

## **AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #3 OF 2017 – end of March – New Titles: see below for details**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Lan and I were in Vietnam for three weeks in February. Lan spent some precious time with her father, who is 98 and still in good health. We flew to Da Nang, visited Hoi An, and did some cave exploring in Dong Hoi. Unfortunately, I suffered from tiredness, lack of appetite, and a dry cough during the visit and upon our return to Vancouver spent three days in hospital, due to acute kidney failure and dehydration. Fortunately, thanks to five litres of IV fluid, I was discharged a few hours before our flight to London, where we were taking our now-seven-year-old grandson Johnny for a treat during spring break. This worked out quite well and was time well-spent. As you read this, we are in China, touring the Great Wall and the Yangtze River.

### **NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER**

Australia is a very nice country. We have visited it a couple of times and have been impressed by the people, the scenery, and the climate. It is a country well-worth exploring. It is rather out of favour with the US administration these days for assuming that America would honour its commitments. This seems to be a concept alien to Donald Trump's way of thinking in angrily hanging up on the Australian Prime Minister in a huff. This has severely damaged America's reputation with a country that has been a close ally of the USA since World War 2, but I am assured by friends in Oz that American citizens are still welcome, even if a certain individual is not likely to receive an invitation for the foreseeable future.

The country's Royal Automobile Assn. reported in December that people still continue to buy paper maps in increasing numbers, in spite of the fact that apps, GPS devices, and Google exist. It did note that younger drivers seemed to have little awareness of suburban names or locations of Melbourne (where a test was done) and noted that those using GPS devices to find their way around consistently failed to have any awareness of where they were. This is consistent with studies done in America and Britain. The point is that paper map sales are increasing.

My source also advised that globe sales have decreased by 50% starting in 2015, due to quality control problems with both Replogle and Scan globes. All too often, spacers were missing, globe halves were poorly joined, metal base plates were sometimes so uneven that the globe could not sit levelly on a surface, and in one case, the globe ball had such a dark coating that it was impossible to read anything on it. It is not my place to slam any industry or corporation but the person's next comment tells it all: "We now import globes from Asia that are less than half the price of Replogle; the quality is very good". Note to Trumpite Americans: if you really want to make America 'great' again, keep in mind that there are competitors everywhere and unless you compete on the world stage in open competition, with high-quality products at low prices, no one will buy your products.

### **EGYPT**

Although Egypt is a wonderful country, rich in history, it has unfortunately largely dropped off the tourist market at the moment due to the political turmoil that is besetting the entire Eastern Mediterranean. I discovered an article noting that archaeologists have discovered a 7,000-year-old city in the vicinity of Luxor. The city of Abydos thrived during the First Dynasty, beginning around 3,100BC, and surviving until about 2,200BC. The mind boggles when imaging dates so far in the past of humankind. Huts, a cemetery, and iron-age tools have been unearthed thus far. Not much is known yet about Abydos, but it should help spur tourism as it is close to the Valley of the Kings, west of Luxor. Regrettably, that depends upon political stability in North Africa. We visited Luxor a few years ago and it is definitely one of the wonders of the world. Hopefully, peace and stability will return to this part of the world and we'll all be able to enjoy the marvels Egypt has to offer. Cairo is also an exciting city to visit and seems to be not affected by the discord roiling in the far south of the country. Our ITMB map of Cairo is an excellent choice for travellers to Egypt.

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## **CANADA'S 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Canada, as a country, is older than most. Germany, for example, was created in 1871 out of diverse feudal states. Italy became a country around the same time. Most of the world's countries, in fact, date to post-WW2. This is not to say that the people of countries such as Latvia didn't exist; of course they did – just not as independent nations. That said, it is a significant achievement for any country to reach 150 years of existence as a nation state. The Canada that was created out of four diverse colonies in 1867 happened because everyone watching the American civil war was concerned about its after-effects. As it turned out, the Americans were much more inward looking after 1865 than outward looking, but no one could predict that in 1864 when the Fathers of Confederation met in Charlottetown, PEI. Although Britain agreed to what became the British North America Act, and it came into force on July 1, 1867, not all the colonies ratified it right away. Prince Edward Island, for example, held out until 1873 before agreeing to join Canada, which was originally limited to modern-day Southern Ontario and Southern Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. The vast territory of the then-Northwest Territories, consisting of modern-day northern Ontario and Quebec, Labrador, the future provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, and the arctic territories, while nominally under Canadian control, were administered by Great Britain and not formally transferred until 1880. British Columbia, which was a separate colony, was persuaded to join Canada in 1871 by being promised a rail link with the rest of Canada. This was an enormous undertaking for a country of only four million people to undertake and took fifteen years to complete. To this day, it is the only transcontinental railway in the western hemisphere (all rail lines in the USA went east or west from Chicago). Through mergers and acquisitions, both Canadian Pacific (the original railway) and Canadian National are now the largest rail systems in the Americas, with lines from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the arctic to the Gulf of Mexico.

The task of nation building was formidable. Initially, the former colonies had to learn to compromise and get on with each other, much as we see happening today in Europe. It worked, because Canada is still here, but the Great Canadian Compromise is a concept familiar to all Canadians. Whether the issue is language rights, oil pipelines, cultural diversity, or indigenous sentiments, Canadians grumble and grouse as much as anyone, but if we can't resolve an issue by talking until we reach a modus vivendi, we keep talking. We don't resort to violence to solve problems, because that doesn't solve anything. It only causes festering resentment and a 'might makes right' approach to governing. As a country, Canada has its problems, but these are being resolved. It is one of the most livable countries in the world, and one of the most visited. This year, our 150<sup>th</sup> as an independent country, is a special time, and we are sharing it with the world by offering free access to all our wonderful national parks for the entire year. ITMB has maps of each province and territory for visitors to use and enjoy. Please come.

## **VIETNAM, CIRCA 2017**

Lan and I have recently returned from three weeks in Vietnam, and I think it is worthwhile to share with you a reality of that country that is worth noting. Simply stated, as a travel destination, Vietnam is HOT! This does not mean that the weather was overly warm, it wasn't, but it does mean that 'tourists' (I prefer explorers, or travellers) are everywhere. We spent time in the old town area of Hanoi and saw far more foreigners, obviously visitors, than on any of our previous nineteen visits. Ha Long Bay, near Haiphong, is actually over-crowded with visitors from my perspective. We flew to Da Nang, in the central coastal region, and were amazed at the improvements since our last visit. Again, lots of tourists. Nearby Hoi An, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, seemed over-run with tourists walking, bicycling, and put-putting around on small motor bikes. The beach at Nha Thanh, further south, is now lined with resorts. The former French hill station of Ba Ne is now a health resort hosting thousands of visitors each day. The sense of growing prosperity in the country is palpable, but the countryside is still impoverished and ignored for improvements. Roads are poor and facilities basic for those living in villages. Still, it is better than during the civil war.

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One needs only travel three kilometers from the epicenter of tourism activity to feel that one is the only foreigner in the country, but my point is that a LOT more people are visiting Vietnam now than at any time in the past. There are reasons for this of course: a relatively safe travel environment, lovely scenery, a diverse cultural experience, and relatively inexpensive travel costs are making VN into a travel haven. That brings me to travel guides and maps. Lonely Planet seems to dominate the guide book trade, at least for English-speaking visitors, and ITMB seems to compete very well with locally-produced maps for the graphic side of travel. We have several maps of VN, covering what we believe to be different markets. First, we publish Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as a map and as a travel atlas to serve those making a fairly cursory visit to this part of the world. Then, we publish maps of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as country maps for those wanting more detail. Finally, for those travellers exploring Vietnam in detail, we offer maps of Hanoi and the north, Hue and the centre, and Saigon/HCM and the south, as well as a special map to cover the exceptional delta region of the Mekong – the river of nine dragons. The old adage of ‘Don’t Leave Home Without Us’ certainly applies to travel to Vietnam. Make sure you have your maps before you leave home; otherwise, you lessen your travel experience and miss fascinating experiences.

### **WHAT’S NEW WITH ITMB**

ITMB, like all commercial companies, has to reflect travel realities. As an extreme example, there is no sense in us publishing a map of the Crimea when no one can go there. The Russians keep such a tight grip on that peninsula that the closest approximation I can think of is the former East German ‘Republic’ puppet state of the former USSR. Believe it or not, we find a steady market for Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen maps. We assume that the market is aid workers and contractors because I, for one, have no desire to visit any of these countries at the moment. Most travellers are cautious. They don’t want to travel to places where there is internal dissent of a violent nature, religious fervor that over-flows into violent outbursts of bombing or attacks on soft targets such as coffee shops or hotels; nor do they care to spend time in overly authoritarian countries such as Saudi Arabia, Venezuela or Turkey. This presents a dilemma to map publishers. If travel drops off to a country like Egypt due to a perception of lack of personal safety, sales of a map of Egypt fall below a level anyone would consider economic. We have far too many titles that are uneconomic. ITMB prides itself on providing maps of the entire world, but I must admit that the ideal is not economic. The world is changing and one reality we need to acknowledge is that the countries considered ‘no-go’ by most travellers is growing. We see it. Map sales to Kenya and Nigeria are way down. Sales of Ivory Coast are miniscule. All of North Africa, with the exception of Morocco, must now be considered ‘no-go’. The westernmost province of China has recently been closed due to the high level of Islamic extremism. Drought in places like South Sudan also deter travel, as does government stupidity in Venezuela. People are still travelling – to places considered ‘safe’- South East Asia, Australasia, North America and the Caribbean, and even Europe, terror attacks notwithstanding. The cruise line industry is booming and airports are crowded with travellers. However, the concept of free and unfettered travel is being threatened. The US government keeps trying to find ways of barring Muslims by banning nationals of selected countries from entering the USA. Calls to restrict access to Europe are growing on that continent. These are concerns to a firm such as ITMB. How to cope; that’s the real question; no answer, I’m afraid.

### **CURRENT PROJECTS AND OUT OF STOCK ITEMS**

Brasil is approaching the end of its print run; about three months’ supply left.

Delhi is almost out of copies (23 left). A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Dominican Republic/Haiti is almost out of copies (14 left). A new edition is being prepared.

Kuala Lumpur is almost out of copies (17 left). A new map is being prepared.

London and SE England is approaching the end of its current edition (97 copies).

Mexico Pacific Region/Guadalajara is now out of copies. A new edition is being prepared, no ETA.

Mexico South is getting low on copies (15 copies), so a new edition will be needed before summer.

Nova Scotia is out of copies. A new edition is at press and expected in May.

QCI, or the Queen Charlotte Islands, is down to 6 copies. We are re-naming this map Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Is. to reflect the more current practice used in BC. The new edition will be available in the near future; no ETA.

### **NEW RELEASES, MARCH, 2017**

See after February for this time around.

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## **NEW RELEASES, FEBRUARY, 2017**

**Havana and Central Cuba Travel Reference Map 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2017 (1<sup>st</sup> for Central Cuba) on waterproof paper 1:12,000/1:420,000 ISBN 9781771293358 UPC 817712933584 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** - Although ITMB has published a map of Havana several times, this version is unique in that, for the first time, we include a map of central Cuba (i.e. the hinterland surrounding Havana). For this reason, our cover picture shows a farmer's wagon selling privately-grown vegetables rather than a scene from Havana itself. Havana, at the time of our most recent visit, showed few signs of improvements, but an increased number of tourists. Since our visit a year ago, tourism has increased by 300%, and most of this traffic trying to visit Havana. This is forcing change and I hope some of it trickles down to benefit ordinary Cubans. The city side covers a large part of the city, not just the 'old town' as others cover. The regional side covers from San Cristobal in the west to Sancti Spiritus in the east. Insets of Varadero, Cienfuegos, and Trinidad are included. The map is printed on waterproof paper, both for durability and because Cuba is subject to sudden storms and this map can double as an umbrella. **AVAILABLE**

**Sydney and Australia's Southeast States Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2017 (1<sup>st</sup> for SE Australia) on waterproof paper 1:7,500/1:2,000,000 \$10.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – We are pleased to see Sydney back in stock after a brief hiatus. The main city of Australia is the beginning point for most visitors to the country, so having a good tourist-oriented map is crucial. The map covers from Bondi Junction in the east to the university lands and Newtown in the west, and from the Harbour Bridge south to Redford Station. An inset map shows North Sydney and a second one shows the Greater Sydney Region. The rear cover shows the region's transit system, and an inset map shows the ferry system within the harbour area. Sydney itself is an interesting city, and the detailed scale used enabled us to add a lot of detail to assist visitors. The other side of the page is a new map for us; one showing the States of Victoria and New South Wales, Canberra Capital Area, and a fairly good portion of South Australia and a bit of Queensland – essentially, from Brisbane south to Melbourne and west to Adelaide (actually, to Woomera). This map is much more detailed than our previous version, although covering a smaller portion of the country. We feel that this map will satisfy the needs of 90% of the visitors travelling in Australia. Due to the size of the country, this meant that the Great Ocean Road could be included, but not Alice Springs. Such is life. **AVAILABLE**

## **NEW TITLES FOR MARCH, 2017**

**Africa West Route Travel Atlas (Tangier to Cape Town via Senegal) 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2017 127 pg., perfect bound 1:3,400,000, with numerous city maps ISBN 9781771290111 UPC 817712901118 \$16.95cdn/us E14.95 13.95GBP** – There are three routes one can follow on an overland expedition from Europe to Cape Town (or the reverse). Last year, ITMB published the eastern route, via Cairo and Sudan to Ethiopia and Kenya. This year, we are pleased to announce the publication of a more practical route to follow, via Tangier, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Mali and Ghana, through the Congo to Uganda, and then south over a variety of options to Namibia and South Africa. The advantage of this route is that it avoids the conflict-ridden countries closest to infection from the extremist Islam movement. It also avoids the current difficulties of the central route through Algeria (the Hoggar route) and Niger. We do have to caution that all routes through Africa contain risks. Routes are not well-developed and are subject to disruption; also, by the nature of extremist Islam, those countries with a sizeable Muslim population tend to be under threat, although at this time the route should be considered safer than the other two routes. Having used this route myself many years ago, I can attest to its attractiveness. Crossing the Sahara is challenging, due to shifting sand dunes, but the new coastal highway through Morocco and Mauritania makes reaching Senegal much easier than previously. Crossing the Congo also remains a challenge, due to poor infrastructure, but once one reaches Uganda several options are available for southward travel. As we focused on the eastern routes in our first volume (Africa Overland), in this volume we provide more westerly routes. We have chosen to ignore Angola for now, due to lack of knowledge of travel conditions in that country, but we know of no reason for travellers to avoid that country. In addition to providing route maps through all the countries involved (shown on the back cover of the book), 43 full-page maps of cities along the route are included, such as Casablanca, Nouakchott, Banjul, Bobo Dioulasso, Lome, Douala, Kigali, Abuja, Livingstone and other cities never before included in a travel atlas of Africa. **AVAILABLE**

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**Cuba East Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2017 1:420,000 ISBN 9781771291620 UPC 817712916204 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – Cuba is the fastest-growing travel destination in the world. Initially, attention has favoured Havana and the western portion of the island, but tourism is rapidly transforming the eastern portion of the country into a more rustic, natural travel experience than the over-heated Varadero resorts or hectic Havana. Until now, there has never been a map of the eastern half of Cuba; now ITMB provides one! The map covers from Varadero to the easternmost tip of Guantanamo Province on a double-sided map. Insets of Varadero, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, and Santiago are included. Naturally, the road network is shown to advantage, and there are numerous capsule comments pointing out interesting points. The American base in Guantanamo Bay is noted, but not emphasized. Cuba is a large island, safe to visit and full of friendly people. This map will prove invaluable to those wanting to go beyond the confines of the traditional resort communities. **AVAILABLE**

**New York State & New England Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2017 1:800,000 ISBN 9781771295642 UPC 817712956422 \$9.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – ITMB expands its coverage of the USA with a detailed map of New York State and New England on a double-sided map at a very detailed scale. The one side covers most of the state and the southern portion of the New England states, along with an inset map of the greater NYC area, the other side covers from Boston and Cape Cod to the northern extremes of Maine and west into Vermont, with inset maps of Boston and Boston Region. The reality of mapping the USA is that it is too large a country and too populous to be mapped in detail except by regions. As a sophisticated economy, it has thousands of towns and an intensive road/rail network. Most American mapping companies took the easy route and mapped one state at a time. As some states are relatively small, this resulted in a visitor needing to acquire dozens of maps to cover the extent of their visit. Our approach is to map the USA in logical regions. Eventually, all of the USA will be mapped; this map is a giant step forward in providing sensible mapping for a great country to visit. **AVAILABLE**

**Oregon and Washington States Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2017 1:750,000 ISBN 9781771298971 UPC 817712989710 \$10.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – This map has two covers, so could either be marketed and Washington and Oregon or the reverse. As we have another title called Washington and SE BC (see below), we prefer to use Oregon & Washington to identify this title. The two states constitute the bulk of what is known as the Pacific Northwest (Idaho is usually included, but not on this map). Side one consists of Washington State, along with an inset map of central Seattle, and small portions of Oregon and British Columbia. Side two is a detailed map of Oregon State (no room for insets) and a portion of northern California. As with all ITMB maps, road quality is shown, highways are numbered, wilderness campsites noted, Amtrak lines shown, higher education institutes portrayed, airports, border crossings, hot springs, golf courses, parks, points of interest, and even isolated examples of gas stations are all shown. This is the latest map of our growing range of USA titles to be released. We're mapping America, one portion at a time! **AVAILABLE**

**Thailand North Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2017 9781771297943 1:830,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771297943 UPC 817712979438 12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – This is a new title for ITMB. Although we have had a map of southern Thailand on the market for a number of years, it seemed to take forever to complete a map covering the Chiang Mai region. The map actually goes from Bangkok north, and side one includes a very good inset map of Bangkok's central area. To my mind, the most interesting spot on this side is the town of Kanchanaburi, which is within easy striking distance of Bangkok. This was the site made famous by the war movie Bridge on the River Kwai (now Khwae) on the Japanese-built Burma Railway. The current bridge is not the original, but the Commonwealth Graves Cemetery is well worth a visit. The other side concentrates on the wilder portion of Thailand, the far north. All known points of interest have been included, including a lovely inset map of Chiang Mai, the focal point of the north. The rail line ends here, but if the city's many temples and pagodas don't overwhelm you, tours to nearby temple sites abound. The temple complex near Phrae, further to the east, are also shown, as is the highway leading to Chiang Rai in the far north. This is an exceptional map and I am very pleased with it. I hope you'll agree. **AVAILABLE**

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**Washington State & SW British Columbia Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2017 1:800,000 ISBN 9781771290869 UPC 817712908698 \$9.95cdn/us E9.50 8.96GBP** – This map hopes to accomplish two goals; first, it is a detailed road and points of interest map for Washington State and adds to our growing range of State covered in detail, and second, it combines that portion of Canada's BC accessible to Americans heading north. The map has two covers so can be marketed either as a USA map title or a Canadian title. The front side covers all of Washington State, with a bit of Oregon and Idaho, and has a decent-sized inset map of downtown Seattle. The reverse side covers much-larger British Columbia – at least a portion of it, including all of Vancouver Island, all the roads from Vancouver eastwards to the Rockies and north to Kamloops, and hundreds of wilderness campsites in the interior. This side also includes insets of Victoria and downtown Vancouver. This map fills a gap in the travel map market in that it crosses an international border and provides benefit to those heading north without having to purchase a separate map. Of course, if they wanted more detail, ITM also publishes maps of Seattle, Vancouver, Whistler, and all of British Columbia! **AVAILABLE**

**COMING IN APRIL**

**Newfoundland & Labrador Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2017**

**Salzburg and Western Austria Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2017**

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