

The Forgotten History of the Mint House

Alright, you have been in New Road's Mint House at 1 New Inn Hall Street countless times, but have you ever wondered about the history of the building? Sure, it is undoubtedly old and has witnessed many changes take place in the Bonn Square area over the years, but is there more to it than that? Larry Kreitzer has done some research into the earliest history of the property and had uncovered some fascinating facts about it. It was originally built by a man named Richard Bettris in the mid-1650s, and was in the hands of his family until the beginning of the 18th century. Interestingly, Richard Bettris was a Quaker surgeon, who was quite a controversial figure during the Civil War and a prominent Dissenter during the reign of Charles II. Bettris offered his house at 1 New Inn Hall Street to be used as the first Quaker meeting house in Oxford for about 30 years. If you are interested in finding out more about this, then have a look at the pamphlet Larry has produced entitled *Oxford's First Quaker Meeting Place: The House of the Surgeon Richard Bettris (c. 1606-1682)*. Copies are available on the resource table at the back of the church. This is a full-scale research study, so be prepared for a detailed discussion of several new primary source documents, and numerous footnotes. However, if all you are after is a quick glance, then the photographs alone are worth looking at (there are ten pictures within it). Also worth noting is the abominable way that Quakers were treated in the 1650s and 1660s by Oxford students. It makes for shocking reading – particularly when they brought pigs into the meeting room to disrupt the Quaker services!