

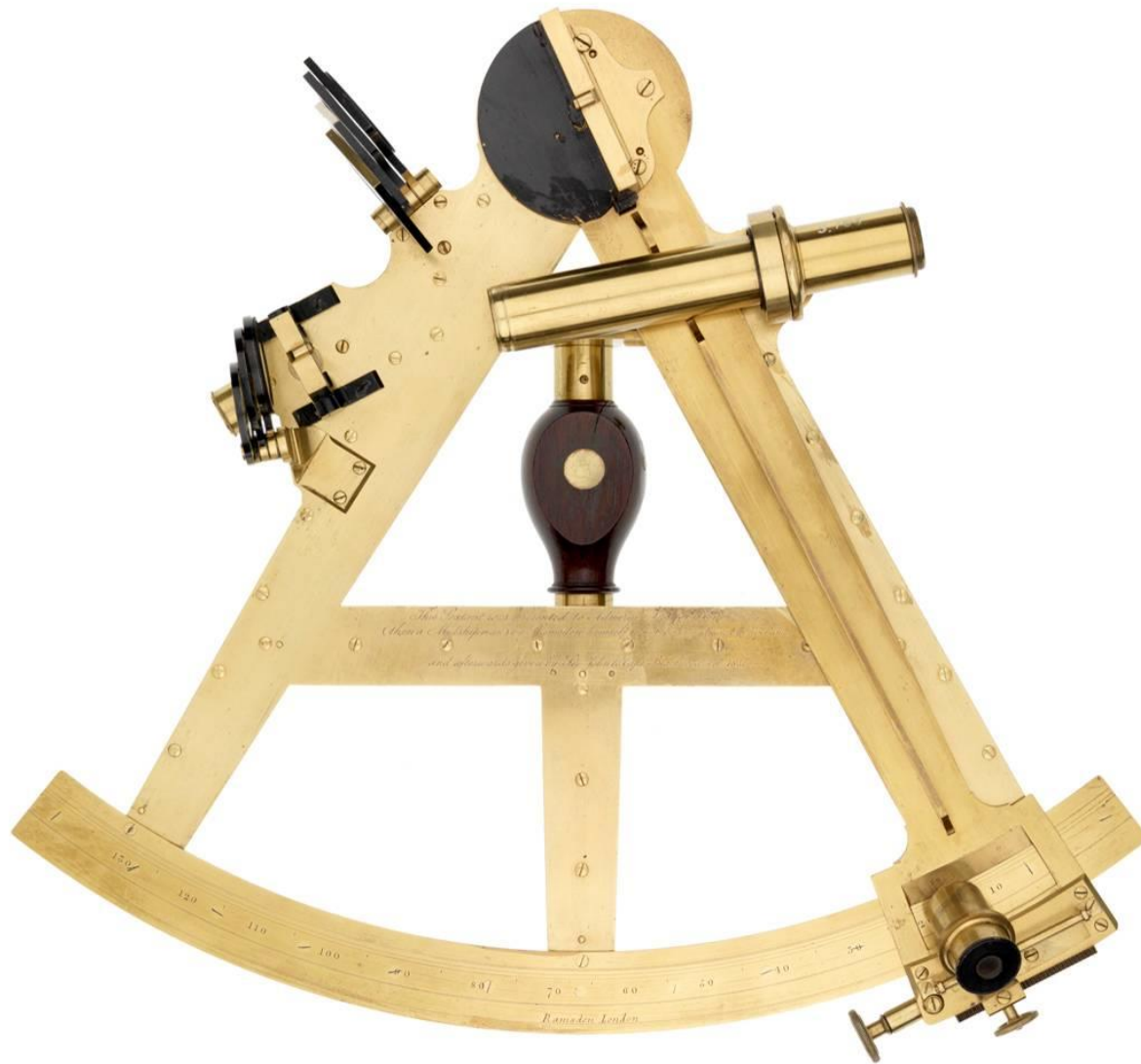
Objects, interpretations and narratives

A single-object case study

Richard Dunn

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

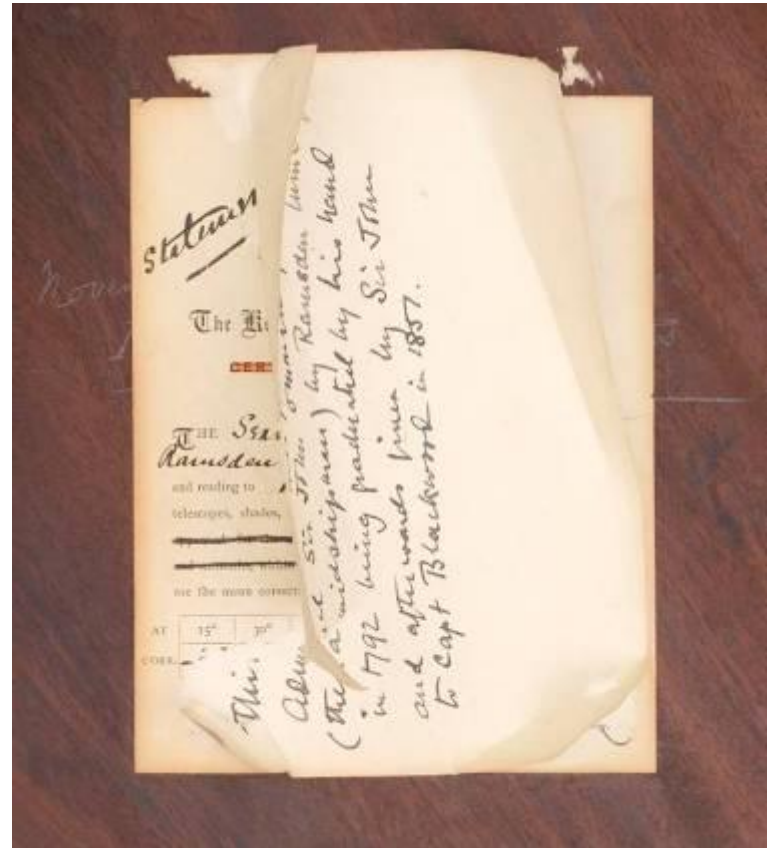
2 July 2010



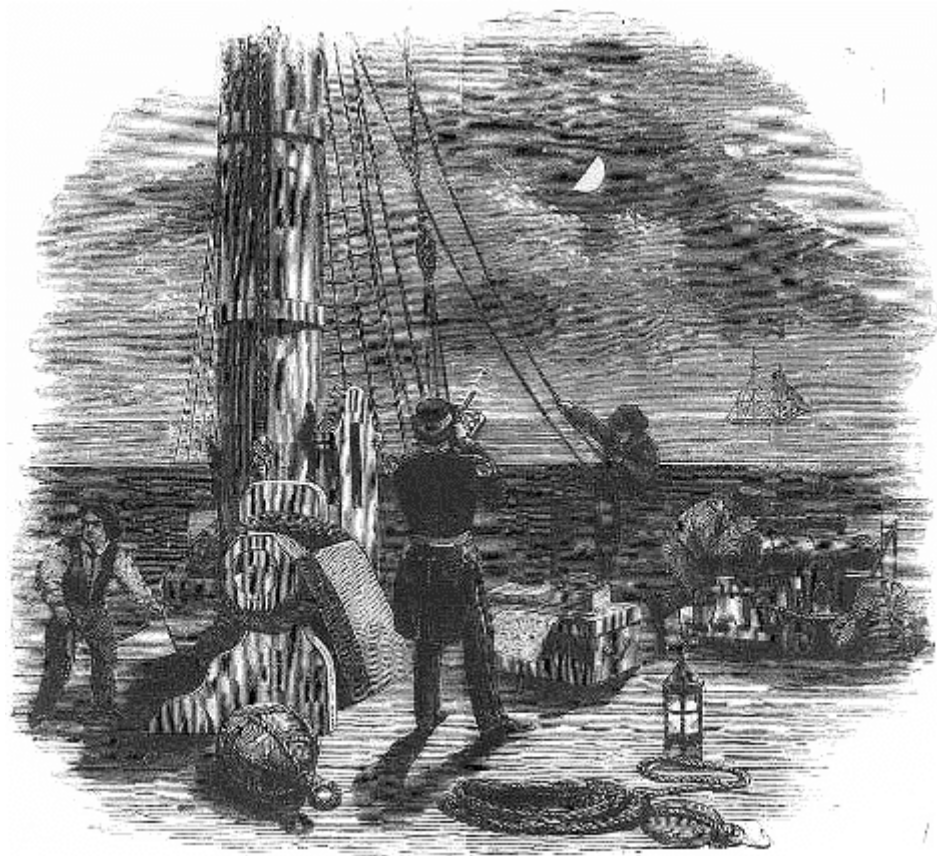
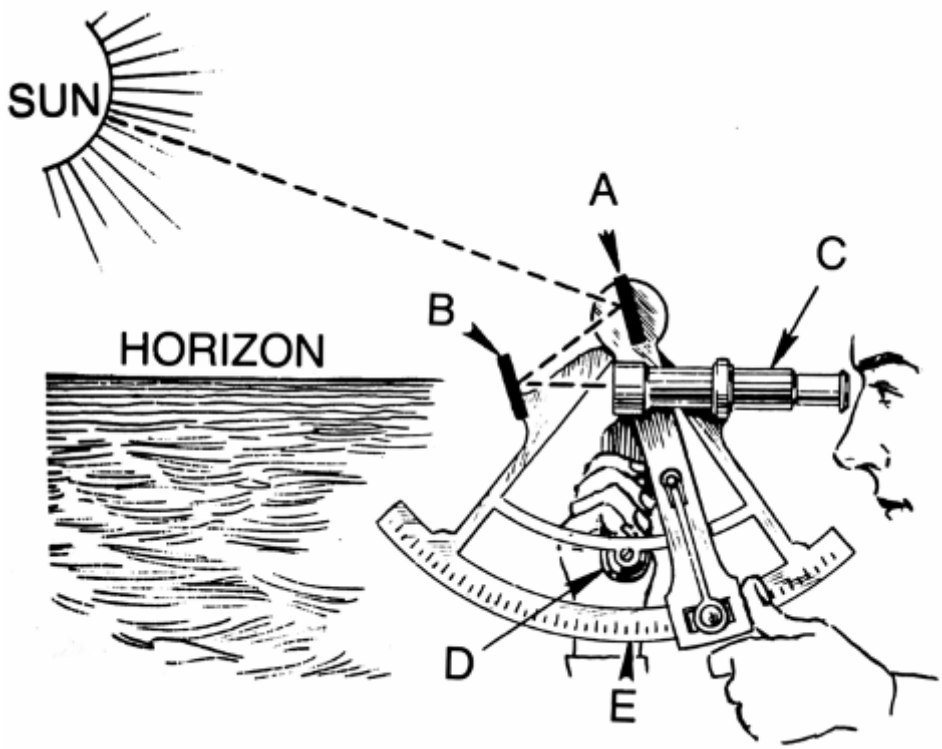
The object

Sextant, signed by Ramsden, London, dated 1792

(National Maritime Museum NAV1140)

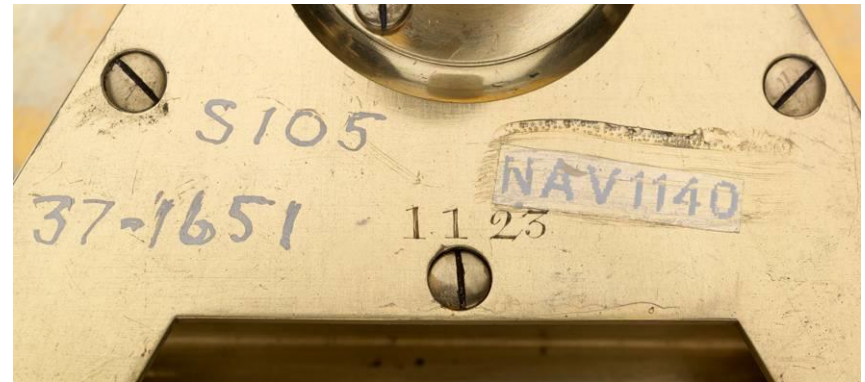


Object case and detail of label



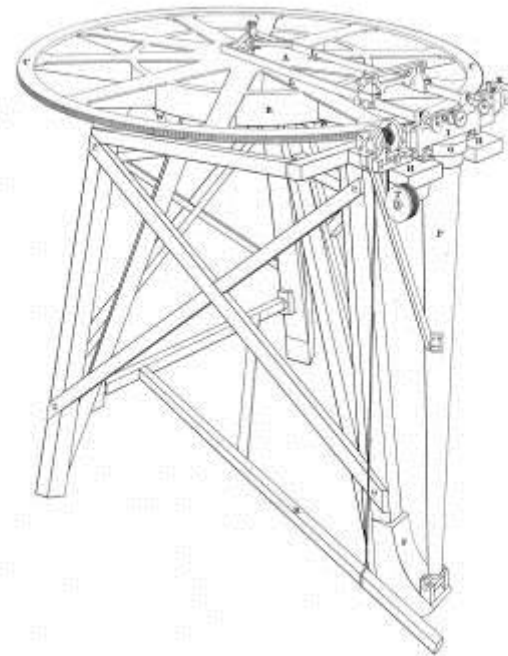
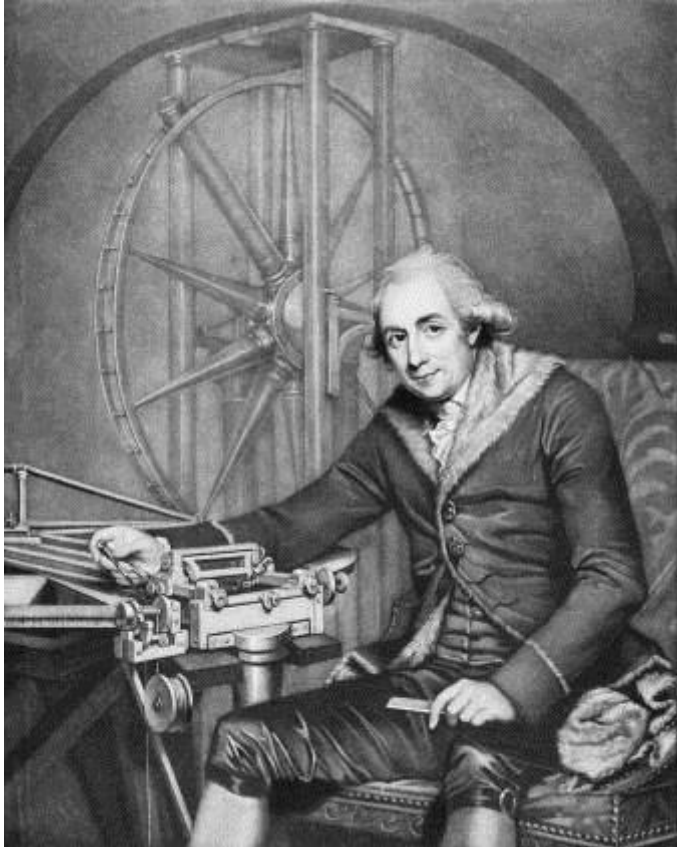
Using a sextant

*This Sextant was presented to Admiral Sir John Crammer,
(then a Midshipman) by Ramsden himself in 1792, being graduated by his hand,
and afterwards given by Sir John to Capt. Blackwood, in 1851.*

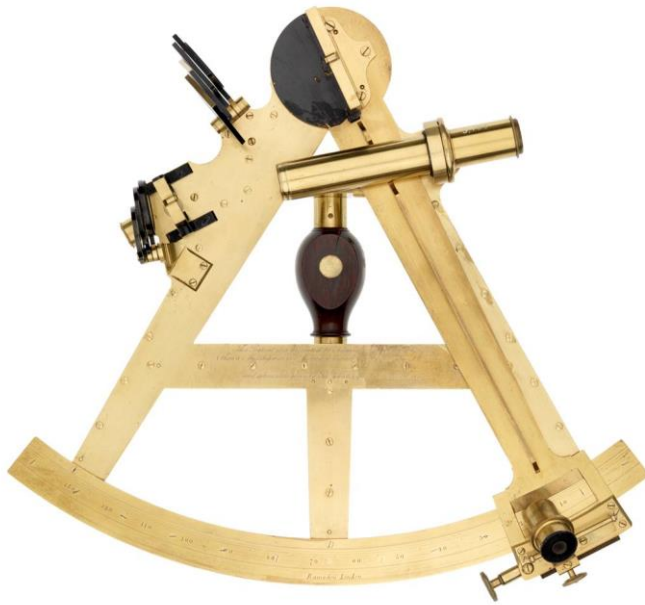


Manufacture and provenance information on the sextant
(National Maritime Museum NAV1140)

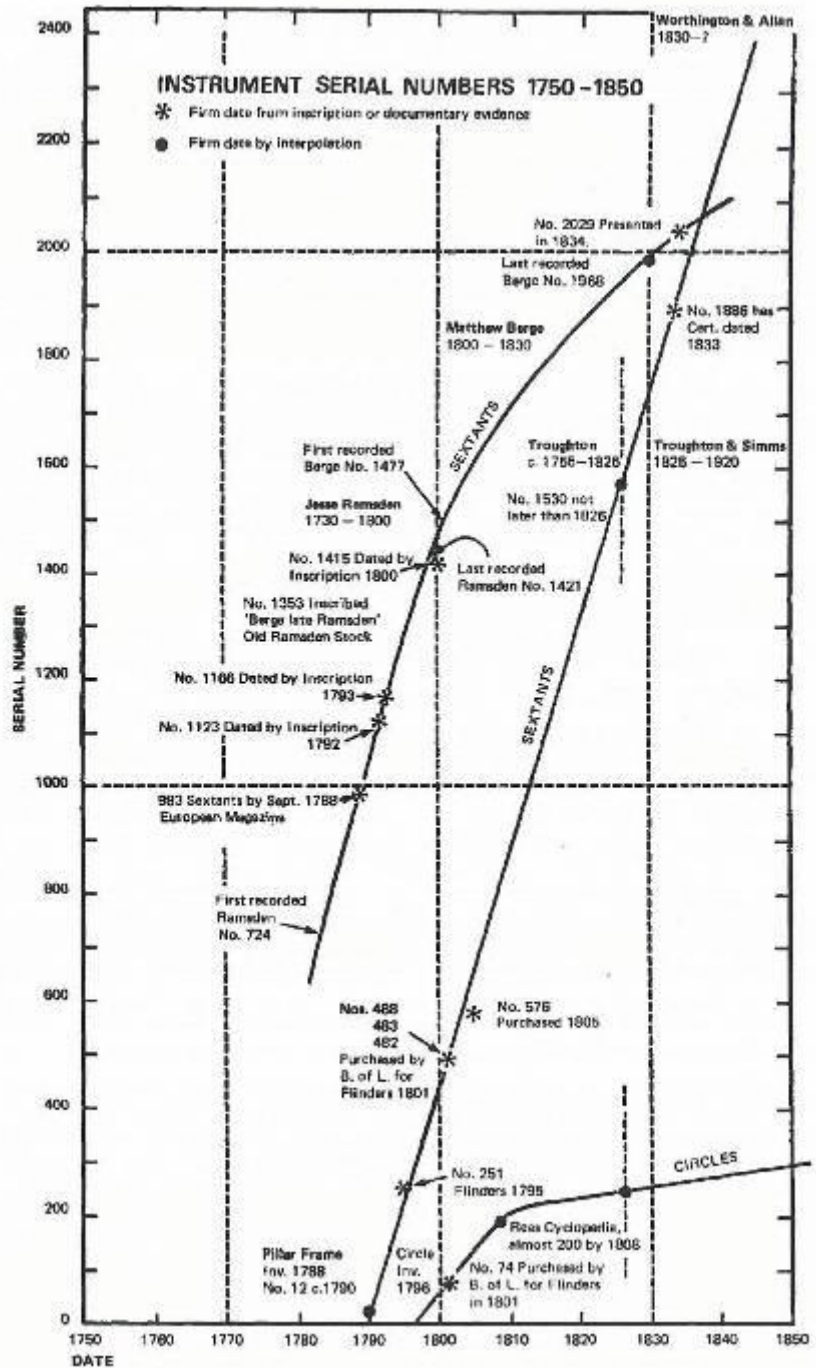
*This Sextant was presented to Admiral Sir John Crammer,
(then a Midshipman) by Ramsden himself in 1792 being graduated by his hand.*



Thinking about manufacture
How the scale was really divided
Jesse Ramsden and his dividing engine



Thinking about manufacture
The sextant used as evidence
for Ramsden's output



*This Sextant was presented to Admiral Sir John Ommaney,
(then a Midshipman) by Ramsden himself in 1792, being graduated by his hand.*



Thinking about ownership
John Ommaney (left) and a midshipman (holding an octant, which was cheaper than a sextant)



Thinking about ownership

**Gillray's caricature of the Macartney embassy to China, 1792–3. Ommaney served on the voyage.
(British Museum)**

*This Sextant was presented to Admiral Sir John Cunningham
(then a Midshipman) by Ramsden himself in 1792 being graduated by his hand,
and afterwards given by Sir John to Capt. Blackwood, in 1855.*



Thinking about ownership

**Captain Blackwood (unknown) and Admiral Purey-Cust,
who bequeathed the sextant to the NMM**



Interpretation

One of the displays incorporating sextants at the NMM. This display concerns the invention of the sextant and the lunar-distance method for determining longitude.