Summer has only just arrived and it seems early to be thinking about autumn, but the special event that I hinted at in my June newsletter is definitely going ahead, with my maps returning to Wivenhoe station.

**Dates 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. Reports on all aspects of schematic map research are most welcome.

From mid July to September (dates to be confirmed) the July Map of the Month, plus the three others in the series will be on display at Wivenhoe Station as part of the Off the Rails art project. It is always nice to see maps in their natural habitat – railway stations – and the last time I exhibited there was back in 2013.

**In the media, on the web**

- *Airline Maps*, co-authored with Mark Ovenden, is featured in Patrick Smith’s Ask the Pilot blog.
- *Tube Map Travels* also gets a nice review courtesy of Tim Bryars (of Bryars & Bryars, dealers in antiquarian maps, books and prints) at the Rhumb Lines blog.
- Something different: in a YouTube documentary David Frankal discusses Berlin railways during the cold war, with some of my Berlin recreations providing relevant images.

**Web page news**

My poster shop has been updated, adding several Maps of the Month that have featured in previous newsletters. The decorative maps section has almost doubled in size. All my past works are available on a print-on-demand basis at a variety of sizes. The most popular ones can be browsed online, but email me if any that you want are not listed.

**Map of the Month:**

**Four Seasons on the Essex Sunshine Coast**

Five years ago, in July 2015, my Art Deco-inspired pastiche map, representing summer on the Essex Sunshine Coast, was joined by a second design comprising a magnolia tree and celebrating spring. The latter had started with Arts & Crafts intent – both genres have a strong local connection with architecture at Frinton-on-Sea – but the tree had other ideas and an Art Nouveau map was the result. This still has local connections but less obvious: Art Nouveau decoration featured behind the closed front doors of many houses at Clacton-on-Sea. In November 2016, now anticipating winter, the pair of maps was joined by a suitably spartan...
Minimalist-Modernist design inspired by George Dow’s exuberant LMS London Suburban railways diagram. Obviously, an autumn map was needed to complete the cycle. To maintain the local architectural connection it was imperative that this would be inspired by the Arts & Crafts style. I was working on a possibility concurrently with the Modernist map and my earliest test files date back to September 2016.

So what took me so long? The upheaval of moving house contributed – I now live on the Essex Sunshine Coast – but also there was my desire to do the concept justice. There is so much competition from other artists and the previous page shows just one example. I was only intending to create a map (that also just happened to be a tree), reducing the need for realism but, even so, research and photographs were still required.

This time a more sober, solid oak tree was the basis of the design – far less likely to tempt me back to Art Nouveau than the more flamboyant magnolia. To complete it, I needed to build up layers of detail and colour, filling the scene appropriately but without cluttering it. The tree itself was hard enough, but convincing ground cover and a sunset were even harder, and it was these that caused me to put down my computer mouse for over three and a half years.

Stepping back, with all four panels competed, these are not the most technically accomplished artworks created but they do represent their respective genres well. First and foremost all four designs are maps and, although it would have been possible to make the trees and their settings more realistic, this would have detracted from the messages as well as their legibility. Ultimately, I see my decorative maps as attempts to encourage other people to have a go, and I still live in hope that this will happen.

Maps disappear into my in-tray of doom for all sorts of reasons but, now I am revisiting them, the causes of dissatisfaction that led to the hiatuses seem to be less insurmountable than I remember. I’m not sure why this is the case, but the chance to clear some of these off my desk has been most welcome. I have several possibilities for Map of the Month for August. Subscribe to my newsletter at www.tubemapcentral.com to find out what I choose.

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