

MINUTES OF THE A G M and 62nd MEETING OF AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY HELD AT AYNHO VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 30th OCTOBER 2013

Present: - Rupert Clark - Chairman & Treasurer
Peter Cole - Secretary.

1. Chairman's Report

Rupert Clark

Rupert listed all the varied topics, exhibitions, exhibits, walks; a very busy year. Added to the Archive are two postcards of Aynhoe Park, a watercolour of the village store in the Square circa 1970's, and thanks to Gill Phillips, an Aynhoe brick.

2. Student Writing/Research Prize

The judges had decided that this prize should be awarded to Miss Lucinda Mills for her work on the life of Anne Frank, and the Chairman presented it to her at the meeting.

3. Finance Report

Rupert Clark

Rupert said that we started the year with £911.15 and ended it with £679.06.

4. Secretary's Report

Peter Cole

Peter said that he had helped a Mr Bennett trace ancestors through some of the Aynho censuses.

5. Election of Officers

Unanimous decision from meeting that Rupert Clark remains Chairman, Peter Cole remains Secretary, Committee members are Kevin Berrill, Ted Sutton and Brian Reynolds. Thanks to Colin, Judith and Anthea for their contribution to the society.

There were no amendments suggested to the Constitution.

The subscriptions will remain as for the last year.

6. "From Gough to Google", the development of printed maps of Oxfordshire

John Leighfield

Maps have been produced by many civilisations. Among others, the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all took mapping seriously.

The first map to show England in some detail was produced around 1250 by historian Matthew Paris. It focused on the principal rivers.

By far the most significant manuscript map of the British Isles is the 'Gough' map produced in about 1360, which is remarkably accurate as far as its depiction of England is concerned. It is in the map collection in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

In the last half of the sixteenth century a number of increasingly good woodcut and copper plate printed maps of England were produced, culminating in the finest and most accurate of them all produced by Christopher Saxton. This map, 'Britannia Insularum in Oceano Maxima', was printed on 21 sheets. Saxton, a Yorkshireman, revolutionised mapping in Britain by surveying all the counties of England and Wales and in 1579 publishing one of the first regional atlases of any country in the world. Not only was this a pioneering effort, but it was also very accurate and was the basis of virtually all printed maps of the counties of England and Wales throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There is a 1590 painting of Queen Elizabeth the First showing her standing on one of his maps to illustrate that she owned the kingdom. Bearing in mind the means of travel, the fact that no one had mapped most parts of the country before and the sheer quality of the result of Saxton's work, this was a truly remarkable achievement. He was the father of British map making. His map of 1574 is the first one to depict "Ayno" on it. Being on the county boundary, Aynho usually features on Oxfordshire maps.

One of the best-known mapmakers was John Speed. He didn't actually do mapping, but he used the work of others like Saxton. He decorated and added to them in a way that makes them uniquely attractive. He was the first to show the Hundreds on county maps. He was the first to put on his maps small plans or views of the main towns (providing us with the first printed map of many towns); he added a significant amount of heraldry into the framework of the maps, and from 1616 onwards, he added a certain amount of classical information. The popularity of Speed's atlas is demonstrated by the very large number of editions it went through. It was first published in 1611; the last edition was in 1770.

Roads are notable by their absence in maps of the first three quarters of the sixteenth century. In 1675 that changed dramatically when John Ogilby produced his *Britannia*. This was a monumental work, containing one hundred plates illustrating in considerable detail the principal roads of England and Wales. His work can be seen as the basis of 'strip maps' that have continued until the present. Once *Britannia* had been published, the road information it contained was added to the plates of the classic earlier atlases such as Saxton and Speed. *Britannia* itself was copied and produced in reduced format by other map sellers for more than a century. Ogilby's achievement makes him one of the greatest figures in British mapmaking.

In 1695, another edition of *Britannia* was published with maps produced by Robert Morden. He made great claims for the innovations in his maps but, in truth, he brought little that was new. However he did regularise the spelling of place names. Morden produced a series of playing cards in 1676 that were decorated with small county maps. They are the first incorporating roads, a year after Ogilby's *Britannia* had made this possible.

There was little real advance in county mapmaking in the first half of the 18th century - although a large number of similar looking maps, still based on Speed but with varying forms of decoration were produced, mostly in a fairly small format.

The first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum when it opened in 1683 was Dr Robert Plot who was also the University's first professor of Chemistry. In 1677, Dr Plot had published his *Natural History of Oxfordshire*. This is heavily illustrated and has as its first illustration a beautifully engraved and highly decorated map of Oxfordshire by Michael Burghers. This is the map at the largest scale of Oxfordshire up to that date.

Emmanuel Bowen and Thomas Kitchin were two very prolific makers of maps in mid-century, producing many maps in slight variants to illustrate magazines, histories and guides for travellers. They responded to a general desire for maps at a larger scale and produced two atlases that were out of the ordinary. In 1760 they issued *The Large English Atlas* that was the largest-format county atlas to date. The scale varied to fit the 27" by 20" size of the pages and, in the case of Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, is just under three quarters of an inch to the mile. All the maps are remarkable for the amount of detailed descriptive text they contain and the lush cartouche carrying the county title

and rural scenes. This atlas was based on some of the first comprehensive re-surveying done since Saxton and set a new standard of cartographic detail and accuracy.

Several people produced large-scale maps, which were popular, but very few of them have survived. The best one was by Philip Overton, who in 1715 published a map on two sheets at a scale of about three quarters of an inch to the mile decorated with views of Oxford and Blenheim. This map is unusual in having west, rather than north, at the top of the map.

A major leap forward in the mapping of the counties took place when in 1759 the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (now the Royal Society for Arts) issued an advertisement offering a prize of £100 for an original, high quality, survey of each county at one inch to the mile or larger. Between 1759 and 1802, twenty three surveyors submitted entries and thirteen were successful. Oxfordshire was surveyed by Thomas Jefferys His was a very detailed and accurate map with a decorative title and a detailed plan of Oxford. Sadly, for political reasons, Jefferys was not awarded the £100 prize.

In 1797 Richard Davis produced perhaps the most remarkable large-scale map of Oxfordshire. This was the result of a very detailed survey and was produced at a scale of two inches to the mile on sixteen copper plates. Each map was numbered and signed by Davis. It is believed that about 250 copies of the map were produced. The equivalent map of Berkshire had been produced by John Rocque in 1761 and, in his prospectus; Davis says that he is producing his map to match Rocque's.

The Ordnance Survey was set up in 1792 partly because of the threat of invasion by Napoleon and developed mapping at a level of quality and comprehensiveness unmatched in the world. The country was surveyed in horizontal bands from north to south; in 1801, the first one-inch-to-the-mile map was published, covering the county of Kent. The southern part of Oxfordshire was reached in 1830; the remainder of the Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire was published in 1833.

From 1842 for two decades there was a noisy political argument as to the scale at which the OS should continue its work. The resolution was to use all the scales proposed by the various proponents, 1 inch to the mile for general topography, 6 inch to the mile for mountains and moorland, 25 inch to the mile for cultivated areas, and an amazing 10 feet to the mile for built up areas with a population greater than 4,000.

The Ordnance Survey put British mapmaking in the pre-eminent position in the world — a position it retains to this day.

The future of mapping of course, thanks to technology, is Google. 3D photographing has ensured surveying is all but redundant. Vegetation can be “removed” and maps can be ordered with a huge array of data added so that they can be bespoke.

Across John's collection, Aynho is spelt three different ways. The featured mapped also changed over the centuries.

7. Forthcoming meetings and events

27th November – a Gala end to the year !

“Before the White Queen” George Goodwin and
“Edgcote – Banburyshire's War of the Roses battlefield, its importance, heritage listing and future”
Julian Humphrys

Coles Bookstore (with a range of history books including George's on Towton) and Stratford Armouries Museum (weapons and kit) are also supporting the event.

Donation bar serving Cheese and Wine.