I’ve finally managed to deliver a newsletter at its scheduled time: the first Monday of the month. There was no need to slow down on designing maps, three more have been completed since the last mailing!

**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 is [now open](#), and we are happy to take questions about these at [submissions@schematicmapping.org](mailto:submissions@schematicmapping.org). Reports on all aspects of schematic map research are most welcome.

**Book news**
I am delighted to spread the word of a new book that will soon be with us. [Macdonald Gill: Charting a Life](#) by Caroline Walker (his great-niece) will be published by Unicorn, with 336 pages and 275 illustrations, ISBN 978-1-912690-89-3. Macdonald Gill is best known for his intricate art-cartography, particularly his [Wonderground Map of London Town](#). His Underground network maps are the inspiration for two Maps of the Month in my Newsletters 47 and 63 (and are set for a future return). Just a tiny proportion of his work depicted London: it was truly global in its scope, capturing bygone eras in so many different ways.

**Map of the Month: Vienna revisited**
Unfortunately I was unable to return to Vienna this year, but if I couldn’t go to the city, then the next best thing was to bring the city to me. The [Stadtbahn](#), with its famous [Otto Wagner](#)-designed Art Nouveau station buildings, commenced operation in 1898. 120 years later it forms a major component of the city U-Bahn network. There are a number of distinctive historic Stadtbahn maps on the Internet, although their origins have been difficult to research. The basic triangle map may have first appeared in the 1930s: an early example of schematisation. It has also not been possible to identify when the first colour version was issued. I have always liked the aesthetics of these maps (a 1978 version is shown). Using the configuration, symbols and font as the basis to show the modern/future U-Bahn network seemed like a nice idea.

Last year, teaching at the New Design University at St. Pölten in Austria, one of the most distinctive [student designs](#) for the Vienna U-Bahn network was a hexalinear map. This used standard horizontal and sixty degree angles. However, the historic version has steeper diagonals, and I settled
on 68° to horizontal, which has the effect of compressing the centre (enclosed by the triangle): this is the opposite to what is usually desired by designers. This was not a problem originally because the Stadtbahn skirted the centre, but one function of the new U-Bahn lines was to serve this area directly.

There were several key factors to address so that justice could be done to this concept. First, the large, distinctive station markers needed to be evolved in a convincing way to show the many new interchanges (I cheered at my computer when I worked out how to show the three-way interchange at Karlsplatz). Second, having devised a slightly cumbersome interchange device, a regular placement pattern was necessary to tame these and make their use look convincing. Finally, the font needed to be authentic. Various internet discussions suggested that the German typeface Erbar (designed by Jakob Erbar and issued in 1926) must have formed the basis, but with various letters modified to tone down the quirkiness of the original. There might have been an Austrian modification of this typeface for use on railways, or more widely, but I have not been able to track this down. In past years I might have accepted the differences and simply used Erbar, but this time round I corrected the noticeably-different letters as best I could. A spiky Danube contrasts nicely with the rounded triangles (matching the authentic S-Bahn symbols). The slightly washed-out colours, frequently seen on 1970s maps, complete the effect.

This was a map that I was struggling to get to work and then everything suddenly fell into place giving a very pleasing result. I haven’t decided on Map of the Month for July, it depends on whether something special can be organised. Subscribe to my newsletter at www.tubemapcentral.com to find out if there is cause for celebration. Clues to the map are here and here.

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