



# **Jesse Ramsden (1735-1800): London's Leading Scientific Instrument Maker (Science, Technology and Culture, 1700-1945)**

*Anita McConnell*

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Jesse Ramsden was one of the most prominent manufacturers of scientific instruments in the latter half of the eighteenth century. To own a Ramsden instrument, be it one of his great theodolites or one of the many sextants and barometers produced at his London workshop, was to own not only an instrument of incredible accuracy and great practical use, but also a thing of beauty. In this, the first biography of Jesse Ramsden, Dr Anita McConnell reconstructs his life and career and presents us with a detailed account of the instrument trade in this period. By studying the life of one prominent instrument maker, the entire practice of the trade is illuminated, from the initial commission, the intricate planning and design, through the practicalities of production, delivery and, crucially, payment for the work. The book will naturally be of immeasurable interest to historians of science and scientific instruments but, as it also sheds light on the increasing commercialisation of the scientific trade on the cusp of the Industrial Revolution, should also interest social and economic historians of the eighteenth century.

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