Number 71, September 2019

We are enjoying a warm, sunny end to the summer here at Walton-on-the-Naze. It has been a productive year for books, but this means that it is time to refocus on writing up research.

Book news

*Tube Map Travels* has been scheduled for production, with an expected publication date of 5th December. We are going to be a little bit secretive as to exactly what it is about, so all we will say for now is to leave a space on your Christmas list for the strangest-ever book on Underground maps!

Date for your diary

The third *Schematic Mapping Workshop* will be held on 15th/16th April, 2021, at Universität Würzburg, Germany. The basic workshop website is complete and includes the full scope and submission timetable. The portal for submissions opens on Thursday 9th April 2020, and we are happy to take questions about these at submissions@schematicmapping.org. Reports on all aspects of schematic map research are most welcome.

In the media

In *Newsletter 68, Map of the Month* was my attempt to make sense of recorder fingering. The *American Recorder Society* were sufficiently intrigued to feature this on the cover of the autumn issue of their quarterly magazine.

**Map of the Month: The human tube map**

After my rant last month about London Buses information design, I promised something more lighthearted for this newsletter. Tube maps are fun, and I am always looking for entertaining, creative takes on them: I have a whole lecture on this topic on my university module *Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future*.

Four years ago, vlogger, railway observer and map enthusiast, Geoff Marshall, was the mastermind behind a Christmas Tube map created from Quality Street and, in July, 2016, the two of us teamed up at the *London Transport Museum*. We talked about map design with an audience, and then set them the task of creating their own Tube maps from craft materials. Pipe cleaners and lollipop sticks worked very nicely for this task.
This summer, Geoff wanted to try something much more ambitious and so, early in August, around two hundred people got together at a southeast London sports ground on a sunny afternoon. This Tube map was to be made out of us. Everything was carefully planned and implemented, even though some tee-shirt colours were much more popular than others, so that a few lines were under-represented. Like being a film extra, brief periods of activity were interspersed with lots of standing round, but at least it didn’t rain, and the drones were expertly controlled. You can see how everything went in this video here.

I was placed in east London, and so ensured that the map was particularly accurately configured in my vicinity. With the dip in the Central Line west of Bond Street, it looks to me as though Geoff decided to base his creation on the online version of the official map, rather than the printed pocket version. For a trained eye it is possible to spot the underlying design for a derivative work in an instant!

This will be a hard act to follow, and I’m intrigued to see what Geoff comes up with next. Meanwhile, with summer nearly over and peace and quiet descending on the local beach, I might see what I can do with sand. In the meantime, Map of the Month next month will return to something more conventional. To find out what is in store, subscribe at www.tubemapcentral.com.

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