

NEWBURY Town Council

Town Hall Open Day

Saturday 15th September 2018
10.00am - 4.00pm



heritage open days



NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUING
TO MAKE NEWBURY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT.

The Town Hall

There has been a municipal building in the Market Place since 1611. The Old Guildhall had a meeting room upstairs with market stalls below and a prison at the side. And in the Market Place were the pillory and whipping post and the parish stocks. This building was demolished in 1825 because it obstructed the passage of carriages and horses.

The 1835 Municipal Reform Act established 178 municipal corporations and as their responsibilities grew over the course of the century there was increasing demand for purpose built accommodation. For the Victorians, however, town halls were not merely functional, they were also municipal showpieces and symbols of civic pride.

In 1875 it was decided to build another Town Hall and the justification for this decision, recorded in the Newbury Weekly News of 31st August 1876 clearly appeals to civic pride: "The reasons which led to the inauguration of this undertaking...[are] the wretched and insufficient accommodation of our police court, and the bad access to our Mansion house; and I may safely say that our Council Chamber was not of a befitting character to a town the size and importance of Newbury"

The initial plan was for a scheme costing £4000, £1000 of which was to come from the County (the County Justices were to have facilities for Sessional and Magisterial business within the new building). There was initially some difficulty



in getting a loan, as the Local Government Board declared that the Corporation had not adequately discharged its duties as a Sanitary Authority and this should take priority over the new scheme. The Corporation subsequently applied to the Lords of the Treasury and were successful. In 1876 tenders were accepted for construction and the decision was reached on a cost basis, with Mr Crook of Southampton offering to do the work for £4345.

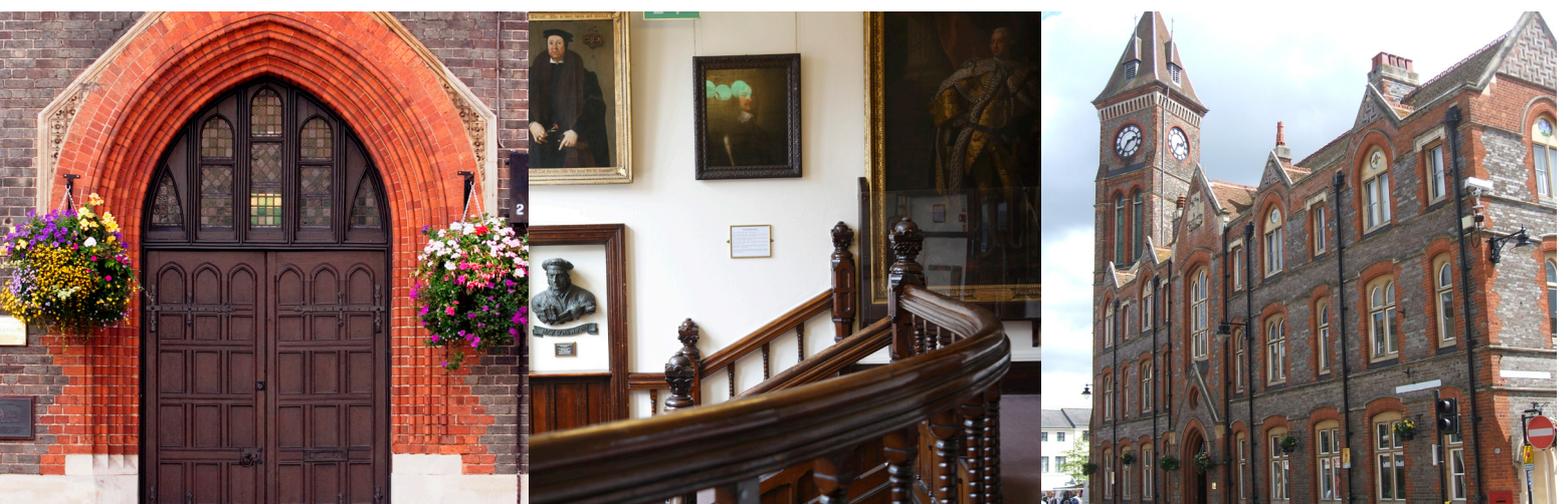
The foundation stone, weighing four tons, was laid by the Mayor, Mr Adey on 30th August 1876, and the building was supposed to be completed by August 1877. Mr Crook faced a fine of £10 per week for every week past the deadline. In fact the builders had several problems during the construction work. Most significantly the excavations for the foundations were two feet too deep and the area flooded. The heating apparatus and staircase had to be altered, and the chimneys added. It was not until 7th May 1878 that the new Town Hall was opened by the Earl of Carnarvon, and the first time it was used for a meeting was on the 15th June 1878.

The Town Hall clock was paid for by public subscription and the tower was raised in 1880, which brought it into line with the architect's original specification. Again the justification balances the functional and the ornamental "[it] would become in its added height not only useful but ornamental; and the whole undertaking would in its general effect form a conspicuous object in the constantly improving architecture of our Borough".

The architect, James Henry Money was born in Donnington in 1834. His other public buildings included Working Men's Conservative Club, Hungerford Corn Exchange, the Memorial Lych Gate at Shaw Church and the Falkland Memorial. J H Money died in 1918 and is buried at St Mary's Church, Shaw cum Donnington.

The Town Hall is built in the North European Gothic style which was popular during the late nineteenth century. Its distinctive polychrome red and blue brick mirrors the design at Reading. The balcony is for Mayoral appearances. The Town Hall is a Grade II listed building.

Newbury Town Council has been using the Town Hall for meetings and offices since 1997.



The Boards of Honour

Recording the Town's Mayors, back to 1596

The Boards can be viewed on the walls of the Council Chamber. They contain the names of more than 400 Mayors, dating back to the time of the Town's first Royal Charter of May 28th 1596.



The Council's Maces

The Newbury Town Maces

"The aforesaid Sergeants at Mace . . . shall carry and bear before the mayor of the borough. . . everywhere within the said borough of Newbery, the Suburbs Liberties and Precincts of the same, golden or silver Maces and engraven and ornamented with the sign of the Arms of the Kingdom of England" Charter 1596

A staff of office, the maces are an Authority from the Sovereign. (Maces are carried upside down when the Sovereign is present.)



Stuart Mace 1707 (Queen Anne 1702-1714)

This mace was made by Gabriel Sleath of London, around 1706. It is 39 inches long and made of silver and then hard gold plated [24 carat].

The usual open-arched crown form with the orb and cross, the arches rising from a circlet of crosses patee, and fleur-de-lis, being richly foliated. Beneath the arches of the crown are the royal arms of James I used until 1707 in relief, and round the bowl which is divided into four compartments by demi-figures terminating in foliage, are the roses surmounted by a crown,



with the initials A R, with the harp similarly crowned and initialed, the fleur-de-lis the same, and the thistle treated in a similar manner. The shaft is divided into three lengths by encircling bands, and as well as the base is chased. The name Edward Stuart majr 1707 is engraved on the shaft. This is sometimes called the “great mace “

On the upper length of the shaft are the engraved arms without shield, of the Borough of Newbury. There appears to be no hall mark. The two maces on the Chain of Office are copieof this mace.

Makers mark: On the flat head of the mace, below the arms and also near the top of the lower half of the shaft is a mark, part erased in each case.

The mace was mysteriously damaged in 1999 and the Council decided not to have it repaired as the arches of the mace cannot be rectified due to the brittleness of the metal. Replacing the crown would detract from its historic value.

The Kimber Mace 1758 (George II, 1727 -1760.)

This Mace is 39 inches long and made by William Shaw & William Priest of London.

An earlier older mace probably Elizabethan “the Small mace” was exchanged for this one to match the length of the “Stuart” mace. [Walter Money].

The open arches of the crown, beneath which are the royal arms used by George II, rise from a circlet of fleurs-de-lis, and balls, and the head or bowl which is “bulged” and decorated with foliage, etc., bears a medallion of the Borough Arms, the name and date. The shaft is divided into three lengths by massive knobs, which as well as the base, are chased.

Hall mark - London for 1757, this is on the side of the mace head, above the floral decoration to the left of the Borough badge.

Makers mark - Above the floral decoration to the left of the cartouche bearing the Newbury badge. The mace was probably made in 1749.

The name John Kimber Mayor 1758 was engraved on the shaft, and a scroll inscribed BURSVS DE NEWBURIE. “John Kimber was a corn factor, and was proved to have forestalled the market (He purchased corn when the price was low, then sold the corn when the price rose). His name, by order of the council, was erased from the mace. This was done, but enough remains of the lettering to identify his name.” There is evidence that he was innocent, but damage to the mace remains. The Royal Arms are on the cap.

The Mayor's Throne

This is a Victorian oak Mayoral chair, with the crest rail carved with the crest of the borough of Newbury. The desk is also Victorian.



Elsie Kimber 1889 – 1954 Newbury's First Lady Mayor



Else Kimber became Newbury's first woman town councillor in 1922, first Lady Mayor in 1932 and first woman alderman in 1943. When Elsie was first elected to the Council in 1922, only women over the age of 30 could vote in elections. It would be another six years before women had equal voting rights.

A hundred per cent Newburian, Miss Kimber was born at Bartholomew House and was educated in the town. Elsie was one of the 39 founding pupils of Newbury County Girls' Grammar School in 1904. On leaving school, she trained to be a teacher but, when her mother fell ill, returned to Newbury and worked in her father's business. She took over the shop from him and was a well known figure around Newbury.

She had a strong sense of public service; gave swimming lessons to local children, was an Air Raid Protection warden during the war and supported St John's Church and Newbury Girls' School all her life. She was also a frequent blood donor, being on call permanently at Newbury District Hospital for this humane and valuable service. She was a governor of Newbury County Girls' School, and keenly interested in Christ's Hospital.

She had a life-long interest in community issues and was most interested in improving housing, slum clearance, education and public health. No detail was too small, a cracked pavement or an unlit lamp, to demand Elsie's attention and fighting spirit, and she would not rest until it was put right. In later life, Elsie was again the first woman in a man's world – as a delegate amongst 500 males to the 'All England Grocers' Conference'.

This year, 2018, to mark the Centenary of The Representation of the People Act 1918, Newbury Town Council has named the meeting room on the ground floor of the Town Hall the Elsie Kimber room, in honour of our first Lady Mayor.

Former Female Mayors

1932 - Elsie Kimber
1953 - Ethel Mary Elliott
1966 - Mrs Elizabeth Ganf
1973 - Mrs Pauline Mada Bodin
1974 - Dr Elizabeth Dyson
1975 - Mrs Ellen Symons
1977 - Dr Elizabeth Dyson
1978 - Engela Mary Archer
1981 - Mrs Jo M. Lindsay
1982 - Mrs Jo M. Lindsay
1983 - Mrs Barbara J. McMahon
1986 - Mrs Josephine Goodfellow

1987 - Mrs Pauline Mada Bodin
1988 - Mrs Christine Fairbrother
1989 - Mrs Christine Fairbrother
1993 - Marion Paterson
1995 - Mrs Sally Jane Hannon
1997 - Martha Vickers
2000 - Susan Farrant
2002 - Frances Berry
2005 - Valeria Ann Bull
2006 - Gillian Durrant
2014 - Jo Day
2018 - Margo Payne



The Town Hall Paintings and Portraits

John Winchcombe the Younger (“Jack of Newbury”)



John Winchcombe (c.1489-1557) was the son of a Newbury clothier, also called John Winchcombe, whose brass memorial can be seen in St Nicolas Church. He became one of the leading clothiers in England, manufacturing about 6000 cloths a year and becoming a principal exporter of English cloths to the rest of Europe via Antwerp. This required organisation for spinning, fulling, combing, weaving, and dyeing on a semi-industrial scale (David Peacock, *The Story of Newbury*, 2011).

Winchcombe became nationally known, leading a number of deputations to Henry VIII on the regulation of the cloth industry. He associated with Sir Thomas Gresham,

founder of the Royal Exchange, and the Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector to Edward VI. He was nominated to be a member of the welcoming party for Henry VIII's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, in 1540, and he contributed to the army which was sent to besiege Boulogne in 1544.

Winchcombe was successful in acquiring property, including the manors of Bucklebury and Thatcham and land in Newbury and elsewhere. His house lay between what are now Marsh Lane and Jack Street, where Marks & Spencers now stands, and its side can still be seen in Marsh Lane. He was a member of the court which tried the Newbury martyrs in 1556.

The portrait is painted on a wooden panel and is dated 1550. It was purchased for Newbury Borough in 1835 for £5 (Walter Money, *A Popular History of Newbury*, 1905). It is attributed to the school of Federico Zuccaro (c. 1543-1609); however, the only known visit by Zuccaro to England was in 1575. The frame is inscribed: 'In respect of things aeternal This is veari vayne and mortell | Spende well thi mortall Lief therefore What thou maist leve for Evermore'. Two other copies of the painting are known, one at Sudeley Castle and the other at Bucklebury House.

Sir John Boys



John Boys (1607-64) was a country gentleman from Kent. During the English Civil War, he was appointed Governor of Donnington Castle by King Charles I in 1643. He took steps to fortify it, including razing the surrounding houses in order to provide a good field of fire. Despite undergoing bombardment, he successfully defended the Castle in 1644 and was knighted by the king. However, when again attacked in 1645-46, he was unable to defend the Castle further and had to accept terms of surrender. These including marching out with drums beating and flags flying, and safe conduct for his soldiers. He had sustained the siege for a year and nine months. He eventually went into retirement and survived to see the restoration of King Charles II.

An inscription on the reverse of the painting states that it is a copy of an original portrait in the collection of William Oxenden Hammond (1817-1903) of St Alban's Court, Nonington, Kent. It was donated by Mrs Maude Upton in 1948. It is likely that the original, which may have been by painted in 1660 by John Riley (1646-91), was sold when the estate was sold in 1938. Its location is not known, but that does not diminish the value of this copy for the history of Newbury.

This copy can be compared with an engraving of Sir John Boys made in the late 18th or early 19th century which is in the National Portrait Gallery. The engraving was presumably made from the original and is clearly of the same man.

King George III and Queen Charlotte

King George III (1738-1820) acceded to the throne in 1760 at the age of 22. In September 1761 he married Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744-1818) and they were crowned in the same month. He commissioned the Scottish portraitist Allan Ramsay to paint a large number of almost identical coronation portraits of himself and his Queen for distribution to people of influence. At least 25 such pairs of portraits



still exist, of which 12 are essentially the same as these.

According to the Newbury historian Walter Money (A Popular History of Newbury, 1905), these particular portraits were presented to William Matthew Burt, who was Governor of the Leeward Islands 1776–81. Mr Burt lived in a house called Maiden Erleigh, near Reading, which passed by purchase and inheritance to the Reverend Edward Goulding, Vicar of Brimpton. It was Mr Goulding's widow Mrs Louisa Goulding who donated the portraits to Newbury Borough when the Town Hall was built in 1879, and they have been located in this position ever since.

Again according to Walter Money, George III visited Newbury twice, in 1784 and 1789. On both occasions, his visit was in order to change horses at the George and Pelican on the way to somewhere else. On the second such occasion, he had just recovered from his first serious bout of illness, and dense crowds lined the roadway to express their joy. With these two brief encounters with this monarch we shall have to be content, but we are indeed fortunate to have copies of these historic portraits. George III was the longest lived British monarch until Queen Victoria and our present Queen, and as the above incident indicates he was popular through most or all of his reign.



The Newbury Coat

Luke Clint's painting of The Newbury Coat commemorates an event which took place on the 25th June 1811 following a wager of 1,000 Guineas between Sir John Throckmorton, Bart and Mr John Coxeter of Greenham Mill, Newbury. Sir John Challenged Mr Coxeter to substantiate his boast of being able to produce a coat within a day.

At 5 am two sheep were shorn, the fleece spun in to yard and the yard in to cloth. At 4 pm the cloth, rich damson in colour, was handed to James White for the tailoring. At 6.20 pm, just 13 hours and 20 minutes after the shearing, Sir John put on his new hunting coat to the cheers of a 5,000 strong crowd which had gathered as the news of the event spread. Mr Coxeter provided 120 gallons of beer for the celebration that followed and the sheep were slaughtered and roasted on the spot.

The feat was considered unique, making the coat world famous. It was displayed at the great exhibition of 1851. Two paintings of its manufacture were commissioned from Luke Clint, son of the famous London artist George Clint. Both pictures show the same

foreground, compressing successive actions into one frame, but they differ in orientation of the mill buildings. One commission came from Newbury's coaching inn, the George and Pelican. Some years later the Throckmorton family bought this painting and it is now displayed with the coat at the family seat of Coughton Hall in Warwickshire. The other commission was from Mr Coxeter, whose family kept the painting at least until 1876, and possibly longer.

It was acquired by Sir Peter Michael, CBE, in 1985 and was displayed in The Vineyard Hotel, Stockcross, Newbury.

In May 2016 Sir Peter gave the Picture on permanent loan to Newbury Town Council and it was unveiled in the Town Hall by the Mayor of Newbury, Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, on the 3rd of June 2016.



