

custom and usage of the Borough and in pursuance to such nomination did pretend to elect William Jarvis as a Capital Burgess in the room of William Greenall at the same Hall made Alderman'. This unconstitutional behaviour was legally challenged by Mr Clarkson's fellow members of the Common Council, with the result that judgement was given against the Mayor's 'pretended right of nomination' and the subsequent election of William Jarvis was declared null and void [132, 132b]. This stricture was probably responsible for Henry Clarkson's rejection in favour of James West in the mayoral election of 4 September 1738 [130, 130b], but it cannot have been held against him for too long as he was Mayor again in 1743.

Another falling-out between the Mayor and members of the Common Council came about in January 1729/30, and is recorded in the Journal. For some reason – known only to himself – the then Mayor, Blagrave Gregory, took it into his head to adjourn, until six o'clock, the Hall which had met in the forenoon of 12 January 1729/30. His refusal to offer any explanation for this unilateral decision drew a written protest from Council members; they protested 'First because we conceive that the Mayor has not any power to adjourn a Hall contrary to the consent of the majority of the members present at such a meeting. Secondly, because Mr Mayor being asked what business he had to propose refused to declare the same.'

The protest was signed by the Recorder, George Wheate, and councillors Edward Box, Thomas Bradford, Richard Burrows, Robert Greenall, Henry Pettipher, Thomas Stokes, Thomas Ward and James West – four of them former mayors. The Mayor's response was to adjourn the Hall to 11 a.m. on 13 January, and then, when all were assembled, he adjourned the Hall until 11 a.m. on 14 January; once assembled, he adjourned the Hall until 6 p.m. that same day; at that time a little business was quickly dealt with – the decision to reject the resignation of John Blencow as an Assistant and to oppose the election of Charles Fox as Burgess – after which the Mayor adjourned the Hall to 5 p.m. on 15 January. Seemingly intent on acting perversely, the Mayor allowed the Councillors to meet, only to send them away until 11 a.m. on 16 January when yet again, no Council business was considered [68. 68b, 69].

The story fades away, because no further reference to, or explanation of this strange behaviour is to be found in the Journal.

It was the twelve Aldermen who constituted the main authority within the Common Council, on occasion acting independently of the six Burgesses; the Journal records 'a Hall held by legal summons by the