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“October weekend in Conwy”

*John Davies*

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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.

## *October weekend in Conwy*

*John Davies*

Bryn Corach is a fanciful turreted house, reputedly a replica of Conwy Castle, which it overlooks, and has sweeping views over Great Orme, Snowdonia's mountains and the Irish Sea. This hospitable HF hotel was our venue for the weekend. The manager, a genial New Zealander named Keith, welcomed us in what we took to be Welsh but turned out to be Maori. He did promise us some Welsh weather, though, and that proved to be true.

As is usual for our annual social weekend we had arranged a mix of formal and informal sessions from Friday evening until Sunday noon, giving plenty of opportunities for getting to know fellow members and learning something new with a cartographic flavour.

Our Friday speaker was Dafydd Gwynn, cultural historian, archaeologist, broadcaster and director of the Welsh Highland Railway. He described the relative remoteness of north-west Wales, particularly before the railway era, and the vital contribution of local mapmakers, however unsophisticated, to the economic development of the area. Later Alan Collinson, of local cartographers Geo-Innovations, spoke of the creative ways in which mapmakers can portray information without the need for symbols and legends.



CJH

*Edric Roberts (on the left) prepares to lead CCS members through the low passages of the copper mine. The hard hats proved essential!*

On Saturday we visited Great Orme Head. This was a pleasant surprise to those of us with childhood memories of the mountain as a rather tacky tourist trap. It's now a well-managed, attractive and very interesting destination where conservation co-exists, more-or-less comfortably, with tourism.

Our first stop, after ascending by the venerable cable-hauled Edwardian tramway, was a tour of the Bronze Age copper mine where our guide, Edric Roberts, told of the accidental discovery of the extent of the workings when he was commissioned by the local council to survey the site of a proposed car park twenty years ago. A vast system of hand-excavated tunnels and shafts extends under the mountain, dating from about 2000 BC, which was worked for green malachite, from which the copper was smelted, until Victorian times. Mr Roberts and his colleagues, having managed to prevent the car park construction, took a lease over the land and have subsequently gradually explored and opened up passages and developed an attraction of major significance.

Later, Rhona Davies, acting warden, led a walk over part of the Country Park, pointing out some of the features and talking about the challenges of mitigating the pressures of tourism. As well as its status as a Country Park, the headland includes an LNR (Local Nature Reserve) and an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The western part, beyond the summit is a particularly sensitive area of limestone pavement and wild moorland; tourist development being largely restricted to the area east of the summit towards Llandudno.

We collected two different and very attractive locally-produced large-scale maps of Great Orme, both derived from original GPS surveys and local observation. These are by Geo-Innovations and Mapping Company Ltd respectively. In addition, the Country Park leaflet includes a useful and informative map.

Several members had brought items from their own collections to display and discuss, which we did on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. This sharing of knowledge and passions is always a rewarding experience and we thank Chris Higley, Mike Cottrell, Roger Hellyer and Gerry Zierler for their contributions.

*Links :*

Great Orme Tramway	<a href="http://www.greatormetramway.co.uk">www.greatormetramway.co.uk</a>
Great Orme Copper Mine	<a href="http://www.greatormemines.info">www.greatormemines.info</a>
Great Orme Country Park	<a href="http://www.conwy.gov.uk/countryside">www.conwy.gov.uk/countryside</a> and follow links
Geo-Innovations	<a href="http://www.geoinnovations.co.uk">www.geoinnovations.co.uk</a>
Mapping Company Ltd	<a href="http://www.themappingcompany.co.uk">www.themappingcompany.co.uk</a>