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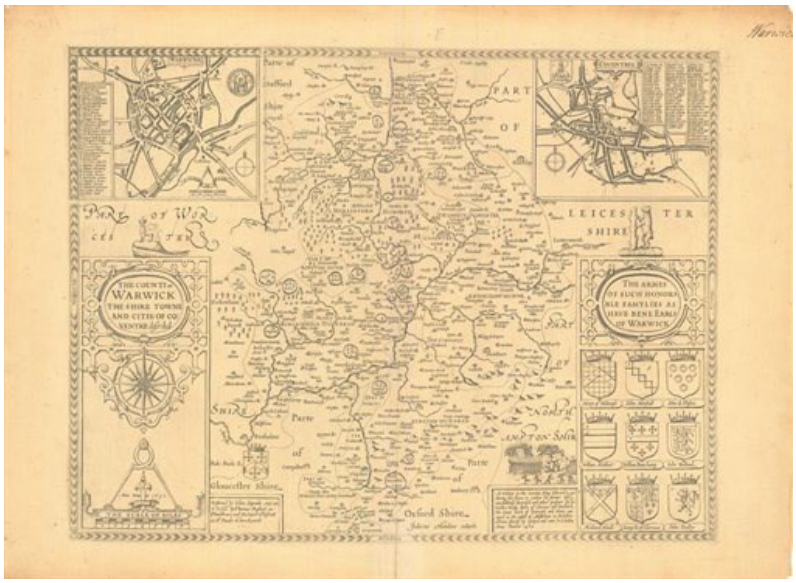
Map collection

The Map Library holds an extensive collection of historic maps covering Birmingham and the West Midlands region.

Beginning with original engravings of the Midlands counties dating from about 1610, the collection holds examples of most major maps produced from this time up to the establishment of the Ordnance Survey in the early nineteenth century. Large-scale plans at 6”, 25” and 50” to one mile are available for Birmingham and its surroundings at various dates. A collection of engravings of Birmingham scenes and buildings is also available.



Open all sections

The United Kingdom

Ordnance Survey maps at small scales (1inch to one mile) from the earliest editions to the present day. Ordnance Survey reconnaissance sheets (c. 1812), and ‘Index to the Tithe Survey’ (c.1860) sheets are also held. Incomplete sets of large scale plans at 6 and 25 inches to one mile are held for the Midland counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. The dates of survey or revision of these plans is usually circa. 1875, 1900, 1914, 1920, 1938,1955 and 1972. Other maps of the Midlands region illustrating themes such as physical relief, river quality and flow, administrative boundaries, population trends, availability of services, etc., are held.

Thematic series of maps covering England, Wales and Scotland, depicting subjects including geology, soils, agricultural land classification, agricultural land use (First and Second series), administrative boundaries, postcode areas, river catchments and mineral assessments are also held.

Modern Ordnance Survey maps at scales of 1:250,000, 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 are held for the whole of the UK, and 1:10,000 scale for most of the country. Midland counties (incomplete sets) are held at 1:2,500, and Birmingham is covered at 1:1250.

Ireland is covered at 1:50,000 scale and smaller.

Outside the UK

The Map Room houses an extensive collection of maps covering most areas of the world. This includes both indigenous mapping, and ‘world atlas’ maps. Maps available for most European countries are at scales of about half-inch to one mile or larger, and most countries are covered at scales of about 1:250,000 or 1:500,000 scale.

Maps of European countries are often available at larger scales, and whilst most surveys date from around 1940, more recent mapping is often available, particularly for France, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. Specialist collections of maps are held for some countries, particularly for Finland, Burma, and those of former British dependencies, where mapping was produced by the Department of Overseas Surveys.

Map Memoirs

Sheet memoirs are available for most thematic maps where published, and these typically accompany maps relating to the depiction of geology, soils, land use and agricultural land classification.

Books about Maps and Mapmaking

This collection covers the history of cartography, the theory and practice of surveying, map-reading, map-making, the description of map projections, and the practical use of maps. Cartobibliographies of most English counties are held, as are current map catalogues and indexes, which show the current availability of maps worldwide.

General Reference

A collection of books is available for consultation which includes geographical dictionaries, almanacs, statistical yearbooks, geographical reference works, and also books lodged by lecturing staff for students to read in the Map Library..

Multiple copies of difficult-to-find books, and obscure journal articles which are required reading for particular courses, are available for short-term loan.

Atlases

The atlas collection comprises over 600 volumes, and includes:

- Many world atlases dating from 1850 to the present day.
- Facsimiles of important antiquarian atlases, including Blaeu, Mercator,Ptolomy, Ortelius, and Nordenskoild
- Thematic atlases – themes include: archaeology, history, oceans, drought, transport, climate, politics, space, environment, linguistics
- National atlases –a wide range of countries is represented
- Atlases of historic town plans, with particular emphasis on England, France, Germany, Ireland and Italy

Dissertations and theses

The map library holds a reference copy of every dissertation and thesis completed in the School of Geography since its establishment in 1924. Volumes over six years old are archived, and are available with a few hours' notice. More recent volumes are held in the map room, and may be borrowed overnight.

See lists of dissertation authors and titles by subject area and year:

- **Environmental Science 2003 (PDF 103KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2003.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2004 (PDF 102KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2004.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2005 (PDF 100KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2005.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2006 (PDF 76KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2006.pdf)**
- **Environmental science 2007 (PDF 75KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalscienceIRE2007.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2008 (PDF 59KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2008.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2009 (PDF 77KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2009.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2010 (PDF 74KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2010.pdf)**
- **Environmental Science 2011 (PDF 75KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/EnvironmentalScienceIRE2011.pdf)**
- **Geography 2001 (PDF 155KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2001.pdf)**
- **Geography 2002 (PDF 171KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2002.pdf)**
- **Geography 2003 (PDF 160KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2003.pdf)**
- **Geography 2004 (PDF 175KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2004.pdf)**
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- **Geography 2007 (PDF 137KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2007.pdf)**
- **Geography 2008 (PDF 156KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2008.pdf)**
- **Geography 2009 (PDF 132KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2009.pdf)**
- **Geography 2010 (PDF 112KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/GeographyDissertations2010.pdf)**
- **Geography 2011 (PDF 150KB) (/Documents/college-les/gees/dissertations/Geographydissertations2011.pdf)**

Electronic Maps and Atlases

The Map Curator can provide advice and assistance with various online mapping services, in addition to providing help with the registration and use of Ordnance Survey DIGIMAP topographic, historical and geological mapping, which is currently available through EDINA.

Local collection

The Local Reference Collection comprises a collection of books, pamphlets, gazetteers, trade directories, town guides and handbooks relating to Birmingham and the Midlands area, with a particular emphasis upon the historical development of Birmingham.

The Conzen Collection

The **Conzen Collection (/schools/gees/facilities/conzen-collection/index.aspx)** comprises the library of the late Professor MRG Conzen, a geographer who was pre-eminent in the field of Urban Morphology and the study of the development of the urban landscape.

The collection includes material covering regional geography, with an extensive slide, photograph, periodical, offprint and map collection. The map collection includes a very large collection of Japanese town plans.

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