Old Bailey Trials between 1715 and 1839 include over 800 cases in which more than 1300 members of the London clock and watch-making trades are named. These practitioners appear as victims of crime, as witness to a crime, as character witnesses for an accused, or as persons accused of a crime. Many unrecorded members of the trade – from business proprietors, specialist workers, journeymen, apprentices, errand-boys and employees of unknown status – are named in these records. The speaker will give examples of the social history of the London clock and watch trade provided by these trial reports, but will concentrate on the first hand evidence of the practitioners themselves that authentically illuminate the custom and practice of the horological trade in Georgian London. Of particular interest are statements made by members of the specialist trades involved in the making of silver and gold watch cases – including illicit practices relating to hall marking. There is also evidence on ‘christening’ – the improper addition of the names of reputed to makers, to time-pieces that came from inferior workshops.

Dr David Bryden spent most of his career as a Museum Curator, moving from the Royal Scottish Museum, to the Whipple Museum, Cambridge, the Science Museum and finally to the National Museums of Scotland. In retirement he continues to undertake and publish research into early scientific instruments.

Following his AHS London Lecture ‘Bankruptcy and insolvency in the English horological trade, 1720-1849’, given in November 2012 and reported in the March 2013 journal, Dr Bryden will now discuss another important serial source of historical information on the horological trade in Britain.


TICKETS:
In order to help with the management of the AHS London Lecture Series, we are now asking all members and guests to register for free tickets in advance of each lecture. Simply visit our website at www.ahsoc.org/events/london-lectures and follow the links for the lectures you require. If you have any difficulties please email ahs.londonlectures@gmail.com. For those without an email address, please book your place by calling 01580 200 155 (24-hour answering machine).

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