



## **ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.**

- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
- **ITM DISTRIBUTION**

**12300 Bridgeport Road  
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### **AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #3 OF 2024 – Early March**

#### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

**“Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools that don’t have brains enough to be honest.”**

**Benjamin Franklin (spoken during an election campaign)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Ides of March are soon upon us with no Caesar in sight and February had an extra day this year. The travel industry seems to be continuing its recovery from the effects of Covid, which is good news for all of us. Royal Caribbean has just initiated the largest cruise ship in the world, the Icon, an amazing four-block-long behemoth capable of carrying 10,000 passengers and requiring thousands of crew members. By all accounts it is an amazing ship, with 24 restaurants on board, an ice-skating rink, several pools, and is being touted as an ‘experience’. The cruise ship industry has more than recovered from the Covid era; it is booming. Travel to China and to India are also picking up, but Europe remains the strong destination of choice. The head of Hilton Hotels Asia was interviewed on TV recently and claimed that travel within China is now higher than it was prior to the Covid pandemic and is approaching 2019 levels in much of Asia. Good news, indeed! 2024 map sales to date are higher than at any time for the past four years, indicating that 2024 will be a good year for travel – and for travel maps!

#### **NEW TITLES**

ITMB’s map sales in the first two months of 2024 have been encouraging. It not only shows a strong on-going demand for paper maps, but our inventory of certain titles is also depleting rather more quickly than expected. Quite unexpectedly, Amsterdam seems to have caught on as a title and is selling exceptionally well. This year will see quite a few new updates to our traditional titles, leaving little time to develop brand new titles, but this month is an exception. We are pleased to announce three brand new, never-before-published ITMB maps! The first is for the southern half of both Alberta and Saskatchewan. For those not familiar with Canada, most of the people and almost all of the roads are located in the southern portion of the Prairie provinces. Yes, we publish maps of the entire provinces and will continue to do so, but for those travelling across Canada, this will be a much more useful map. The second title is our first long-distance hiking map, covering the Appalachian Trail in the eastern USA, from Georgia to Maine, or vice versa. The third exciting title is our second long-distance hiking map, covering the length of Hadrian’s Wall in Great Britain. This massive architectural feature was constructed by the Romans almost 2,000 years ago to separate the Roman colony of Britannia from the ‘barbarian’ controlled northern portion of the island, which the Romans called Caledonia and we call Scotland. As the Emperor Hadrian was the instigator of this massive wall, his name gets top billing! Look carefully at the cover picture and you may note a couple of familiar personalities. Ordering details are included in New Releases, below.

#### **YOU WON’T BELIEVE WHAT ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL TRAVEL ITEMS IS**

There is an essential item used world wide in travel and none of us could survive without it. That’s a pretty dramatic statement, but what is it? Would you believe it is the lowly traffic light? It is everywhere, sometimes annoyingly so, and controls traffic. So what? Think for a moment; haven’t there always been traffic lights? No! They were created by a young American inventor just one hundred years ago, in 1923. A red light for stop, a green light for go and a yellow/orange warning light enclosed in a metal box, usually arranged vertically, but sometimes horizontally, that work automatically to a timing device that is set by a technician and controls how long each light functions. Busy intersections often have a fourth light to allow turning traffic to proceed safely. It’s simple. It’s safe, and it’s effective. Why didn’t it exist prior to 1923 and how was traffic controlled previously? Amazingly, it often wasn’t, and traffic jams were legendary in Victorian times. Some major intersections were governed by traffic police during busy hours, and I suppose that many secondary streets had some form of stop sign, but generally speaking, individual drivers did whatever they felt necessary to move forward. In the days of horses and carriages, one might assume that there would be too few vehicles to cause a problem, but anyone who has read a novel staged in Victorian times knows that vehicles were always colliding, losing wheels, or jamming a roadway to the discomfort of all. Traffic jams are NOT just a modern reality!

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Why did it take so long for such a simple method of controlling traffic to be discovered? One can only speculate, but it did! Once the first system was inaugurated, it made so much sense that it became in everyday usage very rapidly, spreading around the world, and is one invention that has remained true to its origins to a remarkable extent and is consistent in every country. Green, red, and yellow – so simple - but it just took someone to put them together in a box and solve a problem that was becoming untenable as more and more cars took to the roads. Amazing! We take them for granted, but we couldn't live without them and can't travel safely without them, which we rapidly realize in the event of a power outage!

Here's a true story. I was driving in Zambia in 1970 (I know, that's before you were born; don't remind me!) and on the outskirts of Lusaka, the country's capital, I came upon a large sign stating Beware of the Robot!!! Well, I carefully drove the length of the city's only main street (at that time) searching for a clunky metal monster and eventually noticed another similar sign for traffic coming from the other direction. Perplexed, I turned around and drove back to where I had started. No robot was anywhere in sight. I stopped a passerby and asked him where I could find the robot. He pointed to the stop light at the main intersection! What a hoot! To this day, stop lights throughout Southern Africa are referred to as 'robots'. Believe me; it's true! Even in today's South Africa, whenever there is a 'load-sharing' loss of electricity, people just shrug and say that "The robots aren't working right now". Who would have believed a century ago that lights in a little metal box would become essential to travel.

### **BENCHMARK MAPS SOLD**

It is somewhat with a sense of deep regret that I note the sale of Benchmark Maps, due to the ill health of the owner, John Glanville. For those of you unfamiliar with the brand, Benchmark was formed by the notorious Bill Hunt of Map Link fame, who decided that he could put DeLorme Atlases out of business by starting a new venture to duplicate what DeLorme had been doing successfully for years – producing high-quality large-sized road atlases of individual American states. Not being a cartographer himself, Bill formed a consortium with Allan Cartography and Eureka Maps to produce a new set of atlases based on western states, with himself being a highly paid researcher who would drive the roads and provide updating information. Unfortunately, two factors conspired against what might have proven to be a sound business. The first was changing market demand, which was moving increasingly digitally and away from huge, bulky paper atlases that were clumsy to use and were awkward to store in a vehicle despite being nicely detailed. The second was Bill's penchant for conducting his business on someone else's dime. His map distribution firm, Map Link, was constantly operating at the top end of a multi-million-dollar bank line of financial credit that far exceeded the actual valuation of his firm's assets. In other words, it was always very heavily in debt.

This worked for a few years, and Map Link thrived, at least on paper, but greed undid it. When the Great Recession began, Map Link, and Benchmark, quickly ran into serious financial difficulties. Major companies like Borders and Barnes & Noble returned thousands of maps that had suddenly become unsellable. Map Link could not pay its many creditors, including ITMB. Map Link collapsed rather messily, Bill disappeared to Europe, East View bought what it called 'the assets', stiffing all the creditors in the process, and John Glanville, a good man, emerged to buy Benchmark. For the past twenty years or so, Benchmark has carried on expanding its range of atlases and adding state recreationally oriented folded paper maps. However, market changes continued to plague the company, even though it was well-managed. Increasingly, drivers relied upon in-car navigation and less on paper. Benchmark continued to have a loyal following, as did DeLorme, and for that matter, Backroads Mapbooks of Canada. Benchmark's most recent publication has been a large-scale (11x17) road atlas of British Columbia, for a market already saturated with three other firms producing similar atlases within Canada.

John reluctantly decided he had to sell Benchmark as his health was failing and East View stepped up to acquire it. I wish them well with this purchase. ITMB does not market the Benchmark line for distribution, but we do stock a selection of their titles in our retail store. I presume that East View will continue with the line, and retailers will have to contact them to arrange for future orders. John also owned a firm called maps.com, doing contract cartography. Esri has purchased the URL name, but not the company, which now becomes defunct. Good for Esri; that's a great name!

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### **THE SMALLEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD**

I guarantee that you have never visited the smallest country in the world! The Sovereign Military Order of Malta exists only as a diplomatic passport limited to 500 citizens who descend from the legendary Knights Templar of crusading fame. The Order issues its own currency, prints its own stamps, and even has its own vehicle licence plates – but it possesses no land. Nada. Not one square centimeter. It exists because of its legacy and its heritage. Its passports are legally recognized, but it does not belong to the United Nations. It's an anomaly, but it exists. The smallest country that physically exists and receives millions of visitors each year is Vatican City. San Marino or Monaco probably run it close seconds, then Liechtenstein, Andorra, and Luxembourg. Macao and Hong Kong don't count any more, as they are now parts of China. The UN doesn't count either, as it is not a country.

### **LUNAR NEW YEAR**

What we used to call Chinese New Year was celebrated on February 10-16. It is more appropriately called the Lunar New Year, as it is celebrated by several different Asian societies, not just China. The Vietnamese call it Tet, for example. Lan and her group of dancers were quite busy over Tet, entertaining three different gatherings on the first weekend: Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Sunday evening and gave three more performances the following weekend. These performances involve a dozen different volunteer singers, dancers, and musicians, who do this because they love doing it. This involves Saturday afternoon rehearsals in one of the rooms in our office building, and occasional karaoke sessions that sometimes go on far into the evening. Tet, or the versions celebrated by various Asian societies is a big deal in multi-cultural Vancouver. Each year, we hold a parade through 'old Chinatown' and hundreds of thousands show up to cheer on the marchers. It celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. How does Lan find enough time to work on producing 60 maps per year with all this dancing?

### **THE LONGEST HIKING TRAIL IN THE WORLD**

The Trans-Canada Trail, at 24,000 kilometers in length, is by far the longest hiking trail anywhere in the world. One person recently completed hiking it from beginning to end. It took her six years to complete and involved 300 actual days of foot-slogging. No one has ever published a map of the entire route, rather understandably, but portions of it are shown on various ITMB maps. Canada has several long-distance trails. The West Coast Trail on Vancouver Island takes about a week to traverse (mapped by ITMB). The Alexander Mackenzie Trail from Williams Lake to the Pacific takes about ten days to go one way (shown on our map of Sothern BC). In the USA, the Appalachian Trail is a demanding developed trail, and the Pacific Coast Trail (which is a future ITMB title) is international in scope in that it extends from southern California into southern British Columbia.

### **THE MOST POPULAR CAR IN THE WORLD**

Preliminary statistics for the sale of automobiles during 2023 are more or less complete by now. The most popular model of car is not a Ford or a Mercedes, it is the Tesla Model Y, which sold an amazing 1.4 million cars during 2023. No one else even came close, but the next two were Toyota models. If one were to add up all the models in the Tesla line, the total number of cars sold would probably exceed two million units. It is noteworthy that all Tesla cars are fully electric, which shows how fast the world is switching to non-fossil-fuel cars. They are obviously meeting a high level of demand from customers and of course are making Elon Musk a ton of money. Surprisingly, Ford has recently announced that it is cutting back on electric vehicles due to a perceived lack of demand. Sounds to me that American automotive manufacturers are missing the boat. They did so when Japanese manufacturers started importing smaller and cheaper cars into North America many years ago. Toyota and other importing firms now dominate the North American market while American firms continue to churn out gas-guzzling automobiles. There's a lesson here, for those willing to see!

### **WORK IN PROGRESS - all sellers/librarians please note:**

ITMB, as of early March, 2024, has ample inventory of almost all of the titles traditionally carried as part of our publishing line. We ask for your understanding if a particular title happens to be unavailable in the short term.

**Alberta**, a popular title, is approaching the end of its current edition. A new version is being prepared; no ETA.

**Andorra/Pyrenees** is low on inventory; not yet ready for updating.

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**Antarctica** is now out of copies. A fresh printing has already gone to press; no ETA.

**Borneo** is out of print. A fresh edition has been sent to press, no ETA.

**British Columbia**, another very popular title, is out of inventory. Not to worry, A fresh edition has been printed and will definitely arrive early in May. Just keep ordering, using the old ISBN.

**Cameroun/Gabon** is close to running out of copies. A fresh edition is being prepared; no ETA.

**Caribbean East Atlas** is now out of print and discontinued due to high printing costs. Please use our **Caribbean Cruising** map as an alternative.

**Cuzco and Region** is now out of print for a while. A newly updated edition is at press, No ETA.

**Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming** is now out of print. A new edition is at press, no ETA.

**India North and Northwest** is out of print and discontinued. A new map of **Northern India** is in preparation for release in 2025. In the meantime, please continue to order our excellent map of **India**.

**India South and North-east** is out of print and discontinued. It has been replaced by our excellent map of **South India**, which was released last year.

**Jordan/Syria** is now out of inventory. A fresh edition has been sent to the printer; ETA is in June.

**Krakow** is now out of print. A new double-sided map has been printed and will definitely arrive in early March. Please keep ordering using the old ISBN.

**Mexico** is now out of print. A fresh edition has been printed and will definitely arrive in early May. Please keep ordering using the old ISBN.

**Mexico Central** is a new ITMB title that will arrive in early March and complete our detailed mapping of Mexico.

**Mexico City/Central Mexico** is out of print again. A fresh edition has been sent to press and will arrive in early May. Please continue ordering using the older ISBN for now.

**Muscat and Oman** is a new ITMB title, currently at press and expected in March. Our existing map of **Yemen and Oman** is still in print and is available, but with Yemen being in its current state of militant instability, travel needs a good map of touristically popular Oman without including non-touristic Yemen.

**Newfoundland/Labrador** is now out of print. A fresh edition has been printed and is expected in early May. Please continue to order using the older ISBN.

**Northwest Territories** is now out of print. We have prepared a new map that combines it with Nunavut. **Nunavut** is also getting very low on inventory. The new map will portray NWT and Nunavut in a double-sided format and will definitely be available in early May. Please continue ordering using the old ISBN.

**Pakistan** is now out of print, due to an unexpected large sale that depleted our inventory overnight to zero. We are obviously preparing for a new edition, but it will be several months before an updated edition can be completed and sent to press. No ETA for release.

**Prince Edward Island** is now out of print. A fresh edition has been printed and will definitely be available in early May. Please continue to order, using the old ISBN.

**Tanzania** is out of print. A fresh edition is at press and expected in July.

**USA Central** is now out of print and replaced by **Mississippi River**, which is an accurate name for the mid-west of the USA, in that it is the original Louisiana Purchase area that transformed the USA overnight into becoming a huge country. However, methinks that we would have been wiser to stick to central or mid-west USA as a name.

**USA East** is now out of print and has been replaced by **USA East Coast**, which is available.

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### NEW RELEASES in March, 2024

**Alberta & Saskatchewan South Half Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2024 1:900,000 ISBN 9781771297332 UPC 817712973320 \$12.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95** – The Canadian prairies stretch from just east of Calgary to around Winnipeg. This map covers from the British Columbia border to just east of the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border and from the American border to north of Edmonton and Saskatoon. This is a vast region of fairly flat grassland, where farms are huge, and towns are hours of driving apart from each other. The Rocky Mountains are shown on side 1, but not in as much detail as our Banff/Jasper map, then the rest of Alberta, with large inset maps of Calgary and Edmonton. Side 2 covers southern Saskatchewan, with decent-sized inset maps of Regina and Saskatoon. This map would appeal to anyone driving across Canada or concentrating on this part of Canada, which includes the famous Drumheller Tyrrell Museum of Dinosaurs, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Frenchman Butte battlefield, the RCMP headquarters and museum, and Al Capone's underground distillery. Who wouldn't want to see that?! **AVAILABLE**

**Appalachian Trail (USA) Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2024 1:750,000 ISBN 9781771290333 UPC 817712903334 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95** – This is a new venture for ITMB, although we have published several recreational hiking maps over the years. The Appalachian mountain range was the original western boundary of the American colonies while under British rule. Everything west of there was technically the French possession of Louisiana Territory, called by American settlers 'Indian country'. Nowadays, it is a massive recreational hinterland for east coast residents wanting to escape overcrowded cities. The National Parks Service maintains the trail and a series of overnight huts. Most people only hike a portion of the trail, but for the dedicated hiker, the trail is a great adventure. We have divided the length of the trail into four natural regions: Maine into New York State, Connecticut south to Maryland, Maryland to Virginia, and Virginia to Georgia, to its traditional end at Springer Mountain. This is a demanding trail hike, but one of the most popular in the world. **AVAILABLE**

**Hadrian's Wall & Northern England Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2024 1:130,000/1:250,000 ISBN 9781771293440 UPC 817712934406 \$13.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95** – The Romans eventually subdued the fiercely independent Britons over time, from Julius Caesar's second invasion to the end of Roman rule in 410AD, but they never brought the extremely unruly Scots or the Welsh under their rule. In fact, raids from Scotland (known to the Romans as Caledonia) were so devastating that Emperor Hadrian ordered a wall built to keep them out. This massive wall stretches from the mouth of the River Esk, west of Carlisle, all the way across northern England to a point on the River Tyne somewhat to the east of modern-day Newcastle. The wall, like the Great Wall of China, was only moderately successful in keeping the Scottish Picts at bay and required a small army just to man the many watch towers and encampments. Nevertheless, it remained as a fortified border until the Roman legions abandoned Britain in 410. Much of the wall was gradually demolished to create housing and fencing on both sides, but the foundations remain, as well as remnants of fortifications along the length of the wall. In today's United Kingdom, the wall is a long-distance hiking trail, a series of museums and memorials, a few temples that have been reconstructed, and some rebuilt portions of a remarkable construction that has survived the ravages of time. It is a 'must see' travel experience for everyone, a life-shaping experience for youngsters, and a massive tribute to the will of the Roman Empire. By the nature of a rectangular sheet of paper, the map shows much more than 'just' the wall, going as far south as Penrith and County Durham, and north into southern Scotland, showing all sorts of attractions that have nothing to do with the wall itself. In short, this is a marvellous travel map for all to enjoy. **AVAILABLE**

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### NEW RELEASES in February, 2024

**California Travel Reference Map 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2024 1:900,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771291842 UPC 817712918420 \$13.95 cdn/us E/GBP 12.95** – The American State of California has almost as many residents as all of Canada. I wonder how many of them are ex-pat Canucks. Regardless, this double-sided map shows the attractions of the state in amazing detail. By the shape of California, all of southern Nevada is included as well, including the all-important wasteland of Las Vegas. All motorways are clearly shown, including those in greater Los Angeles. All state highways are also shown, as well as most secondary connecting roads. Parks, points of interest, beaches, redwood forests, and distances between major communities are also shown. The state is blessed with interesting offshore islands, such as Catalina, San Clemente, and the Channel Islands, all of which are included. Printed on waterproof stone paper, this map is **AVAILABLE**.

**Germany Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2024 1:675,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771293259 UPC 817712932594 \$14.95 cdn/us E/GBP 10.90** – Germany is Europe's most populous country and is a very popular travel destination. It is also noteworthy for being the first country in the world to generate more than 50% of its energy needs from renewable sources, something we in North America should emulate. It also has Europe's most advanced rapid rail networks, which we emphasize on our map. Side 1 concentrates on the northern half of the country, from the Danish frontier south to the Ruhr region and Magdeburg, with side 2 covering the south. Small portions of adjoining countries also show. We have updated the motorway network, showing portions under construction where necessary. The main highway network is shown in great detail, as this is the best way to explore traditional Germany. Major points of interest are shown, but the country is replete with castles, fortresses, manor houses, gardens, and other touristic attractions. We have used the German names for cities, which sometimes varies from commonly-known English nomenclature. This only affects a few urban areas, such as Koln for Cologne, or München for Munich; 99.9% of German place names are the same in English and German. The map is printed on waterproof stone paper for durability. It is, of course, **AVAILABLE**.

### NEW RELEASES in January, 2024

**Toronto & Southern Ontario Travel Reference Map 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2024 1:12,000/1:600,000 ISBN 9781771298056 UPC 817712980564 \$10.95 cdn/us E/GBP 9.95** – Toronto is the largest city in Canada and the 5<sup>th</sup> most populous in all of North America. Strategically located on the north shore of Lake Ontario, it is halfway between Chicago and Montreal and within easy access to NYC and points south. Its hinterland consists of 100,000,000 people, so this is a city worthy of note! Historically, it dates from 1793, but its antecedents go back many more centuries. The name means 'Meeting Place' in indigenous annals, and it grew rapidly as a centre of commerce and industry over the successive decades to dominate Canada. It is also the capital of the Province of Ontario and the centrepoint for most banks and insurance companies operating in Canada. Touristically, it has the largest airport in the country and is the access point for most flights from the USA and Europe, so tends to be where most visitors arrive. The map shows the core of a vast urban expanse that contains almost all of the touristic sites in the city, from the lovely recreational outer harbour islands to tony Yorkville and High Park, in the west. All tram lines are shown (Toronto has the largest fixed rail tram network in the world), as well as the extensive subway system (recently expanded), and an inset map showing all of Metro Toronto. Side 2 concentrates on part of southern Ontario, from Detroit to Kingston and north to Barrie. This would assist visitors driving to Niagara Falls, which is still the Number 1 attraction of North America. **AVAILABLE**

**US East Coast Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2024 1:1,500,000 ISBN 9781771298575 UPC 817712985750 \$11.95cdn/us E/GBP 9.95** – This is a new title for ITMB, portraying the Atlantic coast states from Maine to Florida. It replaces our former map of USA East Half, which has been discontinued. Side 1 covers from the northern tip of Maine to partway through North Carolina and west to Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. Side 2 continues south to Key West at the southern tip of Florida and west as far as Atlanta and just short of New Orleans. The USA seems to fit naturally into north-south components – the Atlantic Coast is the former British colonies with the addition of Spanish Florida, and the central portion covers the lands affected by the Mississippi River basin and the great plains known as the Mid-West. This particular map is one for exploration of a vast portion of the USA from top to bottom. It would be useful for anyone living in this segment of the country to explore and would suit foreign visitors a readable map of an important part of America. Where exactly IS Gettysburg, anyway? Well, it's on the map, as well as Disneyworld, the Boone Hall Plantation, and Nantucket. This is a map for exploring! So go explore. **AVAILABLE**

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