

# ***Manorial Borough of Newton Abbot***

## ***Information for freeholders of the borough and others***

***Are you the owner or occupier of residential or commercial property lying north of Courtenay Road, east of Church fields and Lang's Copse, south of the River Lemon and Cattle Market, and west of Bearne's School, Devon Square and Forde Park? If so your property may well stand on the site of one of the free tenements that once constituted the manorial borough of Newton Abbot, and the activities of the borough courts may be of interest to you, as to others.***

***The manorial borough was a unit of local government for over six hundred years, from the founding of the town until Mid-Victorian times. For the first three centuries the lordship of the borough was held by Torre Abbey, and for the next three by the Yarde and Lane families of Bradley Manor. But it was the free tenants who regulated the civic life of the town, meeting together in the borough courts and taking turns as portreeve, ale-taster and jurors.***

***After a century and a half of reform and reorganisation most civic functions are now exercised by the Town, District and County Councils, while the town has expanded far beyond the borough boundary and the free tenants have become freeholders. But the manorial borough has never ceased to exist in law, and under the present holder of the lordship the courts leet and baron were revived in 1991, and an ale-tasting ceremony has since been held annually.***

***Within the last five years perambulation of the borough boundary has been revived (after a lapse of 184 years), views of watercourses and inspections of the stocks have been held, and ceremonies of bread-weighing and proclaiming St. Leonard's Fair have been conducted, which are also likely to become regular events in future. Freeholders of the borough can now be admitted as such, and all residents may take the oath of assurance and frankpledge.***

***The provisional programme for 2007 is set out overleaf. All courts and outdoor events are open to the public, and are usually advertised in the Library a week beforehand. Anyone thinking of applying to be a juror or registered as a freeholder of the borough is also welcome to attend an informal meeting. More information on our activities may be obtained from the steward or deputy steward (01392 382981 or 01626 354755) during normal office hours.***

## **Provisional Programme 2007**

All Courts and Jury meetings are held at the Royal British Legion Club in Marsh Road and start at 10.45 a.m. Ceremonies are held at various times, morning and afternoon. Details of all events are placed on the Library notice board a week beforehand.

**January** : Portreeve's Supper Sat 6<sup>th</sup> : Jury meeting Sat 27<sup>th</sup>

**February** : Court Sat 10<sup>th</sup> : Search and Seal Sat 24<sup>th</sup>

**March** : Spring Scavenge Sat 10<sup>th</sup> : Jury meeting Sat 31<sup>st</sup>

**April** : Bread-weighing Sat 7<sup>th</sup> : Court Sat 21<sup>st</sup>

**May** : Beating the Bounds Sat 12<sup>th</sup> : Jury meeting Sat 26<sup>th</sup>

**June** : Court Sat 9<sup>th</sup> : Ale-tasting Sat 30<sup>th</sup>

**July** : View of Watercourses Sat 14<sup>th</sup> : Jury meeting Sat 28<sup>th</sup>

**August** : Court Sat 11<sup>th</sup> : Inspecting the Stocks Wed 29<sup>th</sup>

**September** : Autumn Scavenge Sat 15<sup>th</sup> : Jury meeting Sat 29<sup>th</sup>

**October** : Election Court Sat 6<sup>th</sup> : Lawday & Lunch Sat 20<sup>th</sup>

**November** : St Leonard's Fair Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> : Jury meeting Sat 24<sup>th</sup>

**December** : Court Sat 8<sup>th</sup>

We particularly welcome the interest of borough residents, and hope to see them at courts and ceremonies. We also hope such persons, whether they are interested in an elected post or not, will if eligible apply for admission as freeholders of the borough. As well as maintaining ancient forms and traditions we act as a pressure group, and admitted freeholders are entitled to raise a wide range of matters of local concern for consideration and presentment by the leet and baron jury.

Officers and jurors need not be borough residents however, and persons living anywhere in the town or neighbourhood are welcome to apply for jury posts and are eligible for office. In olden days court attendance and tenure of office was compulsory, and officer posts circulated on an annual basis. A two-year tenure is now preferred, enabling officers to become more familiar with their duties but also serve in a variety of posts and progress to senior office within a reasonable time.