I’m delighted to report that we have now reached a milestone, with my monthly newsletter entering its third year. This is the 25th edition, and I would like to thank everyone on my mailing list for their kind words of support throughout. I certainly can’t see myself running out of Maps of the Month anytime soon.

The 7 Line extension opening in New York in September has generated a flurry of interest in this uniquely fascinating network. I am told that there were some excellent presentations at *The Subway Map: The Last 50 Years, The Next 50 Years* organised by Peter B. Lloyd. This event marked the official launch of the reconstruction by Reka Komoli of Raleigh D’Adamo’s 1964 competition winning design, and it was also the launch of Peter’s Kickstarter Campaign to obtain funds to self-publish the first three volumes of his remarkable series of books on the New York Subway map. If its design challenges and turbulent history appeal in any way, then do make a pledge. Peter is determined to produce high quality products, and I will be assisting him during the production process.

To mark Peter’s event in New York, I am currently offering my book *Underground Maps Unravelled* at a special low price, $65 including tracked airmail delivery to the USA or Canada. The price of packaging and shipping to the USA is almost $40, so this really is as low as I can go. This offer officially ends on Monday 2nd November at 1 PM EST, so do order now if you want to secure a copy at this price.

To cap it all, I yesterday received an advance copy of Mark Ovenden’s latest edition of *Transit Maps of the World*. Rewritten and recompiled from cover to cover, there is very little overlap with previous versions, and so this essential reference work on transit map standards also provides a fascinating time-lapsed record of worldwide urban rail expansion, as well as developments in map design techniques.

**In the media, on the web**

- Peter’s event was previewed in depth by an article in *Gothamist* and was also mentioned in *Wired*.
- In another *Gothamist* article, those people, such as myself, who have designed experimental New York Subway maps, were described as being young and intrepid. That works for me.

**Web page news**

Staying with the theme this month, I have added another option to my lectures page. *Taming the New York Subway*. It is just a matter of time before I get an opportunity to cross the Atlantic to present this. Expect something lively and provocative, like this or this.

**Dates for your diary**

- New York, 17th November 2015, the *New City York Transit Museum* will host *The Subway Map: Tracing a legacy*. This will include the launch of *Transit maps of the World* by Mark Ovenden, and features guest appearances by Peter B Lloyd and Eddie Jabbour. Tickets are $10 and can be purchased here.
- I have been invited to give an address at *Typo Berlin*, 12-14th May 2016. More details will be posted when I have them, we are currently investigating the possibility of including a small exhibition.
- I will be giving my talk *Transit Maps: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* to the University of the Third Age *Hillingdon branch*. **NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE:** now Monday 9th January 2017, 11:00 at Winston Churchill Hall, Ruislip, HA4 7QL.

**Map of the Month: New York updated … with curves and geography?**

I could write a book on designing the New York Subway map, and perhaps one day I will. I have tried a few unusual takes, but readers of *Underground Maps Unravelled* will know that I also have a more conventional design in my repertoire (Page 177). This needed updating for the new 7 Line extension and, now that it looks as though Phase 1 of the Second Avenue Subway really will be completed, I have added this too. Readers of my book will also know my design philosophy: create a map optimised for the current system open today, not a speculative fantasy network, but do keep in mind likely plans for expansion. That way, the map works for what’s there, optimised for today’s journey planning, and without awkward holes or spacing. I always knew that the Second Avenue Subway would require a wider map (the original priority was a design easily legible at A3 size) and so, five years on from the first version, I was ready to rework this completely and try some new ideas.
The basic idea of a track layout map still applies, showing express and local lines separately. You can see at a glance which trains stop where, and whether they share platforms. I’ve kept the design compact – I dislike Subway maps where the length of interchange connectors is greater than the distances between stations. I’ve also resisted the idea to depart from octolinearity, even though this causes difficulties for Flatbush Avenue and Fulton Street. Maps with a larger number of angles struggle to attain coherence.

Improving the layout of the major avenues in Manhattan has given the design a strong spine, and so I’ve tried something different. Broadway (impossible to show nicely with straight lines no matter what the angles) now snakes elegantly from one side of the island to the other. Elsewhere, gentle curves have also slipped in, replacing harsh series of corners with smooth flow. And, controversially (for me) the map has been enlarged further to improve geography, with the routes taken by lines acknowledging the actual streets of New York that they follow.

With a strong foundation, a map might survive a loss of simplicity in order to show closer links between Subway and surface. Total accuracy is always futile for a schematic, so the aim is to create something that, say, 90% of New Yorkers would not get upset about. The basic test is the Park Avenue/Lexington Avenue flip on the 4/5/6 lines in Manhattan. If you can live with this straightened, then nothing here will disturb you. If you want true geography, try to get the excellent Hagstrom map (unfortunately no longer updated) which also shows tourist attractions. The ersatz geographical official map doesn’t even show these, and distorts Manhattan horribly. Looking at scale street maps of New York, and satellite maps, it is clear that that many designs that claim to have some basis in topographical reality are actually distorting New York considerably. Attempts to twist lines to show reality often go too far, resulting in geographical parodies as well as a loss of simplicity and coherence.

I am biased, but the outcome here seems strong and elegant. I always say that every city should make two transit maps available, an outstanding geographical version to show where the network is located, and an outstanding schematic to show how the network fits together. Awkward hybrid compromises don’t work for me at all. The advantage of a track-based map of the Subway is that you can see how the services relate to each other, endlessly combining and dividing, maximising capacity while maintaining variety of destinations served. It is always fascinating to see the clever organisation of service patterns that underlies this network.

If you want to give books or posters as gifts, do order in plenty of time for Christmas. Map of the Month for December will feature a decorative design that I have been working on for months and is still not finished. I hope that all that effort will be worth it! You can subscribe to my newsletter at my web pages, www.tubemapcentral.com.

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