

The Fleet Street Heritage Sundial

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THE HERITAGE of FLEET STREET

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The sundial showing 10 am (sun time) on 21st October 2021.
The gnomon which casts the shadow is at the top left hand corner of the sundial; the shadow moves slowly across and down the sundial during the morning



Painting the sundial in October 2021



The Lady Mayoress of London, Hilary Russell, cutting the tape to open the sundial

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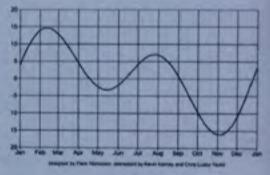
Sundials are a very ancient technology, starting in Egypt and Greece over 2000 years ago. The website www.fleetstreetheritage.com tells you more about this east-facing sundial, which only tells the time in the morning when the sun is on it.

The sundial tells local sun time ("time as it is") here in Fleet Street. Our watches tell Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) ("time as we would like it to be") as set by Act of Parliament in 1880. The graph shows the number of minutes you need to add or subtract from sun time to get to GMT. And in summer you have to add 1 hour for British Summer Time.

The difference between Solar and Mean Time - known as the Equation of Time - is due to 3 reasons. The earth's orbit around the sun is an ellipse; the earth's axis is not at right angles to the plane of its orbit but is tilted at 23½ degrees (which gives us the seasons); and there is a very small difference (0.1 degree) in longitude between Greenwich and Fleet Street.

The sundial was designed by Piers Nicholson, delineated by Kevin Karney and Chris Luisby-Taylor and painted by Steven Whitaker
Hilary Russell, the Lady Mayoress, inaugurated the sundial in September 2021

One of the three plaques at eye level



This unusual east-facing sundial is situated on a vertical wall at the corner of Bouverie Street and Fleet Street in central London.

It measures 10 metres square, and is believed to be the largest vertical sundial in the United Kingdom, and possibly also in Europe. The sundial was opened by the Lady Mayoress of London, Hilary Russell, in October 2021. It commemorates the newspaper industry which, for nearly 300 years, was centred on the Fleet Street area. The face of the sundial shows 5 of the mastheads of newspapers which are no longer published. (Current newspapers could not be shown due to planning restrictions in the City of London: the titles of the newspapers to be displayed on the sundial were selected by a local public consultation.)

More details about the origins, design, execution, and building of this sundial are given on the website www.fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk. There are videos showing the opening of the sundial, and videos showing a number of the sections of the meticulous painting of the sundial by our signwriter. The overall result is a highly-visible sundial which is also effective in flagging up the importance of Fleet Street as the cradle of our national newspaper industry.

There are two other interesting modern public sundials in Central London. The Blackfriars Polar Sundial was presented to the City of London by the Tylers and Bricklayers Company in 1999; it is mounted on a plinth of exactly 2000 bricks. There is also a large "Timepiece" equatorial dial designed by Wendy Hiller outside the Tower Hotel near Tower Bridge. Both these dials and many others appear on the London Thames sundial trail at <http://sundials.co/~thames.htm>



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Additional notes

Prepared by: Piers Nicholson

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Further Reading:

Website www.fleetstereetheritagesundial.uk