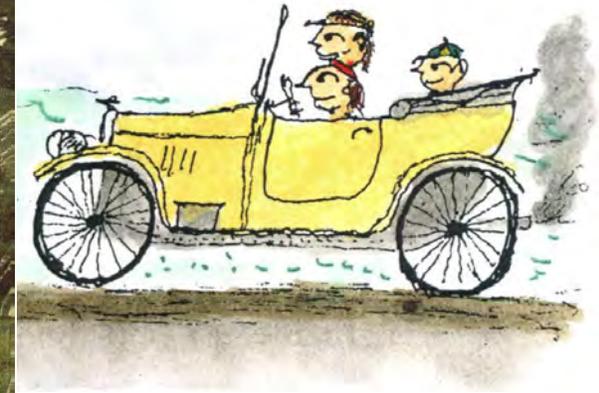
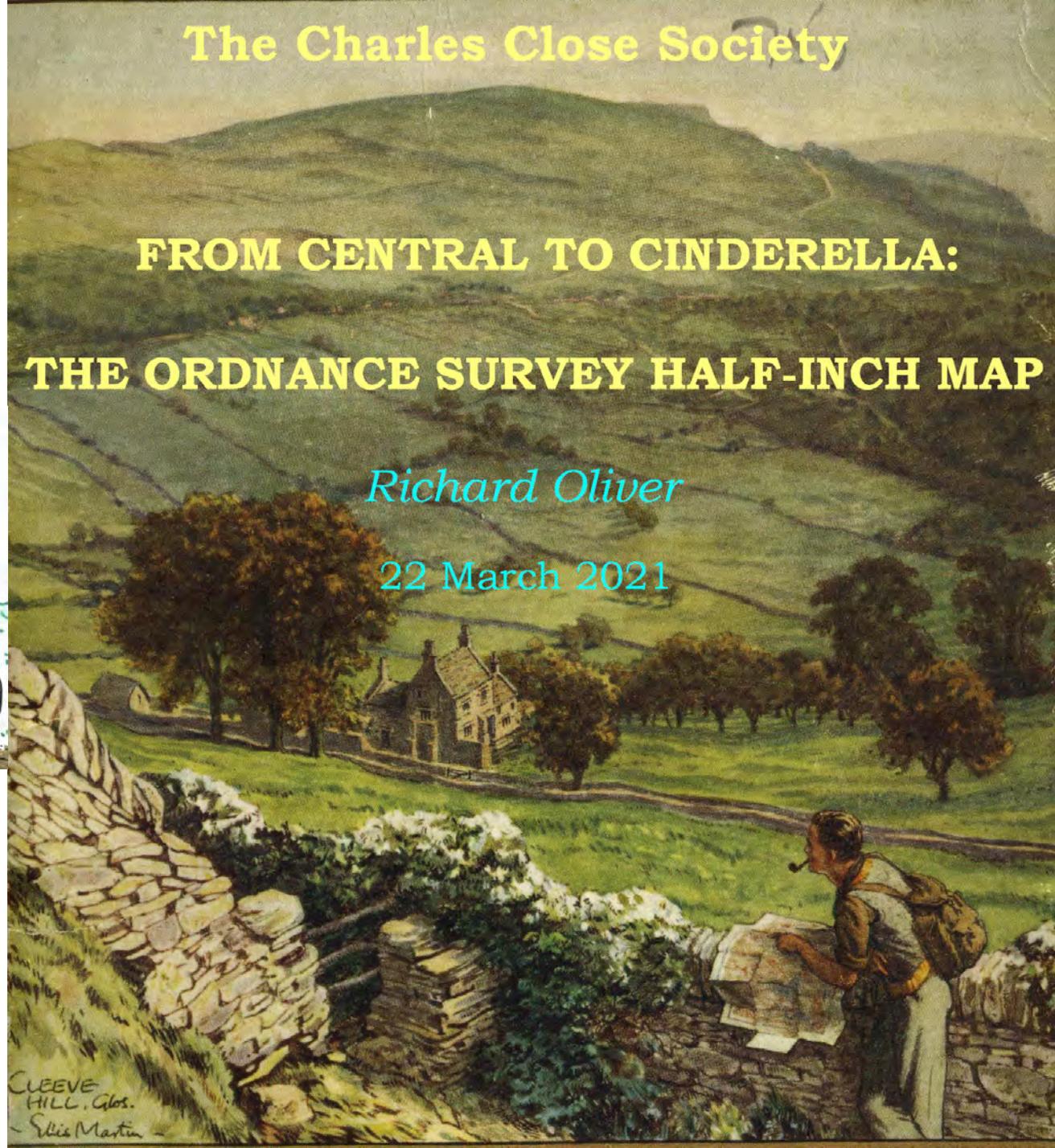


The Charles Close Society

FROM CENTRAL TO CINDERELLA: THE ORDNANCE SURVEY HALF-INCH MAP

Richard Oliver

22 March 2021

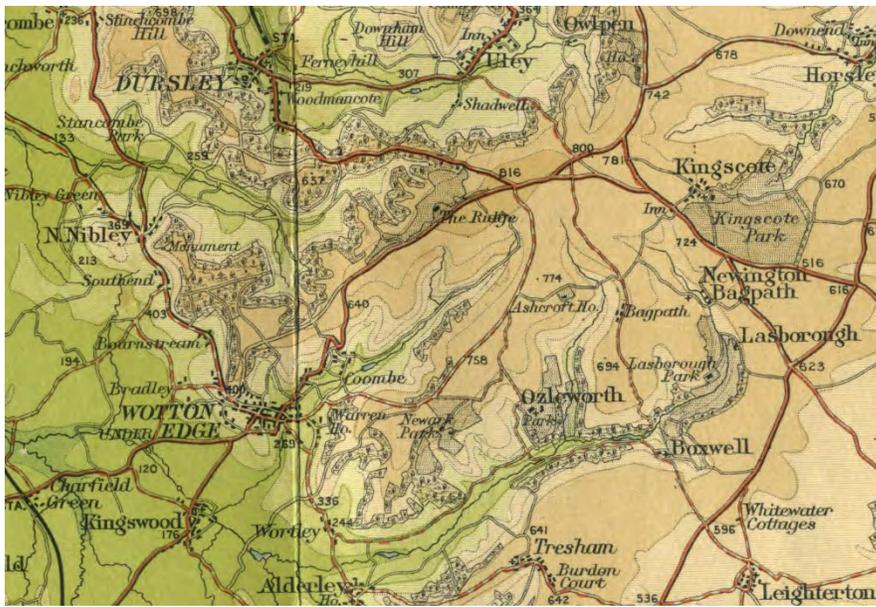


This was an introduction to the Ordnance Survey half-inch map series, which several CCS members have been working on since even before CCS was formed in 1980. Bartholomew started their famous series at this scale in 1875, and in 1900 the Army decided that the half-inch rather than the one-inch was the optimum scale for general use. This led to the OS half-inch being authorised in May 1902, with the first sheets published in March 1903, and for the next 20 years the Army regarded it as the primary topographic map of the country. It went through several rethinks and redesigns, and arguably never achieved a 'definitive' form. In 1922 the army decided they preferred the one-inch after all, being better suited to a kilometre-interval grid, and the half-inch had to survive or fall as a civil map. Efforts after 1930 at restyling and redrawing were frustrated first by the war and then by a lack of money, and the series effectively came to an end in Britain in the 1960s. In Ireland it had a different career: in the Republic it came to be the standard map of the country by the 1950s, and lasted, with some interesting changes of detail, until replaced by the 1:50,000 in the 1990s.

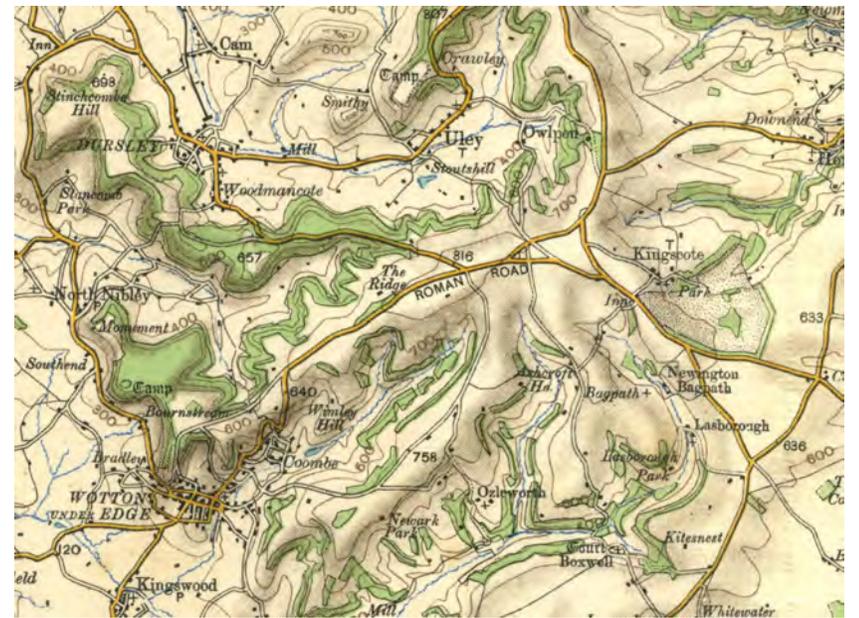
The talk described a considerable number of variations of style: a few are illustrated in the two following slides.



It is recommended that viewers use the enlarging-bar to get a better idea of the map extracts.

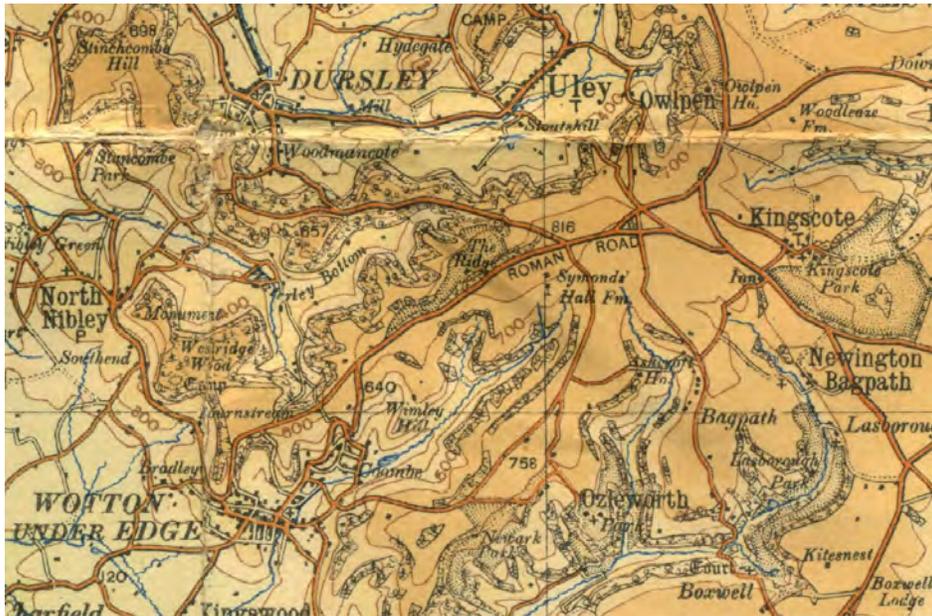


←-- Bartholomew half-inch sheet 28, c. 1904: the firm's mature layering

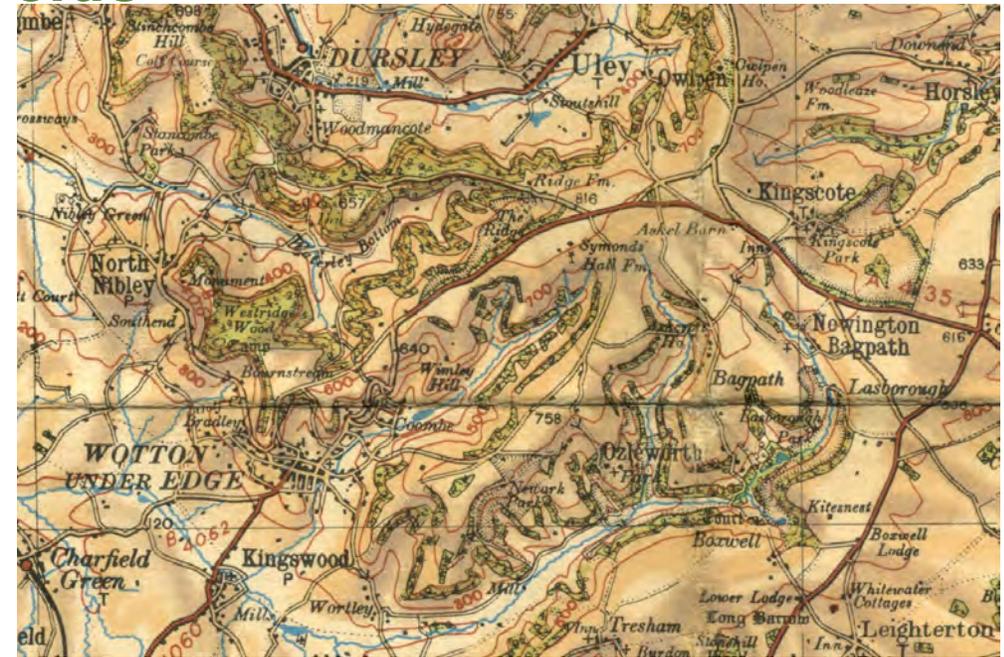


Ordnance Survey half-inch small sheet series 70 (1903): hill-shaded rather than layered ->

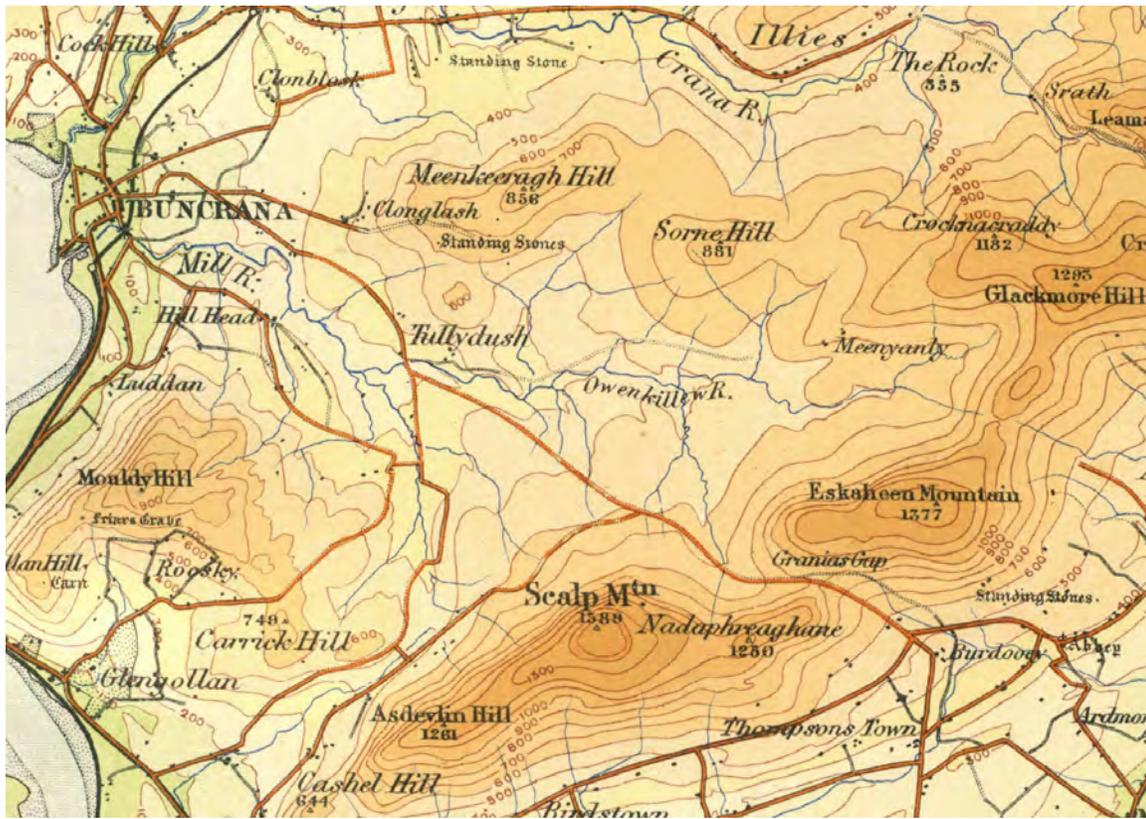
Four different styles for mapping the Cotswolds



←- Ordnance Survey half-inch large sheet series 27 (1913): layering much closer in style to Bartholomew

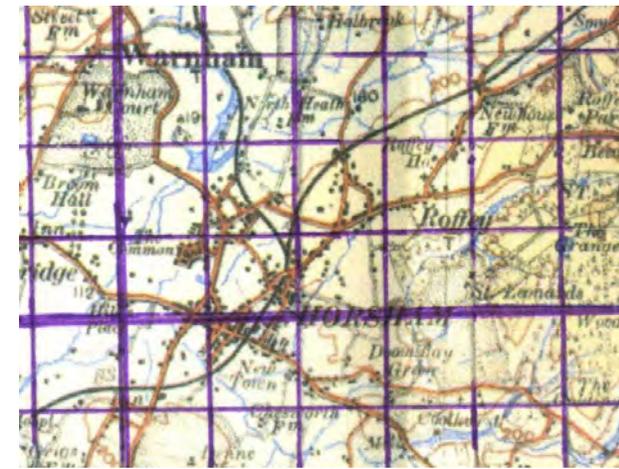


Cotswolds special sheet (1931): hill-shading and subtle layers -



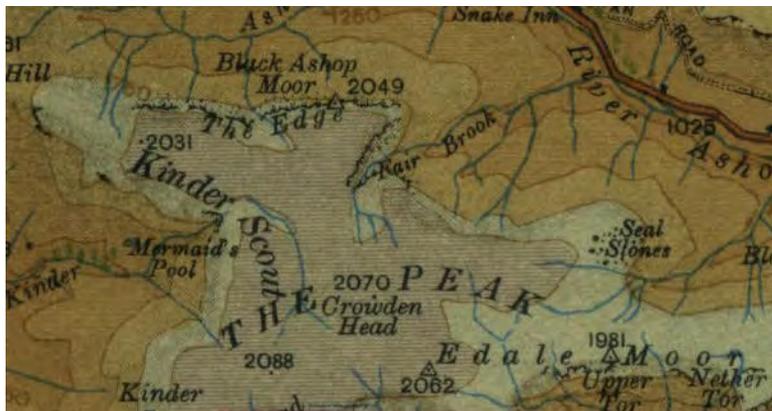
← Ireland sheet 2, with layers (1912): rightly considered by its designer – Col Charles Close – as amongst the most legible of topographic maps then in existence

Reconstruction of kilometre gridding on Aldershot special sheet (1922): *not* a cartographic success... →



^

Luton Airport makes its small-scale cartographic debut, in 1940 on the military version (GSGS 4159) of the district map first published in 1935. (The military version had neither contours nor layers: the brown background here is due to paper acidity.)



Half-inch sheet 13 with layers (1908): the colours were later described as 'laid on with a trowel', and the style was short-lived!