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International Map Collectors Society 1985 Annual London Symposium with the National Maritime Museum

Saturday 22 June 1985
by Terry Kay

The day commenced, for many of the participants, with a leisurely cruise from Charing Cross to Greenwich during which the weather was excellent. Many people were busy reading "The Times" which featured an article, on the Symposium, entitled 'Map Followers Lost in the Past.' The Times journalist had suggested that, if the captain of our boat was in difficulties, there would be no shortage of navigational advice available from the IMCoS members. Thankfully, no such advice was asked for or given!

At Greenwich those arriving by road, rail and boat all met up and proceeded to the lecture Theatre for the 11.00 a.m. start. Valerie Scott, Editor of *The Map Collector* was the Symposium Chairman and in this capacity gave the introductory talk, outlining the programme for the day ahead. Philip Annis, Deputy Director, welcomed the IMCoS members on behalf of the National Maritime Museum.

Christopher Terrell, Curator of Hydrography at the National Maritime Museum, presented the opening lecture entitled "The Anatomy of a Sea Chart." He confessed, at the start of his talk, that his lecture title had been chosen partly to

provide him with a sufficiently wide theme so he could explore those aspects of maritime cartography of particular interest to him. Mr. Terrell then proceeded to display some beautiful slides illustrating the development of the sea chart from the early portolan charts of the Mediterranean, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to an example of a current British Admiralty Chart.

A practical demonstration, on an overhead projector, of how the compass grid on a portolan chart was constructed, was particularly clear. The use of lead and line in the measurement of depths was shown to be very important as evidenced by their frequent depiction in nautical books and on title pages of maritime atlases. An example illustrated during the lecture was that of the well known title page from "The Mariners' Mirror" of 1588, an anglicised version of Lucas Janszoon Waghenaer's "De Spiegel der Zeevaert," the first printed sea-atlas. One of the many hazards faced by the surveying parties of the past was brought to life by a slide of a chart featuring a note "Natives treacherous and savage." Christopher Terrell was able to assure his audience that, on this occasion, somebody