Antique County Maps of Oxfordshire

This review is not comprehensive, but contains the most commonly found county maps of Oxfordshire.
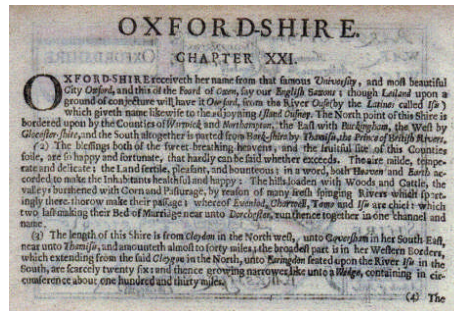
Elizabeth I (1558-1603)

Christopher Saxton made the first county maps of England and Wales between 1570 and 1578. The cost was borne by Thomas Seckford, Master of Requests to Queen Elizabeth. 34 maps were engraved between 1574 and 1578, with Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire as map 10.

Pieter van den Keere started a series of miniature county maps in 1593. These maps are often referred to as 'Miniature Speeds'. Van den Keere was born in Ghent and came to England as a refugee in 1584, aged 13. He later became the son-in-law of the cartographer Jodocus Hondius.

Van den Keere map published 1666:   *Verso:*

Gerhard Mercator published a series of smaller maps of areas of the British Isles in 1593.

James I (1603-1625)

In 1610 **John Speed** published the first British Isles atlas, *The History of Great Britaine*. It contained 67 maps, based on the surveys by Saxton.
Thames and Hudson reproduced Speed's county maps in *The Counties of Britain, A Tudor Atlas by John Speed* in 1988.

William Hole and **William Kip** published further county maps in 1607, 1610 and 1637, including Oxfordshire based on Saxton's survey of 1577.
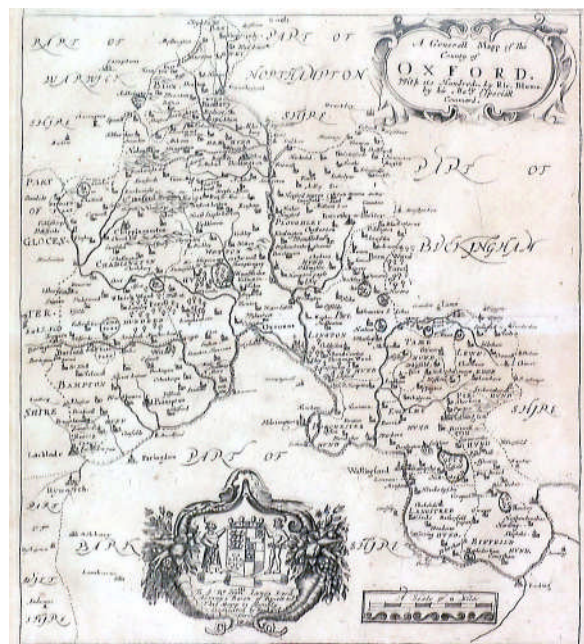The example here is by William Hole.

Charles I (1625-1649)

John Bill published a set of miniature county maps 1626. For the first time, latitude and longitude were included on the margins.

John Blaeu published an atlas of county maps in Amsterdam in 1645. It contained 58 plates, four general maps and 55 counties and islands of England and Wales. The Oxfordshire map was decorated with ten coats of arms and two blank shields. John was the son of the cartographer Willem Janszoon Blaeu, whose world atlas was published in 1630.

Jan Jansson revised some of Mercator's plates and added new ones copied from Speed or Blaeu. The Oxfordshire map bears 18 coats of arms.

Charles II (1660-1685)

In 1673 **Richard Blome** produced two series of county maps. They were based on Speed's maps, but reduced in scale by about two thirds. The Oxfordshire map is entitled, *A Generall Mapp of the County of Oxford … by Ric Blome*.

William III and Mary (1689-1702)

In 1695 **Robert Morden** published two series of county maps of England and Wales. He also produced a set of playing cards bearing county maps. The maps were new engravings from unpublished surveys or after Saxton and Speed. Place names were added and corrected and roads were added to bring the maps up-to-date.
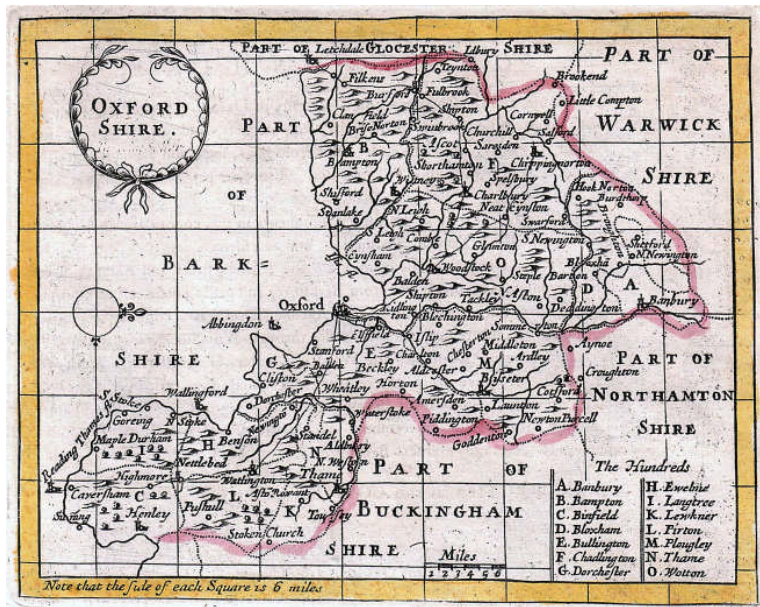
Facsimile Oxfordshire playing card:

Oxfordshire by Robert Morden 1722 edition:

John Seller produced plates for a folio of six county maps in 1679-1680. These were sold to **Philip Lea**, who also reworked Saxton's plates and published county maps between 1665 and 1700. John Seller then resumed making county maps and produced 66 maps of the British Isles in *Camden's Brittanica* in 1696, 1722, 1753 and 1772. A page of text accompanied each map. The maps reappeared towards the end of the century in Francis Grose's *The Antiquities of England Wales* (1773-1787). From 1701 he also produced a series of miniature county maps.

Seller-Grose map of Oxfordshire:
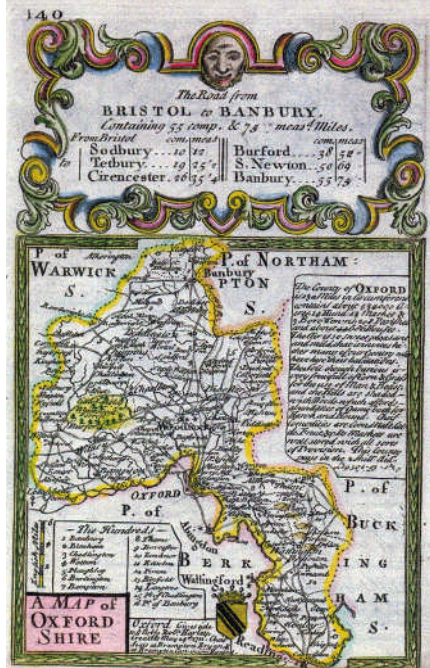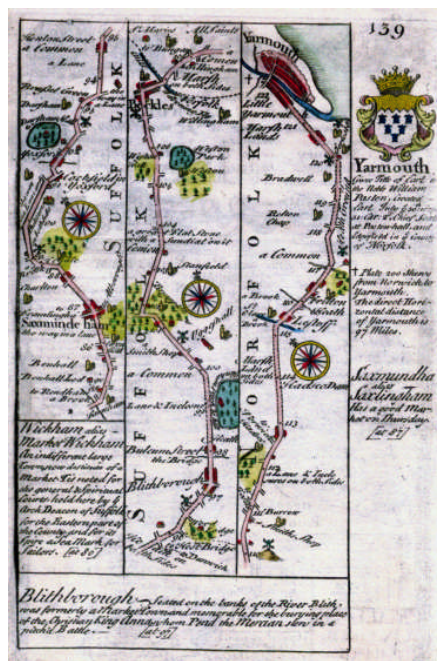

Oxfordshire page from Grose's Antiquities:

George I (1714-1727)

By the start of the 18th century there was a demand for a road atlas that travellers could carry. **John Ogilby's** Britannia of 1675 had contained folio-sized road maps. In 1720 *Britannia Depicta* was published to meet the demand. **Emanuel Bowen** undertook the cartographical engraving and notes by **John Owen** were added. The atlas was so popular that it was reprinted many times in the next forty years.
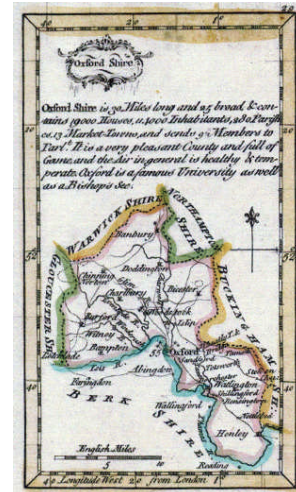
Owen/Bowen Oxfordshire map 1730   *Verso:*

George II (1727-1760)

In 1741 and 1742 **T.Badesdale** and **W.H.Toms** produced the atlas *Chorographia Britanniae*. The design is unique in having a side panel on the left listing the towns of the county with their market and fair days. The example opposite is from the 1742 edition.

J.Newberry published *New and Accurate Maps of the Counties of England and Wales* in 1759, 1770 and 1779. The engraving was by **John Gibson**, who also worked for Thomas Kitchin, Thomas Jeffreys and Emanuel Bowen. The example opposite is from 1759.

Thomas Kitchin (1718-1784) was one of the most prolific English cartographers. He engraved maps for numerous publications. The example opposite, from 1764, has *Oxfordshire. Drawn from a survey and Regulated by Astronomical Observations by T.Kitchin Geographer* in the cartouche.

George III (1760-1820)

Many county maps and atlases were published in this era.

John Ellis published English county maps in 1765. The cartouche reads A modern map of Oxfordshire drawn from the latest surveys. Corrected and improved by the best authorities.
It does have many similarities to the Kitchin map.

The name **George Augustus Walpoole** appeared on engravings of views and maps in the *New Complete British Traveller* published 1784. The book was actually published by **Alexander Hogg** and it is believed that he invented the Walpoole name for one of his workers.
The Oxfordshire map has, in the cartouche, *A new map drawn from the latest and best authorities*.

John Aiken produced a series of simple English county maps in 1790.

John Harrison published an atlas of English county maps in 1789 that was reprinted in 1791. The Oxfordshire map is dated 1787.
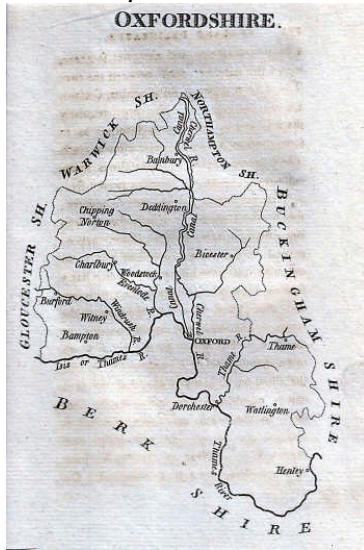

John Cary founded a family business in London producing maps, charts and globes. In 1794 he received a commission from the Postmaster General to survey the roads of Britain. He also produced atlases from 1787 onwards, contributed to a new edition of Camden's Britannia by Richard Gough in 1789 and 1806 and worked with Stockdale on the *New British Atlas* published in 1805.

In January 1808 **Richard Phillips** published an atlas in London. The Oxfordshire map is engraved by **Cooper** (generally known as Capper) and shows *every parish and place containing upwards of 40 houses*.

S.A.Oddy of London published *A New and Improved County Atlas* in 1812-1814. the maps were engraved by **James Wallis**.
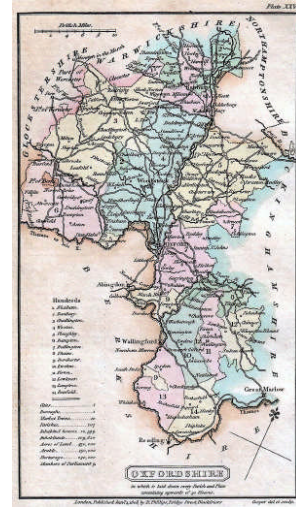
Aiken map 1790:

John Cary September 1797:

R.Phillips (Capper) 1808:
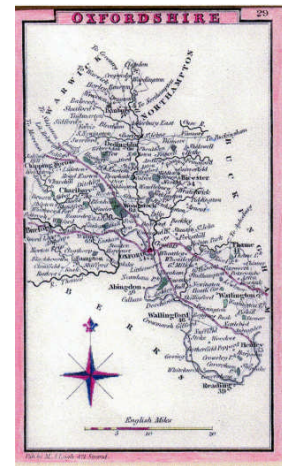

Cary/Stockdale map 1809:
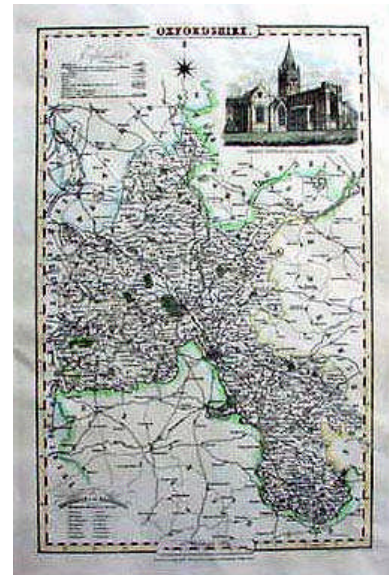

Wallis/Oddy map 1812

George IV (1820-1830)

Samuel Leigh published a series of miniature county maps in 1818 and 1825. Some are signed S.Leigh and others, like this example, are from M.A.Leigh. They were engraved by Sidney Hall and come from Leigh's *New Atlas*.

James Pigot published two series of county maps of England from 1828.
The map opposite comes from Pigot's *British Atlas, comprising the Counties of England* of 1832, sold for £2 10s.The 1840 version of the atlas was reproduced by Bramley Books in 1997. The scene is of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.
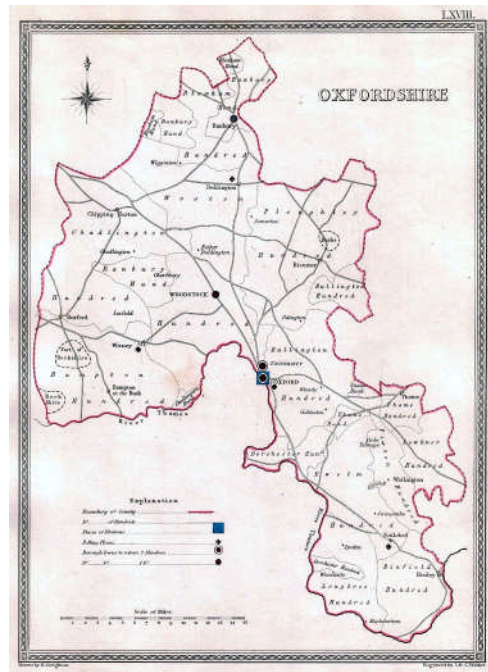

William IV (1830-1837)

Samuel Lewis published a *Topographical Dictionary* of county maps of England, Wales and Ireland between 1831 and 1845. The Oxfordshire map is drawn by **R.Creighton** and engraved by **J&C.Walker**.
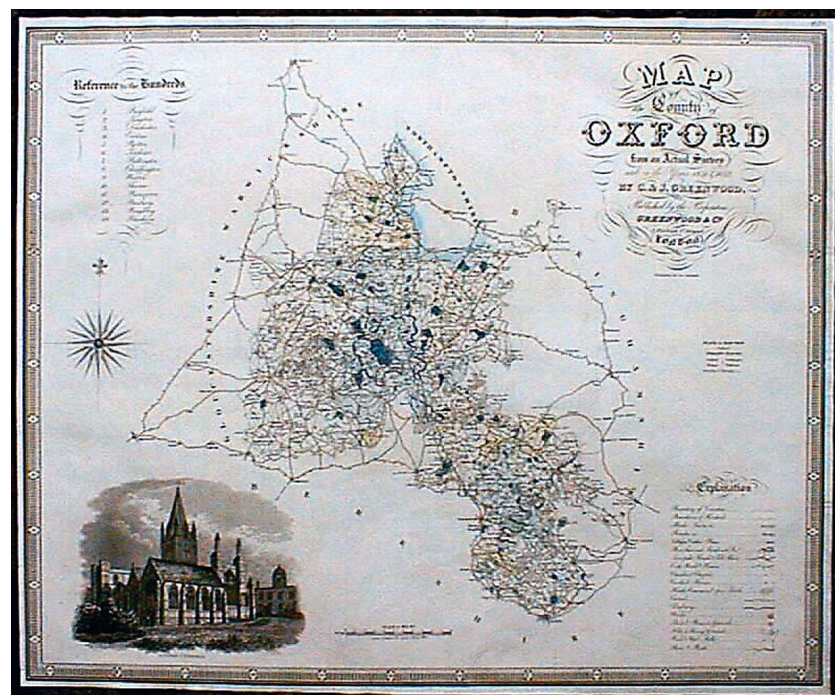
From Topographical Dictionary 1831:

From Topographical Dictionary of England 1835

Christopher and John Greenwood published a series of large county maps from 1819 to 1834. The scene on the Oxfordshire map is of Oxford Cathedral.
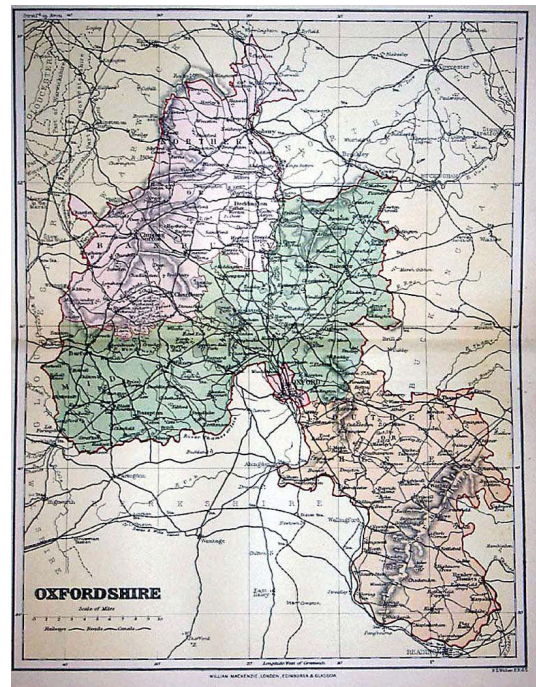
Queen Victoria (1837-1901)

Thomas Moule published an atlas of decorative county maps of England from 1837. The Oxfordshire map shows views of Blenheim House, Radcliffe Library and a general view of Oxford. It was *Engraved for Moules English Counties by W.Schrodlinger*.

Moule's County Maps were reprinted in three volumes, The North of England, The East and South-East of England and The West of England by Bracken Books in 1994.

In 1868 James Virtue published county maps by **William Hughes**.
In 1884 **Letts, Son and Co** published similar maps, as opposite.

George VI (1936-1952)

After World War II John Waddington of Leeds published the *Countryman County Maps of Britain* series of highly coloured and decorative maps in 1947. These were designed and drawn by **Ernest Clegg**.