

apprenticed to the Chandlers after his father had died prematurely during his second term as Mayor. Samuel Welchman (1688) was another whose recently deceased father had been Mayor many years earlier.

There was an astonishing, if temporary, change in political power in 1687-8. King James II's Toleration Act, designed to give Roman Catholics access to borough government (hitherto restricted to members of the established church) had, in puritan Banbury, the opposite effect. Five years earlier Charles II had won a victory in the courts that resulted in many boroughs having their charters replaced with ones that allowed the Crown to remove at will any corporation members deemed to have inconvenient views. That monarch was too diplomatic to make use of these powers. Not so James II, who in 1687 arbitrarily removed many from the Whig-dominated boroughs whose members often made up the whole tiny franchise that elected Members of Parliament.

Banbury was one such, eleven out of twelve aldermen and five out of six burgesses being ejected. In their place, failing the hoped-for Catholics, the Crown was left with the need to find replacements from amongst the numerous dissenters. Three of these were parents of the London apprentices: John Awsten father of Daniel (1676), William, the wheelwright father of Nathaniel Gulliver (1683), and another Nathaniel, the mercer father of Martin Wheatley (1702). For good measure the Quaker father of Edward Stranke (1705) was appointed a Constable a year later, although by this time the former council members had been restored to office.

### **Minor office holders and Corporation favour**

Others who were appointed to this minor office or others in the gift of the Corporation, such as Tithingman, Taster and so on, included, as well as those mentioned earlier, John Barnes, 1670-2, James Wheatly, 1663-5, Richard Shaw, 1666-91, and Samuel Bowler, 1655-7. Thomas Welford was sergeant-at-mace from 1686, and was joined in this post by the former apprentice chandler, Aholiab West (1671), in 1699.

Other evidence of Corporation favour is seen in the grants of relief after the 1628 fire to Francis Vowe and William Bree, lease of the wool hall to Philip Cave and of a tenement in West Bar to Martin Kening or Canning. The council also had funds it could lend on bond, a valuable help in days before such capital was normally accessible. Kening was one beneficiary, as were John Barnes, William Gulliver, Richard Shaw and Thomas Bloxham.