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Cartographiti

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MAP CURATORS GROUP

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Mfikela Jean Samuel presenting at Carto Cymru 2025.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Cartographiti is available free-of-charge to members of the British Cartographic Society. It is not necessary to be a professional map curator or map librarian to join the Map Curators' Group. *Cartographiti* is available through the BCS website:

<https://www.cartography.org.uk/cartographiti>

Conveners' Corner

The Map Curators' Group recently held its first in-person meeting since 2023. On Friday 6 June there was a training morning, 'Getting to know maps', held at, and in partnership with, the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It covered the main differences between cataloguing maps and books, cartographic mathematical data, geographical subject headings and antiquarian maps. The course was well attended and feedback so far has been positive.

In the afternoon we had a Map Curators' Group workshop. This included talks by Vanessa Harding, Chair of the Historic Towns Trust, on the Trust's current research and publications, Donna Sherman of the University of Manchester, on Diversifying map collections, and Andrew Honey on his role as Conservation Inspector for the Hereford Mappa Mundi. Nick Millea of the Bodleian Map Room gave a Show & Tell of maps from the Bodleian's collections (a write-up of the day will be included in the winter edition of *Cartographiti*).

This event will be followed by another in-person meeting; the MCG Autumn Workshop will be held on Wednesday 3 September at the British Geological Survey in Keyworth, Nottinghamshire, in conjunction with the main BCS Conference. Booking is already open on the BCS website.

The discussion on diversifying collections was a continuation of online discussions that were initiated by Paula Williams, the previous MCG Convener, after the MCG Workshop in 2023. We plan to continue these, and some relevant resources will be added to the revised MCG Toolbox on the BCS website once the revision of the website is complete. Anyone interested in future discussions should contact debbie.hall@cartography.org.uk or martin.davis@cartography.org.uk.

Debbie Hall and Martin Davis

Editorial Effusion

I'm writing this having just attended the MCG Workshop, held in Oxford. It was a very interesting afternoon, and well attended, and it was so nice to see so many familiar faces as well as some new ones. A summary of the day will appear in the next issue of *Cartographiti*, where I hope it will be joined by one of the Autumn Workshop. The highlights of this issue include a report on Carto-Cymru by Ellie King, and a history of map curators at the National Archives (formerly the Public Records Office), written by

the recently retired Rose Mitchell. As always, please send me your news for inclusion, and perhaps think about contributing a longer article.

Judith Fox

Around the Libraries

National Library of Scotland

Mapping identities project

NLS is a partner in a research project which has been funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to research the ways in which maps have been, and are still, used to interpret and shape Scottish understanding of the present, past and future. The project is being led by the University of the Highlands and Islands and will run for two years from February 2025. The project will include three small workshops for researchers, a larger conference for a wider audience, a travelling exhibition and related talks. The initial workshop was held in NLS on 25 April with a brief report on the day at: <https://instituteofnorthernstudies.com/2025/04/29/mapping-identities-workshop-a-great-success/>.

Bibliography of the historical cartography of Scotland

This bibliography, newly available online, has been compiled by John Moore, and includes over 770 references to articles relating specifically to maps and map makers of Scotland. It is possible to search by author, subject and keyword, as well as browse the bibliography through chronological, thematic and geographic sections. Informed descriptions and summaries accompany each citation. The Bibliography was originally published over 40 years ago with just 238 entries, but it has been continually maintained and expanded since then by John.

Second Land Utilisation Survey field sheets

The sheets have been scanned and are currently being georeferenced. They should be available online at NLS by July.

Additions to the website

- [OS one-Inch to the mile, England and Wales 'Old Series', 1801–1869](#)
- [Theatrum orbis terrarum](#), Abraham Ortelius (1592)
- [Ordnance Survey large scale maps published in 1974](#)
- [Ordnance Survey one-Inch England and Wales, 3rd edition \(coloured\), 1903–1920](#)
- [OS 1900 text search](#) – view distributions of text from OS six-Inch 1888–1913 maps
- [New survey of the Borough of Birmingham](#) by J. Pigott-Smith (1855)

Chris Fleet, NLS

Cambridge University Library

Acquisitions

- We are about to receive a large donation for the Charles Close Society Archive from David Archer.

- In Autumn 2024 we received Chris Board's collection of quarter-inch Ordnance Survey maps in 16 cardboard boxes. These await processing.

Outreach

Recent visits include:

- Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Family History Society (CHFHS).
- Staff from [Addresscloud](#) (they help insurers understand geographic risk) as part of their workshop held in Cambridge.
- Second year class of undergraduate historians.
- Cambridge U3A for their 'Mapping on the www' course.
- The Master of the [Clothworkers' Company](#) to look at one of our maps of [part of Burma on cloth](#)

Anne Taylor, CUL

Bodleian Library, Oxford

Outreach

Recent in-person presentations have been delivered by maps staff to the Bicester Local History Society; British Cartographic Society Teatime Talks; Cirencester Civic Society; Continuing Education Archaeology and the Antiquarians students; Digital Skills Community of Practice; Friends of the Bodleian Library; Ineos Group; Ordnance Survey Cambridge Conference; Oxford Prospects Programme; Oxford Saïd Business School EMBA programme (two separate events); Oxford University Undergraduate History Thesis Fair; Smithsonian Institute; Weston Library 10th Anniversary celebration; WRFM Radio (two separate events).

In addition, Martin Davis led a 12-session course on 'Mapping people and places' for the MSc in Digital scholarship.

Nick Millea, Bodleian

British Library

Cyber incident

Digitisation projects continue to be affected by the Library's October 2023 cyber incident. For the latest information please see the [guide to what's currently available](#).

Staff

Jo Kent joined the Library in March 2025, taking up the position of Lead Curator of Digital Mapping in the Contemporary British Collections department.

Huw Rowlands, Cataloguer and Processing Coordinator, India Office Maps Project, has been awarded a 2025–26 Coleridge Fellowship at the British Library. His research will use digital and traditional methods to investigate cross-cultural encounters in the Survey of India in the mid-nineteenth century.

Cataloguing

India Office Maps Project: Completed third year of processing and cataloguing material held in the India Office Map Collection. So far, processed over 61,000 maps and recorded data for over 12,800 map catalogue records. Items processed include comprehensive reference sets of India and Adjacent Countries (IAC) one-inch, half-inch and quarter-inch series; sets of IAC production material with film sets showing

staff names and statistics; Ceylon and Burma one-inch series; Burma Forest Survey; cantonment plans and Tigris Corps and related WW1 Mesopotamia maps.

Crispin Jewitt completed cataloguing the China portion of the 'War Office Archive', almost 3,000 items in total – a huge achievement. Created or collected in China between 1890 and 1939, the material, comprising manuscripts, short-run prints, and a number of Chinese gazetteers and atlases, was sent to the War Office in London and used for the compilation of contemporary mapping product.

The British Library is undertaking a project to migrate its collections data onto a new library services platform, Alma, with an aim to complete by the end of the year.

Publications

[*Maps for Empire*](#) 2nd edition, 2025 by A. Crispin Jewitt, former staff member and volunteer in the Maps Collection.

Outreach

The British Library's autumn 2025 exhibition 'Secret Maps' runs from 24 October 2025–18 January 2026. The exhibition will focus upon the ways in which maps have concealed and revealed spatial knowledge in different contexts over the past 500 years. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full public programme and a book, authored by Tom Harper, Magdalena Peszko and Nick Dykes and co-published by The British Library and University of Chicago Press.

Tom Harper, BL

Royal Museums Greenwich

Outreach

In April the Venetian globemaker [Leonardo Frigo](#) was invited to visit the globe collection at our off-site store, focusing on RMG's Coronelli globes. We are planning a Coronelli focused event later in the year.

In March the [Pirates Exhibition](#) opened at the National Maritime Museum, displaying cartographic material such as William Hack's *South Sea Wagoner* (1685): P/33. The exhibition is open until January 2026.

The [New Ocean Map](#) is currently being installed in Ocean Court, which will re-open for RMG's World Ocean Day celebrations on 7 June. It utilises the Spilhaus projection, and marks notable natural ocean features, habitats and key container ports. After the opening, I presented the new Ocean Map to RMG members and guided them through various other 'thought provoking' maps in the collection through a tour.

Tim May, RMG

University of Manchester

Digitisation

The Library's Imaging Department has recently purchased the Selene photometric stereo system.

The Borgia *Mappamundi* was one of the first items to be captured using the surface scanning equipment. However additional advanced imaging examined by Matthew Edney has revealed that our '15th century copy' was most likely produced in the 18th century.

The library's 1546 Pierre Desceliers world map has been assessed and removed from its poles to enable further conservation work. It will then be photographed using the Selene photometric stereo system.

Outreach and teaching

The John Rylands Library has recently installed two new gallery spaces. The Collections Gallery will feature two maps: the Borgia *Mappamundi* and *Fujisan Shinkei Zenzu* [Complete map of the true shape of Mount Fuji]. Both galleries opened to the public on Thursday, 15 May.

Teaching has included contributions to undergraduate English, Art History and Public Health, and to MA History and English.

Donna Sherman, University of Manchester

Royal Geographical Society

Outreach

The map collections of the Royal Geographical Society have been utilised by numerous student groups, individual researchers and events, including several of our Monday Night Lectures. We also have supported a variety of projects in the past few months, including:

- Supporting the Mulu 1968 commemorative event (28 April 2025), which resulted in the donation of several expedition maps and maps from Indigenous Penan peoples.
- Accession of several donations, including WWII silk maps.
- Supervision of the clearing of one of our main map stores, which contains thousands of uncatalogued maps that are being integrated into the collection.
- Support of [Expanding Universe](#) by Hormazd Narielwalla, which uses features from maps in our collections in its design, by hosting tours.
- Leadership of the rehang of Lowther Lodge, including maps.
- Editing and authoring of a special section of Area based on the 'Map conversations' at last year's Annual International Conference.

Katherine Parker, RGS

National Library of Wales

Carto-Cymru: The Wales Symposium 2025 - The Art of Maps

Carto-Cymru took place at the National Library of Wales on 16 May and also online. The event proved very popular.

Cataloguing

We are continuing to catalogue our uncatalogued overseas mapping as well as re-organising and cataloguing our OS material. This process has highlighted a number of gaps in our historic collection of OS mapping.

Digitisation projects

The digitisation of the 25-inch first edition maps of Wales held by the Library has been completed. The Royal Commission are now looking for copies of those sheets we do not hold to complete the set. They have started on the georeferencing and hope to employ extra staff to speed this up. They are also looking for further funding to start digitising Welsh enclosure awards.

Outreach

The cartobibliography of county maps of Pembrokeshire is complete and will be published in the *Pembrokeshire Historical Society Journal*. I have also been asked to contribute to a section on mapping for the *Breconshire County History*.

Huw Thomas, NLW

Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3)

An introduction to the IOM3 Library's map collection

The [IOM3 Library](#) boasts a rich and diverse map collection that serves as a vital resource for researchers, professionals, and enthusiasts in the fields of materials, minerals and mining. Housed at the Boilerhouse in Grantham, this collection offers invaluable insights into the geographical and industrial developments that have shaped these sectors.

Overview of the map collection

Our dedicated map room houses over a thousand items. This extensive collection includes:

- **Geological surveys:** Detailed maps that chart the geological features of various regions, essential for understanding mineral deposits and guiding extraction processes.
- **Mining operations:** Maps illustrating the locations and extents of mining activities, including historical mine workings, which are crucial for both historical research and contemporary safety assessments.
- **Industrial cartography:** Maps depicting the development of industrial sites, transportation networks and related infrastructure, reflecting the growth and evolution of the materials and minerals industries.

Significance and usage

The map collection serves multiple purposes:

- **Historical research:** Scholars and historians utilise these maps to trace the development of mining regions, study the impact of industrialisation and understand historical land use patterns.
- **Educational resource:** Educators and students find the collection invaluable for teaching and learning about geological formations, mining history and the evolution of industrial landscapes.
- **Professional reference:** Industry professionals consult the maps for insights into past mining activities, aiding in exploration, environmental assessments and the planning of new projects.

Accessing the Map Collection

[ICON](#) – our open access online catalogue – allows users to search for items of interest before visiting. This search facility holds approximately 160,000 records, with more being added regularly. While the library primarily serves IOM3 members, we welcome external researchers and enthusiasts to explore our collections by appointment. Please note that borrowing rights are exclusive to members, and a visitor's fee may apply for non-students or non-historians.

For more detailed information or to arrange a visit, please contact the library team at library@iom3.org.

Sarah Daniels, Librarian, IOM3 Library

MCG News

Map Curators' Group Business Meeting

Held online via Teams. 12 February 2025, 14.00 GMT.

Attendees: Tinho da Cruz (Department of Geography, University of Liverpool); Judith Fox (*Cartographiti* editor); Debbie Hall (Bodleian Library and Co-convenor); Nick Millea (Bodleian Library); Caroline Philpott (University College, Cork); David Sherren (Portsmouth University Library); Donna Sherman (University of Manchester); Anne Taylor (University of Cambridge Library); Paula Williams (NLS)

Chair: Martin Davis (Co-convenor)

Martin Davis welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone to renew their membership of BCS if necessary, as the members' mailing list is a useful source of information along with *lis-maps*.

1. The notes of the previous meeting (26 February 2024) had been published in *Cartographiti* 103, Summer 2024 issue and were agreed.

Convener. Martin thanked Paula Williams for all her work as Convener of the group over the last six years. She has now stepped down and the role is being shared by Martin Davis and Debbie Hall.

2. **Training.** A map cataloguing training morning is planned for Friday 6 June, to be followed by an MCG workshop in the afternoon.

3. ***Cartographiti*.** Judith Fox continues to edit *Cartographiti* and two issues were published last year; one included the report on *Carto-Cymru* but the second one was slimmer as there was no MCG Workshop to report in 2024. She thanked everyone who had contributed recently and asked people to continue to share news, project updates etc.

4. **Cataloguing training and Workshop.** There will be a map cataloguing training morning at the Bodleian Library on 6 June 2025. This is particularly aimed at people who only deal with maps as part of their work and would like support with map specific issues such as scale and physical description. Paula said that at previous training of this sort people had asked for atlases to be covered as well as sheet maps. Donna suggested covering cartouches as part of antiquarian maps. Both Tinho and Paula may have documents from previous training courses which they would be happy to share. It

was suggested that the course should start fairly early as anyone travelling a long distance would have to stay the night before anyway. There was interest in a social dinner either the evening before or the evening after the event. Full details and booking information will be shared soon.

5. MCG Day at BCS Conference. There will be a MCG event adjacent to the main BCS conference on 3 September 2025. The details are still to be confirmed but this should involve a show & tell at the University of Nottingham and possibly at BGS in Keyworth, accompanied by a talk.

6. Website. The MCG pages on the BCS website are a big part of our public presence. Currently the BCS website is having an overhaul headed by Seppe Cassettari. Our introductory page needs little change, but the Map Curator's Toolbox has been slimmed down and obsolete or broken links removed by Debbie. Nothing has been added at this time, but suggestions were invited. Meanwhile, Martin is completely redesigning the *Directory of UK Map Collections*, which was last (partially) updated about eight years ago. The idea is to streamline it by just including links to the websites of the relevant institutions, rather than a lot of supplementary information on copying, opening hours etc which may go out of date. It will be accessed via a map interface. There will be an email address for sending updates and corrections.

7. Diversifying our map collections. It was suggested that this topic should be added to the Toolbox, with some of the useful links provided by Paula in the report of the last Business Meeting.

Paula has been organising approximately quarterly online meetings for those interested in the topic and plans to arrange one on 'Reinterpreting our collections' shortly. We would be very keen to cover this topic at the MCG Workshop in June, perhaps as part of a practical session looking at maps which present challenges and promote discussion.

8. Any other business. Tinho has been contacted by an academic who is looking for advice on disposing of post-1945 OS maps. It was agreed that the Charles Close Society was the best option, but that it might not be easy.

Debbie Hall and Martin Davis

Autumn Workshop

The Map Curator's Group will be holding an Autumn Workshop on Wednesday 3 September, the day before the main BCS Conference. It will be held at the British Geological Survey at Keyworth and the programme and [booking is now available](#).

The workshop will feature map collection displays from the BGS Library and the University of Nottingham. In addition, Jon Dollery (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales) will be giving a keynote lecture on "Unleashing the Archives: Mapping the Past for the Future". There will also be an opportunity to tour some of the BGS facilities, not usually accessible to the public, and hear more about the work that takes place there.

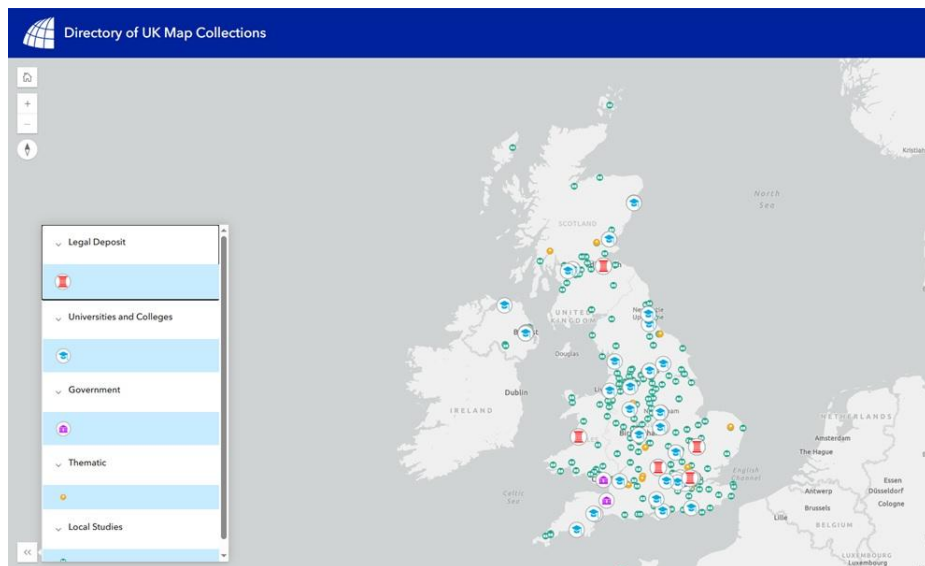
Debbie Hall and Martin Davis

New BCS website and Directory of UK Map Collections

The British Cartographic Society has recently launched a new [website](#), featuring a sleeker design and streamlined content. The new website includes a new page for the Society's [Special Interest Groups](#) (of which MCG is one). A notable change is that resources, including those maintained by MCG, have moved to the BCS GeoViz Resource Centre website, which is linked to from the main BCS site. This includes our *Map Curators' Toolbox*, which has been updated.

Among the most substantial updates which have taken place to our web content is an entirely new version of our *Directory of UK Map Collections*. The *Directory* is a long-standing MCG resource, first appearing as a printed book in 1983. After going online in 2000, this new version is a major departure in that it displays the collections using an interactive map interface, rather than a list. This enables users to zoom into (or search for) a particular area of interest and find nearby map collections, each categorised using symbols for different types of organisation. Clicking on one of the collections opens a pop-up with basic information about the collection and a link to its website. Almost 400 map collections are already included, but any additions or corrections can be submitted to the [BCS administrator](#) for review. We would like to thank Clare Gordon (University of Leeds) for all of her work in maintaining the previous version of the *Directory*, which provided a sound base for creating the new version.

Martin Davis



Directory of UK Map Collections, 2025. Image courtesy of Martin Davis.

Event – Unlocking your archives with GIS:

12 June 2025, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), London

A one-day event was hosted by the RGS, showcasing ways in which ArcGIS Online can be used to aid engagement with archival collections. Esri UK, who are a corporate benefactor of RGS-IBG, provided a demonstration of the platform's functionality, including StoryMaps, Instant Apps, and the ArcGIS Hub. Talks from The National Archives, RCAHMW, and the Institute of Historical Research demonstrated how this had been put to use in practice, including by compiling time series and by creating user-friendly interfaces for exploring georeferenced and vectorised map content.

Martin Davis

Forum

Carto-Cymru 2025 – The Art of Maps

The 'Art of Maps' was our theme for the 9th annual Carto-Cymru symposium at the National Library of Wales on Friday 16 May, looking at how the lines between maps and art blur, and how artistic responses can illuminate maps.

We welcomed 99 online viewers who joined around 60 attendees in Aberystwyth. Two of the talks were given in Cymraeg, the Welsh language, with simultaneous translation provided.

Once again, we worked in partnership with our colleagues at the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), and we were delighted to be sponsored by both the British Cartographic Society (BCS) and the Contemporary Art Society for Wales (CASW).

Huw Thomas and I curated a pop-up exhibition to accompany the event, bringing out some of our most visually striking maps: the *Survey of the manors of Crickhowell and Tretower*, MacDonald Gill's *Wonderground map of London town*, caricature maps by Hugh Hughes and Lilian Lancaster, Europe as the dogs of war, and an array of decorative Ordnance Survey covers.

Nodiadau-maes: field notes for the re-invention of Wales

"Perhaps there is no return for anyone to their native land, only field-notes for its re-invention" James T.Clifford

Artist Iwan Bala gave the first talk of the day with a tour through his artistic interpretation of maps. Iwan characterises his own artworks as *nodiadau-maes* or field notes for interpreting and reinterpreting things that are 'simply expected'. His cartographic visualisations of Wales draw on global influences: the work of US historian James T Clifford; Welsh poet Menna Elfyn and Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar's [*Logo for America*](#). Maps of Wales thread through Iwan's work, from the boar's head in *Mabinogi-dir* (figure 1), to Wales superimposed over the Celtic fringe of Europe with the Llŷn peninsula fused with Brittany, and south Wales with the Basque Country.

"Dw i'n gweld yn aml iawn ffurf Cymru, a dw i'n gweld e ym mhobman, mewn rhyw staen ar y wal... Roedd yn mynd i ryw habit i fi greu'r mapiau, siapiau 'ma o Gymru... Cartograffiaeth o Gymru'n rhan o bob peth am Gymru, yr hanes, y beirdd, y caneuon, y chwedloniaeth, maen nhw i gyd ynghlwm yn y dirwedd"

"I very often see the form of Wales, I see it everywhere, in some stain on the wall...It became a habit for me to create these maps, these shapes of Wales... Cartography of Wales is part of everything about Wales: history, poets, songs, legends, they are all tied to the landscape."



Figure 1. *Mabinogi-dir*, Iwan Bala, 1986. Image courtesy Ellie King.

An abiding image is Wales in the form of a woman. Iwan linked his works on the shape of Wales to a long history of female personification of the country, and particularly to Hugh Hughes' 1840s caricature maps of Wales as 'Dame Venedotia'. A well-known image shows the Dame throwing the authors of the infamous *Ilyfrau gleision* (blue books) into Cardigan Bay. These books contained a report on the state of education in Wales in the 1840s. The Blue Books were deeply unpopular in Wales because of remarks on the Welsh language, the morals of the people of Wales, and nonconformism. The Blue Books led to a belief that the only way for Welsh-speaking people to improve their lot was to learn English. This had a devastating effect on the prevalence of the Welsh language that is still being felt today. As a result, the report came to be known as *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* (The Treachery of the Blue Books).

Y famwlad / the motherland / corff nid llais / bodies not voices

In the spirit of reinventing and reimagining Welsh art, our second speaker was Eysyllt Angharad Lewis. Eysyllt is an artist and parable writer, playing with translation as an aesthetic medium.

Eysyllt characterised the map work of the Beca art group (of which Iwan Bala was a prominent member) as fundamentally commenting on colonialism and colonisation of Wales by the British/English over decades and centuries, "yn llythrennol yn creithio a difwyno ei thir" ("literally scarring and defiling its land").

Wales is made an object through the maps of the Beca group. Eysyllt asks *pa wrthrych?* (What object?)

A woman.

Esyllt highlighted a tension between interpretations of the Beca group's work: is the personification of Wales as a woman speaking about women's suffering as well as national suffering? Or "does the way in which a woman acts as an object of desire/suffering reproduce and reinforce the idea of the motherland as old and decayed, on its knees?" ("A yw'r modd y mae menyw yn gweithredu fel gwrthrych chwant / dioddefaint yn atgynhyrchu ac atgyfnerthu'r syniad o'r famwlad hen a gwyrdroedig, ar ei chythllwng?"). Does the caricature of the female form reduce women's suffering to a metaphor for other traumas? And why are women's bodies so present without their voices?



Figure 2. Poster for National Eisteddfod, Evan Walters, 1926. Image courtesy of Ellie King.

Esyllt presented two works as a counterpoint: a controversial 1926 poster for the National Eisteddfod in Swansea by Evan Walters (figure 2) and *Dyffryn Nantlle Llais Nantlle* (Dyffryn Valley Voice of Dyffryn) by Mary Lloyd Jones (figure 3). Mary is Wales' most influential female landscape artist, and her work takes an abstracted view of landscapes, in particular the lead- and slate-mine-scarred valleys of mid and north Wales.

While Mary Lloyd Jones' work maps the contours of Dyffryn Nantlle with bright colours and vibrant marks, Evan Walters' poster for the 1926 National Eisteddfod in Swansea takes and subverts the trope of the demure 'Welsh Lady' (a descendant of Dame Venodotia, perhaps), depicting instead an assertive and dynamic young woman astride a dragon. Only one copy of this poster survives, thanks to the artist's patron, suffragist Winifred Coombe Tennant. The rest were pulped for being overly sexual by the 1926 Eisteddfod authorities.

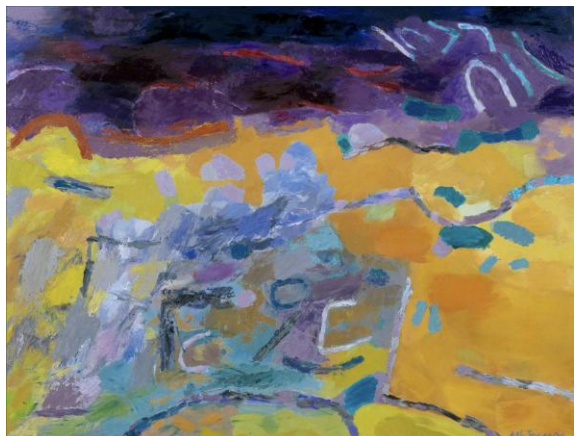


Figure 3. *Dyffryn Nantlle Llais Nantlle*, Mary Lloyd Jones, 1996. Image courtesy of Ellie King.

Sugarcoated history

Our third speaker of the day was artist Jasmine Violet. Jasmine has worked with the National Library on our project, *Dadgoloneiddio Celf* (Decolonising Art). In 2023 NLW commissioned four artists of colour to create new artworks responding to our collections. Two of these projects grew from items in the map collection and had a particular focus on difficult and contested histories of slavery and colonialism.

Jasmine created her work in response to connections between Wales and Jamaica in the 18th century. The National Library of Wales holds records of sugar plantations and people enslaved by Nathaniel Phillips, who would later use the wealth he gained in the Caribbean to buy the Slebech estate, five miles east of Haverfordwest. These records include a map of one of Phillips' plantations, Pleasant Hill, and a list of the enslaved people who worked there in the 1760s.

In her talk, Jasmine made the point that global-majority artists are expected to deal with the trauma of confronting colonial items, violent items, by institutions keen to decolonise their collections. She was keen to take the project in a different direction, instead focusing her artworks on her joy in the Welsh landscape – its vibrancy, its community and the relationships she created within it.

Following on from her project with NLW, Jasmine has staged an artistic intervention as part of the [Perspectives](#) project at Penrhyn Castle in north Wales, in association with *Amgueddfa Llechi Cymru* (National Slate Museum) and *Canolfan y Celfyddydau* (Aberystwyth Arts Centre).

We were delighted for Carto-Cymru to be the venue for the premiere of Jasmine's new work, the short film, *Sugar Coated*. Jasmine deconstructs sculpture busts made of sugar, incorporating dance elements in reaction to the hidden, intertwined history of Welsh slate and the slave trade.



Jasmin Violet presenting 'Sugar Coated'. Image courtesy Ellie King.

Industrial landscapes of Jamaican sugar plantations

Opening the afternoon session was Marian Gwyn, honorary research associate of the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates at the University of Bangor. She spoke on the value of manuscript plantation maps as visual records of “the intersections of land, exploitation, and control”.

Marian opened her talk with a plea for help: the work she presented at Carto-Cymru could not have been completed without access to Bangor Archives. The archive is at risk of existential cuts and the loss of decades of expertise. Three archival posts will be lost, leaving only one part-time post to manage both archives and printed special collections and rare books. If the collections or staff at Bangor Archives have helped your work in any way, you can send a personal message of support to communications@bangor.ac.uk.

Marian encouraged the audience to think of Caribbean island colonies as oil rigs: they were never self-sufficient in either maintaining their population or providing basic commodities, and they fulfilled an entirely extractive purpose. About 70% of enslaved people in the Caribbean worked on sugar plantations, which was the largest killer of enslaved people – ahead of mining and enforced prostitution.



Marian Gwyn at Carto-Cymru. Image courtesy of Ellie King.

Maps were inseparable from the slave trade and colonisation. Herman Moll's maps showed the routes of Spanish flotillas of treasure ships (useful knowledge for merchant adventurers), while manuscript estate maps contained extensive detail on the economics of plantations. The published maps of the time show little detail beyond the coasts, not because of lack of European settlement or knowledge, but because the land was mosaiced with plantations whose details were deemed commercially sensitive. Thus, manuscript plantation maps provide one of the few sources that help

us understand the landscape away from the coast. Interestingly, Marian noted that it is vanishingly rare to find Jamaican estate maps showing any form of relief. To fill this gap, she looked to plantation portraits belonging to estates in the UK. Although undoubtedly sanitised, these provide valuable insight into the landscape. In one example, the 'great house' used by white overseers appears on the map to be very close to the industrialised area of sugar production. However, from the portrait we can see that it was in fact on the top of a hill, overlooking the working area below, which gives a very different understanding of the power dynamics being expressed in the landscape.

Building on Jasmine's work, Marian Gwyn drew another link between Jamaica and the Pennants of Penrhyn Castle. The Penrhyn slate quarry was a very early adopter of industrial practices, allowing it to grow much quicker than its rivals. Marian suggests that this extensive experience of creating industrialised landscapes on Jamaican sugar plantations, was successfully transplanted to north Wales. She argues that the hallmarks of industrialisation – separation of skills, concentration of labour, and the separation of owners from land – were present in Jamaica from the late 1600s, well ahead of the process in the UK.

More than just directions

Rounding off the day was artist Mfikela Jean Samuel. Mfikela created another of the artworks commissioned as part of the Decolonising Art project, and he spoke about the journey he had taken through the project in understanding maps as more than a way of getting from A to B. On the maps of Africa he saw through the project, he said: "When you see a railway on a map, that is not just a line. It means movement, of people and resources. That is there because it serves the colonial masters". On the Central Office of Information map of West Africa Mfikela used as part of the project, there is a decorative border with figures and landscape scenes (see *Cartographiti* 102, page 21). The only figure with a name, the only figure with even a face, is the explorer Mungo Park. Africans appear only as decoration, as a faceless mass, each identical to the last. Mungo Park's face also appears in Mfikela's work *Opening the dialogue* (see *Cartographiti* 102, page 21), but fractured and changed. Mfikela characterised the essence of art as representing the world not just the way it is, but the way you want it to be. This is an argument that could equally be applied to maps, marking lines to order and possess the landscape.

Recognising the artistry in maps gives us the key to a rich visual landscape, and Mfikela ended his talk with an impassioned argument for creativity as a means to create change, to imagine new worlds:

"Human progress is not inevitable; it requires the action of individuals... If you leave here today as the same person, that is a choice. This is an invitation to become an artist."

Iwan Bala's *For Wales See England* and Mfikela Jean Samuel's *Thomas Pennant* are on display in the exhibition [*Dim Celf Cymreig? \(No Welsh Art?\)*](#) at NLW until 6 September. NLW has a significant collection of works by the Beca art group, many of which are new acquisitions.

Works produced by Jasmine Violet and Mfikela Jean Samuel for the Decolonising Art project are on short-term display in NLW's Peniarth Room. The commissions were funded by Welsh Government as part of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

A sneak preview of Jasmine Violet's *Sugar Coated* is available on her Instagram here: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJjMRlEuAKh/>

National Library digitised artworks:

[*Gorchydd gwraig / Woman drapery / Celtic Woman / Wales map 1986*](#) by Paul Davies

[*Dyffryn Nantlle Llais Nantlle*](#) 1996 by Mary Lloyd Jones

Ellie King, NLW



Speakers at Carto-Cymru 2025. L-R: Mfikela Jean Samuel, Marian Gwyn, Esyllt Angharad Lewis, Jasmine Violet and Iwan Bala. (Image courtesy Ellie King).

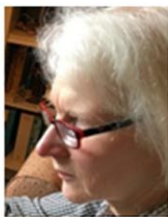
Fifty years of map curators at The National Archive

A desk drawer opened to reveal a group photograph of Assistant Keepers from the 1970s taken at the Public Record Office (PRO) in Chancery Lane. Among the throng stood our first map specialist Peter Penfold, and Margaret Condon, medievalist and later map curator, to whom said desk drawer belongs. Fifty years separate that photo and one of the gathering of colleagues to view maps at my leaving event in April 2025, as I retired as map archivist from the PRO's successor, The National Archives.

I met Peter only via his italic hand, written across card indexes and in letters to curators of his time, such as Peter Skelton at the British Library. We often refer to the published



a



b



c



d

a Peter Penfold, first Head of Maps, c.1975, Chancery Lane

b Margaret Condon, c.2018

c Geraldine Beech, 1999, Kew

d Rose Mitchell, 2013, BCS conference at Hothorpe Hall

Photos a, c and d courtesy of Rose Mitchell.

Photo b courtesy of Margaret Condon

map catalogues he edited: 'British Isles' in 1967, 'Africa' in 1983, and the 1974 volume that scholars of American maps refer to as 'Penfold'.

"Break up the USSR, please" was the request on my second day in Maps back in 1994, closely followed by a similar request to disassemble chapters on maps of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, gathered over several decades for the last published catalogue, on maps of Europe (1998). Be wary of description by place at the time of writing ...

The request came from Geraldine Beech, main editor, who, ruler in hand, checked suspect scales in the manuscript on her tube journeys to our office at Kew. I did visit the Victorian labyrinth of towers and slate-shelved strongrooms at Chancery Lane with its Round and Long Reading Rooms, document request tickets passed up the stairwell on string, and ancient custom of a nightly Assistant Keeper sleepover, including Christmas (just one at a time!). Indeed, on the day the Chancery Lane site closed in late 1999, as readers attended in black, I calligraphed certificates for them, wax-sealed by a conservator colleague.

Map description started in 1926 but moved online in my time. I would still show incoming directors the iceberg diagram, with a smaller visible 'icecap' while many of the 8–10 million maps remain below the 'waterline', yet to be found in a sea of government documents, or fixed on paper whether published, or on hand-written cards of varying legibility. The sea-level has receded in my time, through team efforts including technical colleagues, and an online union catalogue that provides document reference control while allowing user-friendly searches – including USSR maps for the Second World War, arrived since the Europe catalogue was published.

This legacy data work is an anonymous task that allows research and scholarship. I was pleased to find a 1580s map by Ralph Treswell used as the basis for a new archaeological study of Hailes Abbey, while I recall an Adelaide resident standing in

tears of joy before the earliest map of her city. One of my last tasks in post was to upload improved descriptions for thousands of War Office and Foreign Office maps that include Crimean War material, a newly identified set of Coronelli maps of European forts and cities, and much original treaty material. I know the importance of such online access, especially from many years as secretary to the JB Harley Trust for international research in the history of cartography.

Geraldine introduced me to 'the map world' via several of the famous map parties at the British Museum map library of olden time, and I've benefitted hugely from the support, knowledge and understanding of this group of like-minded people, of which I am pleased to be part. In my time Geraldine's important international boundary work of talks and events has continued, now with a typology of these maps, to show how research in historic records can contribute to peaceful issue resolution.

International and national conferences and contexts have allowed me to publish and present to wide audiences a broad range of map-related topics based on the rich holdings at The National Archives, including overseas and military mapping, sea charts, landscape and architectural history. The second edition of *Maps: their untold stories* is due out in September, with a new buildings chapter. My specialism in early modern maps and plans, inherited from Margaret, took me to speak at the Archives Nationales under a crystal chandelier in the elegant Louis XV Paris palace – a contrast to Buckfast Abbey, and to the hard 17th-century benches of Oxford's Convocation House where the Royalist Parliament met during the Civil War.

At the archives, too, with some wonderful colleagues, we've run events for students, the wider public, specialists and ministers. Whether explaining again the intricacies of tithe, Valuation Office and trench maps to enquirers in the Map Room, making a YouTube video, collaborating with material scientists or trying out a theodolite in early morning light at Budapest University, it has been a huge privilege to continue the line of map curators across fifty years, and to take map cataloguing here to a complete century.

Rose Mitchell



Early map viewing at my leaving day, The National Archives. Photo courtesy of Rose Mitchell

Professor Paul D.A. Harvey (1930–2025)

We are sorry to record the death of Paul Harvey, Emeritus Professor of Medieval History, University of Durham. He began his career as an archivist in Warwickshire County Record Office (1954–56) and later the Manuscripts Department, British Museum (1957–66), before moving on to concentrate on academic historical research. His interests included the history of cartography, especially medieval maps, archive preservation and more generally, the social and economic history of medieval England. Among his many publications were:

- *Manorial records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, circa 1200-1359* (1976)
- *The history of topographical maps: symbols, pictures and surveys* (1980)
- *Maps in Tudor England* (1993)
- *The Hereford world map: introduction* (2010)
- *Medieval maps of the Holy Land* (2012)

An obituary will be published in *Imago Mundi*.

Judith Fox

Transfer of material from DGC to Cambridge University Library

As a government department the Defence Geographic Centre has an obligation under the Public Records Act(s) to transfer significant historical material to a recognised place of deposit for permanent preservation and public access.

With a history spanning 222 years the volume of material produced by Military Survey and its predecessors has been vast, but sustained efforts by luminaries such as Ian Mumford and Peter K Clark have ensured that, over the years, much of this historical material has been transferred to The British Museum (now the British Library), and the Public Records Office (now The National Archives). Material has also been donated or presented, *inter alia*, to national libraries, the Royal Geographical Society, The Imperial War Museum and university collections, while important items of national significance have been returned to the original producer, e.g. native mapping of Poland taken by Germany in WWII has been presented to the Polish national archives.

Resourcing this activity has always been a challenge especially since the demise of the Map Library and Research Group some years ago. None the less, since 2017 DGC has re-established a team to assess and preserve the archival collections ahead of the unit's relocation to RAF Wyton, scheduled for the autumn of 2026. With the assistance of consulting volunteers Brian Garvan and Julian Williams, some remarkable caches of material have emerged, usually from the back of long undisturbed cupboards and map presses.

Most recently files recording the production of map series GSGS 3906, GSGS 3907, GSGS 3908, and GSGS 3957 have been rediscovered. These files record the development of the military versions of Ordnance Survey 1:25,000, one-inch and quarter-inch mapping of Great Britain during WWII and provide a real treasure trove of contemporary correspondence and technical papers. It is the policy of the DGC to seek out the most appropriate home for such material to provide open access to researchers, public and academic alike. Working with colleagues in MOD Records, the DGC has secured authority to make a presentation of these files to the University of Cambridge Library for retention in perpetuity in the Charles Close Society Archive. The

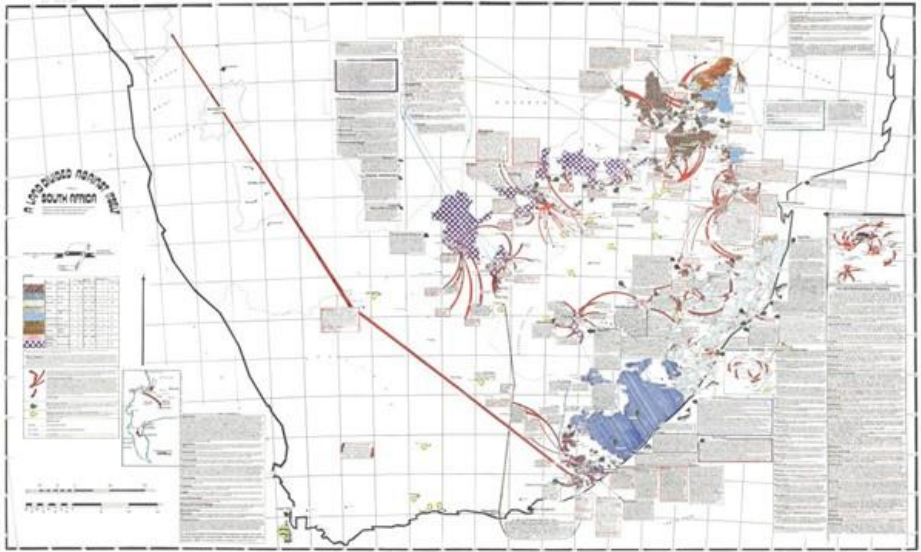
DGC is proud to have accomplished this action and hopes that the material will add to the story of the close collaboration between the Ordnance Survey and the War Office during WWII and be a valuable resource now and into the future.

Note: This article has also been submitted to the CCS newsletter *Sheetlines*

Colin Wright, DGC Map Library

Endpiece

Black Sash



A land divided against itself. Bodleian Library shelfmark 610.41 t.2. Image courtesy Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

The Bodleian Map Room was keen to welcome the Guinness family on a recent visit. Geoffrey Guinness contacted us in November 2024 with this intriguing message:

“In 1977 I was temporarily resident in South Africa. In the autumn of 1977 the Black Sash organisation arranged for the production of a map, detailing the forced removal of indigenous people to their so-called Homelands. The intention was to mail copies of the map to institutions, academic and political, worldwide. It was believed that the South African authorities would try to confiscate these maps. They were, therefore, rolled up, like calendars, hand addressed and stamped, as if they were Christmas presents. My family picked a small number every day and posted them, one by one, in letter boxes round Johannesburg. At least one would have been addressed to the Bodleian. Can you tell me whether you ever received a copy/copies of the map? If so, would it be possible to see it?”

Much to our delight, we were able to find the map, posted to the Library all those years ago. Created at an approximate scale of 1:2,075,000, and crudely coloured, the map measures 75 x 123 cm. On the reverse of the map is an acquisition stamp dated 6 March 1978. Originally, the map was added to the collection at Rhodes House Library, but was transferred to the Weston Library in 2014 (with the rest of that collection).

Geoffrey conveyed his delight by email, and a visit was scheduled, three generations of the Guinness family visiting the Library on 30 November 2024.

Back in the 1970s, the Guinness children hand-wrote the envelopes, and posted each map individually from different post boxes in and around Johannesburg. On arrival at the Library they were introduced to us as the “political activists”.

Along with the map, we were able to display a later map, somewhat more sophisticated and professionally produced, yet somehow lacking the excitement and subterfuge conveyed by the original. We also called up a number of issues of the journal ‘Black Sash’ which thrilled the family as they recognised many of the names featured within each issue, and were keen to share their impressions of this visit with those individuals, many of whom they had lost contact with.

Black Sash was a South African human rights organisation founded by liberal white women in Johannesburg in 1955 as a non-violent resistance organisation. It was so-named as the women wore black sashes on their protest meetings. Their initial campaigns focused on anti-apartheid issues such as forced removal of voters from the electoral roll, and the adoption of Pass Laws. Black Sash was able to disband in 1994 with Nelson Mandela’s release from prison and the unbanning of the African National Congress.

During the visit we were able to search WorldCat for more examples of *A land divided against itself: a map of South Africa showing the African homelands and some of the mass removals of people which have taken place, also conditions in some of the resettlement areas*. Here in the UK another three copies appeared to have made it to the British Library, London School of Economics, and the University of Manchester. Do any more exist over here? A task for the readers of *Cartographiti*?

Elsewhere copies have been identified in the Netherlands, a single copy in South Africa itself, and the United States.

Nick Millea, Bodleian



The Guinness family viewing the map. Image courtesy Nick Millea.

Not the last Page

Dates for your Diary

BCS Teatime Talks are held on the 3rd Thursday of every month. See <https://www.cartography.org.uk/teatime-talks> for more information. Previous talks can be found on the BCS YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/BritishCartographicSociety>.

Previous Oxford Seminars in Cartography are available from the TOSCA events YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMMT6JPEQdLrxAgd4Q2dfdUMB265XJ7kT>.

2025

The Oxford Seminars in Cartography (TOSCA) have finished for 2024–25. See <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/maps/tosca> for the 2025–26 programme.

The Cambridge Seminars in the History of Cartography have finished for 2024–25. See <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/maps/cartographic-events/camsem> for the 2025–26 programme.

The Maps and Society Lecture Series, Warburg Institute has finished for 2024–25. See <https://warburg.sas.ac.uk/whats-on/maps-and-society-lecture-series> for the 2025–26 programme.

9–11 July. International Society for the History of the Map (ISHMap) Symposium and Workshop. Campus Condorcet, Paris, France.

17–22 August. 32nd International Cartographic Conference. Canada Place, Vancouver, Canada.

3 September. Map Curator's Group Autumn Workshop. Part of the BCS Annual Conference (information below)

3–4 September. British Cartographic Society Annual Conference. British Geological survey, Keyworth, Nottinghamshire. In-person. More information and booking: <https://www.cartography.org.uk/annual-conference>

17–19 September. 19th ICA Commission Conference on Digital Approaches to Cartographic Heritage. Charles University, Prague, Czechia.

lis-maps

lis-maps is a forum for discussing news, ideas, issues, policies and practices related to map and spatial data librarianship. Topics can be broad ranging including: acquisition; cataloguing; use; information retrieval; management of metadata; relationship to GIS and RS; collaborative work; conservation. For more information see: <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/lis-maps.html>

To join lis-maps just send the message: join lis-maps <your name> as the only text in the body of an e-mail addressed to: jiscmail@jiscmail.ac.uk

Contacts

Conveners:

Debbie Hall

Email: debbie.hall@cartography.org.uk

Martin Davis

Email: martin.davis@cartography.org.uk

Act as MCG representatives on BCS council, BRICMICS, BSI, etc., and deal with all general business of the Group.

Newsletter Editor:

Judith Fox

Email: judith.fox@cartography.org.uk

Edits and compiles *Cartographiti*.

Subscriptions co-ordinator:

BCS Administration

Email: admin@cartography.org.uk

Organises online distribution of *Cartographiti*.

COPY DEADLINE

Anything you would like publicised, or any item you would like included in the next *Cartographiti* should be sent to the Editor by

30 November 2025