

Royal Ordnance Survey Official Opening

The Duke of Edinburgh is to officially open Ordnance Survey's new head office in Southampton during an official visit on 4 October 2011. The Duke, who accompanied The Queen to open Ordnance Survey's previous head office in 1969, will meet staff at the mapping agency and see how modern digital mapping is made.

Ordnance Survey moved into its new environmentally-friendly head office in February this year. The 16 acre site includes a 100,000 litre rainwater harvester, the largest underground heat pump system in the country consisting of nearly 100 boreholes over 90 metres deep and a state-of-the-art data-centre that processes 1000 terabytes of information everyday.

The process of map making has changed enormously since The Duke's last visit, as today its primary focus is to collect and maintain the geographic data that businesses and public services rely on. Geographic information from Ordnance Survey helps underpin everything from the digital television switchover and satellite navigation to habitat planning and the fight against insurance fraud.

The visit will include an opportunity for The Duke to experience how Ordnance Survey uses 3D technology, similar to that found in cinemas, to pinpoint changes to the landscape, including to the London Olympic Park.

The Duke will also meet one of Ordnance Survey's 250 surveyors, who make 5,000 changes a day to the digital mastermap of Great Britain using satellite technology accurate to just a few centimetres.

Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB, Ordnance Survey Director General and Chief Executive comments; "We are absolutely delighted that The Duke of Edinburgh is to officially open our new building. Our new head office perfectly fits our role as a modern, technology-based organisation and we very much look forward to welcoming The Duke here and to demonstrate how much map making has changed over the past 42 years."

Originally founded in 1791 to map the south-coast of England for fear of invasion by Napoleon, today Ordnance Survey is a GBP130 million-a-year public sector business. It collects, maintains and distributes geographic data that helps underpin everything from rubbish collection to planning flood defences.