



Portrait of Nevil Maskelyne (1732–1811)

Date made
1776

Object ref.
ZBA4305

Credit
National Maritime Museum

Description

Nevil Maskelyne was the fifth Astronomer Royal at Greenwich, from 1765 to his death, and a Commissioner of Longitude. His first achievement at Greenwich was to establish regular publication of the Nautical Almanac. This was first issued in 1766 and disseminated the astronomical tables essential for accurate navigation, especially finding longitude by lunar distances.

Questions

1. Describe this image.
2. What advantages were there to a system that allowed sailors and navigators to find their longitude without the aid of a watch?
3. What disadvantages were there to this system?