Another late newsletter, and this time for the best possible reasons. I’ve had a massive burst of creativity over the last month, and I didn’t want to stop the momentum. There are some wonderful maps on the way, and now I’m impatient to get the newsletters flowing so that I can share them.

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 soon, and we are happy to take questions about these at submissions@schematicmapping.org. Reports on all aspects of schematic map research are most welcome.

Map of the Month: What might a Brutalist Tube Map look like?
I can’t recall what inspired this particular map. It might have been visits to the Barbican Centre and the Hayward Gallery last year, or else two walks along the length of the notorious Beech Street Tunnel. Normally, I reserve my decorative maps for genres that inspire me, and I have certainly never declared a love of Brutalism in public!

The problem with Brutalism is that when it is done cheaply, without imagination, or is not looked after properly, it can be very nasty indeed. At its best, for example, the Royal Festival Hall, Falmer House at the University of Sussex, or even the National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace, the result need not be inherently unpleasant buildings, and the three examples are all bright and spacious inside.

So what might a map inspired by Brutalist architecture look like? I wanted a design that respected the genre, rather than ridiculed the worst of it. In any case, such a map has already been created: Harold Hutchison’s awful official Underground maps, issued from 1960 to 1963 might be the ultimate, unintentional Brutalist parody maps, with their angular harsh corners, and ungainly, unbalanced configurations. Also, my intention was a design that reflected the shape and appearance of the buildings themselves, rather than a map that might be at home hanging up inside them, suitably garishly coloured. This meant a colour-palette inspired by concrete – but not the dirty, grey, cracked, uncared for variety – freshly cleaned, the colour is more of a warm sand.

I chose the 1982 network (the year the Barbican Centre opened) although the 1951 network (the year the Royal Festival Hall was completed) would have been just as appropriate. Sketches took me to a very angular regular design, dominated by diagonals: the Brunswick Centre might have pointed me in that direction. This gave the map lots of shape, but using geometry that was not necessarily traditional, familiar, or advisable. A hexalinear map with shallow diagonals, and no use of horizontal lines, is the last way that I would recommend for designing any London Underground map, but traditional Henry Beck octolinearity is sooooo 1930s!
Stations are just notches cut into the lines, raw and unfinished. The interchanges are designed to stand out: they inherit the geometry of the lines, but are brightly coloured to catch the eye (in contrast to lines in various shades of concrete). The font is *Clarendon*, a blocky Egyptian-style serif that is a good match for lettering often used on these buildings, although in reality a Brutalist typography never really developed, and the typeface style was merely commonplace throughout the 1950s and 60s. A *braveny derivative logo* completes the design, which has been finished in either sharp-corner or smooth-corner versions. Sharp corners are more stereotypically Brutalist, although a *Twitter-poll* was indecisive, and smooth corners are more elegant.

Brutalism means so many different things to so many different people, and there would have been many ways to approach this map. This particular version was strongly constrained by my very first sketch. Who knows what the map might have looked like if I had been in a different mood the day that I started it.

I do wonder how often, at the grand unveiling of an experimental new building, there is a stunned silence from the audience and architects inwardly protesting “but it seemed like such a good idea on the blueprints”. The trouble with putting Avant-Garde architectural visions into practice is that everyone is stuck with the outcome for at least a few decades. Fortunately, a map is less permanent, and the worst of my ideas are now safely in the recycling box. Moving on to the April newsletter, I will let an anniversary choose the next Map of the Month, which means a trip to Berlin. To find out what is in store, subscribe my newsletter at [www.tubemapcentral.com](http://www.tubemapcentral.com).

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