

William Camden

Maps are very useful tools. We can use them to find our way about. They can have other uses. Maps can tell many different things. Some maps show how high the ground is. Some maps show what kind of farming and work goes on in different places. Some maps show how many people live in different places. Maps can be of the sea as well as of the land. Maps of the sea are called charts. They can show the depth of the water. They can show buoys. They can show currents in the sea. William Camden (1551-1623) was born on 2nd May. We only have this little picture of him. He made a big description of all Britain. He put it down in a big book. The book was called *Britannica*.



In his book William Camden wanted to say just how everywhere in Britain looked. He wanted to tell people what they could see that was old. William Camden went far and wide looking for information. He visited East Anglia in 1578. He visited Yorkshire and Lancashire in 1582. He visited Hadrian's Wall in 1599. He studied old books and papers. He looked at monuments. He looked at the shape of the land too. Sometimes people showed him very old papers. They were so old they were not written in modern English. They were written in Old English. William Camden learned Old English. Now he could read the old papers. Some were in Welsh. He learned that too. But William Camden could not go everywhere. He wrote to people. He sent letters all over the country. He asked people to write to him about their home. "Are there any old monuments?" He asked. "Please send me a copy of any writing on old buildings. Do you have old papers from long ago?" He read old books too. Books written by travellers. He put it all together in his book.

At first *Britannia* was in Latin. It had no maps. Soon the book was printed again. Now it had maps. It was in English too. No one had made a book like it ever before!

Here is one of the maps. It shows Dorset. Can you find Dorset in your Atlas?

