

Map Designers Heaven!

A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EVENT
the first of many...

Take six top British cartographers; add a leading locative media specialist and a pinch of American dry-humoured insight into the importance of good cartographic design. Mix in three guest speakers each outlining their own particular cartographic or spatial data projects. Top and tail this with a sparkling Master of Ceremonies and what do you have? The answer is, one of the most electric, exhilarating, entertaining, important events the BCS has ever staged – *The Map Designers, Glasgow 2006*.

In the past fifty years, the world has moved onwards in design terms, but generally, cartography has not really changed at all. The explosion of non-cartographic map makers has brought a vibrancy and freshness to the subject, the like of which has never been seen before.

'GIS is the representation of geographic reality, Cartography is the interpretation of geographic reality'

The Map Designers set out to promote cartography to a wider audience; to seek out these map makers and visual design specialists, and then invite them to share their ideas on mapping, and where appropriate, to explore ways to incorporate into cartography the abundant graphic and artistic skills found in these other disciplines. Additionally, we wanted to explore afresh the contribution that Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has made to our industry, and to reinforce the emerging trend that is seeing the GIS and cartographic professions merging once more. On the other side of the coin, we also wanted to take an opportunity to explain to each of these groups some of the principles that cartographers use when designing maps. It was also seen as an opportunity to explain that it was not necessary to be a cartographer to adopt and benefit from good cartographic practices.



Alan Collinson presenting

With this concept in mind the idea was floated to potential speakers and participants, and we were pleasantly surprised at their eager response, especially from those outside the cartographic industry. From these discussions came the concept of a multi-disciplinary design seminar, incorporating everything from 'GIS to Map Art'. In late September we began to publicise the event in earnest. This, our, hopefully, inaugural event was to be held at The Lighthouse, Glasgow, Scotland's centre for architecture and design; a very fitting venue for a very experimental and ground-breaking venture, giving us the location for our first event, in the hope that if successful, we can bring the event further south, to London or other British cities.

'Map Graphics is the illustration of geographic reality, Map-Art is the expression of ideas about geographic reality'

Once the initial publicity was released, the widespread interest in our proposal quickly became apparent. Over the initial weeks we saw our message being taken up and passed on across the web from site to site, blog to blog until we were actually advertising across the World as well as major UK geographic and cartographic sites, being hailed on some sites as a 'ground breaking' seminar. We also received particular interest from Australia, where a representative of the Mapping Sciences Institute congratulated us on our 'multi-disciplinarian view point' and asked for

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Better Mapping takes to the road See page 6

from GIS...

THE SPEAKERS

Dr Mike Wood OBE, Introduction to *The Map Designers Seminar*.

Alan Collinson, *Geo-Innovations, BCS Design Group Co-Convener*. The Principles of Map Design.

David Barbour, *Stirling Surveys, Maps People Can Read – design for recreation and orienteering*.

Mary Spence MBE, *Global Mapping, BCS President*. The Qualities of Better Mapping.

Susie Jones, *Royal School of Military Survey, BCS Design Group Co-Convener*. GIS and Cartography.

Alan Collinson, *Geo-Innovations, BCS Design Group Co-Convener*. From GIS to Map Art.

Wendy Price, *Wendy Price Cartographic Services*. Mapping as an Art, Tourist Maps, Inviting and informative.

Dr Max Baber, *Professor of Geography, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama USA*. The Significance of Map Design for Effective Analysis and Decision-Making in Public and Private Enterprises.

Drew Hemment, *Director, Future Everything*. Collaborative Mapping and Locative Media.

GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Hannah Clinch, Radius Glasgow.

Chris Fremantle, The work of Helen and Newton Harrison and David Haley on the Greenhouse Britain project.

Matthew Chalmers, University of Glasgow, George Square project, part of the Equator project.

Event Co-ordinator – Lynda Bailey

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feedback with a possible view to undertaking a similar event in the future. We are currently talking to them about this.

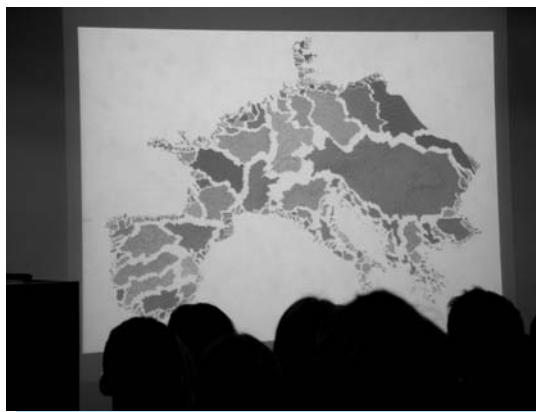
Mike Shand, Phil Cubbin and colleagues from the Society of Cartographers helped us to prepare for the event with publicity and practical help and also took part in the exhibition and networking elements of the day. Many thanks go to them for their help and ideas. We hope that we will be able to work closely with SoC to develop *The Map Designers* idea into future events.

In early November, led by Alan Collinson, the BCS team rolled into Glasgow full of excitement as to what would happen. How would the concept work? Did we have the programme balanced right? The questions were very quickly answered with a resounding 'Yes!'

'In nature light creates the colour.

In the picture the colour creates the light'
(Hans Hoffman)

On the day, in Glasgow, we had representatives from a fine array of artistic and



GIS related fields, companies and institutions including web cartographers, several Scottish and English local authorities, many universities, artists with their own studios, fine arts researchers, tourism, transport, video games sector, publishers, independent cartographers and central government.

Some years ago the International Cartographic Association defined cartography as 'the art, science and technology of making maps together with their study as scientific works of art. In this context may be regarded as including all types of maps, plans, charts and sections, 3D models and globes

*Really enjoyed
the day –
Brilliant!
Map Heaven!*

*Very interesting
and stimulating
away day!*

...to Map-Art

representing the Earth and any celestial body at any scale.' Participants in *The Map Designers* seminar experienced this definition in full scope. BCS cartographers produce some of the world's finest maps and mapping products. Presentations were given by some of BCS' leading cartographers, who drew on a wealth of cartographic experience to share with an enthusiastic audience, their methods and underlying philosophies. Also presenting was locative media specialist, Drew Hemment of Future Everything and BCS Fellow and design scholar, Max Baber, Professor at Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. (For a full list of speakers and titles see inset.)

'Design adds value faster than it adds cost'
(Joel Spolsky)

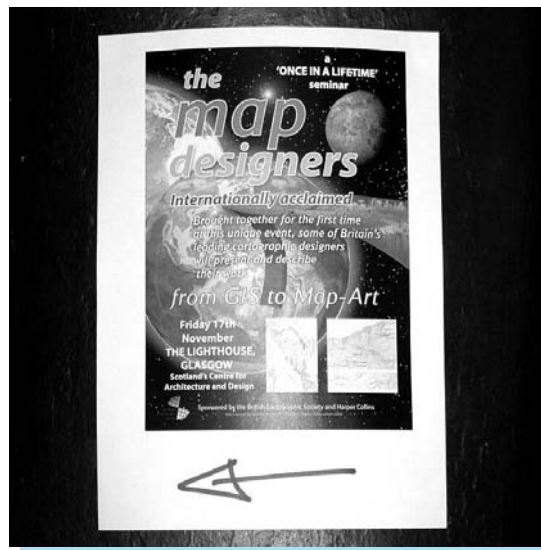
Ever eager to take the initial concept and make it grow, we were delighted to be approached by several individuals from outside of BCS with a view to publicising or presenting on their own particular project. This led to a section of the programme being devoted to three guest speakers. Matthew Chalmers spoke on the 'George Street' project, part of the Equator project www.equator.ac.uk, Chris Fremantle speaking on Helen and Newton



Harrison and David Haley's work on a project called 'Greenhouse Britain' and Hannah Clinch from Radius Glasgow. Each speaker gave an unique insight into their project, illustrating by example the directions that mapping and map art can take and are taking. The Royal Scottish Geographical Society also displayed their *'Images' for All* exhibition as part of a small BCS/SoC exhibition attached to the seminar, giving yet another mapping dimension to our event.

The audience at this event was passionately engaged, as evidenced by eager participation in the Open Forum session that ended the

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seminar. The day was a whirlwind of activity and interest, during which the speakers showed off their exceptional or innovative work. The overwhelming discovery from the day was that there is scope to do so much more; the participants actively asking for future events and more contact with the seminar's speakers. Interesting suggestions were made, including blogs, websites, publications and more events, as to how to take this new potential community forward, each one will be examined more closely in coming months. The interface between cartography and artistic representations of geographic reality is a fascinating one, and worthy of much more consideration and attention.

Lynda Bailey, Alan Collinson and Max Baber
The Map Designers



Probably the best conference I've been to all year despite the fact I know least about the subject

The whole day was a wakeup call for complacent cartography