That was an incredibly busy three months! With teaching, projects to complete, and events to organise, something had to give and, unfortunately, that was to be the monthly newsletter. To catch up, I am planning three special-themed issues in quick succession, one for each of the reasons why there have been delays!

The major announcement for the year is my brand new book, co-authored with Mark Ovenden and published by Penguin Books. *Airline Maps: A Century of Art and Design* is scheduled for release in October, marking one hundred years of regular-scheduled international passenger flight. The book celebrates airline mapping in all its forms, from abstract diagrams to sumptuous pictorial maps, spanning the dawn of civil aviation to the present day. With so much great material available, probably enough for three books, compiling this was a mammoth task. Only the very best maps could be included, and some heartbreaking rejections were necessary along the way.

In the media, on the web

- All the way back in December 2018, Map of the Month for Newsletter 62 featured a digital recreation of George Dow’s LNER London suburban map, complete with pictograms. This was discussed in an article on the *Mapping London* blog by Ollie O’Brien.
- Brexit issues inevitably cause bewilderment worldwide, and the Brexit maps from Newsletter 55 were recent Map(s) of the Week for Ubique, the web magazine for the American Geographical Society.

Map of the Month: Restoring dignity to an airline schematic

An airline theme seems very appropriate this month and, looking for inspiration from my new book, one candidate stood out. In many ways, with invisible airways and air corridors, airline services are even more suited to abstract schematic maps than urban railways. Few, if any, passengers would be in a position to disagree with the trajectories shown on the map, and the distances involved would mean that some topographical distortion might be a useful way of shrinking the design, essential for the early years of flight, with journeys lasting several days and in which every single refuelling stop was shown.

Newsletter48 featured my digital recreation of the recently unearthed Henry Beck design for Imperial Airways in 1935. In fact, a few days ago, I stumbled on an even earlier Imperial Airways diagram that seems to date from 1933, so perhaps Henry Beck’s involvement with airline mapping goes back even earlier than 1935. Imperial Airways made good use of Beck’s base design in timetables and on publicity, but one version in particular stood out for me. The iconic 1938 poster by James Gardner (overleaf) features two Imperial Airways maps, a geographical one showing routes snaking across the globe, and a
The original design would almost certainly also have had a key to denote the routes of affiliate airlines, but inventing its content would have been too speculative, even for me. The hypothetical map now stands alone and has its dignity restored. It is an interesting version, unusually with stripes to denote minor landings and, stylistically, perhaps more 1950s than 1930s. It is certainly another bold attempt to make crossing the world look as easy as crossing London by Underground train. Of course, this idea was taken to its natural conclusion in the famous 1980s Swissair advert, recreated in Newsletter 58.

Thanks to all who contacted me to ask why my newsletter supply had dried up! The manuscript for the airline maps book was submitted at the end of February 2019 (proofs are due soon) and straight after that I needed to make preparations for the Schematic Mapping Workshop that took place in Vienna, and another project, the feature of the next newsletter. Subscribe to these at www.tubemapcentral.com to find out more about it.

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