

Copper engraving, printed on five sheets.

THE BUCKS' FIVE-PART PANORAMA

A General View of London and Westminster

Author
BUCK, Samuel and Nathaniel

Publication date
1788, [1749].

Publisher
Published by Robt. Sayer, 53, Fleet Street,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Copper engraving, printed on five sheets.

Dimensions
Each image approximately: 315 by 815mm. (12.5 by 32 inches). Each sheet approximately: 390 by 855mm. (15.25 by 33.5 inches) Total: (approximately, if joined) 280 by 3175mm (11 by 125 inches).

Notes
The fifth state of this panorama, as identified by Ralph Hyde (Hyde, Notes).

Detail includes masons completing the construction of Westminster Bridge (opened 1750), anglers fishing from lighters, bathers, fishing boats trawling, etc.

In the London Evening Post, 13-15 Feb. 1746, the Bucks announced they would be publishing four prospects of London and Westminster. These, together with two prospects of Portsmouth, would complete the English series. The advertisement concludes: 'N.B. Though the Prospects of London &c. will take much more Time in performing than any of the former sets, the subscriptions will be no more than the former sets, that is, 5s. paid at the time of Subscribing, and 10s. upon Delivery.' Nineteen months later, in the London Evening Post, 24-26 Nov. 1747, subscribers were informed that five drawings of London and one of Portsmouth had been taken. Drawings and subscription lists could be examined at the Buck's Middle Temple chambers, from where proposals could be obtained. In the same newspaper, 17-20 June 1749, they asked subscribers to pardon them for the delay in publishing the London and Portsmouth views, a situation caused by Samuel's indisposition and their desire to render the engravings as perfect as possible. Publication was assured for 1 Sept. On 2 Sept. the Bucks announced in the General Advertiser that the plates for London and Portsmouth were at last completed, and impressions were now being printed off. Delivery would be on 11 Sept., after which date no more subscriptions would be accepted. Gough in British Topography records that the Bucks were 'four months about it' – presumably the engraving of the London plates.

Original drawings for the London and Westminster engravings are to be found in the British Museum Print Room and at the Ashmolean Museum's Sutherland Collection. The Ashmolean's drawings, in pen and wash, are for sheets [1] and [2] only. (Pen and wash drawings for the section Millbank to Essex Stairs section were auctioned at Christies on 2 April 1996, lot 27. They are now in a private collection. They differ from the final version in several respects: little more than the facade is shown of Westminster Bridge, the boats on the river are either entirely different or positioned in different places, and some of the more distant church spires are shown smaller (and thus more correctly) than in the final version). The British Museum's are mounted to form one continuous strip. In the opinion of the late Edward Croft-Murray the drawings in the main were probably the work of Chatelain, who would have been responsible for putting in the sky and the foreground, and for redrawing the topographical mid-distance. On the reverse of the British Museum's drawing is the inscription: 'Buck's original drawing of modern London finished in the reign of George III, Buck's widow had refused £70 for it. I bought it afterwards at Baker's in Covent Garden.'

The prints were still being marketed in the 19th century. They are listed in the catalogues of Sayer & Bennett, 1775, Robert Sayer, 1786 (as the present example), Laurie & Whittle, 1795, and Whittle & Laurie, 1813.

Bibliography

FWM; LMA; Museum of London; YCBA. H. Phillips, The Thames about 1750 (London: Collins 1950); No. 54/6-10 in London Illustrated; Ralph Hyde, A Prospect of Britain (London: Pavilion 1994), pp.22, 47-48; pls 40-44; Ralph Hyde, private notes.

Provenance

Price:

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