



A scarce playing-card map of Essex

ALLEN, Joseph.
 Essex.

Somers Town, London: Joseph Allen & Robert Rowe, 1811. Original hand colour, 93 x 63mm.

£500

A rare first edition of this playing card map of Essex, decorated with a foliate border containing the title. The game was played by taking tricks by playing a county adjoining the card on the deck. The England & Wales map was included as an aid, with a different coloured back. In this first edition each card has the publishers inscription 'Pub. by J. Allen, 3 Hampden Str. Sommers's Town 1811' under the title at top, and 'Also by R. Rowe, No. 19 Bedford Str. Bedford Row London' in the bottom border. In the second edition, later the same year, Rowe's inscription had been replaced by a panel of topographical information; apparently the partnership of Allen & Rowe had been dissolved. The maps next appeared in J. Thomson's 'New English Atlas' in 1823, and finally in Orlando Hodgson's 'The Pocket tourist & English atlas, being a new and complete set of county maps', 1827, by which time the maps were hardly 'new'. Surprisingly it was Hodgson's edition that was the most familiar to the map world: it was not until 1985 that London map and playing card dealer Yasha Beresiner discovered this playing-card format and recognised the connection.

MAP COLLECTOR: 30, p.40-1; KING: Miniature Antique Maps, p192 + Addenda.



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