



A 19th century impression of Hollar's 'before and after' views of the Great Fire of London

HOLLAR, Wenceslaus.

A True and Exact Prospect of the Famous City of London, from S.t Marie Overs Steeple in Southwarke in its Flourishing Condition before the Fire. designed by W.m Hollar of Prague, Boh.cn. Another Prospect of the Sayd City from the Same Place as it Appeareth now after the Sad Calamitie and Destruction by Fire. In the Year M.DC.LXVI.

London: c.1820. Etching on two sheets conjoined, total 225 x 680mm.

£950

Two prospects on one sheet, showing London before and after the Great Fire of 1666, drawn and etched by Hollar immediately after the event. Many of the famous buildings are still standing, including the stone walls of the Norman St Paul's Cathedral, but are only shells. London Bridge has one end burned, the rest saved by an open space that acted as a firebreak. Originally published c.1666 this example is on wove paper, with all publisher's details removed, so is a 19th century printing. Hollar, a Bohemian, is renowned for the quality of his etching. Born in 1607 he was brought to England in 1637 by the Earl of Arundel, a well-known connoisseur, and started working with Stent that year, engraving a view of Greenwich nearly a yard long. This began what has been described as his 'slavery to the publishers'. During the English Civil War his Royalist sympathies forced him to flee to Antwerp, where he completed his most famous work, the 'Long View' of London. After his return in 1652 he worked for many of the most famous names in London publishing, including Ogilby, Overton, Blome and Morden, and became Iconographer to



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the King in 1660. This did not stop him dying almost penniless in 1677. His last words were addressed to the bailiffs asking them not to remove the bed on which he lay dying.

Hind: "Wenceslaus Hollar and His View of London and Windsor", 19, state VI of VI.

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