February turned out to be an unexpectedly busy month. My concentric circles map of Brussels metro and tram routes generated a lot of interest on the internet, and led to an invitation by the Brussels Academy to speak at short notice. Not much persuasion was needed, Brussels is my favourite city, and I always enjoy a visit. A big thanks to my hosts for inviting me and for their hospitality. The lecture was well-attended and well-received, and the questions were very illuminating: clearly, people in different countries have different priorities and concerns when it comes to transit mapping.

Thanks to everyone who responded to my February logo survey. The one that I am using this month was the most popular, slightly. What I am learning is that when it comes to logos, you can’t please all people all of the time! I know that a number of you on my mailing list are graphic designers, and so I am considering the possibility of holding a logo creation competition, with a book and a poster as the prize. If you might be interested in this, drop me a line. If enough people are get in touch, I will make a formal announcement in the next newsletter.

I still have posters of my implementations of Henry Beck drawings left: for UK customers, order any A1 poster from my website during February and March and receive one copy of each of these posters free. The online price for my book is still £40 including UK delivery during March.

In the media, on the web
• The Brussels concentric circles map was first featured in Ezelstad with two articles (here and here). From this, the story was taken up by Le Soir, Brusselnieuws (twice), L’avenir, Brusselblogt, and Brussels Life. I was also interviewed for Belgian television.
• Closer to home, a batch of suburban railway lines are soon to be added to the London Underground map, and speculation is mounting concerning how these might be shown. I was interviewed on this topic by Londonist, and the article includes a video.
• And by coincidence, one of the posters in the special offer above featured in a little bit of a mix-up over at Transit Maps tumblr. The original post is here, followed by this one.

Dates for your diary
• On Tuesday 9th of June, I will be giving a presentation to the London Underground Railway Society titled Underground Maps Invigorated, 18:40, Upper Room, Allsouls Clubhouse, 141 Cleveland Street, London W1T 6QG. I will be discussing the benefits and pitfalls of digitally reconstructing historic maps. If you are a LURS member, I look forward to seeing you there. Guests are admitted, but space is limited.
• The TfL archives are holding a two-day event on 5th/6th August in the Palestra building in Southwark. The theme will be TfL’s design and innovation heritage, and I’ve been invited to take part. This will be a closed event, but quite a few people from TfL are on my mailing list, so look out for further details.

Map of the Month: New York Subway map competition winner recreated
This newsletter features a guest Map of the Month, a landmark competition-winning design for the New York Subway network. The original was lost in the 1980s, but has now been reconstructed from a recently-discovered photograph. Research is by Peter Lloyd, implementation is by Reka Komoli. It is certainly a very imposing piece of work. Over to you Peter.

How did the New York subway map get its colours? In the first half of the century, its lines had only three colours, corresponding to the original operating companies (IRT, BMT, and IND). From the 1960s, however, they were colour-coded by route. This change was due to Raleigh D’Adamo, a young lawyer who, in 1964, entered a competition to redesign the map. D’Adamo observed that riders couldn’t trace routes end-to-end in the map’s diverging and converging lines, where branches of a trunk line shared the same colour.
Secondly, he disliked colour-coding lines by operating companies that had vanished a quarter of a century earlier. Thirdly, he knew that, with the imminent opening of the Chrystie Street tunnel, the former BMT and IND networks would be merged, making the three-colour scheme unworkable. D’Adamo’s innovation was to assign separate colours to individual routes (defined by a startpoint and endpoint). But he had to fit eighteen separate routes—running down the narrow island of Manhattan—into a geographically accurate map as required by the Transit Authority. His solution was as follows. Along each trunk carrying multiple routes, he drew two lines—one for local services and one for express services; and he indicated individual routes by alternating coloured squares. For example, Eighth Avenue has two express services (alternating squares of red and green) and three local services (squares of black, blue, and orange). A dot on the express line shows where express services stopped and likewise for the local services. His simple map, lacking station names, proved the principle of colouring the subway network by route, and thereby changed forever how the subway map would be designed. Sadly, his original map disappeared long ago, but last September Raleigh found an old photograph of it—from which Reka Komoli has painstakingly recreated this digital version.

Peter B Lloyd

Peter originally asked me whether I would be interested in reconstructing this map, but I think that Reka Komoli has done a much better job than I could have done. Peter intends to offer limited edition prints of this design. For more information about this, his book(s) and his musings, visit his transit map history web pages: Metro Map Art. In the meantime, and against my better judgement, Map of the Month for April will feature the Paris Metro. You can subscribe to my newsletter at www.tubemapcentral.com.

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