ISAAC NEWTON- Chronology

1642- Lincolnshire, England- Isaac Newton born on Christmas day (premature); his father, an illiterate but prosperous farmer, had died three months earlier.

1645-1653- Newton's mother remarries and moves; Isaac stays behind, cared for by his grandmother. His mother returns eight years later, when her second husband dies.

1661- Newton admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge. Initially, he is a `subsizar': a student who earns his keep by serving the Fellows and wealthy students (cleaning boots, waiting tables, cleaning dishes, etc.)

1665- Bachelor of Arts. The plague reaches Cambridge that summer; the university is closed, and N. returns to Lincolnshire for two years. By his own account, discoveries on the binomial series, the theory of colors and `direct and inverse fluxions' were made during this period, when he also began to think about gravity and Kepler's laws.

1669-N. (age 26) named Lucasian Professor of Mathematics (Barrow's chair); publishes `*De Analysi'*. He is supposed to lecture on a mathematical topic of his choice, and chooses optics. Of his lecturing, his assistant recorded that:

`So few went to hear Him, & fewer yet understood him, yet oftimes he did in a manner, for want of Hearers, read to ye Walls.'

1671- Newton designs and constructs a new kind of reflecting telescope with his own hands- building the tube, grinding the mirror, making his own tools. The telescope was a sensation, and ensured his election to the Royal Society in 1672 (age: 29)

1672- *New theory about light and colors* published by the Royal Society. *`Light consists of multitudes of unimaginably small and swift corpuscules of various sizes, springing from shining bodies…'* 10 papers attack his theory, with 11 rebuttals by N.

1670s- Experiments on chemistry and alchemy, private studies of theology. His growing, private conviction was that the scriptures, thus Christianity, had been corrupted in the fourth and fifth centuries. Just in time, a royal decree exempted the Lucasian professor from needing to take holy orders (as all Trinity College fellows were supposed to do.) N. becomes a recluse- withdraws from public academic life.

1684- Edmund Halley visits Newton and reports on conversations with Wren and Hooke regarding deriving Kepler's laws from an inverse-square law for gravity. Newton replies he had done this in 1680, and Halley urged him to publish the result. A short paper *De motu corporum* is sent later that year.

1687- Publication of *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* by the Royal Society.

1689- Member of Parliament for Cambridge University (age: 46)

1693- summer: ends contact with Fatio de Duillier (summer); reports of a mental breakdown (fall) – age: 50

1696- moves to London to become Warden of the Mint - takes charge of recoinage, sends counterfeiters to gallows.

1700- appointed Master of the Mint

1703-elected president of the Royal Society (upon Robert Hooke's death.)

1704- publication of *Opticks*

1705-knighted by Queen Anne

1727-death of Isaac Newton. Buried in Westminster Abbey. Of his funeral, Voltaire observes `*He was buried like a king who has done well by his subjects'*.

[Source: `Let Newton Be!', Fauvel, Flood, Shortland, Wilson (eds.)- Oxford U.P., 1988]