

LONDON ELECTORAL HISTORY – STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

5.3 HISTORY OF ELECTIONS IN LONDON, 1700-1847

Note on conventions within all electoral tables

A vote for a candidate is shown as = 1

A null-vote for a candidate is shown as = 0

*A vote which might or might not be given to any other candidate (in elections for more than one seat) is shown as = **

Example:

In the three-candidate general election in Westminster (1784), the possible vote codes are: Fox 001, Wray 010, Hood 100, Wray + Fox 011, Hood + Fox 101, Hood + Wray 110.

So the aggregate of votes for each candidate is represented by Fox **1; Wray *1*; and Hood 1**.

Civic pride was just one reason for London being another exceptional constituency. Its jealously guarded privileges, reinforced by the annual rituals in which begowned liverymen participated in elections, combined to give the citizens of London a unique self-perception of independence. That this image of independence should be expressed in politics is unsurprising, but nonetheless worth stating.

Civic identity, moreover, was strong enough to transcend upon many occasions any ideological divisions among London's representatives. Hence all the London MPs regularly defended the privileges of the corporation and livery in parliament.

In stressing the distinctive nature of these metropolitan constituencies, however, it should be noted that, in the pre-reform era, they were also matched in political energy and activism by a number of other constituencies with large 'open' electorates. Examples were the cities of

Norwich and Bristol, or the county of Yorkshire. The exceptionalism of the metropolitan constituencies does not mean, therefore, that all other places were automatically moribund and mired in corruption. But the significance of these metropolitan constituencies lay in their dramatic focusing of political participation, close to the national seat of court and government. London, poetically dubbed by William Dunbar as the ‘sovereign of cities’, had turned into an electoral hot-house. The rich psephological details that follow are almost overwhelming. Their general message, however, is simple. They indicate steps towards democracy – steps that could have been reversed in subsequent years but, in fact, were not.

5.3.1 London elections in the early eighteenth century

London’s elections gave ample grounds for tactical voting, since there were often two rival slates of candidates for its four seats. The large numbers standing for election also meant that there were many candidates who had the experience of campaigning but not of winning.¹ Such election ‘losers’ did not get a chance to make their mark in parliament but they contributed to the constitutional vitality of the City’s electoral life.

In the early eighteenth century, the prevailing contests were between Church-and-King Tories and moderate Whig reformers, who supported a degree of religious toleration and the claims of parliament. The parliamentary general election of February 1701 followed the norm of being contested by two rival slates, each of four candidates. In the absence of poll book data, the surviving evidence takes the form of individual-level turnout data, showing that 5,539 out of an eligible 7,798 liverymen exercised their franchise.

In these multi-member London seats, it often happened that there was a fierce struggle for the fourth seat. Thus in 1701 the margin of 84 votes by which the Tory candidate William Withers² beat Charles Duncombe³ was sufficient to flatter Duncombe that he might achieve by a scrutiny what he had failed to achieve by a poll. (See Table 38) His appeal, however, was rejected, leaving Duncombe to find a seat elsewhere.

From this election, the surviving individual-level data show, for each livery company, which of its liverymen had exercised their franchise and which had remained neutral. It also declared in the scrutiny which of the liverymen were not qualified to vote. The most common reason for disqualification was that the liveryman had been admitted since the writ

for the election had been issued. Meanwhile, others were disqualified on account of receipt of alms, or because their livery fines had been returned. One particularly valuable aspect of this material (shown in Table 38 – Table **PL1701**, *Poll ID 25*), is that it reveals the number of all London liverymen at the start of the eighteenth century.

Table 38

London parliamentary general election, February 1701: turnout recorded in Table **PL1701, *Poll ID 25***

Date of return: 1 February 1701 Candidate name	Votes received	
	Poll	Scrutiny
WILLIAM ASHURST	3,291	3,245
GILBERT HEATHCOTE	3,182	3,135
ROBERT CLAYTON	3,124	3,088
WILLIAM WITHERS	2,798	2,758
Charles Duncombe	2,714	2,631
John Fleet	2,544	2,480
Francis Child	2,255	2,189
William Prichard	2,126	2,068
Polled	5,539	
Unpolled	2,259	
Total LED cases	7,798	

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*; LED.

No individual-level data survive for any other London parliamentary elections in the first decade of the eighteenth century, until the general election of November 1710.⁴ Political and religious tensions ran high throughout that year, from the trial of Dr Sacheverell in February, through London's election for sheriffs in June and for lord mayor in September, until after the parliamentary election in November. The Whig slate was then led by the incumbents Sir Gilbert Heathcote, London's mayor elect,⁵ and Sir William Ashurst.⁶ They were supported by Sir James Bateman,⁷ and the apostate incumbent and former Tory John Ward, who had become MP for London in 1708.⁸ Meanwhile the Tories fielded their own incumbent MP Sir William Withers, with Sir George Newland,⁹ John Cass,¹⁰ and the rising banker Sir Richard Hoare, who was a member of the Goldsmiths' livery company.¹¹

In the event, the Tories made a clean sweep, gaining all four seats. The gap between the votes for John Cass and the former incumbent John Ward was tantalisingly small: 16 votes (see Table 39). But no scrutiny was called; and the result stood.

Table 39

London parliamentary general election, 1710: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1710, *POLL ID 26*

Date of return: 16 November 1710				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
WILLIAM WITHERS	129	3,629	****1***	3,635
RICHARD HOARE	51	3,572	*****1**	3,576
GEORGE NEWLAND	84	3,385	*****1*	3,392
JOHN CASS	21	3,240	*****1	3,242
John Ward	122	3,224	***1****	3,220
Gilbert Heathcote	49	3,185	1*****	3,179
James Bateman	8	3,104	**1*****	3,099
William Ashurst	2	3,048	*1*****	3,043
Polled				6,647
Unpolled electors				1,645
Total LED cases				8,292

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*; LED.

London's Tories were triumphant again in 1713. The incumbent slate of the lord mayor Richard Hoare (who topped the poll), George Newland, John Cass, and William Withers outdid the Whig slate of John Ward, Robert Heysham,¹² Peter Godfrey,¹³ and Thomas Scawen.¹⁴ The Whigs' demand for a scrutiny was circumvented by the sheriffs' decision that the return should be made quickly, before the expiry of the writ for the election. Meanwhile, petitions from both the liverymen and the defeated candidates to the Commons against the return were lost in the long grass of the Committee for privileges and elections.¹⁵ The election result (shown in Table 40) marked the high tide of early eighteenth-century Toryism, before the death of Queen Anne ushered in significant changes to the political context. Even so, the Tory majorities over their opponents were not very great: 33 votes separated the successful William Withers from the defeated John Ward.

Table 40
London parliamentary general election, 1713: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1713, P011 ID 29

Date of return: 12 November 1713				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
RICHARD HOARE	51	3,842	****1***	3,852
GEORGE NEWLAND	84	3,826	*****1	3,826
JOHN CASS	21	3,802	*****1*	3,818
WILLIAM WITHERS	129	3,763	*****1**	3,783
John Ward	122	3,730	1*****	3,726
Robert Heysham	50	3,688	**1*****	3,683
Peter Godfrey	40	3,657	***1****	3,657
Thomas Scawen	104	3,625	*1*****	3,627
Total LED cases				7,579

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*; LED.

No individual-level data survive for the parliamentary election of 1715, which was the first under the new Hanoverian dynasty. The Tories were divided as to whether they supported *de facto* the new rulers, or whether they supported the theoretical claim of the far-away Jacobites. In London, the new mood was Whiggish. The Whigs in government was also keen to garner support from the headquarters of the great metropolis.¹⁶ Accordingly, Robert Heysham, Sir John Ward, and Sir Thomas Scawen were returned in the Whig interest, while the fourth successful candidate, Peter Godfrey, was classified as on the borders between moderate Whig and moderate Tory.

In 1722, both Heysham and Godfrey stood again, Godfrey with success. There were four other candidates: Richard Lockwood,¹⁷ John Barnard,¹⁸ Humphry Parsons,¹⁹ and Francis Child.²⁰ Interestingly, the Whig incumbent Robert Heysham came last in the six-way poll (see Table 41), while the banker Francis Child heralded a moderate Tory recovery, by successfully winning the fourth seat. A petition to the Commons against the return was withdrawn.

Table 41
London parliamentary general election, 1722: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1722, P011 ID 30

Date of return: 9 May 1722						
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received		Vote code	Number of records	
		Poll	Scrutiny			
RICHARD LOCKWOOD	73	4,235	4,025	***1**	4,236	
JOHN BARNARD	7	3,980	3,840	*****1	3,946	
PETER GODFREY	40	3,852	3,723	*****1*	3,845	
FRANCIS CHILD	22	3,784	3,575	**1***	3,788	
Humphry Parsons	86	3,593	3,393	*1****	3,601	
Robert Heysham	50	3,573	3,441	1*****	3,567	
Total LED cases					7,136	

Source: *Hist. Parl.*, 1715-54; LED.

Alongside the parliamentary elections, the shrieval elections were of great political importance in both London and Middlesex, since the sheriff as returning officer was empowered to admit electors to vote. In June 1723, the Whig Sir Richard Hopkins²¹ and Sir Felix Feast had been returned as sheriffs (for both Middlesex and London) in a controversial election.²² Immediately, the incumbent MP Sir Richard Lockwood, with the support of alderman John Williams,²³ demanded a scrutiny.²⁴ But the situation was soon changed by Feast's death on 24 February 1724, which created a vacancy for the remainder of his term of office.

A fresh election for the post was initially put to a show of hands. A new candidate, Edward Bellamy,²⁵ from the Fishmonger's livery company, was declared to be the winner, defeating John Williams. He at once demanded a poll, in which the very large number of more than 6,500 liverymen voted. As Williams was the victor in the poll by a narrow margin in proportional terms, so Bellamy in turn demanded a scrutiny. This exercise subsequently rejected over 750 'bad' votes, reducing the 'good' total to a little over 5,700. Unusually (although it did sometimes happen), the scrutiny changed the outcome of the election yet again. It transpired that more of the 'bad' votes had been cast for Williams than for Bellamy. In the final revision, he had a majority of 18 votes and was finally returned as sheriff.²⁶

Within the LED, however, the votes are indicated as they were cast at the poll (see Table 42), since no source indicates for the historian which of Williams's votes were disallowed as 'bad'. The interest of this contest lies in its indication of both the seriousness of the contest for the post of sheriff, and the scale of voter participation.

Table 42

By-election for sheriff of London and Middlesex, March 1724: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1724A, Poll ID 31

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received		Vote code	Number of records
		Poll	Scrutiny		
John Williams	127	3,557	2,850	01	3,552
EDWARD BELLAMY	11	3,102	2,868	10	3,060
Total LED cases					6,612

Source: *Daily Journal*, 28 March 1724; LED.

Shortly after that, the death of London MP Peter Godfrey in November 1724 precipitated a parliamentary by-election. It was contested by Sir Richard Hopkins, one of the victors in the previous year's election for sheriff, in the Whig interest. He was opposed by an overseas merchant Charles Goodfellow.²⁷ He polled well but not sufficiently well to defeat the sheriff, Richard Hopkins.

In the 1720s and 1730s, the Whigs under the ministerial rule of Sir Robert Walpole enjoyed a broad but not uncontested political hegemony. The government was keen to shore up its support wherever possible; and Walpole paid great attention to London politics. His City Elections Act of 1725 is generally held to have heralded the tightening grip of a Whig and merchant oligarchy over a range of alternative political views.²⁸ Contested elections in London certainly declined in frequency between the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century and the rise of Wilkite agitation in the later 1760s. But the grip of the oligarchy was never overwhelming. The Tory interest within the City of London kept its own meeting places and embryonic organisation, which enabled it to retain an oppositionist tradition,²⁹ whilst remaining torn between a Hanoverian Toryism and an outright Jacobitism.

Table 43
London parliamentary by-election, December 1724: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1724B, P011 ID 32

Date of return: 11 December 1724				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
RICHARD HOPKINS	56	3,332	01	3,291
Charles Goodfellow	41	2,911	10	2,870
Total LED cases				6,161

Source: Hist. Parl., 1715-54; LED.

The 1727 general election in London certainly showed that the more straightforward Whig and Tory allegiances of the first ‘Age of Party’ in the early eighteenth century were breaking down. Hence the Whigs did not have their own way across the board.³⁰ To be lord mayor at the time of an election was no guarantee of success, as the defeat of Gilbert Heathcote (the mayor elect) had already demonstrated in 1710. John Eyles,³¹ manager of the Walpolean interest in the City, had courted unpopularity during his time in mayoral office, which had just ended before the date of the election. Eyles had provocatively refused to present an address to the king from the Common Council. Drawn up by leading Jacobites, this document was critical of government policy. Nonetheless, Eyles was returned at the head of the poll. In second place, John Barnard was returned as an ‘opposition’ Whig, reflecting the views of the smaller merchants and craftsmen among the livery. The third candidate Micajah Perry was returned as a Whig,³² but he went into opposition shortly after the election. And the fourth man to become MP was the out-and-out Tory Humphry Parsons, who remained London’s MP until 1741.

These results meant that the two incumbent Whig MPs Richard Lockwood and Richard Hopkins were defeated, as were the two other candidates: Sir John Thompson,³³ and Sir John Williams.³⁴ There was a scrutiny. But, although the majority of the Tory Humphry Parsons was reduced by the scrutineers to the narrow margin of 11 votes, he remained validly elected as MP: see Table 44. It is wrong therefore to assume that the effect of the City Elections Act was to deliver London into the hands of the Whigs, no matter that Walpole’s intentions – and hopes – may have been.

Table 44
London parliamentary general election, 1727: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1727, Poll ID 33

Date of return: 24 November 1727					
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received		Vote code	Number of records
		Poll	Scrutiny		
JOHN EYLES	32	3,643	3,539	1*****	3,648
JOHN BARNARD	7	3,620	3,514	*****1	3,611
MICAJAH PERRY	92	3,494	3,396	***1***	3,494
HUMPHRY PARSONS	86	3,370	3,255	****1**	3,363
John Thompson	113	3,340	3,244	**1*****	3,345
Richard Lockwood	73	3,086	2,977	*****1*	3,084
John Williams	128	3,017	2,914	*****1**	3,011
Richard Hopkins	56	3,010	2,921	*1*****	3,017
Polled					6,762
Unpolled electors					1,791
Total LED cases					8,553

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*; LED.

Nonetheless, the political atmosphere in London by the mid-eighteenth century was relatively tranquil in electoral terms. This development was chiefly influenced by growing economic prosperity and political stability; but it was also consolidated by the long-term oligarchic effect of the Septennial Act of 1716, which had put general elections onto a seven-year cycle. However, there were short-term excitements upon occasion. And in such circumstances, the electoral system allowed the venting of political passions.

An example occurred in 1734, at a time when Walpole was deeply unpopular over plans to revise the excise system. He proposed to establish bonded warehouses where taxable imports, such as tobacco, wine and brandy, were to be kept until the excise tax was paid.³⁵ Mercantile and popular opposition was aroused. On 13 March 1734, the death in office of Samuel Robinson, the chamberlain of London, led to an immediate contest for the post – this being the only contested election for that office for which a poll book survives. The oppositionist John Bosworth,³⁶ significantly, himself a tobacco merchant by trade, defeated the Administration's candidate William Selwyn³⁷ by just six votes. The majority was

reduced still further, to four votes, at the inevitable scrutiny, after the rejection of just over 100 votes for each candidate (see Table 45).³⁸

This outcome was one of the many hostile demonstrations, including anti-excise riots, which forced Walpole to withdraw the unpopular scheme. The electoral system was not the only outlet for expressing opposition but it was a constitutional option which respectable citizens readily employed when available to them.

Table 45

Election for chamberlain of London, 1734: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1734, POLL ID 34

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received		Vote code	Number of records
		Poll	Scrutiny		
JOHN BOSWORTH	14	3,326	3,212	01	3,323
William Selwyn	105	3,320	3,208	10	3,283
Total LED cases					6,606

Source: LMA COL/CN/01/01/007 fo 201.

5.3.2 London elections in the later eighteenth century

The relative electoral calm of the mid-century was shifting by the later 1760s. In this decade, there was no dichotomised two-party system. Alliances were flexible, party labels indistinct, and interests often personal. Hence, when writing of the 1768 general election in London, the antiquarian Beaven declared laconically: ‘This was not a political contest’, so anticipating by a generation Namier’s perception of a political hiatus in the 1760s.³⁹ There were seven candidates, each appearing to stand upon a separate ‘interest’. Yet the contest contained the seeds of incipient Wilkite radicalism.⁴⁰

Thomas Harley, first elected for London in 1761 as a supporter of the Court and the ‘monied interest’, headed the poll in 1768.⁴¹ His position as incumbent lord mayor, as well as London’s incumbent MP, clearly aided his candidacy. Following him were two more incumbents: Sir Robert Ladbroke,⁴² from the Grocer’s company; and William Beckford,⁴³ who had both been MPs for the City of London since 1754. The merchant William Beckford, the son of the governor of Jamaica, and scion of the famously

wealthy slave-owning sugar-plantation family, was already moving towards political radicalism as a supporter of John Wilkes. He twice became lord mayor, in 1762 and 1769; and spoke up for the city in an impromptu speech to George III in 1770: the text was later engraved upon Beckford's statue in London's Guildhall. The fourth successful candidate was Barlow Trecothick,⁴⁴ ousting Sir Richard Glyn, who had represented London in parliament for over a decade.⁴⁵ The sixth candidate, John Paterson,⁴⁶ made little mark.

But the seventh and last in the poll was the notorious John Wilkes. Of all the elective offices which he sought in his flamboyant career, only that of MP for the City of London eluded him.⁴⁷ He eventually served all the civic offices of sheriff, lord mayor, and chamberlain. His drubbing in this contest, however, propelled him into a brisk move to the neighbouring constituency of Middlesex.⁴⁸

Table 46
London parliamentary general election, 1768: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1768, P011 ID 35

Date of return: 25 March 1768				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
THOMAS HARLEY	47	3,729	1*****	3,732
ROBERT LADBROKE	65	3,678	*1*****	3,682
WILLIAM BECKFORD	10	3,402	***1***	3,406
BARLOW TRECOTHICK	119	2,957	****1**	2,955
Richard Glyn	38	2,823	**1****	2,827
John Paterson	87	1,769	*****1*	1,770
John Wilkes	126	1,247	*****1	1,245
Total LED cases				5,700

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*; LED.

Between John Wilkes's first attempt to represent the City of London in 1768 and his final return as chamberlain in 1779, the liverymen of London experienced a storm of electioneering. Chance played its part in this: the death of William Beckford in June 1770 (when he was both lord mayor and London's MP) led to contested by-elections for both offices.⁴⁹ There were further contested elections for lord mayor in 1769, in 1771, in 1772, in 1773,

and in 1774, together with contested parliamentary elections in 1773 and 1774. Meanwhile incumbency of the sheriffs' offices was determined by contested elections in 1771, 1772, 1774, and in 1775.

Furthermore, there was an additional flurry of contested elections for chamberlain. John Wilkes stood on the resignation of Sir Theodore Janssen in 1776; undaunted at losing to Benjamin Hopkins in that election, he thereafter challenged the incumbent later in the same year, and again in 1777 and 1778 before finally seizing the prize on Hopkins' own death in 1779. This incessant electoral activity led to a core of liverymen with extensive electoral experience: of the 6,000 liverymen who polled in the contested election for Members of Parliament in 1780, perhaps two thirds to three quarters had gained extensive electoral experience in the preceding decade. Wherever poll books survive, their details have been incorporated into the LED.

In popular elections for lord mayor, the liverymen returned a short list of two candidates, from whom the Court of Aldermen selected one. The election of 1772 was contested by two slates, each of two candidates. The winning pair were John Wilkes (this time heading the poll) and James Townsend, from the Mercer's company, who was already an MP.⁵⁰ They were both radicals, although they did not stand on a unified programme. Townsend was a supporter of the Constitutional Society's more thoroughgoing reform programme, in contradistinction to the Wilkes and the Wilkite Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights.⁵¹ Two defeated candidates, Thomas Hallifax⁵² and John Shakespear,⁵³ also polled effectively, while the token campaign of Henry Bankes was rewarded with two votes (Table 47).

Shortly after this event, another election loomed. At his death in October 1773 the veteran MP Sir Robert Ladbroke had represented London in parliament since 1754. In the ensuing by-election in December 1773, the incumbent lord mayor Frederick Bull⁵⁴ stood on a Bill of Rights Society platform. Against him, the Administration, headed by Lord North, put forward as its candidate the politically inexperienced but economically influential East India Company director, John Roberts.⁵⁵ Bull won but Roberts made a very respectable showing, indicating that the radicals did not command total support.

There followed in 1774 a general election for parliament. At that point, John Wilkes gave his fellow radical John Sawbridge⁵⁶ the support of the Society for Supporters of the Bill of Rights (SSBR), in return for preventing a split in the radical vote in Common Hall. Thus Wilkes was eventually able to become lord mayor, having earlier gained popular

majorities in 1772 and 1773 but then being passed over by the Court of Aldermen.

Table 47
Election for lord mayor of London, 1772: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1772A, Poll ID 36

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
John Wilkes	126	2,301	1***	2,338
James Townsend	117	2,278	*1**	2,326
Thomas Hallifax	45	2,126	**1*	2,161
John Shakespear	106	1,912	***1	2,113
Henry Bankes		2		
Total LED cases				4,548

Source: *London Chronicle*, 6 October 1772; LED.

Table 48
London parliamentary by-election, December 1773: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1773, Poll ID 38

Date of return: 23 December 1773				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
FREDERICK BULL	15	2,695	01	2,691
John Roberts	96	2,481	10	2,464
Total LED cases				5,155

Source: *Hist. Parl.*, 1754-90; LED.

Another parliamentary by-election was triggered in August 1781 by the death of incumbent MP George Hayley. The Administration put up Richard Clarke.⁵⁷ Against him stood Sir Watkin Lewes, veteran of the Society for Supporters of the Bill of Rights, and of many an unsuccessful campaign in Worcester.⁵⁸ More importantly, Lewes was lord mayor. Administration support was unable to prevail over his prestige and influence in that post. Lewes was elected with a comfortable majority (see

Table 49). Meanwhile Wilkes's own final acceptance as Middlesex's MP in 1774 and his gaining of the lucrative post of chamberlain of London began to tug him into respectability. The intensity of Wilkite support also began to decline. But the success of Watkin Lewes in the 1781 by-election indicated that London radicalism was far from a spent force.

Table 49

London parliamentary by-election, October 1781: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1781, P011 ID 39

Date of return: 2 October 1781				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
WATKIN LEWES	72	2,685	10	2,676
Richard Clarke	23	2,387	01	2,386
Total LED cases				5,062

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*; LED.

Calculations about the relative strength of London's rival political groupings affected one detailed outcome of the 1784 general election. In the spring of that year, William Pitt was, nationally, the man of the moment.⁵⁹ The general election swept away many of Fox's Whig supporters, who were dubbed, in a rather obvious joke, 'Fox's Martyrs'.⁶⁰ Pitt himself was nominated in both Bath and London. Indeed, he was declared elected in London on the initial show of hands, along with his supporter Brook Watson,⁶¹ and two radicals, the incumbent MP Watkin Lewes, and Nathaniel Newnham.⁶² A poll was demanded on behalf of two initially defeated candidates: the ministerialist Richard Atkinson,⁶³ and his opponent John Sawbridge, a perennial thorn in the side of the Administration.⁶⁴

But the prospect of egg on the prime ministerial face prompted Pitt, on the first day of polling, to withdraw from such an open and unpredictable constituency. Instead, he chose the politically sluggish backwaters of a Cambridge University seat. Another candidate Samuel Smith withdrew on the second day of polling,⁶⁵ leaving five serious contenders for the four available seats.

The daily 'states of the poll' published in the morning newspapers show that three radicals, Watson, Lewes, and Newnham, rapidly gained an

unassailable lead. So the election became a contest between ministerialist Atkinson and anti-ministerialist Sawbridge for fourth place on the poll. In the event, John Sawbridge attained that fourth place on the declaration (see Table 50).

Table 50

London parliamentary general election, 1784: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1784, Poll ID 40

Date of return: 7 May 1784					
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received		Vote code	Number of records
		Poll	Scrutiny		
BROOK WATSON		4,789	4,776		
WATKIN LEWES		4,554	4,541		
NATHANIEL NEWNHAM		4,479	4,441		
JOHN SAWBRIDGE	103	2,823	2,812	10	2,473
Richard Atkinson	3	2,816	2,803	01	2,534
Samuel Smith		277	277		
William Pitt		52	56		
Total LED cases					5,007

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1754-90; Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser, 7 April 1784; LED.*

But with a lead of only seven votes over Atkinson, a scrutiny was inevitable. The first scrutiny in London since Bosworth's election as chamberlain half a century earlier led to the publication of poll lists for Sawbridge and Atkinson. The scrutiny did not, however, change the outcome of the election. Nor did the petitions against the return, received by the Commons, from both the liverymen and from Atkinson individually, alleging that unqualified voters had polled for Sawbridge.⁶⁶ The result was thus a clean sweep for the reformers, in contrast to the defeat of many Foxite Whigs elsewhere across the country.

London's last pre-reform parliamentary election for which individual-level poll book data survive is that of 1796. The political mood by this date was very different. Britain was at war with revolutionary France and prime minister Pitt had retreated to a much more cautious domestic policy, intent on curbing artisan radicalism. In this London election, the Administration was in a much stronger position. William Lushington,⁶⁷ who had entered the Commons in a by-election the previous year caused

by the death of John Sawbridge, laid emphasis on his independence and was returned at the head of the poll. The lord mayor William Curtis,⁶⁸ who had first been elected for London in 1790, came second. Like Lushington, he stressed his independence, although both supported the Administration. John William Anderson, who had been returned at an uncontested by-election in March 1793, was also re-elected.⁶⁹

Raising the banner of contested issues, Harvey Christian Combe⁷⁰ was the only Foxite Whig to stand. He had been defeated by Lushington in the by-election of March 1795, but he persisted in standing again, in order to ventilate his opposition to the war against revolutionary France. His success in gaining third place was indicative of divided opinion within London on the contentious subject of the war, which was particularly harmful to the economic interests of traders with continental Europe. Combe was supported by the candidacy of William Pickett.⁷¹ He had sought election unsuccessfully in 1790, and now stood again, on a platform of opposition to the war. But he was unsuccessful, his voting tally falling well short of that achieved by Combe: see Table 51.

Table 51
London parliamentary general election, 1796: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1796, Po11 ID 41

Date of return: 8 June 1796				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
WILLIAM LUSHINGTON	74	4,379	*****1	4,372
WILLIAM CURTIS	29	4,313	1*****	4,313
HARVEY CHRISTIAN COMBE	24	3,865	****1*	3,877
JOHN WILLIAM ANDERSON	1	3,170	***1**	3,165
William Pickett	94	2,795	**1***	2,795
Watkin Lewes	72	2,357	*1****	2,352
Total LED cases				6,322

Source: *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*; LED.

At the same time, the 1796 election marked effectively the end of the long political career of Sir Watkin Lewes.⁷² Like John Wilkes in Middlesex, this former radical had shifted his position, and now gave his support to Pitt's administration. He stood; but, falling between two

stools, came last. This was not quite Lewes's final appearance on the London electoral stage. On Wilkes's death in December 1797 the office of chamberlain fell vacant. The indigent Lewes stood against Richard Clarke, but the 48 votes polled by Lewes were an ignominious afterword to a career that had already effectively ended.⁷³ Desperate for the protection a parliamentary seat offered against creditors, Lewes contested London in 1802, polling 652 votes. His regular petitions to the Commons against the return were inevitably dismissed.

As this example suggested, would-be politicians within London had a variety of motives, including a desire for the emoluments of office and/or for the protection against creditors provided by a seat in parliament. However, the fluctuating outcomes of these many different elections indicated that issues as well as interests were emphatically at stake.

5.3.3 City of London elections in the first half of the nineteenth century

The absence of poll book material for the City of London during long periods of the early nineteenth century deprives the historian of public evidence for political divisions and personal rivalries. No doubt, such things continued; no doubt, governments continued to watch carefully the mood of the City; and certainly London elections continued to be disputed. The poll book record, however, remains silent.

When the evidence resumes, it showed yet again how a civic election could instantly provide a framework for a public trial of strength between rival political viewpoints. That was seen in the three rousing campaigns for the post of lord mayor of London in 1831. Despite the historic example of Richard Whittington, 'thrice lord mayor of London', a convention dating back to 1545 made the lord mayor ineligible to serve a second term.⁷⁴ This rule had the useful function of allowing the top job to circulate as widely as possible within the aldermanic oligarchy. Although the convention was occasionally broken by mayors returning to the post after a break of some years,⁷⁵ it remained the case that none should serve a second consecutive term. In fact, a break with that tradition did occur in 1816, when Sir Matthew Wood was elected to his second term as lord mayor. But he was defeated at the poll when he sought a third.

So things stood, when the convention was challenged in the elections

for lord mayor in the autumn of 1831.⁷⁶ A struggle for supremacy between Common Hall and the aldermanic bench ensued, which was immediately coupled with the explosive issues of parliamentary and general reform.⁷⁷ In September 1831 Sir Peter Laurie⁷⁸ stood ‘next below the chair’ in aldermanic seniority. In normal circumstances, he would have been elected lord mayor in succession to Sir John Key.⁷⁹ Although Laurie paid lip-service to the cause of reform, he took the view that the mayoralty was a municipal rather than a political office. But John Key played the Whig/reformer card astutely during his mayoralty, in support of parliamentary reform. Common Hall thus took the extraordinary step of returning him a second time at the popular election, together with Alderman John Thorp⁸⁰ who had already served as lord mayor in 1820-21. Both men polled well ahead of Peter Laurie: see Table 52. The subsequent choice made by the aldermen fell upon Thorp, who, following convention, declined to serve.

Table 52

Election for lord mayor of London, 7 October 1831: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1831A, P011 ID43

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
John Key	63	3,268	1**	3,280
John Thomas Thorp	116	3,089	*1*	3,103
Peter Laurie	68	2,713	**1	2,715
Charles Farebrother		16		0
Henry Winchester		2		0
William Taylor Copeland		1		0
Thomas Kelly		1		0
Polled				5,993
Unpolled electors				890
Total LED cases				6,883

Source: LMA COL/CN/01/01/010 p. 309; LED.

Angered by this outcome, Common Hall again sought in October 1831 to force the issue. They returned the incumbent John Key as the candidate of their choice, together with the conservative William Thompson,⁸¹ who had already passed the chair in 1828-9. Sir Peter

Laurie again stood in the popular election, while the radical Alderman Robert Waithman also threw his hat into the ring.⁸² But whereas Laurie had polled respectably enough at the first election, the second time round both he and Waithman came far behind, as shown in Table 53.

Table 53
Election for lord mayor of London, 21 October 1831: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1831B, P011 ID44

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
William Thompson	115	2,577	*1**	2,579
John Key	63	2,476	1***	2,477
Peter Laurie	68	486	***1	485
Robert Waithman	121	36	**1*	37
Charles Farebrother		2		0
Henry Winchester		2		0
William Taylor Copeland		2		0
Polled				3,107
Unpolled electors				3,776
Total LED cases				6,883

Source: LMA COL/CN/01/01/010 p. 315; LED.

In their collective wisdom, the aldermen selected Thompson but, like Thorp, he too followed convention and declined to serve. So once again the choice of two eligible candidates passed back to Common Hall. It was a game of nerves. At the third attempt, Common Hall again returned Sir John Key, the incumbent lord mayor, together with Thomas Kelly.⁸³ This time they were opposed by Charles Farebrother,⁸⁴ while nugatory votes were recorded for Laurie (again), Winchester (again) and Copeland (again): see Table 54.

Kelly had served as sheriff but had not yet passed the chair. He was thus qualified to serve as lord mayor, although others had more pressing claims of seniority. In fact, Kelly indicated that he was willing to be fined rather than to serve his term. In an open letter to the liverymen, he requested them not to vote for him. Eventually, the popular election returned Kelly in second place to John Key, who headed the poll. At this point, the aldermen gave way and re-elected Sir John Key as lord mayor.

Old custom had given way to popular politics.

Table 54
Election for lord mayor of London, 2 November 1831: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1831C, *Poll ID 45*

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
John Key	63	2,517	1**	2,500
Thomas Kelly	62	2,311	*1*	2,296
Charles Farebrother	33	684	**1	684
Peter Laurie		5		0
Henry Winchester		2		0
William Taylor Copeland		1		0
Polled				3,192
Unpolled electors				3,691
Total LED cases				6,883

Source: LMA COL/CN/01/01/010 p. 319; LED.

The general elections of 1830 and 1831 were the only ones in the period 1700-1852 to be uncontested in London. At that point, the tide in support of reform was irresistible. But after 1832 the constituency was rapidly re-politicised, and the 20 years after the Reform Act saw as many as ten contested parliamentary elections.

Poll book data next throws light upon the election in 1837, which followed the death of William IV and the accession of Victoria. ‘The demise of the Crown’, as it was delicately known, continued to force a general election, until the convention was ended under the provisions of the Parliament Act of 1911. In 1837, there were five contenders for the four seats. Matthew Wood, who headed the poll, had long been known as a thoroughgoing reformer and municipal improver, although this did not prevent him defending the privileges of City of London institutions when the occasion demanded.⁸⁵ William Crawford,⁸⁶ George James Pattison,⁸⁷ and George Grote⁸⁸ took the other three seats.

The victors were all supporters of reform, with various shades of enthusiasm. But Grote, the incumbent MP for London since 1832, had a majority of only six votes over the defeated conservative, John Horsley Palmer.⁸⁹ (See Table 55). Not surprisingly, Palmer’s supporters

petitioned in 1838 against the return, alleging bribery of the voters. But the petition was dismissed and the return of the sitting members confirmed.⁹⁰ London remained at this stage a reform stronghold, as municipal and mercantile interests tended to concur with reform campaigns to curb the political power of the landed aristocracy.

Table 55

London parliamentary general election, 1837: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1837, P011 ID 46

Date of return: 22 July 1837				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
MATTHEW WOOD	131	6,517	1****	6,496
WILLIAM CRAWFORD	28	6,071	**1**	6,059
JAMES PATTISON	88	6,070	***1*	6,054
GEORGE GROTE	43	5,879	*1***	5,869
John Horsley Palmer	85	5,873	****1	5,861
Total LED cases				11,564

Source: Craig; LED.

A contested election for lord mayor followed in 1840, which demonstrated that there were still many London opponents of radicalism, if taken too far. The senior candidate in line to succeed was Alderman James Harmer.⁹¹ He had, however, many critics. Harmer's offence was that he was the proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, an organ of both political radicalism and religious heterodoxy. A vituperative campaign was mounted against him. The *Dispatch* was described as anarchical, anti-monarchical, anti-Christian, anti-constitutional, and venerating of infidelity.⁹²

Against Harmer stood a known conservative, John Pirie,⁹³ and Thomas Johnson, from the Cooper's livery company, both being aldermen.⁹⁴ Harmer polled respectably enough in the popular vote in Common Council (see Table 56); but he trailed after his two opponents, whose names were duly forwarded. Of the two, Johnson was the choice of the aldermen. So the breaking of the seniority rule could operate against a radical candidate, as it had earlier operated in favour of a reformer.

Table 56
Election for lord mayor of London, 1840: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1840, Poll ID47

Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
John Pirie	95	2,741	*1*	2,742
Thomas Johnson	60	2,713	1**	2,712
James Harmer	48	2,294	**1	2,290
Total LED cases				5,082

Source: LMA COL/CN/01/01/010 p. 456; LED.

Seven years later, the City again saw a spirited campaign in the 1847 general election. There were nine candidates for the four seats, amidst public accusations of bribery and corruption.⁹⁵ In general, the election was a triumph for the supporters of reform, now known as Liberals. The poll was headed by Lord John Russell, the eminent Whig/Liberal statesman and devotee of Charles James Fox, whose memorials he edited.⁹⁶ Russell, incidentally, sat in the Commons legitimately, bearing the courtesy title of 'Lord' as the son of a duke.⁹⁷ Russell's success was matched by that of two fellow Liberals: James Pattison,⁹⁸ and Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, holder of an Austrian baronage.⁹⁹ This latter choice was a bold one on the part of the London electorate, since as a practising Jew, Rothschild could not take the Christian oath of allegiance and was hence unable to take his seat. In fact, he was repeatedly re-elected for London at by-elections in 1849 and 1857, until allowed to take a revised oath in 1858. That decision cemented his political base in the City, and he held his seat until 1874, when the Liberals suffered widespread losses.

Against this galaxy of liberal talent, three conservatives polled tolerably well but failed to win: they were Robert Bevan,¹⁰⁰ John Johnson,¹⁰¹ and the politically experienced James Freshfield.¹⁰² However, as happened from time to time in these London contests, there was a dramatic tussle for the fourth seat. It was taken by John Masterman, a moderate conservative and a staunch defender of Protestantism.¹⁰³ As Table 57 shows, he polled precisely three votes more than did the fourth liberal candidate, George de Hochpied Larpent.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile,

the radical candidacy of a London lawyer, William Payne,¹⁰⁵ did very poorly, although 513 voters were prepared to give him support. The result was a reminder, yet again, that political opinions remained divided amongst the London electorate. It also suggested that advanced radicals were henceforth not so likely to find support from the financial and mercantile interests of the City of London, but would have to look elsewhere.

Table 57

London parliamentary general election, 1847: Vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PL1847, P011 ID 48

Date of return: 28 July 1847				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
JOHN RUSSELL	101	7,137	1*****	6,040
JAMES PATTISON	88	7,030	*1*****	5,849
LIONEL DE ROTHSCHILD	99	6,792	***1*****	5,611
JOHN MASTERMAN	77	6,722	****1****	5,760
George Larpent	69	6,719	**1*****	5,646
Robert Bevan	13	5,268	*****1**	4,542
John Johnson	61	5,069	*****1***	4,380
James Freshfield	36	4,704	*****1*	4,029
William Payne	90	513	*****1	400
Polled				11,381
Unpolled electors				9,888
Total LED cases				21,269

Source: Craig; LED.

Notes

- ¹ This section owes much (especially for identification of defeated candidates) to Beaven, *passim*.
- ² Sir William Withers (c. 1654-1721), Fishmonger and alderman of Farringdon Within ward; MP for London, February 1701 – November 1701; MP for London, December 1707 – 1715; contested London, 1715. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, v, pp. 907-10.

- ³ Sir Charles Duncombe (1648-1711), Goldsmith and alderman of Bridge ward (and previously of Broad Street ward); MP for Hedon, 1685-9; contested Hedon, 1689; MP for Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, 1690-5; MP for Downton, 1695 – February 1698; contested Downton, January 1701; contested London, February 1701; MP for Ipswich, February 1701 – November 1701; contested London, November 1701; contested London, 1702; returned for Hedon, 1702; MP for Downton, 1702 – April 1711. See P. Duncombe, *Great Goldsmith: the life of Sir Charles Duncombe* (Chippendale, NSW, 2001); *Hist. Parl., 1660-1690*, ii, pp. 242-3; *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iii, pp. 937-44; and *ODNB*.
- ⁴ For a pioneering study of the historical psephology of these elections, see W.A. Speck and W.A. Gray, 'Londoners at the polls under Anne and George I', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 1 (1975), pp. 253-68.
- ⁵ Sir Gilbert Heathcote (1652-1733), Vintner and alderman of Walbrook ward (and subsequently of Bridge Without ward); contested London, 1698; MP for London, 1-22 February 1701; MP for London, December 1701 – 1710; contested London, 1710; MP for Helston, 1715-22; MP for Lymington, October 1722 – 1727; MP for St Germans, 1727 – January 1733. At the time of the London election of 1710, Heathcote was lord mayor elect of the City. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iv, pp. 309-17; *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 123; and *ODNB*.
- ⁶ Sir William Ashurst (1647-1720), Merchant Taylor and alderman of Billingsgate ward (and formerly alderman of Bread Street ward); MP for London, May 1689 – 1690; contested London, 1690; contested London, 1693; MP for London, 1695-1702; MP for London, 1705-10; contested London, 1710. See *Hist. Parl., 1660-90*, i, pp. 559-60; and *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iii, pp. 77-82.
- ⁷ Sir James Bateman (c. 1660-1718), Fishmonger (and formerly Loriner) and alderman of Coleman Street ward; contested Totnes, 1695; contested St Mawes, January 1701; contested London, 1710; MP for Ilchester, June 1711 – 1715; contested Ilchester, 1715; MP for East Looe, 1715 – November 1718. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iii, pp. 147-9; and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, i, p. 443.
- ⁸ Sir John Ward (c. 1650-1726), Merchant Taylor and alderman of Candlewick ward; MP for Bletchingley, February 1701 – 1708; MP for London, 1708-10; contested London, 1710; contested London, 1713; MP for London, 1715-22; MP for Dunwich, December 1722 – March 1726. See *Hist. Parl. 1690-1715*, v, pp. 793-7; and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 520.
- ⁹ Sir George Newland (1646-1714), Joiner; MP for Gatton, 1705-10; MP for London, 1710 – March 1714. Although Newland never attained the aldermanic bench, he was

placed at the head of the poll in the election for Broad Street ward in 1711. See Anon., *A true and impartial account of the poll of the inhabitants of the ward of Broad Street* (London, James Woodward, 1711), and Anon., *Tory partiality detected: or, a true state of the poll and scrutiny of Broad Street ward* (London, J. Baker, 1712). See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iv, pp. 1018-20.

- ¹⁰ Sir John Cass (1660-1718), Carpenter (and subsequently Skinner) and later alderman of Portsoken ward; MP for London, 1710-15; contested London, 1715. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iii, pp. 486-8; and *ODNB*, 10, p. 487.
- ¹¹ Sir Richard Hoare (1649-1719), Goldsmith and alderman of Bread Street ward; contested London, 1705; contested London, 1708; MP for London, 1710-15. See Anon., *Hoare's bank: a record, 1673-1932* (1932); *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iv, pp. 366-9; and *ODNB*.
- ¹² Robert Heysham (1663-1723), Draper and later alderman of Billingsgate ward; MP for Lancaster, 1698-1715; contested London, 1713; MP for London, 1715-22; contested London, 1722. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, iv, pp. 354-8, and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 136.
- ¹³ Peter Godfrey (1665-1724), Merchant Taylor; contested London, 1713; MP for London, 1715 – November 1724. See *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, pp. 65-6.
- ¹⁴ Sir Thomas Scawen (c. 1649-1730), Fishmonger and alderman of Cornhill ward; MP for Grampound, 1708-10; contested London, 1713; MP for London, 1715-22. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, v, pp. 378-9, and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 410.
- ¹⁵ *CJ*, 17, p. 488-9.
- ¹⁶ For these elections, see I.G. Doolittle, 'Government interference in City elections, 1714-16', *Historical Journal*, 24 (1981), pp. 945-8.
- ¹⁷ Richard Lockwood (1676-1756), Mercer; MP for Hindon, 1713-15; contested Worcester, 1715; MP for London, 1722-7; MP for Worcester, 1734-41. See *Hist. Parl., 1690-1715*, ii, p. 669, and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 222.
- ¹⁸ Sir John Barnard (c.1685-1764), Glover (and subsequently Grocer) and alderman of Dowgate ward; MP for London, 1722-61. See Anon., *Memoirs of the late Sir John Barnard* (1776); *City Biog.* pp. 170-86; *Hist. Parl., 1715-1754*, i, pp. 435-7; and *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, p. 49.
- ¹⁹ Humphry Parsons (1676-1741), Waxchandler (and subsequently Grocer) and alderman of Portsoken ward; contested Reigate, March 1717; contested Reigate,

- 1722; MP for Harwich, 1722-7; MP for London, 1727-41. See *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, pp. 326-7.
- ²⁰ For Sir Francis Child, later MP for Middlesex 1727-40, see section 5.2.1, n. 21.
- ²¹ Sir Richard Hopkins (d. 1736), Cutler (and subsequently Fishmonger) and alderman of Lime Street ward; MP for London, December 1724 – 1727. See *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 149.
- ²² See Anon., *A true account of the proceedings relating to the late election of sheriffs for the City of London and county of Middlesex* (London, J. Roberts, 1723).
- ²³ Sir John Williams (d. 1743), Mercer and alderman of Cripplegate ward; contested Minehead, 1723; contested London, 1727; MP for Aldeburgh, May 1730 – 1734. See J.J. Baddeley, *The aldermen of Cripplegate ward* (1900), pp. 87-93; and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, pp. 541-2.
- ²⁴ Anon., *A true account of the proceedings* (1723).
- ²⁵ Edward Bellamy (d. 1749), Fishmonger and alderman of Billingsgate ward. His death, on 28 March 1749, is noted in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 19 (1749), p. 141.
- ²⁶ BL Hargrave Ms. 139, fos 285-7.
- ²⁷ Charles Goodfellow, (d. 1728), Mercer. Identified as 'a Russia merchant and formerly a consul in Muscovy', in A.J. Henderson, *London and the national government, 1721-42* (Durham, NC, 1945), p. 99. His death, on 28 October 1728, is noted in *Political State of Great Britain*, 36 (1728), p. 405.
- ²⁸ See Doolittle, 'Walpole's City elections act (1725)'; Rogers, 'The City elections act (1725) reconsidered'; and discussion in section 3.3.4 and within that n14.
- ²⁹ See L. Colley, 'The Loyal Brotherhood and the Cocoa Tree: the London organisation of the Tory party, 1727-60', *Historical Journal*, 20 (1977), pp. 77-95; and idem, *In defiance of oligarchy: the Tory party, 1714-60* (Cambridge, 1982).
- ³⁰ For this election, see Anon., *A letter of advice to the livery-men of the City of London, concerning their choice of members for the next parliament* (London, A. Moore, 1727). This pamphlet has a fictitious imprint; see M. Treadwell, 'Of false and misleading imprints', in R. Myers and M. Harris (eds), *Fakes and frauds* (1989), pp. 41-4.
- ³¹ Sir John Eyles, Bt (1683-1745), Haberdasher and alderman of Vintry ward; MP for

- Chippenham, 1713-27; MP for London, 1727-34; contested Chippenham, 1734: see *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, p. 21.
- ³² Micajah Perry (1694-1753), Haberdasher and later alderman of Aldgate ward; MP for London, 1727-41. See E. Donnan, 'Eighteenth-century English merchants: Micajah Perry', *Journal of Economic and Business History*, 4 (1932), pp. 70-98; J.M. Price, *Perry of London: a family and a firm in the seaborne frontier, 1615-1753* (1992); *ODNB*; and *Hist. Parl., 1715-54*, ii, pp. 341-2.
- ³³ Sir John Thompson (c. 1669-1750), Vintner and alderman of Candlewick ward; contested London, 1727. His death, in February 1750, was noted in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 20 (1750), p. 91.
- ³⁴ See above n. 23.
- ³⁵ P.A. Langford, *The Excise crisis* (Oxford, 1975) is the *locus classicus*.
- ³⁶ Sir John Bosworth (d. 1752), Musician and common councilman of Farringdon Within ward. His death, on 3 August 1752, is noted in *London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, 21 (1752), p. 384.
- ³⁷ William Selwyn. He may have been the Skinner defeated by Henry Marshall in the aldermanic contest for Farringdon Within ward in 1737. One William Selwyn died on 4 July 1749.
- ³⁸ The statement in *London Chronicle*, 8 April 1784 (*sic*) that the scrutiny rejected the votes of two gardeners, a druggist, and a longbow stringmaker may well be correct, as the printer of the poll placed these at the end of the list as being without liveries and therefore doubtful (for further context, see section 7.1.11). But the accompanying statement that the scrutiny then rejected exactly 100 votes for each candidate is not borne out by the contemporary minutes of Common Hall.
- ³⁹ Beaven, i, p. 292.
- ⁴⁰ See L.S. Sutherland, *The City of London and the opposition to government, 1768-1774: a study in the rise of metropolitan radicalism* (1958).
- ⁴¹ Thomas Harley (1730-1804), Goldsmith and alderman of Portsoken ward (and later of Bridge Without ward); MP for London, 1761-74; contested Herefordshire, 1774; MP for Herefordshire, May 1776 – 1802. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, pp. 586-7; *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iv, pp. 155-6; and *ODNB*.
- ⁴² Sir Robert Ladbroke (c.1713-73), Grocer and alderman of Castle Baynard ward;

- contested London, 1747; MP for London, 1754 – October 1773. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, p. 16.
- ⁴³ William Beckford (1709-70), Ironmonger and alderman of Billingsgate ward; MP for Shaftesbury, December 1747 – 1754; returned for Petersfield, 1754, but chose to sit for London; MP for London, 1754 – June 1770. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, pp. 75-8; *ODNB*; and *BDMBR*.
- ⁴⁴ Barlow Trecothick (c.1718-75), Clothworker and alderman of Vintry ward; MP for London, 1768-74. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 557-60.
- ⁴⁵ Sir Richard Glyn (1711-73), Salter and alderman of Dowgate ward; contested London, 1754; MP for London November 1758 – 1768; contested London, 1768; MP for Coventry, December 1768 – January 1773. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, pp. 507-8; and *ODNB*.
- ⁴⁶ John Paterson (1705-89), Barber; MP for Ludgershall, 1761-68; contested London, 1768. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 252-3.
- ⁴⁷ W.P. Treloar, *Wilkes and the City* (1917) discusses City politics in greater detail than do subsequent studies of Wilkes.
- ⁴⁸ See section 5.2.2.
- ⁴⁹ It also led to a reissue of the City of London poll book of 1768. An advertisement in the *Public Advertiser* of 23 June 1770 declared that ‘This book will be very useful to all persons that interest themselves in the present ensuing elections for lord mayor, sheriff, and a Member of Parliament’.
- ⁵⁰ James Townsend (1737-87), Mercer and alderman of Bishopsgate ward; contested West Looe, January 1765; MP for West Looe, July 1767 – 1774; MP for Calne, April 1782 – July 1787. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 537-8.
- ⁵¹ For a succinct assessment of this Society, see J. Cannon, *Parliamentary reform, 1640-1832* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 61-71, 80, 83. And for its longer lived and more radical successor, the Society for Constitutional Information, see A. Goodwin, *The friends of liberty: the English democratic movement in the age of the French Revolution* (1979), esp. pp. 63-117, 215-17, 277-8, 332-3, 353-7, 362, 389-90.
- ⁵² Thomas Hallifax (c. 1722-89), Goldsmith and alderman of Aldersgate ward; MP for Coventry, December 1780 – February 1781; MP for Aylesbury, 1784 – February 1789. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, pp. 567-8.

- ⁵³ John Shakespear (d. 1775), Ironmonger (and formerly Broderer) and alderman of Aldgate ward. His death, on 19 May 1775, was noted in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 45 (1775), p. 255.
- ⁵⁴ Frederick Bull (1714-84), Salter and alderman of Queenhithe ward; MP for London, December 1773 – January 1784. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, pp. 129-30; and *BDMBR*.
- ⁵⁵ John Roberts (d. 1810), Brewer and East India Company director (and subsequently its chairman); contested London, December 1773.
- ⁵⁶ See below n. 64.
- ⁵⁷ Richard Clarke (1739-1831), Joiner and alderman of Broad Street ward; contested London, October 1781; chamberlain of London, 1798-1831.
- ⁵⁸ Sir Watkin Lewes (1740-1821), Joiner and alderman of Lime Street ward; contested Worcester, November 1773; contested Worcester, March 1774; contested Worcester, 1774; contested Worcester, 1780; MP for London, October 1781 – 1796; contested London, 1796; contested London, 1802. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, p. 40; *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iv, pp. 431-2; and *BDMBR*.
- ⁵⁹ William Pitt (1759-1806), contested Cambridge University, 1780; MP for Appleby, January 1781 – 1784; contested Bath, 1784; contested London, 1784; MP for Cambridge University, 1784 – January 1806. Pitt has been the subject of many biographies, of which the most authoritative is J.P.W. Ehrman, *The younger Pitt* (3 vols, 1969-96). Pitt's voluminous papers are in TNA PRO 30/8. In the 1780 election, Pitt, like his great rival Fox in 1784, stood as a candidate in two separate constituencies, to provide himself with political insurance in case of defeat in the popular franchise. This practice was not forbidden until 2006, when the Electoral Administration Act limited candidates to standing in only one constituency on one writ (ie. in a General Election). In 1780 William Pitt was proposed for London but withdrew and was returned for Cambridge University; in 1784 Charles James Fox was returned for Tain Burghs, while awaiting the outcome of the Westminster scrutiny.
- ⁶⁰ See M.D. George, 'Fox's martyrs: the general election of 1784', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, 21 (1939), pp. 133-68.
- ⁶¹ Brook Watson (1735-1807), Musician and alderman of Cordwainer ward; MP for London January 1784 – February 1793. See *City Biog.*, p. 44; J.C. Webster, *Sir Brook Watson, friend of the loyalists: first agent of New Brunswick in London* (Sackville, NB, 1924); *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 611-2; and *ODNB*. His unique distinction, among all MPs discussed here, was to have a wooden leg, replacing one

supposedly bitten off, in his youth, by a shark.

- ⁶² Nathaniel Newnham (1741-1809), Mercer and alderman of Vintry ward; MP for London, 1780-90; contested London, 1790; contested Ludgershall, April 1791; MP for Ludgershall, June 1793 – 1796. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 200-201; *BDMBR*.
- ⁶³ Richard Atkinson (1738-85), Goldsmith and alderman of Tower ward; contested London, 1784; MP for New Romney, June 1784 – May 1785. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, ii, p. 32.
- ⁶⁴ John Sawbridge (1732-95), Framework Knitter and alderman of Langbourn ward; MP for Hythe, 1768-74; contested Hythe, 1774; MP for London 1774-80; contested London, 1780; contested Hythe, 1784; MP for London, November 1780 – February 1795. Sawbridge had been defeated at the General Election of 1780, at which John Kirkman was elected MP although he had died at Margate on the last day of polling. Sawbridge was returned unopposed at the ensuing by-election. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 409-11; *ODNB*; and *BDMBR*.
- ⁶⁵ Samuel Smith (1755-93), MP for Ilchester, 1780-84; contested London, 1784; MP for Worcester 1784-90; contested Worcester, 1790; MP for Ludgershall, April 1791 – June 1793. See *Hist. Parl., 1754-90*, iii, pp. 451-2; and *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, v, p. 205.
- ⁶⁶ *CJ*, 40, p. 38. Neither petition was successful.
- ⁶⁷ William Lushington (1747-1823), Merchant Taylor and alderman of Billingsgate ward; MP for London, March 1795 – 1802; contested London, 1802. See *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iv, pp. 475-6.
- ⁶⁸ Sir William Curtis, Bt (1752-1829), Draper and alderman of Tower ward (and later of Bridge Without ward); MP for London, 1790-1818; contested London, 1818; MP for Bletchingley, February 1819 - 1820; MP for London, 1820-6; MP for Hastings, 1826 – December 1826. See *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iii, pp. 545-8; *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*, iv, pp. 829-32; and *ODNB*.
- ⁶⁹ Sir John William Anderson, Bt (c. 1735-1813), Glover and alderman of Aldersgate ward; returned for Okehampton, 1790; MP for London, March 1793 - 1806. See *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iii, pp. 65-7.
- ⁷⁰ Harvey Christian Combe (1752-1818), Brewer (and brewer) and Fishmonger, and alderman of Aldgate ward; contested London, March 1795; MP for London, 1796 – June 1817. See *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iii, pp. 488-9; and *ODNB*.

- ⁷¹ William Pickett (1736-96), Goldsmith and alderman of Cornhill ward; contested London, 1790; contested London, 1796.
- ⁷² See above, n. 58.
- ⁷³ See *Oracle*, 3 January 1798.
- ⁷⁴ Beaven, i, p. xxvii; and see note on elections for the London mayor in section 3.3.5.
- ⁷⁵ Humphry Parsons, lord mayor in 1730-1, served again in 1740-1; meanwhile William Beckford, lord mayor in 1762-3, served a second term in 1769-70. Others who were re-elected to the mayoral chair followed the spirit of the convention by declining to serve: thus Sir John Barnard, lord mayor in 1737-8, declined the honour when re-elected in 1741, as did Thomas Skinner when re-elected in 1799. The presumptions of others in seeking a subsequent term were liable to be challenged at the polls, as when Brass Crosby was defeated in 1771. See Beaven, i, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
- ⁷⁶ For these elections, see Charles Wallis, *Narrative of the proceedings arising out of the three contested elections for lord mayor of the City of London* (London, W. Lake, 1831).
- ⁷⁷ For London radicalism in these years, see I. Prothero, *Artisans and politics* (Baton Rouge, La, 1979); D.J. Rowe, 'Class and political radicalism in London, 1831-2', *Historical Journal*, 13 (1970), pp. 31-47; and J.A. Bennett, 'The London Democratic Association, 1837-41: a study in London radicalism', in J. Epstein and D. Thompson (eds), *The Chartist experience: studies in working class radicalism and culture, 1830-60* (1982), pp. 87-119.
- ⁷⁸ Sir Peter Laurie (1778-1861), Saddler and alderman of Aldersgate ward. See P.G. Laurie, *Sir Peter Laurie: a family memoir* (Brentwood, 1901).
- ⁷⁹ Sir John Key, Bt (1795-1858), Stationer and alderman of Langbourn ward (and subsequently of Bridge Without ward); MP for London, 1832 – August 1833. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a reformer.
- ⁸⁰ John Thomas Thorp (d. 1835), Draper and alderman of Aldgate ward.
- ⁸¹ William Thompson (1793-1854), Ironmonger and alderman of Cheap ward; MP for Callington, 1820-6; MP for London, 1826-32; contested Sunderland, 1832; MP for Sunderland, April 1833 – September 1841; MP for Westmorland, September 1841 – March 1854. See *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*, vii, pp. 423-31. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton

all describe him as a Conservative.

- ⁸² Robert Waithman (1764-1833), Framework Knitter and alderman of Farringdon Without ward; contested London, 1812; MP for London, 1818-20; contested London, 1820; MP for London, 1826 – February 1833. Waithman was, by convention, ineligible to serve as lord mayor, having served in 1823-4. See J. R. Dinwiddy, “The patriotic linen draper”: Robert Waithman and the revival of radicalism in the City of London, 1795-1818’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xlvi (1973), pp. 72-94; *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*, vii, pp. 592-9; *ODNB*; and *BDMBR*, pp. 504-6. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a Whig.
- ⁸³ Thomas Kelly (1772-1855), Plaisterer and alderman of Farringdon Within ward. See R.C. Fell, *Passages from the private and official life ... of Alderman Kelly* (1856), and R.C. Fell, *The life of Alderman Kelly, Lord Mayor of London* (1858).
- ⁸⁴ Charles Farebrother (d. 1858), Vintner and alderman of Lime Street ward; contested Lambeth, 1835. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Conservative.
- ⁸⁵ Sir Matthew Wood (1768-1843), Fishmonger and alderman of Cripplegate ward; contested London, 1812; MP for London, June 1817 – September 1843. See *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, v, pp. 645-7; *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*, vii, pp. 886-94; and *ODNB*. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a radical reformer.
- ⁸⁶ William Crawford (d. 1843), Spectacle Maker; contested Brighton, 1832; MP for London, 1835-41; contested London, 1841. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a Whig.
- ⁸⁷ James Pattison (1786-1849), Spectacle Maker; MP for London, 1835-41; contested London, 1841; MP for London October 1843 – July 1849. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a reformer.
- ⁸⁸ George Grote, (1794-1871), Needle Maker; MP for London, 1832-41. Grote had been placed at the head of the poll on his first election to parliament. See M.L. Clarke, *George Grote, a biography* (1962); *ODNB*; and *BDMBR*, pp. 222-6. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a radical reformer.
- ⁸⁹ John Horsley Palmer (1779-1858), contested Ashburton, 1835; contested London, 1837; contested Ashburton, March 1843. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Conservative.
- ⁹⁰ T. Falconer and E.H. Fitzherbert, *Cases of contested elections determined in committees of the House of Commons* (1839), pp. 659-60; and *CJ*, 93, p. 336.

- ⁹¹ James Harmer (1777-1853), Spectacle Maker and alderman of Farringdon Without ward. See *ODNB*.
- ⁹² The anti-Harmer pamphlet containing these descriptions is in BL, 695 l. 14 (58).
- ⁹³ John Pirie (1781-1851), Plaisterer and alderman of Cornhill ward; contested London, 1841. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Conservative.
- ⁹⁴ Thomas Johnson, Cooper and alderman of Portsoken ward.
- ⁹⁵ Anon., *A full and authentic account of the bribery and corruption displayed at the late City of London election* [London, 1848].
- ⁹⁶ Lord John Russell (1792-1878), MP for Tavistock, May 1813 – March 1817; MP for Tavistock 1818-20; MP for Huntingdonshire, 1820-6; MP for Bandon Bridge, December 1826 – 1830; MP for Tavistock November 1830 – 1831; MP for Devon, 1831-2; MP for Devon South, 1832 – April 1835; MP for Stroud, May 1835 – 1841; MP for London, 1841 – July 1861. Scion of a family that long maintained the Whig flame, and attained distinction in both politics and history, he edited *Memorials and correspondence of Charles James Fox* (4 vols, 1853). See J.M. Prest, *Lord John Russell* (1972); *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, v, pp. 66-9; *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*, vii, pp. 1056-75; *ODNB*. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Liberal.
- ⁹⁷ Lord John Russell, the third son of John Russell, 6th Duke of Bedford, was later ennobled in his own right (1861) as 1st Earl Russell of Kingston Russell and Viscount Amberley of Amberley and Ardsalla.
- ⁹⁸ James Pattison (1786-1849), Spectacle Maker; MP for London, 1835-41; MP for London, October 1843 - 1849. Liberal.
- ⁹⁹ Lionel Nathan de Rothschild (1808-79), banker and philanthropist; MP for London, 1847-68 (but did not take his seat until 1858); contested London, 1868; MP for London, February 1869 – 1874. Rothschild was a friend of the young Benjamin Disraeli, who provided an idealised portrait of Rothschild as the well-travelled Sidonia in *Coningsby* (1844). See *ODNB*. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Liberal. See also for wider context, N. Ferguson, *The world's banker: the history of the house of Rothschild* (1998).
- ¹⁰⁰ Robert Cooper Lee Bevan (1809-90), contested London, 1847. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Conservative.
- ¹⁰¹ John Johnson (d. 1848), Spectacle Maker and alderman of Dowgate ward; contested

London, 1847. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Conservative.

- ¹⁰² James William Freshfield (1775-1864), MP for Penryn, 1830-2; contested Penryn and Falmouth, 1832; MP for Penryn and Falmouth, 1835-41; contested Wycombe, 1841; contested London, 1847; contested Derby, September 1848; MP for Boston, April 1851 – 1852; MP for Penryn and Falmouth, 1852-7. Dod describes him as a Protestant; McCalmont and Stenton describe him as a Conservative.
- ¹⁰³ John Masterman (1781-1862), MP for London, 1841-57. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal Conservative; Stenton describes him as a Conservative, ‘prepared to resist any further concessions to Popery’.
- ¹⁰⁴ George Gerard de Hochpied Larpent (1786-1855), contested Ludlow, May 1840; contested Nottingham, April 1841; MP for Nottingham, 1841 – July 1842; contested London, 1847. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Liberal.
- ¹⁰⁵ William Payne (1799-1872), serjeant-at-law and Independent Radical; contested London, 1847. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal.