

Part 2



# SUNDIALS

by  
*Warrington Hogg.*

The

visitor occasionally finds in out-of-the-way places

primitive forms of dials, such as were used in Saxon, Norman, Early English, and mediæval times, and which, naturally enough, have a special charm of their own. A good hunting-ground for them, it seems to me, is on the south walls or doorways of our Norman and Early English churches, especially those which have escaped so-called "restoration."

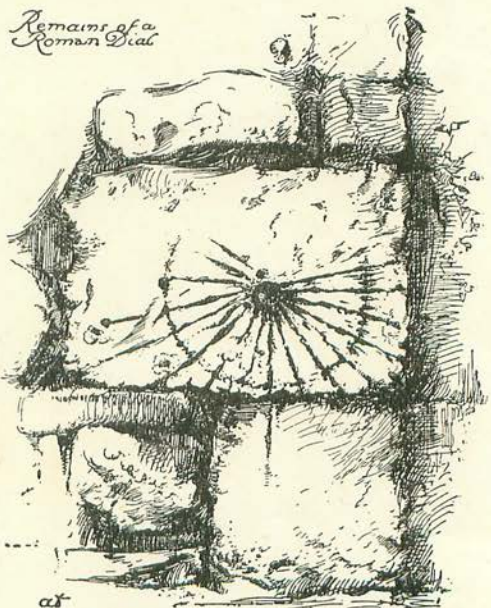
There is one at Lyminge, on the south wall of the venerable church, well worthy of notice. The church itself, Bevan quotes as being one of the three most interesting in Kent, as well as one of the most ancient in the country. It has distinct traces of Roman and Anglo-Saxon masonry, the fact being that a Roman basilica first of all existed there, then a Saxon church was built on its site, and later another church, which was added to by different Archbishops — Wareham, Cardinal Morton, and others.

Of the basilica, the foundations and portions of the apse were brought to light by the efforts of the well-known enthusiast in things antiquarian, Canon Jenkins (who is rector and vicar of Lyminge); he himself telling me many interesting facts pertaining to the dial. It is cut rudely, but to a considerable depth, on a stone which undoubtedly originally formed part of a Roman villa (Villa

Maxima de Lyminge), and is now built as one of the corner stones into the south wall of the nave, which wall was St. Dunstan's work (about 965 A.D.). Its position is about 5ft. 4in. above the present ground level, and about 14ft. to the right of an inscription pointing out the burial-place of St. Ethelburga, the Queen (633—647 A.D.), daughter of King Ethelbert and wife of Edwin of Northumbria.

At Mersham—a little village between Smeeth and Ashford—there are to be seen

*Remains of a Roman Dial*



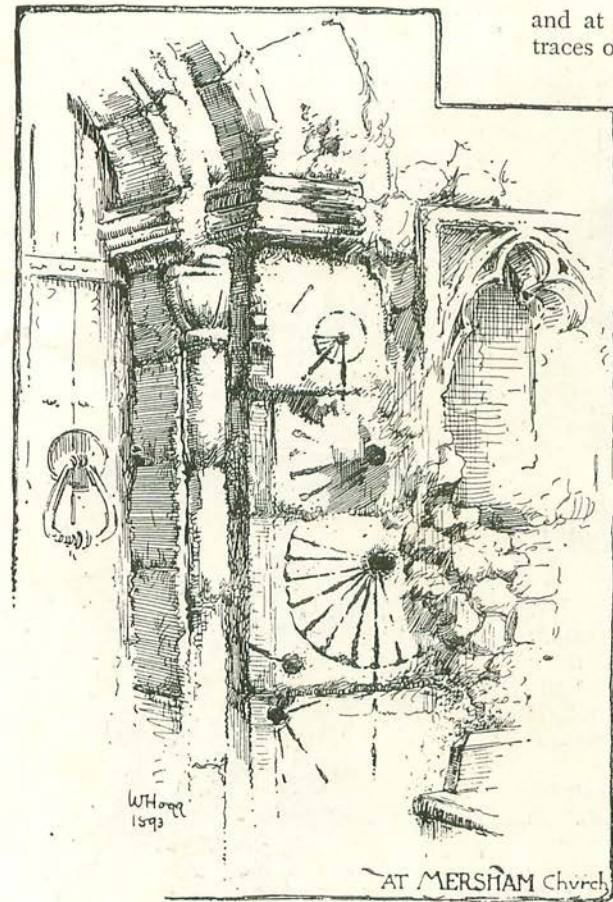
LYMINGE.

and at Patribourne, on a similar doorway, traces of four dials may be distinctly seen.

Smeeth and Swingfield churches both possess dials of a like character, but in the latter case they have been partly choked up with cement, apparently at the time of the restoration of the church a few years ago.

At Warehorne Church (mainly Early English) is a stone built into the wall about 4ft. above the present ground level and 1ft. to the right of a south doorway, upon which is carved an ancient vertical dial, which evidently belonged to a still earlier edifice.

In Dover Museum is a curious type of dial which, according to Mr. Loftus Brock, is of Roman workmanship. It was found in 1862, in Dover, on the site of the ancient Church of St. Martin's-le-Grand (founded by Wictred, King of Kent, 693—725 A.D.). It is a cube of oolite, between four and five inches square, with one heart-shaped, two semi-cylindrical, and two triangular-formed dials hollowed out of its sides. The Rev. R. Dixon, another expert on the subject, is of opinion that it was an engraved horizontal dial, made originally for some site in Central France or Switzerland, and brought

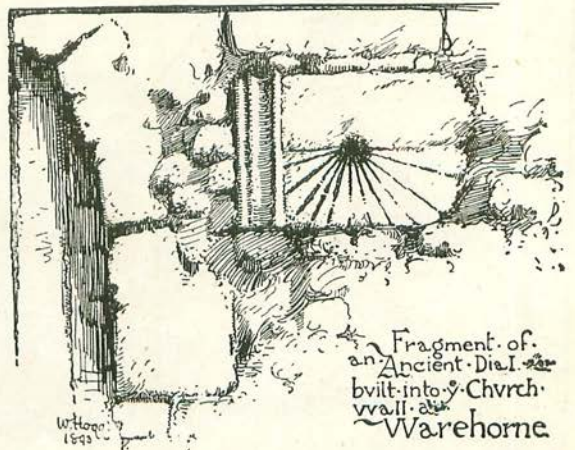


AT MERSHAM Church

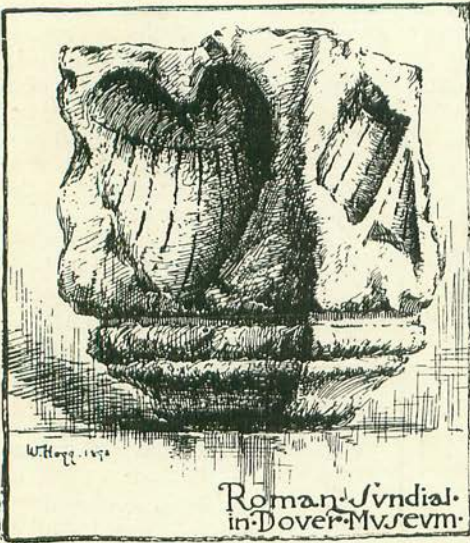
traces of no fewer than seven ancient circular dials on the south doorway of the church (mainly Early English), five being on the right-hand side and two on the left, a protecting porch of later date helping to preserve them. The largest one measures 9in. in diameter, and is still very distinct, the hole where the style, or gnomon, had originally been is deep, and about 3ft. above ground-level, and the radiating hour lines, ten in number, are regular in their disposition and end in little drilled holes. The other dials are irregular, partially obliterated, and so arbitrary in their arrangement that it is somewhat puzzling to decide as to how they could all of them have possibly told the same time.

to Dover with the expectation that it would give the correct solar time there. A similar mistake was made in the year 263 B.C., by Valerius Messala, who, under the same belief,

At Barfreton Church is a dial somewhat of the same type carved on the left-hand side of the richly-decorated Norman south doorway;

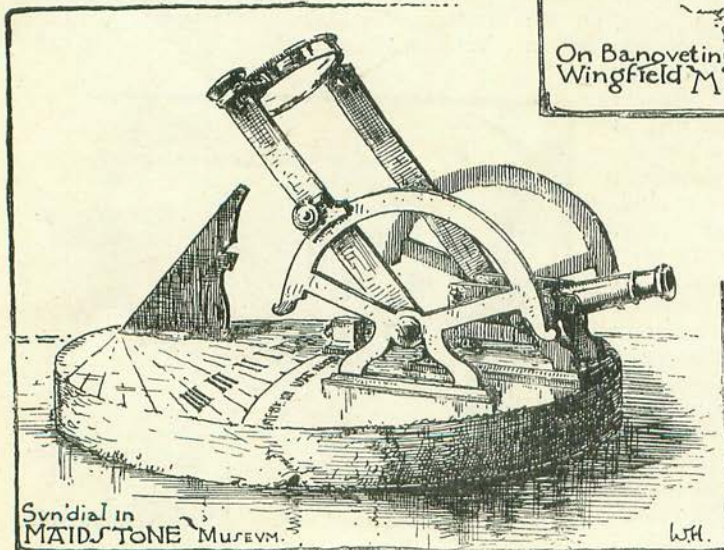


Fragment of an Ancient Dial built into Chvrch wall at Warehorne



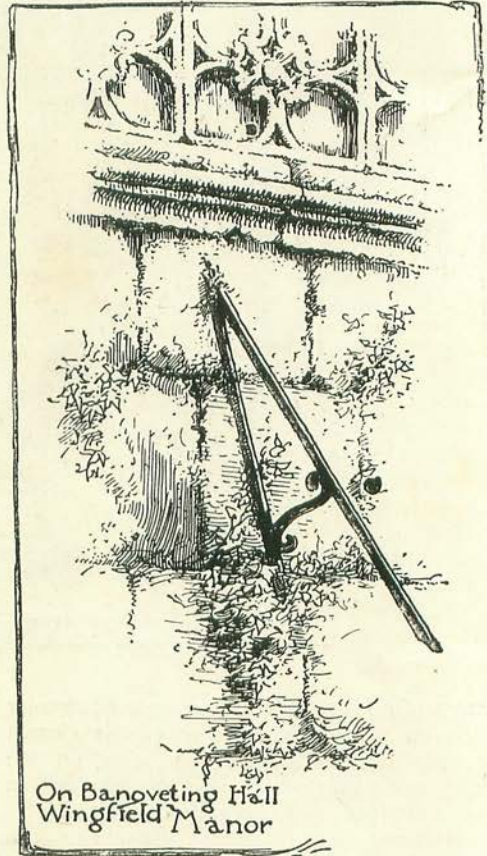
brought a Sicilian sun-dial to Rome. But which ever view is right (and both theories are of interest) it seems to me to be more fascinating to dream about the story of the centuries this sun-kissed stone — had it speech—could tell us, ere it was ticketed and shelved in a local museum.

One does not often come across a cannon sun-dial, like the one given in my sketch. It is in the entrance-hall of Chillington Manor House, now Maidstone Museum, and embodies a decidedly ingenious idea. My readers will note that a burning-glass is carefully focused over the touchhole of a



miniature loaded cannon, timed to go off each day at noon: it is made of metal and is fixed to a circular slab of marble, about a foot and a half in diameter, upon which are cut the radiating hour-lines of the dial and its maker's name, as follows:—

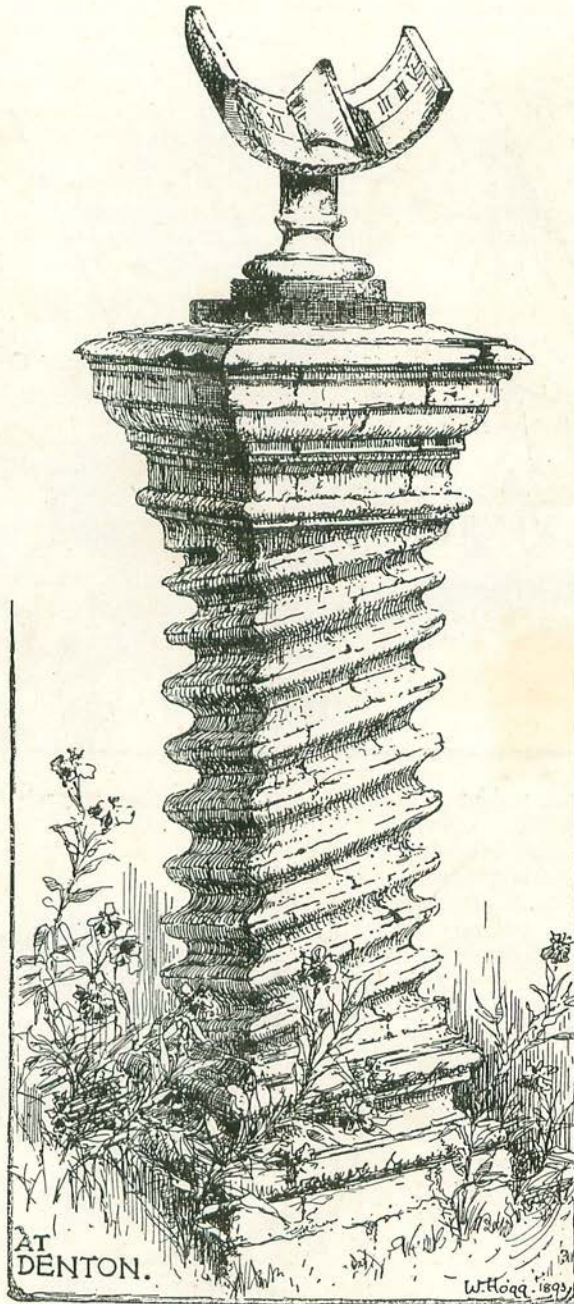
"Victor Chevalier Jng<sup>r</sup> Brev<sup>t</sup> Quai de l'Horloge 77 à Paris."



On the ruins of Wingfield Manor, in Derbyshire, are still to be seen two dials, simple in form and design, which were placed there some time about 1678 by Immanuel Halton, astronomer and mathematician, to whom the Manor House then belonged, and who during his life made many alterations to render

the place, shattered by Cromwell and his followers, fit for his abode. The dial given is over the bay window of the Banqueting Hall—the fine tracery of which still remains intact—the other being placed over one of the windows adjoining the State rooms. Wingfield Manor House is rich in historic associations. It is mentioned in Doomsday Book, and was given by William of Normandy to his illegitimate son, William Peverel. It afterwards became the home of Ralph, Lord Cromwell (Henry VI., Treasurer of the Exchequer). Mary Queen of Scots passed many long months of captivity there in one of the western apartments of the inner quadrangle, and later it was the scene of one of the most obstinately contested struggles that mark that unhappy period when King Charles I. fought for his crown and his Parliament for its power.

At the little village of Denton, a few miles from Canterbury, in a cottage garden, stands a fine red brick and plaster dial of quite another type. It is about fifty years old, and was built by one Richard Webb, a master mason; the workmanship is truly

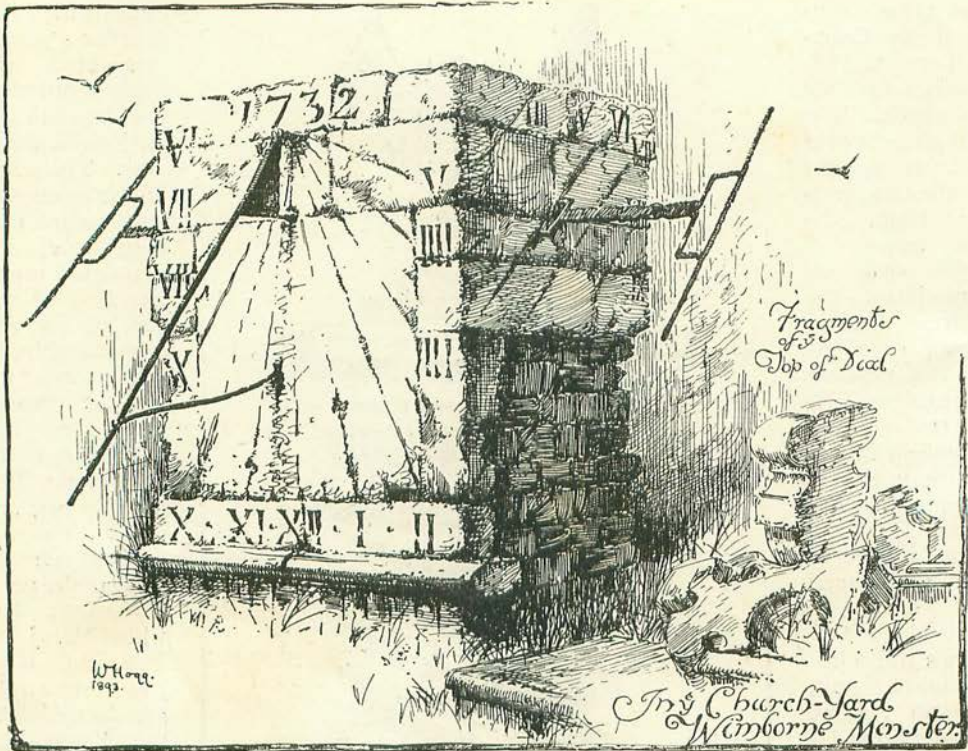


excellent, the mortar-joints throughout not being more than one-sixteenth of an inch in thickness. The porch of the cottage is by the same cunning hand, and attracts much attention by reason of its fine craftsmanship.

Wimborne Minster, Dorset, boasts a dial which must not be missed. It is dated 1732, and used to be perched on the gable of the north transept; but when Mr. J. L. Pearson, R.A., the eminent architect, restored the church some few years ago, it was taken down and placed temporarily under the yew tree in the Minster yard,

where, alas! it stands "unto this day." It was not deemed desirable, owing to its great weight, to replace it in its original position, and Mr. Pearson has designed for it a fine pedestal, so that it can eventually be placed somewhere to the south-west of the

Minster yard; a lack of funds being the only preventive to this becoming *un fait accompli*. It is of stone, 6ft. in height; its south face is 4ft. in width, and its east and west faces 3ft. respectively, each of which bears a gnomon—a somewhat unusual feature.



In the garden of the residence of J. Cresswell, Esq., C.E., at Dover, is a dial with five gnomons upon a handsome stone pedestal; the plate is of slate, designed and engraved by R. Melvin, London, but no date is given. The largest gnomon is in the centre, and the four smaller, of equal dimensions, at each corner. Upon the plate are engraved three mottoes, as follows:—

“Sic transit gloria mundi”

(So passeth the glory of the world away).

“Horas non numero nisi serenas”

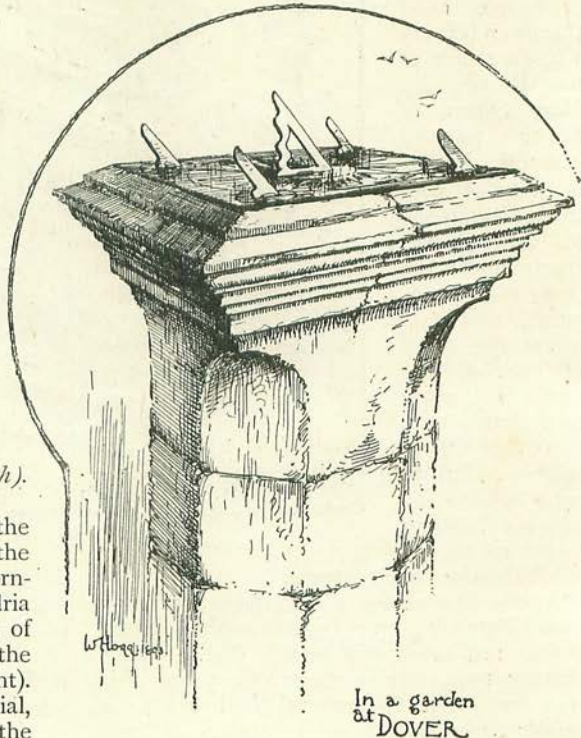
(I count the bright hours only).

“Sol non oxidat super iracundiam vestram”

(Let not the sun go down upon your wrath).

Ephes. iv. 26.

The large gnomon in the centre of the plate gives our own solar time, that in the N.W. corner gives New York time (morning), that in the N.E. corner Alexandria time (afternoon), that in the S.W. Isle of Borneo time (evening), and that in the S.E. corner New Zealand time (night). On the outer border of the central dial, immediately beyond the numerals, the



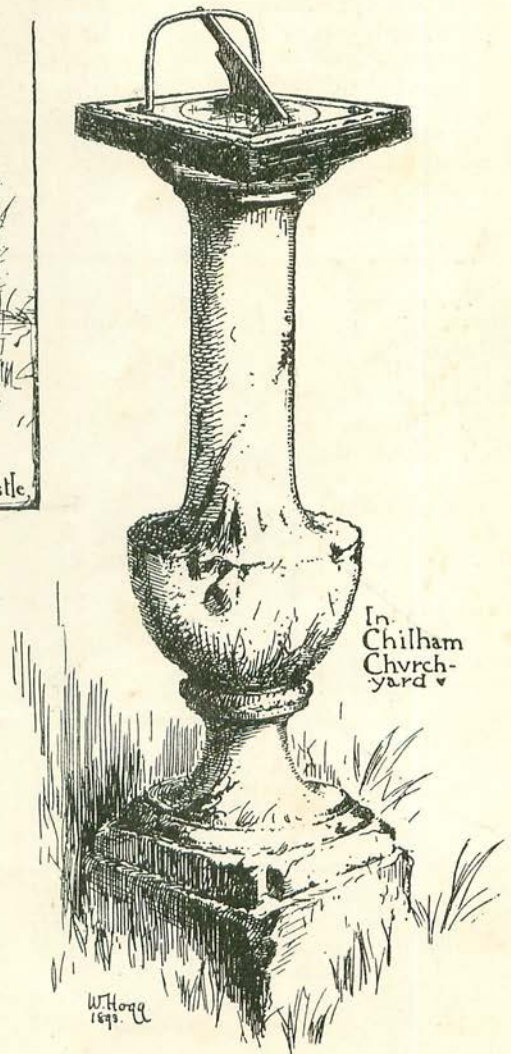


names of sixty-nine places are engraved, so that practically the time the world over may be readily calculated. The outside measure of the pedestal is slightly under 2ft. square, and the whole is rather over 4ft. in height. It is picturesquely situated on the Dover Hills—Dover Castle, which is quite close, lying due east of it; in short, it is a fascinating and singularly complete dial, with a delightful surrounding.

A few miles from Canterbury, in the beautiful grounds which surround Chilham Castle and House, is a richly designed dial, which was put up between 1741 and 1774. The pedestal, elaborately carved, is of stone much weathered and time-worn; the metal plate is richly engraved, and bears the crest and arms of the Colebrooks—a Hampshire family—and the maker's name, "Thomas Wright, Instrument Maker to H.M. George

Vol. vi—41.

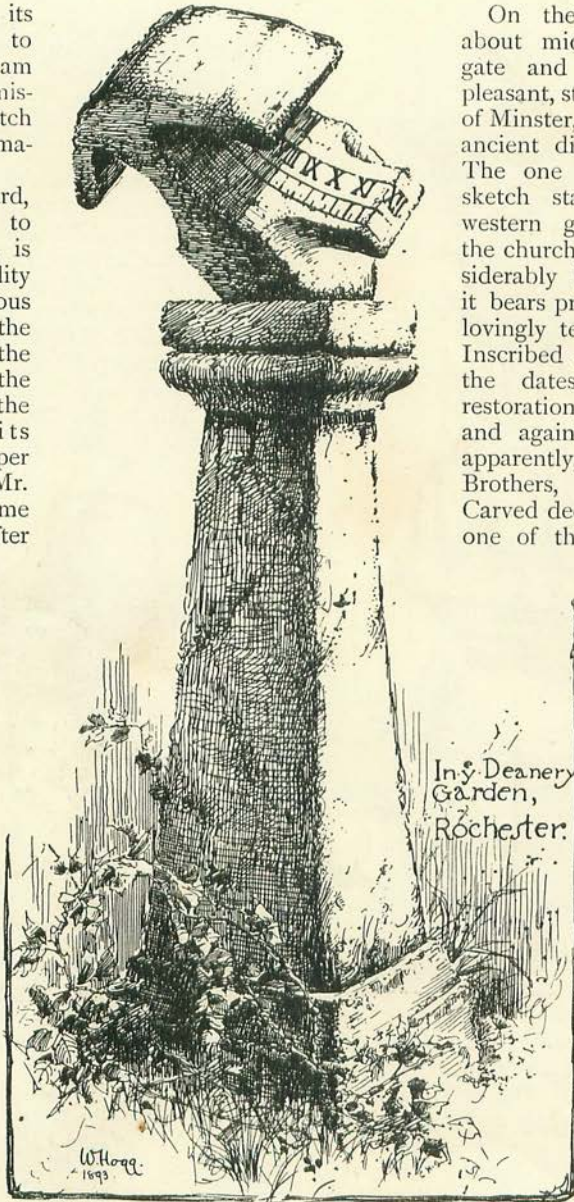
II." Before saying good-bye to this pleasant example of dial-craft let us glance at the castle ruins, which consist of an octagonal Norman keep of three stories, the remainder having been pulled down at different times. The first defensive position here was probably a Roman camp, and subsequently to this it was said that King Lucius, a Brito-Roman chief, erected a fortress, afterwards enlarged by the Saxon kings. After the Conquest it came into the hands of Sir Fulbert de Dover (one of the Dover Castle Knights); and in the seventeenth century Sir Dudley Digges erected an entirely new house, which descended from him to the Colebrooks (whose arms are upon the dial), and lastly to the family



of the Hardys, its present owners, to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to make the sketch and for the information here given.

In the churchyard, which is adjacent to the Castle grounds, is a dial in all probability designed by the famous Inigo Jones—note the graceful form of the stone shaft and the simple line of the gnomon, with its curious stout copper support, which Mr. Charles Hardy told me was placed there after an attempt had been made to wrench the gnomon from the plate. The maker's name, "G. Stedman, London," but with no date, is engraved on the dial-plate.

In Dean Hole's garden, at Rochester, is a stone dial, shaped somewhat like a thick, short anchor, surmounting a simple square pedestal; it marks the boundary-line between the two parishes of St. Margaret and St. Nicholas. The Dean pointed out to me that the anchor part turns readily on a pivot, and on the south side of the pedestal is fixed an engraved metal plate, giving a table of equations, by which the anchor may be adjusted to tell the true time at any period of the year. The total height is about 5ft. 6in., and the whole is of grey stone; and so covered over with moss and damp-stain was it, that I had to scrape a considerable amount of it off before I could decipher even one single numeral.



On the Isle of Thanet, about midway between Margate and Ramsgate, is the pleasant, straggling little village of Minster, which possesses two ancient dials worthy of note. The one of which I give a sketch stands hard by the western gate of the yard of the church, and has seen considerably better days, though it bears proof of having been lovingly tended of late years. Inscribed around the dial are the dates of three several restorations—in 1841, 1873, and again in 1890; the last, apparently, being by Langley Brothers, of St. Lawrence. Carved deeply and boldly into

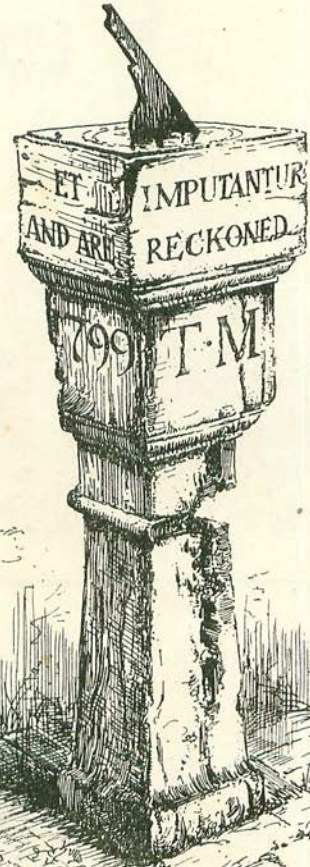
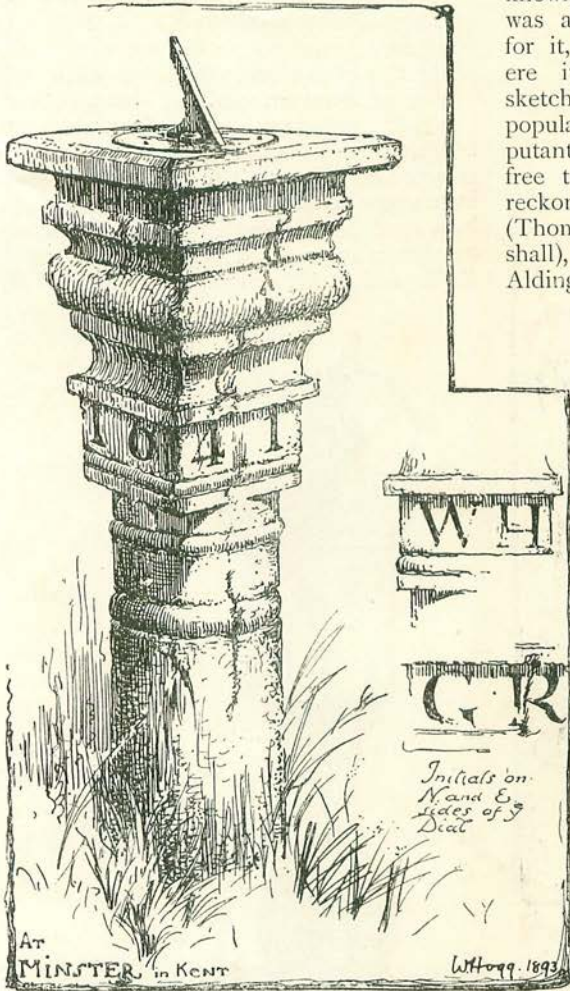
one of the flat members of the oaken shaft is a date, 1641, and the initials W. H. and G. R. The dial has a curious cut-off look, and one is led to suppose by its general proportions that the shaft was originally very much taller, but had, probably, become rotten through the extreme damp, and had broken off, only to be set up again in shortened form; or, can it be that, as the years have rolled on—for 1641 is a long, long time ago—

that it has become partially buried by ever-thickening graves and surface accumulations?

It is worth while to glance at the church, which is cruciform; it has a Norman nave, Early English transepts and choir, in which are some humorously carved Miserere stalls. An old chained Bible and a chest made out of an oak trunk are, too, to be seen. Close by, to the east of the church, on one of the chimneys of Minster Court (which dates from the twelfth century), is the other dial to which I referred; it was originally painted white

with black numerals, and was restored by J. Swinford, Esq., in 1856, who then placed that date and his initials above the then existing motto upon the dial, which runs as follows: "Tempora labuntur quæ nobis

whose days are verily numbered. It is moss-grown, weather-beaten, time-worn, warped, and rotten to the core; but, nathless, a delightfully picturesque one. I gathered that Mr. Reginald Blomfield, the well-known architect (son of the present rector), was about to design an entirely new shaft for it, so one was glad of the opportunity, ere it was swept away, of making the sketch here given. It bears one of the most popular of all dial mottoes, "Pereunt et imputantur," and immediately underneath its free translation, "The hours pass and are reckoned." A date, 1799, the initials T. M. (Thomas Mills) and W. M. (William Marshall), who were once churchwardens of Aldington, are painted just below the motto.



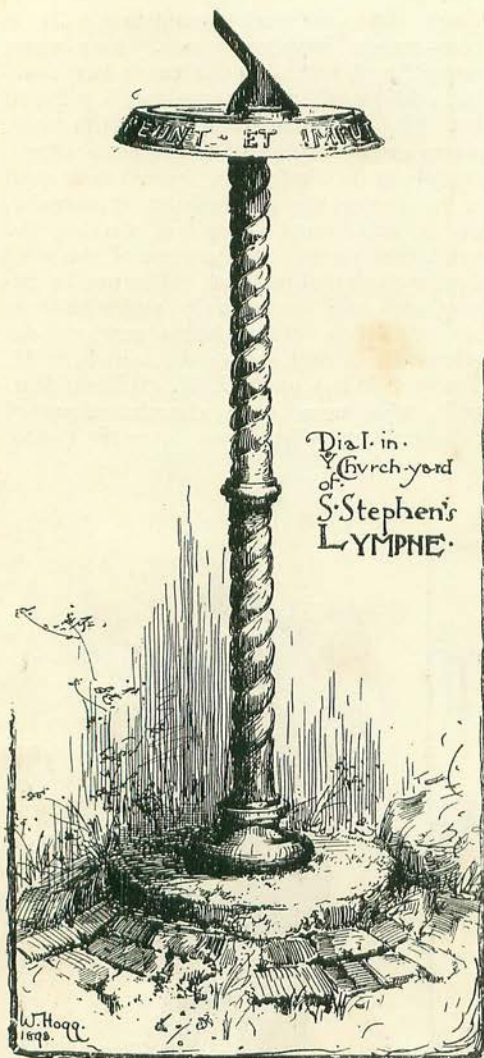
pereunt et imputantur." (*Time glides by, which perishes for us and is reckoned.*)

Tramp a couple of miles across country from Smeth Station, and one comes to the little, old-world place of Aldington, where once the Archbishops of Canterbury had a hunting palace. Its church (of which Erasmus was rector in 1511) has a noble tower (built by Archbishop Wareham, in Henry VII.'s time), standing on an eminence facing Romney Marsh—a landmark for many a mile around. In the surrounding "garden of sleep" is a dial on a wooden shaft,

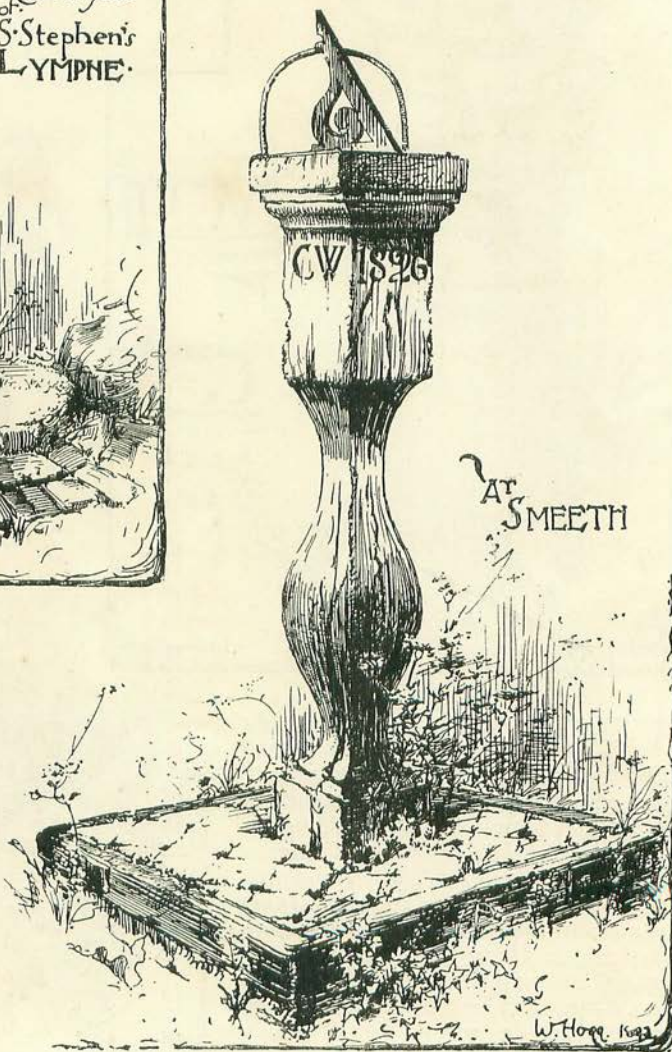


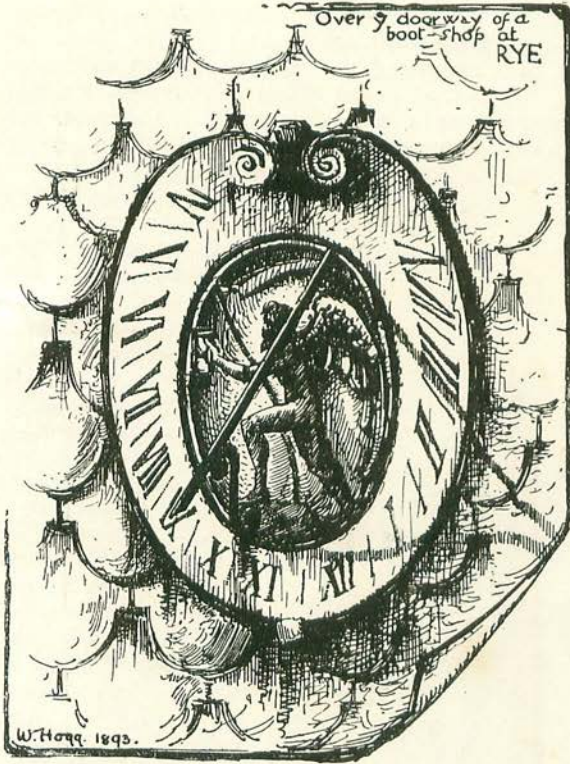
the whole resembling an attenuated-looking refreshment-table.

Besides several ancient dials on the south doorway of the Norman and Early English church of Smeeth, which I have previously mentioned, there is, hard by the pathway leading to the south porch, a dear, old-fashioned, picturesque-looking dial. The pedestal is of oak, rusty-black, set on a little square platform of reddish-brown, moss-covered, and grass-grown tiles, which are bordered by four oaken timbers heavily clamped with iron. The dial-plate is eight inches square, and the gnomon is supported by a stout copper rod in the same curious manner as the one at Chilham. The initials E. H. and C. W. (churchwardens), and the



Lympne (the Portus Lemanis of the Romans, and one of their great garrison stations), now a decayed village, possesses a type of dial in the church-yard which I imagine has no counterpart. The circular plate is old, and, too, the brickwork of the base, but the shaft and dial-table (around the latter of which, in raised letters, is the oft-repeated motto: "Pereunt et Imputantur"), are of comparatively modern cast-iron; the general effect of



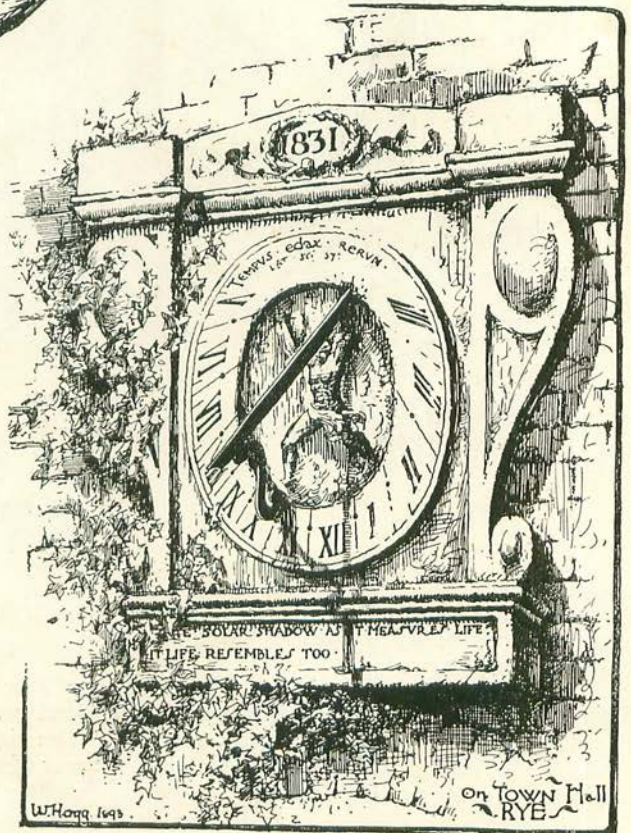


date, 1826, are carved on three of the sides of the shaft, the date probably referring to the last restoration. The whole is rapidly going to decay, and is split in several places almost from top to bottom.

Fixed against the red weather-tiling, and a few feet above the doorway of an old boot-shop in the High Street of Rye, is an oval dial of unusual interest and in excellent preservation; Mr. Wellsted, its owner, told me that it is probably about a hundred years old. Forty odd years ago the shop was a jeweller's, and of course it is not unlikely that he placed it there. It is rather under two feet in its largest dimension, has a white ground with black numerals and style, and, in a deeply-recessed panel in the centre, has a figure (apparently of plaster) modelled in high relief and painted black, representing Father Time, bald-headed (and, I am bound to add, with ears almost as large and protuberant

as a donkey's), bearing scythe and hour-glass. He is represented treading upward and onward on his dark pathway.

There is another dial at Rye, on the Court House or Town Hall, of which I am able to give a sketch. It was presented in 1831 to the town by Colonel Sir De Lacy Evans (of Crimean repute), M.P. for Rye at one time, and afterwards, at the time of his death, M.P. for Westminster. It is of stone, and was placed originally on the Grammar School, but was removed, I believe, in Jubilee year to its present position. It, too, in a central panel, has a representation of "Devouring Time," and the curious will observe that he is without hands, head, or feet—not to mention being minus half an arm. Immediately above is carved the quite (under the circumstances) appropriate motto, "Tempus edax rerum" (*Time the devourer of all things*). Seeing that he had already apparently de-



molished his own head, hands, and feet, not to mention other details, one smiled as one realized for once "the eternal fitness of things."

On the southern face of the Norman tower (rich in exterior arcading) of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, at Dover, is an old

and surrounded by a broad black border, upon which are painted in white (somewhat irregularly) the numerals. Two wide strips of lead, nailed above and to the east side, form a sort of water-shed and protection during stress of weather, and help to give the dial quite a piquancy of its own.

Dear old dials! they seem to possess a charm for so many types of mind—of interest alike to the archæologist and the architect, the poet and the painter, while others find just the study of dial mottoes a fascinating pursuit—and no wonder, for they are sometimes so truly fine and almost always worthy of attention.

On a dial which stood in front of the Exhibition Buildings in Edinburgh in 1886 (but which has since been removed), and known as Prince Albert Victor's dial, were graven no fewer than nine mottoes, four of which I here give:—

I mark but the hours of  
sunshine.

Time is the chrysalis of  
eternity.

Time and tide tarry for  
no man.

Tak tent of time ere  
time be tint.

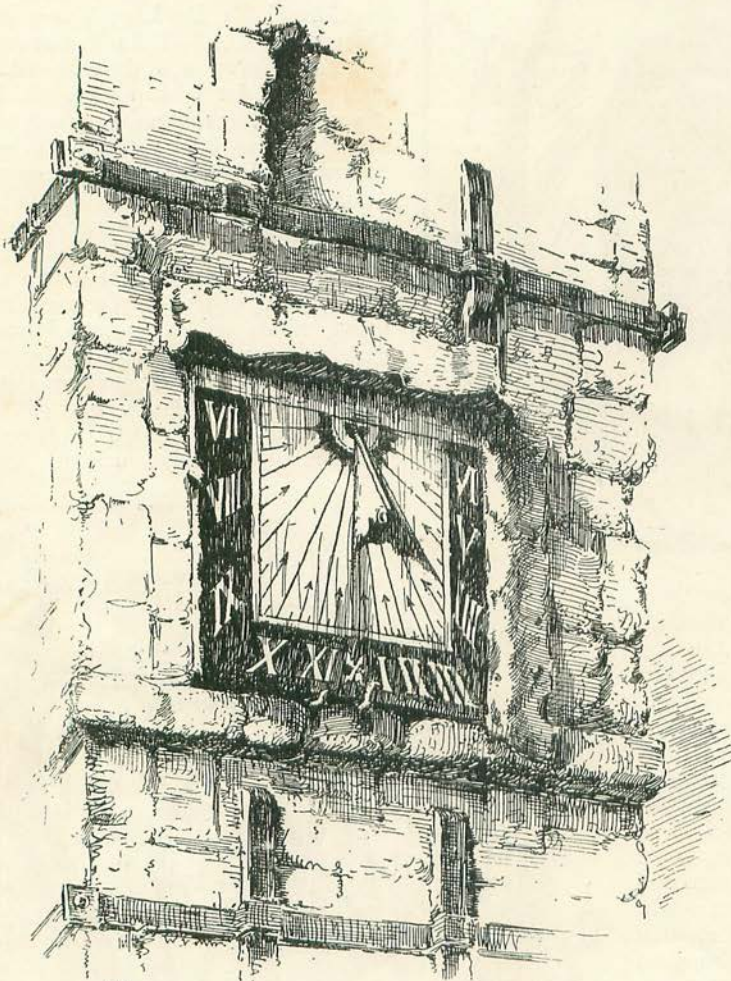
At Dunbar, on a dial, dated 1649, runs the motto: "Watch for ye kno not the houre"; and on one on the corner of a house near Edinburgh, dated 1683, is graven:—

As the sun runes  
So death comes.

What a peaceful one  
is that on the walls of a  
church in the north of Yorkshire:—

"In cælo quies"  
(*In Heaven is rest*).

"Now is yesterday's to-morrow," is to be found on a slate dial in Nottinghamshire. "The night cometh," which is engraven on a tower of a church in Surrey, seems to embody the story all dials have to tell us.



On St. Mary  
the Virgin's Tower,  
Dover.

vertical dial, interesting perhaps more to the artist than to the busy passers-by, who have not time in this work-a-day world to linger to see "the passing of the shadow," but glance doubtless at an obtrusive modern clock, lately placed upon the tower's western face. The dial is of wood, about 2½ ft. square, originally painted white in the centre