CAMBRIDGE MAYORS: 800 YEARS

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

SOME EDITED HIGHLIGHTS

JOHN MARTYN AND JOHN MORTLOCK

In the past, the Mayoralty carried much more authority than it does presently. Many of those who were eligible to be elected to the office wished to serve for longer than one year, since they anticipated enjoying the power which the office afforded. One such person was Mr. John Martyn. During the thirteenth century he was Mayor on no fewer than fifteen occasions, although only seven of these can be determined with any certainty.

Mr. John Mortlock, who first served as Mayor in 1785, continued to serve as Mayor every other year, for a total of thirteen periods in office, the last being in 1809. During the intervening years, John Mortlock served as Deputy Mayor. This was usually to a Mayor who was either a business partner or a relative of his. John Mortlock also served as Member of Parliament and as Recorder of the Borough. His influence over Cambridge was strong and was held for nearly thirty years. His name has become infamous due to his reputation for selling the property of the corporation to his relatives and friends cheaply. Mortlock founded the first bank in Cambridge, now Barclays Bank, in Bene't Street.



Painting of John Mortlock, 1779.



The Great Mace.

THE MACES

In 1710, the Great Mace was presented to the Council by Samuel Shepherd, Jnr., of Exning, who was one of the Members of Parliament for the Borough. In 1724, four smaller maces were presented to the Corporation by Thomas Bacon – again, one of the Members of Parliament for the Borough.



The iron chest at the Guildhall.

THE OLD BOROUGH CHEST

In 1531, a new iron chest was made to store the town's valuables and Charters. This still stands outside the Council Chamber at the Guildhall. An extract from the Borough Documents of Cambridge indicates that a new iron chest was made for the valuables of the town in 1531. The materials used were: three hundred-weight of iron, eleven iron plates, and one thousand nails. These cost one pound, nine shillings and four pence.

WILLIAM MOTT AND "THE MOTT SERMON"



The procession from the Guildhall.

William Mott was born in circa 1694. In 1762, he granted to the corporation an annual rent charge of six pounds on lands at Great Eversden and Little Eversden. This was to provide for a sermon to be preached in Holy Trinity Church. William Mott was Mayor of Cambridge in 1763. The annual Mott Sermon continues to be held to the present day. This constitutes a tradition which goes back some two hundred and forty-five years. The Mayor and other Members of the Council attend this service in full civic regalia.

THE FIRST MAYOR

The first recorded Mayor of Cambridge is Hervey fitz Eustace, who was Mayor in 1213. The house in which Mr. fitz Eustace resided still stands in the grounds of St. John's College and is now known as the "School of Pythagoras". The stone construction of the building not only explains its survival, but it also indicates a considerable prosperity on the part of Mr. fitz Eustace. Indeed, the seal of Mr. fitz Eustace bore a mounted knight with a drawn sword, indicating that he was of knightly rank.



The School of Pythagoras and St John's College.