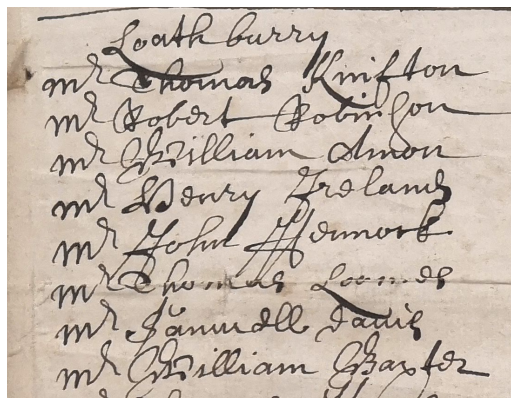


AHS London Lecture 14 November 2019

James Nye and Caitlín Doherty

Levellers and Latten Workers—Some Light Among the Lanterns on Lothbury

George White first coined the term ‘Lothbury style’ in commenting on the similarity of work by a group of early lantern clock makers working in the north-east of the City. From the late 1630s onwards, the parish of St Margaret’s Lothbury in the City of London was home to a number of clockmakers, who had their living among a diverse group of founders, braziers, drapers, mercers, clothworkers, cooks and tavern keepers, Puritans, regicides, preachers, turners, secret printers, and many more besides. In 1603, Stow didn’t mention the clockmakers in his survey—it was too early—but he does talk about the founders and their use of pole-lathes to make their products ‘smooth and bright with turning and serating [...] making a loathsome noice to the by-passers.’ He makes it sound a pretty unpleasant place. Before the Great Fire, the street followed the familiar pattern, of jettied buildings leaning close to each other, surrounded by an atmosphere of sea-coal smoke, and in some places the heat of molten brass, and the din or screech of metal on metal. For several decades, scholars have documented the survivals of the period—particularly the lantern clocks—but this lecture



seeks to place those clocks, even more so their makers, in a broader context. It focusses on the period 1630–1670, and considers a community of a few hundred people, living through what must often have been the worst of times, their environment, and the possible tensions and bonds that may have characterised the most colourful decades of the period. It sets out to place various clockmakers on a reconstructed map of the street, and describes some of their neighbours—a surprisingly diverse group, from many walks of life.

Dr James Nye is well-known to members as the Chair of the Society. With a lifelong interest in horology, he is known for a specialism in electrical horology, but has written and lectured on a wide variety of topics—this lecture venturing into the earliest period he has considered. He is Junior Warden of the Clockmakers Company in 2019, the current Chair of its Collections Committee, and a volunteer guide in the Clockmakers’ Museum.

Dr Caitlín Doherty completed her PhD at St John’s College Cambridge in early 2019. This was a collaborative project, bringing together Cambridge’s History and Philosophy of Science Department, and the Science Museum in London. Her thesis was entitled, ‘Leonardo’s Tomb: Exhibitions of Early Flight Technology at the Deutsches Museum, Science Museum and Smithsonian, 1903–2003’. In January 2019 she took up the position of Principal Researcher with the Institute for the Future of Work, in London.

TICKETS

The lecture will be held at St Margaret’s Lothbury, in the City. All members and guests attending the London Lecture Series need to register for free tickets in advance of each lecture. Visit our website at www.ahsoc.org/events/london-lectures and follow the links for the lectures you require. If you have difficulties email ahs.londonlectures@gmail.com. Alternatively, book your place by calling 07733 481595 (24-hour answering machine).