



Iter Tolkienensis: A Tolkiennymical Road Trip from Buckland (Worcestershire) to The Ivy Bush (Carmarthen, Wales)

Mark T. Hooker

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The impulse to write *Iter Tolkienensis* came from a book by Steve Ponty: *Middle-earth in Magic Mirror Maps of Wales ... of the Wilderness in Wales ... of the Shire in England* (Matador, 2014). The insight of Ponty's book is that the maps in *The Hobbit* are the mirror images of the maps of Wales.

Ponty's insight prompted me to return to a question that I had raised in my article "The Linguistic Landscape of Tolkien's Shire" in *A Tolkienian Mathomium* (2006), where I equated the real-world Bredon with Bree Hill of Middle-earth due to both a correlation of meaning and of location. "The suggestion is intriguing," I noted, "and certainly begs to be followed up on, but that is another story."

Iter Tolkienensis is the story that I should have told, but didn't after my article. It starts in Buckland (near Evesham), proceeds west (Middle-earth east) to Bredon Hill, and then follows the road into Wales that is known in its latest incarnation as the M50 and the A40.

The name *Iter Tolkienensis* is an echo of the book title *Iter Britanniarum*, an extract of the Roman Roads of Britain from the *Antonine Itinerary*, a famous *itinerarium*, or list of the Roman stations and the distances between them along the various roads of the Roman Empire.

Though the selection of the route is admittedly arbitrary, it nevertheless offers a good assortment of real-world place names that can profitably be viewed through a Tolkienian lens, which is a linguistic perspective that begins with a name or a word, and then looks for its story in the real world with which Tolkien was familiar.

Iter Tolkienensis will, therefore, look at the meanings and stories of the place names that the route passes along the way, place names that might be translations or corruptions of those on a map of Middle-earth. *Iter Tolkienensis* passes places that could be Minhiriath, and the family estates of the Gamgee-s and Boffin-s; the Black Country, a rope-walk, and a lookout post; Rivendell, Esgaroth, and Eryn Vorn; before reaching The Carrock, Dol Guldur, and the Ivy Bush; to name but a few.

Also from this author:

Tolkien Through Russian Eyes (Walking Tree Publishers, 2003), published simultaneously in Russian.

"Frodo's Batman," *Tolkien Studies*, No. 1 (2004)

A Tolkienian Mathomium (Llyfrawr, 2006)

The Hobbitonian Anthology (Llyfrawr, 2009)


"Reading John Buchan in Search of Tolkien," *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources*, Jason Fisher (ed.). (McFarland, 2011)

Tolkien and Welsh (Llyfrawr, 2012)

The Tolkienaemum (Llyfrawr, 2014)

Tolkien and Sanskrit (Llyfrawr, 2016)

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