It is amazing how quickly time vanishes when you are busy. The lectures for my new module, taught at the University of Essex; *Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future* have all been written, and the teaching is almost complete already. Soon it will be back to my other writing projects and designing new maps.

**In the media, on the web**
- My [Berlin circles map](#) appears on a slideshow of alternative designs compiled by the *Berliner Zeitung*.
- Some more web coverage of my [Paris circles map](#). Six articles in French from *GQ Magazine* (again), *Slate Magazine*, *Cariboo*, *UrbaNews*, *Femmepaysage* and *Blog en Commun*. There is a selection of my designs [here](#), which seem to be posted by someone called Wangshgeo, and here’s one that slipped by from January; my Paris circles map is also included in a review by Richard Archambault of *Transit Maps of the World* by Mark Ovenden.
- Martin de Jong spotted my [Milan curvilinear](#) design and wrote about it in Dutch for *Vrije-Ruimte*.
- Geoff Marshall, via the *Station Master* blog, talks about my [London Underground map in the style of Massimo Vignelli](#).

**Map Research**
Another manuscript has been submitted: *Preference versus performance: Investigating the dissociation between objective measures and subjective ratings of usability for schematic metro maps and intuitive theories of design*. The journal is the *International Journal of Human Computer Studies* and the paper includes the final analysis of the internet usability survey which was conducted during 2014. There are very interesting findings, and a few surprises. If you would like a copy of the manuscript then email me.

I have also had a paper accepted for the [Design Research Society 50th Anniversary conference](#) at Brighton to be held in June. The title of the paper is: *Expectations and prejudices usurp judgements of schematic map effectiveness* and this features new data in which two maps from the internet survey were submitted to usability testing. The final version will be prepared shortly, email me if you would like a copy of this. My [publications page](#) is currently a little bit out of date. I am awaiting a decision on another manuscript that should be made soon. Once I have received this, the page will be fully revamped.

**Map Teaching**
The hard work of preparing *Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future* is now complete. It attracted four students for its first intake, but this worked perfectly for me, giving enough space to ensure that all the lectures were well-prepared and delivered. The eclectic mix of design, transportation history, psychology and usability testing blended together well, providing a firm foundation for future deliveries in years to come, wherever the module is taught. An interesting possibility might be to run the course as a summer school for people who want to take part, but cannot enroll as university students. Contact me if you might be interested.

**Dates for your diary**
- I have been invited to give an address at *Typo Berlin*, 12th-14th May 2016. The title of my talk is *Round in circles and back again: Simplicity, coherence, and the need for evidence-based design*. The day and time will be posted when I have this information. An exhibition of my designs has been confirmed.
- I will be presenting a paper at the Design Research Society 50th anniversary conference, DRS2016, 27th-30th June 2016. The title of my paper is *Expectations and prejudices usurp judgements of schematic map effectiveness*. The day and time will be posted when I have this information.
- I will be giving my talk *Transit Maps: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* to the University of the Third Age [Hillingdon branch](#), Monday 9th January 2017, 11:00 at Winston Churchill Hall, Ruislip, HA4 7QL.

**Web page news**
- The [course web page](#) for PS499 *Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future* currently has the overview and the first seven lectures available for download, along with the slides for the laboratory class on map design. The three remaining lectures will be posted this week, and then all ten of them will be available.
- For newsflashes and updates don’t forget my Twitter page: [@TubeMapCentral](#).
Map of the Month: No network too small to feature as a decorative map

Some emails I receive are quite touching. For example, a few months ago, I received one from Australia, from a man who wanted to give his wife a special tenth wedding anniversary present; four cities featured in their lives together, three of them were London, Glasgow, and Sydney, and so could I supply decorative maps for these? Of course. The fourth one, unfortunately, had no underground network, perhaps a blank page with just the title for that one? The city? Cork. Well, never one to resist a challenge, I already knew that Cork had a local train service. Some further research revealed that this had expanded considerably since I last looked. This was becoming interesting.

Sometimes decorative maps take years to complete, requiring many experiments before the right level of embellishment is achieved. Other times, the inspiration falls into place remarkably quickly. Starting with the font: Hibernica was soon identified as a nicely produced modern take on traditional Irish lettering. Further research led me to experiments with Celtic knots, and the lovely construction set developed by Daniel L. Isdell. With all the necessary raw materials at my fingertips, the basic design was easy and fun to assemble, and duly dispatched to Australia.

Decorative maps often need to be printed very large to be able to breathe, and for the detail to be appreciated fully. For a complex design such as my London Art Deco map, anything smaller than A1 really doesn’t work well. On the other hand, a simple network can show off its glory at a far smaller size, just ten stations and three lines easily gives more than enough potential for a simple execution to have variety and visual appeal. Could this idea work for Dublin? I’m not so sure.

Map of the Month for March comes from another reader suggestion. This will again be decorative map, but much more elaborate. It’s a concept I’ve been toying with for years, but only now have I been able to identify a font that will do the idea justice. A decorative map never looks right if the lettering is unsuitable. You can subscribe to my newsletter at my web pages, www.tubemapcentral.com.

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