

## AHS London Lecture Thursday 26 March 2015

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### New Light on Chronometer-Makers and the Instrument Trades

Museum curators, collectors and others with an interest in a particular type of object such as chronometers, or compasses, sometimes seem to forget that the craftsmen and manufacturers who produced and sold them often had many other commercial interests and networks, which affected their businesses. While there were always a few specialists, many of those who called themselves chronometer makers in practice sold a range of other related material, not only clocks and watches, but also jewellery, nautical and drawing instruments, charts and books. On the other side of the trade divide, nautical instrument makers usually sold chronometers. The main aim of this lecture will be to examine these interlocking activities which did much to support maritime and scientific endeavour, sketching in the 'bigger picture'.



Dr Gloria Clifton is curator emeritus at the Royal Museums Greenwich, which includes the National Maritime Museum and Royal Observatory. Before her retirement she was Head Curator of the Royal Observatory and she continues to work there as a volunteer.



This compass of about 1850 is one of a range of instruments, including chronometers, by Edward John Dent in the collections of the National Maritime Museum. [NMM NAV0364].

This study arose out of some background research on makers carried out for the catalogue of 'Chronometers at Greenwich', which Jonathan Betts is preparing. In the process it also emerged that some of the details given in standard reference works needed revising, so in this sense too the work has thrown new light on the subject.

The 2015 AHS London Lecture Series is supported by the kind sponsorship of Carter Marsh & Co.