Although Christmas rapidly approaches, there is still time to purchase posters from my webshop. Several new designs have been added over the past year, particularly to the decorative maps category. To ensure timely arrivals, I am currently only using carriers with guaranteed deliveries such as DHL and UPS.

I was recently pleasantly surprised to see that my posters depicting Four Seasons on the Essex Sunshine Coast are still on display at Wivenhoe station. If you are in the area, do take a look while you still can.

Date for your diary
The third Schematic Mapping Workshop will be held on 21st/22nd April, 2022, at Universität Würzburg, Germany. The workshop website includes the full scope and submission timetable. Reports on all aspects of schematic map research are most welcome. The portal for submissions opens in April 2021 and we are happy to take questions about these at submissions@schematicmapping.org.

Web page news
This year, I have returned to lecturing in human intelligence at the University of Essex. Although not strictly map related, in a way research into the structure of intelligence can thought of as attempts to map the mind. For people who are interested, these lectures are online – I also cover psychometric test theory and critiques of intelligence and intelligence testing – alongside the most recent versions of all my others, including my module on transit maps, which unfortunately is not running this year.

Map of the Month: Mapping New Trade Regimes
There is a lot more to maps than showing the lines of urban rail networks, but schematisation techniques are often relevant beyond these, especially where topographical fidelity is not essential and might even distract from the information that the map is intended to convey. In Newsletter 83, I discussed a world map based on Hexagons. Here I give another example of a schematisation, this one closer to my home.

The purpose of the map is to show the various legal regimes that will shortly be governing trade between Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Ireland and the rest of Europe, and the rest of the world. The complex coastlines are irrelevant to the information to be displayed – all that was needed was recognisable basic landforms – and, to fit in all the complex details, Ireland needed to be enlarged relative to Great Britain.

A long time ago, my friend and mentor Doug Rose explained to me that octolinearity is inappropriate for
schematic maps of the British rail network, resulting in an ungainly diagram that is too wide and shallow. Instead, 60° is a far more appropriate diagonal to show the lines. Hence, the logical starting point for the new map was to use equilateral triangles. The previous page shows part of the process, involving successive iterations for simplifying, adjusting, and smoothing. The completed version shows Ireland enlarged but, despite this, it lines up well with its ferry links to Great Britain. The various islands are the most obvious casualties of the schematisation process, but these do not negotiate their own trade deals and, therefore, their inclusion does not add to the information that the infographic is conveying.

Creating this schematisation was less than half the work, the hard part was keying the various legal regimes to ensure that these were shown in logically appropriate, consistent combinations. Although this is not a transit map, it still depicts movement – of goods and services – but in a very abstract way, showing bureaucratic hurdles rather than geographical ones. It comprises a colourful warning that people trading internationally will soon need to pay close attention to the new legal frameworks that will be in operation.

The map here is a sneak preview, one of several infographics that I have helped develop for a major book to be published next month: more details in the next newsletter. The other inspiration for this map was the imaginary design from Newsletter 77, exactly one year ago, and it is good to be able to find a use for this technique. Map of the Month for December will be a lighthearted diversion. To find out what is in store, subscribe to my newsletter at www.tubemapcentral.com.

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