

*Town: Prints and Drawings of Britain before 1800.* By Bernard Nurse, Bodleian, 2020. ISBN 9781 851245178. Pp. 224, illus., STG £35.00 (cloth). <https://bodleianshop.co.uk/products/town>

Following the excellent comparable 2017 volume by Nurse on London, this attractive and well-designed volume draws on the extensive Bodleian collection made by Richard Gough (1735-1809), a collector and traveller. Director of the Society of Antiquaries of London from 1771 to 1797, Gough travelled widely, and his travel journals relate to 1756, 1760-71, and 1778. He also travelled in later years. The interplay of travel accounts, maps and views makes for a good flow. The book is organised regionally for England, followed by sections on Scotland, Wales, and Touring Britain. Within each section, the towns are arranged alphabetically. The contemporary illustrations are well-chosen and will support towns that are not illustrated here by maps, for example Exeter.

The maps reproduced by Nurse were sometimes engraved, as with John Rocque's 1746 map of Shrewsbury and Isaac Taylor's 1757 map of Hereford, but others are not well-known. For example, for Barnstaple there is a manuscript map from the 1650s by Richard Newcourt. There is no description or key, and the map was probably intended for publication, which was the case with his of London. For Portsmouth, there is a detailed manuscript map of 1716, including soundings and comments on the sand. Attributed to the military engineer Talbot Edwards, this map was used as the basis for other maps over the following half-century. Edwards had been appointed to carry out a survey and report on the fortifications after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. The city was not attacked then, but concern about possible French intervention highlighted its significance, as did subsequent conflicts, culminating in the Franco-Spanish invasion plan of 1779. The Gough collection includes other maps of Portsmouth, one of which, by John Peter Desmaretz, who became Overseer there in 1748. With characteristic scholarship Nurse carefully works out the dating of the latter, compares it to a 1750 plan in the British Library, and includes a passage from Gough's journal describing his visit there in 1761.

There are no surprises for the Scottish or Welsh sections, but for Whitehaven there is an unpublished 1772 plan by John Draper and John Ainslie of what was then a coal boomtown. For Norwich, only one other copy of the single-sheet map by Thomas Cleer of about 1696 is known to survive in a public collection.

The considerable cartographic interest of this volume is not limited to such maps. There is also a full-page reproduction of Gough's 1770 map of the British Isles section of the Hereford *Mappa Mundi*, the earliest illustration from the map. He identified many British place names on his sketch. A very attractive volume, that reflects far more scholarship than the format may suggest to the casual glance.

Jeremy Black