



Time check



Most Royal Navy and merchant ships used marine chronometers and deck watches for navigation until the 1950s.

The accuracy of the timekeepers was vital for the safety of ships that had to approach coasts at night and in bad weather, reach destinations at high speed or rendezvous with each other in mid-ocean.

The Royal Observatory coordinated the servicing, repair and testing of all the Royal Navy's sea-going chronometers.

In this building, staff checked and rated the accuracy of every single Royal Navy chronometer. The timekeepers were also heated and cooled to measure their performance in arctic or tropical conditions.

The chronometers you see here were used on many ships which explored, fought, patrolled and traded across the world's oceans.

Navigation officer of the USS Constellation, 1800

Master of the SS Great Britain, 1842

