land area, which on both sides of the new GDS product is instead an extremely subtle layer tinting using very pale peachy and green colours.

Recommended to connoisseurs of good mapping – you know who you are! Published by the States of Guernsey. No price marked but I paid around £8.

