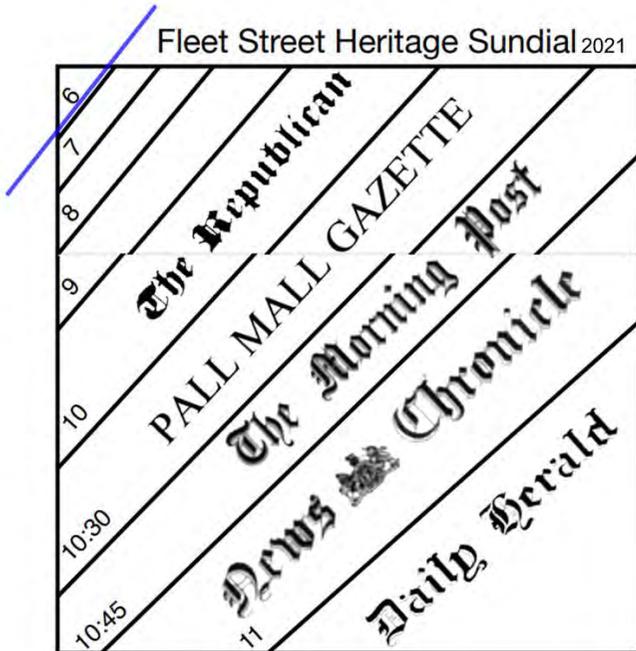


The opening of the Fleet Street Heritage Sundial  
by the Lady Mayoress, Hilary Russell  
on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021



This booklet contains:

Our plans for the further development of the Fleet Street Heritage Project

The building of the sundial – A new sundial for Central London

The planning of the sundial - – A new sundial for Central London?

## The Fleet Street Heritage Project

The sundial is the public face of the Fleet Street Heritage Project and is now completed. The next stage is the development of the information panes and the associated website.

We are planning to produce at least 75 information panels, typically of 700 words or so with two pictures on each panel. Each panel will be linked with a QR code to a parallel sister page on the [www.fleetstreetheritage.com](http://www.fleetstreetheritage.com) website.

The information panels will be in 3 broad groups. The draft list of subjects is shown below. Panels finished or under active development are starred \*. We are asking current newspapers to produce their own text together with a scan of their original masthead and a small section from the first page of the first issue.

<u>Group 1 – General</u>	<u>Gp 2 – Defunct titles</u>	<u>Gp3 – Current titles</u>
Fleet Street in 1500s*	The Republican*	Daily Telegraph*
Points of interest/Map*	Pall Mall Gazette*	The Times *
List of newspapers*	Morning Post	Sunday Times*
No 62 Fleet Street*	Daily Courant	Sun*
Freedom of the Press	News Chronicle	Daily Herald*
Fleet Street in 1600s	Daily Herald	Guardian
Fleet Street in 1700s	Morning Chronicle	Observer
Fleet Street in 1800s	Daily Post	Evening Standard
Fleet Street in 1900s	Black Dwarf	Financial Times
Fleet Street today	Poor Man's Guardian	Daily Mail
Clockmaking industry	Reynolds News	Daily Express
Thomas Tompion	Saturday Review	Daily Mirror
Magpie Alley	Empire News	Sunday Express
St Dunstan's Church	Workers Dreadnought	Sunday Mirror
Temple Church	Children's Newspaper	Sunday Telegraph
St Bride's Church	Daily Worker	Morning Star
<u>etc.</u>	etc.	Metro etc.

The information panels will be made available to local organisations who wish to stage exhibitions. We hope that we will also be able to find local sites for displaying these panels on a long-term basis, and have made some progress with this.

We are now hoping to find some people who would be willing to write some of these articles. Authors would be given an honorarium, and the author's name would appear on the finished article. If you, or anyone you know, might be interested in working with us on this project, please send an email to [piersnic@gmail.com](mailto:piersnic@gmail.com)

## A new sundial in Central London

My article in the March 2020 issue of the "British Sundial Society Bulletin" also had this title, but with a significant question mark at the end of it. The question mark indicated the considerable uncertainty about whether we could get the permissions, the finance and the team together to make it happen.

It started with the planning permission, which has to be done through an online portal. I was fortunate in being able to speak to people in the planning department from time to time. My initial idea to have the mastheads of two or three current newspapers (with the hope of raising some revenue) was thrown out at once – the City of London does not permit advertising, so all the newspaper headlines had to be defunct titles. My second thought was to include the badges of three livery companies, but that too was counted as advertising (even though there are many examples of such badges on display in the City)

I also wanted some plaques, at eye level, on the freedom of the press, the sundial, and the newspaper industry, all to be set within an 11 m. wide list of all the national newspapers from the Daily Courant in 1702 onwards. This got whittled down to just 3 plaques measuring only 45 x 30 cm. Full planning permission was finally given in December 2019.

We had deferred looking for the money to build the sundial until we had planning permission. This seemed to be a sound decision at the time, but it meant that our timing could not have been worse, since people had too many other things to think about at the beginning of the Covid pandemic. We had some individual donations, but insufficient for the whole project. Fortunately we discovered that the City of London had a Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund, who, at the third application, came to our rescue.

The sundial could not be designed until the exact declination of the wall relative to true North was known. The hour lines of dials facing near to East are very sensitive to even minor changes in the declination. There is no great problem in measuring the declination if one has access to the front surface of the wall, and one is certain that the face of the wall is in one plane. But access was only possible with scaffolding or a cherry picker, which would have cost money we did not have; the wall was about 150 years old, and had a pronounced step in the middle of the sundial area

The final solution was to get a laser survey of the wall done. This produced a point-cloud of several million (x,y,z) coordinates of every point on our wall. This was ably interpreted by Chris Lusby-Taylor, who found out that the wall declines 3.75 degrees North of East, and that it is 0.21 degrees out of plumb. The step was later measured to be approx 6 cm at one end and 4 at the other. Kevin Karney, who had been associated with the project for some years, did the final delineation of the sundial.

We decided that the sundial would be painted on the wall, and were very fortunate to find a signwriter, Steven Whitaker, who did a magnificent job, particularly on painting all of the detail of the Royal coat of arms on the News Chronicle masthead.

The erection of the scaffolding should have been very straightforward. We had obtained a quote some months before, so we told them to go ahead. But we needed to get a licence from the City of London to put it up, and the licence we received had the name of Fleet Street and not Bouverie Street on it. That took another week to sort out. The highway authority will only allow the work to start on a weekend, and the environmental department will not allow any noisy work to happen after noon on Saturday or on Sunday. That imposed another 3 days of delay. These were just two of the many glitches in this phase of the project.

We had originally planned to repaint only the top portion of the wall white, but decided this would look strange, and that we should paint the whole wall white. But the painters were unable to get at the top portion of the wall because the scaffold did not have the requisite boards on its low stages, and it was not possible to get ladders up between the scaffolding. So this part of the job had to be left till the scaffolding came down.

We went out to a public consultation on the question of which newspaper mastheads should be included on the sundial, apart from the Republican, which would appear at the top since it was published by Richard Carlile, who had his printing office at 62 Fleet Street. The 4 mastheads which received the most votes were the Morning Post, Pall Mall Gazette, News Chronicle and the Daily Herald. The other 4 on the ballot paper were the Manchester Guardian, Daily Sketch, News of the World, and Daily Worker.

Fabrication of the gnomon did not go as easily as expected. I had hoped that the fabricators who make my stainless steel sundials in Norfolk would be able to do it, but they could not meet the delivery date because they were installing some large and complicated new machinery. A fabricator in Devon said they could do it, but were unable to get their design signed off by structural engineers. This meant we had to extend the scaffolding date by another month. Fortunately, this meant that the original firm could now make it in time, so it was delivered on the 7<sup>th</sup> October. Chris and I with our builder Ern installed it the following Monday, weaving it out of the way of the scaffold poles.

Looking back, the main difficulty was that of executing and coordinating a series of complicated processes with no previous relevant experience. Throughout, I have had a lot of support from the committee of the Castle Baynard Ward Club, from the Fleet Street Sundial CIC directors, John Latham and Nigel Springer, who represents the owners of the wall, and my fellow members of the British Sundial Society.

It all worked out all right in the end. The scaffolding came down on 14<sup>th</sup> October, the wispy sunshine that day indicated that everything was fine, and this was confirmed in the stronger sunshine next day. The 3 plaques were installed that day, and everything was then ready for our official opening.

After many delays, consultations and glitches, the sundial was finally opened by the Lady Mayoress, Hilary Russell on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021



---

## A NEW SUNDIAL FOR CENTRAL LONDON

PIERS NICHOLSON

In December, 12 years of planning, negotiating, and discussing came to an end when the City of London gave planning permission for the Fleet Street Heritage Sundial. The next stage is the serious business of raising the funds and building it. You can follow progress on [www.fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk](http://www.fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk), and it would be much appreciated if you would add your name to the “Please support us” page.

In 2007, my wife and I bought a micro-flat of 170 sq. ft. in Bouverie Street, just off Fleet Street in central London (Fig. 1). We could not help noticing the very large blank wall on the building adjoining our new flat, and we were slightly puzzled that our new address was 62 Fleet Street even though the front door is in Bouverie Street.

It took some years to find out why there were no windows in the large blank wall. The answer was that there had originally been another building alongside the wall, covering about half of what is now the entrance to Bouverie Street. Old maps show Bouverie Street narrowing down to eight feet or so at the junction with Fleet Street (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1. The junction of Fleet Street and Bouverie Street.

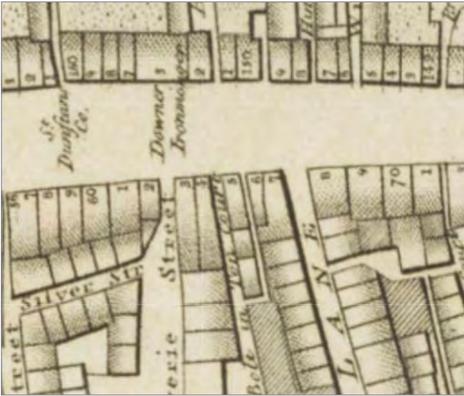


Fig. 2. The corner of Fleet Street and Bouverie Street as shown in Richard Horwood's map of 1799.

Around 150 years ago, the City had one of its periodic campaigns to widen Fleet Street, and, at the same time, decided to widen the access to Bouverie Street by purchasing and demolishing 62 Fleet Street. The current building numbered 62 seems to have been built at the back of no. 61. However, the reason for the absence of windows is that the City did not need the whole site of the original no. 62. There was a strip about a foot wide which was surplus to their requirements. This strip can be seen on the ground as a separate lighter colour against the squares of the pavement. The title deed of the new 62 incorporated this strip, extending all the way to Fleet Street. Thus, the wall is not the exterior wall of no. 61, but the party wall between 61 and 62.



Fig. 3. Fleet Street in the 1930s (Museum of London).

By the 1930s this wall had been put to commercial use, with a 4 × 4 grid of standard-size posters advertising a wide variety of products (Fig. 3). After the war, the City of London adopted a strict policy banning advertisements above ground floor level. The owners of the wall attempted to get around this restriction, but were forced to comply after the City of London took enforcement action.

For 40 years or more, the wall has remained blank. When I first arrived in the flat, I did some research on the original 62, and discovered that it had been the publishing house of Richard Carlile, who had started a newspaper called *The Republican* in 1819. It was not a good time for republicanism then, and the government tried to silence *The Republican* by increasing the newspaper tax from ½d. to 4d. per copy, by prosecuting Richard Carlile for seditious blasphemy, and, in the end, sending him to prison. He was one of the many who campaigned for the freedom of the press, and one of the very few who were imprisoned for it.

I thought it would be a good place for a sundial, since the wall faces a few degrees north of east. In addition, I had also noticed how few reminders of the newspaper industry there are left in Fleet Street. The iconic *Daily Express* building still has its Grade II\* listed Art Deco facade with aluminium lettering for the *Daily* and *Sunday Express*. Further away from Ludgate Circus, mosaics on a wall commemorate the *Dundee Courier* and the *People's Friend*, and high up on a building opposite is the lettering for the London News Agency Ltd at no. 44. And down the hill off Whitefriars Street is Ashentree Court with some metal information panels about the *Daily Mail* which was printed in Northcliffe House nearby. This in turn leads into Magpie Alley which has some ceramic panels showing how the newspapers were printed.

The purpose of the new sundial is to remind the many users of Fleet Street (residents, City workers, and tourists) of the worldwide reputation of Fleet Street in the days when it was the hub of the newspaper industry, and also to provide a permanent memorial to those like Richard Carlile (who lived on this site) and others who fought and suffered for the freedom of the press.

The Fleet Street Heritage Sundial project has four elements:

- The face of the sundial located on the wall which faces a few degrees north of east
- The gnomon projecting out from the top left corner of the sundial face
- The three explanatory panels at head height at the foot of the wall
- The [fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk](http://fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk) website

The sundial face is marked out with the lines where the shadow falls for every hour from 6 to 10 with additional lines below. Between six pairs of these lines appear the

Gnomon to cast shadow  
(stainless steel tube  
almost parallel to the wall)

Hour lines with markers, and  
five newspaper mastheads  
(to be selected)



Fig. 4. A draft design for the sundial at the top half of the wall.

mastheads of five newspapers. The particular newspaper titles to be used have not yet been selected, but three or four of them will be newspapers no longer published (starting with the *Republican* which was printed on this site) and one or two of them may be current newspapers (Fig. 4).

The final selection of newspaper mastheads to be included in the sundial will be decided at a later stage. The hour lines and the newspaper mastheads will be painted on the wall by an experienced signwriter. The painting is expected to take about 3 weeks, and will be done from scaffolding.

The position and size of the gnomon is determined by the mathematics derived from the orientation of the wall relative to due South. The gnomon will be fabricated from stainless steel tubing and will be attached to the wall with suitable anchor bolts.

An occupational hazard for sundials in large cities is that sunlight may be interrupted by neighbouring buildings and trees. This sundial will not have any problem with trees, and the building opposite is quite modern, and is unlikely to be redeveloped. The sun will shine on this sundial the whole year except for a few weeks around the winter solstice. A projecting part of the building opposite also interrupts the sunshine for the very early hours when the sun is low. Apart from these, the sunlight will cover the complete upper part of the wall until around 11:30 GMT.

The provisional text for the three plaques at the base of the wall is given below.

#### Plaque 1 – Freedom of the Press

Number 62 Fleet Street stood on this site until it was pulled down to widen Bouverie Street in the late 1800s. It was the printing office of Richard Carlile who published *The Republican* here from 1819 to 1826. He was present at the Peterloo massacre in 1819, and published the first report of it in London. Carlile also published *The Rights of Man* and other books by Thomas Paine. The Government attempted to shut down *The Republican* on many occasions and Carlile was prosecuted and sent to prison three times.

#### Plaque 2 – Fleet Street Heritage Sundial

Fleet Street was the hub of the British newspaper industry for over 100 years until the late 1980s when the need to adopt new technology, to work in modern buildings, and to modernise labour relations caused the newspapers to move to other parts of London. The sundial on the wall above commemorates some of the newspapers which made the name of Fleet Street famous throughout the world, and the individuals like Richard Carlile who spoke out for the freedom of the press which we enjoy today.

#### Plaque 3 – More about Sundials

Sundials are a very ancient technology, starting in Egypt and Greece over 2000 years ago. Our website, [www.fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk](http://www.fleetstreetheritagesundial.uk), tells you more about this east-facing sundial, which only tells the time in the morning.

It has a link to the Thames sundial trail at [www.sundials.co.uk/trailthames](http://www.sundials.co.uk/trailthames), which will take you to other fine sundials nearby. This website also has a wealth of other information about sundials, including projects for you to do, technical explanations, pictures of sundials worldwide, and other sundial trails.

News of the progress of this project will appear on Twitter @allsundials.

[piersnic@gmail.com](mailto:piersnic@gmail.com)