

## Around the Museum with Arty Fact: No. I. -

### An Old Hampshire History Book

**Y**ou may have seen it, you may have not — the little old book at the bottom of the columnar cabinet in the August exhibition 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations of Emsworth Museum'. It was simply entitled *Hampshire* and was open at a point showing a map of Hampshire and the page facing was entitled Hampshire. This is the first printed page but actually is number 845. The details of the map are easy to determine, but those of the book are not. I will follow the tale told in RA Carroll's *Printed Maps of Lincolnshire, 1576-1900*, as this seems a little more complete than the accounts in other county carto-bibliographic texts. It is one of the most recently published (1996) and draws on many other county bibliographies. I take no credit therefore for the detailed research underlying what follows, as for the most part the work and words are those of Carroll. At this point, and perversely, I will cease the convention of crediting statements to Carroll in case there is objection to any changes, insertions and interpretations that I make, and that may cause misrepresentation of his intention.

The map is by Robert Morden, as it says, and was published originally in 1701. It had been made a little earlier, around 1693, for publication in Edmund Gibson's edition of Camden's *Britannica*, but rejected possibly on the grounds that this particular series of county maps were too small. Morden had to produce a larger set of maps in double-quick time to fit the bill. Despite this *Britannica* proved popular so that these larger Morden maps exist in relatively large numbers. As a result this series of smaller maps did not appear until the publication of Morden's *New Description and State of England* in 1701. The maps show the same errors as Morden's larger maps indicating that they had been summarily dropped without a substantial second stage revision, and that the larger maps were mainly hurried copies of them. The *New Description ...* was not a great success since it was difficult to sell smaller versions of maps to anyone who may have bought the larger ones. Nevertheless it was re-published in 1704, one year after Morden's death. A general air of failure seems to have hung over these maps, almost like a Jonah's touch, for they appear never to have been part of any seriously successful project. Then again failure breeds rarity, although not always does this convert into value.

Morden's smaller map plates re-appear as the basis of *Fifty-six new and accurate maps of Great Britain, Ireland and Wales*, 1708 in a project steered by Hermann Moll who made a number of corrections to the plates and additionally produced the remaining plates (Morden had only covered the English counties). The plates then form the basis of the publication *Magna Britannia et Hibernia* which commenced in 1714 with a somewhat chequered history.

*Magna Britannica* is one of the first works to be issued in serial (monthly) form and it is surprising it wasn't the last. The plans for it had been set sometime before 1708 within the framework of a much larger work *Atlas Geographus: or a compleat system of geography, ancient and modern*. This latter began publication in June 1708, at a cost of 1s. per monthly issue, and, by the end of 1710, the whole of Europe

(excepting Great Britain and Ireland) had been completed. The much-delayed publication of the other three continents was finally completed in 1716.

From the start there was a certain drift in the project deadlines, there being frequent and sometimes lengthy breaks in the target of monthly issues. The amount of information about Great Britain and Ireland however had grown, since planned, to such an extent that it was the cause of considerable drift while plans for its publication were settled. Various announcements of imminent publication had been made since 1710, and then in 1712 it was decided to issue it as a supplement to *Atlas Geographus* and separately from the rest of Europe. Despite this it took another two years for the first of the monthly issues to appear. Still the project laboured on, with frequent and lengthy breaks (one of some two years) between issues as ownership changed either through disinterest or demise (possibly both) of the partners. Given the timespan one can imagine similar afflictions affecting the subscribers, making it difficult to keep an accurate list of who were current and who were not.

During delays, information kept accumulating causing further delay, and it was not until April 1731 that the final issue (no. 92) was published. In all it had taken close on 18 years to complete the Great Britain and Ireland section. The entire work entitled *Magna Britannia et Hibernia* was bound into six volumes, and published as each volume became available. The first two were published around 1720 by E & R Nutt and J Morphew, with volume two containing Hampshire. Quirkily the title page of this latter volume refers to the county as being 'Southampton', while the title within the text is 'Hampshire', both commonly used in old documents; it is just the inconsistency that is unusual. The remaining volumes appeared in the period 1724-31 principally due to the efforts of Thomas Cox (now the sole owner of the project), which is the cause of some confusion that exists even to the present day (a different Thomas Cox is credited with writing major parts of the text and there is some debate as to who this exactly was). Despite the title of the publication, the Irish counties were never produced. Hence it is possible that even today, someone, somewhere, could be holding, by bequest, a piece of paper promising imminent delivery of the Irish section. It is clear that consumer protection was not fully enshrined in British law in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

That was not the only quirkiness in the project for the structure of the British section was odd in itself. It had been decided early on that the counties would be issued in alphabetical order and that each county would appear as a separate monthly part. Perhaps someone should have let the editor know, for this simple aspiration was immediately thwarted by the Introduction. Running to 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> parts it meant that the individual counties had now to be issued as two separate half parts, with the first half of a county's description appearing as the second half of a monthly issue, and its second, concluding, half forming the first half of the next monthly issue, while the page numbers ran consecutively from one monthly issue to the next. Is that all clear? Good, because then came Kent!

You may not know that Kent was the subject of the first county topographical study (by William Lambarde, c1570), so quite a lot was known about Kent. In fact the totality of material here demanded that several monthly issues needed to be devoted to this county's coverage. Ha-ha you say, an opportunity to get back to the original

intention of one county per single monthly issue perhaps? No, Lancashire still appeared in two separate parts, presumably it having been concluded by now that issuing a county in two monthly parts actually had a certain business sense, since individual county subscribers would have to make two purchases, as opposed to one, to obtain their full county description.

From this take it is not difficult to conclude that the individual monthly issues are rare, indeed Carroll claims "those of Lincolnshire have not been found". One contributory factor is that subscribers once their particular interest had been met would have likely combined the relevant halves and wholes of the monthly issues to form a single county booklet. This was not exceptional since texts were generally issued in "Publishers' Boards", with bookbinding a bespoke service through much of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between 1724 and 1731, Thomas Cox (the publisher and seller) advertised the availability of certain counties as separate entities some judicious time after the county material had been published. Such individual county booklets had to overcome another quirk of the monthly issues, whereby the second part of a county's coverage ended with a mileage chart with the first page of the following county's coverage printed on its verso. In fact surprisingly the most common form of the work to be found, according to Carroll, is as one of the six volumes. This is strange, for it indicates that quite a number of subscribers must have lasted, if not the full distance, then for a considerable period. There was a small release of individual counties by subsequent project partners (now Ward and Chandler) in 1738, made by assembling the two halves and the relevant wholes. These latter overcame the split county parts problem by publishing a new title page for each of the counties with a reset first page of the county on its verso.

So what of the little book in Emsworth Museum. Despite what has been researched and written by Carroll, it has to be said that the history of *Magna Britannia et Hibernia* remains more exhausting than exhaustive. Let me try and pick through the pieces. The Emsworth book has the ownership inscription "Philip Chandley, Ringwood, Hants, his book, 1740" written by an ancient hand at the rear. The lack of a title page however suggested that it is not one of the later 1738 edition due to Ward and Chandler. There is a suggestion (footnote 18, p. 67, Carroll) that the individual county booklets released in 1724 by Thomas Cox also might well have included a newly printed title page, and on this basis I dismiss the possibility from the Emsworth case. As to date, "1716" is credited by the donor (JE Barratt, a great supporter of Emsworth Museum) and this corresponds to the time of publication of the two monthly issues comprising Hampshire. For this reason my preference is that it has been formed by a private subscriber in 1716, who fortunately did not have too much of a wait to obtain the Hampshire parts.

The Museum is pleased to possess this item that it received by donation with accession no. 66-2. From a personal point of view it is an extremely interesting book, and I haven't read a word of it yet!

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