

Better Mapping 2006

Taking The Message To The People

Autumn 2006 saw the BCS take to the road with a series of educational seminars. The intention was to educate, promote and discuss the idea and principles of good cartography, with the back up plan of promoting the work of the Society and hopefully providing a boost to membership.



The exhibition

Despite last minute, unavoidable changes to the agenda, the programme delivered exactly what the doctor ordered (Dr Cassettari that is!). Alan Collinson of Geo-Innovations gave delegates an eye opening show and tell approach to the 'good, the bad and the ugly' of the mapping world followed by an introduction to the many different types of maps from HarperCollins. BCS' very own Ken Atherton then succinctly described the principles of map making (complete with 'blow-up' props) including map projections and reference systems, scale, resolution, generalisation, marginalia and metadata.



Mary Spence and Faith Clark

After a much needed refreshment break, field surveyors from the Ordnance Survey gave a very interesting presentation on creating and maintaining a national archive including the growing role of technology such as GPS, Real

Time Kinetics and LiDAR. Seppe Cassettari covered the thorny topic of copyright and other legal considerations, making many of the delegates seriously consider some of their own mapping activities, then the last session before lunch saw Peter Jolly of ESRI demonstrating some of the advanced cartographic functionalities of today's GIS software.

After lunch delegates were shown how to put *Better Mapping* into practice. Mary Spence MBE of Global Mapping and Alan Collinson provided expert advice on all aspects of map creation. From selecting the right information to the importance of colour, text size, placement and spacing to the choice of shading – delegates received practical guidance on what to do in order to create better maps and what not to do!



The attentive audience

In addition to the educational side of the events, there was also the chance for delegates to network with each other and with a selection of BCS Corporate Member organisations. Thanks go to the Association for Geographic Information, British Geological Survey, Cities Revealed, Collins Bartholomew, Cosmographics, ESRI (UK), Geo-Innovations, Global Mapping, Lovell Johns, The Map Shop, Ordnance Survey, Scotprint, Stirling Surveys, UK GeoForum, United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, and The XYZ Digital Map Company for their support.

The seminar series started on the last day of October in the prestigious setting of Trinity House, London. Home to the Corporation of Trinity House, the venue was replete with historical navigational globes, models of 17th century ships and the ship's bell from the Royal Yacht Britannia, which was 'chimed' to

Continued on page 17...

Seppe Cassettari covered the thorny topic of copyright and other legal considerations, making many of the delegates seriously consider some of their own mapping activities

article and the 'complex algorithm' kind. As an example of this, how do I find out about the practical problems associated with the Bonne projection at a scale of 1:10,000? Answer, with very great difficulty, all the works available tell me either 'the Bonne was used in the Great War' or will tell me how to perform a Molodensky transformation, neither of which is much use to me. If I need to know if I can scan a Bonne map and use it in my mapping software with simple lat/long, nothing is available. If the BCS could support articles on questions at this level, I am sure there would be a lot wider interest.

I would like to see more articles that bridge the gap between cartography and map users. Not with a lower standard of authorship or authority, but with a focus on users rather than map producers.

Another aspect of the face of the BCS is membership. Currently one can only get to be a Fellow by 'meeting the professional competence criteria agreed by Council'. Anyone seeing that will think the BCS is only

for cartographic professionals, there is no other route to any sort of recognition. This will be reinforced if they read on and find 'While membership of the Society is open to anyone who has an interest in maps or charts, uses them in the course of employment not otherwise concerned with maps, or consults them in the pursuit of leisure, such activities and interests are not regarded as being appropriate qualifications for those seeking to obtain Fellowship status.' That is fine, keep the Fellow as a mark of cartographic excellence but how about developing another grade of membership with parity of esteem with a Fellow but gained by a route more associated with using maps rather than producing them at a professional level?

If the BCS does not change, it will in all likelihood, fade away.

Howard Anderson
BCS Member and member of the Historical
Military Mapping Group

Better Mapping 2006

...continued from page 6

call the delegates back from lunch at the start of the afternoon session. The Corporation is concerned with the safety of shipping and the well being of seafarers and has three distinct functions: they are the General Lighthouse Authority for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar, a charitable organisation dedicated to the safety, welfare and training of mariners and a Deep Sea Pilotage Authority providing expert navigators for ships trading in Northern European waters. As navigation and cartography are natural 'bed fellows' this venue was the perfect setting to kick off the series of events.

The following week saw participants heading to Cardiff City Hall. Again an imposing historical venue this time complete with a 'work in progress' ice rink for the cities festive celebrations. Then on to Aintree Racecourse home of the Grand National and finally exactly a month after the series started it came to a close on the 30th November at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh.

In total over 300 delegates attended the events, mostly from local government or other public sector organisations and mainly non BCS members. Overall feedback from the delegates was very positive enforcing the opinion of the organisers, BCS Council and Corporate Members that the enormous contribution by all involved was more than worth the end result.

Faith Clark



I would like to see more articles that bridge the gap between cartography and map users.

As navigation and cartography are natural 'bed fellows' this venue was the perfect setting to kick off the series of events.