

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed May 18, 1931

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WEATHER VANE NOTES

Vanes of several patterns have been designed for showing the angle the wind makes to the horizontal. They are sometimes called "vertical vanes" or "inclino-meters."

In France, before the Revolution, only the nobility were permitted to place vanes on their dwellings. The shape of a vane denoted the owner's rank.

The learned Roman M. Terentius Varro, who died in 28 B.C., had on his farm a vane connected with an indoor dial. Vanes of the same kind were constructed in Italy in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

A weathercock on St. Peter's Church, Westminster, is depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry.

The belief once prevailed that if a dead kingfisher were hung up by its bill its breast would always turn to the wind. Hence this bird was called the "natural weathercock."

The "Dictionnaire des Girouettes," published by Count C. de Proisy d'Eppes, was a sort of "Who's Who Among the Turncoats" of the period from the beginning of the French Revolution to the return of the Bourbons. Each name in this opprobrious directory is prefixed with one or more little weather vanes to denote the number of times the individual in question had changed his political allegiance.

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