

## MACKWORTH, Sir HUMPHREY (1657-1727), industrialist and parliamentarian

**Name:** Humphrey Mackworth  
**Date of birth:** 1657  
**Date of death:** 1727  
**Spouse:** Mary Mackworth (née Evans)  
**Child:** Herbert Mackworth  
**Parent:** Anne Mackworth  
**Parent:** Thomas Mackworth  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** industrialist and parliamentarian  
**Area of activity:** Business and Industry; Politics, Government and Political Movements  
**Author:** David Williams

Born in January 1657, the son of Thomas and Anne Mackworth, of Betton Grange, Shropshire. (His grandfather and namesake was prominent both as a soldier and as a politician on the Puritan side in the Civil War). Mackworth matriculated from Magdalen College, Oxford, 11 December 1674, entered the Middle Temple on 10 June 1675, was called to the Bar in 1682, and was knighted by Charles II on 15 January 1683.

In 1686 (settlement dated 16 June) he married Mary, daughter of Sir Herbert Evans of Gnoll, Neath, Glamorganshire, who became her father's sole heiress on the death of her sisters. (She herself died before July 1696). On his marriage, Mackworth settled at Neath. His wife's grandfather, David Evans, as well as her father, had obtained leases which virtually gave them a monopoly in the working of coal in this area. These were renewed for Mackworth, who actively developed coalmining on his wife's estates. Copper smelting had been carried on at Neath in the late 16th century, and may have been continued spasmodically in the 17th century. Local coal had been used from the start to smelt copper there and in Cornwall, and on this account Mackworth became interested in copper smelting. He may have started smelting at Neath as early as 1695. In 1698 he acquired large interests in Cardiganshire. Rich mineral deposits had been found in 1690 on the Gogerddan estates, and a company had been formed by [Sir Carbery Pryse](#) (see [Pryse of Gogerddan](#)) to develop them. This became increasingly important in 1693 when the monopoly of the Society of Mines Royal was terminated. After [Sir Carbery Pryse's](#) death (1694) Mackworth, in 1698, acquired his interests for £16,440, and reorganised the enterprise as the Company of Mine Adventurers, which obtained its charter in 1704. Rapid development in smelting then took place at Neath, which was centrally situated between Cardigan and Cornwall, the two sources of mineral supply. Mackworth was, however, engaged in bitter disputes with neighbouring coal proprietors, notably [Sir Edward Mansel of Briton Ferry](#) (see [Mansel family](#)), and his Company of Mine Adventurers, which had been financed by very dubious means, became bankrupt in 1709. This matter was investigated in 1710 by a committee of the House of Commons, which declared Mackworth ' guilty of many notorious and scandalous frauds,' but he was saved by the fall of the Whig administration in that year. In 1713 he formed the Company of Mineral Manufacturers, but this ceased operations in 1719, although smelting continued at Neath until his death. In 1715 he acquired various manors at Neath.

Mackworth sat in parliament as member for Cardiganshire in 1701, and from 1702 to 1705. He then abandoned Cardiganshire for Oxford University, but was defeated, and sat for Totnes from 1705 to 1707. He wished to be returned for Cardiganshire in 1708, but [Lewis Pryse of Gogerddan](#) was himself a candidate. Mackworth therefore contested Cardigan boroughs at a by-election in February 1710, but the financial scandal was then at its height, and he was defeated. He was once more returned for the shire in October 1710, and sat until 1713. He was an active member and served on an unusually large number of committees. His political views were typical of the Tory High Church party, and, despite his Puritan ancestry, he was a strong supporter of the Occasional Conformity Act.

He was one of the four laymen who assisted Dr. Thomas Bray to form the S.P.C.K. on 8 March 1699. In 1706 his company made provision for the payment of £20 a year towards a Charity school at the Esgair Hir mine in Cardiganshire, and £30 a year to a minister at the same place, as well as £20 a year towards a Charity school at Neath. On 17 September 1719, in view of the difficulty of getting a schoolmaster at Neath, he suggested to the S.P.C.K. the use of an 'itinerant master' to start new schools and train ushers in them. He wrote a number of religious works. His piety and benevolence are in strange contrast to the dubious nature of his financial transactions. He died on 25 August 1727.

His eldest son, HERBERT MACKWORTH (1687 - 1765), succeeded to his estates, and represented Cardiff in parliament as the protégé of the Cardiff castle interest from 1739 to his death in 1765. He, again, was succeeded by his son, Sir HERBERT MACKWORTH, who also represented Cardiff from 1765 to 1790, father and son thus having represented the same

constituency for fifty-one years. But in 1790 he was forced to retire when the heir to [earl Bute](#) came of age and required the seat. Herbert Mackworth was created a baronet in 1776. His son, Sir ROBERT HUMPHREY MACKWORTH (1764 - 1794) died without issue.

## Author

Emeritus Professor David Williams, (1900 - 1978)

## Sources

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## Further Reading

Syr Humphrey Mackworth, *The answer of Sir Humphrey Mackworth to the several particulars of the complaint upon the petition of several creditors and proprietors of principal-money, annuities, and shares of the Company of Mine-Adventurers* (London? 1709?)

## Additional Links

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