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“A great map for a Great Park”

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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 great map for a Great Park Gerry Zierler

Squeezing extra value out of our bus pass recently took my friends and me for a splendid day's walking in Windsor Great Park, the beautiful tract of land spreading south from Windsor Castle to Virginia Water in Surrey.

Using our trusty OS *Explorer* 160, we got by well enough and of course reading an OS map is second nature to all of us, right? Well, actually there were moments when we couldn't *quite* make out some of the detail, in order to try and avoid being arrested as a trespasser in some grace-and-favour back garden.



Part of Anderson Geographics map of Windsor Great Park reduced by about 50%

Imagine our delight, over lunch in the pub by Virginia Water, to discover that we could buy over the bar a splendid privately-produced map of Windsor Great Park, backed with Central Windsor & Eton. Not just any old map this, but an exceptionally clear map for walkers and visitors in general.

And now, there's a second edition from the same publishers Anderson Geographics, complete with hill shading on the Great Park side of the map, making for still more attractive and useful map than before.

How does this compare with our old friend, *Explorer* 160? Well of course scale is on the side of the specialist map. Compared with the OS 1:25,000, the scale is approx 1:5300 for the town map and roughly 1:14,000 for the park map. Thus 126 square inches of OS map covers the same territory as 464 square inches of the Anderson map.

The most useful feature of the Anderson map is its easier fold and overall size. Inevitably, the OS map's halfway fold is right across Virginia Water and to walk round this lake in the park means unfolding your *Explorer* to the full sheet size of 50 by 37 inches. Not easy on a blowy day! The Windsor Great Park map is just 26 by 17 inches so is rather more manageable. This is not to criticise the OS offering however, since that map provides a lot more country than just Windsor, and a price quite reasonable when compared with the £4.49 guide price suggested by Anderson. Of course, Windsor along with its Great Park, castle and Eton, is one of Britain's biggest tourist attractions, and if anywhere deserve its own large scale map for visitors and walkers, it's here, and Anderson Geographics have exploited this quicker than the OS, or anyone else for that matter. It's surprising perhaps that the Crown Estate haven't done their own: they can offer only a small scale cycling map leaflet. But have they welcomed Anderson's initiative? Well, no! Actually it seems they have been rather uncooperative with the publishers, to the point of raising security issues: rather pointless when all the information is in the public domain.

The Windsor Great Park map shows clearly the private areas using both darker tint, boundary lines, and even the word *Private* on each parcel. So in this respect, it is more useful than the OS map, so perhaps the Crown Estate should be grateful. The scale bars are in metres and yards, since apparently joggers prefer this to miles!

Although not covering a particularly hilly area, the new edition's hill-shading and 2m-interval contours make for very easy navigation, whereas the OS 5m contours can present only a generalised picture. But why a 2 metre interval? Well, the clever cartographer realised that data could be taken without royalty from the USGS Shuttle Radar Topography Mission and combined with heights from out-of-copyright OS historical mapping. He also admits to being 'a bit of a nut' about hill shading!

Apart from the single example of the Long Walk, shown by OS as part of the Three Castles Path, there is no indication of any of the open walking areas of the Great Park, shown clearly on the Anderson map by lighter green tint and a myriad of footpaths, shown as you'd expect by dashed thin black lines.

The town side of the map, 'Central Windsor & Eton', is superbly clear, thanks largely to its large scale (about 12 inches to the mile) but also its clever choice of both bold and subtle colours to show castle and college (deep red), shopping and pedestrian areas (yellow and orange), famous and other buildings

(shades of pink), and public and private park land (shades of green). The OS has nothing to compete with this, and the only other local offering of note is by the Ramblers' Association, which is highly generalised and in a pocket leaflet.

So how did 'The Essential Maps of Windsor Great Park and Central Windsor & Eton' come about? Anderson Geographics is a private venture of James Anderson and his wife, Jane Voss. James is one of the directors of Cassini Publishing Ltd, well known to CCS members and public alike for their reproductions of old OS maps. Anderson also published the London Landscape map, previously reviewed in *Sheetlines*.¹ Living in Berkshire, he saw the opportunity for a map of Windsor Great Park and produced the first edition in 2004, now sold out.

The new edition is worth buying even if you have indulged in the first edition, since it is a very pleasing cartographic product – and may even be useful!