

## Mapping Manchester

In the last issue, we brought you details of 'Mapping Manchester', an exhibition of cartographic stories relating to the rainy city. Mark and Adam went along to have a look for themselves.

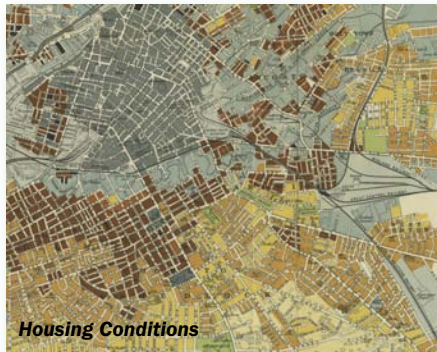


Courtesy of Manchester Geographical Society

If ever there was a case for enforcing the Great British 'North/South divide', this was it. As Editors of *Maplines* we are a foursome; two below Birmingham and two above. The Southern office, clearly keen to avoid an early outing for the winter thermals, graciously stood aside, allowing Mark and I to attend this unique exhibition and gain an insight into the city we have both worked in, if not lived in. We attended as a group of eight: three cartographers, one planner, one urban designer, one researcher, a student and a mechanic. As varied a bunch as one could wish for! Once assembled, we made our way across town to Deansgate, an area steeped in local

history, and headed for the impressive John Rylands University Library, in particular the Historic Reading Room.

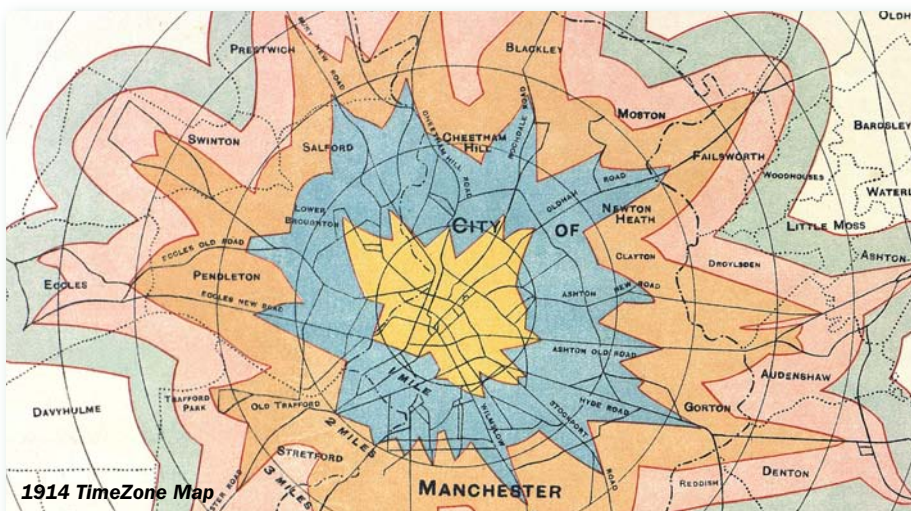
En route we passed the Christie Room, currently housing the life and literature of Charles Darwin, and although intrigued we were looking for an evolution of another kind. Manchester was at the heart of Britain's Industrial Revolution and the maps on display, dating as far back as 1794 gave us a rich insight into the emergence of industrial and social Manchester. Split into several themes, the



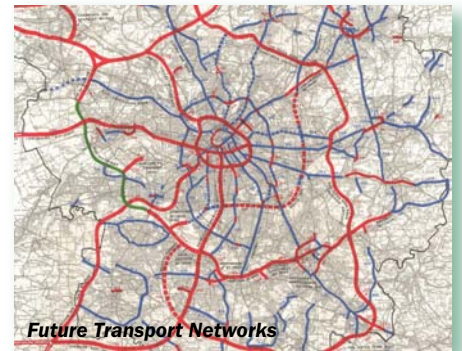
Courtesy of Alex Singleton, University College London

exhibition describes the story of the city in maps and photographs, touching on key aspects of Manchester's urban life such as commerce, transport, leisure and morality.

There was more than enough on display to keep even a sceptical mechanic interested. The 1914 *TimeZone Map*, showing tram-car



Courtesy of Manchester City Archives and Local Studies Library



Courtesy of Chetham's Library

journey times towards the city centre, the combination of 'petal' contours and their colours give the map a fiery appearance! The rather quirkily named *Drink Map of Manchester*, which related increased poverty to the availability of alcohol, were intriguing to all. Our planners and designers found interest in transport maps and more recent maps to do with the regeneration of a city that has seen its fair share of poverty and deprivation. *The 1945 Plan* represented the bold, yet ultimately unfulfilled, dream of planners of post-war Britain for the city, and maps showing housing conditions of the 'Shock City' in the late 19th century helped to explain the history and fabric of the city these people worked with.

There was also a focus on the various and changing cartographic skills employed by map-makers over the centuries, using the tools available at the time. The range of these on display was excellent. From hand-drawn maps to 3D models, Manchester is viewed from all angles as the city's cartographers strive to map places in new and intriguing ways.

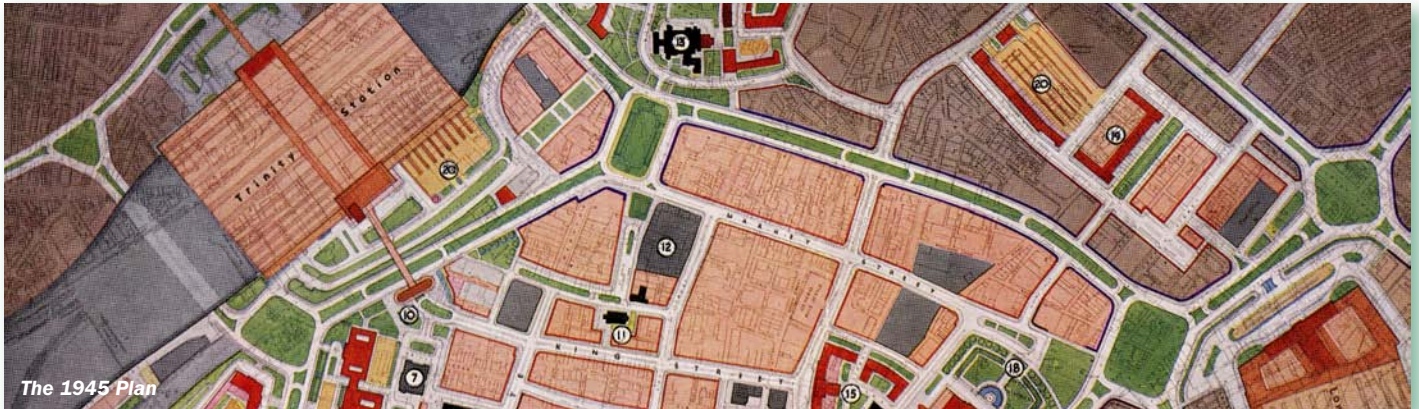
The future of Manchester was a key theme. The recent referendum on public transport and the congestion charge has given planners and politicians something to think about and cartographers something to draw. Although an overwhelming 'no' vote, it was interesting to see the *Future Transport Networks* map (in true Harry Beck style) and compare the route lines with those of the past.

The vast array of maps on display highlight the benefits cartography can bring to a city. Many were inspired from the city itself, though it was clear to all how maps can play their part in shaping the future of urban life.

Although a city's skyline may change, the shape of a city forever remains. No doubt a somewhat comforting conclusion to today's Mancunians.

Adam King and Mark Sansom

The exhibition runs until 17th January 2010. For more information visit [www.mappingmanchester.org](http://www.mappingmanchester.org). For details on the John Rylands Library and visiting times, please see [www.library.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk).



Courtesy of John Rylands University Library

## Map Curators Tackle the World Wide Web

In September the Map Curators' Group held its 2009 Workshop, *From Paper to Screen: Putting Maps on the Web*, at the National Library of Scotland Map Library.



With papers on [www.OLDUKMaps.com](http://www.OLDUKMaps.com), Soviet military mapping, the Scottish Gazetteer, the digitising process of 12,000 maps of former Dutch colonies in the East Indies and the People's Map, the array of information and speakers was dazzling.

Following the MCG's annual Business Meeting, there was a private viewing of items from the Bartholomew Archive, including records, photographs, samples and other artifacts of the Bartholomew family mapping business, now at home

in the NLS Map Library.

Thursday's highlights were a demonstration by Chris Fleet and Petr Pridal of loading and enhancing scanned maps onto the Internet and a reprise by Barbara Bond MBE of her BCS Helen Wallis Memorial Lecture, 'Communicating with maps and charts: did the message get through?'

There was also a chance to visit The Aerial Reconnaissance Archive (TARA) which was especially poignant to those delegates who had seen it several years ago when BCS met at the University of Keele. The collection suffered poor storage conditions and accessibility there, and was the subject of national concern, so it was heartening to see it in its new Scottish home, where publicity and access has improved.

A visit to the British Geological Society allowed delegates a look at the digital flying overview map of Britain, seen last year on the BBC's *Britain From Above*.

On Friday, delegates were welcomed by Margaret Wilkes at the new home of

the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in Perth. This was the first group to be hosted in the RSGS's new home, where Chief Executive Mike Robinson told us of their mission to return geography to the forefront in Scotland. A tour of the Fair Maid's House followed, which, after renovation, will house the Society's collections.



This Workshop was the first that did not meet as a preliminary programme to the BCS Symposium, and it was felt that by separating events, the MCG was able to plan a longer, more successful, programme. With attendance at twice the usual level, the group decided to hold its 2010 Workshop in September with another 2 or 3-day programme.

April Carlucci