Now back from *Typo Berlin 2016*, where my exhibition of maps attracted lots of attention, and a packed room listened to my challenge to make graphic design more evidence-based. The talk has been blogged [here](#), and there is also a video [here](#), although this will only be generally available in ten months time.

Also, for German readers, for a short time only, my book *Underground Maps Unravelled* is being offered for sale by Bücherbogen for €52.50, cheaper than buying direct from me.

In the media, on the web
May seems to have been a month of map compilations, with slide shows including my London designs from the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and Paris designs from *Buzzfeed*.

Dates for your diary
• I will be presenting a paper at DRS*2016*, the Design Research Society 50th anniversary conference at Brighton, Friday 30th June 2016 at 11:15. The title of my paper is *Expectations and prejudices usurp judgements of schematic map effectiveness*.

• Just finalised, the Sign Design Society will be holding a *Transit Map Extravaganza* summer party on Thursday 7th July, 2016 at the Gallery, Alan Baxter & Associates, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, EC1M 6EL. This will include a presentation by Mark Ovenden: Wonderfully Weird Worldwide Transit Maps, and a rare one-day exhibition of my own work: Purely Decorative: The Map is the Reward. Admission is by ticket only, purchased from [here](#), £25 including refreshments and drinks.

• 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.

Map research
The internet study investigating people’s subjective evaluations of map usability takes a step closer to publication; Preference versus performance: Investigating the dissociation between objective measures and subjective ratings of usability for schematic metro maps and intuitive theories of design has now been reviewed, and an updated version should be completed and available before the end of the month.

Map of the Month: De Stijl
I've spent the last month immersed in design and decorative arts, enjoying Art Nouveau in *Brussels*, *Antwerp*, *Darmstadt* and *Bad Nauheim*, as well as Modernism at the *Bauhaus Archive* in Berlin and a wonderful exhibition of van Doesburg’s work at *Bozar* in Brussels, which inspired something unexpected.

![Map of the Month: De Stijl](image)

The abstractedness of Beck’s work, especially his final design, has often been likened to the abstract art of Mondrian: An internet search for *Harry Beck plus Mondrian* yields a surprising number of hits. Moved by a delightful peaceful morning at Bozar contemplating rectangles and squares in perfect harmony, I began to wonder what a De Stijl inspired transit map might look like. Re-imagining Beck’s design in this way would certainly be entertaining, but I’ve recently been trying to make my decorative maps more authentic by setting them...
in cities relevant to the genre. With De Stijl pioneer Theo van Doesburg having examples of his glass work installed in Rotterdam, that city's small but extensive metro network seemed like an excellent starting point to create a map dominated by simple shapes.

Suitable blocky fonts are easy to find, I used Distill by MADtype. A tetralinear map in keeping with the overall concept is easy to design for any network, but something seemed to be missing; a much more obvious stylistic connection was necessary.

The moment of inspiration came when I realised that the text of the station names was also adding structure to the overall design, creating its own shapes. This inspired a distinctive, recognisable background; grey out of necessity so that it didn't interfere with the other line colours. From this I worked backwards to merge the lines into the background pattern. The final step was to realise that although the original rectangular station symbols might be in keeping with the theme of the overall concept, it was difficult to integrate them into it, and they were adding unnecessary fussiness, detracting from the stripped-down simplicity. A more discrete station symbol permitted a more elegant solution, although there are many other ways of showing stations.

Henry Beck's final published maps were dominated by horizontal and vertical lines, with diagonals kept to a minimum, certainly in keeping with the striving for simplicity advocated by the various 20th Century design movements. June is going to be a busy month for me, but the Sign Design Society exhibition should give me impetus to finish at least one decorative map in progress. To find out which one, you can subscribe to my newsletter at my web pages, [www.tubemapcentral.com](http://www.tubemapcentral.com).

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