

The Common Council's selection procedure was certainly irregular. On 29 September 1734 Richard Wheatly was rejected as Assistant by a vote of 7-6, but a 12-2 vote on 16 October accepted him as both Assistant and Burgess [99, 101]. Subsequently, he was elected Alderman, on 21 April 1742 [151], and Mayor that same year on 6 September (his only service as Mayor) [153b, 154]. There are other instances of a man being elected Assistant and Burgess at the same time: the Rev. Mr Francis Wise, for example, on 11 March 1736 [123b]; Charles Hide on 11 September 1753 [223b, 224], and William Hows on 2 September 1755 [231]. The cutler, Nathaniel Reason, however, seems to have been *persona non grata* as far as the Common Council was concerned for, try as he might, he was unable to progress beyond the state of Assistant. Nominated as a Burgess candidate on 14 July 1749, he was rejected in favour of the Rev. John Wardle by a vote of 8-5 [200]; on 3 July and 22 July 1751 he was first rejected in favour of Henry Clarson [jun.] by 9-0 [209] and then in favour of William Jarvis, by 9-2 [209b]; even more decisively – by 14-1 – he lost to Charles Wyatt on 6 September 1756 [238b]; nominated for the last time on 11 September 1759, the Journal records that he 'was not allowed to stand for election' as Burgess by 8-6 [255].

In contrast to Nathaniel Reason, Henry Clarson [sen.], dyer, could hardly have been more popular with the members of the Common Council: on the one day – 30 December 1730 – he was elected Assistant, Burgess and Alderman [74b]; less than a year later – on 6 September 1731 – he just lost out to James West in the election for Mayor [77b], but succeeded in 1732 with a decisive 22-1 defeat of Edward Box [86b]; he went on (at the third ballot over James West) to serve as Mayor from 1735 [109b, 110], and again, from 1743, by 24-1 votes over William Greenall [162b, 163]; he was again preferred over William Greenall in 1747, by 23-1 votes [191b], but died in harness on 14 March 1748/9, William Hide taking over the remainder of the mayoral year [193b]. (His son – also Henry, baptised on 4 April 1713 – followed in his father's footsteps by serving as Mayor in 1755-6, 1765-6 and 1777-8).

For the most part, Henry Clarson [sen.] maintained his popularity to the last, but it had been threatened in 1736 when he unwisely overreached himself during his second turn as Mayor: in Common Hall on 31 March he took it upon himself to nominate 'two persons as candidates for office of Capital Burgess against consent of the majority of Aldermen and Capital Burgesses then present contrary to the ancient