

Mayoral insignia

Most of the items of Mayoral Insignia in Rossendale has been donated by benefactors over the years and many are over 100 years old.

The Mayor's robes and chains are the outward sign of the civic role held; the Mayor usually wears the robe of office only on special or ceremonial occasions.

In Rossendale the Mayor has a choice of insignia and regalia to wear. The Bacup chain was donated in 1885 by Councillor James Smith Sutcliffe, the shields of the chain bear the names of all the Borough of Bacup Mayors from 1885 to 1974. Likewise, the Haslingden and Rawtenstall chains bear the names of the past Mayors of those Boroughs from 1892.

The Mayoresses chains date from 1922 when the Mayors of all three towns purchased chains of office for their Mayoress to wear.

Prior to 1974 each of the towns had their own Coat of Arms on a fob which was worn with the chain of that town. The chains are now worn with the Rossendale fob which was specially designed by the College of Heraldry to represent the new Borough of Rossendale formed in 1974. The Rossendale Coat of Arms incorporates objects from the Coats of Arms of the five Boroughs which were combined in part or in whole to make Rossendale. The five Boroughs being Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, part of Ramsbottom and Whitworth.

The chain belonging to the old Ramsbottom District Council went over to Bury. Whitworth Town Council have retained their own chain.

The badges worn by the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress were also donated by organisations or individuals. The Deputy Mayor of Rossendale's medallion was presented to the Council in 1997 by Mrs. Veronica Slater in memory of her late husband Jim. The Deputy Mayoress of Rossendale's medallion was purchased by the Rotarians of Bacup when they celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in 1997

In Rossendale, we have two maces, the larger being the Rawtenstall mace, made from sterling silver and gilt and presented to the Borough of Rawtenstall in 1935 by Harry Whitehead, a local industrialist to commemorate the Mayoralty of his sister Alderman, Caroline Whitehead, who was the first lady Mayor of Rawtenstall. The second mace is the smaller Haslingden mace.

When entering or leaving the Council Chamber on official business, the Mayor is always preceded by the mace. It is also carried before the Mayor on ceremonial occasions such as the Remembrance Parade and Civic Sunday. The mace is one of the oldest forms of Civic insignia and is a symbol of the Mayor's authority; the mace originated as a weapon of war.

It is interesting to note that in the presence of the monarch the mace is reversed, its use as a symbol of royal authority being redundant.

When preceded by the mace, the Mayor is often dressed in the Robes of Office. The Mayoral robe is red and edged with simulated fur. With the robes, the Mayor would wear lace cuffs and a jabot at the throat.