



A Greenwich Canvas and Beyond

Margaret Kaye

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A GREENWICH CANVAS & BEYOND Greenwich? Magnificent, magnetic and mysterious? Understand more by tracking time in compelling chapters leisurely foraying through two millenia at Greenwich, focusing on the events before and after Canaletto painted, in 1752, the completed Royal Seamen's Hospital fronting the Thames. On the hill behind, the Royal Observatory, built in 1676, provided the very expert astronomy that led to the local time transforming the world: the much revered Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and Longitude Line 0.00° (Prime Meridian). Now the old fishing village and royal estate, 10 Km (6 mi) downriver from central London, is a World Heritage Site displaying spellbinding history, science, and seamanship. The reader - junior, senior, armchair traveller, future visitor, or simply curious - may find entertainment and easy query solving. The achievements of the 1st Astronomer Royal John Flamsteed, clockmaker John "Longitude" Harrison and Capt James Cook circumnavigating with the unique timepiece chronometer K1 on trial, are primarily noted and their lives explored elsewhere in the UK. They were ordinary people who did extraordinary things, pioneering painstakingly their chosen belief and craft with incredible vision. Each was born in a small village; one in Derbyshire and two in Yorkshire. The astronomer John, and clockmaker John, remained Mr Flamsteed and Mr Harrison to the end of their long lives. The navigator James Cook would probably have been promoted to very senior naval rank had he not been killed, aged fifty. He is probably the best known of the three. Primarily because of them, and their inspiration to others, the world owes the incomparable benefits of Greenwich Mean Time and accurate longitude calculation proven at sea during the 18th century. Greenwich Mean Time, initially pioneered to bring order to the chaos of inaccurate time-measuring systems, progressed to provide a basic reassurance and common denominator worldwide. It would become an essential ingredient of many tremendous achievements down the centuries and remains an integral part of global life. The Greenwich World Heritage Site is profoundly rich in the nation's history and technological development, particularly from the 17th century onwards. The knowledge of its wonders might appear a bit overwhelming for the novice or greenhorn to absorb in one brief visit. For anyone interested in Greenwich, and Mean Time, this book has been compiled – by a lay person for lay people. It began as a short article about a day out to Greenwich and then snowballed. The result is but a few basic stitches in a titanic tapestry of history, geography, science, astronomy, and maritime endeavour. The dates are included merely as signposts and stepping stones to accompany the reader when wandering through, perhaps in wonderment, two thousand years of events. For clarity and convenience the main text is divided. Part I deals with Greenwich as the home of GMT. Part II concentrates on the lives of John Flamsteed, John Harrison, and Captain Cook, beyond Greenwich. The Appendix provides dates of events (with explanations for some), chronologically presented from 0 AD to 2000 > for easy reference. The Gazeteer gives information on access to Greenwich, and other places in England mentioned in the narrative that might be of interest to those of exploring inclination. There is Bibliography and Index, plus numerous color illustrations.(Black/white version createspace.com/3832527)

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