



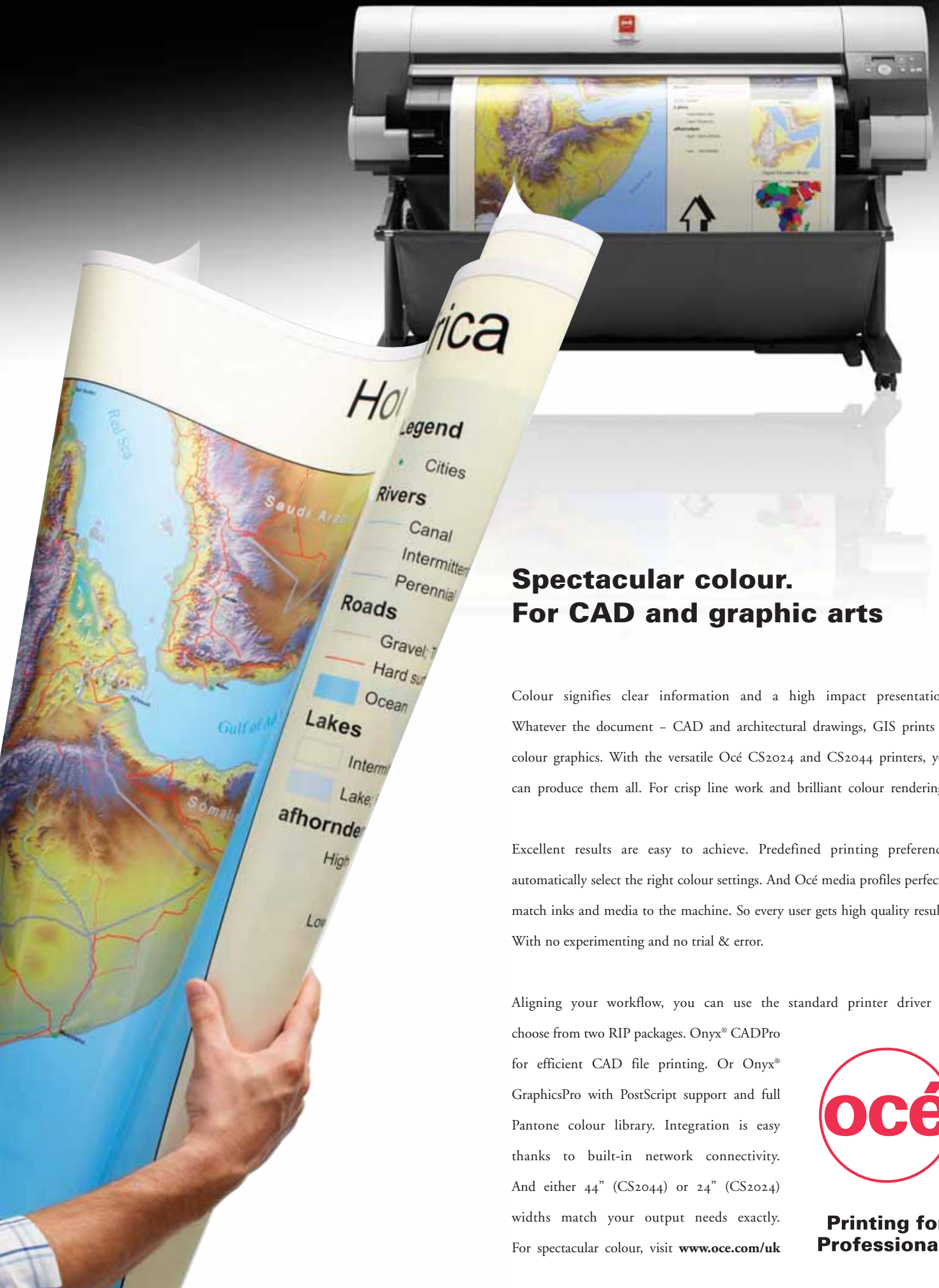
MAPPING WELSH LANGUAGE

ORDNANCE SURVEY HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED A CONSULTATION ON ITS POLICY OF OFFERING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE WELSH LANGUAGE. BRYN JONES DISCUSSES WHY BRITAIN'S NATIONAL MAPPING AGENCY HAS ADOPTED ITS POLICY AND HOW IT HAS MET THE CHALLENGE OF FULFILLING A PUBLIC-SECTOR OBLIGATION IN A COMMERCIAL WORLD.

Ordnance Survey is renowned throughout the world for providing accurate, reliable and detailed geographic information for more than 200 years. Today we are a dynamic, modern organisation leading the way in technological innovation; however, we are justifiably proud of our rich heritage. As well as traditional paper maps, Ordnance Survey provides definitive and intelligent digital geographic data benefiting tens of millions of people every day.

A leading brand, Ordnance Survey is often thought of as a British icon. Our maps reflect the diverse nature of Britain's physical geography, culture and history, and as our remit covers England, Scotland and Wales our databases contain place names of Welsh, Gaelic, Cornish or, Anglo Saxon origin – and Norse, Latin and Norman influences – with descriptions reflecting landscape features, settlements and the local communities. Our customers include Scottish Gaelic and Welsh speakers, many of whom use these indigenous languages side by side with English.

Ordnance Survey is a separate government department financed through data licensing rather than direct funding from the taxpayer. Our financial status as a government Trading Fund gives us the opportunity to innovate and develop, but as a public body we have certain obligations and a degree of regulation. One such obligation is our Welsh Language Scheme. Public sector organisations that provide a service to the public in Wales are required to produce language schemes under the Welsh Language Act. The Act established the principle that Welsh and English languages should be treated on an equal basis in the conduct of public business in



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names for natural features – such as rivers, hills and valleys – they are submitted to the Welsh Language Board, as appropriate, for an opinion on the form and spelling of the name. An opinion may also be sought on the names of man-made features such as villages and towns.

The version given by the Welsh experts may be used to resolve ambiguity where it exists, to provide a written version of the name when this cannot be obtained in the locality, and – when no evidence about the

name is obtained locally – to provide the version to be included in the data. In reconciling any local differences of opinion, Ordnance Survey selects the version suggested by the advisory body to representatives of local people but does not attempt to enforce its acceptance by them. If no other evidence of the form or spelling of a name is obtainable the recommendation of the advisory body is accepted.

An example of a Welsh language place name that has been added to our maps is *Cwm Cneifion* the original name for *the Nameless Cwm* on Glyder Fawr mountain in Snowdonia.

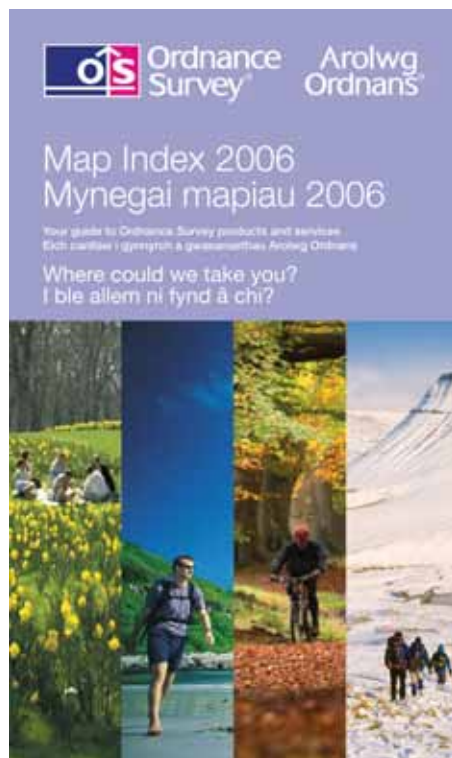
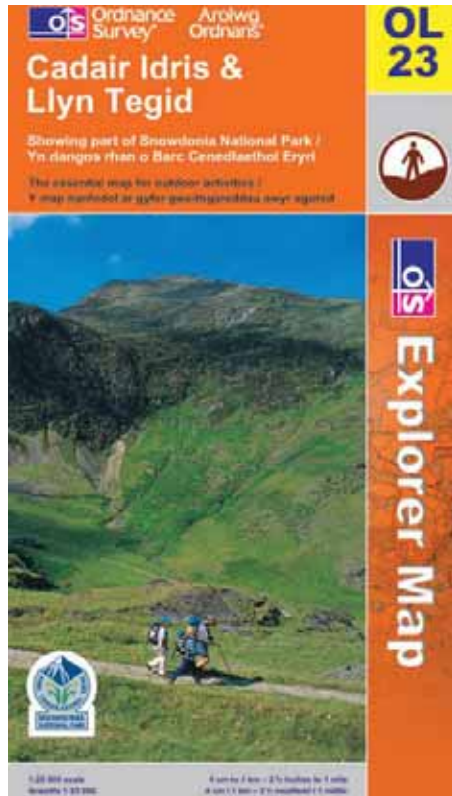
Commercial concerns

Ordnance Survey aims to be responsive to specific market requirements from both the private and public sectors, and as a trading fund is required to make a modest return on the capital employed.

It is unlikely that publishing conventional maps in the Welsh language would bring the necessary commercial return on investment. In addition to the cost of printing and distribution, it would be unlikely that mainstream booksellers and wholesalers would be willing to give shelf space and the necessary promotion to support such niche publications. However, we have made progress recently with consumer products printed on demand. Our OS Select™ product is an individually tailored self-centred map – available at two scales, 1:50 000 and 1:25 000 – and the legend and cover can be ordered in Welsh language formats. The mapping on this product is derived from the same datasets as our conventional paper maps, so the mapping has bilingual content to the same extent as those paper maps. Technological advances in the future may result in a choice of datasets being available on such products, in addition to our large-scale and Internet delivered mapping. In the meantime we will strive to improve the bilingualism of our products and services, offering tailored solutions to customers in Wales where appropriate.

A copy of Ordnance Survey's Welsh Language Scheme document and further information on the work of Ordnance Survey can be found at www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/reports. A Welsh version of the document appears on the Welsh site www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/cymraeg.

Bryn Jones is Ordnance Survey's Welsh Media Executive.



Ordnance Survey – Welsh Language maps.

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