

Warping historic maps and plans Program and speakers

PROV Map Warper - Public Record Office Victoria

With Map Warper we can turn pixels into real geographic information by layering our historic maps and plans onto a web mapping tool. This process, called rectification, allows us to visualise how places have evolved over time. Very simply, the user places markers or 'ground control points' on the historic map and on corresponding points in the exact same location in a real-world, online map. The open source Map Warper software then assigns latitude and longitude values to those points as well as the x/y position of the pixels in the map image corresponding to those points. The result is an overlay of the historic map image on top of the contemporary world in the correct location. Asa collaborated with UK based geospatial developer, Tim Waters, who originally built mapwarper.net to build a version for PROV in 2019. After seeding the platform with 5000 Parish Plans of which a small group of dedicated volunteers contributed metadata, the platform was opened to the public in June of that year to help crowdsource the rectification of historic maps and plans. The PROV Map Warper currently contains 12080 historic maps and plans of which 5533 have been rectified or geospatially placed as overlays by staff, volunteers and the public.



Asa Letourneau, currently in the role of Online Engagement Officer, has been with PROV in a variety of roles since 2005. He specialises in creatively using technology to encourage user engagement and promote archival collections. Recently, Asa led a project to implement a new map geo-referencing application service called the PROV Map Warper. Asa is most interested in cultural collection interoperability and making archival records as accessible as content found in libraries, museums and galleries.

Map Search – National Library of Australia

The Java-based software server GeoServer provides the basis for Map Search provides the basis for Map Search, which includes thousands of Australian topographic maps, tourist maps, cadastral or parish maps and more, from the National Library's collection. Developed by NLA software engineer Kent Fitch, the maps are overlaid on your choice of three layers, OpenStreetMap, OpenTopoMap and Geoscience Australia's topo layer. Map Search also includes a map editing feature, which you can use to pinpoint and writeup places of interest on the historical maps. Map Search contains 13,200 historical maps of which 8,000 have been rectified by the public.



Susie Russell has worked at the National Library of Australia since 2011, initially with the Oral History and Folklore collection, and most recently with Maps. She is now part of the Curatorial and Collection Research section, which builds and shapes the Library's collection across all formats. Susie has a background in anthropology and the history and sociology of medicine, and this year she is starting a PhD in art history at the ANU.



Dr Martin Woods is the Director Curatorial and Research Programs at the National Library of Australia, and was formerly Curator of Maps and Research from 2005 until 2019. Martin was curator and consultant editor for the 2013 National Library exhibition, 'Mapping Our World: Terra Incognita to Australia,' which attracted world-wide attention when it brought to Australia for the first time the legendary 'Fra Mauro map,' together with other ancient and medieval maps from Europe's great library's. In 2018, Martin co-curated 'Cook and the Pacific,' which brought together journals, maps and artefacts from James Cook's three Pacific voyages. The author of books and articles on the history of cartography, Martin is also

President of the Australian & New Zealand Map Society, which hosts conferences and events about mapping each year, and produces a journal The Globe, for map enthusiasts.

Georeferencing Program – Museum of Lands Mapping and Surveying Queensland

The Museum of Lands Mapping and Surveying in Queensland is coordinating a Geo-referencing Program that bring thousands of old maps to life by geo-referencing them onto current maps. This important information will eventually be accessed through the Queensland Globe to assist in historic land research. The Program started in 2019 as a pilot project, 'Old Maps News Tricks'. It was so successful that it is now an ongoing program with a new name. The process of geo-referencing involves assigning geographical points in common between the old and new maps and then linking the historical map to its spatial location. The result is that historical maps can be viewed alongside their modern-day counterparts.



Cecilia Tram has been working in spatial information since 2006 and was manager of the Museum of Land Mapping and Surveying from 2009 until 2019. Previously she was involved in fine art, government policy and programs. Her leadership brought a strong focus on understanding and digitising the collections and leveraging opportunities to maximise their availability. A secondary focus has been to bring recent history into the displays such as the 1970's techniques in creating topographic mapping and introducing multi-media displays. She currently manages customer service for the Department of Resources spatial information and open data.



Kaye Nardella started as a cartographic cadet with the Department of Mapping and Surveying in 1978. After finishing the required Cartography course, Kaye completed a Bachelor of Arts in 1988 majoring in history. The next course completed was a Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies in 1997. From 1998 she worked part-time as an archivist with the John Oxley Library and part time with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. A full-time position was taken up with this department in 2004 and she was appointed senior curator of the Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying in 2007.



Peter Gersekowski is a Principal Advisor, Spatial Information in the Department of Resources, Queensland. He has qualifications in Cartography and Public Sector Management. Peter worked in South Africa as a cartographer compiling touring maps and with Queensland Government, primarily with mapping application development and in policy and client engagement with the Queensland Spatial Information Council (QSIC). He took on the responsibility of managing the Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying in 2019.

Program inquiries

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