



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

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

**12300 Bridgeport Road
Richmond, BC
CANADA V6V 1J5
TEL: (604) 273-1400
FAX: (604) 273-1488
E-mail: Jack@itmb.com**

AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #3 OF 2021 – March (sent out early April)

INTRODUCTION

The world is slowly starting to return to a degree of normalcy as Covid vaccines become more widely available and as governments reduce travel-related restrictions. This good news needs to be tempered by a huge proviso: the largest demographic group in Europe and in North America are those over 65. This represents tens of millions of individuals considered to be most likely to have a severe reaction to Covid-19, so the focus of vaccination is obviously concentrated on such people. Also, vaccines are not yet generally available in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, or Latin America, so we are still a long ways away from 'freedom' to travel. However, we are one month closer to a reality that has been long-awaited. April showers will bring May flowers, and with each passing month, the lockdowns and stay-at-home orders are being relaxed. Good news for all of us!

THE STATUS OF MAP PUBLISHING IN 2021

This is a mapping newsletter, even if our focus has been closely linked to Covid updates for the last year, so it is appropriate to review at this time where mapping fits into current-day reality. First, I am referring to paper maps used by travellers, not electronic maps. Generally speaking, most publishers have survived the crisis brought about by Covid. This includes Borch, Canada Map Office, Collins, Hema Maps, ITMB, GM Johnson, Michelin, National Geographic Maps, Nelles, Ordnance Survey, and Touring Club Italiano among others. Most distributors of maps have also survived, fortunately. Unfortunately, several retailers have shut their doors forever.

This brings me to note content. Very few map publishers have released any new editions or titles during 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021. This is understandable at a time of minimal travel and minimal change. Map publishers generally update their artwork at a time when existing inventory of a particular title is depleting to zero. With reduced sales, many firms have slowed down the updating/reprinting processes. It appears that most maps available a year ago are still available. There are exceptions. Geographers' A-Z closed down and although their inventory was acquired by Collins, many city plans have disappeared from distribution outside of the UK, and possibly inside as well. On the positive side, GM Johnson has released several new American city maps and ITMB has released over 30 new international titles. Supply, generally speaking, does not appear to be a problem.

Marketing of maps does appear to have changed. There are fewer retailers carrying maps than was the case a year ago, and the economy is such that no new retailers have come to the forefront to replace those who have disappeared. Market demand remains muted, to put it politely. There are signs of a gradual recovery for some travel destinations, but it is still too soon to see a trend towards recovery. Internet sales do, however, seem to be more robust than previously, possibly reflecting a general inability to shop in person, but perhaps a harbinger of a permanent change in the travel information industry. It is still too soon to say, but those are my thoughts as to the current state of the map publishing industry, as of today. Your views would be appreciated.

VACCINES ARE BECOMING MORE AVAILABLE

During the month of March, it became evident that the ability of pharmaceutical companies to produce reliable and effective vaccine doses increased significantly. In part, this is thanks to the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine being approved for use, but is also thanks to leadership in government. Let's give credit where credit is due, regardless of political affiliation. In the USA, Biden helped broker a deal to double monthly production. This will dramatically shorten the time period for vaccinating all Americans. That's good news for everyone. In Canada, Trudeau has announced significantly larger doses of vaccine arriving during March and April, resulting in waiting lists for seniors and older workers to receive protection being moved up significantly. It can't come soon enough!

In the UK, Boris Johnson has force-fed vaccine inoculations, resulting in 30% of all UK residents being vaccinated to date and lockdown requirements eased or eliminated. I'm sure that more good news could be reported from other European and Asian countries. It is still too soon to expect travel restrictions to be removed, but the time is fast approaching when we can resume travelling safely, at least within guidelines. Internal flights will probably resume first, with international flights being slowly resumed. Regardless, this is encouraging news!

I'VE BEEN JABBED!!!

OFFICES IN: HANOI. PRAGUE. VANCOUVER

WWW.ITMB.COM



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

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

**12300 Bridgeport Road
Richmond, BC
CANADA V6V 1J5
TEL: (604) 273-1400
FAX: (604) 273-1488
E-mail: Jack@itmb.com**

Despite the fact that millions of individuals have been vaccinated, until now, the only person of my acquaintance to be vaccinated within the mapping world has been Guy Johnson of GMJ Maps, as least to my personal knowledge. As of April 3rd, I have received my first jab. Canada has been a little slow in its ability to vaccinate, due to difficulties in obtaining sufficient doses of vaccine, but we are now protecting all those over the age of 75. Lan is a bit younger than myself, so her turn won't come up for a couple of weeks. Linh and Phuong, being much younger, won't be able to get their first jabs until sometime in May. Due to the necessity to vaccinate everyone as fast as possible, second jabs (the booster shot) are being delayed until the summer months. The grandchildren, as we all know, won't have a dosage suitable for their smaller frames until sometime in the fall. I won't speak for other parts of the world, but British Columbia should be fully vaccinated by July! Great news!

VIRTUAL TRAVEL: ARTHUR AND THE BEGINNING OF ENGLAND AS WE KNOW IT

We're not ready for international real-time travel yet, so here's another virtual travel experience!

The Roman departure from Britain in 410AD was devastating for the island colony. Not all the Roman population left, as some had established deep roots in the land, but the army, the scholars, and the administrators all left in pretty short order, leaving chaos behind. Whenever there is a political vacuum, someone will fill it. In this case, the Celtic Britons very soon were besieged by sea-faring Norsemen from Denmark and northern Europe, including the Germanic areas populated by Franks. Angles and Saxons would eventually decimate the native British population as raids turned into invasions. Both the remaining Romans and the native British found themselves hard-pressed to survive. Organized civil society disappeared in a very short time period in Scotland, Northumbria, present-day East Anglia, and Kent/Sussex. Life quickly descended into a very unpleasant reality for just about everyone.

Out of desperation, someone often rises to the challenge and holds the darkness at bay. Such a man was Arthur. We don't know much about him, because this was the beginning of the centuries-long Dark Ages, where very little written history has survived, but he was probably the descendent of a Roman settler in the central-western part of modern-day Somerset. He was never a king, except in providing leadership, but he supported established Britons who were monarchs, such as Mordred, and tried to keep the Saxons at arm's length. I am working my way slowly through the first English novel ever written, Mallory's *La Morte d'Arthur*, written many centuries later, by which time the exploits of Arthur had expanded to include all sorts of chivalrous imaginings as to be fanciful and not believable, but the essence of the legend of Arthur still rings true, and Mallory's account merely codified tales that had been verbally passed from one generation to the next as oral history, becoming distorted as the centuries passed..

The original tale occurs in the early days of the arrival of Christianity into England in the 400s. The Romans were what we would call pagans, worshipping a wide variety of gods and goddesses. Beings such as Mithras or Isis were well known to Britons, who sort of adopted them after the Roman persecution of Druidism devastated that faith. Christianity was introduced to the island colony by the Romans and became popular. As Arthur was a pagan, he was reviled by the Christians, so his story is somewhat coloured by religious opinion of the time that portrayed him negatively. Regardless, Arthur had real leadership quality and gathered together a community of like-minded people, and was quite successful in stemming the advances of the Saxons into western England for quite a few years.

The Arthurian legends that have survived to modern times are largely fictitious or twisted out of context to fit a bard's rendition. Remember, nothing was written down until Mallory, in the late 1400s, so the story had been transmitted orally for almost a thousand years and had morphed into a combination of multiple legends. Some things remained throughout: Arthur's sword, Excalibur, translates from the Welsh *Caledfwlch*, and Guinevere, probably a Welsh princess, from *Gwenhwyfar*. *Aquae Sulis* (Bath), *Corinium* (Cirencester), *Glevum* (Gloucester), *Isca* (Exeter), the *Stones* (Stonehenge), and *Venta* (Winchester) still existed as towns several generations after tens of thousands of Romans left and were important locales for the telling of the tale. If there ever was a round table, it was probably a relic of Roman times, and was just a convenient piece of furniture, but it is very much a part of the tales related for centuries.

OFFICES IN: HANOI. PRAGUE. VANCOUVER

WWW.ITMB.COM



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

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

**12300 Bridgeport Road
Richmond, BC
CANADA V6V 1J5
TEL: (604) 273-1400
FAX: (604) 273-1488
E-mail: Jack@itmb.com**

The Knights of the Round Table were probably various kings or warrior lords (we would use the term warlords) who met occasionally to co-ordinate action against the Saxons, while pledging insincerely not to attack each other, under the principle of United We Stand, which was probably honoured more in theory than in practice. Camelot probably did not exist, simply because the Britons quickly lost any ability to work in stone after the Roman supervisors left. It might have been a long-forgotten fortified hilltop settlement, or a reworking of a Roman fortress, but the bards made it a wondrous place that lives on to this day in our imaginations.

Regardless of what truly happened, the story of Arthur and his knights resonates to this day and there are numerous sites in modern-day England one can visit to gain a shadowy sense of what life must have been like during Arthur's time in the late 400s and early 500s. Gloucester comes to mind, as well as Tintagel. Arthur failed to stem the tide of the upheaval that forced a mass migration, much as the Romans failed in stopping the Goths and Visigoths from sacking Rome and ending the western empire, which is why we have largely lost 500 years of history, but the story of Arthur's valour has lasted for more than 1,500 years for a reason. Arthur represents the ideals of honesty, chivalrous integrity, and knightly leadership; values that we hold close to us to this day.

TRAVEL TRIVIA

1. The word hotel refers today to a place of accommodation. Its origins evolve from the Latin hospes, meaning a guest. Hostage or hostile also come from the same base, probably from the custom of holding hostages to guarantee a treaty or obedience to a ruler. The present-day meaning of hotel only came into common usage in the 18th Century, when peaceful travel became more common.
2. Tulips, the flower most associated with Holland, came to Europe from Turkey. The word 'tulip' originates from the Turkish word 'tulbent', meaning turban, probably because the flower resembled the headdresses worn in Turkey at that time.
3. A cruise is a pleasant ocean or river excursion today, but its origins are more sinister. As usual, it is based in Latin, in this case 'cruce', or cross, which originally meant trouble, or misery. Naturally, it developed religious connotations, then became commonly used by sailors 'crossing to and fro' over often-tempestuous bodies of water. It entered English usage in the 17th Century to represent crossing the ocean.
4. In Oudewater, Netherlands, ladies can weigh themselves on Witches scales. In 1545, Charles V granted rights to the town to weigh women suspected of being witches, and to issue certificates affirming that the weigher was NOT a witch. 'Tis true! You can do it to this day.
5. In Boulia, Australia, they hold camel racing events. Historically, camels were imported into Australia in the hope that they would prosper in the desert-like interior of much of the country. This proved to be impractical, but the camels are still there and are now a tourist attraction.
6. In Nunavut, the Canadian far north, golfing addicts have created a version of golf that uses green-painted rugs as 'greens', and orange golf balls that stand out in the snow. Naturally, the game must be played at midnight to take advantage of the 24-hour daylight period in mid-summer. There are several such events, such as in Iqaluit in April (on frozen Frobisher Bay) or at Gjoa Haven, played on frozen tundra.
7. If you ever find yourself in Plano, Texas, with nothing to do, you can visit the Cockroach Museum, where dead roaches are dressed up like well-known human personalities, such as Roach Perot or Liberoache.
8. If wire is your thing, there is a museum in La Crosse, Kansas, with more than 2,000 variations of barbed wire. How is it possible to have so many types of prickly wire?
9. Somewhat more interesting, perhaps, is the Gas Station Museum in Milan, Italy, containing 150 different gas pumps and 2,000 oil containers. The mind boggles at the prospect!
10. During WW2, the US Army needed sunscreen lotion to protect military personnel in the hot, tropical, Pacific region war zone. One of the pharmacists involved later went on to develop Coppertone sunscreen, to this day the world's most popular lotion to avoid sunburn.

TINY STEPS TOWARDS NORMALCY

Lan and myself took two of our grandchildren on a three-day drive through BC's interior, staying at a motel in Kamloops and visiting a wildlife preserve – about 1,000kms round-trip. This was our first trip to anywhere in 15 months, so was as much appreciated for its degree on normalcy as for its experience. Health protocols are very much a part of life throughout Canada, and accepted. Travel to Canada is still difficult, but a road trip is still quite possible.

OFFICES IN: HANOI. PRAGUE. VANCOUVER

WWW.ITMB.COM



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS
- ITM DISTRIBUTION

12300 Bridgeport Road
Richmond, BC
CANADA V6V 1J5
TEL: (604) 273-1400
FAX: (604) 273-1488
E-mail: Jack@itmb.com

WORK IN PROGRESS - all sellers/librarians please note

ITMB, as of March, 2021, has ample inventory of almost all of the titles traditionally carried as part of our publishing line. The following titles are under development, with our best guess as to the future:

Amazon is almost out of print. A new map, called **Amazon and Northern Brasil**, is being developed; no ETA.

Amsterdam and Netherlands – The city of Amsterdam is one of the most touristic cities in Europe. It is also special to me, as I lived on Singel Canal for a summer as a young man and had the opportunity to explore the city in depth. Like many cities, as part of our long-term plan to gradually expand ITMB's coverage of Europe, a new edition of Amsterdam is long overdue. Artwork preparation is almost complete.

Austria – This is a project that has been years in the making. ITMB introduced a single-sided map of Austria a few years ago, which sold, but did not do justice to an important country like Austria. As a result, we have re-worked the artwork into a double-sided map of the country and made it into a Rail/Road map. The artwork is almost ready to go to press, but call it a work in progress for now. It should arrive in the late spring.

Balkans – ITMB has mapped many of the Balkan countries as individual maps that belong to the region known as the Balkans, but never the region itself. This is in the process of rectification. Lan is in the early stages of preparing a double-sided map showing the entire Balkans region, plus Greece, on one side, and a detailed hiking map of the mountainous interior of the region on the other side. This should be ready for release sometime in 2021.

Cape Town and the Garden Route – This is a title we have wanted to do for years. South Africa, as a country, has stumbled badly since ZANU took over the reins of power. However, things seem to be getting better touristically, so we have started developing a new double-sided map of one of the most touristic parts of all of Africa. The city side artwork is almost completed, and we are working on the southern coastline of South Africa at the moment.

Dubrovnik and the Croatian Coast - We were privileged to participate in a ten-day cruise from Porec to Dubrovnik and found it to be such a wonderful learning experience that we wanted to create the perfect map of this wonderful area. Covid has enabled us time to concentrate on developing new titles, and mapping Dubrovnik has been a real treat. As with all brand new titles, this one will be ready when it is ready, and not a day sooner.

Florence and Northeastern Italy – One of the most-visited cities in Europe is Florence. This second edition map is being developed as a double-sided city and regional map covering all of Tuscany and surrounding provinces. The city itself needs no introduction to map sellers, so all I'll say is that it covers the urban area in excellent detail at an incredible 1:5,000 scale, showing all attractions. The regional side is still a work in progress, but by its name, should cover from Venice to Milan to below Sienna. Due in the summer.

Georgia and Tbilisi – The Caucasus region has been volatile ever since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989. ITMB first published a map of the Caucasus region in the mid-1990s, noting various breakaway mini-states/autonomous regions and the fracturing of the region into mutually hostile nation states. As a result, it is very difficult to map a country like Georgia accurately. How does one portray the various autonomous regions? What is the correct border between Georgia and its neighbouring states? How can one prepare a map of Georgia without including parts of Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan? One might as well ask 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' The time has come to prepare a detailed map of Georgia as it is today without unduly combining it with artwork covering neighbouring states as an integral part of the artwork. Thus, Lan is working on a detailed map of the country on one side, and a first-ever detailed map of Tbilisi on the second side. ITMB publishes an excellent map of Georgia combined with Armenia, which is available. We are not expecting Georgia to be completed before mid-2021.

Maui – I'm not yet sure exactly what Lan is preparing, but it has long been our goal to expand our coverage of the various islands of Hawaii and the Maui/Lanai portion of the state is the only part left unmapped. We already have a map of the State as an entity, with separate maps of Big Island, and Oahu/Honolulu, it is about time that we concentrated on the remaining islands. Details will follow.

Nevada and Northern California – This title will focus on Nevada and add to our growing range of American titles; The artwork is in the early stages of development, and will be available when completed.

OFFICES IN: HANOI. PRAGUE. VANCOUVER

WWW.ITMB.COM



ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.

- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS
- ITM DISTRIBUTION

12300 Bridgeport Road
Richmond, BC
CANADA V6V 1J5
TEL: (604) 273-1400
FAX: (604) 273-1488
E-mail: Jack@itmb.com

Russia's Heritage Cities – The current edition is out of inventory and consideration of a fresh edition suspended until travel to the central portion of Russia is more safely accomplished.

Slovakia and Hungary – Inventory of this title has sold out. We are re-working this title into a brand new double sided map called **Slovakia and Bratislava**, with the country filling one side and an excellent city map being on the opposite side of the sheet.

Solomon Islands – For some unknown reason, this particular map seems to be selling better at the moment than any of our Pacific Ocean island maps. We still have inventory in stock, but Lan is happily re-working this map into a double-sided one with some sort of Pacific Ocean map on the reverse.

Surinam – This title is out of stock indefinitely. We hope to re-release it in 2021, depending on safe travel provisions.

Wales and Cardiff – Lan is working on a more detailed map of Wales than we have been able to produce to date. I've reviewed the artwork, and it looks pretty good. The reverse side will be a detailed map of Cardiff, the nation's capital, which I haven't yet seen. No idea when this project will be completed!

NEW RELEASES FOR January and February, 2021

Burkina Faso & West Africa Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2021 1:950,000/1:4,800,000 ISBN 9781771290920 UPC 817712909206 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - AVAILABLE

Cyprus Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2021 1:40,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771291712 UPC 817712917126 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - AVAILABLE

Ethiopia & Eritrea Travel Reference Map 5th Ed. 2020 1:900,000/1:915,000 ISBN 9781771292665 UPC 817712926654 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP AVAILABLE

Everest and Himalaya (or Himalaya and Everest) Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2021 1:90,000/1:1,330,000 on waterproof stone paper \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - AVAILABLE.

Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2020 1:380,000 ISBN 9781771295710 UPC 817712957108 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands Travel Reference Map 7th Ed. 2020 1:190,000/1:85,000 on waterproof stone paper \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Shanghai & China Southeast Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2020 1:16,000/1:2,500,000 ISBN 9781771297202 UPC 817712972026 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - AVAILABLE

OFFICES IN: HANOI. PRAGUE. VANCOUVER

WWW.ITMB.COM