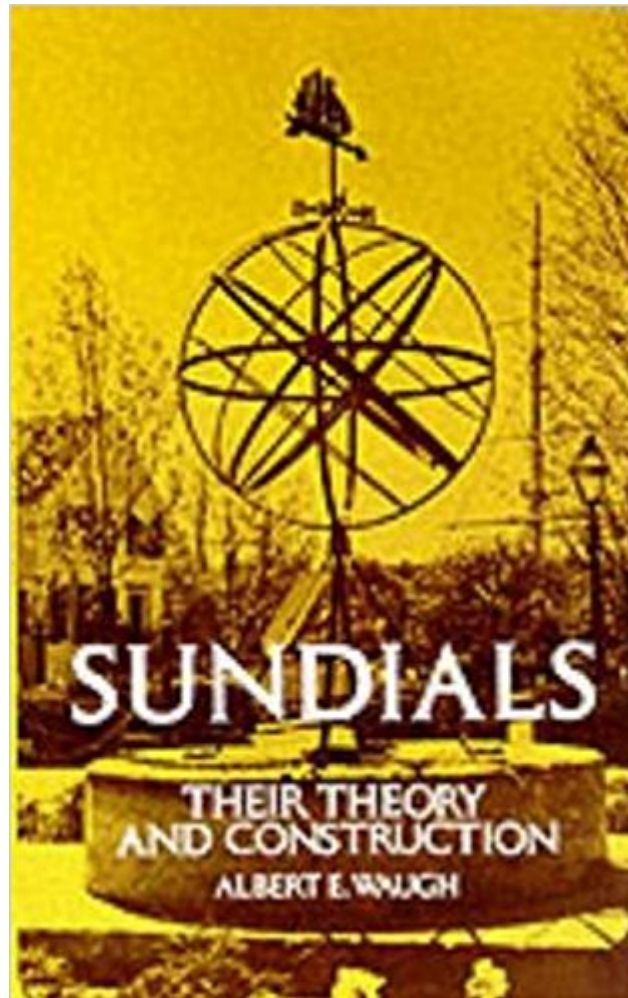




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Sundials: Their Theory And Construction



Synopsis

Have you every wanted to build a sundial or to understand how one works? Then you have probably been frustrated as you search vainly for help. Most books on the subject are either rare out-of-print works published centuries ago and available only in highly specialized collections, or highly complicated treatises whose information is hidden behind frightening arrays of involved formulas. But now your search is over. This book is designed to meet sundialing needs at either the simple or the sophisticated level. Albert E. Waugh, professor and administrator at the University of Connecticut for 40 years, and an expert on the subject of sundials and their curious history, presents, on the one hand, a rigorous appraisal of the science of sundials, including mathematical treatment and an explanation of the pertinent astronomical background; on the other hand, he presents simple and non-technical treatments such that several of the dials can be built by children! The subject matter is arranged in 19 chapters, each covering a different aspect of dialing science. All the common types of dials are covered, but the reader can also learn about analemmatic dials, polar dials, equatorial dials, portable dials, memorial dials, armillary spheres, reflected ceiling dials, cross dials, and old-fashioned noon marks. There are also sections on dial furniture, mottoes, the actual layout out of a dial, the equation of time, finding time in other cities, how to find the meridian, how to find time by moonlight – even how to estimate time from the length of one's own shadow! Directions are given for designing dials for any part of the country, or any place in the world. The author has designed many dials, and his text is filled with helpful hints based on his own personal experience. There are over 100 illustrations, charts, and tables, followed by an appendix which is filled with material which reduces or eliminates the need for calculation on the part of the reader.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (June 1, 1973)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486229475

ISBN-13: 978-0486229478

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.5 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #135,338 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Engineering &

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Customer Reviews

A pretty good introduction to sundials but more of a "How To" book. A little too light on theory considering that it touts "theory" in the title. Not much discussion about the way the Sun moves, the Equation of Time and what causes it, the changes in the Sun's declination and how it effects your sundial; the difference between clock time and solar time, and so on. It is sort of there in bits and pieces as he discusses how to lay out various dials, but no comprehensive overview is offered and any explanations offered are cursory. If you already know enough about that stuff to read a sundial properly and you just want to know how to make a sundial, or set up that sundial you just bought, or you don't really care that much about studying the theory, you will be fine with this book. If you really want to dig into the theory, the math, and the design; or if you want to understand how an unusual sundial you have come across in real life or the internet actually works; or if you want to understand what all those "extra" lines on a complex sundial do and how to read them; or you want to design an unusual dial of your own, this book is not going to be much help.

No other book, as far as I know, gives such clear detail about making your own sundials. That word seems so narrow; Waugh covers much more of solar time-telling than just dials. One thing that amazes me is his passion. He writes with clear pride about his own sundials, good to within (he says) ten seconds! This book covers graphical or analytic techniques for laying out sundials on just about any surface that doesn't move, horizontal, vertical (facing any direction), slanted, or even the ceiling. He also discusses the movable kind, like a "shepherd's dial". It has nothing inherently to do with sheep, but can be used anywhere, even without knowing true north. The historian may be disappointed. This is not a catalogue of sundials through the ages, although bits of history are scattered throughout. In one sense, though, this is a view into the time of its writing (1973). A modern reader, with access to modern calculators and computers, will be amused if not puzzled by some of tricks used to make hand computation more feasible. I don't know anyone any more who multiplies by adding logs, and the circumlocutions around negative logarithms look positively quaint. The only real flaw in this book is its systematic omission of half the world: the southern hemisphere. It wouldn't have been so hard to add just a paragraph or two about sundials that work "backwards". Although this book celebrates the craft and art that can go into a sundial, its real value

is technical. This book gives the essential methods for the functional side of a solar time-piece; bring your own artistry.

There are many spreadsheets available to the potential dial-maker, enabling him or her to quickly lay out lines for all sorts of dial configurations and easily add the most complex furniture to any face. However, such an approach is a sort of "black-box" approach and doesn't connect the maker to the underlying principles of dialing. Waugh's book has detailed explanations and examples of graphical and mathematical techniques - if you use either you will understand dial-making. This book appears to be based roughly on Mayall & Mayall. Their germinal book was a standard for many decades but is not as clear as Waugh's. Sundials are attractive additions to any property and needn't look like the abominations sold on-line or in garden supply shops. This book provides the key to making some wonderful dials and even today, some 35 years after it was written it competes well with the computerized dial layout software. Dialing is a gentle art and deserves personal interaction of the type this book enables. I like this book.

Waugh's assuring and professorial voice is a terrific example of an enthusiastic academic writing for a popular audience. His prose is lucid and rings with his own love of the subject. I wish I could have spent an afternoon with Professor Waugh on his Connecticut farm talking sundials.

I am totally pleased with this purchase. I've leafed through it and find it to be exciting with the many illustrations, easy reading, and how the content is organized. I am quite pleased with the size of the book, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, and size of print. The seller, HPB Outlet, listed the condition as good - it's not only good, it's perfect!! The price was right, and delivery was ahead of schedule. This was my first purchase from HPB Outlet, and I'm looking forward to doing business with them in the future.

This thoughtfully designed and fully comprehensive guide gives you all the information you could possibly need to design and create a variety of sundial types. I didn't give it four stars because it is a bit on the dry side, but when trying to convey reams of technical information I suppose the entertainment factor has to be reduced.

good

Interesting! Includes wall sundials, on bldgs in Europe. I bought one in Carcassonne, France. All you

need is a nail.

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