



**BRITISH
CARTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY**

Review of events in 2025

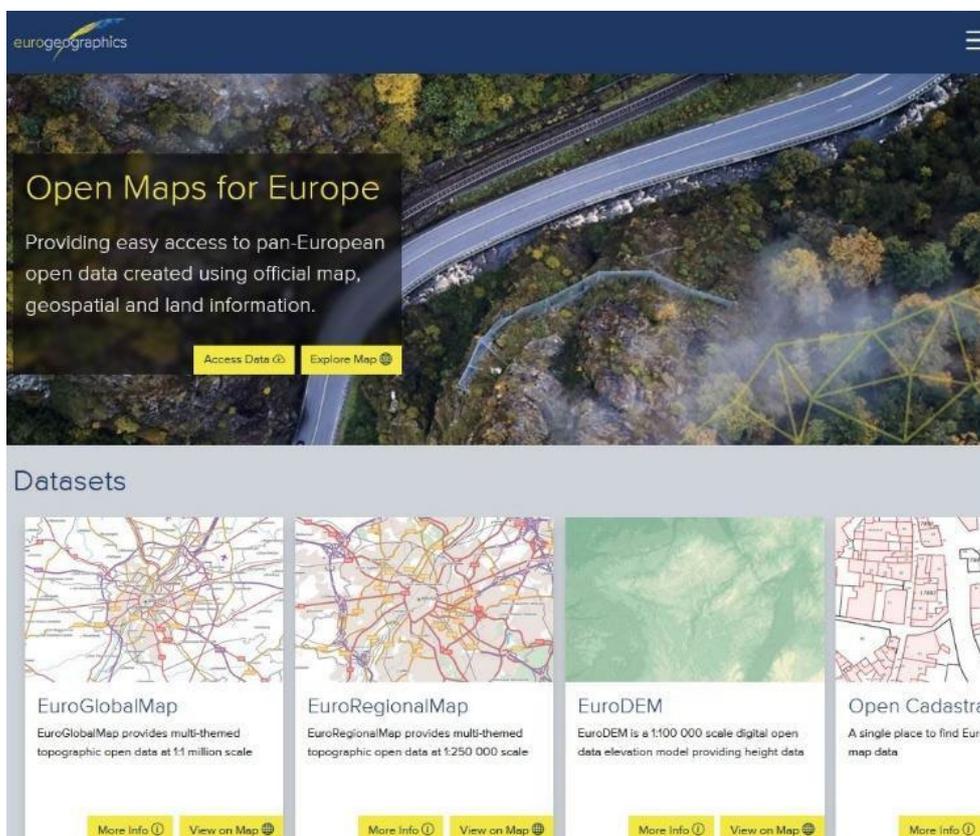
Review of events in 2025

BCS organises many different events during the year but in a way it's a shame they don't get more publicity in terms of reporting afterwards. This article, therefore is intended to put that right and allow our readers and members to feast on the memories of events attended in **2025** or, sadly for some, to consider, with regret, those they missed. The event mix is considerable taking in our monthly talks at Tea Time, the activities of the Special Interest Groups of Map Curators and Historic Military Mapping, Fellows Events, our AGM speaker, the Winter Lecture, and the Exhibitions we attended as a society intended to market our Society and boost the membership and indeed engage with other likeminded societies. Not forgetting, of course, our major annual conference at British Geological Survey in Nottingham about which much has been written in the last two Maplines editions so we'll give that a miss in this review.

Where to start, how much space is there and how can we possibly do justice to this number of interesting, informative and entertaining events? We won't be able to report on them all.

Tea Time Talks & Other Talks

Tea Time Talks are so called because they take place at (a late) Tea Time from 7. 00 p.m. until 8.00 p.m. We started off in **January 2025** hearing about the activities of Eurogeographics, the not-for-profit membership association for the European National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registry Authorities representing more than 60 organisations in 46 countries across the whole of Europe.



The screenshot shows the Eurogeographics website. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the 'eurogeographics' logo on the left and a hamburger menu icon on the right. Below the header is a large banner image of a road winding through a forested area. Overlaid on the left side of the banner is a dark grey box with the text 'Open Maps for Europe' in yellow, followed by 'Providing easy access to pan-European open data created using official map, geospatial and land information.' Below this text are two yellow buttons: 'Access Data' and 'Explore Map'. Below the banner is a section titled 'Datasets' in a light grey box. Underneath this are four white cards, each representing a different dataset. Each card has a small map thumbnail at the top, a title, a brief description, and two yellow buttons at the bottom: 'More Info' and 'View on Map'.

Dataset Name	Description
EuroGlobalMap	EuroGlobalMap provides multi-themed topographic open data at 1:1 million scale
EuroRegionalMap	EuroRegionalMap provides multi-themed topographic open data at 1:250 000 scale
EuroDEM	EuroDEM is a 1:100 000 scale digital open data elevation model providing height data
Open Cadastral	A single place to find Euro's map data



February was a journey across the Atlantic to hear from Chris Brackley from Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Wendake-Nionwentsio Territory (also known as Ontario). It's worth investigating this location and the derivation! Chris spoke to the title of "Putting Indigenous People on the map" in Canada with the intriguing synopsis quotation from a geographer named Bernard Nietschmann, that

"More indigenous territory has been claimed by maps than by guns. This assertion has its corollary: more indigenous territory can be defended and reclaimed by maps than by guns."

Moving into **March** and another continent we welcomed Catherine Njore from Nairobi in Kenya speaking about "Promoting Environmental Education (EE) & Education on Sustainable Development (ESD) in Kenya" Catherine is the National coordinator for Kenya in the Barbara Petchenik Children's World Map Drawing Competition in the International Cartographic Association (ICA) and has worked at Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, Kenya Institute of Surveying and Mapping and Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. Her high profile talk built on her experience promoting cartography amongst children with the provision of map products and promoting a reading culture amongst children and empowering and mentoring youth on social issues.



In **April** it was back to more familiar territory with a talk by a BCS member, Simon Ritchie, a semi-retired IT professional who for the last five years has worked with global positioning systems (or more accurately Global Navigation Satellite System) and served up in his talk on "Industrial Archaeology Hiding in Plain Sight" a history of the Ordnance Survey network of trig points and benchmarks that they created, a network now largely made redundant by accurate GPS survey systems and is now industrial archaeology.

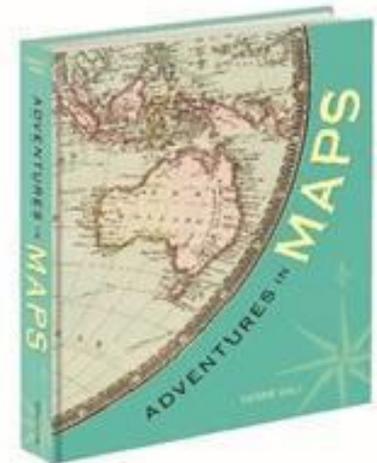
Triangulation

- Jesse Ramsden designed the Great Theodolite for the project.
- Accurate to one minute of arc.
- Took three years to build, completed on 1787.
- Roy's team spent the next year triangulating across the South of England to the coast
- and then triangulating across the Channel to the Casini's reference points.
- They spent another year calculating the results.
- The triangulation became an iconic project of The Enlightenment

Box Hill: a Classic 20th Century Trig Pillar



In **May** Debbie Hall, another BCS member and a Senior Library Assistant in the Bodleian Map Room, treated us to a talk about “Adventures in Maps”. Maps and journeys intersect in many ways, and in her talk, Debbie spoke about the stories of twenty journeys, routes and adventures, illustrated by maps. Some maps describe the route that a traveller followed, some are the results of exploration, and others were made to show future travellers the way to go. The talk covered a sample of these, which range from journeys of a few miles to great adventures across land, sea, air and space. It included the first recorded landing on Rockall, an isolated rock in the North Atlantic, whose explorers found themselves cut off by fog, and a seventeenth century sea chart to illustrate a privateer’s journey across the Atlantic. On land, David Hogarth was a nineteenth century explorer who travelled along the Euphrates exploring both history and geography, while Thomas Cook and the first passenger railways enabled more people than ever before to expand their horizons beyond their local area.



June was the month of our AGM which of course is always a cliff hanger and so to calm the nerves afterwards we always have a guest speaker. This year we invited Peter Gibbs, who, for those of a certain age will be remembered as a stalwart of the BBC TV weather team who entertained us on TV for many years as part of that weather forecasting team. Now retired from that, he is one of the chair persons of BBC Radio 4 Gardeners Question Time.

But his talk was really nothing to do with either - except Peter cut his teeth researching weather patterns and data by spending two years in Antarctica and explained all in his talk entitled “Two Years in a Tin Can” (and not to be confused with a Bee Gees album of the same name!) so called because the accommodation at the isolated Halley research station was somewhat basic. His talk highlighted and examined the challenges for cartography in a constantly changing but largely featureless landscape whilst also mentioning the Antarctic Place Names Committee as Antarctica is one of the few places on Earth where new place-names are still being added.



The Perspective of a Geography teacher: How I use maps as tools for learning, application and creation within Geographical topics and concepts

Tristan Willis



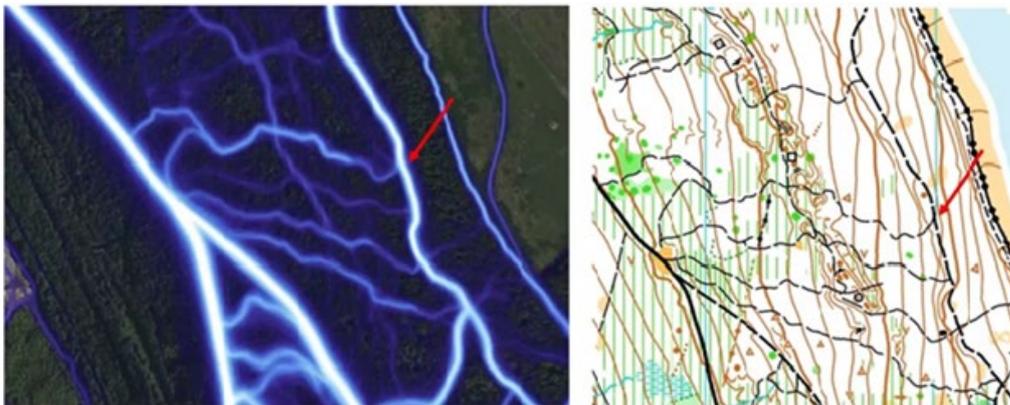
Slide Theme: Designed by pikisuperstar / Freepik

June was a good month for talks and was a double header month as we had a tea time talk as well as the AGM talk. For this we again crossed the Atlantic to hear from Tristan Willis. Tristan is a British geography teacher, currently based in Mexico who delivered a teatime talk on how to use maps as tools for learning across a range on Geographical concepts. This was delivered for all, irrespective of cartographic skills, to demonstrate a variety of ways even the most rudimentary of maps can be used. As part of the talk, Tristan identified the importance of identifying spatial relations but also how to these can be represented on maps to convey the key learning targets as well as problem solving. Examples of topics include applying concepts to create maps when assessing hazard risks, using satellite imagery and topographic data to understand different climates, to problem solving of modern day issues such a flood prevention. Tristan was able to give examples of online mapping resources that can be used to aid teaching in class.

In **July** we continued with the theme of energetic outdoor action, that's where the basic components of cartography start after all and we invited along Jack Cornish. Jack is the Director of England at the Ramblers, Britain's walking charity and previously was the organisation's Head of Paths. He is the author of a book published in 2025 called 'The Lost Paths' a personal journey and exploration of the deep history of English and Welsh paths. Jack first came to find beauty in our paths when he walked from Land's End to John O'Groats and then subsequently joined the Ramblers to set up their Don't Lose Your Way project, which seeks to put historical paths back on the map. In his talk, Jack explored the history of how our millennia-old network of paths was created, has evolved, and been transformed. He talked about how our paths have been mapped and the historical maps being used now to reclaim our lost paths.



August and **September** were “free” months, one due to the holiday season and the latter because we were all occupied at our excellent annual conference of “Managing our Landscapes” at the British Geological Survey. So, it was not until **October** for our next Tea Time Talk which featured David Peel, owner of Peel Land Surveys specialising in producing orienteering maps for orienteering clubs, events, schools and outdoor centres. He talked us through the process of the map making today from blank sheets of paper to producing printed orienteering maps with an increased emphasis on sourcing, processing and analysing an array of data sources (including LiDAR, aerial images. etc.), then how this base map is used in the field and then how the finished map is produced using specific CAD software.



Copyright Strava (left image) and South Yorkshire Orienteers (right image)

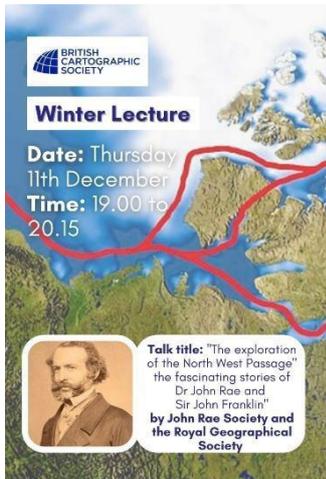
November saw BCS addressed by Dr Jim Turner talking about the construction of the high-profile High Speed 2 high speed railway of 140 miles of track, four new, state-of-the art stations, two depots and 32 miles of tunnel. The talk gave BCS an overview of surveying approaches and geospatial data on the project, including coordinate system and datum, survey control, survey activities, and survey data including 3D web-based mapping. Jim is Lead Survey Control Engineer at High Speed 2 Ltd, and is responsible for the topographic and engineering survey standards and requirements for the project, a key position for the construction.

Britain's new high-speed railway is now being built

Key facts

- HS2 is the first new intercity railway to be built north of London in over a century.
- 140 miles of track, four new, state-of-the art stations, two depots and 32 miles of tunnel.



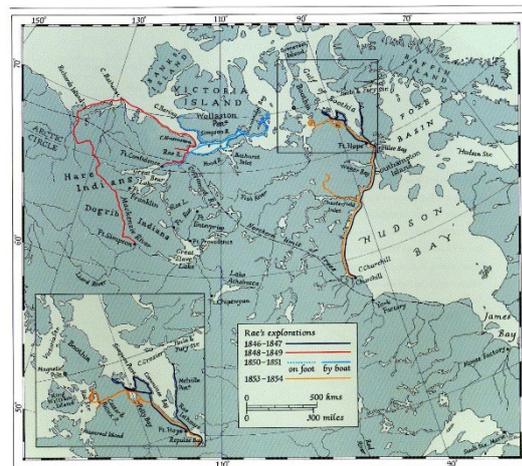


Our year ended in **December** with our **Winter Lecture** featuring a combined talk by Fiona Gould of the John Rae Society in Orkney and Eugene Rae of the Royal Geographical Society on the subject of “The exploration of the North West Passage: the fascinating stories of Dr John Rae and Sir John Franklin” The talks focused on the quests in the mid 1800s to discover the North West passage in Northern Canada which would link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The contrast between the two men was significant with differences which were highlighted in the talk in upbringing/social standing, career choice and approach to exploration. Much controversy was engendered by factions and supporters of both men with

claims and counter claims about what had been achieved. The talk examined some of these disputes including evidence of surveying and the background to the disappearance of the lost expedition commanded by Sir John Franklin and the part Dr John Rae had in uncovering the truth and his subsequent vilification for doing so.



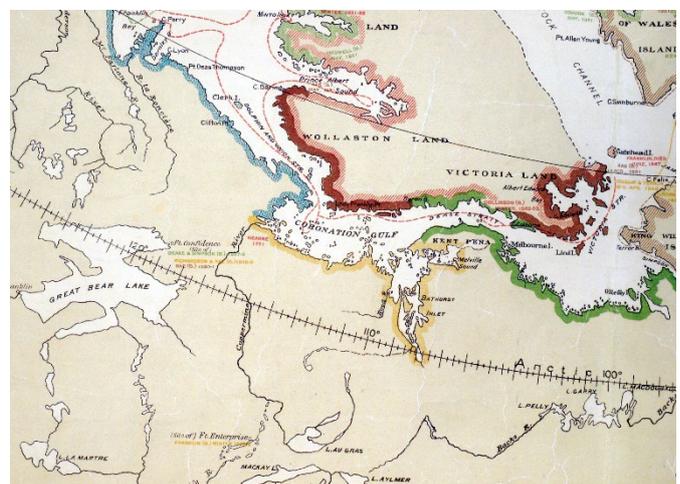
Drawing of Hall of Clestrain: Rae's childhood home. Courtesy of Ian Ashman



Rae's Arctic Journeys. Courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland



Both images courtesy of RGS - IBG



Fellows event 2025

On Monday 13th October, fifteen BCS Fellows visited the (IWM) Imperial War Museum, and were hosted by Dr Bryn Hammond Principal Curator, Collections and his team of experts. Full Article will be in the Spring 2026 Edition of Maplines.



Behind the scenes Tour of the Workshops and lots of Photo opportunities



Map Curators Group (MCG) 2025

The MCG held two in person events and one online in 2025. There was a half day training session on map cataloguing, “Getting to know maps” on 6th June at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, covering the differences between cataloguing maps and books, cartographic mathematical data, geographical subject headings and antiquarian maps. The course was well attended by a mixture of map specialists and library staff who work with a range of collections. The Summer Workshop took place in the afternoon and included talks on the Historic Towns Atlas project and the conservation of the Hereford Mappa Mundi, with a talk and group discussion on “Diversifying our Collections”, followed by a display of maps from the Bodleian Library.

The MCG Autumn Workshop was held at the British Geological Survey in Keyworth the day before the main BCS conference, and included talks from staff from the BGS library and archives, followed by a session by Jon Dollery on “Unleashing the Archives: mapping the past for the future”, an RCAHMW project to widen access to archives by digitising maps from collections across Wales. After excursions around the BCS site, Elaine Watts, Cartographic Technical Specialist at the School of Geography at the University of Nottingham, talked about the ways in which the map collection is useful and relevant to geography students and the wider community. The succession of online discussions on Diversifying our Collections continued, with a talk by Marenka Thompson-Odlum of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, on the ways in which the museum has responded to the challenge of presenting problematic material from their collections. Like the PRM, many map collections have material that reflects Britain’s colonial past and discussions on how best to communicate its nature and context to our users are ongoing.

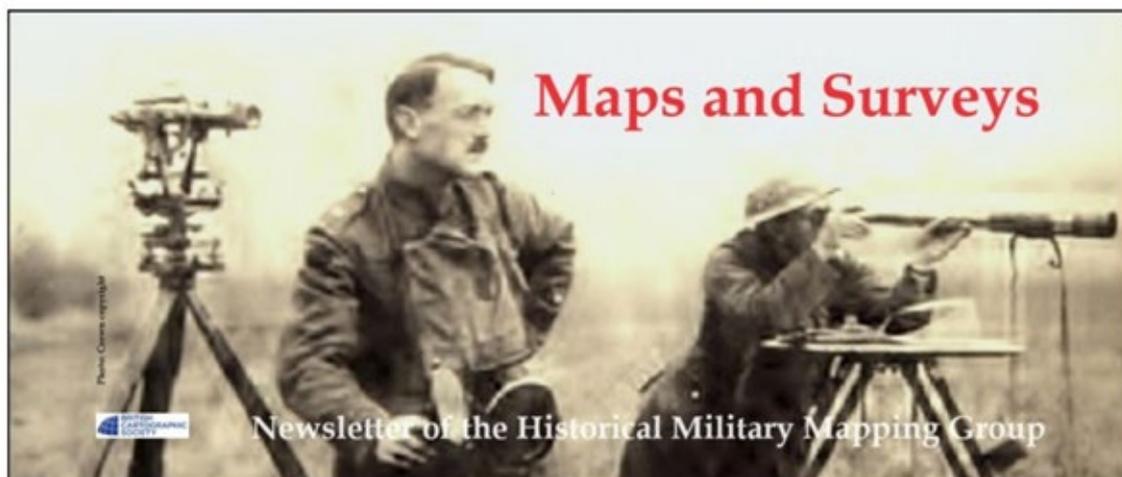
Historic Military Mapping Group (HMMG) 2025

This group is a forum for discussion for those interested in or engaged in research into any aspect of the history of military survey and mapping. There is a particular focus on 19th and 20th century military survey and mapping. The group liaises closely with the Defence Surveyors Association (DSA) and HMMG members have a standing invitation to attend the DSA’s events during the year. HMMG aim to offer regular talks and visits to members of the group. Previous events have included a trip to the battlefields of France, RAF Northolt and a tour of Cambridge University Library.

HMMG is convened by Dr John Peaty and it publishes three times a year (spring, summer and autumn) a high quality newsletter Maps and Surveys edited by Paul Hesp. Paul is always happy to receive news items and articles. Paul will be standing down in the autumn after 5 years of sterling service. If anyone would like to have a go at editing the newsletter, please contact Paul Hesp or Dr John Peaty.

As part of the relationship with DSA, HMMG members attended some of their events of which two are noted here for 2025. These were the Spring Event of April 2025 held at Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum in Salisbury where presenter Mark Heighway spoke on the subject of “The New Forest in World War II; a review of the artifacts still to be found in the New Forest from the war. Also, a talk by Merryn Walter who provided a critique of the German mapping organisation of WWII. A second major event put on by DSA to which BCS were invited was in September 2025 held in Newbury on Operation Granby which was the codename for the British military operations during the 1991 Gulf War aimed at liberating Kuwait following Iraq’s invasion. Six speakers presented on their assessment of different aspects of the operations and their personal involvement in different roles.

HMMG will continue to support the activities of DSA in 2026. We note that in addition HMMG are planning visits to The National Archives and the Imperial War Museum. Also to note that with the closure of the Defence Geographic Centre (DGC) in its current location this year, large amounts of historical military mapping have been and are being transferred from DGC to archives, libraries and museums including TNA and the IWM.



Maps and Surveys appears in spring, summer and autumn. The Newsletter welcomes contributions. Editor: Paul Hesp (Paul.Hesp@drei.at)

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From the Editor

You may never have heard of Finnish cameras. In this issue of *Maps and Surveys*, Erkki-Sakari Harju tells the story of the camera with which the Finnish army started producing maps based on aerial surveys.

‘Swiss quality’ is a synonym for perfection. Perfection can be a burden. Both terms apply to the highly specialised maps for the mountain fortress system constructed by the Swiss from the late 19th century onwards.

Paul Hesp

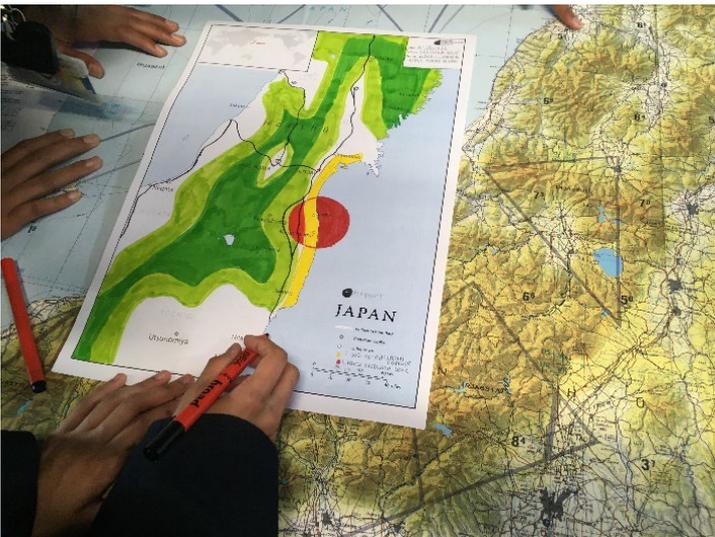
Cover Page of HMMG Autumn edition 2025 of Maps and Surveys

Restless Earth

BCS runs a disaster relief mapping workshop programme based on natural disasters for geography GCSE students in Years 9 and 10. It is a two-hour workshop in which students take on the roles of humanitarian aid, search and rescue, military and medical aid in a disaster relief scenario. They mimic the job of mapping organisations such as MapAction, Shelter Box and the UN in producing maps to support aid workers. We look specifically at the Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster of 2011 and will have a new scenario based on the Turkish/Syrian earthquake of 2023

From January to June 2025, the British Cartographic Society's disaster-relief mapping workshop, Restless Earth, was delivered in nine schools across the east, south east, Midlands and London. The programme introduced students to the role of mapping in disaster response through a series of practical, classroom-based sessions. Delivered through 18 dynamic sessions, the programme reached an impressive 1,193 students aged 12 to 16, supported by dedicated teachers and enthusiastic BCS volunteers. Together, they explored how maps can become lifesaving tools in times of crisis.

After eight and a half rewarding years, Jennifer Johnston has stepped down from her role as Restless Earth coordinator. Reflecting on her time with the programme, she highlights the hands-on, collaborative nature of the workshops as their greatest strength. Students work in teams to design purpose-specific maps for audiences speaking multiple languages, powerfully reinforcing the importance of clear symbology in disaster response. Jennifer will hand over the reins to Richard Matthews, who will take on the coordinator role in 2026, ensuring the Restless Earth legacy continues to inspire the next generation of map-makers.



BCS presence at Exhibition & Conferences

A key element in the overall activity of the Society is its presence at various exhibitions and conferences throughout the year. Being there helps to raise the profile of BCS and attract new members. Over the past couple of years, this has included events at DGI (Defence Geospatial Intelligence), the GA (Geographical Association) Conference, the GIS Research UK Conference (GISRUK), the GeoPlace annual conference, the ESRI UK Conference, GEOBusiness, the Association for Geographic Information GeoCom event and the GGP (Government Geography Profession) conference.

Our presence at each is determined by the overall value for money that that provides. The cost to the Society is not only the simple cost of gaining access and an exhibition space. We also have to support those members who will represent us at the event and arrange for exhibition material to be transported to and from the venue. Consequently, the set of events we attend each year will vary; we would typically have a formal presence at perhaps five or six. Each tends to be focussed on a particular segment of the overall cartographic profession. We therefore try to choose events that provide the best spread and so raise awareness of BCS across say, education, GI specialists, academia, government and the like.

Our ability to support events depends on members being able to represent us at these events. We are always looking for new volunteers who would be able to tell others about what we can offer the profession and promote the benefits of joining BCS. If you might be interested, please do get in touch with Catherine our administrator. Alternatively, if you're going to event that does not have a corporate presence but feel that there may be scope and opportunity to publicise the work of the Society then do contact Catherine about possibly having some back numbers of Maplines or other publicity material that could be distributed.

