

Samuel and Nathaniel Buck
[Twenty-four views of abbeys and castles in Kent]
London
1736

From 1725 onwards, Samuel Buck spent each summer travelling around some part of England, making drawings of places of antiquarian interest; from 1727 onwards, he was accompanied by his younger brother, Nathaniel Buck. Back in London, during autumn and winter, they engraved and printed a set of 24 plates; in the spring they presented this set to their subscribers (who paid two guineas (£2.10) for each set, one in advance and one upon completion); in the summer they made their next tour. That plan sounds as if it was bound to hit a snag – but in fact it never did. Summer after summer, the Bucks set out on their travels; spring after spring, they were ready with the next set of plates. After fourteen years they had covered the whole of England (fourteen sets, 19 by 12 inches, 1726–39); then, without pause, they started work on Wales (three sets, 1740–2, the third set containing an extra dozen plates). Nor was this the Bucks' only undertaking. From 1728 onwards, at a somewhat less hectic pace, they were also producing a series of views of the cities and principal towns in England and Wales (thirteen sets of six plates each, 33 by 13 inches, 1728–49). After 1752, they ceased producing new work. Nathaniel was dead by 1774; Samuel died in 1779, at the age of 83. Some years before that, however, the entire stock of plates had been sold to the printseller Robert Sayer, who managed to squeeze a little more profit out of them.

As they had informed their subscribers in April 1735, the Bucks spent that summer in Kent. (Apart from Yorkshire, Kent was the only county which was given a whole set to itself.) By April 1736 they had finished their eleventh set of plates. This set begins (as usual) with an engraved frontispiece thanking the subscribers for their support and telling them what they have got for their money and what they can expect to get next.

[To the Noble & Generous Encouragers of this Work by Subscription This Eleventh collection of Twenty four Views as follows . . . is most gratefully inscrib'd by Their most obed. humble. Servts. SAML. & NATHL. BUCK. . . . NB. The Generous Subscription this Eleventh Sett of Prints has been honour'd with encouraging the Authors to proceed They propose this Summer to take Drawings of the most remarkable remains of ABBYS, CASTLES &c. to be found in Sussex, Surry &c. and to finish the Plates in Twelve Months time from the Date hereof. From No. 1. Garden Court, Middle Temple. Publish'd according to Act of Parliament by Saml. & Nathl. Buck, April. 1736.](#)

The views are listed numerically in the frontispiece, but the plates themselves are not numbered. This is the list:

<1> [The west view of St. Austin's-abby, in Canterbury.](#) <dedicated to Sir John Hales, bt>

<2> [The north view of Feversham-abby, in the county of Kent.](#)
<dedicated to the Earl of Rockingham>

<3> [The north east view of Malling-abby, in the county of Kent.](#)

<4> [The south view of Reculver-abby, in the county of Kent.](#)
<dedicated to Sir Edward Dering bt>

<5> [The south view of Tunbridg-priory, in the county of Kent.](#)
<dedicated to Robert Weller esq>

<6> [The south-east view of the hospital or Maison-Dieu at Dover.](#)

<7> [The north west view of the chapel and tower in Dover castle.](#)
<dedicated to Sir George Oxenden bt>

- <8> The west view of Dover-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to the Duke of Dorset>
- <9> The north view of Dover-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Sir Basil Dixwell bt>
- <10> The north west view of Rochester castle.
- <11> The south east view of Rochester castle.
- <12> The south view of Allington-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Lord Romney>
- <13> The north view of Leeds-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Lord Fairfax>
- <14> The north east view of Canterbury castle. <dedicated to Thomas May esq>
- <15> The north-west view of Richborow-castle, in the county of Kent.
- <16> The west view of Hever-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Robert Humfreys esq>
- <17> The south view of Cowling-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Thomas Best esq>
- <18> The south view of Tunbridg-castle, in the county of Kent.
- <19> The south-east view of Saltwood-castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Sir Brooke Bridges bt>
- <20> The south view of Sandown-castle, in the county of Kent.
- <21> The north-west view of Deal-castle, in the county of Kent.
- <22> The north west view of Walmer castle, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to the Earl of Middlesex>
- <23> The north west view of Sandgate castle, in the county of Kent.
- <24> The north-east view of Eltham-palace, in the county of Kent. <dedicated to Sir John Shaw bt>

With slight variations, the imprints read:

S. & N. Buck delin. et Sculpt. 1735.

Most of these plates carry a dedication; all of them have some lines of verbal description at the bottom. For example, beneath the view of Hever castle, we are given this information:

Thomas de Hever temp: Edw. III. is said to have built this Castle. Joan one of the Daughters & Coheirs of Wm. Son of Thomas de Hever living in K. Edwd. IV. Reign. carry'd this Castle by marriage to Reginald Cobham of Sterborough adjoining. of which Family it was purchas'd by Geffry Bullen Grandfather to Sr. Thos. Bullen Kt. of the Garter & Earl of Wiltshire. on the Attainder of his Son George Bullen visc. Rochford A. D. 1536 it Escheated to the Crown: where it continued till K. James I. granted it to Sr. Edwd. Waldgrave Bart. a Descendant from whome James Ld. Waldgrave convey'd it to Sr. Willm. Humfreys Kt. & Bart. Ld. Mayor of London A. D. 1715. Father of the present Sr. Orlando Humfreys Bart. Whose Son & Heir Apparent Robt. Humfreys Esqr. now enjoys it.

Much of this comes from Philipott (1659:185–6); where it diverges from Philipott, it confuses Sir Edward Waldegrave (who bought Hever in 1557–8) with his grandson of the same name (who was made a baronet in 1643). But what it says about the Humfreys family is correct. To be brief, these descriptions are not of any use, except for what they may have to say about the current state of affairs.

C.F. May 2011.