



Royal
Astronomical
Society

**The 2023 Agnes Mary Clerke Medal for Historical Research is awarded to
Professor James A. Bennett**

Over the past four decades, Professor James A. Bennett has made an outstanding and internationally recognised contribution to the history of astronomy. Working in the context of collections of scientific instruments, chiefly at the Whipple Museum in Cambridge and the History of Science Museum in Oxford, Professor Bennett has focused on the history of practical mathematics, including astronomy and navigation, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. His work, resulting in more than 160 publications and contributing to over 35 exhibitions, has been highly influential among historians and curators of science. Emphasising the tools, practices and wide range of contributors to astronomy, he helped to redefine a field previously focused on great men and their publications. His books include *The Mathematical Science of Christopher Wren* (1982), *The Divided Circle: A History of Instruments for Astronomy, Navigation and Surveying* (1987), *Church, State and Astronomy in Ireland: 200 years of Armagh Observatory* (1990) and *Navigation: A Very Short Introduction* (2017). From 1974 to 1976 he served as archivist and catalogued the manuscript collections. Published in the Society's *Memoirs*, his catalogue has been consulted by generations of historians and remains in much use to this day.

For these reasons Professor Bennett is awarded the Agnes Mary Clerke Medal for Historical Research.