



A scarce issue of John Speed's map of Essex

SPEED, John.

Essex, divided into Hundreds, with the most antient and fayre Towne Colchester Described and other memorable Monuments observed. Anno 1662.

London: Roger Rea & Son, 1665. Coloured. 390 x 515mm.

£950

A highly decorative map of map of Essex engraved by Jodocus Hondius for John Speed's county atlas, the 'Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain'. Around the edges are an inset town plan of Colchester, a strapwork title cartouche and depictions of three Roman coins. On the map London is shown in profile, dominated by the Norman St Paul's Cathedral. Unlike most of Speed's maps it is based on the work of John Norden, a contemporary of Saxton's and the first to plan a series of county histories. However he failed to attract sufficient backing for his enterprise and never completed it. His surveying was superior to Saxton's, and Speed preferred to use Norden as a source where possible. This example comes from the Roger Rea issue of the atlas, which was beset with disaster: according to an advert for the 1676 Bassett & Chiswell edition, "the greatest part of an Impression, then newly Printed, [was] destroyed by the late dreadful Fire, 1666". Surviving examples of any Rea map are thus rare.



Stock ID :24044

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