

Café Scientifique Headingley

Monday 12th December 2016 at 7:30pm

Speaker: David Sellers

**Title: William Gascoigne (1612-44), Leeds Astronomer,
Or, How a Spider put Leeds at the Forefront of the Scientific Revolution**



Outline:

William Gascoigne (1612-44) of Middleton, Leeds, was first inventor of the telescopic sight and micrometer—instruments crucial to the advance of astronomy. 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 tragic 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 the progress of science ... Oh, yes, and how it was all due to a serendipitous spider!

Biog: 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 tragically short life of Gascoigne, his invention of the telescopic sight and micrometer, and the turbulent times in which he lived. David is currently writing a biography of the Victorian astronomer and educationalist, Charles Thomas Whitmell, who lived for a time in Leeds.

Venue: The New Headingley Club 56 St Michael's Rd., Leeds LS6 3BG

Time: Club opens at 7:00pm for drinks & the room at 7:30; talk begins promptly at 7:45pm

Entry: Donation please for room hire and expenses: **£3 at the door**



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