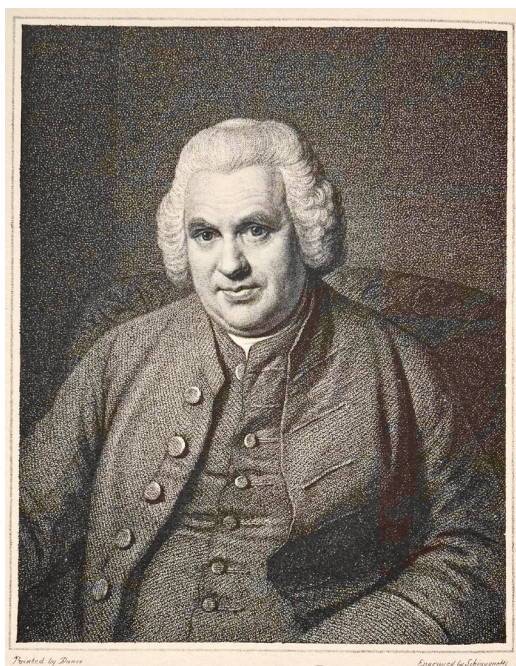


## AHS London Lecture Thursday 9 November 2023

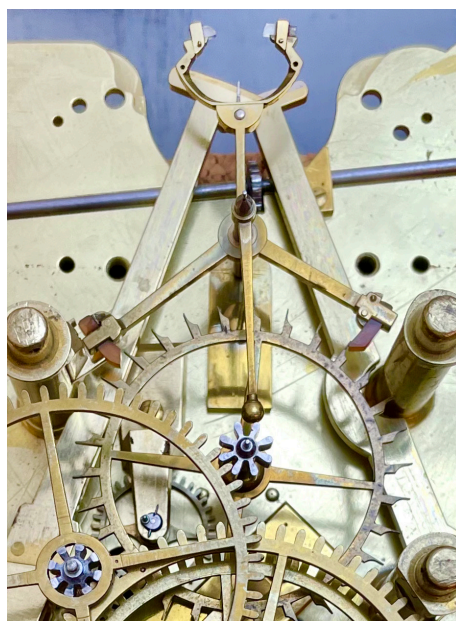
### Jonathan Betts, **The Technical Legacy of Thomas Mudge (c.1715–1794)**

Thomas Mudge is justly regarded as one of the eighteenth-century's finest watch and clockmakers, with a richly deserved place in the horological pantheon. Always celebrated as a top contributor to the long list of British horological invention and achievement, Mudge positively set the standards of construction and finish in eighteenth-century watch and clockwork – rarely equalled and never exceeded. This lecture celebrates that achievement while also looking closely at the context, motivations and inspirations behind his work.

Mudge is perhaps most famously associated with the genesis of the lever escapement, arguably the most significant escapement in the whole history of watchmaking. Looking closely at this important technological design, the lecturer asks the seemingly bizarre question 'Was the lever escapement ever actually *invented*?'. The talk thus concentrates principally on Mudge's contribution to precision timekeeping and includes a look at his designs for precision pendulum clocks and his creation of the three marine timekeepers of the 1770s, in his attempts to qualify for the rewards still on offer by the British Board of Longitude.



Thomas Mudge. Engraving by Schiavonetti after the portrait by Dance. (Photo: Jonathan Betts)



The escapement from Mudge's lunar clock, c. 1755. (Photo: Jonathan Betts © British Museum)

*Jonathan Betts MBE (bettshorology@icloud.com) is the Vice-Chairman and the Honorary Librarian of the AHS. He retired as Senior Curator of Horology at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich in 2015.*

#### Attending London Lectures

We run our 2023 London Lecture Series as hybrid events, available live both online via Zoom and in-person at St Mary-at-Hill Church, Lovat Lane, London. Whether online or in-person, those wishing to attend lectures must register in advance at [www.ahsoc.org/events/london-lectures](http://www.ahsoc.org/events/london-lectures). If you have questions or difficulties please email [events@ahsoc.org](mailto:events@ahsoc.org).