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Abstract for Keynote Speaker

Newton and Compound Interest

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Abstract. It is well known that in 1685 Isaac Newton developed his *Principia Mathematica*, which was published in July 1687.   What is perhaps less well known is that during this period of intense intellectual activity Newton took the trouble to endorse some compound interest tables for renewing and purchasing the leases of the numerous properties owned by cathedrals and colleges. These tables had been produced by George Mabbut, a steward or butler at King's College Cambridge, and Newton certified them as correct on September 10th 1685. The tables were published anonymously at Cambridge in 1686 with Newton's certificate prefixed to them.

My talk will report on the contents, background and authorship of the Tables. The subsequent history of the Tables will be reviewed, showing that they became known as Sir Isaac Newton's Tables as they went through numerous editions, and that they became a source of controversy in 1731, when an anonymous critic suggested that they unduly favoured the cathedrals and colleges, as opposed to the leaseholders. Finally the question will be posed of whether such considerations may have influenced the original publication in 1686 and Newton's involvement.

Selected References

Aecroid [?] (1628) Tables of Leases and interest

Anon (1722) The Value of Church and College Leases consider'd: and the Advantage of the Lessees made very apparent

Anonymous (1731a) Tables for renewing and purchasing of the leases of Cathedral-Churches and Colleges. Sir Isaac Newton's Tables

Anonymous (1731b) A True Estimate of the value of leasehold estates, and of annuities and reversions for lives and years. In answer to a pamphlet, intitled, Sir Isaac Newton's tables

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Mabbut G (1686) Tables for renewing & purchasing of the Leases of Cathedral-Churches and Colleges. Sept. 10. 1685. Methodus hujus Libri rectè se habet, numerique, ut ex quibusdam ad calculum revocatis judico, satis exactè computantur, Is. Newton Math. Prof. Luc

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