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THOMAS JUDGE 1886

1846 born in Acton. His father and grandfather were both watchmakers. He worked in their shop as a boy.

1866 Married Maria Jane Pilbrow in Canterbury where he now lived and worked.

c1874 Moved to Hythe and set up shop as a jeweller and silversmith in premises on the corner of the High Street and Bank Street. He quickly established himself as a fine craftsman.

1875 When the church clock needed replacing in 1875, the churchwardens turned to Judge, who provided a new dial and hands. The dial was eight feet in diameter: an open skeleton one, made of cast iron with gilt figures and minutes, and gilt hands. It was described as 'somewhat similar to the one at Canterbury Cathedral, but larger'.

1881 Town Councillor for the Middle Ward

1885 Churchwarden St Leonard's Church

1886 Mayor of Hythe. The weather was severe that winter and men who depended on outdoor work for their living could find no employment and had to rely on charity for the upkeep of their families. Judge organised a series of entertainments during the winter evenings, the proceeds to go to needy people in the town, and he and the mayoress were able to distribute coals, tea and sugar among the poor.

He wanted to commemorate his mayoralty by presenting the town with a drinking fountain, and it was agreed that this should take place on the day of the Freedom of the Borough ceremony for the town's MP, Sir Edward Watkin in May. The site was to be next to the town hall, set into the wall of the house belonging to Charles Fagge, a jurat and physician. It was unveiled by Lady Watkin.



The Drinking Fountain today

Less than a month later, Judge was dead, aged just forty. The cause of death was reported as 'an aneurism of the heart'; it was said that he suffered a great deal of pain. Sir Edward Watkin attended the funeral. Flags were flown at half mast, and blinds were drawn in many private houses. Laster, he was commemorated in a mosaic on the pulpit of St Leonard's church.



The premises formerly owned by Thomas Judge

His business was taken over by Benjamin Ninnes. The drinking fountain remained in situ for over twenty years, but in 1911, the London, County and Westminster Bank acquired the late Dr Fagge's house and wanted to rebuild the premises. The fountain was moved to the wall of Mackeson's Brewery in Market Square (now Red Lion Square). Mackeson's stopped trading in the town in 1968 and the brewery was demolished. The wall, however, remains, now enclosing a sheltered living complex. The water supply was disconnected to the drinking fountain, but it has now been restored and the fountain re-painted.