

Public lecture



William Gascoigne (1612 - 44)

Leeds Astronomer

how a spider put Leeds at the forefront of the scientific revolution



by David Sellers

Thursday 21 Sept.

7:30 pm

(7:05 – 7:20

for tea and biscuits)

University House,
(next to the Students' Union
Building)
University of Leeds

William Gascoigne (1612-44) of Middleton, Leeds, was the inventor of the telescopic sight and the micrometer — instruments crucial to the advance of astronomy and precision engineering. He was killed during the English Civil War at the Battle of Marston Moor. His name is now known to historians of science around the world, but for some considerable time after his untimely death at the age of 32, it seemed as if his achievements would be consigned to oblivion. Most of his papers were lost in the maelstrom of war and the few that seemed to have survived later disappeared. This is the story of how his work was rescued and how it came to be central to the rise of modern precision astronomy and engineering. And how it was all due to a serendipitous spider!

David Sellers is a civil engineer by training and before retirement was the Flood Risk Manager of Leeds City Council. He is also a historian of astronomy and has authored or co-authored several books on the subject. He is vice-Chair of the UK-based Society for the History of Astronomy. His book *In Search of William Gascoigne: seventeenth century astronomer* (New York, 2012) is the only book devoted to the short life of Gascoigne. David is currently writing a biography of the Victorian astronomer and educationalist, Charles Thomas Whitmell, who lived for a time in Leeds.

This lecture is free and you do not need a ticket – but if you are coming with a group of friends and would like seats reserving, please contact :-

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