

only some of them Burgesses – who were admitted as Freemen between 1723 and 1759; it also records how much they were required to pay for the privilege ‘granted on account of (1) service (2) birth’.⁷ These amounts were set by the Common Council and varied considerably: charges of two, three, four and five guineas were most often made, but there are instances where the figure was £6, £8, £10 and £15; even these were far outstripped by the £50 required of Rowland Gunion/Gungion on 27 September 1728 – the same day that John Gilkes was charged four guineas and Daniel Sale five guineas for the freedom, so we do have to wonder by what process of reasoning the members of the Common Council arrived at these figures in the first place [61]. Whatever the process was, it was dented somewhat by post-rider and innkeeper William Driver who, on 19 May 1740, challenged his assessment and managed to get a charge of £4 reduced to £3 [138, 138b].

From 1752 the freeman’s payment appears to have been fixed at five guineas – except in the case of the Rt. Hon. Frederick North, Lord North, who was admitted freeman on 17 June 1754, on payment of ‘what his Lordship pleases’ and was pleased to pay ‘into the Chamberlain’s hands Ten Guineas’ [225b].⁸

For others, the charge was waived altogether. [Jochin Philip] Ludowig Ripkee, ‘former trumpeter in Lord Harford’s Regiment of Horse, Captain Marcham’s Troop’,⁹ was granted the Freedom of the Borough on 14 July 1749, simply on payment of fees for admission, ‘he being late a soldier’ [200b]. John Wrighton, ostler at the Three Tuns in the Horsefair, and victualler John Tustain were excused payment on 29 May 1750, ‘if they can show that they are eldest sons of freemen of Banbury’ [204]. On 30 March 1752 it was agreed that Thomas Wise – admitted in 1751 on payment of five guineas – ‘should not pay, he having served his apprenticeship to a freeman for one year’; the Chamberlain accordingly repaid him his five guineas; Samuel Sale was in the same situation – but there is no mention of his having been reimbursed [210, 210b, 215]! John Johnston and John Lambley in 1755, and Andrew Annesley in 1757, were also charged admission fees only [233, 234, 234b, 241b].

The Journal does not tell us how much these admission fees ‘for freedom filing and entering’ were, but we learn from the Chamberlain’s

⁷ Town Clerk’s Book of Forms and Precedents, 1797, 37.

⁸ See pages 104-111, Lord North’s correspondence relating to Corporation affairs.

⁹ Marriage Register of Banbury, Part 2, 1724-1790 (BHS 3), 24 April 1748.