

## AHS Annual Meeting 2017 'A Life in the Day of Josiah Emery'

To be held in the Leopold Muller Lecture Theatre at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF, on Saturday 20 May 2017

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| 10.00 | Museum doors open. Registration with tea, coffee and biscuits                        | 14.00 | Annual General Meeting and presentation of awards.                                     |
| 10.30 | Chairman's introduction  | 15.00 | Lisa White, <i>Home and Shop: Interiors of the London town house of the 1780s</i>      |
| 10.35 | James Nye, <i>A Life in a Day: Josiah Emery, 33 Cockspur Street, 19 March 1781</i>   | 15.35 | Roger Smith, <i>The immigrant craftsman: Emery in London</i>                           |
| 11.10 | Jonathan Betts, <i>Josiah Emery. The watchmaker, his business and his clientele</i>  | 16.10 | Jerry White, <i>Crime and Society: The legal and political climate in 1780s London</i> |
| 11.45 | Peter Guillery, <i>Shop-houses and built contexts: Emery's premises and environs</i> | 16.40 | Closing words  |
| 12.15 | Lunch in Queen's House   | 17.00 | The museum closes  |



Thomas Rowlandson, *The Pillory at Charing Cross, 1809*. Emery's house would be in the middle distance.

We look forward to welcoming as many members as possible, and guests are also welcome. The full day programme charge of £20 covers the costs of buffet lunch and refreshment breaks. There is no charge for members wishing to attend the AGM only. Please complete and return your booking form

as soon as possible. General enquiries, and those concerning the AGM, to Ticehurst (01580 200155), enquiries about arrangements at Greenwich to the NMM research executive Lizelle de Jager (020 8312 6716). The Society reserves the right to alter the published programme as necessary.

The day's events have been arranged with the kind sponsorship and support of Sotheby's.

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Stolen from Emery's shop in 1781: a watch identical to this. The burglar was caught and tried.  
Left: watch from a private collection. Right: a scene in the Old Bailey, artist unknown.

This year's conference is based on a rather different and unusual theme. A number of members have expressed an interest in knowing more about 'the life and times' of some of the more celebrated names in horological history, and Josiah Emery (?1725–1794) has been chosen to go under the spotlight. Beyond Emery's horological output, there is a limited amount we know about the man himself, but that does not mean that we cannot look at the world he inhabited and learn more generally about the life of a watchmaker such as Emery in business in London in the 1780s. As a focus for discussion, we start with a burglary that took place at Emery's shop in Cockspur Street in March 1781, and look at what can be learnt from the evidence given at the trial of the thief at the Old Bailey.

Naturally Emery's professional contribution will be discussed, as will his place in the horological pantheon, at this most intensely interesting period in horological and scientific history. From the evidence in the court case and other surviving documents, there is a certain amount which can be conjectured about Emery's premises in Cockspur Street. We will hear about the typical layout and furnishings of such a middle class tradesman's shop and home in London at the time, and consider the daily personal and business routines at that period.

Swiss-born, Emery was a first generation migrant making a highly successful career in London. What were his social and professional networks and how did his 'ex-pat' community fit in London? These networks are now

becoming much better understood and will be discussed in one of the papers. The burglary and resulting trial provide a fascinating insight into the fate of those whose existence in the great Metropolis had taken a turn for the worse, resorting to crime to support themselves. Given the relatively high value of their products, for watch and clockmakers the risk of suffering a burglary has always been a part of professional life, and the many contemporary accounts of such incidents reveal how the criminal justice system worked at that time. Those such as Josiah Emery, who were subject of such crime, could play a role in the fate of the defendant, and what happened in this particular case will be revealed.

As far as we know, no portrait of Josiah Emery has survived, but it is hoped that 'A Life in the Day of Josiah Emery' will provide an interesting and engaging glimpse into his world.



Dial of an important precision regulator signed 'Josiah Emery London', 1805-08, height 45 cms. British Museum 1958,1006.2065.

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