Another busy month and another diary date added. I delivered my paper *Expectations and prejudices usurp judgements of schematic map effectiveness* at [DRS2016](#) (symposium summary [here](#)), and this was followed by a very successful exhibition; *Purely Decorative: The Map is the Reward*, hosted by the [Sign Design Society](#), where over 50 people saw 30 different maps on show. It has been quite a while since my maps have been *on display to the public*, and I am currently looking into the possibility of crowd-sourcing funding for a future major event.

Still available to German readers, *Underground Maps Unravelled* is offered for sale by [Bücherbogen](#) for €52.50; cheaper than buying direct from me.

**In the media, on the web**
- I was recently interviewed, along with Peter B. Lloyd, by Nicola Badstuber for *London Reconnections*. The hour-long podcast is available [here](#), in which we discuss various issues concerning map design and usability. Some points are reiterated by Alex Block in his [blog](#).
- Yet another *Paris Metro map* has surfaced on the internet. I get an oblique mention in an article by Lonely Planet, and was asked for comments by CityLab.
- My *Madrid Metro curvilinear map* attracted attention again, with an article in Spanish [here](#).
- One of the designs from my exhibition, the homage to George Dow’s 1935 LMS London electric services map, deservedly caught the eye of many people, and CityMetric wrote an article about it.

**Dates for your diary**
- I will be one of many people taking part in an evening event at the London Transport Museum, Covent Garden: *Late Debate: Social behaviour and mapping*, Thursday 28th July from 18:45 to 22:00, tickets £12. Full details of my contribution are to be finalised, but something interactive is planned.
- 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 and web page news**
*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 accepted by the *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*, and should be published later this year. My [articles page](#) has been updated, and there are now nine academic publications on the usability of schematic maps that are available for direct download.

**Map of the Month: Homage to a long-lost design**
The year is 1935, schematic mapping is in its infancy, and just a handful of networks worldwide are shown in diagrammatic form. Even so, with octolinear designs for the Berlin S-Bahn and London Underground, the rule-book is already being written. Despite this, George Dow, the most innovative of the early pioneers, creates a map that tears it up in style. This is a delightfully ingenious design: Take a small network and show it in the simplest way possible by using tetralinear angles, then add a twist, rotate the map by 27°. The balance is wonderful: logo/title, map, key, perfectly spaced, and the mundane has been transformed into something dramatic and exciting.
Unfortunately no known prints survive, and all that remains is a station entrance photograph that proves this version was issued, and a monochrome reproduction in the Railway Gazette, but why should that stop us from enjoying the map in all its original glory?

Digitising any historic map takes us into a world of assumptions, inferences, and compromises; so many that I have written a whole lecture on the problem: Underground Maps Invigorated. Some inferences, however, are reasonable. We can be almost certain, from contemporary designs, that this was printed in two colours, red and black, but even the border is a guess.

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The real problem with digitising a historic map is what to do about the lettering. For some maps, an actual manufactured typeface is used, and the more important ones have been recreated as electronic versions. For the map here, the original was hand-lettered in exquisite Art Deco style, using a unique set of letterforms which cannot be captured in their entirety by any commercially available font today. One solution is to attempt to trace every individual letter, hence trying to capture the characteristic variability of hand lettering. My own view is that this is not only time consuming but looks wrong. Computer graphics give perfect straight evenly-stroked lines to show routes, and identical circles for stations. With that environment, trying to mimic variable hand lettering would be inappropriate. Either the vagaries of 1930s print reproduction must be captured perfectly (requiring a level of obsession which, perhaps surprisingly to some readers, I’m not disposed to) or else a compromise is needed.

Fortunately, the letterforms are simple monostrokes, and sufficiently uniform for George Dow’s intentions to be reasonably clear, and so it was easy to create a special font derived from them. The product, therefore, should be treated as an homage rather than a recreation, an attempt to depict the original in modern-day glory but with the compromises that were made in its production honestly stated and understood.

I implemented this design years ago, but the excitement it generated at the exhibition and on Twitter suggested that it deserved another outing. It is high up on my list of all-time great transit maps and, who knows, if it keeps receiving publicity, perhaps one of the original ones will surface. I currently have a number of maps in progress, so hopefully one of these will be completed in time for the next newsletter. You can subscribe to this at my web pages, www.tubemapcentral.com.

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