



Sheetlines

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

“Landscape of London [map review]”

Richard Oliver

Sheetlines, 88 (August 2010), pp.50-51

Stable URL: <http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/files/Issue88page50.pdf>

*This article is provided for personal, non-commercial use only.
Please contact the Society regarding any other use of this work.*

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.

Review

***The landscape of London, 1:65,000,
Anderson Geographics, 2009. ISBN 978-0-9548428-1-9, £9.99***

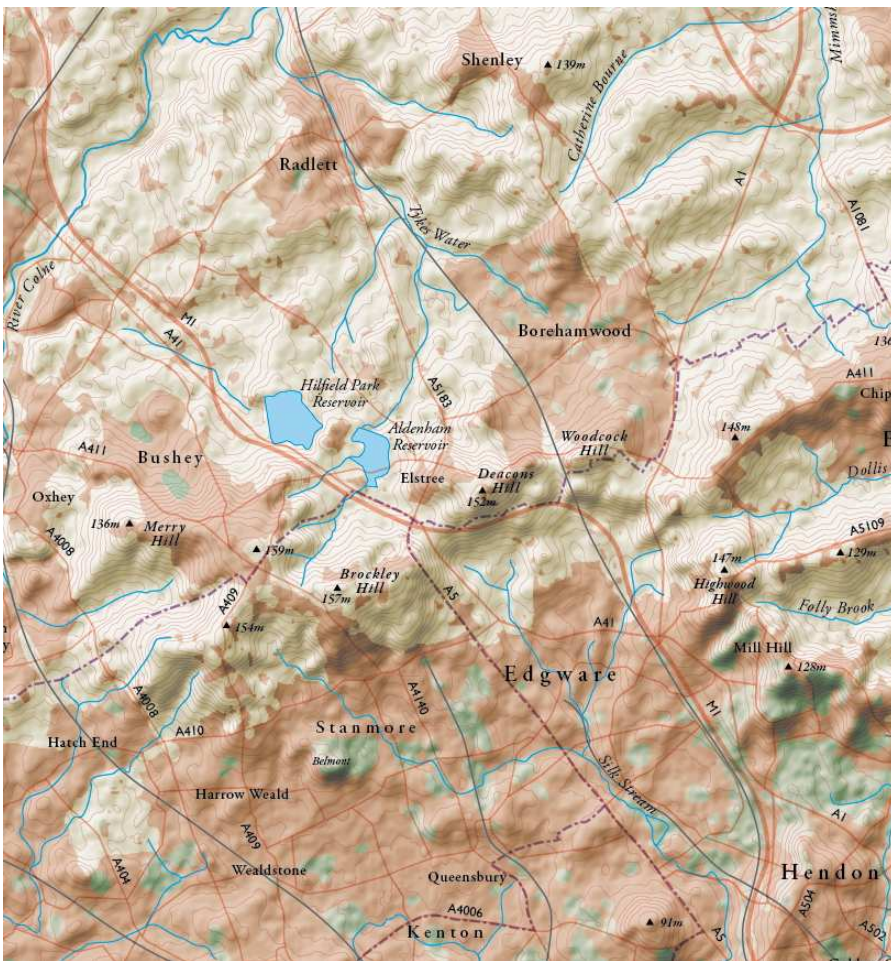
The first thing to say about this stylish offering is that you get more map-area for your money than you do from Ordnance Survey, who printed it. The paper size is the same as for the OS 1:50,000 *Landranger*, 100.0 by 89.0 centimetres, but there is a ‘bleed’ edge and the title and legend, tucked into a corner, occupy only about 12.2 by 12.9 cm, so that 98.2% of the paper is ‘map’, as compared with only 71.9% of the *Landranger*, or 63.9% for those *Landrangers* with a Welsh legend. Efficiency of paper use is one of those strangely-neglected aspects of map design that deserve more attention. It is partly determined by the complexity or otherwise of the legend and marginalia: here there are only eleven symbols to explain, and there is no grid.

The map is subtitled on the cover ‘A unique 3-D map revealing the natural landscape of Greater London’. It is by no means the first attempt of its sort: a notable earlier contribution was *Stanford’s contoured map of the county of London*, at 1:21,120, originally published in 1878 for use in schools.¹ Relief was shown by illuminated contours at 25 feet (7.5 metres) interval and hypsometric tinting, in shades of brown, school board boundaries were shown, and there was an instruction that the map should be hung so that the light came from the left of the observer. Given its longevity, a number of copies must have remained in use in 1934-5 when the OS issued the four sheets of the 1:63,360 Fifth (Relief) Edition covering London in a ‘Physical features alone’ version. The background to the ‘Physical Fifth’ has not yet been properly explored, but it consisted of the water, hachures, hill-shading, contours and hypsometric tinting of the parent map, with no adaptation: thus there were gaps in rivers where they were crossed by bridges, and there were gaps for built-up areas, where only the contours were shown. I do not know the print-run of the Stanford mapping, but the OS ‘physicals’ only seem to have been printed in runs of 200 or so, and only one is known to have gone to reprint: the main market seems to have been University geography departments.²

The landscape of London has contours and hill-shading with a cream ground-tint and, as is often the case with hill-shading, makes a better three-dimensional effect from a distance than close-to. A big problem with ‘physical’ mapping is location, away from obviously dramatic features such as the Thames or the scarps of the Chilterns or the North Downs.

¹ Ralph Hyde, *Printed maps of Victorian London, 1851-1900*, Folkestone: Dawson, 1975, 164 [entry number 172] lists versions of 1878, 1892 and 1926. My description is based on the 1892 edition.

² This is inferred from the pattern of subsequent disposals.



The OS physicals did not attempt to solve it, and they are best used in conjunction with the topographic version, which can be cumbersome.³

Here the solution is closer to Stanford's: built-up areas are a brown tint, 'Parkland /forest' a green tint, railways and their termini are solid black, main roads are brownish-red, and borough boundaries and names are purple; all other text is black, in an attractive serified style. Cultural names are confined to the minimum necessary to identify older focuses

of settlement, with the exception of the Olympic site, but they include a number of names of hills, ridges and streams for which you will search in vain on current OS 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 mapping. There is no grid, and this contributes enormously to the clarity of the map. The area covered is approximately between 495.5 and 560.5 east and 150.5 and 207.5 north on the National Grid. (The area around Ongar is omitted, in favour of the title and legend.)

The map derives from Ordnance Survey digital data, and is an example of what one hopes will be increasingly common: OS data, and in the sense of inputting 'drawn' by OS, but customised to produce something quite different-looking that supplies a gap in the market. I very much hope that *The landscape of London* meets with sufficient success to encourage similarly-styled mapping of other centres in Britain.

Richard Oliver

The extract from The landscape of London map is published by kind permission of Anderson Geographics.

³ Given the in frequency with which the 'Fifth Physicals' are met, this is a contingency that most readers will not be troubled with.