

History of the Royal Observatory Greenwich



**Flamsteed
Astronomy
Society**



**Mike Meynell
Flamsteed Astronomy Society
30th November 2024**

Royal Warrants

On 4 March 1675, Charles II issued a Royal Warrant, creating the position of *Astronomer Royal*, aiming to address the problem of navigation at sea.

On 22 June of the same year, a further warrant was instigated for the construction of an observatory:

Whereas, in order to the finding out of the longitude of places for perfecting navigation and astronomy, we have resolved to build a small observatory within our park at Greenwich, upon the highest ground, at or near the place where the castle stood, with lodging-rooms for our astronomical observator and assistant.

Charles II, Warrant establishing the Royal Observatory in Greenwich



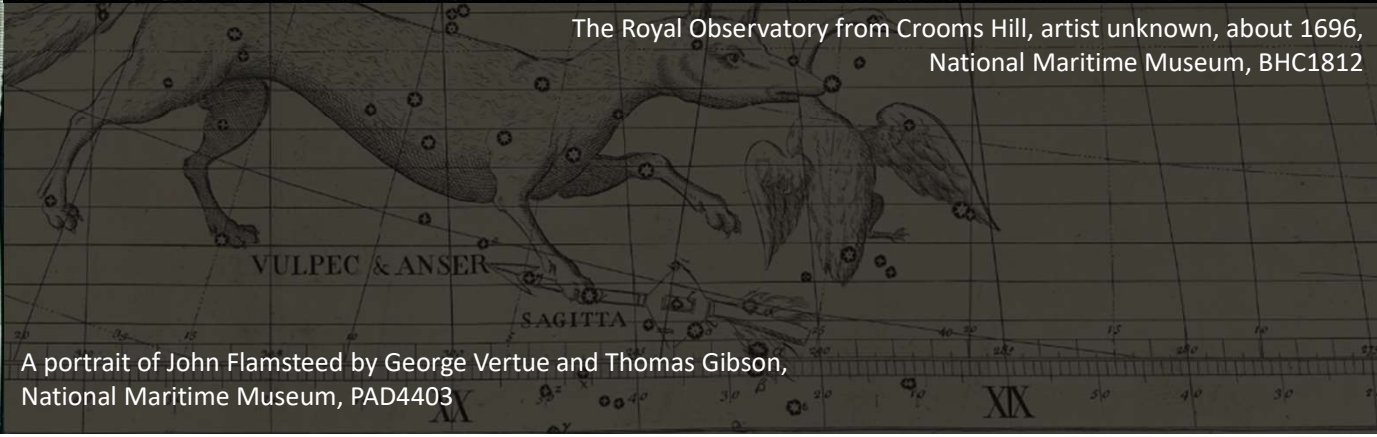
Painted around 1680, Greenwich and London from One Tree Hill shows the Queen's House in the centre, with the brick ruins of the Tudor Palace still visible to the right
Source: BHC1808 National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Greenwich Hospital Collection



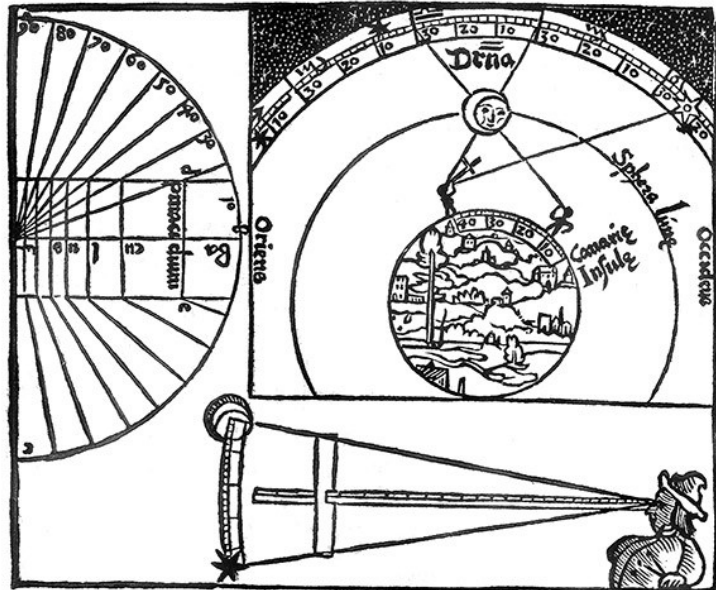
*JOHANNES FLAMSTEEDIUS Derbiensis
Astronomiae Professor Regius. Anno Aetatis 74. Obijt
Decem. 31. 1719.*



The Royal Observatory from Crooms Hill, artist unknown, about 1696, National Maritime Museum, BHC1812



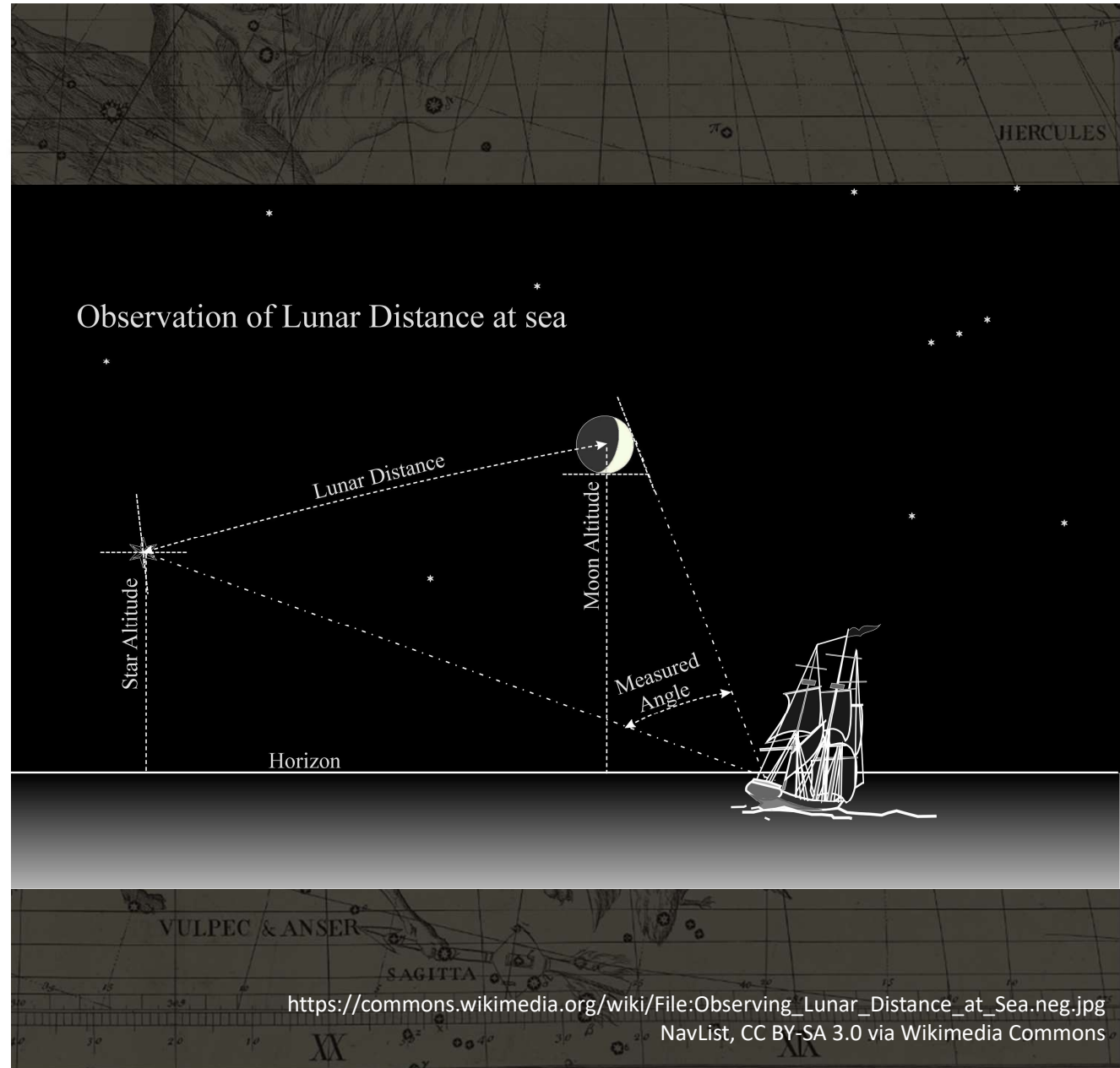
A portrait of John Flamsteed by George Vertue and Thomas Gibson, National Maritime Museum, PAD4403



De partibus mensurae seu Speciebus Geometriae practicae. Caput vndecimum.

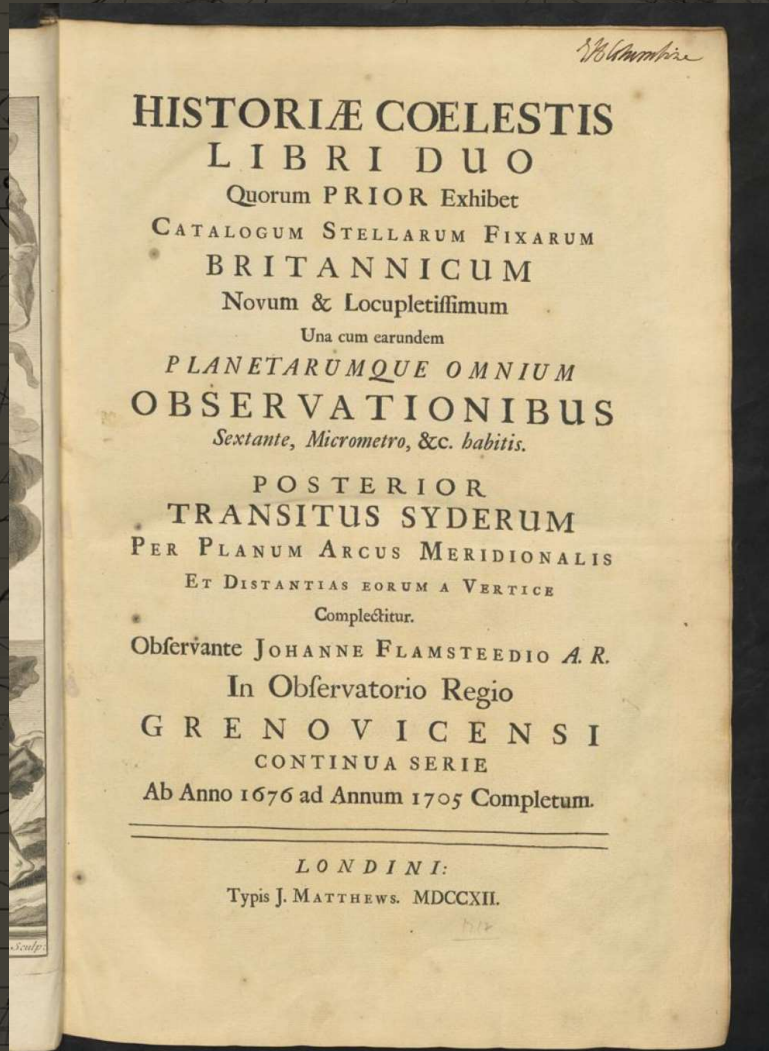
Mensura est longitudo finita: quae ignotam locorum distantiam simili experimento mensurat. Cuius partes seu famose quantitates/quibus Geometer utitur sunt Bra num hordei/Digitus/Ontia/Palmus/Dichas/Spithames Pes/Selquipes/Braous/Passus simplex/Passus duplex quae Geometricum appellare libuit/Cubitus seu vlna/Pertica quem plures radium vocant/Stadium/Leuca/Miliare italicum/Miliare germanicum. &c.

Illustration from 1524: Smithsonian Institution Libraries

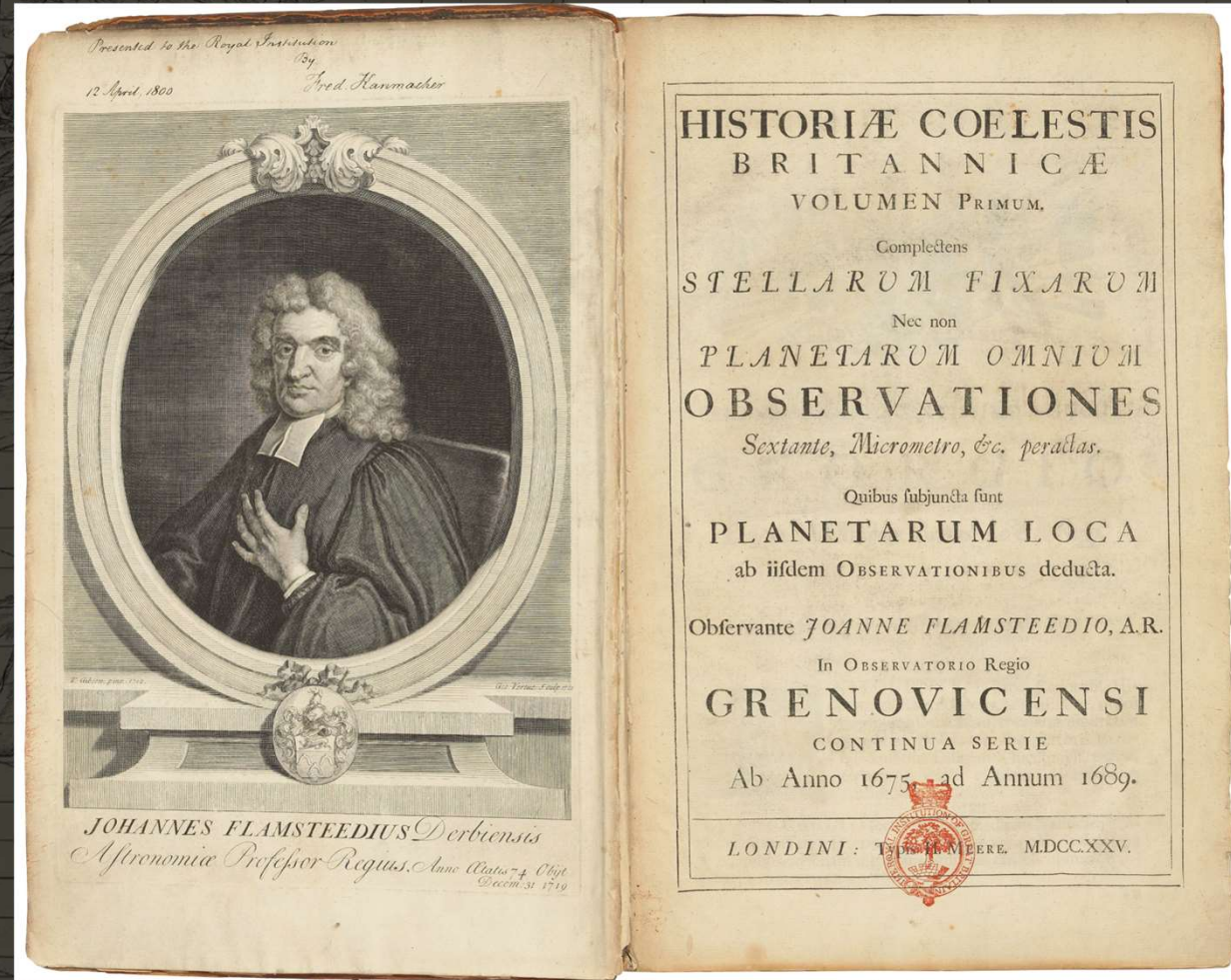


https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Observing_Lunar_Distance_at_Sea.neg.jpg
NavList, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Historiae coelestis libri duo: 1712



Historia Coelestis Britannica: 1725



Sir Cloudesley Shovell, 1650-1707



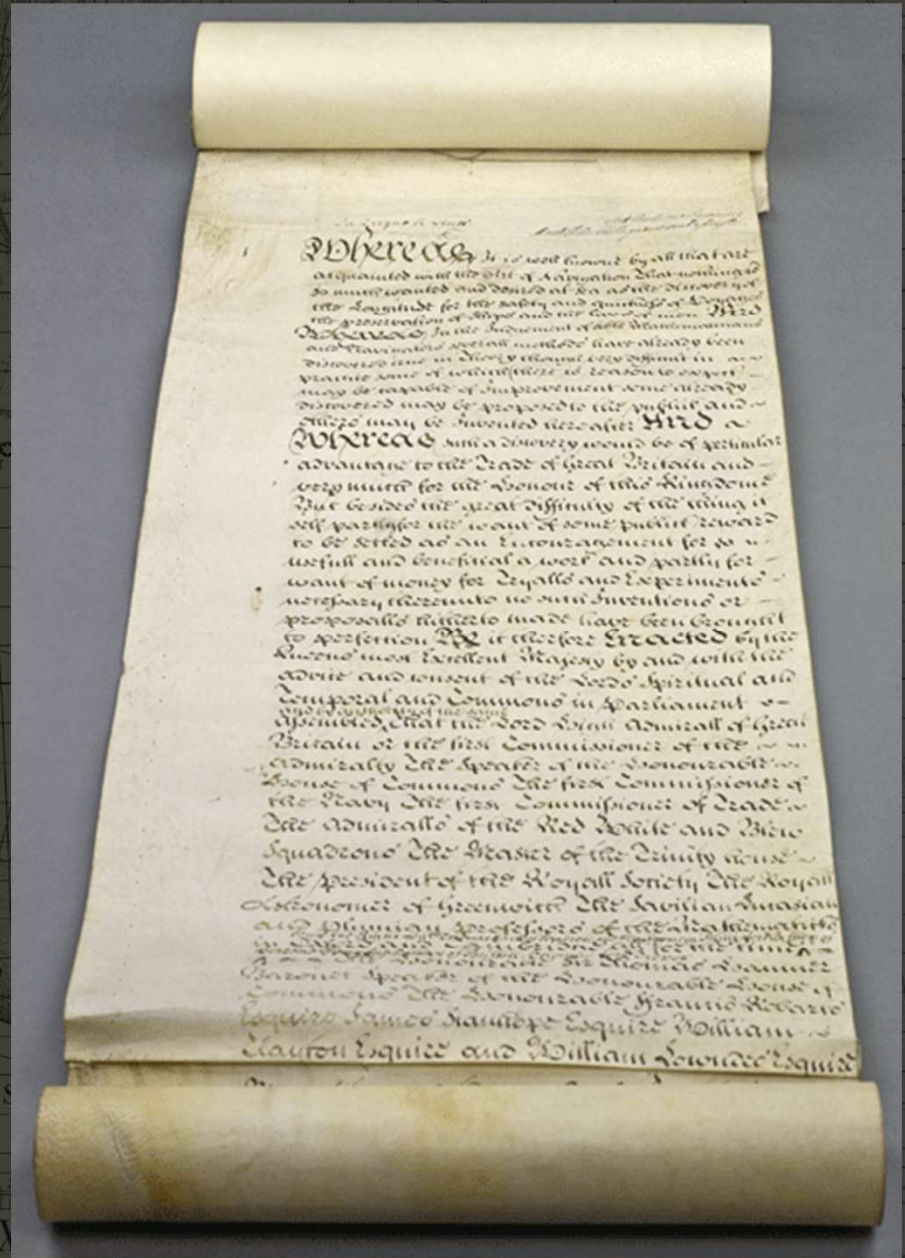
1714 Longitude Act

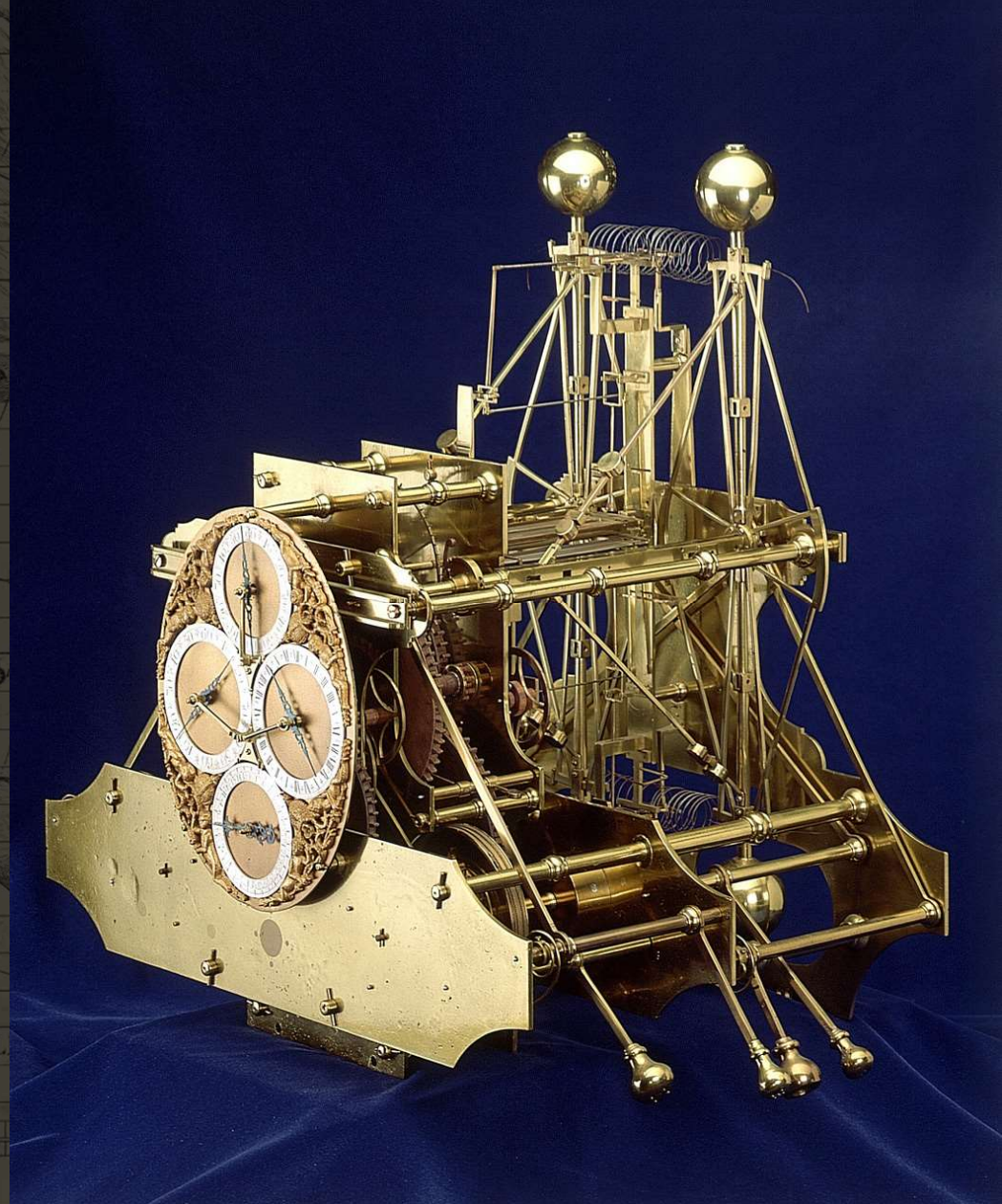
An Act for providing a Publick Reward for such Person or Persons as shall discover the Longitude at Sea

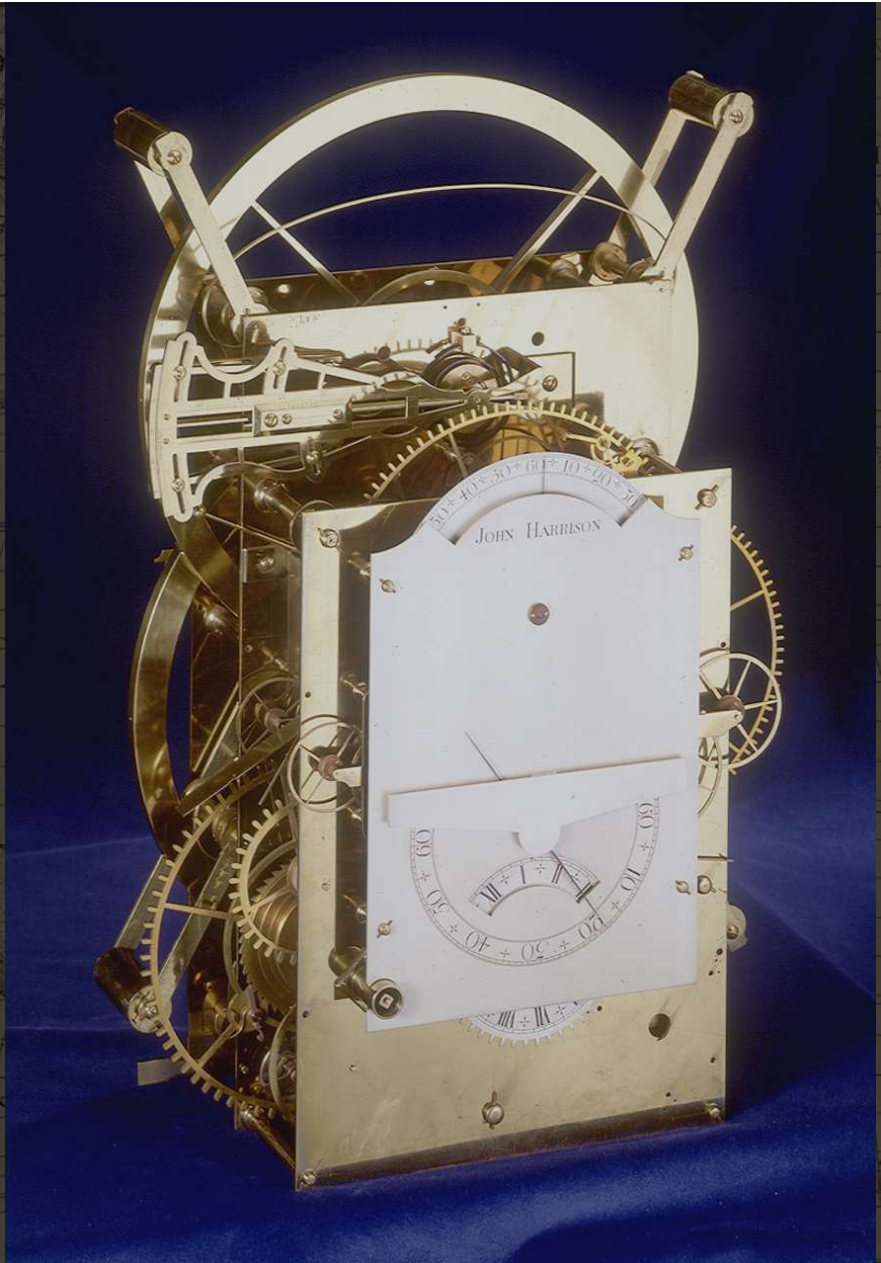
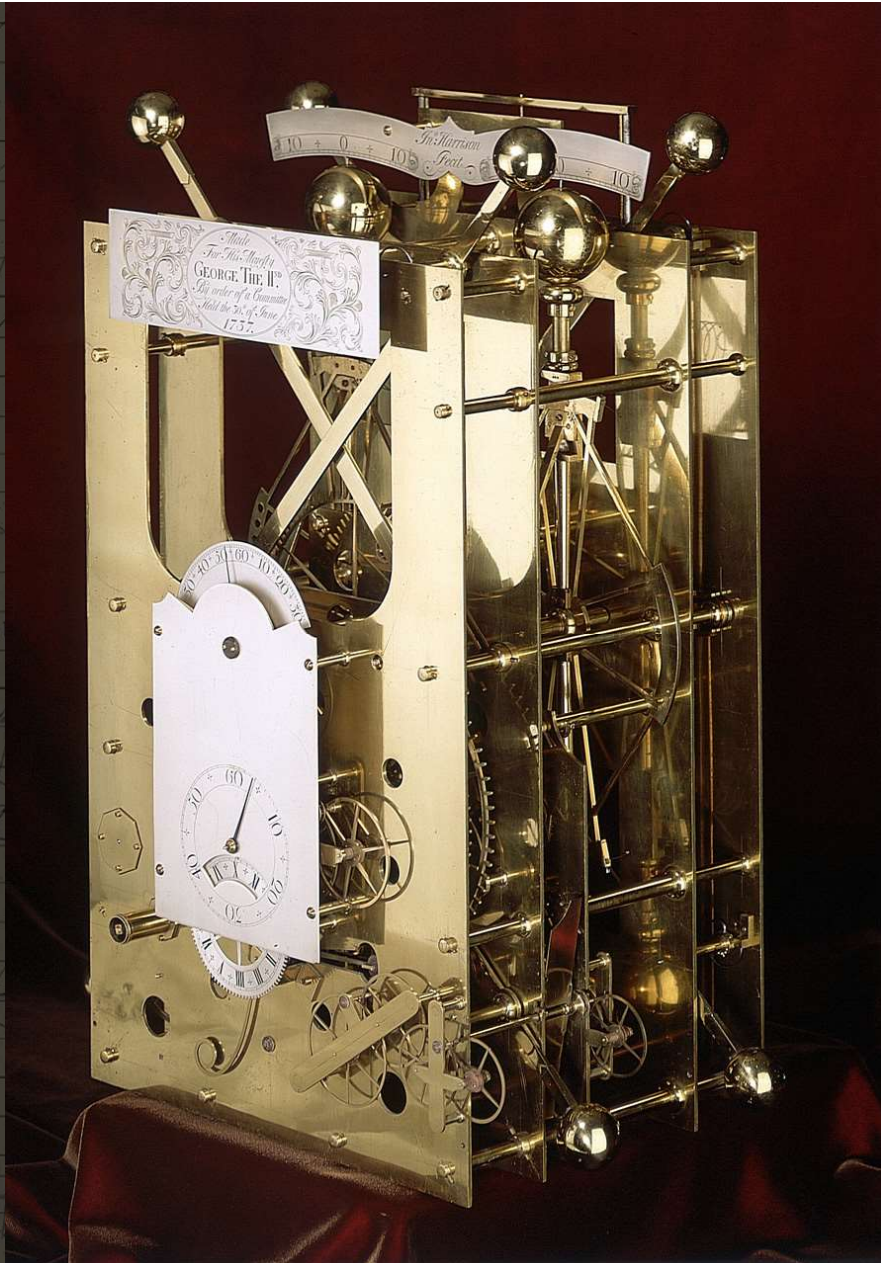
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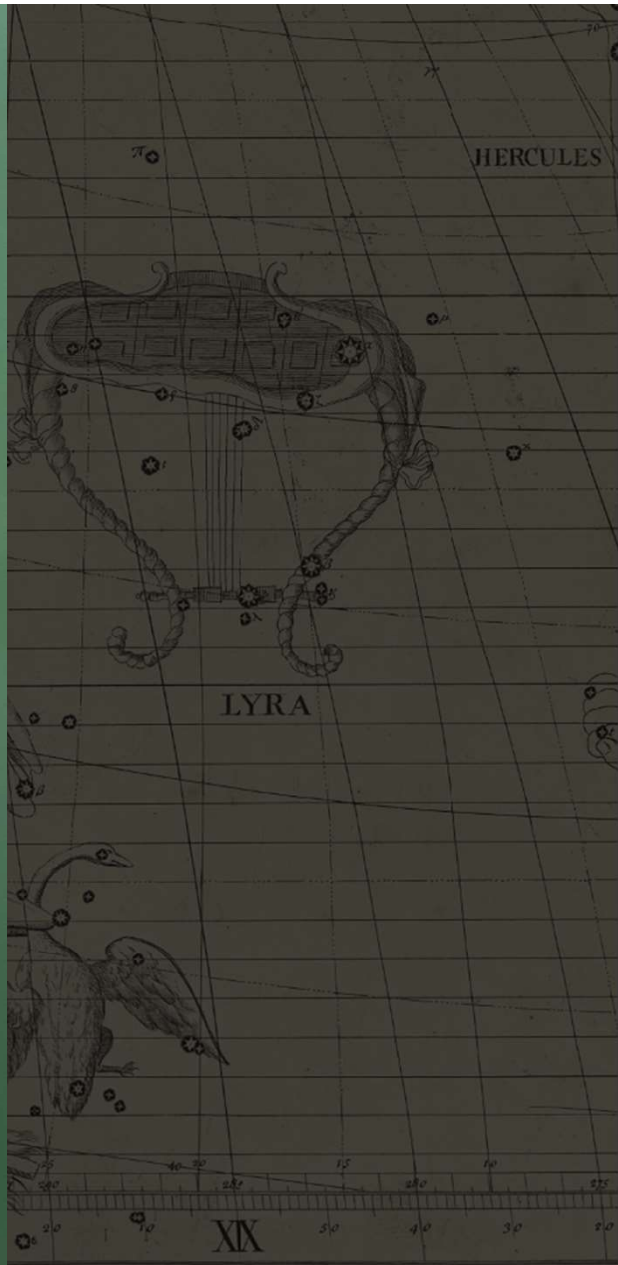
for the Safety and Quickness of Voyages, the Preservation of ships, and the Lives of Men

£20,000 reward
approx. £3,000,000 today











THE
NAUTICAL ALMANAC
 AND
ASTRONOMICAL EPHEMERIS,
 FOR THE YEAR 1767.

Published by ORDER of the
COMMISSIONERS OF LONGITUDE.

L O N D O N :
 Printed by W. RICHARDSON and S. CLARK,
 PRINTERS;
 AND SOLD BY
 J. NOURSE, in the Strand, and Mess. MOUNT and PAGE,
 on Tower-Hill,
 Bookfellers to the said COMMISSIONERS.
 M DCC LXVI.

[48] APRIL 1767.

Distances of γ 's Center from \odot , and from Stars west of her

Days	Stars Names.	12 Hours.			15 Hours.			18 Hours.			21 Hours.		
		°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
1	The Sun.	40.	59.	11	42.	31.	44	44.	9.	51	45.	44.	35
2		53.	32.	7	55.	4.	24	56.	36.	16	58.	7.	45
3		65.	39.	18	67.	8.	27	68.	37.	14	70.	6.	39
4		77.	22.	36	78.	48.	58	80.	15.	1	81.	40.	46
5		88.	45.	20	90.	9.	27	91.	33.	21	92.	57.	0
6		99.	52.	6	101.	14.	34	102.	36.	52	103.	59.	1
7		110.	47.	42	112.	9.	6	113.	30.	25	114.	51.	49
6	Aldebaran	50.	36.	10	52.	4.	5	53.	31.	57	54.	59.	44
7		62.	17.	43	63.	45.	10	65.	12.	34	66.	39.	57
8	Pollux.	31.	25.	48	32.	53.	11	34.	20.	40	35.	48.	12
9		43.	7.	5	44.	35.	4	46.	3.	8	47.	31.	15
10	Regulus.	17.	51.	57	19.	20.	36	20.	49.	26	22.	18.	27
11		29.	45.	36	31.	15.	26	32.	45.	26	34.	15.	35
12		41.	48.	49	43.	19.	55	44.	54.	10	46.	22.	36
13		54.	2.	11	55.	34.	36	57.	7.	12	58.	39.	59
14	66.	26.	28	68.	0.	18	69.	34.	20	71.	8.	33	
15	Spica μ	25.	4.	34	26.	39.	23	28.	14.	26	29.	49.	44
16		37.	49.	37	39.	25.	14	41.	3.	5	42.	40.	8
17		50.	48.	40	52.	26.	59	54.	5.	31	55.	44.	15
18		64.	1.	2	65.	41.	3	67.	21.	18	69.	1.	48
19	Antares.	31.	37.	14	33.	19.	7	35.	1.	13	36.	43.	32
20		45.	18.	29	47.	2.	10	48.	46.	5	50.	30.	12
21		59.	14.	6	60.	59.	31	62.	45.	11	64.	31.	2
22		73.	23.	37	75.	10.	43	76.	58.	2	78.	45.	31
23	Capri-corni.	33.	17.	26	35.	4.	38	36.	52.	4	38.	39.	45
24		47.	41.	9	49.	29.	53	51.	18.	44	53.	7.	40
25	Aquilæ.	65.	57.	35	67.	29.	54	69.	2.	36	70.	35.	39
26		78.	24.	51	79.	59.	9	81.	33.	29	83.	7.	45

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HELD AT WASHINGTON
FOR THE PURPOSE OF FIXING
A PRIME MERIDIAN
AND
A UNIVERSAL DAY.

OCTOBER, 1884.

PROTOCOLS OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

WASHINGTON, D. C.
GIBSON BROS., PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS.
1884.



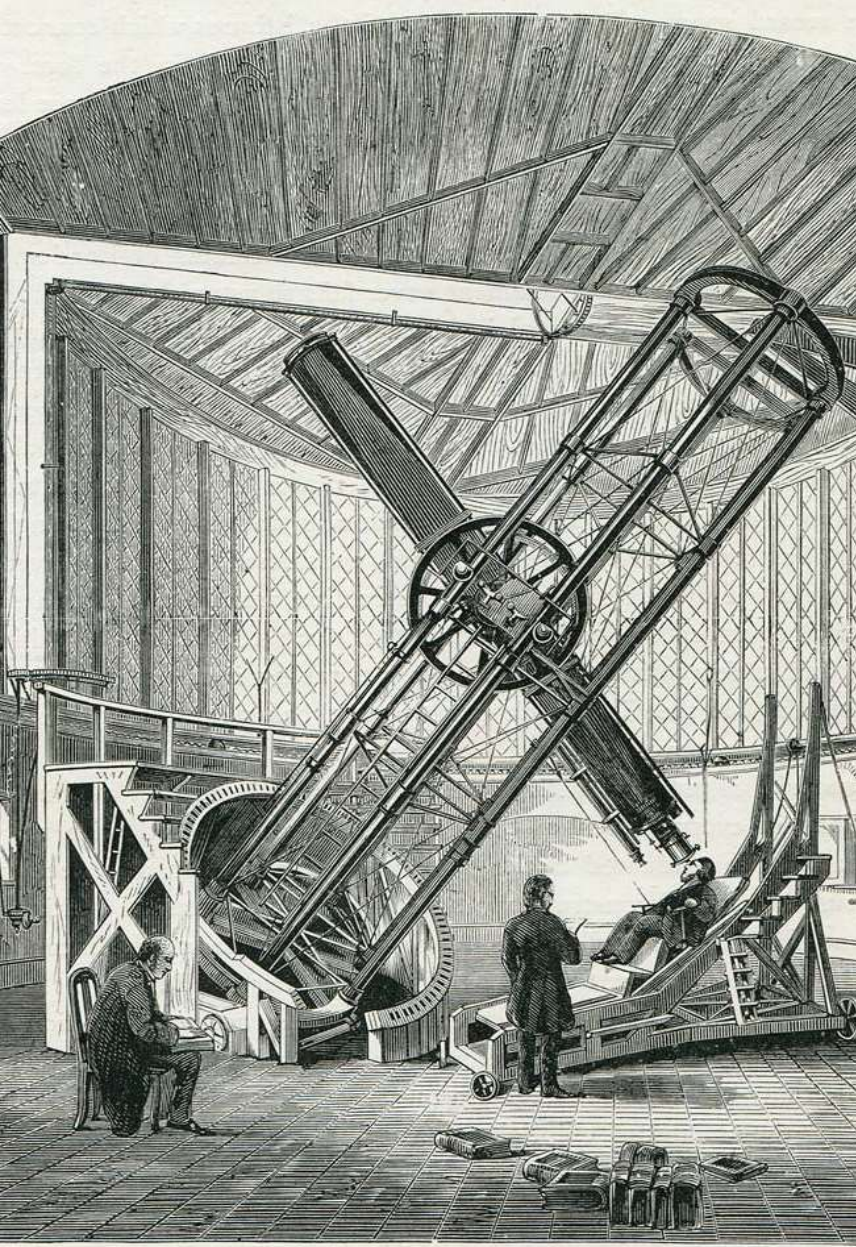


George Biddell Airy

HERCULES

- Astronomer Royal 1835-1881
- Airy Transit Circle – still defines the Prime Meridian of the World today
- Expansion of the observatory
- Magnetic and meteorological data
- Additional telescopes, including the altazimuth telescope and the original Great Equatorial Telescope



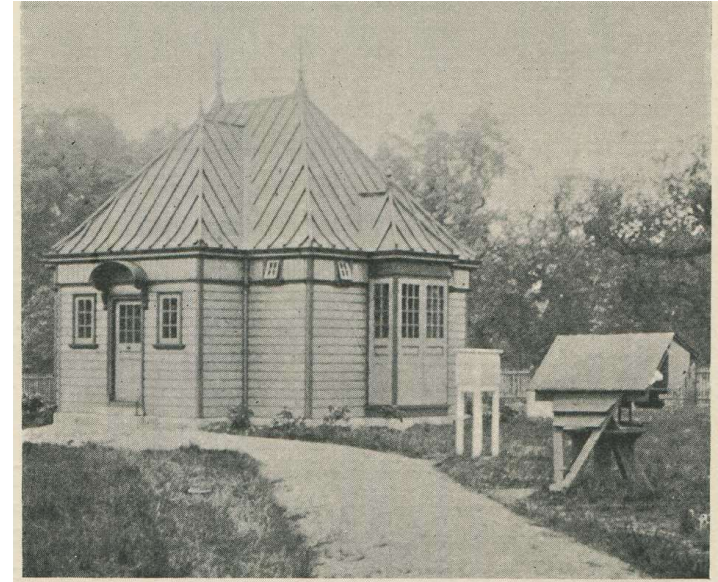
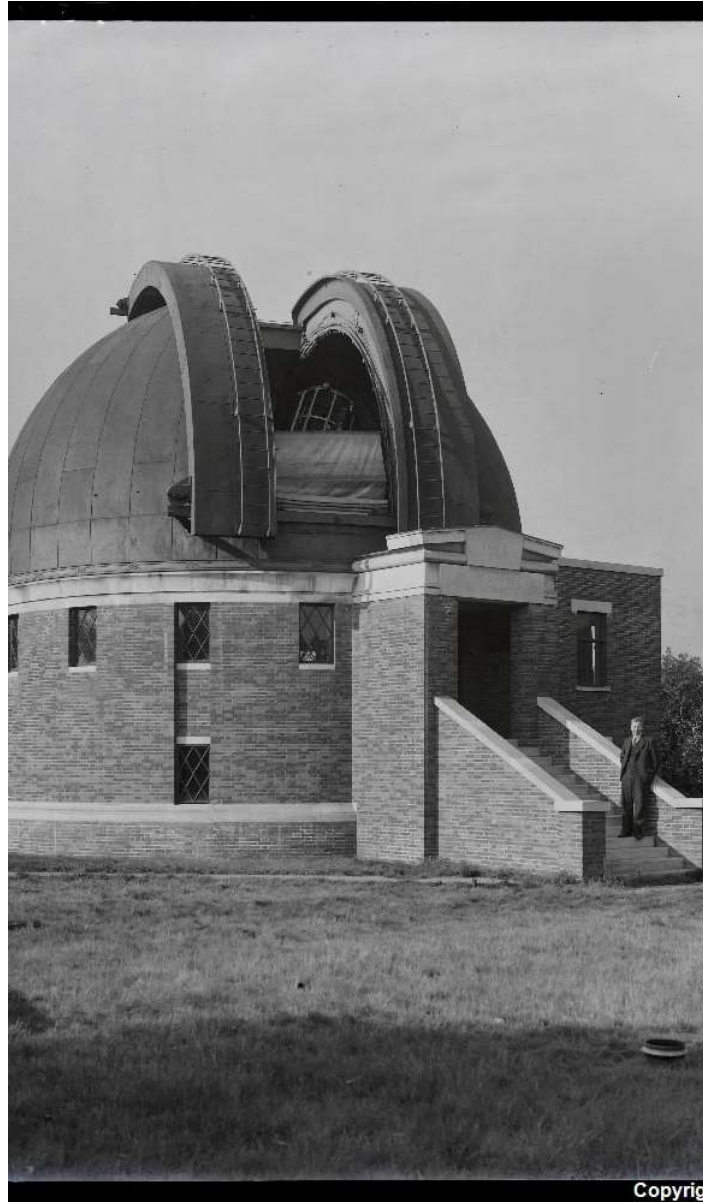




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Herstmonceux, East Sussex



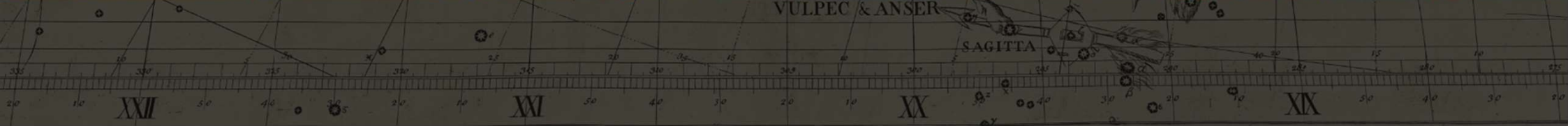
Credit: Mike Meynell







HERCULES



VULPEC & ANSER

SAGITTA

XXI

XX

XIX

XVIII

Thank you for watching!



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