

MAP LIBRARY



1970s

Alfred Wainwright said in his book *A Pennine Journey: The Story of a Long Walk in 1938*, that 'Map lovers are scarce, book lovers many, yet I think the reward of the lover of maps is far and away the greater'. Well, such a statement is debatable and I dare say it might prompt some discussion in the staffroom here. It has certainly been a hugely rewarding experience for me to look after this institution's map collection for the last 20 years and, as a lover of maps, I was delighted when the Map Library re-opened on 1 October 2007 in its new home within the University Library. This represented its third move in over 40 years, having previously been located in the High Street, Buckingham Building and most recently in the Portland Learning Resources Centre. This latest move to the library was a major undertaking and it took a team of ten removers to relocate the contents over a period of two days.

A Directory of UK Map Collections, a web publication made available by the British Cartographic Society, lists 71 universities and colleges that claim to have some form of map collection, ranging from those containing just a few hundred items within an academic department, to the copyright libraries at Oxford and Cambridge that each hold more than a million maps. The directory is currently being updated, but it is probably the case that fewer than 20 institutions can claim to have anything that can be described as a map library. Our own Map Library has never suffered from a scarcity of users and there is no shortage of uses to which maps and map data can be put. At the Google Developer Day that was held in London in May 2007, Google's Geospatial Technologist, Ed Parsons, said: 'Everything that happens, happens somewhere', and also suggested that 80 per cent of the world's information has a geographical component. So, given the importance of geographical data, it is fitting that the Map Library, and the services that it provides, should be made accessible to the whole University community.

Restricted space meant that the collection had to be significantly reduced for its move to the University Library. The content is now focused on mapping of Great Britain and Western Europe, including a growing collection of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ordnance Survey maps at a variety of scales. For many weeks the maps that we didn't have space to house were left to languish in the basement of Park Building, in the room affectionately known as 'The Morgue'. This international collection, containing several thousand



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examples of maps from Africa, Asia and North and South America, was eventually saved when the Department of Geography, which has a particular interest in their use for research, offered to retain them. Wainwright also said: 'I have thrown books away, but never a map'.

The role of the map librarian has changed considerably over the last 20 years and today we are just as likely to be helping a student to convert digital map data into a format suitable for use in their CAD application as we are finding our way through the collection of about 15,000 map sheets. However, we continue to acquire paper mapping from a variety of sources, one of the most significant being the Defence Geographic Centre at Feltham, which has a policy of disposing of surplus mapping to public institutions. Mapping and map data have the potential to be used across a wide range of disciplines and, as is common with many other map libraries, we exhibit a diversity of map users and map use. For example, our collection of historical maps of the local area, including detailed Ordnance Survey County Series maps of Portsmouth from the 1870s–1930s and facsimiles of eighteenth-century mapping, are particularly well used by students of architecture and property development. Our collection of very detailed air photographs of Portsmouth, taken between 1945 and 1948, have been useful to our Estates department when evaluating the risk from unexploded bombs prior to developing new construction sites. Some surplus maps have even been used by an art student as part of a costume design project.

Several items in the collection always prove popular when put on display during Open Days. These include a handful of Soviet maps of British cities. Once a military secret, they were procured from the Jana Seta map shop in Riga after being saved from the pulping machine following the collapse of the USSR in 1992. The maps are colour coded to indicate strategic targets. In contrast to such absorbing map content, fans of the late John Peel's 'Home Truths' programme on Radio 4 may recall the quest to find one square kilometre on an Ordnance Survey map which had nothing in it at all (the accolade of 'Britain's Dullest Place' was eventually awarded to a field in North Lincolnshire, as depicted at Grid Reference SE830220 on Landranger map 112). I went one better and offered listeners an entire map with nothing on it! In fact, the collection contains several examples of maps that show nothing, or virtually nothing, at all.

Paper maps continue to be an important resource for learning and research. In fact, Vanessa Lawrence, Director General of the Ordnance Survey, said herself in a press statement: 'There's a long-term future for paper maps ... People who try to write them off are the same people who are convinced that books are going to

disappear because information can be downloaded onto palm-top computers. I don't believe it.' However, within the Map Library we devote a significant amount of time to helping users with digital mapping, particularly that derived from the EDINA Digimap Service (<http://edina.ac.uk/digimap>) and we are always on the lookout for new and effective web-based mapping services.

By the end of February 2008 the University of Portsmouth had over 830 registered Digimap users¹. Digimap usage statistics for 2007 show that they made an average of nearly 6,000 map requests every month. The Digimap data is held centrally and can be accessed anywhere by registered users, but students still need to be educated about its use and the potential uses of the data. This is particularly the case following the introduction of OS MasterMap data. This detailed map data forms the framework upon which all future Ordnance Survey mapping will be based and replaces *Land-Line.Plus* mapping, which is due to be withdrawn from the Digimap service in August 2008. This has implications for all Digimap users, since any downloaded MasterMap data that is provided in GML format may require translation before it can be used in a GIS or CAD application. It is anticipated that training sessions in the use of Digimap, including MasterMap data, will be made available later in the year. In the meantime, anyone who needs advice about the use of MasterMap data should contact the Map Library.

A number of facilities and services are available within the Map Library, our most recent acquisition being an HP DesignJet large format colour printer. We can now offer users a means of printing digital mapping in full colour at any size up to A0, supplementing the service already available in Portland Building. Uniquely within the University, the Map Library also has a black and white plan copier, capable of 1:1 reproductions of original material up to 915mm wide and of any manageable length. Details of prices and availability of both these services can be found at www.port.ac.uk/library/maplibrary. Bill Johnson (Cartographer) also provides a map drafting service to staff for the production of maps and diagrams to publication standard. Examples of the work he can undertake include customised location maps for events, research cartography for journals and floor plans for display. Anyone interested in this cartographic service should contact Bill at bill.johnson@port.ac.uk or on extension 3630.

If you haven't visited the Map Library before then do drop in. We are located on the first floor of the University Library, overlooking the William Beatty Building (just look out for the globes). Perhaps you too feel the same way about maps as Wainwright: 'Give me a map to look at, and I am content. Give me a map of a country I know, and I am comforted'.

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¹ The University currently subscribes to the **Digimap – Ordnance Survey Collection** and to **Historic Digimap**. Other services available to subscribing institutions include **Geology Digimap** and **Marine Digimap**, which was launched on 17 January 2008.

It's hard to miss all the media hype about Second Life. Second Life is a virtual 3D world. Typically you create an alter ego, known as an avatar, who represents you. You see things from the point of view of the avatar. Where it differs from the 'first person' computer games of the 1990s and late 1980s, is that it is on the internet and is a shared world that anyone can log in to. Indeed, there are currently some 12 million 'residents', although perhaps only 30,000 logged in at any one time. Second Life only opened in 2003. It's free to use and there are lots of items (clothes, gadgets, vehicles, etc) which are free to pick up and keep. If you have the time and patience you can even learn to build your own objects. If you want to get serious about your virtual life, you can use real money to obtain the local currency of Linden dollars then buy land for building or pay for enhancements to your physique, your clothing or your possessions. It's even possible to get a job and earn money in Second Life if you're prepared to work at it.



Chapter Runo (in cape and topper!) outside UoP SL Research Centre – above his top hat you can just see the Chaplaincy area

Social interaction

Social interaction has taken on new meanings with the proliferation of virtual worlds such as Second Life, World of Warcraft, Guild Wars and the like. The latter two promote quests and combat, whereas Second Life dispenses with fighting to create a world where, like real life, you can do anything. You can attend a lecture or a conference, lounge by the pool chatting with friends, visit a museum, or even engage in virtual sex. Generally interaction is still via typed 'chat' on the keyboard, but towards the end of 2007 Second Life introduced the technology to allow voice chat – if your PC or your office environment is up to it!

The growth of Second Life is remarkable – when last writing about it in April 2007 the 'population' was only five million, thus it has more than doubled in six months. With all the hype, it's perhaps not surprising that higher education establishments have taken an interest in Second Life. Some see it as a means to manage lectures for distance learners, some wish to interact with students in a student-friendly manner and others wish to promote resources or presence in the real world. Libraries, for example, can move on from 'virtual tours' using photographs or video to actually building virtual libraries in the virtual space. Electronic books, journals and databases might then be presented much more naturally, as it were.

LIFE BRINGS FRESH OPPORTUNITIES

Yet another interface?

So is this just 'yet another interface'? One computer science academic who specialises in user interfaces despaired of the fact that for years he's been designing interfaces that are non-intrusive and simple to use. Second Life is all interface and it most certainly takes some learning! In fact, on first arrival you're welcomed into a small part of the world where you can practise walking and talking and flying, not to mention changing your appearance, amongst other new people who are equally confused!

However, for those who take to this kind of environment naturally, there's obviously a certain ease with which it is possible to access resources and contacts in an entertaining and useful manner. Fairly complex material can be mapped metaphorically to real world experience and that real world experience can be translated to the virtual world with much less work.

University of Portsmouth in Second Life

With the EXPERT Centre buying a plot of land and a Higher Education Academy project team in the process of doing so at the time of writing, the University of Portsmouth is beginning to establish a presence in Second Life. Whether it is sensible to create a representation of the physical campus or to aim more for a sense of 'presence' and an impressionistic idea of the University, is still a matter for debate.

The University Library has been investigating the use of Second Life, considering perhaps recreating the physical building to help students or even pre-entry students orient themselves to the real library. More likely and perhaps more useful, however, would be the ability to answer enquiries virtually or to provide training in information literacy, particularly to distance learners or part-time students who find access in the real world problematical.

To that end I have been tasked with exploring the possibilities of Second Life and my avatar called Chapter Runo has been doing just that. I have also attended two short courses on virtual librarianship, which had a teaching element in Second Life and managed assignments and interaction with tutors and other students via a virtual learning environment.

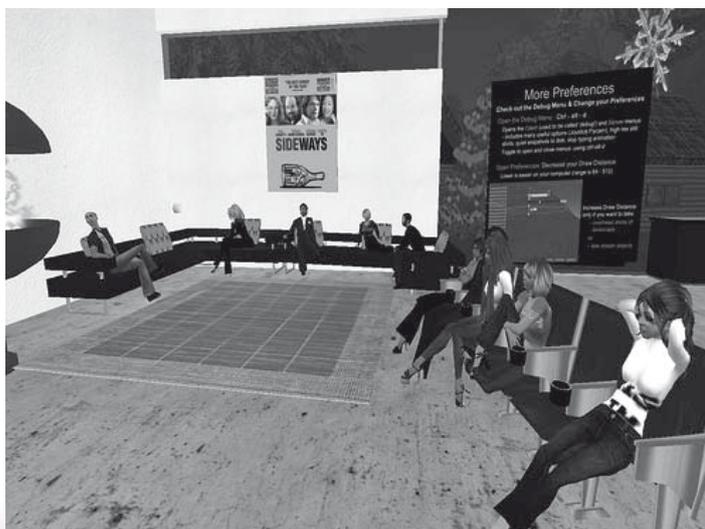
Reflection

A considerable investment in time needs to be taken to become familiar with Second Life – and it still feels surreal even months later! I have encountered problems with motion sickness (which does seem to be unusual) and have struggled with the vast randomness and feeling of alienation. However, when you do meet real people and have real interactions with them – whether social or work related – the huge possibilities of Second Life do become more apparent. It is very reminiscent of the early days of the world wide web, when it was difficult to know what was 'out there', difficult to know how to access it, difficult to find anything, and everyone was unsure about just how useful it was all going to be.

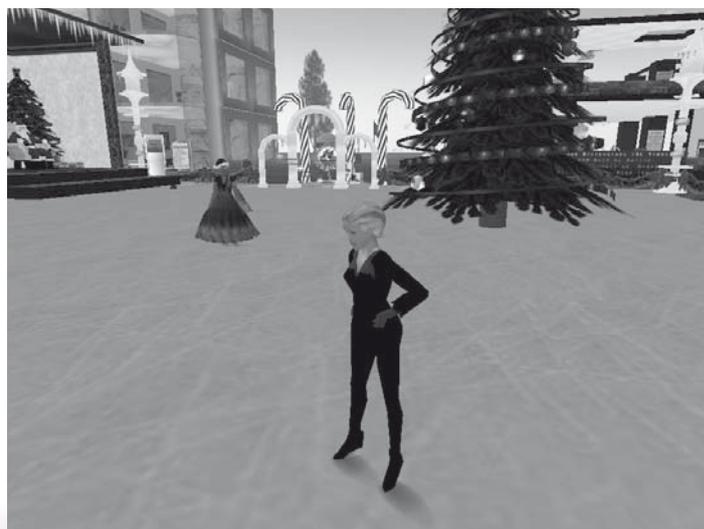
There are also issues concerning what happens if Second Life should stop being trendy. On the other hand, there are those who argue that Second Life is the way the internet is going to develop and that eventually all our interaction and information will be managed in a 3D world of some sort; even if Second Life has been long since replaced by then.

Students are already inhabiting this space and the more they become familiar with it, the more it will be useful to engage in all sorts of teaching and learning activities in Second Life. And a library presence is no exception.

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Virtual class on virtual librarianship
(one of the class display screens can be seen at the back right)



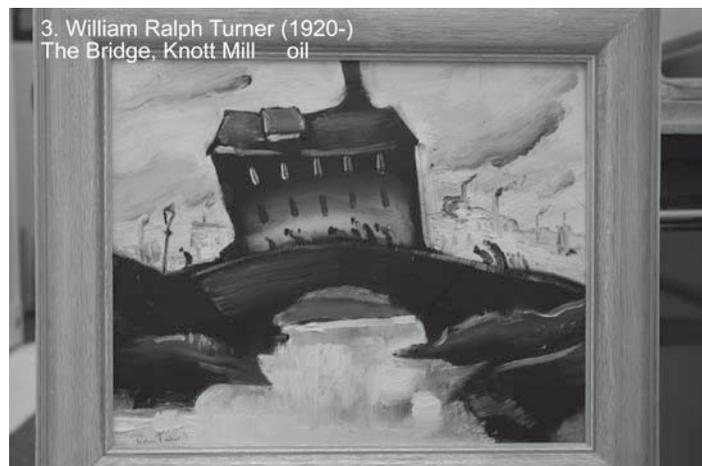
Chapter Runo meets up with a couple of former colleagues to go skating just before Christmas

BEAUCHAMP COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS

The core of the Beauchamp Collection of paintings, on long loan from the Beauchamp family and displayed in the recently-extended library, is a large group of pictures by the northern artist William Ralph Turner.

He was born at Chorlton-cum-Medlock in Lancashire in 1920 and studied part time at Derby School of Art while he was in the Royal Ordnance Corps during the Second World War. He had a job hand-colouring photographs and later taught life drawing and painting in an adult education college in Manchester. He also taught at Hulme Hall School. A figurative artist, many of the scenes he depicted are of the industrial north and, though his technique was quite different, L.S. Lowry, whose portrait he painted, was an influence. Turner was also attracted to the work of Lowry's own teacher, French-born Adolph Valette (1876–1942), who settled in Manchester and to the expressionism of Max Beckmann and Maurice Vlaminck. There are striking examples of his work, such as *The Bridge, Knott Mill* and a number of drawings, now on the library walls. His pictures are held in public collections in Stockport and Manchester and in the collections of Peter Ustinov, Sebastian Coe, Eddie Shah and Freddy Pye. The Beauchamp Collection also contains paintings by Valette, the northern artist Reginald Gardner (1948–), Wigan-born Lawrence Isherwood (1917–1989) and Nick Schlee (1931–). The latter two artists provide pictures of the south, of the Thames and Brighton Pier respectively. Turner himself frequented St Ives and his depictions of the area in sunshine complement his often chilly northern

townscapes.
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A BASKET FOR ALL YOUR EGGS: THE ELIN PROJECT

Have you ever wanted to be able to search most of our ejournal content in one go? Are you frustrated by having to visit both Ebrary and MyiLibrary to check availability of ebooks? Wouldn't it be nice to save your favourite journals, articles, books, database and websites in your personal resource collection? The library is currently working on a project which will deliver all of these.

Many academic libraries have invested in so-called 'federated search' tools. These enable simultaneous searching of a range of separate databases: your search is sent to each database, the results retrieved and the aggregated results presented on screen. Usually, the search tool will also be integrated with a knowledge base which examines the results and presents information about which articles are available in full text. Although attractive conceptually, this idea has its problems: result sets can be huge and may be confusing to users and searches sometimes take a long time, since a number of remote sites have to be visited and then give you a response.

The Electronic Library Information Navigator (ELIN) project adopts a different approach to the problem. Instead of remote sites being visited within the search process, content from each site is captured and stored on a single server, which can then be searched in one go. This makes searches much quicker and also enables results to be presented in a clear and consistent way. Because the knowledge base of our holdings is also integrated into the product, access to full text is also easier and more reliable than with a federated search tool.

ELIN has been designed and produced by the University Library at Lund, in Sweden. It has a clear attractive interface which we have customised to our own house style.

Through one interface, ELIN offers the opportunity to:

- search ejournal articles from a wide range of publishers, including all of the major collections to which we subscribe
- search ebook titles from both Ebrary and MyiLibrary
- save your most useful, or your favourite resources in your personal collection
- browse by subject for journals, websites, ebooks and databases

The browse facility has been implemented by importing content from our own Subject Directory into ELIN. There is still work to do on this, since our Subject Directory headings have to be mapped to appropriate headings in ELIN; this is quite tricky and will take time to get right. Once in place, however, the subject browse facility may offer a long-term replacement for the existing Subject Directory.

Apart from getting the subject headings right, there is currently one other obstacle to long-term adoption of ELIN: at present, it is only available off campus using the webcache. Instructions on how to do this are on our website, but since it involves changing browser settings, this may be technically challenging for some of our users and others may have problems with a firewall in their workplace. However, with the Athens service due to be replaced this summer, a number of possible solutions exist and we are reasonably confident that this problem can be satisfactorily overcome.

Initially on trial until the end of March, the decision has now been taken to subscribe to ELIN for a year in the first instance. During this time we would encourage you to take a look at it and give us your views; in the meantime, we will continue to work to improve and develop the service. If enough of you deem it indispensable, so it will become!

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