

The 1960s

Comedian Robin Williams has been credited with saying that ‘if you remember the ‘60s, you weren’t there’. I was there, going through secondary school education, playing a lot of football and thinking about career opportunities. However, while I wasn’t there when the Society of University Cartographers (SUC) was founded in 1964, I know enough history to now see what the significance – initially locally in the UK, and later internationally – of the formation of the SUC has been. Although the British Cartographic Society had been founded the previous September, the SUC was originally set up because ‘a more specialized organization was needed to cater for the particular interests of those people engaged in producing maps for the purpose of book illustration’ (Hodgkiss, 1964).

One of the main aims of this new organization was to coordinate appropriate training and offer support to these ‘practical’ cartographers, who often worked in small units or individually. The UK’s first, full-time diploma course in cartography was established at Oxford College of Technology in the same year of the Society’s foundation, with a diploma course in Geographical Techniques at Luton College of Technology being offered from 1967. Textbooks for students of the art and science of cartography were already available in English; Erwin Raisz’s standard text, *General Cartography*, first published in 1938 and revised in 1948, was soon accompanied by the first edition of Monkhouse and Wilkinson’s *Maps and Diagrams* (1952), while the first of Arthur H. Robinson’s *Elements of Cartography* was published in 1953 (and was to go through five further editions until its last in 1995, gathering co-authors as it went). The cover blurb to the first edition stated: ‘One of the important innovations in *Elements of Cartography* is the inclusion of a chapter on map design, a phase rarely covered in other books’.

So, what was happening in cartography in this decade? ‘Commercial cartographers’ were peeling their scribe coats to produce the artwork for multi-colour lithographic printing to take place. Meanwhile, ‘university cartographers’ were generally using rOtring® pens, Letraset® and Letratone® to produce their map illustrations. However, a revolution was about to happen, initially in a very small way. There were the first signs of computers being used for mapping tasks, admittedly in an experimental fashion. One of the first programs was SYMAP, which was created in 1964 at Harvard University. A little later on this was the first computer mapping

package I used and I well remember the tedium of setting up the card input and the rather poor resolution of the grid-based lineprinter output.

This presaged a period of very strong influence of the Harvard Laboratory for Computer Graphics and Spatial Analysis, which was founded in 1965. They soon released a second program in 1967, SYMVU, ‘a computer graphics program written for the purpose of generating three dimensional line-drawing displays of data’.

Shortly, there was the first known use of the term ‘Geographic Information System’ by Roger Tomlinson, in his 1968 paper, ‘A Geographic Information System for Regional Planning’. While Tomlinson is considered by many as the father of GIS, the influence of this new technology was soon to take an upturn that has eventually changed the whole industry. Jack and Laura Dangermond founded the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) in 1969 as a privately held consulting group. The business began with \$1,100 from their personal savings and operated out of their home in Redlands, California. Esri now a global supplier of GIS software, web GIS and geodatabase management applications, and is very prevalent in some sectors of the cartography field.

The content of the *Bulletin* reflected cartography at the time. Although it had started life with discussions of some quite narrow practical issues, by Volume 1, No.3 (published in June 1967), its content had widened significantly. The first article we have included in this section of the book is by Carson Clark, a founder member of the Society, and was the first of several by different authors on aspects of map design – a topic not often considered in the present era of getting the data mapped and available as soon as possible. Carson was a Cartographer in the Department of Geography at Southampton University at the time of writing. In 1969 he established the Carson Clark Gallery on Edinburgh’s Royal Mile which was labelled as ‘Scotland’s Map Heritage Centre’, and is still run as a family business.

Secondly, we present an early example of the Society encouraging interaction between cartography and other disciplines. Published in Volume 2, No.1 (December, 1967), Elwyn Edwards’ views on the psychological aspects of map design were possibly ahead of his time. An ergonomist and aviation psychologist, he was a Lecturer and Reader in Psychology at Loughborough University from 1960 to 1976, Professor of Applied Psychology at Aston University from 1976 to 1984, then Director of Human Technology

until 1993. His obituary in *The Independent* (25th November 1993) noted: ‘In Britain we have a serious and, for the future, damaging attitude of almost total neglect of our technologists. Our way of life is entirely dependent on their efforts and achievements, but so long as they do their work well, we can ignore them and they remain unknown outside their particular sphere. Edwards and his circle of aviation technologists are in this category’.

The influence of the *Bulletin* can be judged by the fact that many of the authors of articles went on to have a significant influence in the wider cartographic community. Volume 3, No.1 of the *Bulletin* carried the first of a series of contributions by Mike Wood. He was one of the first ‘academic cartographers’ to be involved in the Society, sharing his serious academic rigour and yet being very much in touch with the practical aspects of the cartographer’s field of work. Later he became President of the Society of Cartographers, of the British Cartographic

Society and of the International Cartographic Association (ICA).

The range and depth of articles the Society was publishing in the *Bulletin* was now increasing, and by Volume 4, No.1, it was starting to carry some very substantive papers. The final 1960s article we reproduce here is by Alan Hodgkiss, the first editor of the *Bulletin* and author of one of the classic cartography texts for the next decade, *Maps for Books and Theses* (1970), which I studied during my Cartography course at Oxford Polytechnic. Here Alan charts the evolution of the Ordnance Survey’s one-inch maps in a comprehensive paper that helped set the pattern for several other authors to establish their reputations by pursuing in-depth studies of the work of the Ordnance Survey.

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