



# Dial Time

The SunInfo OnLine Newsletter

April 2015 Edition

## SunInfo's Dial Time Newsletter

A little diversion into dialing: Here can be seen a few of the stories taken from the SunInfo web pages in the past months, some new topics and some updates on some older stories..

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## Amersham's 'Different' Dial



Amersham in Buckinghamshire of course has a famous and wonderful painted vertical declining dial on Whielden St, a road roughly leading from the town centre. There are one or two others recorded nearby but in 2007 a really quite unusual dial was discovered by that most diligent of dial recorders, Ian Butson. Not recorded in the Na-

tional Register at the request of its owner, it is nevertheless freely visible from the nearby road. It adorns the South facing wall of *The Dial House*, a dwelling once occupied by artist William Monk (1863-1937) who is mainly known now for his London drawings and etchings.

Unusually inset into a shaped, bordered, brick recess and dated 1808 across the centre, it is a vertical dial constructed out of lead sheet with an iron gnomon and iron scroll supporter. The gnomon appears to have been poorly refixed at some time.

The dial is additionally unusual in that it has an elliptical time scale, and has hour lines but apparently without numerals. It appears to be decorated by an engraved angel guarding both the ellipse, and the date in Roman numerals.

A Latin motto takes up the bottom of the panel in compressed capitals. It reads:

**Lux et Umbra Vicissim Sed Semper Amor**

This translates as *Light and shadow by turns but always love*: a pun on the vicissitudes of life. It is a motto which has been in use at least since 1724 and is one which was later used at the front of that wonderful children's book, "Moondial".

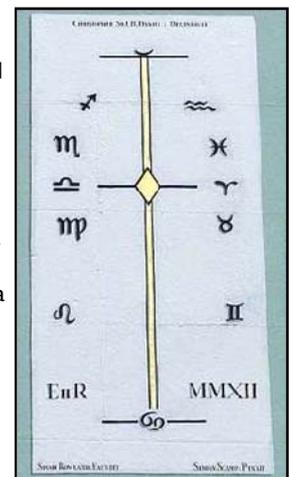
## The Faversham Noon Mark

BSS President Christopher Daniel's most recent sundial commission, is a Noon Mark which has been prominently placed on the Guildhall in the town's Market Place and is most certainly worth a look. It was inaugurated by the Mayor a little time back.

Christopher remarked to the local press afterwards that he felt it was quite an honour for the town council to give him permission to paint a sundial on the Guildhall which, after all, is a listed building having parts

dating back to 1574. Chris had wanted it to be something special to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The dial was painted by Simon Scamp, a local sign-writer and it was funded by local brewers Shepherd Neame as well as by a number of anonymous donors.



## Smiling Sundials?

Here are three dials that seem to be smiling! The first two are in Germany. That on the left is on the Wehrkirche in Dörnthal Sachsen. The dial in the centre is on a building in the market square of Nuremberg. The one on the right is in Kaunas in Lithuania. That one displays the motto *Lucen Demonstrat Umbra*. None seem to be known in the UK. Do you know of others? If so please let the webmaster know at the link on the last page and we shall publish them on *SunInfo*.



## Wandering and Wondering—in Woodstock

**Why should there be two nearly identical and remarkably accurate, dials in a small Oxfordshire town?**

Walking into the lovely Market town of Woodstock in Oxfordshire by either of its entrances from the main road, is always delightful. On Woodstock Town Hall there is a dial which is carved into a block of white stone or perhaps marble.



The dial on the Town Hall

It was way back in 1998 that dial enthusiast Anthony Capon first drew attention to the fact that the Town Hall dial was unusual in that the block is placed on a ledge and turned or canted, to make it read correctly. The suspicion then was that it was a dial that had been made for another location.

However, closer inspection shows that the so called limiting hours are not 6am and 6pm as they would be for a direct South dial and the gnomon is not exactly placed along the noon line. Therefore the dial was constructed as one that declines, in this case to the West and apparently then turned to make it

read correctly. The plot thickens. There are only a few other vertical declining canted dials known in the National Sundial Register so it would be nice to find the explanation. The answer might just possibly be only a short distance away at the back of St Mary Magdalene's Church in Woodstock where there is a similar, older, larger and very well made dial.

The Church was built in the 12th century, in the reign of King Henry II, as a Chapel-of-Ease to the Parish Church of St. Martin, Bladon. It was probably constructed for the convenience of the Court since the King was often in residence at his Royal Manor



The dial on the Church

of Woodstock. Long after the church was built – though when we do not know – the sundial was installed, It was moved to the West in the 19thC after some emergency building works and there it remains to this day.

It only takes a moment to realise that the Town Hall dial is a near complete copy of the St Mary Magdalene dial (even down to its backward lettering for 7am and 8am!) rather than one delineated for its location. In fact this copy is probably relatively modern. It is known only from the 1950s and was 'redrawn' in the early 1990s. See what you think from the pictures here.

## Counting the Sunny Hours

It is certainly true that mottoes like 'Sunny Hours' or 'I'll Only Count Your Sunny Hours' are these days generally regarded as pointers to doubtful or fake dials.

Yet, the Latin originator of these mottoes: *Non Numero Horas Nisi Serenas* (I count no hours that are not bright) has an excellent pedigree and, with its related mottoes, is arguably the second most common UK dial motto after *Tempus Fugit*. Indeed the slightly expanded English version of the motto e.g. "Let others tell of storms and showers; I'll only count your sunny hours" is nearly as common as its Latin version whereas the incidence of the English "Time Flies" is only one third that of its Latin counterpart. The difference is puzzling since Mrs Gatty merely records the English version as being inscribed on a fairly obscure 1870 dial in Co Kerry and she gives no earlier reference than that. In its Latin form it is said to have been Tennyson's favourite sundial motto but that cannot account for the popularity of the English version.

The matter becomes a little clearer when it is realised that the expanded English version was the one selected by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in 1892 for the dial that was placed on one of the several extensions then being made at Sandringham House in order to improve the accommodation for visiting Heads of State.

So, could the popularity of the English motto be attributed to its use by the Royal Family? Quite possibly.

There's an interesting further coincidence to this story too. It relates to the horizontal dial which used to be outside the Swiss Cottage in the grounds of Queen Victoria's residence at Osborne, in the IOW.

That dial disappeared for many years until that 'sleuth extraordinaire', John Ingram made several visits and finally discovered that it had been taken into store by the gardeners on the basis that the dial was thought to be a more modern one installed after the time Edward VII gave part of

the House over as a convalescent hospital for Officers.

Now that may indeed be the case although it does seem odd for the dial to have been placed near a children's chalet if that was so.

The interesting thing is that that dial too has an English motto. Interestingly, it is "I count the bright hours only". Odd that it should be one of the same family of mottoes so favoured by Edward VII and Queen Alexandra for Sandringham.

Could it be that King Edward VII first became acquainted with it as a child at Osborne after all? Perhaps the dial is older than we think?



The Sandringham Dial

**Mottoes like 'Sunny Hours' are often regarded as pointers to doubtful or fake dials.**

**But...**

## "Remember and Celebrate with Island Pride ..."

Saturday, 9 May 2015 will mark the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of Guernsey after five long years of occupation by the German forces. This will be marked from 6am to 9:45pm with no fewer than 22 events! Of particular interest to diallists is the **Guernsey Liberation Monument** which was precisely placed, using electronic age technology and David Le Conte's exemplary design, to mark the path of the Sun on each anniversary of the Island's libera-

tion on the 9th May 1945. The tip of the shadow of the five metre high obelisk falls on a curve of stone seating throughout the day and provides a link between 1945, and each Liberation Day thereafter where the event has the above title as its theme.

Each year on the 9th of May the obelisk shadow silently commemorates the Liberation by following the precisely delineated path, the shadow tip pointing at the designated

times to the inscribed events of 1945: the signing of the surrender of the German forces at 7.15 am, the landing of the British Liberating Force at 8.00 am, the unfurling of the Union Flag at 10.15 am and Winston Churchill's memorable words: "Our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today" and of course ending with: *Toutes graces au Bouan Dju* (Thanks be to God)





THE  
**SUNINFO**  
NEWSLETTER  
APRIL 2015

Have you any sundial news or information that you think would be of interest to others? If so please send the webmaster an email via our website at [www.bit.ly/suninfo](http://www.bit.ly/suninfo)

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## Isleworth Restored...

The Sundial at All Saints' Church in Isleworth has recently been wonderfully restored by Royal Warrant holders Charles Perry Restorations of St Albans. A very interesting and important dial, it is the only one known in the UK to have a scale that indicates the sun's altitude. Sadly as may be seen from the first image here, it had been allowed to get into a very poor—and very dangerous—state before the experts were called in. As well as the usual problems associated with any dial restoration this one had a few more!



The gnomon was hanging off its painted wooden dial plate and could have

fallen at any time. The back plate was rotten, one mahogany corbel had already come off, the paint finish was nearly gone and the delineation at its last restoration had been faulted in many ways. Once in the hands of the restorers, the gnomon was straightened, a nodus added, the back plate replaced, the whole dial properly delineated, a duplicate mahogany corbel carved and good wood let in to the remaining one. The whole dial was then repainted using old photographs of earlier versions as guides and the dial fully tested on a carefully constructed and oriented jig before being reinstalled. An old friendship renewed!



Dial after Charles Perry's Restoration

## SunInfo—All the world's sundial news—just a click away!

**SunInfo - Pages Devoted to Information and Comment about Sundials and Societies in Britain and the World**  
Including an independent web resource that may be of interest and use to everyone interested in the world of sundials. Over 100 documents are now archived or linked here!  
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<p><b>News, Information and Comment about Sundials, Sundial Websites, Sundial Societies and Related Matters</b></p> <p><b>6423</b> The full daily listing of the Equation of Time for 2015 is available <a href="#">Here!</a></p> <p><b>22,590+</b> visitors to SunInfo! In update 2015 this web site has welcomed this huge number of visitors to see our sundial related news, archives and comment web site! In terms of 2015 we had record breaking interest in the run up to the 25th BSS Conference, 23,000 in March 2014 and 22,682 in April! Now following the protracted and recurring problems with the BSS Trustees, we have had a further record of 28,302 hits in November 2014! Thank you all for your interest and feedback. Do keep coming back to see what's new. We update this site all the time.</p> <p><b>More than 2,710</b> visitors have now checked out our page about the 2012 BSS Cheltenham Conference, a conference that was held nearly <b>three years ago</b> that level of interest is little short of amazing. Mind you, our page includes commentaries, photographs and the results of delegates' opinions. Sadly things that are no longer published by the current BSS Council about its conferences. Indeed, and by way of example, there is still no website entry of consequence about the 2013 meeting in Edinburgh on the BSS site nor one about the 2014 Greenwich Conference either. Why ever not you may ask? Well, it might appear to you to be a device for</p>	<p><b>News</b></p> <p><b>629</b> A novel use of sunlight prediction! As of March 2015, planning permission has been approved or is pending approval for no fewer than <b>236</b> new high-rise buildings in central London! And to think that even in the 1960s St Paul's Cathedral was still the tallest building in London! In readiness for this new onslaught, architects NBBJ of Seattle and with offices in other world cities, have devised a way for tall buildings not to bring with them the usual shadow blight. <a href="#">More here</a></p> <p><b>620</b> With just over <b>25 days</b> to go, the programme for the 2015 BSS Conference is being put together. Following his absence last year owing to illness, BSS's Vice President Fred Sawyer has however confirmed his attendance this year and is intriguingly to speak about a relatively unknown, 17thC dialist. See our special <a href="#">Conference page</a> for details! 20.04.15</p> <p><b>619</b> Capt. Michael Francis Anton <b>Martin, DFC</b>, wartime pilot of Spitfires and then Lancaster bombers, Civilian pilot for BCC and then Irish Avrovec and a long time horologist and sundial enthusiast, died peacefully in North Woodchester on 25th January 2015, aged 94 years with son Christopher, daughter Elaine and his beloved Vera by his side. Michael was the son of the late Rev. Arthur Frank Martin, former vicar of Stroud and of Andertley, the much loved husband of the late Christine Martin and a cherished father, grandfather and great-grandfather. A lovely, unassuming man and Spitfire fanatic who will be much missed by those who had the privilege to know him, head <a href="#">Spitfire's Legacy</a> to a great man. 20.04.15</p> <p><b>618</b> Travelling to the BSS Conference by train and worried that because of the very late conference announcement you cannot now get the cheapest tickets? Well, <a href="#">SunInfo</a> brings you a possible way to make your journey cheaper. Why not consider Split Ticketing? It's perfectly legal, it's not the having separate tickets when you have to change trains. Want to know more? Go to <a href="#">Train Split</a> and find out... You can use it at other times and for many UK train journeys too. The <a href="#">TrainSplit.com</a> link explains all about it. 16.04.15</p> <p><b>617</b> BSS has announced its 2015 Conference!! Owing to the extraordinary delay in the announcement</p>	<p><b>*** 64 Downloads so far!!!***</b></p> <p><b>The FREE 2015 SunInfo Calendar is now available here!!!</b></p> <p>With one A4 page for each month, this FREE PDF pictorial calendar can be downloaded and printed off to give you a ready supply of twelve UK sundials to look at throughout 2015. Each month includes the equation of time correction for each day and a latitude zone</p> <p><b>Below latitude corrections to be utilised for sundials in the British Isles. Check it out and download it here.</b> Only a 600 download. Just print it on suitable paper stock. 15.04.15.</p> <p><b>The 2015 BSS Conference</b> will take place in the East Midlands Conference Centre and with accommodation in the nearby eco-friendly Orchard Hotel, Nottingham over the weekend <b>10-12 April 2015</b>. In the usual format it will commence Friday afternoon and finish at Sunday lunchtime. The Futuristic Orchard Hotel offers floor-to-ceiling windows, bespoke furniture and a unique décor throughout. <a href="#">More information here!</a> <b>616</b> <a href="#">What to see</a></p>
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It provides an eclectic mix of news, information, research, advice and comment and it even includes a reference section containing over a hun-

dred interesting documents devoted to the history, information and comment about sundials, sundialists and sundial societies in Britain and the world.

It maintains a separate page devoted to details of the latest Annual Conferences of both BSS and NASS, the address of their venues, how to get there by train, car or air and things

to see and do whilst in the area.

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