After a rejuvenating Christmas break, the new term starts with a vengeance. *Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future* is all set and ready for its third outing, and planned major rewrites for two lectures will be flagged in forthcoming newsletters and made available for download. I’ve also been asked to give some lectures in applied psychology to the Year I students. With books and papers in the pipeline, and preparations for the Schematic Mapping Workshop, it will be a busy ten weeks!

**Dates for your diary**

- The second [Schematic Mapping Workshop](#) will be held on 11th/12th April 2019, at TU Wien, Austria. Details are on the workshop [website](#) and the program will be announced once it is finalised. [Online registration](#) is now open and we are currently reviewing submissions.
- There is also a second outing for the [Transit Mapping Symposium](#), organised by [Jug Cerovic](#) and [Richard Archambault](#), this time in Paris on Thursday 28th February/Friday 1st March. I won’t be attending, but any reports back will again be welcome.

**Map of the Month: Something to hang on the wall, version II**

In my [September 2017](#) newsletter, I described a digital recreation of a famous Underground map, inspired by the Arts & Crafts movement, created by [Macdonald Gill](#) and issued in 1921. I cheated with the lettering: The hand-drawn originals were too intricate for me to impersonate, and instead I substituted a modern digital font based on artistically appropriate lettering from the era.

In the process, however, the somewhat sanitised result had lost everything in ambiance that it had gained in legibility. Fortunately, the same email exchange that led to the recreation of LNER pictograms for George Dow’s design in [Newsletter 62](#), last month, also led to [Doug Rose](#) generously agreeing to create a set of representative vector letters based on Macdonald Gill’s handwriting.

Of course, a digital recreation of florid hand-drawn lettering, even if the intention is an homage, is surely not only anachronistic but inherently self-contradictory. How can robotic consistency of letterforms possibly be avoided? It can’t but ... it is hard for people, visually, simultaneously to take in all fine details across a wide visual field, and many letters had several alternatives that could be applied contextually, and also be combined to form ligatures where appropriate. The outlines of the letters were not used to create a digital font (unlike the Danish Seeest-Johnston lettering described in [Newsletter 60](#)).
Instead, every station name was assembled and spaced individually, letter by letter, with many modifications created on an ad hoc basis where necessary, and always with reference to the letterforms used for the original words. Hence, there is just enough lettering variability to tone down any feeling of mechanical repetitiveness.

The lettering was applied to the original map slightly smaller than on the original, thus avoiding the worst of its problems of crushed station names. The result has now been transformed; far more appropriate to hang on the wall of a house that was built in 1905. My design philosophy is again vindicated: If there is ever any aspect with a map that you are really not happy with, and you know it is fixable, then don’t ignore it, take the time to fix it. The result will always reward the effort.

The last two newsletters provide a nice Gill brothers double act, Gill Sans by Eric Gill in December, and Macdonald Gill’s hand lettering this month. With so much to do in the next few weeks, newsletter delays should be expected, but when they do arrive they will be full of exciting details. Subscribe to these at www.tubemapcentral.com to make sure you receive them.

Max Roberts, mjr@tubemapcentral.com