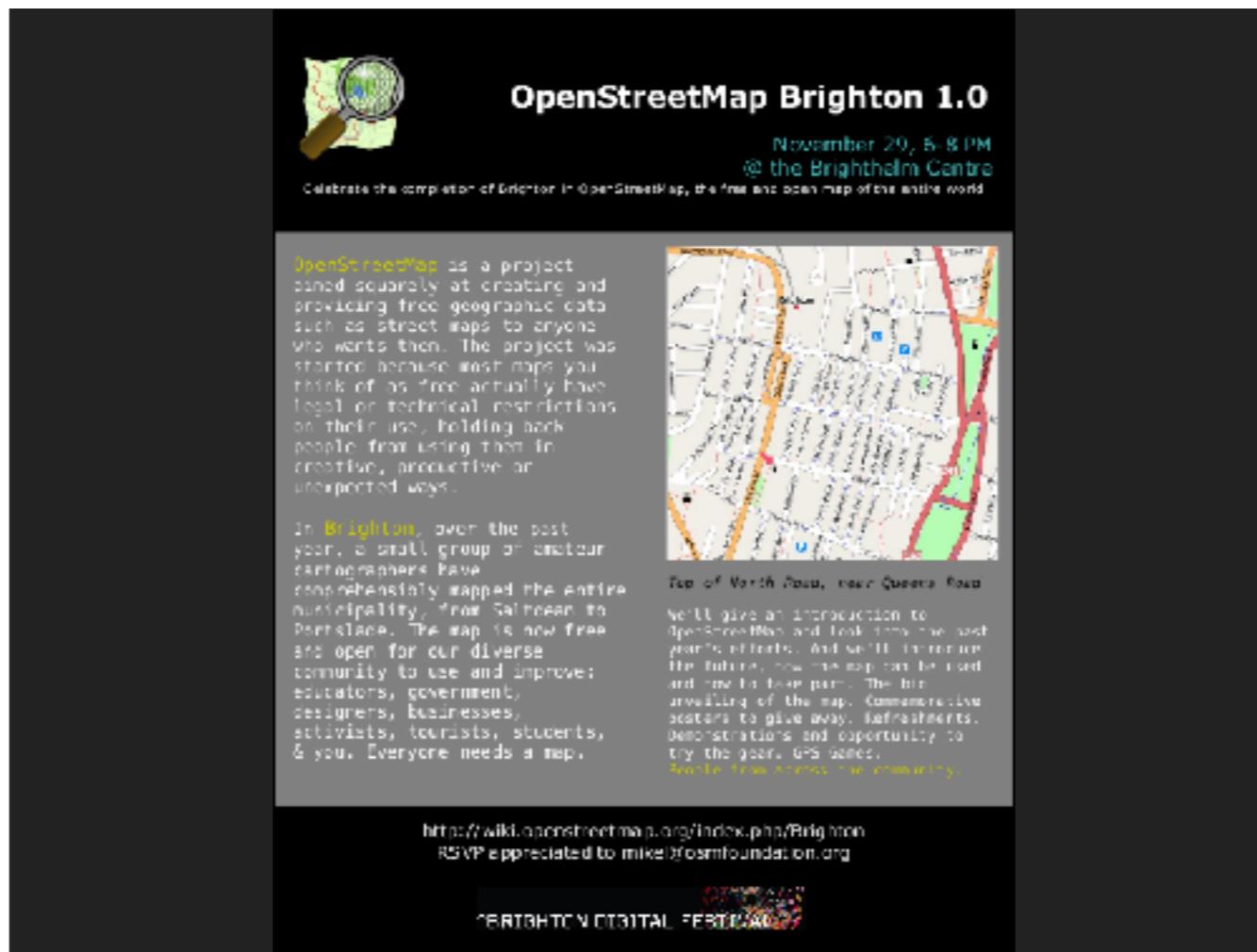




2004, LONDON. A LONDONER IS ANNOYED

Let me tell you a bit of UK history. One day in 2004 a Londoner is trying to use some mapping software but there are no freely available maps. Steve Coast has a brainwave, “why not make it myself?” and starts to collect tracks from a handheld GPS. You all know where this is going....

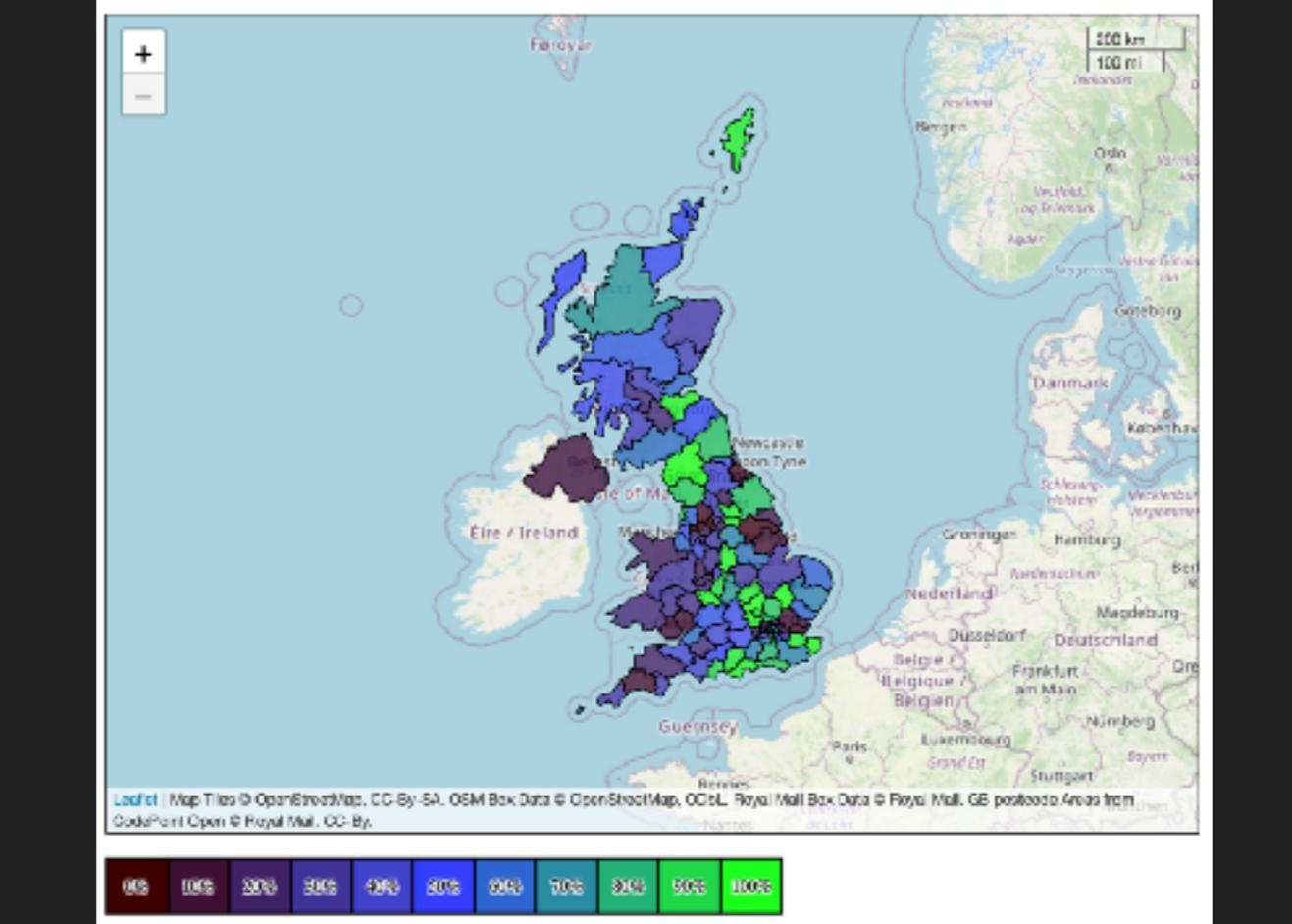
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/f4niko/35612745725>



This intrepid explorer is not alone for long. Soon a group of people join in, presenting the idea to others, and running mapping parties. Mikel may remember this from 2009. It is an exciting time breaking new ground.

A few years go by and the map grows. It is no longer a crazy idea, but crazy good. Some mappers drop by the wayside, others move on to other parts of the mapping ecosystem, but somewhere along the way the momentum changes. The mailing list isn't such a welcoming place any more. New people aren't joining in the conversation. There aren't many mapping parties. Connections aren't being made.

OSM Post Box Progress by Postcode Area



This is not to say that activities have stopped. Far from it. Local pub meetups continue. They have a regular attendance and good turnover of members. Look at this long-running task of mapping all the postboxes in the country. They are matched to a closed data Royal Mail list. You can see pockets in Edinburgh, Derby, Birmingham, London, the South Coast. Today, the UK map is good, just about all the roads are there, most amenities: hospital/fire stations/etc., lots of bars/shops/restaurants/, but building coverage whilst highly detailed in some places is non-existent in most others.

We are of course immensely proud in the UK that OSM started here.



ORDNANCE SURVEY

One of the big reasons OSM started in the first place are The Ordnance Survey. These people are serious about licensing and had a stranglehold on map data. They are accurate, painstaking, expensive, resistant to change, and well funded.

They were seen as the enemy. Some would say that with our usage by Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft, etc. we've beaten them now. They don't feel like the enemy any more.

However Ordnance Survey have been learning. They now release Open Data. It contains reduced resolution of their main products, but it works as a taster to business. Enough to get them started but not enough to build a full business on. They also started a business accelerator programme that captures the hearts and minds of startups. Many times when looking at the businesses and projects created, they could have used OSM.



For example, a recent project called Slow Ways. Freelance geographer Dan Raven-Ellis is asking people to connect footpath corridors for joining urban areas....it gets national press coverage. The Ordnance Survey use government money to pay for development, map data, and marketing. We cannot compete.

There was also a feeling that time-and-again the mappers in the UK had no clear voice to represent them with companies or government.
This is why we formed a Local Chapter

**MANY THINGS YOU COULD DO,
EVERYONE IS A VOLUNTEER,
NOT VERY MUCH MONEY**

“MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK”

The problem we all face is very much the same.

With limited resources, it is hard to know what to spend your time and effort doing in order to get the most results.

How do you get more bang for your buck?

Here is what we have done so far...

COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ Web site, conference presentations, podcast
- ▶ Loomio platform for seeking consensus
- ▶ How to talk to new mappers?
- ▶ UK Quarterly Projects

The first steps were obvious. Get out there and be seen. Build a web site, do more presentations, talk on podcasts. The web site is now definitely *the* landing point for new mappers and people seeking help in the UK.

The mailing lists have a number of limitations, so we started using the Loomio platform for gaining consensus. It has discussion threads which can end in a vote, or you can run polls in different formats. But there are still some people who reject new technology and still like the mailing list. ‘Yet another place to talk!’.... ‘too high tech!’.... ‘too much chatter!’. The conversation needs to be in one place.

We realised that we don’t have any dialogue with new mappers. Often they won’t even know that other mappers exist. This hasn’t been resolved yet.

We’ve been successful with running quarterly projects. These focus activity to improve the map, help people work at a national-level, and have been very good for creating new software for conflation or reporting.

OUTREACH

- ▶ Contact from companies, multinationals, government departments, individuals
- ▶ Open Data Institute -> discuss ideas -> SotM -> public-private grant program -> existing and new developers -> presenting at SotM
- ▶ Geospatial Commission

With the web site as a landing point, we are now contacted by companies, government departments, local councils, and individuals. All of whom would not spoken to us previously. I know that the mailing list is there, but these contacts are scared to engage with it.

A big success was with the Open Data Institute. We helped them with their research, discussed ideas with them, and encouraged them to attend State of the Map. They then launched a public-private grant scheme where small companies could work with a local council using Open Data, primarily OpenStreetMap. 4 companies got paid work. 2 of them went on to present at State of the Map in Milan.

The UK has a Geospatial Commission with a billion pound budget. We got our foot in the door, but the government remain loyal to the Ordnance Survey and other government related organisations.

TALENT POOL

- ▶ Local Chapter are an entity that companies can talk to
- ▶ “is this idea sensible?”
- ▶ Help to write an Invitation To Tender
- ▶ Paid/voluntary work for developers/mappers
- ▶ Microgrants

When someone contacts us it is often just for hand-holding “is this idea sensible?” “Are we going to offend anyone”? Questions like that.

We can then point them in the right direction to get information or services.

If it sounds like something that could become paid work then we help them to write an Invitation To Tender and pass it on to our Talent Pool of developers. It is a reasonable amount of effort to qualify a lead in this way, but it makes it much more likely that a project will go ahead with a developer involved with OSM.

This activity led us to create a microgrant programme. The programme asks for requests that will improve the map and also spread the word to community groups or local government. We have given out our first. We don’t have much more money to distribute but would like to.



**ACT LOCAL, THINK GLOBAL
...AND GET BACK THE FEELING
OF THE OLD DAYS**

So, it is a mix of good and bad points.

The most effective actions involve connecting people to each other, or in providing the resources for people to help themselves.

I'd like to see an OSM group in every town and city in the country.

Extinction Rebellion have an interesting approach with their Self-Organising System

ACT LOCAL, THINK GLOBAL

OSMF

- ▶ Create tooling and resources
- ▶ Get money from larger donors

Local Chapter

- ▶ Implement tooling, use resources
- ▶ Distribute microgrants

Area Group

- ▶ Use resources
- ▶ Regular face-to-face meet-ups
- ▶ Meet and greet new members

TEXT

WHAT DO WE WANT FROM YOU?

- ▶ More tools for managing: CiviCRM? Microcosm
- ▶ Joint memberships (OSMUK + OSMF)
- ▶ Financial support
- ▶ API to help meet and greet
- ▶ Shared comms/outreach
- ▶ Conflict resolution