

## ***OS data in A-Z Adventure atlases***

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Geographers' A-Z Map Co Ltd has been a long term commercial licensed partner of Ordnance Survey, originally creating our own street mapping based upon 1:10,560 and later 1:10,000 paper sheets, through to present day digital products. This mapping was then, and still is today, typically updated from a variety of sources including local authorities, the emergency services and site visits.



As has been previously documented in *Sheetlines*,<sup>2</sup> Ordnance Survey devised a new business strategy, in part, to meet the need for improved access to geographic data for both commercial and non-commercial use. As a result OS *OpenData* was launched in 2011 for general royalty-free use and, following revised licensed partner contracts, two royalty-applicable raster datasets (1:25,000 and 1:50,000) were also released without restrictions on areas used.

One of the driving forces behind this agreement was to stimulate commercial activity and product diversity which A-Z has embraced with the new *Adventure atlas* series.<sup>3</sup> Here was an opportunity to use OS *Explorer* 1:25,000 mapping so highly respected and widely used by the occasional leisure walker and serious fell walker alike in a fresh exciting way.

Rather than simply reproducing these as sheet maps we decided that a book with additional information and gazetteer would offer the customer a useful alternative in a compact form. In addition, the page format allowed the overall area of coverage to be tailored more precisely, excluding extraneous areas that might otherwise appear within a standard rectangular sheet map area. Publication parameters were further defined by the decision to keep the 1:25,000 scale and that the unopened book should be the same size as an *Explorer* map when closed to fit in existing map pockets.

A-Z took delivery of the November 2011 release of 1:25,000 data, supplied in 100 km squares of seamless raster mapping at a resolution of 660 dpi. The fact that this was a raster dataset was not seen as a great disadvantage as it was felt essential to keep the familiarity of the mapping to engage with existing *Explorer* map users. However, the subsequent need to mask out detail would have been much simpler and quicker with a vector dataset.

<sup>1</sup> The author is Chief draughtsman, Geographers' A-Z Map Co Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Karen McGrath, 'Use of OS data by commercial publishers', *Sheetlines* 95,3

<sup>3</sup> The A-Z *Adventure atlas* range was launched in early 2012 with four titles covering Dartmoor, the Lake District (2) and Snowdonia. Their immediate success prompted a further eight publications. An additional six titles are about to be released, including the Brecon Beacons (2), North York Moors (2), Yorkshire Dales South and the South Downs Way. Another seven are in preparation.

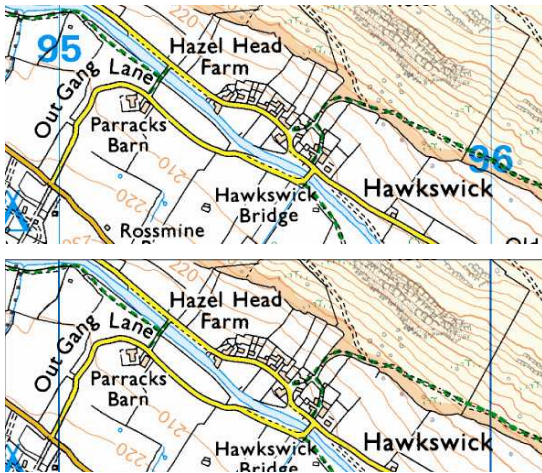


figure 1(upper), figure 2  
(lower) (SD955706)

by-pass to the south of Tremadog as under construction<sup>4</sup> (figure 3). The by-pass was plotted and drawn as open by an A-Z draughtsman (figure 4 shows the revised map as published in the *Snowdonia Adventure atlas*). Other map changes are less obvious; including additional mooring symbols added to *The Broads Adventure atlas* and a new Youth Hostel along the South Downs Way near Southease Station for example.

Generally only changes within the specification of the *Explorer* map are carried out, although it is possible to introduce new features if felt necessary. This was the case with the popular Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge. Plotted from a gpx file, the route is shown in a distinctive way that is complimentary to the map style; although knowledgeable OS map users would no doubt be quick in identifying this 'alien' feature (figure 5).

To a large extent the pagination process is automated with page grids and numbers, continuation arrows and index references all effectively created and positioned. National Grid references are reintroduced in the page margins and the appropriate 100 km letter reference added.

Page edge make-up is necessary where a feature, often only named once on a sheet map, may appear on several pages each needing to be

Separation of each 100 km file into its component four-colours (CMYK) facilitates editing. For example, the cyan OS grid numbers, on the conventional sheet map (figure 1), are masked out as they are obviously not suitably positioned for our page layout (figure 2).

A-Z receives updates from various Government agencies, including the Department for Transport, so the road network is reviewed for essential change and updated accordingly. An example of this kind of intervention is illustrated below where an extract of OS raster clearly shows the new A487

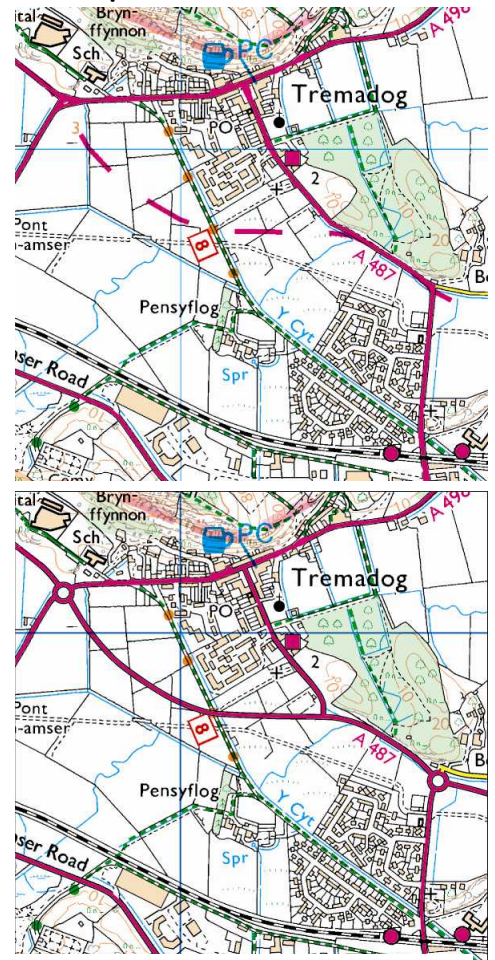


figure 3 (upper),  
figure 4 (lower)  
(SH562397) (*Snowdonia  
Adventure atlas 3C 66*)

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the by-pass has since been opened in a later release of OS data and that any new or subsequent editions of *Adventure atlases* will always use the latest available supply

named. This work is carried out by placing vector masks and additional text which may include town names, danger areas, National Parks, natural features and A road numbers.

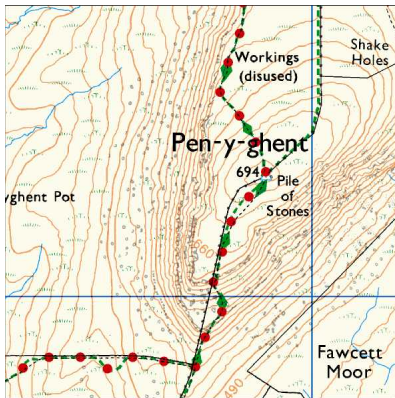


figure 5 (SD836733)

While it could be argued that the mapping content has little more to offer than an existing *Explorer* map the ‘added value’ is more apparent from a product point of view. Additional pages include practical advice and other helpful information: from a list of mooring points in the Norfolk Broads to featured highlights within the Brecon Beacons National Park. QR codes introduce an interactive element to the books giving smart phone users quick access to relevant web sites: from OS map reading and National Grid guides to weather reports and safety information. Cover flaps can be opened to allow a map legend of selected features to be referred to while

using the map pages inside (a full map legend is included within the book). In the first of a National Trail series, five publications covering The South West Coast Path saw the introduction of a schematic route planner indicating distances and depicting facilities in towns alongside the path with Ordnance Survey symbols as a reference where appropriate.

But one of the key benefits, synonymous with the A-Z brand, is the inclusion of a gazetteer, listing towns and villages, selected natural features, car parks and Youth Hostels. For example, the ability to easily locate car parks in the Lake District is particularly useful as a number of recognised walks start from them – eg *Maggie’s Bridge Car Park 2C 38 NY134210*. As can be seen the entry includes an alpha-numeric index square and page number reference along with a six figure National Grid reference. This dual referencing also allows the gazetteer to be used alongside an OS *Explorer* sheet map if required.

The customer will often also benefit in terms of cost where a carefully targeted area may require the purchase of a single *Adventure atlas* instead of two or more *Explorer* maps. Potential savings are most apparent with the South West Coast Path which would require the purchase of 17 *Explorer* maps costing £95.00,<sup>5</sup> while five *Adventure atlases* covering the route would cost £25.00.<sup>6</sup>

In making *Explorer* mapping available to licensed partners OS has opened up an area of the retail market that was previously unavailable to A-Z and instigated a more diverse product range. A-Z *Adventure atlases* offer customers an alternative product using familiar *Explorer* mapping, updated and added to when appropriate, covering carefully focused areas of interest with additional pages of useful information to enhance visitor experience. Whether map users want to spread out a sheet map when planning, or prefer the convenience and practicality of a compact book while walking, a choice is now available – they may even decide to buy both!

<sup>5</sup> South West Coast Path OS bundle [www.walking-books.com](http://www.walking-books.com)

<sup>6</sup> A-Z South West Coast Path bundle [www.az.co.uk](http://www.az.co.uk)