My newsletter enters its fourth year of monthly production without a break, and new map books still keep arriving. Paired with an intriguing new exhibition at the British Library, Maps of the 20th Century: Drawing the Line, edited by Tom Harper, is published by British Library Books, ISBN 0712356614. Viewers of BBC Breakfast on Thursday 4th November might have spotted me talking about one of the exhibits. For a more esoteric Christmas gift, Mark Ovenden's ubiquitous Transit Maps of the World is now available in Japanese, published by Nikkei National Geographic, ISBN 486313360X. It's translated title is Beautiful Subway Maps of the World, perhaps more evocative than its English cousin. And, of course, my own book, Underground Maps Unravelled has a permanent price reduction: £30 for UK purchasers, including delivery, £40 to Europe, and £50 to the rest of the world. Sample chapters are available online. For discounts for multiple purchases, email me.

Dates for your diary
- Apologies for the incorrect date in the last newsletter; the exhibition planned by Wiener Linien to celebrate the start of construction of an extension to Line U2, and the creation of Line U5, commences on 7th November 2016. The venue is confirmed as the new information centre at Volkstheater on U2/U3. A number of my designs should be on display, but check opening times before travel.
- 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.

In the media, on the Web
- The BBC Breakfast article on the British Library exhibition; Maps of the 20th Century, can be viewed (and downloaded) here.  
- Anthony Denaro on Medium asks is the iconic transit map dead? No! Journey planners are useful, but network maps have advantages that these apps will be unable to offer for a long time.

Research news
- Some publishers move fast: Map-induced journey-planning biases for a simple network: A Docklands Light Railway study has been typeset and allocated to its journal issue. For a limited time only, the published manuscript can be downloaded from here. After 6th December, you can either download a pre-print of the article direct from my publications webpage, or email me for a copy of the typeset document. A digested version of the article produced by FWT is available here.
- The University of Essex Department of Psychology is trying project-based recruitment for PhD students who wish to commence in Autumn 2017. One of the available topics is the investigation of objective versus subjective measures of map usability; for more details, the project list can be downloaded here.

Web page news
In time for Christmas, several of my designs from the last year will be added to my web shop this week; posters for sale can be browsed here. For discounts for multiple purchases, email me.

Map of the Month: Seasonal Decoration
I have always been intrigued by the aesthetic qualities of maps, and how these can become the focus of a design, so that the emphasis of purpose shifts from tool for navigation to purely decorative work. I have created many pastiches inspired by artists, designers, and genres, and the Sign Design Society generously hosted an exhibition of my works in June this year. There are other works on the way, although I do wish that other people would have a go! There have been some wonderful realisations of maps in different media, but too many would-be artists content themselves with taking base maps and changing the station names. With some thought and creativity, some beautiful works have resulted, but several decades on from the first attempts at playing with station names, a tedious cliché is the most frequent outcome.
Last year, I created two pastiche railway advertisement posters to celebrate the seaside resorts on the north Essex coast. For the Art Nouveau design, the map became a magnolia tree in the spring, bursting into flower, and for the Art Deco work, a racy 60º map pointed towards a classic sunburst; definitely a design for summer. Autumn this year was splendidly colourful, and with winter on the horizon, maps to celebrate four seasons on the Essex coast seemed like a nice idea.


The design is inspired by George Dow’s splendid 1935 LMS London suburban map. Simple graphics emphasise the key details and the message. If these evoke sky, snow, or sun then this is merely coincidental. Modernism eschews any frivolous decoration; form must follow function. Of course, this is just one interpretation, my own, of how a map for winter could have been designed. Recently, I discovered an enchanting railway poster from just over 100 years ago, turning the LB&SCR map into mistletoe, persuading passengers to go to the south for Christmas. I am sure that winter, or indeed any season could be represented by maps interpreted differently to mine, so if you are artistically inclined, why not give it a go?

The Brighton Line map reminds me that Christmas is rapidly approaching, and so if you wish to obtain posters or my book for overseas delivery then do try to place an order soon; ideally before the next newsletter is due. Meanwhile, on the Essex Sunshine Coast, the autumn map is conspicuous by its absence; it’s complicated and I want to get it right. Next year is the 150th anniversary of trains to Walton-on-the-Naze, and so a deadline looms – decorative maps are hard to design to a schedule! To see whether it makes December Map of the Month, subscribe to my newsletter at my web pages, www.tubemapcentral.com.

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