

Local history in a local saleroom

Maps and documents relating to Quaker family come up at Essex auction house centuries later

by Roland Arkell

When the Quaker movement, founded in c.1652 by the Cumbrian preacher George Fox, began to spread from its roots in the north-west of England, its message of a simpler Christianity found a receptive audience in eastern England.

A monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends was established in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, a stronghold of nonconformism, as early as 1656. Fox himself visited Bishop's Stortford in 1665, writing in his journal: "Then we rode to Bishop's Stortford where some were convinced."

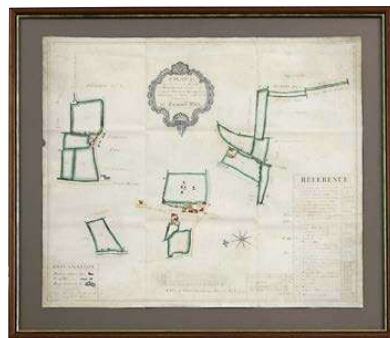
In the decades after the Restoration – and the passage of the Act of Toleration that allowed for freedom of conscience in 1689 – the Essex parish of Stansted Mountfitchet, in particular, became a powerful centre for the Quakers and other Independents. Today, Stansted Mountfitchet is the home of auction house **Sworders' (25% buyer's premium)**, and included in the firm's Books and Maps sale that ran online from October 18-27 were a series of maps and documents related to a local Quaker family, the Days.

John Day, a grocer, was among those who signed a lease on land for a Quaker burial ground on Conygree Wood in 1703. His marriage certificate to Katherine Cater of Littleport, Ely, dated April 21, 1696, including the signatures of 50 witnesses was offered together with the document marking the union of his descendant Samuel Day (also a grocer) and Kezia Laurence of Woodbridge, Suffolk, on August 8, 1764. Together, they took £380.

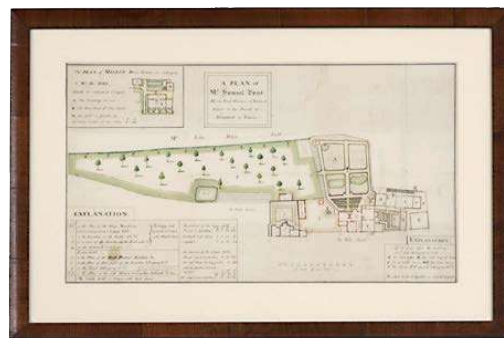
As early as the reign of Queen Anne, the Day family's property holdings had the makings of a considerable country estate.

Sold at £760 was a lot comprising two printed and hand-coloured plans detailing the tracts of land and buildings in the area owned by another Mr Samuel Day at the turn of the 18th century.

Probably produced as legal documents for the Day family to record property ownership, one, dated 1703, carefully documents acreage in the parishes of Stansted Mountfitchet, Birchanger and Ugley



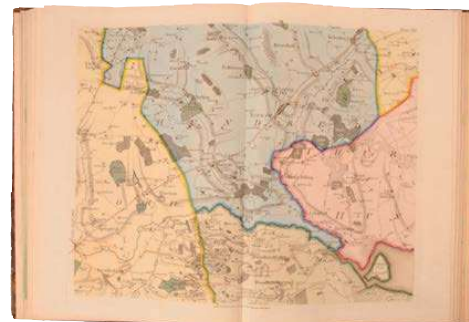
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– including land on what is today Stansted Mountfitchet high street. The other plan (undated but likely produced at the same time) is titled *A Plan of Samuel Days House Yard Gardens and Orchard, situated in the Parish of Stansted in Essex.*

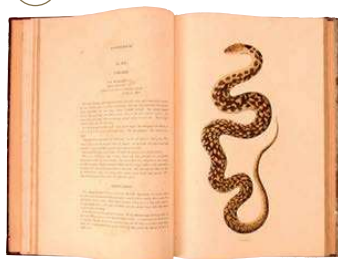
Only way is Essex

Another lot of local interest in this sale was a complete first edition copy of John Chapman and Peter André's 1777 *A Map of the County of Essex.*

The meticulously detailed survey, completed by private cartographic entrepreneurs to the unusual scale of two inches to the mile, was the first map of the county that allowed contemporaries to place their village, local market town and even their own house within the immediate landscape. It predates the Board of Ordnance by almost 40 years.

This copy features the 25 hand-coloured double-page engraved

5



1 & 2. Two plates from *A Map of the County of Essex* by John Chapman and Peter André, **£540** at Sworders.

3 & 4. Two printed and hand-coloured plans detailing the land and buildings

owned by the Essex Quaker Samuel Day in 1703, sold for **£760.**

5. *An account of Indian serpents, collected on the coast of Coromandel* by Patrick Russell, **£6100.**

sheets, including the pictorial title page and the list of subscribers that suggests around 240 were printed. At £540 (estimate £600-900) it made a little less than others have brought in the past decade.

The two bestselling entries were the first work on the snakes of India and a deluxe set of the collected works of Winston Churchill.

Patrick Russell (1727-1805) was a naturalist with the East India Company who published *An Account of Indian serpents, collected on the coast of Coromandel* in three volumes in 1796, 1801 and 1809. Offered here were the first two volumes – with 46 and 42 hand-coloured engraved plates – offered in contemporary full leather bindings. Estimated at £4000-6000, they sold for £6100.

The *Centenary Edition of the collected works of Winston Churchill*, reproducing his 50 books in 34 volumes, was issued by The Library of Imperial History from 1973-76. It was a mammoth task – 11 publishing houses were required to release the individual copyrights on the various

titles – and a commercial disaster for the publisher, which went bankrupt before the projected run of 3000 sets was completed. In all, perhaps 1750 of these vellum-bound sets (priced at £1060 in Britain and \$3000 in the US) were sold.

Sworders' copy (number 483, issued to the Bedfordshire businessman Geoffrey RD Farr) was special on two accounts. Following criticism that the *Collected Works...* had omitted many speeches and Churchill's contributions to other books, the *Collected Essays of Winston Churchill*, a four-volume compilation of most major articles was offered to subscribers at an extra £60. It was included here.

The real attraction, however, was a bespoke hardwood bookcase topped by a pediment bearing the Churchill arms with a presentation plaque to the subscriber below. This add-on is pictured in original advertisements at the time but seemingly only a handful were ever made. It was this that sent bidding to £5050 (estimate £3000-5000). ■