

The appointment, together with his work for Wren's architectural firm, made him the single most significant figure in the grand project for rebuilding London, an enterprise whose swiftness amazed foreign visitors. It is in Jardine's accounts of this period of Hooke's life, rather than in her accounts of his scientific labors, that Hooke really comes alive.

A feature that recommends Hooke to biographers is the existence of his famous diaries, which both Jardine and Inwood use well. The diaries sketch out the business of Hooke's everyday life, the breadth of his social acquaintance, and the details of his domestic existence. Jardine and Inwood both discuss his constant concerns with his health and with medical remedies, few of which seemed to have done much good. The diaries are also the source for what historians know about his sex life, without which no biography is nowadays complete.

Jardine's book is lavishly illustrated and is more appealing to the eye. Inwood's, by contrast, is comfortable and old-fashioned and takes its biographical task seriously, proceeding largely chronologically and trying not to leave out important events in the course of Hooke's life. Jardine attempts more vigorously to develop themes, such as the long-lasting importance of Hooke's childhood in the Isle of Wight. His early years on the island seem to have shaped his later geological ideas and provided social connections (including sources of servants) that continued to be important to him until the end.

Anyone seriously interested in Hooke has, in addition to Jardine's and Inwood's books, plenty of specialized scholarly work available. The layperson who wants to learn something about Hooke's tremendously inventive scientific career would do well to start with Inwood, whereas the reader who is interested in the social and cultural life of later 17th-century London will profit much from Jardine's colorful and insightful book.

Peter Dear
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

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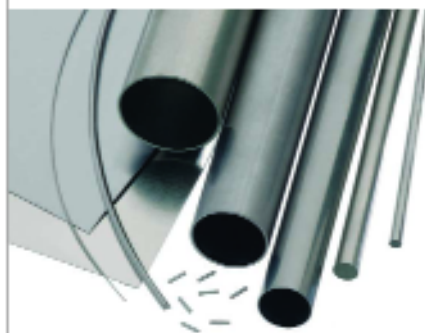
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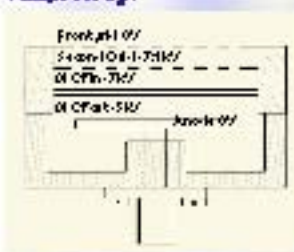
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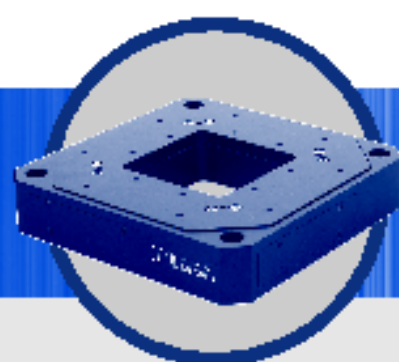
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