

'This book is a love letter to the lost art of the fold-out bus map and its endangered cousin the tabular timetable, victims of the ever-present online geospatial real-time information systems.' So opens this excellent, colourful, volume.

Maps for users of public transport have been a subject of study and collecting for some time, but hitherto it has been descriptions of rail rather than of road that have been favoured by publishers. *The Rise and Demise of the Bus Map* is a timely counterbalance to this, and is a complement to older studies such as Ken Garland's *Mr Beck's Underground Map* (1994) and David Leboff and Tim Demuth's *No need to ask! Early maps of London's Underground Railways* (1999). The essence of such books is that the emphasis should be on the illustrations at least as much as the text, and high production values are necessary. An advantage that was not available in the 1990s is that it is possible to display maps on the internet, and most of the maps illustrated in this *Bus Map* volume can be viewed on the Timetable World website (<https://timetableworld.com/find>). This circumvents the problem that most of these maps are too large to be displayed at the original scale on a single page, so that either they must be reduced, or else the reader must be satisfied with an extract. It also compensates for my regular *bête noire*, the problem of detail being lost in the gutter of double-page spreads.

John Davies will be known to some readers as co-author with Alex Kent of *The Red Atlas* (Chicago University Press, 2017), and as a past editor of and contributor to *Sheetlines*, the journal of the Charles Close Society for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps. As the author details on the last page indicate, his interest in bus maps goes back eighty years, so he can certainly claim experience. He provides a useful summary of bus company ownership in the United Kingdom, which has been subject to considerable change over the past century, and often reflects as much political imperatives as the convenience of the user. This is summarized in the main section titles: 'The Early Years', 'Peak Bus Era', 'Rationalisation', 'Deregulation and Privatisation' (by far the longest chapter: well over a third of the book), and 'The Digital Age'. The 'Deregulation' chapter has the advantage, from the point of view of variety, of numerous local networks, several firms specializing in producing bus maps, and a growing interest in collecting them, so that more survive. Some maps combine all public transport networks: more recently

this has meant including railway systems, but combined bus and tram maps were needed in some cities up to 1962. A few maps exclusively concerned with tramways were illustrated: though trams are rail-guided, they are largely competitors rather than complementary to railway systems: they came later and went earlier.

Variety of ownership is reflected in variety of cartographic style, some of which, particularly in the first sixty-odd years of the century, tends to the minimal rather than to the ornamental, with monochrome production on, at most, tinted paper. A few are distinctly decorative, for example the Sheffield Corporation map of the later 1920s, illustrated on page 30, with its hill-shading and vignettes of notable buildings. The nearly contemporary map of buses around Luton on page 33 is distinctly more functional, to the extent of lacking route numbers, but then it was the centre-spread in a comprehensive timetable booklet. A common characteristic was for ornamental covers, often including municipal coats of arms, to be in inverse ratio to the map inside.

It is appropriate that most of the maps in the book come from the author's own collection. These maps have suffered the fate of many that were produced in huge quantity and were either sold at nominal prices or, more often, given away: they have been little regarded and readily discarded when no longer needed, so that survivors are a tiny proportion of those that were printed – and the older the map, the more severe has been the attrition of time. These maps have not, by and large, been the subject of legal deposit under the Copyright Acts and are not found in the many local studies libraries in the United Kingdom: their preservation has largely been due to individual initiative. This volume is a worthy introduction to the field.

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