

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THOMAS ROSS

Part 20: The Other Dials of Lennoxlove

DENNIS COWAN

The Lady of Lennoxlove (Fig. 1) is a fabulous multiple dial and has been the subject of at least two articles in the *Bulletin* and has to be my most favourite dial. She appeared in Part 3 of this series of articles,¹ and was more recently extensively covered by Alastair Hunter in his article ‘A Scottish Sundial Holding Secrets’ in June 2016.²



Fig. 1. The Lady of Lennoxlove.

But there are other dials at Lennoxlove. In volume 5 of *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*,³ Thomas Ross mentions two other dials at Lennoxlove, which he knew as Lethington Castle.

The first is a horizontal dial that sits just to the north of the Lady’s garden. Ross provides no sketch and merely says:

“A round horizontal dial with a baluster shaft [Fig. 2] stands in front of this ancient castle; it is undated, but on its metal face is engraved DAVID LYON SCULPSIT.”

As can be read above, Ross identifies it as a “round horizontal dial” but as can be seen from Fig. 3, it is clearly octagonal. It is almost certainly the same dial, however, as although the markings are only just legible today, the



Fig. 2. The horizontal dial and pedestal.



Fig. 3. Detail of the horizontal dial.

engraving described by Ross can be seen. There are Roman numerals from 4 am to 8 pm read from the inside on an inner ring. Outside that another ring includes hour, half- and quarter-hour lines, outside of which is a minute scale with ten minute intervals named. Additionally, “for latitude 56 degrees” can be identified on the dial, which is correct

for Lennoxlove. Unfortunately these engravings did not photograph well!

David Lyon is not a known maker, but Webster's *Signature Database*⁴ has a record for a barometer maker named Lyon operating out of Edinburgh in 1772. In addition, there is a Hunter Lyon (son or brother perhaps) also operating out of Edinburgh from 1793 to 1803. He was an optician and it is known that both barometer makers and opticians also dabbled in sundials. There is a possibility, therefore, Edinburgh being less than twenty miles from Lennoxlove, that our David Lyon is the one mentioned above or perhaps part of this family.

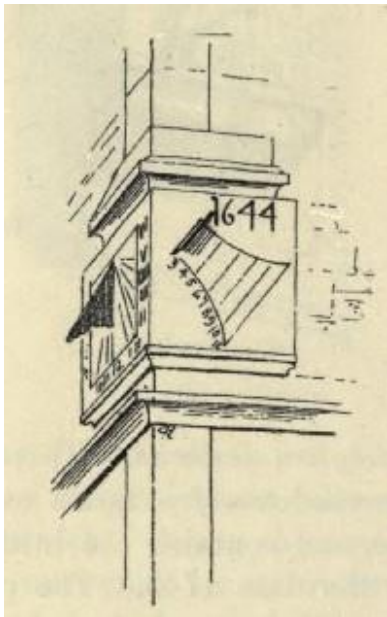


Fig. 4. Ross's sketch of the south and east vertical dials incorrectly showing the east face gnomon on the 3 am hour line.

As to the other dial identified by Ross, he comments:

*"On the south-east corner of the latest part of the castle may be seen the dial shown in [Fig. 4]. The date (1644) shows that this portion of the building was erected after Lethington passed from the Maitlands into the possession of the ancestors of the present proprietor, Lord Blantyre."*⁵

His sketch at Fig. 4 is clearly in error, as it shows the east face gnomon on the 3 am hour line. The photograph of the dial today (Fig. 5) shows the gnomon correctly positioned on the 6 am line, where it looks as though the date of 1644 has been re-engraved. The south face of the dial has Roman numerals whereas the east face has Arabic numerals.

This dial is on the left-hand edge of the building underneath the security camera and directly above the Lady in the left foreground of Fig. 6.



Fig. 6. Lennoxlove with the Lady in the left foreground and the south and east vertical dials (circled) above her and underneath the security camera.



Fig. 5. The south and east vertical dials today with the probably re-engraved date.



Fig. 7. The south and west vertical dials (circled) above the lamp on the corner of the house.

There is another dial at Lennoxlove which was not known to Ross. It is similar in design to the previous dial, but has south- and west-facing dials sitting as it does on the south-west corner of the house above the lamp (Fig. 7). Again like the south-east dial, the south face has Roman numerals whilst the west face has Arabic numerals (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Detail of the south and west vertical dials.



Fig. 9. The south-east and south-west dials together.

Finally, Fig. 9 shows the close proximity of these last two dials.

REFERENCES and NOTES

1. D. Cowan: 'In the Footsteps of Thomas Ross Part 3: The Sundials of James Gifford', *BSS Bulletin* 24(iv), 6–9 (December 2012).
2. A. Hunter: 'A Scottish Sundial Holding Secrets', *BSS Bulletin* 28(ii), 7–13 (June 2016).
3. D. MacGibbon and T. Ross: *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, David Douglas, Edinburgh (1892).
4. <http://historydb.adlerplanetarium.org/signatures/>
5. Since 1946, Lennoxlove has been owned by the Dukes of Hamilton.

dennis.cowan@btinternet.com