

THE MERCHANT TAYLORS COMPANY  
OF LONDON, 1580 - 1645  
POLITICS &  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT  
AND POLITICS

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

THE MERCHANT TAYLORS COMPANY OF LONDON 1580-1645  
with special reference to government and politics

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BY

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**ABSTRACT**

During the period 1580-1645, the Merchant Taylors Company, one of the twelve major livery companies of London, assumed a central place in the social, financial, and political affairs of the capital. The archives of the Company, more varied and extensive than is often assumed, have allowed a detailed study of the nature and organisation of one of early modern London's major social organisations. That organisation embraced two highly distinct and autonomous bodies. The livery was closely-knit, select and oligarchic in its government, dominated by an élite of leading citizens and merchants devoted to the affairs of the livery company. The yeomanry was an organisation of immense social and industrial importance, responsible for the regulation and representation of a high proportion of all of London's freemen. Its parallel government was dominated by members of the handicraft, and investigation into the yeomanry's role and the attitudes of the livery governors allows critical reappraisal of the phenomenon known as the "decline of the guilds", and an assessment of the role of the livery companies in promoting social stability in later Elizabethan and Early Stuart London.

The sixty-six years to 1645 represent a period of increasing corporate wealth, membership and influence, and the detailed examination of Company government and structure, coupled with a portrait of the livery company leadership from 1630, facilitates a reappraisal of political and religious developments in the capital. The Merchant Taylors Company is shown to be closely-tied to the royal government and in particular to William Laud, a pattern of loyalties which survived the municipal revolution of 1642 and the outbreak of Civil War in England.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A & O	Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642-1660.
AMB	Ancient Manuscript Books of the Merchant Taylors Company.
<u>B.I.H.R.</u>	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.
BL	British Library.
CCC	Calender of the Committee for Compounding.
CFAOM	Calender of the Committee for Advance of Money.
CLRO	Corporation of London Record Office.
CM	Court Minutes of the Merchant Taylors Company.
<u>Costume</u>	The Journal of the Costume Society.
CSP Colonial	Calender of State Papers, Colonial.
CSPD	Calender of State Papers, Domestic.
<u>Ec.H.R.</u>	Economic History Review.
<u>E.H.R.</u>	English Historical Review.
GHL	Guildhall Library (Printed Books).
GH MSS	Guildhall Library Manuscripts.
<u>History</u>	The Journal of the Historical Association, New Series.
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission.
HOL MSS	House of Lords Manuscripts.
<u>JBS</u>	Journal of British Studies.
J CC	Journal of Common Council.
<u>J.H.G.</u>	Journal of Historical Geography.
J HOC	Journal of the House of Commons.
MF	Microfilm in the Guildhall Library.

ABBREVIATIONS (continued)

MSC.DOC.	Miscellaneous Documents of the Merchant Taylors Company.
MT Hall	Merchant Taylors Hall Archives.
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury.
<u>P &amp; P</u>	Past and Present.
PRO	Public Record Office.
Prob.5	PRO Probate 5, PCC Paper Inventories 1661 - c.1725.
Rep.	Repertories of the Court of Aldermen.
SOTR	Statutes of the Realm.
SP	State Papers (Domestic).
<u>T.R.H.S.</u>	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.
Univ.Press	University Press.

## INTRODUCTION

Research into the history of early modern London still requires perhaps little preliminary justification. The well-rehearsed arguments concerning the central importance of the capital in the political, social and economic life of a predominantly-rural kingdom between (1) 1500 and 1650 have not been seriously questioned, yet we know little about many aspects of London's history during (2) that period. New research has substantially modified the traditional view of a sprawling metropolis beset by administrative paralysis, disorder and social inequality, replacing it with a picture of a well-organised City with (3) a socially-mobile population. This new model London may pay insufficient attention to the degree of social

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(1) See for example V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, Oxford, 1961, p.4; A.L. Beier and R. Finlay, "The Significance of the Metropolis", in their London 1500-1700. The Making of the Metropolis, 1986, pp.1-33; B. Coward, Social Change and Continuity in Early Modern England, 1550-1750, 1988, pp.75-78.

(2) For this view see for example Beier and Finlay, op.cit., p.6 and S. Rappaport, "Social Structure and Mobility in Sixteenth-Century London: Part 1", The London Journal, 9, (2), 1983, pp.107, 132. Rappaport's "Worlds within Worlds" (Cam.Univ.Press, May 1989), was published too late for its ideas to be examined in this thesis.

(3) V. Pearl, "Change and Stability in Seventeenth Century London", The London Journal, 5, (1), 1979, pp.3-34; Rappaport, Part 1, pp.107-135, and idem, Part 2, The London Journal, 10, (2), 1984, pp. 107-134.

deprivation and the problems of crime and vagrancy  
 (1) between 1570 and 1650, but the relative stability of the capital during the period certainly demands the fullest examination and explanation.

(2) If much of the history of early modern London still waits to be written, some aspects have received their fair share of historical research. The demographic expansion of the metropolis has been investigated, with the most significant growth placed between 1580 and 1645. The expansion in population brought with it grave social and administrative difficulties, and in no small measure underlies the contemporary development of the Merchant Taylors Company, which in the century to 1650 saw annual admissions of new members rise by 450 per cent against an estimated increase in metropolitan population of 312 per  
 (3)  
 (4) cent.

(1) P. Slack, Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England, 1988, pp. 69-72, 95-95, 102; Beier and Finlay, op.cit., pp.17-21.

(2) The terms 'municipality' 'City', 'capital' and 'London' are used inter-changeably to designate the City of London and the liberties. Where a wider geographical area is discussed this is made clear in the text or is signified by reference to the 'metropolis'.

(3) Beier and Finlay, "The Significance of the Metropolis", p.11; R. Finlay and B. Shearer, "Population Growth and Suburban Expansion", in Beier and Finlay, op.cit., pp.37-59. Aspects of the methodology employed by Finlay and Shearer are controversial. See V. Pearl, review in J.H.G., 13, (3), 1987, pp.323-325.

(4) Finlay and Shearer, "Population Growth", p.39. See Appendix 1.

perhaps the most significant development in the study of early modern London has been the emphasis on the importance of local neighbourhood society and of smaller social organisations in London. This has resulted in particular in a major reappraisal of the role of the eighty or so guilds (or 'livery companies') in promoting stability in sixteenth century London, with emphasis laid on the opportunities for participation and social mobility. The guilds have been portrayed as "the most important form of social organisation in sixteenth century London"; while Jeremy Boulton's evaluation of the social structure of Southwark in the early seventeenth century concentrated on the stabilising role of neighbourhood societies, he recognised that among Southwark's more well-to-do householders "company membership may have rivalled, or provided another social dimension to, those bonds of neighbourhood".

However, as Steven Rappaport fully appreciated, generalisations regarding the many minor London guilds dominated by small masters cannot be easily extended to the wealthy and powerful major livery companies, which accounted for an enormous proportion of London's freemen. In the 1550s, the Merchant Taylors Company alone attracted over 13 per cent of new freemen, a proportion which a century later may have nearly doubled. Those

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(1) Rappaport, Part 2, p.110.

(2) J. Boulton, Neighbourhood and Society. A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge Univ.Press 1987, p.233.

(3) Rappaport, Part 2, pp.120,121.

(4) G.D. Ramsay, "The Recruitment and Fortunes of some London Freemen in the mid-sixteenth century, Ec.H.R., second series,XXXI, 1978, p.532; Pearl, "Change and Stability", pp.30,31.

merchant-dominated major companies with industrial bases have long been regarded as centres of exclusivity,  
<sup>(1)</sup> oligarchy, and division, especially in the earlier seventeenth century, when the governing élites tightened their grips on companies which neglected industrial regulation during their "slide to a social and  
<sup>(2)</sup> ornamental function". It might seem more appropriate to speculate that London remained stable in the earlier seventeenth century despite - rather than as a result of - the social contribution of the guilds. Indeed, if "wearing the livery was one of the most important goals of a man's career", the Merchant Taylors Company between 1580 and 1645 frustrated the ambitions of thousands of  
<sup>(3)</sup> London's freemen.

This thesis will focus on the government and regulation of the livery, yeomanry and the Company's nominal trade in the belief that studies of the internal workings -

(1) The "struggle within and between" London's guilds is one of the primary themes of G. Unwin's general studies, Industrial Organisation in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, 1904, and The Gilds and Companies of London, 1908. His views became orthodoxy - see for example R. Ashton, The City and the Court 1603-1643, 1979, pp.43-82; W.F. Kahl, The Development of London's Livery Companies, Boston, Mass., 1960, pp.1-32.

(2) D.C. Coleman, The Economy of England 1450-1750, Oxford Univ.Press, 1977, p.75.

(3) Rappaport, Part 2, p.122. For elaboration of this point, see below, p.131.

rather than the external form - of the institutions of the capital can illuminate the nature of metropolitan society and (to some degree) industry in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. While the importance of London's manufacturing industries is now better understood,<sup>(1)</sup> the organisation and development of individual trades is often obscure,<sup>(2)</sup> and it will be necessary to undertake a brief survey of one of the capital's major handicrafts to clarify the relationship of the Merchant Taylors Company with its nominal trade.

The period from 1580 to the 1640s has attracted much attention from students of political and religious history, both of London and the kingdom. The 'Puritan Movement' of mid-Elizabethan London may have had no parallel under James I, but Puritanism in a wider sense remained strong among the capital's Jacobean leadership.<sup>(3)</sup> The role of religion in propelling England down an increasingly short road to Civil War has aroused

(1) A.L. Beier, "Engine of Manufacture: the trades of London", in Beier and Finlay, op.cit., pp.142-161.

(2) A number of scholarly modern histories of individual London guilds and their crafts or trades exist, including P.E.Jones, The Butchers of London, 1976; B.W.E.Alford and T.C. Barker, A History of the Carpenters Company, 1968; and A. Plummer, The London Weavers Company, 1600-1970, 1972.

(3) P. Collinson, "The Jacobean Religious Settlement: The Hampton Court Conference", in H. Tomlinson (ed.), Before the English Civil War, 1983, pp.29-30, 45-51; D.A. Williams, "Puritanism in the City Government 1610-1640", Guildhall Miscellany, I, 1955, pp.2-14.

(1)

considerable controversy, but has not loomed large in the unresolved debate regarding the political attitude of London's civic and merchant élite under the Early Stuarts. The student of pre-Civil War London politics is now faced with a stark choice: a City élite bound to the royal government come what may by factors such as traditional loyalties and allegiances and dependence on political and commercial privileges derived from the Crown; or alienated by the enormous burden of royal predations and demands under Charles I. (2) Charles and William Laud looked to London not only as a source of finance but as the focal point of their attempts at (3) social and religious reconstruction; the capital occupied a central place in national affairs, and the ideological leanings of its governors requires clarification.

It is a contention of this thesis that studies of the histories of the greater London livery companies can do much to further understanding of political developments in the capital, but only as one part of a wider investigation into the lives and allegiances of

(1) See for example P. White, "The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered", P & P, V101, 1982, p.53, and for a contrary view J.S. Morrill, "The Religious Context of the English Civil War", T.R.H.S., fifth series, V34, 1984, pp.156, 157.

(2) Pearl, "London", passim; Ashton, "City", passim. A. Fletcher accepted the 'alienation' view in his The Outbreak of the English Civil War, 1981, p.159.

(3) K. Sharpe, "The Personal Rule of Charles I", in H. Tomlinson, op.cit., p.62; Ashton, "City", pp.188-198.

Company governors, the functioning of Company government, and the precedents for decisions, electoral practices and resistance to municipal or royal demands. The importance of the major companies has always been appreciated by historians - Clarendon emphasised the place of the "several companies incorporated within the great incorporation; which, besides notable privileges, enjoyed land and perquisites to a very great revenue" - but they have been assigned a highly dependent place within London's administrative structure. The role in politics of the major companies cannot therefore be evaluated without a reappraisal of their relationship with the City government.

Examination of the political, social and industrial place of the Merchant Taylors Company in early modern London required a multi-faceted approach, combining extensive research into the lives and careers of key figures in both the livery and the yeomanry with use of a variety of national and municipal records, and not least the substantial archives of the Company itself. The archives of the major livery companies are wider-ranging than is commonly supposed; thousands of folios of sixteenth and seventeenth century minutes and financial accounts, sometimes surprisingly frank, are supplemented in many cases by committee records, yeomanry records,

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(1) G.Huelins (ed.), E. Clarendon, Selections from The History of the Rebellion and The Life By Himself, 1978, p.235.

correspondence, search and property view books, election bills, and taxation records. Early inventories reveal the extent of the loss of records over the centuries, to the detriment of our understanding of the histories of the companies in the early modern period.

The surviving records of the livery companies have of course been utilized in the past, and not only as sources of biographical detail on apprentices and freemen. The general histories of the twelve main companies belong to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and largely present them as organisations barely distinguishable one from another or from the municipal government. London's guilds are furthermore the subject of an inordinate number of individual histories, with up to eight centuries of existence covered on a chronological basis. With some important exceptions, most of the histories are what W.F. Kahl described as "domestic chronicles", content to describe ceremonial, the formal and unchanging structure of government, illustrious members and charitable endowments. Many of the major companies lack

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(1) Unwin, "Gilds", passim; W.H. Herbert, The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London, 2 vols., 1834.

(2) Introduction to Unwin, "Gilds", 1963 edn, p. xxxviii. Useful modern histories include Jones, "Butchers"; Alford and Barker, "Carpenters"; Plummer, "Weavers"; G. Hadley, Citizens and Founders. A History of the Worshipful Company of Founders, London, 1365-1975, 1976; A. Crawford, A History of the Vintners Company, 1977.

any monographic studies however, and historians have been grateful for C.M. Clode's century-old works on the Merchant Taylors Company, although they conform to Kahl's model of introspective histories written by past Masters and Wardens. Clode's history ranged from the late thirteenth century to 1613, and presented the sixteenth century as one of 'disintegration', primarily as a result of 'the disendowment of religion' and the 'destruction'  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
of the Company's trade monopoly. His works will remain useful reference books, but are of limited value for the  
<sup>(2)</sup>  
modern historian.

This thesis is therefore presented as a pioneering work, thematic and covering only a relatively short period of Company history. The thematic approach has necessitated a large number of internal cross-references, but the number of references to other livery companies are less numerous; this is partly because of space limitations,

(1) C.M. Clode, Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Taylors, 1875; idem, The Early History of the Merchant Taylors Company, 2 vols, 1888. The account of the early 17th century is dominated by the reception of James I in 1607, with the terminal date, the year when a new set of ordinances was promulgated, reflecting Clode's pre-occupation with the formalities of Company government.

(2) Clode was unaware of the existence of some key manuscript books, including the invaluable fragmentary ordinances of 1429-1455 and the yeomanry record book. I have only referred to Clode's works where this is felt to be valuable.

but also in view of the highly general nature of many published histories and the difficulty of making valid comparisons based on brief examinations of original record books. Indeed, one of the main tenets of this thesis is the need to examine the early modern history of each leading company in depth and as an integrated whole before interpretations of their role in London's trade, politics and society are advanced.

The choice of any historical period is of course arbitrary. All of the extant records of the Merchant Taylors Company prior to 1660 (excluding title deeds and school records)<sup>(1)</sup> have been examined, but a number of factors suggested choice of the period 1580-1645, even setting aside demographic and political developments. The court minutes and financial accounts represent a continuous dual set of records only from the 1570s, with gaps in the late 1640s, the 1650s and the early 1660s. Further, the quality and quantity of the records improves in the late sixteenth century, reflecting the labours of individual clerks such as Richard Langley during a period of increasing interest in record-keeping in<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Only brief descriptions of most of the 'Ancient Manuscripts Books' and 'Miscellaneous Documents' are given in the text and footnotes, as they are considered individually in the biographical section. The Accounts books are mainly unfoliated. Wherever possible the dates of meetings and folio references from the minute books are given, although some numbers are illegible, omitted or repetitive.

(2) See below, pp. 29, 67, 68.

(1) general. The period also has an internal logic, witnessing a spectacular growth in membership, corporate wealth and municipal influence, developments which enhanced the importance of the Company in the eyes of the Crown and its ministers. The chronological barriers erected will not however be rigidly observed; particularly when the yeomanry government and tailoring trade are considered, a somewhat longer historical perspective is required.

#### Constitutional background

Before turning to the government of the Company from 1580, it is necessary to follow briefly its constitutional development during the preceding 350 years, a process which has received considerable (2) attention from the guild's historians.

By the early sixteenth century, the formal constitution and powers of the guild were fully evolved, having been progressively developed by charters of 1327, 1390, 1408, 1439, 1465 and 1502. The 1327 Charter recognised the

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(1) See for example P.Cain, "Robert Smith and the Reform of the Archives of the City of London 1580-1623", The London Journal, 13,(1), 1987-1988. pp.3-16.

(2) For example Clode,V1,pp.33-38;Herbert.op.cit.,pp. 385,386,412-431.F.M.Fry and R.T.D.Sayle,The Charters of the Merchant Taylors Company,1937 includes facsimiles and full translations of all the Charters and associated manuscripts stored in the Company Hall.

existence of a Master and four wardens, who were permitted to hold meetings and assemblies (including a midsummer feast in honour of St. John the Baptist), and to distribute "one livery of clothing of one suit ...  
 (1)  
 each year".

In 1408, the guild was incorporated by Henry IV as "The Fraternity of Taylors and Linen Armourers of St. John the Baptist in the City of London". The fraternity was designated "solid perpetual and incorporate" with power  
 (2)  
 to hold land and property. Further, in 1439 the guild obtained rights of search over all of its members whether resident in the "city of London" or "the suburbs of the same", and regardless of their trades. An explicit prohibition on any other guild searching members of the tailor's guild caused consternation in the City and the temporary withdrawal of the letters patent, but the  
 (3)  
 clauses were repeated verbatim in the charter of 1465.

In 1502, favoured treatment by the Crown again led to  
 (4)  
 conflict in the City. Henry VII's clarification and

(1) Fry and Sayle, op.cit., p.17. The significance of the right to wear the livery was greatly enhanced after the formation of a subordinate yeomanry organisation in the 15th century. See below, pp.241,242.

(2) Ibid, p. 17.

(3) Ibid, pp.20-25.

(4) See below, p.165. Under the new incorporation the freemen became "Merchant Taylors" rather than "tailors and linen armourers". Ibid, pp.34-39.

enhancement of the Company's privileges was so extensive that unlike many guilds, the Merchant Taylors Company felt no need to seek a new charter in the late sixteenth (1) or early seventeenth centuries. The Company was explicitly authorised to expand its membership by any means, without hindrance from other guilds, and to make ordinances without reference to the Lord Mayor. It was made clear that the exclusive right to search Company members extended not only to tailors, but to drapers and any other tradesmen. Further, the jurisdiction of the guild over the tailoring trade was elaborated: the search could be made throughout the City franchises and suburbs, and "from now on no native, stranger or foreigner may use the said art ... within the city the liberties and suburbs of the same" unless authorised by the Master and (2) wardens.

On a day-to-day basis the Company was governed under ordinances which were in practice added to or amended at (3) will, although in 1507 and again in 1613 the full

(1) The new Charters often defined the suburban area under a guild's jurisdiction. Pearl, "Change and Stability", p.13. The 1637 Charter of the Butchers allowed searches up to two miles from the City. In 1685, the two-mile limit specified in the 1569 Charter of the Bakers was increased to twelve miles. Jones, "Butchers", p.215; S.L. Thrupp, A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Bakers of London, 1933, p.54.

(2) These restrictions in practice did not prevent tailors from becoming apprentices and freemen with other City guilds. See below, pp.307,308.

(3) The emergence of a 'court of assistants' is discussed below, pp.23-25.

(1)

regulations were submitted to the Crown for approval. The 46 ordinances of 1507 regulated every area of guild life, from apprenticeship regulations to property views to the election of the Master. Penalties were laid down for a wide range of offences, including the employment of unfree workmen, unruly behaviour, absence from meetings and refusal to bear office. The drafting of a new ordinance in 1611 against assistants absent from Election Days led to a decision to update the ordinances as a whole, and in May 1613 the new set of orders was finally  
(2) approved by the Crown. The need to thoroughly revise the ordinances in 1611-1613 emphasises the gulf that often existed between formal regulations, and the practice of government, which is subject of the following chapter.

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(1) MF 310, AMB V2-3, passim. Some 15th century ordinances survive; (MSC.DOC.A2).

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 15.7.11, p.534; MF 328, 23.1.13, 10.5.13, pp.68,69,83. Key differences between the two sets of orders are noted below, passim.

## I GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNORS OF THE LIVERY 1580 - 1645

### Introduction

The governments of the greater London livery companies have long been the subject of generalised comment by historians of early modern London, with attention focused on the degree to which they embodied the tendency for exclusive and self-perpetuating groups of leading citizens to monopolise powers of decision-making and exploit the authority and resources of the guild in their own interests.

Recently this perception has begun to change, at least with respect to the sixteenth century and the smaller London guilds. Indications of the continuing role of the guilds in relieving the poor, industrial regulation and in the resolution of disputes between members have been emphasised, together with the extensive opportunities for participation available to men with sufficient longevity. This chapter sets out to examine in depth the nature and operation of the government of one of the foremost City companies in the 66 years to 1645. The structure and

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(1) See for example G. Unwin, "Gilds", passim, & Ashton, "City", pp.44-46.

(2) V.Pearl,"Social Policy in Early Modern London", in History and Imagination. Essays in Honour of H.R.Trevor-Roper,H.Lloyd-Jones,V.Pearl and B.Worden (ed.'s), 1981, pp.115- 131;Rappaport, Parts 1 & 2, passim.

size of the court of assistants, its functions and finances will be explored, together with the advantages of membership, the distribution of power among its members and the inter-relationship with the municipal government.

The Court of Assistants - Decision-making and Distribution of Power

By the middle of Elizabeth's reign, all decision-making in the livery company had been monopolised by the court of assistants for at least three quarters of a century. In the mid-fifteenth century, decisions of any significance had to be submitted to the assembled liverymen for approval. In 1442, a decision regarding the colour of the livery gowns was approved "bi commen assent of the brethern at a quarterday after Christimasse"; and in 1455 an ordinance preventing tailors from setting-up as masters without a licence was passed by "all the Feleship".<sup>(1)</sup> Late fifteenth century court minutes reveal that the Quarter Days were still assemblies where major items of business were ratified by the wider body of 'whole brothers': in May 1493, the fellowship approved the names of new liverymen, a grant of a place in the Company's almshouses and an order against ex-wardens absent on Election Days.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) MT Hall, MSC.DOC.A2, 1429-1455, ff.9,10.

(2) MF 312, AMB V37, 7.5.93, ff.64,65.

It is clear however that the role of liverymen outside of the ruling court was diminishing before 1500. Their right to participate in the choice of the Master after the Election Day dinner was formally ended in 1490; the court of assistants cancelled existing regulations and resolved that "the Maister that shall be new chosen from hensforth shall be named and chosen by them that have ben Maisters in the parlour at Midsomer even before dyner as (1) it has been used before tyme". Despite complaints to the municipal government by certain members of the guild who wished "to have the election of the master and wardens as (2) formerley", the only element of participation surviving in 1507 was the right to give formal approval to the financial accounts after they had been read "openly in (3) the Common Hall". After 1580, the livery were consulted officially only in 1611, 1627 and 1642-43 regarding the proposed Ulster Plantation and major loans to the Crown and parliament respectively, but there are no indications that these oligarchical arrangements gave rise to resentment. It will be shown that Merchant Taylors who joined the livery had as a rule close ties with Company governors, and were guaranteed eventual co-option onto the ruling court if they enjoyed good health and (4) continued business success.

(1) MF 312, AMB V37,4.6.1490,f.23.

(2) W.Herbert,*op.cit.*, p.426.

(3) MF 310, AMB V2,ff.64v,65. This right had lapsed by the 1560s, and was excluded from the revised ordinances of 1613.

(4) See Chapter II, p.130.

The influence wielded by liverymen who had secured a place on the court of assistants inevitably depended to some degree on the time that they devoted to the affairs  
 (1) of the livery company. The potential influence of an active member of the ruling body depended however on his place within the strict hierarchy of authority that found expression in the strict seating arrangements enforced in the Council Chamber. The Merchant Taylors Company's charters and the ordinances made under their authority vested decision-making powers with the Master and his four wardens, taking advice from the undefined  
 (2) body of "assistensez or Counceillours". By the early fifteenth century, this body was composed of sixteen former office holders who joined with the Master and  
 (3) wardens to transact all non-routine business. This body of senior liverymen was formally increased in number to twenty-four between 1437 and 1442, and was first referred to as a 'court of assistants' in the 1560s. Their role was already paramount by the late fifteenth century: the Master following his election swore not to introduce new regulations "withoute the advice of the Wardeyns and of  
 (4) other your predecessours".

(1) For the significance of this point, see below, pp. 57-60.

(2) MF 310, AMB V2, ff.74-77.

(3) MSC.DOC.A2, Ordinances 1429-1455.

(4) MF 310, AMB V1, f.1.

During the period 1580-1645, courts of assistants were generally convened at 8 a.m. on dates appointed by the previous meeting, or set by the Master when pressing business arose. A meeting was properly-constituted when the Master, two wardens and at least ten other assistants (1) were present; decisions were usually reached by oral votes, known as "scrutiny and most voices", or on some occasions were "put to handes". All decisions were by simple majorities, the "major parte" prevailing, with a casting vote held by the Master. The minutes rarely record all the arguments raised during the course of a debate, although they reveal clearly that protracted and heated discussions were engendered by contentious issues, through which the Master attempted to maintain order with the help of an ivory hammer. At a meeting in August 1598, the court spent "so long tyme" discussing the request for a loan of £1,800 to the Crown that much of the day's normal business had to be held over; in February 1611 the governors spent most of the morning discussing the proposed Ulster Plantation, returning to the issue with "much debating" after attending the (2) funeral of one of their colleagues.

The court minutes for July 1607 are unique in that they

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(1) MF 310,AMB V2,ff.60v,61;MF 326,CM V3,22.3.95,ff.147, 284. The ordinances set a minimum of three wardens, but in practice two were sufficient.

(2) MF 326,CM V3,28.8.98,f.381;CM V5,6.2.11,pp.502,503.

record all the principal arguments advanced at a meeting called to decide whether municipal dignitaries (as well as members of the royal court) should attend the Election Day. It was variously argued that their attendance would be an honour; that it would dilute the benefits accruing to the Company; that the seating arrangements might offend the nobles present; that it was the Company's duty to treat the City authorities with respect; and that the Lord Mayor might attempt to "crosse" the Merchant Taylors Company by persuading Prince Henry to become a member of the Lord Mayor's own livery company. After consideration of these and "many other reasons & opinions" the matter, "yea or no", was put to an oral vote. By a clear majority (unenumerated) the nineteen assistants and officers resolved to invite only Merchant Taylors to their grand mid-summer assembly.

The detailed results of votes were also as a rule not disclosed in the court minutes. Except in the ballot papers relating to the livery and yeomanry annual Election Days, in the century after 1559 votes cast were recorded only in respect of five decisions, all highly controversial: the compulsory purchase by the municipality of lands required for the City burse in 1565, the election of the Common Clerk in 1610, 1622 and

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 9.7.07, p.265.

(2) MF 325, CM V1, 10.1.65, pp.154, 155; CLRO, Rep.15, 1562-1565, f.406 seq.. 25 of 29 assistants initially opposed the City government's proposal for what became the Royal Exchange.

1624, and the choice of the parson of St. Martin Outwich  
 (1) in 1614. In 1602, a ballot box was purchased for use in the allocation of loan monies and almsmens' places between rival suitors. In December 1602, the box was used for the first time to make the final choice between the suitors for a loan of £100, although the Master still had to make use of his casting vote after the ballot was  
 (2) a tie. Although the use of ballot slips or silk buttons allowed votes to be cast confidentially, their use remained relatively rare. A method of drawing lots was increasingly employed to allocate certain loan monies: slips of paper with for example "£100" inscribed on them were mixed with blank papers and the loans awarded to the suitors or their patrons on the court who drew the 'lucky papers'.

Of greater interest are the handful of cases when the ruling body referred a decision to a secret ballot in response to deep divisions among its members. This occurred during the course of the election of the Common Clerk in 1610 and 1622, the choice of the parson in 1614  
 (3) and during consideration of Lady Weld's legacy in 1624.

(1) For the political and religious dimensions of the latter three incidents, see below, pp.157,158,180-186.

(2) MF 327,CM V5,18.12.02.p.74. The ballot box was also employed in 1610 and 1622 to fill minor Bachelors Company offices, which were usually reserved for poor freemen.

(3) The exact results of the ballots are known for the first three of these four occasions. For the political and religious significance of the 1624 incident, see below, pp. 159-161.

It is of course possible that the impression of division among the Company élite during the Jacobean period, with close votes and secret ballots which find no parallel under his successor, may simply reflect the approach of Common Clerk Richard Baldcock, shown by Table 1 to have held that position through most of the reign of James I.

TABLE I

Common Clerks of the Merchant Taylors Company 1580-1645.

	<u>Common Clerk</u>	<u>Livery Warden</u>	<u>Master</u>
Thomas Haselfoot	1575-1587	-	-
Barnabas Hilles	1587	-	-
Richard Wright	1587-1595	1600, 1606	1611
Richard Langley	1595-1610	1611 (discharged)	-
Richard Baldcock	1610-1624	-	-
Clement Mosse	1624-1636	-	1641
Robert Marsh	1636-C. 1658	-	-

The various clerks employed by the Company during the period certainly left their mark on the records they kept, but the incidents of 1565 and 1610 did not occur within Baldcock's tenure. There is in fact little indication that the historical view of Company affairs has been distorted by the hands which recorded them. Richard Langley significantly expanded the information content of the minutes, and both the minutes and the other records of the livery company remained full under

Mosse and his protégé Marsh. Marsh for example set down the proceedings at the extraordinary assemblies called in (1) 1642 and 1643 to consider the provision of money for parliament in the fullest detail. It was the incidents themselves and the reaction of the livery company rulers that differed between the reigns of James I and his son; it will be shown that under Charles I, the assistants showed an outward unanimity in religious affairs and a willingness to countenance external pressure which found (2) no expression under his predecessor.

Notwithstanding the procedures available for reaching decisions by means of votes, formal or informal, in practice most assistants were rarely prepared to cross the most senior members of the court. The lower half of the table was occupied by liverymen who had served as warden, but had not been elected to the prestigious offices of alderman, sheriff or Master. While it will be shown that the role of these junior assistants in Company government was significant enough to discourage the co-option of men of certain ideological persuasions in the 1630s, the court was dominated to an extraordinary degree by a handful of powerful citizens. The senior assistants were collectively known as the 'old Masters', although they included (in order of precedence) members of the court of aldermen and assistants who had acted as sheriff, as well as former Masters; all three groups

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(1) See below, pp.218-220, 224-225.

(2) See below, pp.195-215.

included liverymen who had paid a fine rather than serve in office. These men were accorded a special reverence and standing in the livery company, and except for the aldermen (who were excused onerous assignments), played a pivotal role on all commissions and committees. Further, where reference to a full court was felt to be unnecessary or inconvenient, the Master frequently consulted only his predecessors regarding Company business, and the Master with the advice of the four wardens put forward the names of liverymen considered suitable to succeed them. Only the executive and the senior assistants were entitled to vote in the election of the Master, the office which marked the most significant division of status on the court. In consequence the new chief executive could be chosen by a handful of the foremost livery governors. In 1632 for example, the Master, two wardens and six assistants elected Michael Griggs as Master for the forthcoming  
(1)  
year.

The real influence that aldermen and other leading assistants could bring to bear on proceedings can be measured through examination of the small number of incidents where the records reveal the identities of interested parties when key decisions were made. In the 1570s and 1580s, cloth merchant Richard Hilles attended meetings of the ruling body with a rare dedication, and from 1565 it was known to his colleagues that he had

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 17.7.32, ff.452, 452v.

assigned considerable properties to the livery company in his will, having already provided for the Merchant Taylors Company grammar school in Suffolk Lane. Hilles' fellow assistants more than once expressly bowed to the wishes of "Soe good and beneficiale a father of this house", and his religious beliefs strongly influenced a number of their decisions. His remarkable influence as "the moste Aunceyente Maister Accomplyshinge his duty ... from yeare to yeare" facilitated the appointment of his son Barnabas to the much sought-after position of Common Clerk in 1587 without any form of election; on the death of Barnabas later on in the year, his successor was appointed only after a formal electoral process involving ten candidates.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is the impending resignation of Common Clerk Richard Langley in early 1609 that provides one of the most explicit case studies illustrating the decisive influence of key assistants, with two rival campaigns set in motion to nominate his successor. Correspondence was received

<sup>(1)</sup> Will PCC 36 Drury; MF 325, CM V1, 28.5.65,3.2.74 pp.185, 692. Hilles was Master in 1561, and except for reduced attendance in 1566 was present at almost every meeting of the court of assistants until his death in 1588. For further details on his life and religion, see below,p.148.

<sup>(2)</sup> MF 326,CM V3,29.6.86,1.2.87,11.3.87,ff.142v,145, 157v.

from Sir Thomas Lake supporting the candidature of Richard Baldcock, a Merchant Taylor who had worked as deputy to the Clerk of the Signet for nine or ten years and who enjoyed the support of a leading alderman, Sir John Swinnerton. A merchant and a customs farmer, Swinnerton was one of the most celebrated members of the livery company, having been admitted to the livery and court of assistants in 1602 after election as alderman.<sup>(1)</sup> From 1602 to 1616, Swinnerton was regularly in attendance at the Hall, despite the active business career which has received much attention from historians (although since Beaven's work his civic and livery company career has been confused with that of his father and namesake, who was also an assistant from 1596 to 1608 and unlike his son served as Master of the Merchant Taylors Company, in 1606).<sup>(2)</sup> It was undoubtedly the younger Swinnerton who without formal reference to his livery company colleagues engineered the attendance of the king and numerous members of his Household and Court at the 1607 Election Day; in that year, Swinnerton was involved in Court intrigue as part of his attempt to regain the major customs farms.<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Rabb, Enterprise and Empire, Cambridge, 1967, p.386; Will PCC 125 Cope; Ashton, "City", pp.98-100; Beaven, The Aldermen of the City of London, 1908, I, p.345. For Swinnerton's entry to the livery, see p.121.

<sup>(2)</sup> Will PCC 8 Dorset:Rabb,op.cit.,p.386; Beaven II,p.48.

<sup>(3)</sup> Ashton,"City",p.99.

In 1609, Swinnerton was determined to appoint his own man, Richard Baldcock, as clerk of his livery company. Baldcock's principal rival was John Whalley, a Merchant Taylor backed by several senior judges who in addition had the advantage of familiarity with the affairs of the Company as the protégé of the out-going clerk. In July 1609, a meeting from which Swinnerton was absent was ready to appoint Whalley as deputy to Langley, but deferred a final decision as a result of the intervention of the Master, Humphrey Street, who must have known Swinnerton's late father well: they had sat side by side at assemblies for many years following the appointment of both men to the livery in 1586. Street held up a final resolution despite the 'approbation' of several assistants for Whalley, alleging that he had promised Swinnerton's 'man' that no decision would be made in the absence of his patron.

On August 14th, Lord Treasurer Salisbury wrote to the livery company protesting that the reluctance of the assistants to appoint Whalley stemmed from the "opposition of one man of chiefest place amongst you, where there is a concurrence of the rest", stressing that he had once employed Langley - presumably his informant in 1607 - and had helped him secure promotion in the municipal government. The matter remained deadlocked however as "some speciall men" on the ruling body - who Langley in a subsequently-deleted aside in the minutes

added were "desirous to preferr an other person" - alleged that Whalley had led a "loose lief" and drew attention to legal proceedings initiated to substantiate allegations against him.

The case against the hapless Whalley, heard at the Guildhall before the Lord Chief Justice, was found to be brought as part of a "foule and strong Conspiracie" to defame the defendant; the Recorder of London recommended that the Merchant Taylors Company elect Whalley as Clerk forthwith. Notwithstanding, in December 1609 the matter was again deferred after the Master, John Vernon, drew attention to the number of absent governors - a reference in all probability to the otherwise - engaged Swinnerton. The intrigue and disagreement surrounding the replacement of the Common Clerk compelled the governing élite to take some sort of action, and in January 1610 the wrangling was suspended by means of a compromise hammered-out in the enforced absence of Richard Langley. It was resolved that as contests between rival suitors tended to leave the ultimate victor impoverished, the court should be allowed to exercise their right to choose officers without external interference. Further, Langley was asked to combine his new appointment as deputy Town-Clerk with his duties to the livery company for as long as was possible.

In October 1610, Langley finally resigned as the pressure of work became intolerable, and recorded in detail the

procedures followed to choose a successor from the seven candidates who had presented themselves to the court of assistants. In two rounds of formal voting, conducted as was customary by the raising of hands, the twenty-one assistants eliminated three then a further two of the candidates. In the second vote, only three of the four men in contention received any support: one Thomas Sparkes' gathered three votes and Richard Baldcock seven, leaving Whalley with an absolute majority of eleven votes. On a final secret ballot held immediately afterwards, one of Whalley's supporters as well as all of Sparkes supporters switched to Baldcock, who therefore won by eleven votes to Whalley's ten. The final success of Swinnerton's candidate emphasises both the immense influence of the "speciall men" among the more active assistants, as well as the importance attached to the office of Common Clerk. While all the members of the court played a role in routine Company government and decision-taking, men like Common Councillor Richard Hilles, Clement Mosse and aldermen John Swinnerton, William Craven, Leonard Halliday and William Acton were able in no small measure to shape the policies of one of  
(1)  
London's major livery companies.

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(1) MF 327, CM V5, 21.6.09-15.10.10, p.385 seq.. It is probable that the adoption of contrary positions by a handful of key Jacobean assistants gave rise to the disputes of 1610, 1614, 1622 and 1624; for illustrations of the influence of the individuals referred to, see respectively pp.31-32, 86, 33-36, 159, 123-124, 191.

The foregoing account has focused on those occasions when the court was seriously divided over particular issues, as it is in such circumstances that the Company records throw most light on the effective distribution of power among the ruling élite. It should be emphasised however that on most issues the governing body was far from the centre of dispute and division. The greater part of livery company business was routine and uncontroversial, and few majority decisions were challenged at subsequent meetings. Furthermore, there is little indication that strongly-held opinions gave rise to lasting rifts in the context of livery company government. Even in the 1640s, committed royalists and parliamentarians were able to sit side by side on the court of assistants, presumably agreeing to differ once votes on controversial matters had been taken. In addition, the close ties between many assistants made the ruling court an improbable centre of disharmony. It will be shown that family and other connections bound many of the liverymen,<sup>(1)</sup> and not surprisingly these bonds often existed among the senior liverymen entitled to participate in Company government. Under Elizabeth I the position of the Offley family in the municipal government was mirrored by their domination of the Merchant Taylors Company: in the 1580s, four of<sup>(2)</sup> the family group sat on the ruling court. The influence

(1) See Chapter II, pp.123-126.

(2) The Offleys were one of the most extensive "cluster families" within the Elizabethan municipal government identified by F.F. Foster, The Politics of Stability, 1977, p.102.

of the dynasty founded by Jerrard Gore senior, Master in 1567, reached enormous proportions in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century; by 1619 brothers Richard, William and John were the three most senior assistants while a fourth brother Raphe was a junior member of the court.<sup>(1)</sup>

The ties between many liverymen and assistants also made challenges to the authority of the ruling court by more junior liverymen extremely rare. The governors of the livery company were empowered to fine members for offences such as arriving late at meetings, and in more serious cases held out the threat of expulsion from the livery and imprisonment on the authority of the Lord Mayor. In 1601, John Robinson was threatened with loss of his livery for absence from a dinner for which he had been appointed steward; in 1613 he was committed to Newgate by the court of aldermen for refusing to pay a fee to be discharged from office as renter warden-elect.

<sup>(2)</sup>  
Robinson's conduct was exceptional, although two issues

(1) Richard Gore was an assistant 1589-1619, acting as Master in 1602, while aldermen William and John were assistants 1612-1624 and 1611-1634 respectively. Raphe was an assistant 1618-1627, and Master 1623. Beaven, II, pp. 173, 177.

(2) In 1581 assistant William Offley was threatened with committal for striking an ex-Master, as was William Haynes in 1586 for refusing to join the livery. In 1600, liverymen who refused to lend money towards the Company's corn stock were also threatened with committal. MF 326, CM V3, 16.12.81, 5.7.86, 14.6.1600, ff. 71v, 144, 418.

in the 66 years after 1580 gave rise to wider discontent. In 1603, at least seven junior members of the livery took umbrage at the special rank awarded to four new liverymen who as Wardens Substitute had organised the pageant of Lord Mayor Robert Lee, and three of their representatives attended a meeting of the assistants in June to register their protest. Although dealt with in a "brotherlie manner" by certain ex-Masters, who were anxious to avoid "hart burnyng and discontentment", their governors held "yt not fit to render Accompt of their proceedings to them, whoe in duetie ought to submyt themselves". The matter ended with this unambiguous statement of the principles underlying the government of the Company, although the court suspected that some members of the livery stayed away from the next Quarter Day assembly "of  
(1)  
purpose".

The attempts of the Company élite to protect the interests of some of the 'generality' of freemen during the reign of Elizabeth I had caused more serious divisions. In 1571, the assistants had promulgated an ordinance directing all drapers free of the Merchant Taylors Company to place 50 per cent of cloth requiring dressing with the small group of clothworkers affiliated

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<sup>(1)</sup> MF 327, CM V5,20.4.03-31.3.04, p.88 seq.. Except for Raphe Gore junior, who died prematurely in 1617, all 7 went on to join the ruling body in 1618 or 1619.

(1)

to the livery company, who faced economic sanctions aimed at forcing them to join the Clothworkers Company. Despite efforts made to persuade leading freemen and some junior liverymen to obey the ordinance in 1574, 1584, 1588-1589 and 1598-1599, in the long term little was achieved. In 1599, the Company governors' instruction to the beadle to enforce a distressment order against leading freeman Edward Davenet (who had argued that the restriction was illegal) resulted in legal action against the livery company which was withdrawn after an inconclusive settlement with him the following year. His success in arguing that the charters of the livery company gave it no authority to impose such trade restrictions on drapers led to the ordinance being disregarded by his fellow retailers, although it was included with the ordinances submitted to the Crown for approval in 1613. The attempt by the Merchant Taylors Company to extend the scope of its powers in the

(1) In 1566, 42 masters, 11 journeymen and 68 apprentices, falling to 38 householders with 286 'dependents' in 1568. MF 325, CM V1, 21.10.66, 13.12.68, pp.366-369, 248-252.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 27.1.99-15.12.1600, ff.388-426. J.R. Kellet cited the case of Davenet & Hurdeis, 11 Coke 86a as a symbolic set-back for guild regulation of their nominal trades, believing the case centred on the general right "to put out work under contract to foreign artisans". J.R. Kellet, "The breakdown of Guild and Corporation Control over the handicraft and retail trade in London", Ec.H.R., Second Series, x, 1958, p.384.

interests of a minority group of artisans ultimately failed, but its divisive nature can be overstated: Edward Davenet was co-opted to the livery in 1602, joining several other drapers who had been prominent offenders, a number of whom went on to become assistants in due course.

(1)

#### The Court of Assistants - Admission and Advancement

A seat on the governing court of the Merchant Taylors Company was traditionally the reward of liverymen who completed twelve months service in the demanding office of renter warden, and properly accounted for the balance of rents collected during their terms. In consequence, two senior liverymen were sworn as assistants soon after each annual Election Day, replacing those older assistants who left London, died or became too infirm to continue to play an active role in the affairs of the livery company. However, the tendency illustrated by Table 11 for freemen to face rather longer delays before admission to the livery was paralleled by the growing wait faced by liverymen before

(2)

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(1) Notwithstanding earlier difficulties, in 1619 a new generation of Company governors made a token effort to enact the ordinance on the request of poor clothworkers of the yeomanry, emphasising that the drapers and artisans were "all members of one Company". MF 328, CM V7, 16.6.19, 12.10.19, pp.515,539.

(2) See Chapter II,p.107.

admission to the court of assistants. Table 2 reveals that after 1630 new governors had on average joined the livery sixteen years earlier, compared to ten years in the 1580s, and these long-term trends had a remarkable

TABLE 2

Co-option to the court of assistants 1580-1645.

	<u>No. of new Assistants</u>	<u>Average No. of years on the Livery</u>
1580-1589	25	10
1590-1599	23	11
1600-1609	22	13
1610-1619	35	15
1620-1629	42	12
1630-1639	24	16
1640-1645	24	16

195

impact on the character of the senior section of the governing court.

Table 3 examines the pattern of promotion for assistants elected as Master during the period, including figures for the years 1560-1579 which clearly show that the trends antedated 1580. The Masters elected from the 1620s were on average freemen of over thirty years standing, compared with fifteen years for their

TABLE 3

Average no. of years spent as freemen and liverymen by  
 (1)  
 the Masters of the Merchant Taylors Company 1560-1645.

	<u>Years as Freemen</u>	<u>Years as Junior Liverymen</u>	<u>Total years from Freedom to Court of Assistants</u>
1560-1569	9	6	15
1570-1579	12	10	22
1580-1589	9	10	19
1590-1599	15	10	25
1600-1609	16	10	26
1610-1619	11	14	25
1620-1629	17	14	31
1630-1639	19	13	32
1640-1645	12	16	38

counterparts elected in the 1560s. This resulted in an appreciable contraction in the body of governors, as indicated by Tables 4 and 5, which indicate respectively the average attendance at meetings during the period; and the number of different individuals attending meetings at least once in a sample of eight years. After serious debate in 1612, the Company governors revised

(1) Data was available for 69 entries to the freedom and 78 admissions to the livery for the total population of 86 individuals.

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TABLE 4

Average attendance at meetings of the assistants  
(excluding Master and Wardens)

1580-1589	15
1590-1599	15
1600-1609	14.5
1610-1619	14.5
1620-1629	14.5
1630-1639	13
1640-1645	12.5

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TABLE 5

No. of individuals attending meetings at least once  
(excluding Master and Wardens)

1580	29
1590	30
1600	30
1610	26
1620	26
1630	31
1640	25
1645	21

longstanding entrance qualifications by agreeing to co-opt sizeable groups of senior liverymen to act as assistants prior to election as renter wardens. This practice was first considered in 1608 and made use from 1612: in the 30 months from July 1618, no less than 29 liverymen were co-opted to replace dead or inactive members of the court. Additional intakes were authorised in 1625 and 1629, but the policy noticeably lost favour in the 1630s. Despite the gradual contraction in numbers attending, no large-scale intake occurred until 1637, with the result that the average size of meeting dwindled to just 12 by 1635. In that year, for the first time in over 20 years, a liveryman from outside of the ruling body was elected warden; he joined a court made up almost entirely of aldermen and ex-Masters, several of whom had died or ceased attending by 1636.

Only in early 1637 was a group of new governors sworn-in under the radical Master Richard Turner, and when the personalities and policies of the court in the 1630s are considered, the interval between 1629 and 1637 looks distinctly like reluctance to extend decision-making authority to those men waiting in the wings. This

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(1) Five individuals were taken on during the intervening six years, two when elected as warden. For Richard Turner, see Appendix 2.

reluctance may well have stemmed from an appreciation of the strong views of a number of those senior liverymen, including John Venn, taken onto the court in his turn with five colleagues in 1638. One of the leading supporters of parliament in the early 1640s, Venn was soon joined on the court by the radical merchant John Stone, who in the 1640s and 1650s would become a Captain in the parliamentarian army, a member of the 'Barebones Parliament' and ultimately a member of the Council of State.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1641, the inadequate attendance at meetings gave rise to the admission of another small group of senior liverymen, including John Pococke, another prominent parliamentarian who testified against Laud in 1644.<sup>(2)</sup>

Promotion to the court of assistants could also be achieved on assumption of high office in the municipality. While most Merchant Taylors elevated to the offices of alderman or sheriff were of high rank in their livery company, six of the 195 liverymen made assistants between 1580 and 1645 had not served as warden

<sup>(1)</sup> Pearl, "London", pp.87-89.

<sup>(2)</sup> Beaven, II, p.151; J. Farnell, The Politics of City of London (1649-1657), Chicago Univ. Ph.D. Thesis 1963, p.234; A & O, V2, passim.

<sup>(3)</sup> A & O, V1, passim; CSPD 1644, p.4.

(1)

prior to municipal advancement. Election as sheriff or alderman brought with it immediate promotion to the senior section of the court of assistants, as well as exemption from all offices in the livery company. In consequence the majority of Merchant Taylors who served as aldermen during the period never acted as Master.  
(2)

For the majority of freemen, the gaining of a place among the group of senior assistants followed service for two twelve month periods as warden, followed by one twelve month term as Master. For the twenty-three assistants included in Table 2 who had reached the position of Master by 1614, the interval between co-option to the ruling court and election as Master was considerable, varying between six and fourteen years with an average of over eleven years. For the thirty-eight assistants who became Master after 1614, the average interval fell to just six years, two of which on average preceded even their first year as warden.

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(1) Aldermen John Swinnerton, Richard Hearne, Robert Ducy and William Acton; and sheriffs-elect Clement Mosse and Abraham Reynardson. In addition, ambassador to Muscovy Sir John Merrick became a senior assistant without serving as warden or obtaining high royal office. Acton, Merrick and Ducy had already been co-opted to the court of assistants.

(2) 12 out of 16. In some guilds aldermen were expected to act as Master. Ashton, "City", p.42.

The relative inexperience of the executive in the three decades prior to the Civil War, which must have further enhanced the position of the more active senior governors, reflects enforced changes in the pattern of elections to the offices of warden and Master. During the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, Masters had in almost every case previously acted as a renter warden and subsequently as either second or upper warden; this custom was formalised in the ordinances of 1613 which included the new provision that only men who had held the office of upper or second warden could be included in the Master's election bill. This pattern of service had in fact been observed in most years since the early fifteenth century, except that until the early Elizabethan period a liveryman from time to time served as warden for three years. The growing demands of the office meant that from 1572 no Merchant Taylor was expected to discharge the duties of warden more than twice, with the single exception of leading clothworker Nicholas Spencer, who in common with most artisans after 1580 made slower than average progress through the  
<sup>(1)</sup> Company hierarchy. For over half a century freemen could expect to serve twice as warden prior to election

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(1) Spencer served as warden in 1568, 1579 and 1583, and was finally elected as Master in 1588 after over thirty years on the livery.

(1) as Master, with Nicholas Spencer providing one of only  
 two exceptions to the rule. This situation altered dramatically under Charles I as a result of the growing reluctance among junior assistants to accept office as Master of their livery company or sheriff of the City.

Under Elizabeth I, the offices of Master and warden were borne without demure, with just a handful of well-connected freemen being discharged. In 1590, ex-renter warden William Offley - whose father Henry was a senior member of the court - was excused from further offices on the grounds of physical infirmity. He was the only liveryman excused executive duty between 1575 and 1605; in 1605, John Tedcastle won the right to commute his service as warden only with the active support of John Swinnerton. Table 6 shows that from the middle of James I's reign, the number of governors seeking to pay a fine rather than accept the office of Master escalated, usually on the grounds of non-residence in the capital and physical infirmity, although in some cases other motives were probable. In 1634, Master-elect

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(1) In most cases it included one year as renter warden. In ten cases, all between 1580 and 1625 inclusive, initial promotion was to the position of second warden.

(2) The other was Henry Offley, who became Master in 1584 despite only having twelve months experience as a livery warden. He almost certainly owed his favourable treatment to his family ties.

TABLE 6

Number of assistants obtaining exemption or discharge  
from the office of Master or from all livery offices  
1580-1645

1580-1589	-
1590-1599	1
1600-1609	1
1610-1619	10
1620-1629	9
1630-1639	12
1640-1645	(1) 1

Robert Senior's livery company colleagues reluctantly accepted a fine in lieu of service in the light of his alleged physical disabilities, yet he had acted as upper warden in 1633 and continued to regularly attend at the (2) Hall until his death in 1638.

The growing unpopularity of the position of Master was matched furthermore by the tendency under the Early Stuarts for citizens to pay a fine rather than serve as sheriff in the municipal government. The office of

(1) The fall in number from 1640 reflects the new policy of ending all exemptions relating to municipal status. In a small number of additional cases in the earlier 17th century liverymen were excused or discharged from the office of warden only.

(2) Senior's career is examined in Appendix 2.

sheriff, like that of Master, was an immensely expensive one which offered few opportunities to re-coup disbursements, and was in addition often used to raise funds in times of financial stringency from citizens who would not have expected to be elected to such high office.<sup>(1)</sup> The growing number of Merchant Taylors nominated, however briefly, to the shrievalty did however gain exemption from any further livery company offices. In 1615, the exasperated Company governors concluded that the number of liverymen being elected as sheriff would soon leave them "bereft" of suitable wardens and Masters, and promptly ended the blanket exemption - originating before the accession of Elizabeth I - in respect of men that chose to fine as sheriff.<sup>(2)</sup> The unwillingness of Merchant Taylors to assume high executive office continued however, and the chance survival of the slips of paper which served as election bills for the period 1597-1627 facilitates more detailed examination of changes in the nature of the annual electoral contests.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) See Pearl, "London", p.65. 36 men fined as sheriff in 1627 alone.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 8.7.15, p.172.

(3) MT Hall, MSC.DOC.A8. The bills record the names of candidates, with vertical strokes representing the votes cast by each assistant as the ballot papers were passed around the table.

From 1595 to 1609, the elections were rarely closely-fought, but were clearly not pre-determined. Of the 62 election bills relating to the position of warden before 1610, only 16 (or 26 per cent) were unanimous and three of the four candidates for each post obtained at least one vote in 10 (or 22 per cent) of the remaining (1) elections. In 1595 for example, Richard Gore obtained 12 votes in the election to the upper wardenship, only one more than Henry Palmer, who was however elected in 1596 with 20 out of 23 votes cast. A decade later, the four wardens elected attracted between 15 and 18 of the maximum 20 votes available, and the two-man election of the Master followed a broadly similar pattern. Only four (or 27 per cent) of the 15 assistants elected to that office before 1610 enjoyed the unanimous support of the electorate, but the successful candidates always obtained at least two-thirds of votes cast.

The genuine choice accorded to the electors diminished during the second decade of the seventeenth century, with most ballot results demonstrably pre-determined. In 87 per cent of the 135 elections between 1610 and 1627, only one nominee received any votes, and unsuccessful nominees

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(1) There were four bills per annum, plus two extra bills when new elections were necessary in 1604 and 1605. Some liverymen who received no votes were improbable contenders, including Richard Paramour, renter warden in 1577, who was entered in the bill for upper warden every year 1595-1602. He did not attract a single vote during that period.

rarely won more than one or two votes. Furthermore, when successful candidates were subsequently discharged, the liverymen appointed as candidates in their place in secondary ballots usually attracted a majority of votes cast. Thus in 1623, when the position of renter warden became vacant, liveryman Edward Warner was entered in contention with the three unsuccessful candidates in the original ballot, and won unanimous support. In a similar vein, ex-warden Thomas Owen was entered in the consecutive elections held in 1618 after two Masters-elect paid fines, although he had ceased attending livery company meetings in mid-1615 and had been rejected in the ballot of 1612. In both years, he did not attract any of the votes cast.

Any presumption that the restrictions on electoral choice reflected the pre-disposition to oligarchy of small élites in early modern London would be unfounded. The small number of suitable and willing potential executive officers simply led to an increasing emphasis on the "rule of the Rowle" - the appointment of individuals to executive office strictly by reference to their rank in the roll of liverymen's names, which was established on admission to the livery and subsequently reflected offices borne in the Company and municipality. In 1623

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(1) This was first referred to in 1616. MF 328, CM V7, 12.7.16, p.240.

for example, the minutes record that when a second warden-elect was discharged, Robert Draper "the next unto him in the Role was in nomination and....the chiose by most voices did frelie fall upon the saide Robert  
 (1)  
 Draper".

The near-crisis in executive continuity faced by the Merchant Taylors Company under the Early Stuarts provides a possible explanation for what prima facie appear to be electoral irregularities under Charles I. In 1626, Edward Warner became the first Master of the livery company who had not served as a senior warden in accordance with the provisions of 1613. The election bills show however that he was promoted from second warden-elect to Master only because two other appointees refused to accept office. In July 1627, another precedent was set after several assistants proved reluctant to be considered for the office of Master. Edward Cotton, who had joined the ruling court five months earlier after a brief period as alderman, was sworn as Master after his fellow assistants "moved" him to accept nomination notwithstanding his right to claim  
 (2)  
 exemption. After the breaks in tradition marked by the

(1) MF 328, CM V8, 29.7.23, p.176. In fact the court ignored the formality of entering four names into a written bill.

(2) MF 328, CM V8, 17.7.27, f.303; MSC.DOC.A8, 1627; CLRO, Rep.41, 1626-1627, ff.79v, 92; Will PCC 28 Sadler. Cotton had served for several months as alderman of Broad Street Ward and paid £500 over 30 months to be discharged.

1626 and 1627 elections, the matching of municipal and Company records reveals that liverymen who fined as sheriff could expect to be elected as Master on the following mid-summer Election Day regardless of their previous status. Recent election as sheriff led to the dual appointment of junior liveryman Michael Griggs as an assistant and Master in mid-1632, and to the appointment of Simon Wood as Master in 1637 only twelve months after he had completed his service as renter warden. Similarly, William Parsell was elected Master immediately after twelve month's service as renter warden in 1639. The elections of 1640 and 1641 do however appear to have reflected a political bias; although eligible as recent sheriffs-elect, neither Abraham Reynardson nor Clement Mosse were the most appropriate choices as Master in those years, Reynardson not least in the light of his re-election as sheriff in 1640.<sup>(2)</sup>

The election of Sheriff Reynardson as Master itself set a precedent; in 1645 Samuel Avery was appointed head of the

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(1) Sheriffs were elected annually on 24th June. Pearl, "London", p.52.

(2) The circumstances surrounding Griggs' election after rejection by the citizens as sheriff also invites speculation that political factors were involved; this is uncertain as it is possible that his livery company colleagues would have rallied to his support regardless of his politics. For the political dimension and suitability of the new Masters in 1640, 1641, see below, pp.212-214, 216-217.

Company as a result of - rather than in spite of - his recent election as alderman. Thereafter it became the norm for Masters to be leading members of the City government, who were excused service as warden but expected to shoulder the financial burden of the office of Master. Avery's election therefore marked the culmination of three decades of constitutional adaption which belies the picture of hidebound urban oligarchs unwilling and unable to respond to change, and underlines the difficulty of generalisation with respect to the government of the greater London livery companies.

#### The Court of Assistants - Size and Attendance

Known collectively since the middle of the fifteenth century as the "twenty-four", the number of assistants regularly attending meetings was generally much lower than this figure. Meetings convened during the period 1580 - 1645 as a whole were on average attended by just 14 or 15 citizens, and Table 4 has shown that the number of citizens answering summons to meetings actually declined during the period. The total size of the court in the sense of all citizens entitled to participate in its affairs was naturally considerably higher. Meetings held in the mornings of Quarter Days or on the annual Election Day were particularly well-attended as a result of the social facilities available on those days. The number of governors present was not uncommonly around 20

with a peak of 26 set at a Quarter Day in 1600. Indeed the number of individuals who took up their seats at least once in any year in general varied between 25 and 30, although again the long-term trend has been shown to be one of contraction.

Tables 4 and 5 do not reveal one crucial feature of the government of the livery company: the central role of a handful of committed assistants whose attendance record was conspicuously better than the vast majority of their colleagues. In 1598 for example, 17 senior members of the court were seen at the Hall, of whom 11 attended between one and eight of the 24 meetings, while four of their colleagues were present at between 22 and 24 (1) meetings. The same four individuals moreover had the most consistent attendance records at assemblies for many years. In 1599, it was the same group who attended at least 16 of the 19 meetings convened, and between them they diligently acted as governors for a total of 139 (2) years. It is difficult to establish the factors which inspired such dedication in a minority of the Company élite, although all were wealthy men prominent in the

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(1) The remaining two attended 15 and 18 meetings.

(2) Robert Dowe, assistant 1571-1612, Master 1578; Robert Hawes, assistant 1578-1601, Master 1580; Henry Offley, assistant 1570-1612, Master 1584; Richard Procktor, assistant 1581-1610, Master 1593.

City government who usually chose in later life to stay in London rather than retire to the provinces. They were in many cases munificent benefactors of their livery  
(1) company.

A number of assistants made occasional visits to the Hall in retirement after playing an active part in Company affairs earlier in life. Jerrard Gore was Master in 1567 and sat as a senior assistant until 1575; he maintained contact with his company until his death in 1607, attending Quarter Days in 1589 and 1590. Such sporadic attendance was far from uncommon. Humphry Corbett served as Master in 1603, but was present at only eight meetings in the next four years; Thomas Plommer, who paid a fine rather than serve as Master in 1630, took up his seat on the court on just five occasions between 1630 and 1637.

Some senior members of the court with other demanding offices gave attendance a low priority - excepting aldermen who generally were highly active in Company affairs. William Fleetwood for example was a member of several parliaments and held numerous legal and professional posts, most notably the office of Recorder  
(2) of the City of London between 1571 and 1592. His much-

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(1) See Appendix 2 for the lives of 25 active senior assistants.

(2) P.R.Harris, "William Fleetwood, Recorder of The City, and Catholicism in Elizabethan London", Recusant History, 7, pp.106-120, 1963.

valued advice was sought regarding legacies, leases, loan bonds and interpretations of the corporate charter, but while he was a member of the governing body for over thirty years from the early 1560s, he was rarely present at meetings. He attended no more than five meetings each year and only ten in total between 1581 and 1594, complaining to Burghley in the 1580s that "I have not  
 (1)  
 leisure to eat my meat I am so called upon".

Some overseas merchants were like Fleetwood unable or unwilling to devote much time to Company business. Wealthy East India Company director John Merrick was also ambassador to Muscovy and Governor of the Muscovy Company in the 1620s; although he accepted places on the livery and its governing court in 1602 and 1612 respectively, he played only a minimal part in livery company affairs. In 1607, he was discharged as steward for the grammar school election dinner as his embarkation for Muscovy was imminent, and he took his seat beside his fellow assistants only seven times 1618-1620, fifteen times  
 (2)  
 1624-1626 and once in 1630. The role of leading Common Councilman and Merchant Adventurer Richard Gore was greater, but intermittent. He served as Master in 1602,

(1) Ibid, p.108.

(2) MF 329,CM V5,18.5.07, p.256; Rabb,op.cit.,p.341;  
 Acts of the Privy Council, 1623-1625, p.236, 1628-1629,  
 p.232.

but left London for Hamburg in 1616 where he was deputy-governor of his trading company, giving up his key to the treasury of his livery company in that year.<sup>(1)</sup> Gore's pre-occupations meant that he was not seen at the Hall at all 1612-1614 or 1617-1618. The connection between the livery company and leading City merchants and bureaucrats was of varying significance to both parties; many were more honorary members than figures of weight in Company government.

#### The Court of Assistants - Business Transacted

Perhaps the most significant development in the early modern history of the Merchant Taylors Company was the enormous expansion in its holdings of real estate, and in the concomitant responsibilities of the governing élite. These extended not only to property management, but to the administration of associated charitable and educational trusts. This development had important repercussions, including constitutional and administrative changes within the livery government; increasing reliance on the yeomanry in matters affecting the ordinary freemen; and the enhancement of the political and financial importance of the Company within the capital.

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<sup>(1)</sup> A.Friis, Alderman Cockayne's Project and the Cloth Trade, 1927, pp.84,85; MF 328,CM V7, 27.5.16, p.230; Foster,op.cit.,p.166.

In the late fifteenth century, the weight of business transacted by the 'twenty-four' was light. In the 1490s a handful of items were dealt with at each meeting, including occasional discussions relating to the guild's small property holdings, which supported a number of priests and almsmen as well as thirteen obits.<sup>(1)</sup> After the set-backs of the Reformation, new real estate and associated trusts were slowly but steadily accumulated, becoming a virtual torrent from the 1590s. While consideration of the general pattern of charitable giving and of the physical characteristics of the property portfolio cannot be included within the scope of this thesis,<sup>(2)</sup> consideration of the scale and nature of the acquisitions is necessary to understand their impact on the development of the livery company.

(1) MF 312, AMB 37, CM 1486-1493, passim.

(2) Property accounting for nearly 26% of rentals receivable was sold for £2,133 in the 1540s to redeem and purchase annuities relating to 'superstitious uses'. See below, p.166.

(3) A number of Company manuscripts provide fascinating insights into trends in property management and development. The "Evidences Book" of 1605 sets out details of all acquisitions to that date and of current rentals. View books contained detailed dimensions of some of those properties taken from the 1630s to the 1660s. MF 310, AMB V8, The Evidences Book; MF 311, AMB V20, Views Book; MT Hall, AMB V19, Rentals Book 1632.

When in 1570, Sir Thomas Rowe had bequeathed properties in the capital to the Merchant Taylors Company worth £51 per annum in return for payments to almsmen totalling £40, his colleagues had marvelled at his "good zeale and hartie affection" and noted the "speciall truste and confidens in them reposed before all others"; by the end of the century it was commonplace for both Merchant Taylors and non-citizens to arrange for the Company to implement their charitable designs. A number of the legacies involved were spectacular by any standards. Between 1589 and 1611, Robert Dowe made-over several thousands of pounds to the Merchant Taylors Company to enable property to be purchased to fund a vast array of payments of a philanthropic nature, and the hope that his example would be emulated by other "bountifull & liberall" members was not unfounded.

Between 1615 and 1640, cash and property worth tens of thousands of pounds passed into the hands of the livery company, a phenomenon which can be illustrated by consideration of the particularly bountiful five years to 1620. In 1616-1617, the Company received £3,500 in money plus houses in Lombard Street worth at least £2,000 under

(1) MF 325, CM V1, 25.9.70, pp.470-475; The Evidences Book, p.124 seq..

(2) MF 326, CM V3, passim; MF 327, CM V5, 27.10.04, 7.10.08, pp.147, 329.

the wills of Merchant Taylors William Parker and John Vernon, and purchased a large estate in Kent with the cash to partially finance a plethora of related annual charitable payments amounting in total to £256. From 1618, charitable payments of £140 per annum were made under the terms of the will of William Craven, who in 1615 had paid £2,250 to purchase the magnificent Popes Head Tavern and neighbouring shops for his livery company. In 1619 the executors of late assistant John Harrison made-over £500 for the completion of a Lancashire grammar school under the jurisdiction of the livery company, as well as title to numerous properties in and around Crane Court and in St. Swithin's Lane.

(1) MF 301, Accounts V11, 1616-1617, Accounts V12, 1617-1618; Wills PCC 9 Weldon (Vernon), PCC 47 Cope. Parker was a friend of William Craven, his executor and co-resident in St. Antholin's parish. During his lifetime he remained aloof from his livery company, and the ease with which he avoided all Company offices must be attributable to the influence of his friend on the governing court.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 18.11.15, f.203v; Will PCC 75 Meade; John Stow, The Survey of London, ed.H.B.Wheatley, 1956 edition, reprinted 1987, pp. 178, 179.

(3) Will PCC 72 Parker. The oversight of the distant school was neglected by the over-worked governors of the Merchant Taylors Company in following decades. H.M.Luft, A History of Merchant Taylors School, Crosby, 1620-1970, Liverpool Univ. Press, 1970, pp.44,45,50,51.

By 1620, rental income - ignoring the often substantial lease premium instalments - stood at over £1,500, an increase of more than 50 per cent in ten years. Further, while all the properties brought with them associated financial obligations, the trusts established generally assigned to the Company's use any rentals remaining after the fixed annual payments had been made; these gains could only grow over time as higher rents and lease premiums were negotiated when new tenancy agreements were drawn-up. The Popes Head Tavern properties attracted rentals on acquisition of £169 55s, representing an immediate annual profit of £29 55s, while as early as 1605 the properties acquired from Sir Thomas Rowe yielded £117 per annum against total disbursements fixed from (1) 1570 at £40. With rental incomes also augmented by direct purchase of new properties from surplus funds, the renovation of properties under covenants in leases and an unchecked process of building by Company tenants wherever (2) space allowed, the fortunes of the Merchant Taylors Company soared. From 1591, the Company bore the largest

(1) MF 310, Evidences Book, p.124 seq..

(2) In 1599, a freeman was granted a 50 year lease of 18 tenements and 7 gardens in Bell Alley in St. Botolph's Without Bishopsgate after agreeing to build 9 new tenements there for the livery company. Between 1616 and 1626, much of the Company's mainly - open lands at Moorfields and in Moor Lane had been covered with cottages and newly-divided tenements. MF 326, CM V3, 8.12.99, f.407; MF 328, CM V8, 23.11.25, f.263v.

share of loans and taxes levied by the municipal government on the City livery companies, and in 1610 the proportion required from the Merchant Taylors Company was increased from 9.36 per cent to 10.5 per cent. The Company was an important source of finance in early modern London.

The administrative burden on the livery governors grew pari passu with corporate wealth, as is well illustrated by consideration of the expansion in loan funds. The provision of money for generally interest-free loans to young tradesmen, ranging in term from one to ten years and in amount from £12 10s to £200, was an increasingly popular form of charity during the period.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1580, the court of assistants was responsible for distributing twenty sums totalling £600, £100 of which had been available from the early sixteenth century. By 1603, the number of loans available had grown to 67, valued at £2,900, and by 1645 110 individual sums were available totalling £4,500.

The volume of business and financial transactions bore heavily on the Master and renter wardens at a time when their workload at the 'Ordinary Courts' where freemen and apprentices were registered was also greatly increasing,<sup>(2)</sup> and had a considerable impact on the nature of Company government. The role of the livery officers and

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(1) W.K.Jordan, The Charities of London, 1480-1660, 1960, pp. 172-177.

(2) See below, p.80.

assistants in resolving disputes between freemen and in actively enforcing the apprenticeship regulations rapidly

(1) declined, and government by the court of assistants became more formal and complex as well as considerably protracted under the Early Stuarts. While Table 7 shows that the average number of meetings per year actually fell during the period, the length of those meetings substantially increased. From 1606, lunch was provided

TABLE 7

Average annual number of courts of assistants 1580-1645 (2)

1580-1589	20
1590-1599	19
1600-1609	19
1610-1619	20
1620-1629	18
1630-1639	15
1640-1645	12.5

at meetings to encourage attendance throughout the morning; after the first meeting where this facility was available the Common Clerk noted with satisfaction that two or three times the normal level of business had been (3) transacted. On a number of occasions, courts were re-convened for several hours after lunch; in March 1632 for example, eleven assistants met in the morning to consider business relating to the Ulster Plantation; a legacy of £500; the maintenance of the Hall; and the

(1) See below, p.81 and Chapter VI, pp.330-332.

(2) As a result of plague, only 13 meetings were held in 1593 and 1603.

(3) MF 327, CM V5, 2.7.06, p.227.

appointment of four committees to deal with property leases and views. Ten members of the court met again in the afternoon to transact other business including the (1) appointment of almsmen and the allocation of loan monies. In order to minimise the disruption of business, the Master was provided with a hammer to keep order and also a bell to summon the livery beadle. Doors were also put up at the entrance to the Council Chamber and to the main body of the Hall "to prevent many annoyances which happened by reason at the same lieth too common to all (2) commers".

Other innovations in government belong to the same (3) period. The clerk and beadle of the Bachelors Company spent an increasing proportion of their time undertaking duties for the Master and wardens to ease the workload of their livery counterparts, and printed bills were used to notify assistants and liverymen of (4) assemblies from 1629. The number of record books kept was expanded to encompass comprehensive registers of freemens wills, leases, title deeds and property views,

(1) MF 329, CM V8, 14.3.32, ff. 437v-446v.

(2) MF 329, Accounts V7, 1600-1601, p.458v; MF 326, CM V5, 9.1.08, p.293; MF 328, CM V7, 18.3.14, p.115.

(3) Improvements in record-keeping and accounting were of course not confined to London livery companies of the time. See Cain, "Robert Smith", pp.3-16, and (for a summary of the wider context) Coward, op.cit., pp.86, 98.

(4) MF 302, Accounts V15, 1629-1630. Printed freemens oaths were also used from the 1650s.

and records of loan money sureties and contributions made  
(1)  
towards the Ulster Plantation and the corn stock. Accounting procedures and responsibilities regarding rentals receivable were amended to smooth the transition process when new renter wardens took office, and steps were taken to improve financial controls: annual reviews of all bonds for debts receivable were instituted; the fortunes of loan money sureties were more closely monitored; and both the Master and renter wardens were obliged to provide security for bonds and funds passing  
(2)  
through their hands to prevent loss to the Company. In addition, from the mid-1620s places on the four-man audit committee were reserved for ex-Masters rather than the traditional mix of senior and junior assistants, and the committee was increased in number to five in 1629 and to  
(3)  
six from 1630.

The augmentation of the role of committees represents perhaps the most significant development in Company government during the period. During the early sixteenth

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(1) MF 326, CM V5, 8.8.08, p.318. In 1625, the court resolved that views of property should be recorded in a separate book with full details of dimensions and fixtures and fittings. MF 328, CM V8, 23.2.25, f.241v.

(2) MF 300, Accounts V8, 1601-1602, p.66; MF 328, CM V7, 10.8.18, 28.8.19, pp.478, 531; CM V8, 29.7.23, p.176.

(3) The auditors scrutinised the annual accounts before publication at a court of assistants in August, and items of expenditure were occasionally disallowed.

century, the assistants had extricated themselves from all business relating to the enrolment of apprentices and freemen by delegating responsibility to a committee of the Master and wardens; a century later however non-executive members of the ruling court below the rank of alderman were increasingly required to serve on committees and commissions relating in particular to property and wills under which the Merchant Taylors Company were beneficiaries.

Until the late sixteenth century, the Master and Company workmen had conducted a day-long view of corporate land and properties each spring, which was followed by the View Day of the renter wardens when repairs undertaken at the behest of the Master were inspected. Although both views were held in certain years in the earlier seventeenth century, their inadequacy - recognised as early as 1597<sup>(1)</sup> - necessitated the regular appointment of generally short-lived committees to view specific properties, prepare written reports regarding their condition and propose new leases. In addition, committees were set up to consider at length the terms of wills involving the livery company; to settle disputes between tenants; and to oversee longer-term building work, such as the three year project to build twelve new almshouses for widows at Tower Hill 1635-1638. In 1629,

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 14.3.97, f.342. The early 16th century ordinances had required quarterly rather than annual views of properties.

no less than fourteen different committees met on Company business, which included consideration of the condition of five tenements and visits to the grammar schools at Wolverhampton and Much Crosby in Lancashire. Another group of assistants designated the "Committees for Moorfields", established in early 1628 to administer the patchwork of plots and tenements in little Moorfields and Moor Lane, met on several occasions at the Hall to consider the best method of leasing-out the property. It is perhaps not surprising that nine of the eleven cases of liverymen not taking up places made available on the ruling court between 1580 and 1645 occurred during the second half of the period.

#### The Court of Assistants - Advantages of Membership

While a number of liverymen were unwilling to join the court of assistants, 195 (or 95 per cent) of the 206 places made available between 1580 and 1645 were taken-up. Within the livery company promotion to the governing body naturally brought with it an enhanced status and prestige, but it was not in most cases a crucial step in a freeman's civic career, in contrast to elevation to the livery which opened the doors of the municipal government to ambitious citizens. Election to the Common Council often preceded co-option to the court

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(1) 195 per Table 2, plus 11 liverymen discharged (D) per Appendix 4.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.50-60; Rappaport, Part 2, p.122.

(1)

of assistants by several years, and high office in one of the livery companies of the capital was not a precondition for (although it automatically followed) selection as alderman. Merchant Peter Collett, son and former apprentice of liveryman Thomas Collett, briefly served as alderman in 1599, only four years after assuming the livery of the Merchant Taylors Company. He asked "to be dispensed with other inferior roomes", and although he was ranked as a senior assistant he never  
 (2)  
 attended meetings of the court.

Most Merchant Taylors clearly welcomed the further opportunity to influence affairs in the capital and to complement their standing in the municipal government. Furthermore, co-option to the small group of livery company governors brought benefits beyond heightened status and participation - matters perhaps of less concern to freemen who already enjoyed the fraternal and social benefits of wearing the livery, and held high office in the City government.

The position of assistant brought with it a degree of patronage, most notably regarding the granting of the  
 (3)  
 livery, but also with respect to applications for loan monies. In the late sixteenth century, when the number

(1) See Appendix 4.

(2) Rabb, op.cit., p.268; Beaven, I,p.345; MF 326, CM V3, 6.10.99, f.403.

(3) See Chapter II, pp.122-126.

of loans available was far smaller than in the earlier seventeenth century, competition for the money was fierce and successful applicants were very often relatives or former apprentices of members of the ruling court. When four new loans became available in 1595 under the terms of the will of the late Master Hugh Henly, it was unremarkable that they were awarded to a relation of Hendly and to appointees of Alderman Leonard Halliday,  
<sup>(1)</sup> Warden Robert Hampson and Master John Churchman. It was however in the administration of corporate property concerns that the opportunities for direct personal gain lay.

On at least one occasion, a senior governor was implicated in a plot to extract monies from the Company by exposing defects in the legal title to various properties,  
<sup>(2)</sup> but such deception was exceptional. Leases of the more desirable messuages, groups of tenements and gardens were openly fought-over by prominent members of the Company élite, who in many cases made considerable gains by sub-letting the properties.  
<sup>(3)</sup> The declared policy of the governors regarding the granting of leases was to prefer dutiful freemen over other suitors (especially if

(1) MF 326, CM V3, 31.5.95, f.295.

(2) See below, pp.167,168.

(3) In 1615, the court of assistants noted how the total rentals generated by the many small tenements near the Hall far exceeded the rentals received from the Company's direct tenants. MF 328, CM V7, 18.3.15, pp.159,160.

they were existing lessees or were seeking accommodation for their own use) on a condition that they would "do as another will" in respect of premiums and rentals. In practice, the most influential assistants were able to extract advantageous new leases and improvements to existing leases for the benefit of themselves and relatives; meetings were convened on a number of occasions solely to consider the suits of individual assistants or their relatives for desirable properties.<sup>(1)</sup>

In 1590 for example, Alderman Henry Rowe, son of the late Merchant Taylor Sir Thomas Rowe and a close relative of assistant Oliver Rowe, was involved in lengthy negotiations over the renewal of a lease with eleven years to run of the 'great messuage' and three adjoining tenements in Bishopsgate Street. He obtained a 32 year repairing lease for a rental of £14 per annum, and a premium of £250 deferred for eleven years. His attempts in 1597 on election as sheriff to gain further favours regarding the property indicate that some of the court - which no longer included the impecunious Oliver Rowe - were unhappy with his preferential treatment. The request for assistance in renovating the property was not well-received, the clerk noting that the court "well

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(1) The tendency to profiteer has not been remarked on by historians of the London livery companies, although it was alluded to by F.J. Fisher regarding the 1630s at a seminar at the Institute of Historical Research, London, in March 1982.

remember how greate a bargaine they had lately granted to  
the said Mister Alderman ... for a farr lesse some than  
would have been given for the same".  
<sup>(1)</sup>

The ruling élite could profit directly from corporate real estate, as well as obtaining dwelling houses for themselves and relatives on favourable terms. Between 1597 and 1599, the suits of the incumbent tenant for a new lease of the "Sword and Buckler" in Broad Street Ward were not well received, despite the policy of favouring existing tenants and the intervention of the Lord Mayor in 1598. In April 1598, the minutes record incidentally (after views of the property) that one of the assistants, Roger Heley, wished to obtain the lease for his own use, although only in September 1599 did he openly make an offer for the lease. The following month Heley rather than the incumbent tenant obtained a lease for 31 years, on the grounds that he was better able to rebuild the property; in 1606, having ejected the sub-tenant the previous year, he was criticised by his colleagues for dividing the tenement into two and charging high rents to  
<sup>(2)</sup>  
a number of new sub-tenants. Similarly in February 1633,

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(1) It was finally decided to award Rowe one fifth of his costs. MF 326, CM V3, 10.8.97, f.353v. Oliver Rowe only attended meetings twice between 1596 and 1600 inclusive as a result of losses in his trade.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 2.11.97, p.358 seq.; MF 327, CM V5, 10.5.06, p.213.

the long-standing clerk Clement Mosse flouted Company rules by obtaining a 21 year lease in reversion of a tenement near the Three Cranes, increased to 41 years in July 1633; soon after coming into possession in 1645 he obtained a redrafted lease in the name of a freeman of  
 (1)  
 the Fruiterers Company.

Examination of decisions regarding key properties reveals that aldermen affiliated to the livery company were particularly successful in persuading their colleagues to disregard Company procedures and regulations relating to leases. In May 1625, Alderman Ducy obtained a 27 year lease of a messuage for a premium of £450 and annual rentals of £50, and just one month later obtained at no cost an increase in the length of the lease to an exceptional 130 years. His fellow assistants anxiously  
 (2)  
 noted that the grant was not to establish a precedent. When in 1646 Alderman Reynardson became dissatisfied with the terms of the 41 year lease of the great messuage and tenements in Bishopsgate granted to him in 1644, he simply boycotted meetings at Merchant Taylors Hall. After fifteen months, the assistants became anxious to end his boycott, "whereby they have wanted his assistance & counsell", and a delegation visited him to discuss his

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 19.2.33, 3.7.33, ff.466, 477v; MF 330, CM V9, 14.10.46, f.244v.

(2) MF 328, CM V8, 13.5.25, 25.6.25, ff.246v, 257.

grievances. He re-appeared at the Hall and was granted a  
 (1)  
 lease with a new term of 55 years.

Measures were introduced from time to time to limit the gains that assistants could make at the expense of their livery company. In 1606, following the example of the Drapers Company, the court resolved that new leases should not exceed 21 years in term and that suits for renewal should not be considered until the leases were within two years of expiration - with a fine provided exclusively for assistants who attempted to circumvent  
 (2)  
 the regulations. The problem was also considered serious enough for a new provision to be included in the ordinances of 1613 prohibiting governors from propounding suits for themselves or friends, and stipulating that assistants should withdraw from meetings when they had an interest in matters under discussion.

In general the impressive new rules were observed, although some members of the ruling court managed to evade them; Sir William Craven obtained a lease for 31 years of "Copthall" in St. Gyles Without Cripplegate in 1615 notwithstanding the sixteen years still to run in  
 (3)  
 the existing lease. Further, there are clear indications

(1) MF 330, CM V9, 13.8.44, 11.3.46, 23.6.47, 28.8.47,  
 ff. 205, 226, 226v, 260, 267, 267v.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 17.5.06, pp.217, 218. The ban on suits within two years of expiration was overturned in 1628 as the Company had cashflow problems.

(3) MF 328, CM V7, 18.3.15, p.155.

that leases were being taken at substantially less than market value. In 1609 and again in 1618, high-level committees were established after complaints regarding the number of leases being sealed at "under values to men that make gayne of the same", a practice in conflict with the duty of the assistants to be "good husbands for the  
 (1)  
 howse". In June 1618, the suit of ex-warden Edward James for the lease of numerous tenter grounds, gardens and small tenements in Moorfields was accompanied by his reassurance that the properties were desired "more for his quiett and pleasure then for any proffitt that he  
 (2)  
 purposeth to make thereby".

The opportunities available to incumbent Masters and wardens could be particularly profitable. In 1581, it was necessary to promulgate an order forbidding Masters and wardens from seeking grants of leases while in office; they were furthermore prohibited from taking land, tenements and gardens out of lease and rebuilding or otherwise altering them to their advantage, on pain of  
 (3)  
 losing the property involved and costs incurred. It is not easy to discover examples of the type of incident

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 28.8.09, pp.400, 401; MF 328, CM V7, 8.5.18, p.456.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 8.6.18, p.463. James obtained a 28 year lease in July 1618.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 28.6.81, f.64v.

envised in 1581, although two incidents which were exposed in the 1640s do illustrate how assistants could benefit while holding the highest Company offices.

In 1601, the Company had purchased a property in Threadneedle Street abutting the Hall, using £150 bequeathed by the late Merchant Taylor Peter Blundell on condition that 40s a year was distributed to prisoners in Newgate. Any surplus yields were devised to the Master and wardens; consequently when in 1642 a premium of £60 was paid for a new lease of the property, it was retained by the Master, Clement Mosse, and his wardens. In July 1643, their moral right to the money was challenged, and it was agreed that it would be returned and paid to the  
 (1)  
 poor of the yeomanry.

In the second incident in 1648, junior assistant Oliver Neave invoked the order of 1581 against outgoing Master George Nash. He complained that the lease of his tenement in Cornhill had been granted (without a vote) to Edward Nash, the Master's son, for a term beginning with the expiration of the original term in 1651. After much controversy and the appointment of a committee of investigation, the grant was revoked in 1649, but clearly Neave owed his success primarily to his position as an assistant and the son of the late Francis Neave, Master  
 (2)  
 in 1629. Nash was unlucky; many of his predecessors

(1) MF 330, CM V9, 11.7.43, f.175; MF 310, AMB V9, Wills Book, f.168.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 8.3.48, 2.8.48 - 17.3.49, ff.280, 295v seq..

could feel satisfied that they had reaped at least some tangible gains in return for the time they had invested in Company affairs.

#### Leading Officers of the Livery

While effective power in the Merchant Taylors Company was wielded by the body of assistants, the charter of incorporation formally entrusted power to the Master and four wardens, and no study of the government of the livery company would be complete without reference to the main features of these and other notable Company offices.

Assistants who had borne the office of livery warden were (1) eligible for election as Master, an office which was held for one year and which an individual never held for more than one term. Masters-elect swore an oath of loyalty to the livery company, sitting at the table in the Council Chamber rather than kneeling with the wardens-elect. Thereafter they assumed onerous duties which rapidly increased in the early seventeenth century as both the number of apprentices and freemen being registered and property interests and associated charitable trusts expanded.

The Master was specifically responsible for viewing the properties of the Company each year; for accounting for premiums receivable on new leases, and for administering the loan money funds and stock of corn, as well as for

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(1) See above pp.54-56 for the 5 exceptions to this rule  
1627-1645.

executing the decisions of the court of assistants and City precepts. He was expected to attend all Company gatherings, including funerals; the Lord Mayor's Day; and sundry assemblies where (for example) new liverymen or wardens were sworn or money was put into or taken from the treasury. Further, he presided over not only the courts of assistants but the separate Ordinary Courts where scholars were appointed to the London grammar school, yeomanry officers and meetings were approved and above all the apprenticeship regulations were implemented.

Whereas in general the assistants met only on a monthly basis, the Ordinary Courts were often held early in the morning on two days a week, although they tended to be less frequent in the winter months. As the number of transactions relating to the presentation of apprentices, the registration of freemen and associated business escalated to the point where over 1,000 new apprentices could be brought before the courts in one year, the pattern of meetings held by the Master and his wardens changed. The short regular meetings of 1580, when the business of 56 meetings could be recorded on 28 pages of minutes, were replaced by the 1620s by no more than 25 much longer assemblies per annum, which could however generate up to 70 pages of minutes.

The increase in business relating to apprenticeship also

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(1) In June 1600, a meeting was ended prematurely at 9 a.m. as the Master and wardens were by custom due to attend the Election Day of the Skinners.

led to the erosion of one of the traditional roles of the Master and wardens. In the mid-Elizabethan period, freemen and their apprentices still frequently brought their disputes to the Ordinary Courts, where the Company officers heard and resolved them free-of-charge or referred them to agreed arbiters, often a number of the wardens. In 1580, 37 disputes were brought to the attention of the Master and wardens, relating to such matters as small debts, master-apprenticeship relations and disputes with customers; by the turn of the century, only a handful of cases were heard each year. In 1608, the Master presided over 35 meetings at which only six disputes were considered, a number rarely exceeded in subsequent years, although it is probable that freemen increasingly turned to the more accessible government of  
(1)  
the yeomanry.

The duties of the Master involved considerable personal expense, not least with respect to the provision of the dinners at the Quarter Days and on other occasions. The Master was entitled to an allowance of £60 for four Quarter Day dinners in 1580, which had risen to £166 13s 4d by 1617. He also received £30 in total from the four

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(1) Rappaport emphasised the importance of the role of the court of assistants of the livery companies in settling disputes, although in the Merchant Taylors Company only the Master and wardens were involved in arbitration by 1562, and that role was minimal by the end of the century. Rappaport, Part 2, pp.112,113. For the yeomanry's role, see below pp.283-284.

wardens and the quarterages of the liverymen, but the allowances were not intended to cover the total expenses incurred by the Master. The cost of the mid-summer Election Day was especially high as it had become a major event in the social calender of the City as well as of the livery company, attended by a "greate concourse of people more than any other Company of London".<sup>(1)</sup> In 1607, the elder John Swinnerton was happy to pay £140 towards the unusually high cost of entertaining King James at the Election Day - a sum more than double the level of the current allowance. In 1617, the assistants noted that the duties and costs of the Master were "over & above the Masters of other Companyes",<sup>(2)</sup> an observation which at least partially explains the rapid growth in the number of liverymen elected to that office seeking to pay a fine - set at £100 in 1613 - in lieu of service.

The benefits accruing to Merchant Taylors who spent twelve months as Master were largely intangible. Incumbents were able to enroll apprentices and freemen without charge, and received small sums from new liverymen and when some charitable payments were made. In addition, they exercised a degree of patronage over the appointment of minor officers such as Butler and Cook. While it has been shown that there were also opportunities to make personal gain from the property

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(1) MF 327, CM V5, 30.5.08, p.306.

(2) MF 328, CM V9, 4.7.17, p.402.

holdings of the Company, the main advantage of service as Master was the acquisition of an immensely enhanced status in the livery company and no doubt to some extent in the municipal government. The office of Master was consciously modelled on the office of Lord Mayor, with the "reverence and wurshipp" attached to the foremost office of the municipality "moste nearly imytated" in the Company's own government.<sup>(1)</sup> From mid-summer until the second meeting of the following calender year, the last Master was ranked above all other assistants except the new Master. This tradition meant that in late 1604 Humphry Corbett - who may well have been an artisan and played little part in municipal government - was seated in precedence to aldermen and knights Richard Hearne, William Craven and John Swinnerton. Thereafter, as one of the 'grave fathers' of the livery company, the ex-Master acquired a new rank which found expression in the weight attached to his opinions and in his treatment on formal and ceremonial occasions. He received preferential treatment at the Election Day, and the sternest action was taken against any member of the Company who was disrespectful to him.<sup>(2)</sup> Those assistants

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(1) MF 325, CM V1, 3.2.74, pp.691, 692.

(2) In 1581 the Company governors were prepared to imprison junior assistant William Offley for striking William Phillips, "so grave a father & late a Master". MF 326, CM V3, 16.12.81, f.71v. Phillips was Master 1579-1580.

who had passed the Master's chair played a key role on all committees and commissions, and incidental references in the minutes of the Ordinary Courts reveal that prominent ex-Masters were often present at the Hall between meetings of the court of assistants. This practice was no doubt encouraged by the entrusting of the keys to the treasury to the two assistants who had borne the office of Master earliest.

The four wardens who attended the Master at all times were not equal in status. The upper and second wardens, generally more experienced assistants who had acted as junior wardens, did not have a specialised role in Company government. The two renter wardens, one responsible for the East of the City and one for the West, undertook a variety of tasks during their twelve months in office. With their two predecessors, they provided a dinner for the court of assistants on St. Bartholomew's Eve before visiting the fair held the following day to 'search' the yards of drapers affiliated to the Company. From 1625 to 1633 they were charged with overseeing the maintenance and sale of the corn stock, a task passed to the senior wardens thereafter as part of readjustments in the government of the livery company. Their principal duties however related to the collection of the quarterly rentals due from tenants and making payments from the receipts under the terms of the wills

(1) of benefactors. The scale of these duties increased enormously in the early seventeenth century, leading on the one hand to small financial concessions to the renter wardens and on the other to the phenomenon of assistants earnestly seeking dischargement on election for £50, or more often for £100 in return for exemption from all executive offices.

As the administration of Company affairs became more complex, the livery officers came increasingly to depend on the knowledge and experience of their salaried Common Clerk. Like the Master, the clerk had the use of a study in the Hall, and was responsible for attending all meetings of the assistants or Master and wardens to record all "acts businesses & things as shalbe agreed & concluded upon". With the help of his assistant, he also drew-up the lengthy annual financial accounts, prepared apprenticeship indentures and maintained all the sundry books of records except those pertaining to the Bachelors Company. He also attended searches and views of property, read aloud the ordinances and major legacies at Quarter Days and furthermore was charged with keeping the records of the livery company "safe and secrett". The clerk advised the Master and wardens regarding precedents

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(1) In the earlier 16th century, these duties had been undertaken by just one of the four wardens. By 1562, the City had been divided into the eastern and western sector, with a renter warden responsible for each sector.

(2) MF 328, CM V8, 17.9.24, f.222.

and areas of concern: in 1619, negotiations entered into by the municipal government regarding concealments were regarded as "business of such importance that the common clark desireth to have Committees appointed for that purpose".  
 (1)

The significance of the office of Common Clerk is reflected both in the bitterly contested election processes under James I, which resulted in an annual re-selection procedure being instituted,  
 (2) and in the automatic conferring of the livery on successful applicants. The clerk could go on to acquire high office in his livery company - as shown by Table 1 - as well as in the municipality. Richard Langley resigned in 1610 as a result of his duties as deputy-Town Clerk, while Clement Mosse by the date of his resignation in 1636 also held the titles of Under Chamberlain and Comptroller of the Chamber. When Mosse announced his intention to resign as clerk in 1635, his employers were greatly alarmed and persuaded him to stay on "in respect that the Company is like to be full of much buisines for this  
 (3)  
 yeare ensuing".

(1) MF 328, CM V7, 16.16.19, p.515.

(2) Annual re-selection occurred from 1624 following the intervention of the Crown. The idea had first been mooted in 1587 when Richard Hilles had obtained the office for his son Barnabas, but had been dropped after the new clerk's death in the same year.

(3) MF 329, CM V8, 14.7.35, f.532. See Appendix 2 for Mosse's career.

The Beadle was the only other livery officer of any significance in Company affairs. Salaried and annually re-selected from 1624, he attended outside the Council Chamber door when the court of assistants was in session, issued summons to meetings, levied fines and attended searches and property views. His duties exclusively pertained to the livery, and included a ceremonial role at the Election Day where he carried the silver mace before the Master and wardens.

TABLE 8

## Beadles of the livery 1580-1645.

	<u>Term</u>	<u>Admission to Livery</u>	<u>Trade</u>
Robert Dowle	1579-1590	By 1562	
Edward Thruxton (2)	1590-1598	1571	
Nicholas Hurdes	1598-1617	1598	Tailor
Robert Churchman	1617-1644	1617	
William Bayley	From 1644	1630	Draper

The Beadle was often an elderly liveryman of small means, and (if an ordinary freeman) acquired the right to wear the livery gown.

The Court of Assistants - An Extension of Municipal Government?

The ruling courts of the twelve major livery companies of late Elizabethan and Early Stuart London were invariably composed of senior Common Councilmen and aldermen, and

(1) See appendices 4 and 5 for an indication of the overlap of personnel.

(2) Will PCC 114 Weldon (1617).

one final question bearing on the importance of the Merchant Taylors Company in civic and national affairs is worthy of consideration: were the governing bodies of the companies principally sub-groupings of the municipal élite, executive arms of the City's governing council unlikely to resist municipal demands or to adopt distinctive political or religious positions?

The livery companies were certainly one medium through which municipal requirements - often directly emanating from the Crown - for taxes, loans, military personnel and corn were channelled. The practice of furthering municipal and royal policies through the leading guilds and companies was well established by 1558, with written instructions or "precepts" issued by the Lord Mayor regularly received by the Merchant Taylors Company during the 1560s. It appears however that the practice only became well established during the earlier sixteenth century, as the court minutes of 1487-1493 reveal that only one directive was received from the City government, relating to the reception of Henry VII in 1492. Furthermore, the extent to which the early modern

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(1) As the demands of the Crown often reached the livery companies via the municipality, there is some difficulty in treating separately the relationship of the Merchant Taylors Company with the City and the Crown. The Company's response to major projects or financial demands emanating directly from the royal government are therefore not dealt with in this chapter.

(2) MF 312, AMB V37, November 1492; Unwin, "Gilds", pp.237-239.

companies faced such demands and the increase in municipal authority generally under the Early Stuarts (1) has been overstated. The Merchant Taylors Company rarely received more than two or three precepts a year, and these usually related to the stock of corn maintained on behalf of the City. Even in the 1590s, when an unusually high number of precepts were issued as a result of the military requirements of the Crown and the importance of the corn stock in times of economic hardship, only 43 precepts were delivered to the Company Hall. This moreover was higher than in any other decade, as indicated by Table 9.

TABLE 9

Precepts received from the Lord Mayor of London by the Merchant Taylors Company

<u>Subject matter</u>	<u>1590-1599</u>	<u>1610-1619</u>	<u>1630-1639</u>
Ulster Plantation	-	8	-
City Food Supplies	22	17	10
Men, Arms, Loans	13	5	-
Ceremonial Matters	3	2	2
Other Matters	5	2	3
—	—	—	—
	43	34	15
—	—	—	—

(1) See for example Ashton, "City", pp.70, 71 and Unwin, "Gilds", p.232. Rappaport noted just 68 demands made on the companies by the municipality in the 16th century. His observation that precepts were communicated to the freemen by being read aloud by the livery companies does not apply to the Merchant Taylors Company with one exception (regarding apparel) in 1596. Rappaport, Part 2, p.111. MF 326, CM V3, 31.1.96, f.317.

While the Lord Mayor occasionally summoned the wardens of the companies to receive verbal instructions or made direct approaches to the companies by letter,<sup>(1)</sup> the implementation of municipal directives was not a predominant feature of livery company life.<sup>(2)</sup>

The social and ceremonial life of the major companies was of course interwoven in many respects with that of the City government.<sup>(3)</sup> Merchant Taylors elected as sheriff or Lord Mayor were provided with gratuities to beautify their City residences, and the silver plate of the livery company was put at their disposal. Further, a sheriff-elect was accompanied to the Guildhall by fellow assistants early on Michaelmas Day in September, and they were present after dinner when the new sheriff toured the City prisons and received charge of the inmates. They were also in attendance when their colleague made his way by water to Westminster to be presented at the Exchequer, and they and other liverymen played a central role in the organisation of the feast at the Guildhall on the day

(1) In 1639 for example Lord Mayor Abbot personally appealed for feasting to be forborne and for monies saved to be paid to the poor. MF 330, CM V9, 9.4.39, f.70v.

(2) The Ulster Plantation did however involve a considerable financial commitment, as will be discussed below, pp.174-176.

(3) City ceremonies were based on company and guild affiliations. Rappaport, Part 2, p.111.

(1)

after Simons and Judes Day in October. The election of a Merchant Taylor as Lord Mayor was a major event in the life of the Company, and the enormous task of organising the spectacular pageant or Triumph on the day that the Lord Mayor took his oath at Westminster was the responsibility of the Bachelors Company officers and was (2) paid for by the more well-to-do freemen below the livery.

Despite the close involvement of the Company in municipal affairs, loyalties of the Common Councilmen, aldermen and City bureaucrats who sat as assistants lay first and foremost with their livery company. The governors reacted strongly whenever precepts involving financial outlay were issued by the Lord Mayor without reference to a resolution of the Common Council. When in 1590 the Lord Mayor required rye to be laid-up without consulting Common Council, the assistants refused outright and by concession offered instead to lend a maximum of £100 for up to six months. In 1605 a meeting at which aldermen Lee and Craven were present formally noted that a precept for contributions towards the promotion of a bill in

(1) These duties are fully set out in the court minutes of for example 1595. MF 326, CM V3, 17.9.95, 5.11.95. f.305 seq.. The outgoing sheriff was also accompanied when the jails were handed over to his successor.

(2) R.T.D. Sayle, Lord Mayors Pageants of the Merchant Taylors Company in the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries, London, 1931. In 1610, 317 freemen contributed nearly three-quarters of the £805 expended on the pageant of Sir William Craven.

parliament had been issued on the authority of the court of aldermen alone, and thus was not binding on the  
 (1)  
 Company.

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TABLE 10

Merchant Taylors elected as sheriff or Lord Mayor 1580-1645, excluding freemen who briefly assumed office before being discharged.

	(2)	<u>Sheriff</u>	<u>Lord Mayor</u>
Anthony Ratclyffe	1585	-	
Robert Lee	1594	1602	
Leonard Halliday	1595	1605	
Robert Hampson	1599	-	
William Craven	1601	1610	
John Swinnerton	1602	1612	
Geoffry Elwes	1607	-	
John Gore	1615	1624	
William Gore	1615	-	
Richard Hearne	1618	-	
Robert Ducy	1620	1630	
William Acton	1628	-	
Henry Pratt	1631	-	
Abraham Reynardson	1640	1648	

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The assistants were also vigilant with respect to more insidious attempts to extend the authority of the Lord Mayor over the companies. In 1569, the court had defied the head of the City government when a precept was not only issued without reference to Common Council, but in

(1) MF 326, CM V3, 9.5.90, f.210; MF 327, CM V5, 19.1.05, p.152.

(2) Gore and Reynardson were initially elected Sheriff in 1614 and 1639 respectively. They paid to be discharged, but were subsequently re-elected.

(1)

tone was "willing & comandinge" rather than "regeſtinge". They reacted in the same way in 1594 when a precept for corn contained a "commandement to the Companie to lend at their perill": the governors resolved that it was "above the Jurisdiction of the Courte of Aldermen to ... binde an absolute incorporated Companie", and advised the Lord Mayor and Town Clerk that unless the manner and form of  
 (2) the precepts was reformed they would not be implemented.

The Merchant Taylors Company did not slavishly implement the policies of the court of aldermen even when directives were authorised in the proper manner. Whereas the major companies and the municipal government were normally at one in opposing the incorporation of groups of small masters, the City authorities from time to time made concessions (albeit unwillingly) to minor guilds. These were strongly contested by the Merchant Taylors Company due to their violation of the 'custom of London' - the principle that freemen could without restriction practice any trade or vocation in the capital. In 1599, the recommendation of the Lord Mayor that the Company of Cooks should acquire cognizance over all freemen following the trade was rejected, "the Company fynding the presedent very daungerous to reduce every freemen to be free of the Company whose proper trade he douth

(1) MF 325, CM V1, 1.8.69, p.407.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 12.10.94, f.275.

(1) exercise". The pressure from companies such as the Tallowchandlers, Cooks, Gardeners and Bakers for more control of their nominal trades was growing however, and in 1606 Common Council resolved that all "carmen" should be translated to the Company of Woodmongers, a decision resisted by the Merchant Taylors Company for five months until legal action began against its freemen and many (2) other companies had capitulated. In 1617 however, the Company stood firm against the decision of Common Council that all glaziers should bind their apprentices with the Glaziers Company, supporting freemen who wished to remain loyal to their oath to the Company "which as this Courte taketh it cannot be dispensed withall by any Act of (3) Common Counsell".

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 2.5.99, f.392. The Cooks found short-lived success in 1605. Ashton, "City", p.63; Unwin, "Gilds", p.264.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 25.1.06, 14.6.06, pp.204, 205, 220; Ashton, "City", p.62; Unwin "Gilds", p.356.

(3) MF 328, CM V7, 29.1.17 - 29.7.18, pp.375, 459, 475; CLRO Rep.32, 1615-1616, f.311; Unwin "Gilds", p.264. The Company did however respond favourably to any scheme to ameliorate the less desirable consequences of the Custom of London. Under James I a remarkable level of co-operation was inaugurated with the Clothworkers Company, old adversaries of the Merchant Taylors Company. Joint action to curb the number of apprentices per master and joint searches which continued (after some problems in the 1640s) until after the Restoration were introduced. MF 328, CM V7, 29.1.17, 6.12.17, 7.10.18, pp.376, 430, 487; MF 304, Accounts V22, 1663-1664.

From 1577, the City livery companies were required to provide, maintain and sell at their own costs set quotas of corn, stored at the Bridgehouse for distribution by (1) the companies in times of dearth. The response of the Merchant Taylors Company to the frequent municipal demands relating to the corn stock was at times unco-operative or even dismissive. In 1587 for example, the "slackness" of the assistants in implementing precepts regarding the provision of grain was criticised, and a confrontation developed over the allocation of sale proceeds between the Company and the minor companies which shared its garner in the Bridgehouse. When the assistants sent two of their number to argue the case before the court of aldermen, this was "evill taken" and the Master later reported "howe sharpele- ie he & the (2) wardens were reprehended at the Courte of Aldermen".

These were not every day occurrences, but they were no rarity either. The commonplace practice of saving maintenance costs by leaving the supply of the market to sub-contracted bakers or other third parties was invariably regarded by the municipality as a means "to colour the busines & defraud the Citty for the saving of (3) the Companies expence". However, when in early 1630 the

(1) In 1600 and 1608, the Merchant Taylors Company considered building its own granary on land at the Three Cranes, but the project was abandoned due to high projected capital costs.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 14.6.87 - 26.11.87, f.165 seq..

(3) MF 329, CM V8, 13.4.32, f.447v.

Merchant Taylors Company was ordered to provide 1,050 quarters of corn, just such an arrangement was entered into, and a personal letter of rebuke was received from Lord Mayor Campbell after an audit discovered that the grain store of the Company was deficient by 850 quarters. The assistants - including Alderman Acton - responded by authorising the purchase of just 100 additional quarters. With plague and food shortages threatening the City in later 1630, the assistants were required to certify the amount of corn they had obtained from overseas, and hurriedly appointed a committee to obtain 200 or 300  
 (1)  
 quarters "with all convenient speed".

One of the most remarkable features of the systematic flouting of municipal directives - most commonly regarding the corn stock, but also financial assessments and similar matters - was the acquiescence of assistants who were prominent members of the City government. Aldermen frequently witnessed decisions to buy far less than the amount of grain allocated to the Company, while in 1596 Alderman Ratclyffe was present when the response of the court of assistants to a precept was "to answere  
 (2)  
 the matter with silence". Thomas Wilford was Master of the Merchant Taylors Company in 1585, as well as a leading member of Common Council and Chamberlain from 1591 to 1603. He was present on several occasions when his municipal responsibilities might have been expected

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 10.3.30 - 17.9.30, f.370v seq..

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 14.6.96, f.324.

to test his loyalty to his livery company, including meetings when the Company's corn was sold to the highest bidder and the assistants procrastinated at length over  
 (1)  
 the provision of loans.

The governing élite in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century were willing to resist financial demands even when more than municipal interests were involved. In 1586, only after the Master and wardens were threatened with commitment by the Privy Council did the assistants agree to comply with a precept regarding the provision of gunpowder for the Crown, and even then the Master was authorised to buy a maximum of only 1,000 pounds rather than the 1,776 pounds allocated  
 (2)  
 to the Company. In 1603 and 1604, the livery company governors were criticised for their "remisse" in contributing to the £15,000 loan to James I and to the  
 (3)  
 costs of welcoming the new king to the capital.

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(1) Foster, op.cit. pp.167, 188; MF 326, CM V3, 25.3.97, f.344. For the procrastination in 1591 over the loan towards the Crown's naval costs, see below, p.168.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 8.10.86, ff.148, 149.

(3) MF 327, CM V5, 9.4.03 - 26.9.04, p.84 seq.. The delay involved regarding the last-mentioned matter was six months. It will be shown that the Company proved much more co-operative in lending to the Crown under Charles I.

### Conclusion

The government of the Merchant Taylors Company has been confirmed as extraordinarily oligarchic. Real authority lay with a handful of regularly-attending senior assistants, usually leading cloth merchants and dealers with a high profile in the municipal government. They were remarkably conscientious men, meeting in 1630 in small assemblies in Alderman Robert Ducy's City house notwithstanding "god's visitation in the hall", and the hasty departure of the Master from London in view of the prevalence of plague.<sup>(1)</sup> Their influence on Company affairs was shared only with the Common Clerk. Always legally-trained by the late sixteenth century and prominent in the municipal bureaucracy,<sup>(2)</sup> the Clerk became indispensable as the Company's involvement in legacies and lands expanded.

There are nevertheless few signs of division or resentment among the wider livery body or within the governing court itself. It has been shown that most junior liverymen could expect to be offered a place on the ruling body in due course, a privilege rarely declined. However, the minutes of governing bodies

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 30.7.30 - 17.9.30.f.389 seq.: P. Slack, "Metropolitan government in crisis: the response to plague", in Beier and Finlay, op.cit., p.65.

(2) Richard Langley, clerk from 1595, was trained at Lincoln's Inn and was City Solicitor before becoming deputy Town-Clerk. CLRO, Rep. 29, 1608-1609, f.25.

invariably play down the extent and intensity of argument and disagreement, and when placed in a wider context various incidents recorded between 1580 and 1645 clearly reveal serious clashes of interest, both personal and more principled. Some of the more principled disputes will be examined in detail in Chapter III.

While highly oligarchic, the government of the Company did not conform to the model of fossilised structures predominant in modern histories. Major changes in electoral procedures and in the content and form of government were engendered by a "flood tide of generosity"<sup>(1)</sup> and a not unconnected unwillingness among the liverymen to hold executive office. Further, although high-fliers such as John Swinnerton and Michael Grigges were in their thirties when promoted to the ruling court,<sup>(2)</sup> there was a marked increase in the average age of assistants, leading to a shorter period of active participation and the need to co-opt liverymen who had not served as warden. These junior assistants were increasingly rapidly promoted to the offices of warden and Master as a result of the shortage of willing candidates. The relative inexperience in Company affairs of many assistants and officers in the 1620s and 1630s can only have augmented the power of the experienced

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(1) Jordan, op.cit., pp.107, 112. Jordan's "floodtide" in English charitable endowment in the earlier 17th century was largely attributable to Merchant Taylors and other wealthy London freemen. Slack, "Poverty and Policy", pp.162,163.

(2) See Appendix 2 for Grigges.

senior governors, who in the 1630s appear furthermore to have consciously restricted the admission of new assistants.

The influence of individual assistants varied, but the views of even the most junior assistant could not be discounted. Votes were an entrenched feature of decision-making, with a ballot box allowing something approaching a secret ballot on key issues after 1602. The election bills preserved in the Company Hall appear to be the only records of that nature known to be extant in pre-Civil War London; they may well be indicative of participatory decision-making which would have involved much wider social groups in the wards, parishes and  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
smaller guilds.

The functions and personnel of the governments of the Merchant Taylors Company and municipality were highly interwoven, and the growth in corporate wealth which provided benefits for Company governors also magnified the importance of the livery company in municipal affairs. The relationship of the Company with the City authorities was however less dependent than is often assumed, and as far as was practicable leading livery governors placed the interests of the Company before duty to the municipal government. The governing élite had responsibilities and loyalties to a wide range of political and social organisations in London, but they were in a real sense Merchant Taylors, by name and inclination.

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(1) Records of formal voting procedures only appear to be extant in the later 17th century Wardmote Inquest Books. I owe this information to V. Pearl.

II: THE LIVERY OF THE MERCHANT TAYLORS COMPANY, 1580-1645Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine a number of features of the body of liverymen in the late Elizabethan and Early Stuart periods, including a detailed appraisal of the criteria used in the selection of new members. The advantages of wearing the livery gown of the Company and the associated costs will be considered, together with the implications of the findings with respect to the exclusivity, nature and constitutional stability of the Company and its role as a political and economic pressure group in early modern London.

Background

The origins of the division of the freemen into two distinct bodies with unequal rights and privileges, dependent on whether individuals were entitled to wear the livery gown, can be traced to the efforts of the master tailors of the guild to regulate the activities of their journeymen and apprentices in the early fifteenth century. The "young men" of the trade had by 1415 established their own fraternal organisation, a development viewed as inimical to good order by both the (1) guild and municipal authorities. The new organisation was as a result quickly brought under the control of the

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(1) See Chapter V, pp.241,242.

guild, and its importance was magnified as the exclusivity of the 'masters guild' or livery increased, partly as a consequence of the admission of merchants to the Company, and partly as an inevitable result of the spectacular growth in the number of freemen affiliated to the Company in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>(1)</sup> As early as 1430, the governors of the livery were taking steps to protect the exclusivity of the "clothyng of the fraternitie", imposing fines on "brethren" who gave away their distinctive gowns and hoods, a practice which made the sight of the garments as "common as it may be which causeth the lordes & other worthies to sette the lesse thereby".<sup>(2)</sup> Although collectively the body of "whole brothers" was still known as the "masters guild" into the early sixteenth century,<sup>(3)</sup> the efforts of the governors of the late medieval period to attract members of rank and substance had been remarkably successful. By 1500 the register of honorary members included the names of scores of fourteenth and fifteenth century dignitaries drawn from the ranks of the legal profession, the Church and the Court, with the names of kings Henry V and Henry VI included among the eighty-nine entered in the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) See below, 296-304.

(2) MT Hall, MSC.DOC.A2, Ordinances 1429-1455, f.8.

(3) MF 310, AMB V2, f.71.

(4) MF 297,298, Accounts Vols 1-8, 1398-1484, passim. A full list of honorary members is set out in the court minutes of 1607. MF 327, CM V7, 16.7.07, pp.272-276.

The successful promotion of the guild, which without doubt owed much to the contemporary acquisition of considerable religious privileges, meant furthermore that by 1500 the livery included a small but highly conspicuous group of merchants and traders. The fifteenth century financial accounts reveal that among newly-admitted freemen, master tailors were in the overwhelming majority, and many became Company governors: the efforts of the governing court in the 1490s to discipline a master who employed workmen not free of the City could give rise to his riposte that "there were some persones which have sitten (on the court) that were grater maynteners of foreigns other wyse than (he) did". The role of freemen following the nominal trade of the guild continued to be central in the earlier sixteenth century, with one-third of the Masters elected in the 1530s finally identified as royal tailors despite the difficulties facing the historian of early modern London when seeking to establish the occupations of citizens who were not merchants.

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(1) The privileges granted by popes, bishops and religious orders included use of a private chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral and the extension to guild members of "all thynges as is or shall be don" for the spiritual well-being of members of several religious bodies in London. MF 310, AMB V2, ff. 10-20; Clode, "Memorials", pp. 49-52.

(2) MF 312, AMB V37, f. 72v.

(3) John Skutt, John Malte and Richard Gibson were all tailors to the Court of Henry VIII and Masters of the Company during the 1530s. N.H. Nicholas, Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII 1529-1532, 1827, pp. 212, 217; Wardrobe and Household Accounts, PRO, E101, 418/7.

In 1502 however, it was successfully argued that the role of merchants and traders in The Fraternity of Taylors and Linen Armourers required recognition in the form of the re-incorporation as The Guild of Merchant Taylors of the  
 (1)  
 Fraternity of Saint John the Baptist. The grant of new letters patent to the Company, engineered in all probability by leading liveryman and Courtier Sir William Fitzwilliam in the face of enormous municipal hostility, reflected the rise to power of merchants in the guild alongside the most prosperous artisans, rather than the precocious emergence of a class of capitalist "merchant-tailors" in London as was commonly supposed by  
 (2)  
 later commentators.

The increasing number of wealthy merchants and retailers affiliated to the Merchant Taylors Company from the late fifteenth century onwards also provided the guild with a small but slowly growing number of representatives at the highest level of municipal government. The office of Mayor was occupied by a member of the guild for the first time in 1498. and again in the first half of the  
 (3)  
 sixteenth century in 1508 and 1546. By the third

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(1) MF 310, AMB V2, pp.24v-31v; F.M. Fry and R.T.D. Sayle, op.cit., p.38. The guild will be referred to throughout as the Merchant Taylors Company.

(2) H. Miller, "London and Parliament in the Reign of Henry VIII", p.135.B.I H.R., xxxv, 1962, pp.128-149.

(3) A.B. Beaven, The Aldermen of the City of London, II, 1908, pp.17, 19, 29. The three Mayors were respectively John Percyvale, Stephen Jenyns and Henry Huberthorn.

quarter of the century, the Merchant Taylors of London were well on their way to becoming one of the most influential and wealthy bodies of liverymen in England.

#### Co-option and Demotion

By the mid-Elizabethan period, the grant of the livery or 'clothing' to a freeman of the Merchant Taylors Company represented formal recognition of a status derived from business success which was not normally attained until middle age. The interval separating admission to the freedom of the City on successful completion of an apprenticeship from co-option to the livery varied widely, from months through to periods spanning over four decades. Simon Clynt, who 'fined against' the office of Master in 1613, was aged fifty-six and a freeman of thirty years standing when co-opted in 1589, while high-flier John Swinnerton, who became free of the City in that year, was only thirty-three when first offered the livery in 1598.

Table 11 indicates that the majority of freemen during the period 1580-1645 faced a wait of between ten and twenty years before they could hope to be offered membership of the livery, with the average number of

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(1) MF 328, CM V7, 4.9.13, pp.95, 96.

(2) Will PCC Cope 125.

years erratic but tending to increase as the body of well-to-do freemen became more numerous. If it accepted that most apprentices in early modern London were in their late twenties when they completed their terms,<sup>(1)</sup> it is evident that newly-admitted liverymen were often in their forties, and in many cases considerably older. The eighteen new liverymen of 1592 had on average been free of the City for twenty years, although in three cases that figure exceeded thirty years.

Once a freeman had attained an acceptable "quality and condition", the Company governors made enquiries regarding his "habilities, wysdomes and civill conversations", and a favourable assessment led to an offer of a place on the livery, a privilege only declined by a handful of freemen during the period.<sup>(2)</sup> Groups of prospective liverymen were selected as a rule every third year in spring or early summer, before being summoned to the Hall in Threadneedle Street where the Master and wardens informed them of the decision of the court of assistants, and arranged a date on which they were to

(1) Rappaport, Part 1, pp. 115-117.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 16.4.89, f.192; MF 327, CM V5, 10.7.02, p.45.

(3) The livery was not accepted by 16 of the 430 freemen to whom it was offered 1580-1645, or less than 4%. For the contrasting reasons which led freemen to prefer to stay as members of the yeomanry, see below, pp.17-21, 323.

return with gowns and hoods in the current colours of the livery. On the appointed morning, a solemn initiation

TABLE 11

The average number of years Merchant Taylors had been freemen of the City of London on first admission to the livery 1580-1645, grouped decennially except for the period to 1645. The averages for the periods from mid-1562 (when the sixteenth century court minutes commence) to 1579 are shown for comparative purposes, together with averages for members of the handicraft.

NUMBER OF YEARS AS FREEMEN

<u>ALL LIVERYMEN</u>	<u>MASTER TAILORS</u>
1562-1569	12.5
1570-1579	15
1580-1589	16
1590-1599	17
1600-1609	14
1610-1619	18
1620-1629	16
1630-1639	13
1640-1645	16
	18
	22
	-
	27
	22
	26
	19
	23
	32

ceremony was conducted in the presence of the Master, wardens and former Masters. Livery hoods were placed around the shoulders of the assembled freemen by the Master, whereupon each in turn fell to his knees and recited the oath of the "whole brother" before being taken by the hands, "saluted", and

(1)

"hartely byd welcome" by the Company governors. The observation of the traditional rituals and the recital of the oath underlined the entry of the chosen freemen into a new and superior fraternal organisation; while all freemen on first admission to the Merchant Taylors Company took an oath focusing on the requirements of the apprenticeship regulations, liverymen undertook additional obligations which emphasised the dignity and status of their new position. Public behaviour, in particular, was to be exemplary.

(2)

Following appointment to the upper section of the Company, the names of new liverymen were entered on the membership roll, with former yeomanry wardens given precedence of rank. The appointment was for life, on condition that members were able to continue living "in good fashion and haveinge a competent estate". Although the name of a member was not expunged from the livery roll, a reversal in his fortunes in practice meant that participation in the life of the fraternity ended. Thomas Sontley for example joined the livery in 1633 in an extraordinary (rather than a 'general') intake

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 7.6.95, p.29; MF 327, CM V5, 16.7.10, p.463.

(2) MF 310, AMB V2, ff.78-81.

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 14.7.40, ff.105, 106.

(4) The small group of elderly Almsmen of the Livery were however invited as guests to the quarterly dinners of the Company.

approved as a result of the "respect" of the court of assistants for eight of the most prosperous ordinary freemen. Setbacks in his business in the late 1630s had however as one consequence the withdrawal from 1640 of invitations to public meetings, although the minutes recording his plea for financial assistance still describe Sontley as a member of the livery.<sup>(1)</sup> His effective relegation to the status of an ordinary freeman was furthermore not unusual. Nicholas Beale, promoted to the livery six years earlier than Sontley after fifteen years as a freeman, was still active in the affairs of the Company in 1645. By 1647, his trade had fallen victim to the "distempered times", and his offer to withdraw from the livery in return for the refund of his admission fees was accepted by the assistants.<sup>(2)</sup>

The social and commercial success of citizens below the ranks of the haute bourgeoisie, the foremost City import-export merchants, was precarious, and many liverymen - including at least 50 (or 12 per cent) of the 414 citizens admitted to the livery of the Merchant Taylors Company during the period 1580-1645 - were obliged later in life to seek various forms of economic support, in

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 3.7.33, f.476v; MF 330, CM V9, 29.10.52, f.409.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 18.8.47, f.265v.

(3) See Appendix 4 for these 414 individuals.

many cases after abandoning the capital in the face of  
(1)  
financial difficulties. In a number of cases, decline  
was swift and apparently unforeseen. Merchant Richard  
Cox was elected to the position of warden in 1600 after  
eleven years on the livery, and was included in the  
financial assessment imposed on the wealthiest members of  
the Company in 1603 to defray the costs associated with  
the coronation of James I. In 1604 Cox was imprisoned  
for debt and abandoned his trade, and for the next  
fourteen years his former colleagues on the court of  
assistants endured regular pleas for financial assistance  
(2)  
as Cox struggled to maintain himself.

Many liverymen were unable to sustain the business  
success which supported their lifestyles for as long as  
Cox. By 1634, liveryman of four years standing William  
Bayley had given up his drapery business as a result of  
losses incurred, and in 1636 and 1637 respectively  
liverymen George Hough and John Kerrill (co-opted at the  
same time as Bayley) were forced to request assistance  
after falling onto hard times. Hough explained his  
misfortune by reference to bad debtors and the effects of  
guaranteeing the debts of others, while Kerrill's problems

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(1) The total number of liverymen who suffered social  
and economic reversals may well be much higher, as only  
those who made direct approaches to the Company for help  
have been identified.

(2) MF 300, Accounts V8, 1602-1603, pp.317-333; MF 327,  
CM V5, 28.1.04, pp.109,110.

drove him to seek employment in the Low Countries as a  
(1)  
'common soldier'. It is not surprising that such cases were most numerous in the troubled 1640s, when seventeen members of the Company élite sought financial support. Although the average number of years they had spent as liverymen was sixteen, four had been admitted in the early 1640s, and their misfortunes were often set down in graphic detail in the minutes, providing some insight into the disastrous results of the Civil War for many well-to-do citizens. Sidrack Williams had suffered "losses at sea, and by reason of the rebellion in Ireland all his estate is loste". Freeman Edward Duke had been "plundered of moste of his estate", while Jerman Tonge incurred great losses as a result of his dealings with  
(2)  
"Courtiers and gentlemen".

Immense social and economic setbacks could at times affect highly successful merchants at the peak of their civic and business careers, depriving the Merchant Taylors Company of experienced governors. Merchant and

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 4.2.34, 16.12.35, ff.496, 543; MF 330, CM V9, 7.2.37, f.1.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 20.1.43, 17.3.43, 12.3.49, ff.63,161,310. Williams was one of several liverymen who were unable to recover from losses related to the troubles in Ireland. Williams and Tonge joined the livery in 1624 and 1640 respectively.

member of Common Council Oliver Rowe abruptly ceased attending meetings at the Hall in June 1596, and in March 1597 was repaid the £6 10s he had lent towards the costs of maintaining a stock of corn in recognition of his  
 (1) recent losses. By 1600 Rowe had restored his fortunes sufficiently to be able to re- appear at the Hall, but was still unable to contribute the sum of £2 13s 4d towards the assessment of 1603. Rowe's problems were matched by those of cloth merchant Edward James, who traded within the privileges of the East India, Levant  
 (2) and Spanish companies of London. In 1620, James was elected as Master after five years service on the court of assistants and at least three years as a member of  
 (3) Common Council. Only weeks after completing his term as Master, it came to light that James was hopelessly indebted and unable to make good monies entrusted to him during the previous twelve months. His stock of cotton was seized on the orders of his former colleagues, and summons to their meetings were withdrawn. In 1624, the Company governors in a more generous mood agreed to

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 25.3.97, f.344. Rowe served as yeomanry warden in 1566 and livery warden in 1578 and 1582 prior to his election as Master in 1592.

(2) T.K. Rabb, op.cit., p.322; A. Friis, op.cit., p.33.

(3) CLRO, Rep.33, passim.

(1)

provide James with an annuity of fifty pounds for life.

#### Costs and Benefits of Co-option

As suggested by the timing of the downfall of Rowe and a number of other liverymen, membership of the upper section of one of the London's leading livery companies involved considerable personal expenditure. While the most significant demands on the pockets and time of liverymen arose subsequent to promotion to the ruling court,<sup>(2)</sup> the demands commenced with the initial acceptance of the clothing. Since the early fifteenth century, an entry fee of twenty shillings was payable, together with small gratuities to the Master, Common Clerk and beadle which remained fixed throughout the period at a total of 13s 4d. Additional gratuities in the form of new livery hoods or an equivalent sum of money were expected by the clerk and beadle, and venison was customarily provided at the Election Day feast to reduce the Master's costs.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) MF 328, CM V8, 28.8.21, 1.10.24, pp.64,224,225. The annuity was only granted after it was established that his problems had not arisen through extravagance or 'neglect', and on condition that none of the money found its way to his creditors. The Company monies lost included several hundred pounds of loan monies. MF 328, CM V8, 7.3.26, p.270.

(2) See above, pp.79-82, 84-85.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 7.6.94,f.297.

Furthermore, a supplementary fee was levied on new members who had not borne the office of Warden Substitute which by 1616 had been increased to £33 6s 8d.<sup>(1)</sup> From the 1580s, an additional five pounds was payable towards the Company's expenses in maintaining a quota of corn, normally refundable only on death, and from at least the 1560s pairs of junior liverymen had been expected to organise and finance one of the annual livery dinners. In 1600, one 'stewards dinner' cost in the region of twenty pounds, of which only three pounds was met by the Company, while by the 1620s each steward was contributing<sup>(2)</sup> at least twenty pounds.

To most freemen offered a place on the livery, the concomitant costs were far outweighed by the perceived advantages of membership. Indeed, elevation to the livery was a milestone in the career of a citizen of early modern London. Only members of the City liveries were entitled to participate in the government and ceremonial occasions of the municipality, meeting annually to elect the Lord Mayor and one of the two

(1) See below, p.249.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 10.2.01, f.427; MF 330, CM V9, 6.2.39, 19.8.46, ff.67, 239v, 240.

(3) From 1608, a two-tier 'fine' was introduced, with a higher sum payable by freemen who had actively sought promotion to the livery. In 1616 and 1624, all non-yeomanry wardens co-opted to the livery paid the surcharge. See Table 14, p.249.

sheriffs in Common Hall, and lining the streets to greet  
 (1) distinguished visitors to the capital. Membership of one  
 of the principal livery companies was by the early  
 seventeenth century no longer a precondition for  
 nomination to the prestigious court of aldermen, but most  
 aldermen were freemen of one of the twelve great  
 (2) companies. Table 12 reconstructs the career of leading  
 draper and Merchant Taylor Henry Webbe as an illustration  
 of the steps involved in a successful civic career in  
 late Elizabethan and Early Stuart London - although he  
 was never elected to the position of alderman. New  
 liverymen were generally already influential figures in  
 the wards, and most senior members of the livery of the  
 Merchant Taylors Company were prominent on Common  
 Council. The majority of liverymen never attained the  
 rank of alderman, and those who did so generally had not  
 served as Master, an office from which they obtained  
 exemption whether or not they actually took up their  
 (3) seats on the court of aldermen. The grant of the livery  
 to a freeman thus conferred a status and rank which  
 marked the beginning of his participation in the affairs  
 of the municipality as much as in the affairs of his  
 livery company.

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(1) Pearl, "London," pp.55-60. In 1640 liverymen on foot  
 and horseback greeted Charles I on his return to London.

MF 330, CM V9, 7.11.41, ff.133v-135v.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.59,60.

(3) See above, pp.86-87.

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TABLE 12

The career of Merchant Taylor and draper Henry Webbe, of St. Dunstan in the West, in his ward, livery company and the municipal government.

Freeman of London	1559
Scavenger	1564, 1565
First Inquest Position	1567, 1568
Constable	1569, 1570, 1571
Yeomanry Warden	1572
Second Inquest Position	1572, 1573
Liveryman	1579
Churchwarden	1583, 1586
Fourth Inquest Position	1585, 1586
Common Councilman	1586-?1607
Renter Warden	1586
Second Warden	1591
Master	1598
Senior Assistant	1599-1607

This table draws heavily on the incomplete tabulation of Webbe's progress through the municipal hierarchy in Foster, op.cit., p.56. The Repertories of the court of aldermen indicate that Webbe was a member of Common Council to at least 1604, and it is probable that he was active in municipal government as long as he attended meetings of his livery company.

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Liverymen were also able to participate fully in the extensive social life of the fraternity, facilitating the establishment or strengthening of business and social contracts. The social life of the Company found its principal expression in the four annual Quarter Days,

normally convened in the months of March, June or July, October and December, plague and economic conditions in the capital permitting. The mid-summer Quarter Day, when the livery met at the parish church of St. Martin Outwich before the annual election ceremonies and dinner, was the most celebrated event staged by the Company, although numerous other gatherings at local churches and the Hall were held. These included meetings on Good Friday, the Election Day of the yeomanry, on June 11th when scholars were nominated from the Company grammar school to St. John the Baptist's College, Oxford, and (after 1605) on November 5th. Attendance at the funerals of leading Merchant Taylors also loomed large in the corporate social calender, with dinner usually provided for the livery from the estate of the deceased.

The importance of the meetings of the greater livery companies as part of the public life of the City of London is brought sharply into focus by the diary of Merchant Taylor Henry Machyn, of which several hundred pages covering the period 1550 to 1563 are extant. The

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(1) See below, p.153.

(2) J.G. Nichols (ed.), Camden Society, 42: The Diary of Henry Machyn Citizen and Merchant Taylor of London from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563, 1848.

diary describes notable public events in London, including political disturbances, riots, tragedies and in particular great social occasions such as funerals and feasts. The main assembly days of the greater City companies occupy a central place in the portrayal of London life, including those of the Grocers, Ironmongers, Mercers, Goldsmiths, Skinners and in particular those of Machyn's own livery company. In 1555, he recorded that "the ij day of July was the Marchand-tayllers feast, and ther dynyd my lord Mayre and dyvers of the Counsell and juges and the sheyfes and many althermen and gentyllmen, and they had agaynst ther dener lvijj bokes (bucks) and ij stags". In 1562, he noted that the guests at the mid-summer gathering included the earls of Sussex and Kildare, the Chamberlain of the City and numerous  
 (1)  
 aldermen.

The nature of the advantages secured on entry to the livery, together with the further benefits obtained by  
 (2)  
 liverymen who joined the governing élite, are put most clearly into perspective by consideration of the attitudes of freemen who achieved precocious success in business and civic affairs or were the sons of foremost members of the Company. These freemen had less to gain from active participation in the life of a City livery company; their indifferent attitude stood in stark

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(1) "Diary of Henry Machyn", pp. 93, 287.

(2) See above, pp. 70-79.

contrast to the loyalty shown by leading Merchant Taylors whose social and civic success was closely linked to membership of their livery company. Prominent overseas merchant and knight Robert Lee was an active member of the livery and court of assistants throughout his life, notwithstanding his leading role in the municipal government and in several chartered trading organisations.<sup>(1)</sup> By his will he established a trust for the benefit of young Merchant Taylors, and in life had established close ties with fellow members of the court of assistants.<sup>(2)</sup> Lee's four sons, all of whom became freemen of the Company and City between 1597 and 1606 by virtue of their father's citizenship,<sup>(3)</sup> were set up in business by Lee, and with his status and wealth behind them showed little interest in the affairs of their livery company. Henry Lee became a successful merchant, an alderman and a knight, but in 1602 made use of his father's influence to obtain a rare immunity from nomination to the livery, and some months later wrung from the reluctant governing court total exemption from

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(1) He was an alderman 1593-1605 and Lord Mayor in 1602. Beaven, II, p.345. He attended meetings of the assistants of the livery company from 1590 to 1605. For his other company affiliations see Rabb, op.cit., p.332.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 14.1.07, p.243. Lee's daughter for example married the son of leading governor Jerrard Gore. Beaven, II, p.175.

(3) F.F. Foster, op.cit., pp.100,102.

charges or offices associated with guild membership in return for the provision of a modest quantity of silver plate.<sup>(1)</sup> His brother Robert was an equally successful merchant who took-up the clothing in 1602, but ignored offers of a seat on the court of assistants made in 1612<sup>(2)</sup> and 1615. In 1616, he obtained full exemption from Company offices as a result of his knighthood.<sup>(3)</sup> His brother John Lee accepted the livery in 1608 after being offered a privileged status, but like Robert never took up the seat on the court of assistants made available in 1615.<sup>(4)</sup> The fourth brother, James, played no part in the affairs of the Merchant Taylors Company after acquiring his freedom in 1606.

The attitude of Henry Lee and his brothers was a common one among the sons of the leading members of the governing élite. The only son of outstandingly successful merchant Leonard Halliday, Lord Mayor in 1605, only became free of the City when the governors of his father's livery company offered him privileged rank on the livery after being advised that he had married the daughter of a wealthy citizen, bringing him a "great

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(1) Beaven, II,p.345;R.G. Lang,The Greater Merchants of London in the Early Seventeenth Century,Oxford University Ph.D.thesis, 1963, passim;MF 327,CM V5,5.6.02, 19.10.02, pp.28,66,67.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 13.3.12, 1.9.15, pp.34, 189.

(3) MF 328, CM V7, 16.7.16, p.241.

(4) MF 327,CM V5,7.9.08,p.236;MF 328,CM V7,1.9.15,p.189.

(1) portion". The son of the late alderman and assistant Sir Robert Hampson declined a similar offer. Further, the small number of Merchant Taylors who achieved very early success in their business and civic careers also proved reluctant to become involved in the affairs of the Company. John Swinnerton became a freeman in 1589, and only four years later secured his first customs farm and was rising fast in City business circles. In 1598, he was offered the clothing of the Merchant Taylors Company with a rank senior to all liverymen except those admitted prior to 1595 in recognition of his wealth and royal connections. He declined the offer. By 1602, Swinnerton was a member of the House of Commons and election to the court of aldermen was imminent, leading to a second offer of a privileged place on the livery. On his election as alderman and sheriff, he was made the unique offer of exemption from the 'fine, oath and place' of a liveryman if he would deign to sit on the court of assistants. Perhaps anticipating the protracted struggle he would face under James I to retain his interest in the customs farms in the face of the machinations of rival syndicates, Swinnerton accepted, and in the event was able to use the Company he dominated for the next decade in spectacular fashion in order to ingratiate himself (2) further with the Crown.

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(1) MF 327, CM V5, 7.9.08, p.326.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 27.5.98, f.372; CM V5, 5.6.02, 10.7.02, pp.46,47; Ashton, "City", pp.98-100; Lang, Ph.D. thesis, pp.54-57. See p. 171.

Patronage and Promotion to the Livery

While a minority of members such as Swinnerton at least initially showed uninterest in membership of the livery, the right to wear the clothing of the fraternity was in general as highly valued as it was restricted in the later Elizabethan and Early Stuart periods, with the opportunities for freemen to become full members of the Company steadily diminishing. Notwithstanding recent (1) re-appraisal, the livery sections of the great London guilds with large memberships were extraordinarily exclusive, with the livery available to only a tiny (2) minority of prosperous freemen. Further, while success in business or occasionally professional life was a prerequisite for selection, the choice of new liverymen was in general highly subject to the discretion of senior Company governors, particularly when a prospective liveryman had not strengthened his hand by serving as a yeomanry warden.

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(1) Rappaport's research suggested that on average 29% of householders of sufficient longevity in 16th century London became liverymen, although he stressed that the liveries were relatively closed bodies. Rappaport, Part 2, pp.124,125.

(2) This theme runs through much of Unwin's classic work on the London guilds. G. Unwin, The Gilds and Companies of London, 1908 (1963 edn.). For a more recent discussion of the nature of the London liveries, see Ashton, "City", cap.2.

The minutes of the first decade of the seventeenth century illustrate clearly the subjective nature of the selection process, as the assistants were especially anxious to delay the admission of large numbers of freemen to full membership following the unusually large 'general call' of 1602: twenty-seven new liverymen had been co-opted in response to the election of Robert Lee as Lord Mayor. A majority of the governors agreed to extend the moratorium on admissions beyond 1605, despite the election of Leonard Halliday as Lord Mayor in that year, but in June 1606 the court bowed to pressure from the incumbent Master, Thomas Juxon, who was allowed to nominate one freeman of his choice to the livery.<sup>(1)</sup> The decision aroused considerable "discontentment" among the freemen, and encouraged Lord Mayor Halliday to present nominees of his own just two weeks later. On July 2nd, a letter from the Lord Mayor demanding that two of his former apprentices be immediately promoted to the livery was read aloud to the assembled assistants. After consideration of the resolution of 1605 against any further increase in the numerical size of the livery, and of the relative youth of the two nominees - Richard Draper had been a freeman of the City for only a matter of months and Robert Ducy for barely six years - the governors in an act of defiance agreed to send a

(1) His nominee was John Hanbury, Sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1622 and 1637, knighted in 1627. MF 327, CM V7, 14.6.06, p.219; Beaven, II, p.59.

delegation to the Lord Mayor to inform him of their  
 (1) rejection of his demands. Halliday was unmoved, and after a week of wavering the court relented, authorising the appointment of five additional liverymen - all former wardens of the yeomanry - to head-off resentment among the freemen. The precedent meant that on four subsequent occasions before the next 'general call' a total of six well-connected freemen were promoted to the livery, including John Lee and John Halliday, sons of the Lord  
 (2) Mayors of 1602 and 1605.

In 1610, a new intake of liverymen was authorised, and the transcript in the minutes of a letter from the brother of one of the appointees to one of the leading governors confirms the unequal opportunities available to freemen seeking early prominence in public affairs in London. The letter, from Adam Ottley, conveys his gratitude to Richard Gore for arranging for his brother Francis Ottley to be co-opted to the livery. He went on to explain that Francis had been selected solely on the strength of the recommendation of Gore, his former master, without enquiry into his character or finances and despite his residence in Muscovy beyond the purview of the livery company for many years. Ottley's entry fee of thirty pounds had been put-up by liveryman Robert

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 2.7.06 9.7.06. pp 223, 228, 229.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 7.9.08, p.326.

Ducy, but he proved unable to re-imburse Ducy as a result of the poor state of his financial affairs, emphasised in his brother's letter. He was finally deemed to be unworthy of the clothing, and his name was ignominiously  
(1)  
struck from the livery roll.

A high proportion of liverymen of the late Elizabethan and Early Stuart periods would at the least have waited many more years for promotion had it not been for understandings between the foremost Company governors, allowing each to confer the substantial benefits of membership on relatives, friends and freemen who had served an apprenticeship with them. The bargaining process is well illustrated in the 1618 minutes, following the renewed motion of two ex-Masters that additional members of the family of the late Alderman Geoffry Elwes be admitted to the livery in advance of the next general intake, which once again was a distant prospect as the number of members stood at over one hundred. The court after some deliberation decided that Jeremy, Jarvis and Henry Elwes should join their brother Edward on the livery, but only after the extraordinary intake had been extended to include the sons of three other senior assistants. Consequently, Jerrard, son of

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(1) MF 327, CM V5, 1.10.10, pp.476, 477. The thirty pounds had been borrowed by Adam Ottley primarily so that Gore "should reap no disgrace, by causing (Francis), to be chosen". For details on Gore, see above, pp.59-60.

Alderman John Gore; Robert, son of incumbent Master William Greenewell; and Thomas Franklin (whose father and namesake had fined against the offices of Master and sheriff earlier in the year) became liverymen three years  
 (1)  
 before the next general call.

While nepotism and favouritism were decisive influences in the choice of new liverymen, personal antagonisms could equally delay or even block the movement of a freeman through the Company hierarchy. Henry Gardiner was a successful Levant Company merchant who by 1627 was a freeman of nine years standing and of "good worth" in the eyes of the court of assistants. For undisclosed reasons Gardiner had fallen out of favour with his former master, John Browne, who had regularly attended meetings of the ruling court since 1620 and in 1624 had been elected as renter warden. In 1627 Browne vetoed the  
 (2)  
 inclusion of Gardiner in the general call. Browne's rise in the Company continued with his election as second warden in July 1627, and it was moreover well known to the other assistants that his will included substantial  
 (3)  
 benefactions to the Merchant Taylors Company. There is little doubt that his inevitable election as Master two

(1) MF 328, CM V7, 13.10.18, p.492.

(2) MF 328, CM V8, 2.4.27, 20.5.28, ff.322, 323v; Rabb, op.cit., p.296. In 1619 the court minutes describe Gardiner as a young merchant living near Drapers Hall. MF 328, CM V7, 10.11.19, p.544.

(3) MF 328, CM V8, 20.5.28, f.323v.

or three years later would have prevented his former apprentice from joining the livery for years to come. On Browne's unexpected death in early 1628, Gardiner was promptly co-opted to the clothing on preferential terms, emphasising the direct importance of the right connections for freemen wishing to join the upper section of a greater London livery company—over and above the natural headstart enjoyed by the sons and apprentices of leading citizens in life generally and in business in particular.  
(1)

It would of course be misleading to suggest that every liveryman owed his status primarily to family ties or bonds surviving from apprenticeship. Highly conspicuous success in business or some professional career ensured that sooner or later a place on the livery would be made available, and in addition service as yeomanry warden increased a freeman's chances of further promotion within the Company — although the majority of well-to-do freemen viewed election as an officer of the yeomanry not as a passport to the livery, but as a burdensome position

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(1) The personal intervention of assistants is marked in most intakes to the livery in the period 1580–1645. It can be no coincidence for example that the first general call after East India Company merchant Richard Hearne became an alderman and an assistant in 1618 included his sons Robert and Nicholas, as well as his former apprentices Walter Eldred and Samuel Paske, made free by Hearne in 1602 and 1606 respectively.

associated with poor relief and industrial regulation.

### The Size of the Livery

The picture of the livery as a select, closely-knit body is reinforced by consideration of the total size of the membership, particularly in relation to the numerical strength of the Merchant Taylors Company as a whole. It has to be emphasised at the outset that the estimation of the number of persons affiliated to the livery body at any one time is complicated by a number of factors. Contemporary lists of freemen entitled to wear the livery gown were compiled in a number of years for taxation purposes, but generally excluded several members: the Common Clerk, the livery beadle, exempt municipal bureaucrats and liverymen who happened to be out of town or were undergoing financial troubles.<sup>(2)</sup> Further, as several years could lapse between intakes, the livery body could fall appreciably in number before a new call was authorised.

After due allowance for omissions from contemporary lists, it is possible to put the number of liverymen participating in Company affairs under Elizabeth I at between eighty and ninety, reaching a peak of 104 in 1602

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(1) 30% of liverymen co-opted between 1580 and 1645 were former Wardens Substitute. See below, p.313.

(2) Aged members of the clothing who had permanently left London and were not included in the financial assessments have not been added to the amended figures for total membership.

after the uncommonly large intake authorised in connection with the election of a Merchant Taylor as Lord Mayor for the first time in over thirty years. The 'greatnes' of the livery resulted in the unprecedented interval of eight years before the governors would countenance admission of a large batch of freemen, although the livery had not grown substantially in number in three quarters of a century. By late 1627, membership stood at approximately 110, and immediately following the large intakes of 1616, 1630 and 1640 may have reached as high as 130. The general calls were however primarily intended to maintain rather than increase the level of membership, with the records of decisions to admit new liverymen often expressly referring to the need to replace men who had retired to the provinces or were unable to attend meetings for other reasons. In 1589, only three years after the last general call, the assistants agreed to co-opt a new group of freemen as a

(1) Ninety-eight liverymen were taxed during 1602-1603, and a further six have been identified, principally from attendance records of the court of assistants.

(2) An unusually comprehensive list of full members compiled in 1537 included ninety-seven names. Reproduced in Clode, "Memorials", Appendix A(8).

(3) 44 freemen were admitted in 1610, 46 in 1630 and 43 in 1640 - see Appendix 4. The estimate of the membership in 1627 is based on the list of liverymen who lent money to the Crown in that year. MF 328, CM V8, 22.12.27, f.316.

result of the "none residence of a number of liverymen  
beinge for the most parte of the years inhabytinge in the  
Countries", and in 1637 the high proportion of the  
forty-six freemen granted the livery in 1630 who had  
since died or retired necessitated the recruitment of an  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
additional twelve members.

The small size of the livery during the late Elizabethan  
and Early Stuart periods meant that approximately one  
quarter of its membership were also entitled to attend  
meetings of the governing court, and that access to the  
court was in most cases a certainty, barring early death  
or economic setbacks. Indeed, despite the lengthy wait  
faced by most liverymen before co-option to the court of  
assistants, 53 per cent of the 414 liverymen sworn-in  
during the years 1580-1645 were eventually offered a  
<sup>(2)</sup>  
place on the ruling court. The community of interest  
between members of the livery in and out of the ruling  
group was overwhelming: at no time during the period did  
the Company Fathers face serious dissent, resistance to  
their authority or major divisions within the livery

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 16.4.89, f.192; MF 330, CM V9, 3.5.37,  
f.11v.

(2) See Appendix 4. The unity and cohesiveness of the  
livery and livery governors was emphasised in Rappaport,  
Part 2, pp.116. For a different view, see Ashton, "City",  
pp.45, 46.

membership. Further, the basically stable size of the livery stands in stark contrast to the enormous expansion in the number of freemen affiliated to the fraternity. The full privileges of membership were not available to the vast majority of the freemen, who lived within a different world from the wealthy merchants of the livery. Even in the middle decades of the seventeenth century, when a number of City institutions faced critical comment regarding restrictive constitutions, demands made by the freemen made no mention of access to the livery or the nature of its government.<sup>(1)</sup> The Company's stability owed much to the benign policies of its governors and the nature of its constitutional structure. It also helps to explain, in conjunction with the close ties binding most junior liverymen to colleagues on the court of assistants, how one section of London's élite could without fear of serious internal dissent remain staunch allies of Charles I and William Laud in the 1630s and earlier 1640s.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### Occupations and Employments

The occupational nature of the livery during the period

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(1) Internal agitation in 1649-50 is discussed below, pp.343, 344.

(2) For the number of freemen affiliated to the Company, and the relationship with Laud and Charles I, see Chapters IV and VI respectively.

1580-1645 was, like its numerical strength, highly exclusive without precipitating the internal tensions visible in some London guilds to which the attention of historians has traditionally been drawn.<sup>(1)</sup> It has long been appreciated that a high proportion of citizens entitled to wear the prestigious livery gowns of the major guilds and companies were drawn from the mercantile community, and the Merchant Taylors Company was no exception. 48 per cent of the 414 freemen admitted to the upper section of the fraternity between 1580 and 1645 whose occupations have been established were involved in overseas trade;<sup>(2)</sup> most were members of the privileged

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(1) M. James, Social Problems and Policy During the Puritan Revolution 1640-1660, 1966, pp.193-270; Ashton, "City", cap.2; Unwin, "Gilds", pp.339-344.

(2) The trades of 69% of the 414 freemen admitted to the livery in the period have been identified with reasonable certainty, from Rabb's work, the numerous references in the Company records and from miscellaneous national and municipal records. The sample identified is probably representative of the whole population as a result of the importance of loan finance references in the court minutes as a source of information. The loans were made to freemen following every sort of trade, with several smaller amounts reserved for tailors. See Appendix 4, which indicates the trades of liverymen who were not involved in the cloth trade as merchants, wholesalers or retailers. The sources used generally categorise non-artisans as merchants or retailers and this simplified division has been adopted here, although the distinction between rich retailers and wholesalers was not clear-cut, and both could at times undertake business normally associated with overseas merchants.

London monopoly companies, which under the Early Stuarts relied on the Crown to uphold their privileges and renew their charters in the face of parliamentary antagonism.<sup>(1)</sup> The most successful among them accumulated substantial personal fortunes, and often became aldermen in the municipal government and leading members of their trading companies. Such status accorded them great influence in their livery companies, where they tended to dominate the small ruling bodies.<sup>(2)</sup> They included luminaries such as Alderman Leonard Halliday, an assistant of the Merchant Taylors Company 1588-1611 as well as a director of the East India Company; Alderman Robert Lee, leading wine importer and an assistant for fifteen years from 1590;<sup>(3)</sup> and East India Company merchants and aldermen John and William Gore.<sup>(4)</sup>

Not surprisingly, merchants on the livery were usually of a less exalted status than men like Halliday, Lee and the

(1) For a detailed study of this theme see Ashton, "City", pp.83-120.

(2) See Appendix 2.

(3) Lang, Ph.D.thesis,passim; Rabb,op.cit.,p.305; Foster, op.cit.,p.70.

(4) Lang,Ph.D.thesis,passim; Foster,op.cit.,pp.100, 102; Rabb; op.cit.,p.332.

(5) Lang,Ph.D.thesis,passim; Rabb,op.cit.,p.300. For the influence of the Gore family under the Early Stuarts, see above,p.38.

Gore brothers, and (as emphasised above) were subject to spectacular failure as often as spectacular success. Furthermore, the fame and fortune of the merchants was matched or in some cases surpassed by that of colleagues on the livery engaged in the domestic cloth trade. No less than 36 per cent of the new liverymen of the period were domestic cloth traders, most commonly described as retailers of woolen or sometimes linen cloth, operating from outlets in areas such as Candlewick Street, St. Paul's Churchyard and Watling Street.<sup>(1)</sup> A high proportion of the cloth retailers and wholesalers became senior assistants and prominent figures in the municipal government.<sup>(2)</sup> Draper Geoffry Elwes for example was elected Master in 1604 after twenty-one years on the livery, and served on the court of aldermen from 1605 to 1616.<sup>(3)</sup> His colleague

(1) The role of domestic cloth traders was emphasised in Lang, Ph.D.thesis,passim.

(2) 33% of the Masters elected 1580-1645 have been identified as drapers, a proportion roughly equal to their representation on the livery (36%). Merchants on the other hand accounted for 58% of Masters, a higher proportion than their representation on the livery (48%).

(3) Lang,Ph.D.thesis,passim; Beaven,I,p.345. The trade followed by Elwes is revealed by chance in the minutes of a meeting of the Master and wardens in 1588 when he was disciplined for not making use of clothworkers free of the Company. MF 325, CM V2,17.12.88,f.217v.

on the court of assistants Henry Webbe became Master in 1598, nineteen years after first assuming the clothing of the fraternity, and was one of several City cloth <sup>(1)</sup> retailers prominent on the court of Common Council. Perhaps the most outstanding example of a wealthy and influential domestic trader was however William Craven. In 1582, Craven is mentioned as in dispute with his former master Robert Hudson over the type of cloth sold in one of Craven's shops, and his growing success in business was reflected in his election as alderman in 1600 and his appointment as a royal supplier in 1603. During the Jacobean period, when he was described as a trader in old and new draperies, he became perhaps the most successful cloth wholesaler in London, and was a towering figure in the Merchant Taylors Company until his <sup>(2)</sup> death in 1618.

The influence of the numerous cloth traders among the liverymen, while usually less marked than that of overseas merchants, enabled them to use the powers and

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(1) See Table 12. In 1568 Webbe was selling cloth from a stall at Bartholomew's Fair, and in the 1580's he traded from Fleet Street. MF 325, CM V1, 7.8.68, p.351; MF 325, CM V3, 26.5.83, f.151.

(2) Will PCC 75 Meade: MF 325, CM V2, 26.11.82, ff.143v, 144; Foster, op.cit., p.144; Ashton, "City", p.39; Lang, Ph.D.thesis, passim; CLRO, Rep. 33, 1616-1618, f.46. For Craven's legacies and influence, see pp.63, 159.

prestigious name of the Merchant Taylors Company to their advantage on several occasions during the period. In the late 1590s, during the Mastership of Henry Webbe, thirty-nine of the leading drapers affiliated to the Company banded together unofficially and, styling themselves as "the Merchant Taylors of London", signed a petition to the Privy Council regarding the poor condition of their trade in London.<sup>(1)</sup> The signatories of the petition, which criticised "divers marchanntes" who had withheld orders of cloths from the retailers,<sup>(2)</sup> included twenty-five current or future liverymen; thirteen of them would at some point act as Master. On other occasions the drapers of the Company ensured that the livery governors co-operated with the Drapers Company in the interests of London cloth retailers in general. In 1604 for example, livery warden and draper Andrewe Osborne successfully entreated his fellow assistants to support a bill in parliament touching on the manufacture and sale of woolen cloth. He and four members of the livery were appointed as committees to follow the

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(1) The petition is extant among the Salisbury papers. Hatfield House Library, Cecil Papers, 186/101. I am grateful to the library authorities for providing a copy of the petition.

(2) The strong criticism of some City cloth merchants may explain why the petition was never discussed at formal meetings of the court of assistants (where leading cloth merchants would be in attendance) even though the signatures are headed by those of the incumbent Master and upper warden, Henry Webbe and Geoffrey Elwes.

progress of the bill, and their expenses were reimbursed  
(1)  
by the Company.

The late Elizabethan and Early Stuart livery was overwhelmingly an association of merchants and domestic cloth traders, but this represented a significant change in the nature of the fraternity since the early sixteenth century. As mentioned above, the mercantile element had won royal authority to replace the ancient title of the guild with the ambiguous "Guild of Merchant Taylors" in 1502, but this achievement reflected primarily the high aspirations of a small number of merchants and Courtiers occupying influential positions in the Company rather than the numerical preponderance of non-artisans on the livery. While the incomplete nature of the records of the period precludes a thorough analysis of the trades of the liverymen, it has already been indicated that master tailors were a force to be reckoned with in the Company  
(2)  
in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In the four years from 1469 to 1472, forty-five out of seventy-seven freemen admitted to the upper section of the guild were identified as master tailors, and many of their number were subsequently elected as wardens and  
(3)  
Master.

The situation a little over a century later was however

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(1) MF 328, CM V7, 12.5.04, p.121.

(2) See above, p. 103.

(3) MF 312, AMB V37, Accounts 1469-1472.

radically different. Of the liverymen admitted during  
 (1) the period 1580-1645, only 7 per cent were  
 handicraftsmen, and inevitably they were drawn from the  
 small group of outstandingly successful London tailors  
 with good reputations at the nearby royal court or among  
 the gentlemen who came to London to update their  
 (2) wardrobes. Walter Fysshe was a senior assistant of the  
 Merchant Taylors Company for nearly a decade following  
 his election as Master in 1576, owing his status to the  
 patronage of Elizabeth I, to whom Fysshe was personal  
 (3) tailor. In later years this position was occupied by  
 another Merchant Taylor, William Jones, who served as  
 (4) livery warden in 1599 and 1605. Fysshe's position as one  
 of the ex-Masters on the court of assistants was however  
 probably matched only twice in the following fifty years;  
 Peter Towers, Master in 1622, was almost certainly the

(1) It is unlikely that tailors formed a greater proportion of those liverymen whose trades have not been established, particularly as liverymen prominent in the Company and municipal governments are proportionally represented among their number. A high proportion of obscure liverymen with unknown trades may have indicated a preponderance of artisans.

(2) For the 'luxury' aspect of the tailoring trade in London, see below, p.355.

(3) Acts of the Privy Council, 1575-1577, p.316. Will PCC 53 Brudenell.

(4) Jones had been appointed as Elizabeth's tailor by 1596, and although he lived until 1626 he never became Master. CSPD 1596, pp.300,302.

last freeman closely involved in the tailoring trade to  
(1)  
occupy that office.

The inability of artisans to reach the highest positions in the Company was largely due to the expense of accepting office, but was in part a result of the advanced years of most tailors on accession to the livery. The longer period required by artisans to accumulate the necessary wealth and status meant that up to forty years elapsed between the acquisition of citizenship and the grant of the livery to master tailors: while the average newly-admitted liveryman of the period had been free of the City for between thirteen and eighteen years, Table 11 indicates that members of the handicraft among them had often reached old age. Richard Selby had been a freeman for thirty-three years and Nicholas Wyniff for forty years before being included in the general calls of 1592 and 1610 respectively, and not surprisingly neither subsequently served in any executive capacity. Master tailors, the dominant force on the livery in 1500, were a rump of conspicuously elderly liverymen by the end of the century.

Those members of the clothing - some 9 per cent - who did not fall into any of the three principal occupational groups examined above followed a miscellaneous collection

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(1) Tailors were still represented on the governing court in the 1650s. See for an example p.375 (Taylor).

of trades and handicrafts or were professional men and bureaucrats. The latter body included the Common Clerk and beadle and employees of the royal and municipal governments; Richard Camarthen, Surveyor of the Customs and Subsidies, was on his admission to the livery in 1595 given exemption from all Company offices and ranked below  
(1) only former Masters. One of the most active and influential Merchant Taylors of his day was another employee of the Crown, Nowell Sotherton, who was elected as Master in 1597 and from 1606 was a Baron of the Exchequer. His advice and the influence he could bring to bear on behalf of the Company were highly valued by his colleagues on the court of assistants, and from 1606 he was given a status which set him above even the former  
(2) Lord Mayors among the Company governors.

Both Camarthen and Sotherton had one thing in common with a high proportion of their contemporaries on the livery apart from their freedom of the City of London and the Merchant Taylors Company - their strong ties with the Crown. It is axiomatic that the overseas merchants who formed the most numerous group on the livery were dependent on the Crown as the source and defender of the

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 30.5.95, 31.5.95, ff.292, 294; Rabb, op.cit., p.260; CSPD, 1611-1618, p.605.

(2) For detail on Sotherton's career, see below, p.170.

(1)

monopoly powers of the great chartered trading companies. It is striking however to observe the direct economic links of many non-merchants with the nearby royal court in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. George Johnson, elevated to the court of assistants in 1625 after fifteen years on the livery, was elected as Master five years later; as Woolen Draper to His Majesty's Household under both James I and Charles I he was only one of several domestic cloth traders obtaining (2) a material part of their livelihoods from the Court. Michael Griggs, a member of the livery from 1624 and a (3) notorious royalist in the 1640s, was a joint supplier to the Crown with Thomas Brandwood, who joined Griggs on (4) the livery in 1627. Thomas Robinson, promoted to the livery a decade after Brandwood, was Charles I's official (5) hose supplier in the 1630s, while it has already been

(1) R. Brenner, Commercial Change and Political Conflict: The Merchant Community in Civil War London, Princeton University Ph.D.thesis, 1970. The monopoly companies faced fierce parliamentary attacks in the later years of Elizabeth I and under James I. Ashton, "City", pp.83- 120.

(2) CSPD 1603-1610,p.404; MF 328, CM V8, 10.4.33,f.470.

(3) See Appendix 2.

(4) CSPD 1628-1629, p.16.

(5) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.49, f.324. Robinson "trusted the greatest part of his estate" to his royal patron, and consequently was ruined in the 1640s.

noted that Jacobean alderman Sir John Swinnerton was deeply involved in exploiting domestic concessions.

### Conclusion

The livery of the Merchant Taylors Company in the late Elizabethan and Early Stuart periods was a tiny and privileged body, closely bound to one another by ties of blood, marriage, friendship and earlier apprentice-master relationships. The governors of the livery organisation exercised considerable discretion over the timing and indeed the very fact of the highly ritualistic admission of freemen to the upper section of the Company. The domination of the closely-knit and predominantly mercantile élite over an enormous body of freemen, often relatively poor and following the nominal trade of the livery company, was maintained without a murmur of opposition; a phenomenon explicable by reference to the development of a highly organised sub-organisation known  
<sup>(1)</sup> as the Bachelors Company.

Those members of the livery who were able to maintain their health and social status were assured of eventual participation in government and in the substantial benefits, direct and indirect, which accrued to livery governors. Many of the small group of senior liverymen

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(1) See Chapters V and VI.

who effortlessly maintained control over the affairs of one of the wealthiest institutions in London outside of the great import-export trading companies were closely connected to the royal government; a fact not without significance during the second quarter of the seventeenth century when Charles I and William Laud looked to London for support for their fiscal and religious policies.

III: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS 1580 - 1625Introduction

One of the primary purposes of undertaking research into the affairs of the Merchant Taylors Company was the hope that the records of the organisation might throw light on the contentious issue of the political leanings of the select group of leading London citizens who wielded directive influence in the major institutions of the City during the reign of Charles I. Historians of the Civil War have long appreciated the fundamental importance of the role of London in national politics, and from 1961 the contention was generally accepted that a powerful body of aldermen, Common Councilmen and trading company governors remained well-affected to the Crown-reluctantly or otherwise-throughout the period of non-parliamentary government and the dramatic events of 1640-1642. That thesis has however been challenged by a radically different interpretation: London's élite, excepting only a handful of royal concessionaires, were deeply alienated from the policies of the Crown during the 1630s, and the civic and business establishment returned to more traditional allegiances only in the winter of 1641-1642.

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(1) V. Pearl, "London", passim.

(2) Ashton, "City", passim.

The leading London livery companies have not loomed large in the historical debate, and attempts to establish their political positions in the early 1640s have been  
(1) unenlightening. The limited attention paid to the political orientation of the London companies arises from the nature of the available historical sources, rather than any failure to recognise the importance of the greater livery companies in the constitutional affairs of the capital. Brief examinations of the minutes of the meetings of the governing bodies of the companies produce more questions than answers. Is the election in 1640 or 1641 of a Master or warden known to have supported the Crown or parliament in the Civil War indicative of a majority political viewpoint among his colleagues; or was it the continuation of a long-established pattern of selection followed for decades or even centuries? Did resistance to or compliance with financial demands emanating from the government of Charles I or from parliament reflect political allegiances; or simply a longstanding antipathy to taxation or the current condition of the company treasury? Such questions may only be answered by means of a wide-ranging study of the

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(1) The livery companies do not feature strongly in the work of V. Pearl, and are discussed by Ashton principally in the context of the creation of new companies by the Early Stuarts (cap.2).

operation and development of individual livery companies over an extended period, and by a detailed investigation of the realities of decision-making and control in the companies.<sup>(1)</sup> If one man of a certain status could in practice dominate the affairs of a major City institution, then his political and religious orientation are of crucial importance in determining the political stance taken by the City during the period preceding the outbreak of Civil War in England.

The historical records of the Company for the period 1580-1630 were therefore examined inter alia to facilitate the reaching of firm conclusions regarding political and religious developments in the period 1630-1645, but have revealed with surprising clarity the shifts in prevailing political and religious sympathies among the Company governors throughout the extended period. In line with the results of some previous research, the records reveal a strong tendency to support Puritanism among leading citizens in the later

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(1) Most of the scores of histories of individual companies pay only the scantest attention to their role in political affairs in the earlier 17th century, including Clode's work. Two exceptions are Girtin's study of the Drapers Company, and in particular the brief but thoughtful examination of the politics of one of the smaller of the livery companies by Anne Crawford. T. Girtin, The Triple Crowns, 1964, pp.217-236; Crawford, op.cit., pp. 114-121.

Elizabethan and earlier Jacobean periods being replaced - not without some antagonism - by support or at least tolerance for the views of the Arminian school, along with a much more pliant attitude towards royal demands and interference in Company affairs. Most significantly, the Merchant Taylors Company stood as a bulwark of support for the government of Charles I in the turbulent period from 1640 to 1642; and as a centre of resistance to parliament's demands from 1642 to 1645, when its affairs remained under the direction of leading citizens robbed of authority in the municipal government in 1641 and 1642.

The results of this study inevitably have some implications regarding the 'revisionist' approach to Civil War history, and these will be considered in the conclusion to this chapter.

#### Puritan Influences To 1603

The ruling body of the Company in the late sixteenth century was strongly influenced by assistants who inclined towards Puritan ideas. Their position in the

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(1) The description "Puritan" is used here in the general sense of depicting the "hotter sort" of Protestant distinguishable by their lifestyles and fervent beliefs, but not to suggest an inherent tendency to 'opposition'. P. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants. The Church in English Society 1559-1625, 1982, pp. 247, 248, 268, 282.

Company was at its most decisive in the 1570s and 1580s, when the foremost member of the governing court was Richard Hilles. Hilles was one of sixteenth century London's most well-known Puritans, and was able to depend on the support of several of his livery company colleagues whenever matters impinging on his religious sensibilities came to the attention of the court. His ideological allies among the assistants included the influential City bureaucrat William Fleetwood, who held strong Protestant views; senior governor Walter Fysshe; and Robert Dowe, one of the most active and beneficial assistants from his co-option to the court in 1571 until his death in 1612. Dowe was a trusted friend of Hilles and was renowned for his "godly life" and "fervent

(1) Hilles' life is discussed in detail in Clode, V2, pp. 59 seq.. He was a regular correspondent of Henry Bullinger in earlier years and a close friend of Miles Coverdale, having gone into voluntary exile to the main centres of European Protestantism 1539-1547. He played a conspicuous part in the movement favouring Lady Jane Grey's accession, although during Mary's reign he maintained a low profile rather than join his former apprentice William Salkyns, a Marian Exile and a liveryman of the Company from 1570. He remained strongly interested in the opinions of the German and Swiss reformers. Also see O.C. Hilles, Richard Hilles. Citizen and Merchant Taylor, 1927; Will PCC 19 Spencer, 20.8.87.

(2) Recorder of London 1571-1692. Foster, op.cit., pp. 126, 188. See above, pp. 58-59.

(3) Will PCC 53 Brudenell. The sentiments in Fysshe's will mirror Hilles' views. For Fysshe, see above, p. 138.

(1)

zeale" for sermons and religious debate. His eulogistic obituary, written and published some months after his death in 1612,<sup>(2)</sup> informs its readers that Dowe's "whole delight was to be conversant with the scriptures, and to meditate upon them day and night", and that he was very often to be found "talking, and reasoning of the word of God, and of Religion".

It is not surprising that, for example, the opposition of London Puritans to playgoing and other public entertainments such as puppet shows and bowling alleys - which gave rise to anxieties regarding perceived threats to morality as well as to public health - were reflected in the decisions of the governing body of the Merchant Taylors Company in the mid-Elizabethan period. Plays traditionally performed by pupils of the Company grammar school in the Hall in Threadneedle Street were banned in the 1570s after the assistants expressed unanimous disapproval of all such forms of entertainment, characteristically emphasising the "impudent familiarities" towards "Masters, Parentes and Maiestrates"

(1) Dowe witnessed Hilles' will and implemented his charitable designs after Hilles' death in 1587. MF 326, CM V3, 23.6.93,f.262 seq..

(2) A.Nyxon, London's Dove:or a Memorial of the life and death of Maister Robert Dove, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, 1612.

(3) R. Ashton, "Popular Entertainment and Social Control in Later Elizabethan and Early Stuart London", The London Journal, 9,1, pp.3-19.

(1)

engendered by such public gatherings. In a similar vein, it was resolved that part of the garden adjoining the Hall which had been converted for use as a bowling alley  
 (2) should be returned to its previous use.

The influence of Hilles and like-minded colleagues is also reflected in the decision to purchase a copy of the second edition of the Geneva Bible, printed in London by Christopher Barker in St. Paul's Churchyard and much favoured by Puritans of the period. The copy of the bible was placed in the Hall so that literate freemen attending the weekly courts of the Master and wardens could "occupie themselves" properly when waiting to enrol  
 (3)  
 apprentices and conduct similar business.  
 (4)

During the remainder of Elizabeth's reign and through much of the Jacobean period Londoners of Puritan sentiment remained surprisingly numerous among the small body of senior Company governors. Robert Dowe was joined on the court in 1593 by the fabulously wealthy cloth

(1) MF 326 CM V3.16.3.74,p.699. In 1592, the Company governors again expressed their strong disapproval of playing houses in the capital, referring to the "contagion of manners and other inconveniences" which arose. MF 326 CM V3,23.3.92,f.112.

(2) MF 326.CM V3,30.10.78,f.36v.

(3) P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 1967, pp.164,165.

(4) MF 326,CM V3,30.10.78,f.36v.

wholesaler and strong Puritan William Craven, a supporter of the notorious St. Antholin's lectures. Craven's status on the ruling court was enhanced by his election as alderman in 1600 and his elevation to the position of  
 (1)  
 Lord Mayor ten years later.

In 1591, London preacher Dr. Arthur Bright, who in 1584 had made only a qualified submission to Whitgift's articles, was appointed as parson of St. Martin outwich, conspicuously without reference to the procedures laid down in the ordinances for exercising the Company's ancient right to fill the benefice. In 1573, Bright's predecessor, Henry Withers M.A., had been chosen in a formal manner from four candidates nominated by learned doctors of divinity from Cambridge and Oxford  
 (2)  
 universities in accordance with the 1507 rules; by the time that letters of recommendation from the Archbishop of Canterbury and other dignitaries arrived at the Hall in June 1591, a number of assistants had decided among themselves to appoint Bright. On July 10th, he was awarded the position without the customary vote, and one of the parties supporting rival suitors, St. John's College, Oxford, was informed that the court had decided to appoint Bright at the "verie ernest sewte" of the parishioners; this decision, and the representations of the unnamed parishioners, find no record in the livery

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(1) Foster, op.cit., pp. 129, 130; Ashton, "City", pp. 39, 40.

(2) MF 325, CM V1, 15.12.73, p. 688.

minute book. In 1600, Dr. Bright resigned for personal reasons and was replaced by William Taylor of St. John's, whose patron for many years had been the elderly Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's and former Marian exile.

Indications of the predominant religious views among the Company élite may also be obtained by consideration of the acrimonious dealings of the Merchant Taylors Company with St. John's College, Oxford, which are fully documented in the collection of original letters and school election papers extant in the Company Hall, and in the minutes of the court of assistants, where correspondence was frequently set down verbatim.

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 30.6.91, 10.7.91, ff. 229v-231v. Seaver describes Bright as a pluralist as he already held a nearby benefice, although he was appointed with the support of the parish due to the poverty of the living. From 1602 the Company contributed towards the remuneration of the parson. P.S. Seaver, The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent 1560-1662, Stanford, California, 1970, p. 214, 357.

(2) Nowell's longstanding support for Taylor is set out in a letter of 1600 addressed to the Company, which is extant in its archives. MT Hall, AMB V54, f. 82. For Nowell's career see Collinson, "Movement", passim.

(3) The letters and election documents mainly relate to the period 1589-1660, and are collected in a volume in the archives numbered L5. (AMB V55 in the calender, MF 321).

The founder of the college, Merchant Taylor and Catholic  
 (1)

Sir Thomas White, included in its statutes the provision that a proportion of the students should be drawn from the Company grammar school by way of an annual election by the college and Company authorities. The college was throughout Elizabeth I's reign a focal point for Catholicism, and subsequently became a stronghold for High Church doctrines; the attendance of men like prominent Arminian Dr. John Buckeridge at the annual election no doubt contributed to the recurring disputes between the representatives of the two bodies over  
 (2) electoral rights and formalities. In the 1590s, the college authorities stayed away from the annual meeting in several years without providing due notice, and advanced dubious interpretations of the founder's statutes, allegedly for their  
 (3) "private benefittes". Furthermore, the President and his senior fellows were accused of informing the Company that they would not be coming to

(1) Will PCC 36 Stonarde; Clode, V2, pp. 98-149, 174-193.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, passim; MSS Book L5; F.M.W. Draper, Four Centuries of Merchant Taylors School, 1561-1961, 1962, pp. 1-50; H.R. Trevor-Roper, Archbishop Laud, 1573-1645, 1940, pp. 32-43. Buckeridge was tutor to Laud and was his predecessor as President of the college occupying the post from 1606 to 1611. As a senior fellow and later President, he attended the elections on several occasions, sharing cakes and wine with amongst others Robert Dowe and William Craven in 1598. MF 326, CM V3, 11.6.98, f.394.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 20.6.94, f.269

London in view of the improbability of any places being available at the college, and in the event arriving unannounced at the grammar school on a Sunday in the full knowledge that the court of assistants would not be in session on the Sabbath.

(1)

Between 1597 and 1606, the college laid claim to a right of veto over the selection of Merchant Taylor students, and refused to accept some of the students attracting a majority of the votes cast by the President and Senior Fellows, the Company governors, the Dean of Westminster and the other doctors of divinity in attendance, leading (2) to the most bitter disputes at the school. While the claims of St. John's were ultimately unsuccessful, the livery company assistants returned like with like in the form of an unwillingness in nearly every instance during the period to accept the nominees of the college for any of the preferments in their gift. From the late sixteenth century through to the 1620s the college's

(1) MF 326,CM V3,30.5.95,ff.293,294. The assistants were obliged to take special precautions in 1595 to be "sure the said Colledg shall not take them unprepared".

(2) In 1597 the college representatives "refused to give their single voyces and pricks in such manner as our Master wardens and assistantes did But pretended that they had a negative voice The which was utterly denyed". MF 326,CM V3,11.6.97,f.349. The election schedule of 1605 similarly notes that "This yere greate unkindnes passed betweene the College & Company". MSS Bk L5.

nominees for positions at the grammar schools and for the benefice of St. Martin Outwich were rejected (except in the case of Parson William Taylor in 1600), notwithstanding the repeated urgings of the college authorities for assistance in the placing of fellows. Further, in 1618 the critical report of certain townsmen of Wolverhampton regarding Burton, the 'usher' or junior master of the long-established Company school in the town, led the court of assistants to ask St. John's - somewhat uncharacteristically - to suggest a replacement.<sup>(1)</sup> The reply sent to the Company in May 1619, which remarkably finds no mention in the court minutes, contained the President's recommendation of former St. John's man John Snape as a result of his "studiousnes & soundnes in Religion, accordinge to the Course of the Church of England".<sup>(2)</sup> On 16th June, the Company governors agreed that Snape was unfit for the position of usher,<sup>(3)</sup> and paid him off with 44s. In September, one William Smith M.A. presented the court with a certificate signed by numerous citizens of Wolverhampton supporting his appointment to the school, but again the assistants manifested their concern over the nominee's religious

(1) MF 328, CM V7, 1.12.18, 8.2.19, 28.4.19, pp.500, 503, 510.

(2) The original letter, signed by President William Laud, is filed within MSS Bk L5.

(3) MF 328, CM V7, 16.6.19, p.516.

credentials, and after noting that the certificate gave them "noe satisfaction concerninge his religion", accepted the nomination with the proviso that Smith would be removed if enquiries did not confirm that he was in "noe way addicted to the Romish religion but a sound  
 (1)  
 Protestant".

#### Religious Division and Realignment under James I

The foregoing account suggests that 'sound Protestants' exercised a strong and often decisive influence over the affairs of the Merchant Taylors Company in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, although they do not appear to have enjoyed the unrivalled and consistent ascendancy of the 'hotter sort' of Protestants on the governing body of the Haberdashers Company during  
 (2)  
 the period. There was nothing to match the strong support of the Haberdashers for Puritan lectureships in London, or the close relationship established between the Merchant Taylors Company and leading London Puritans in

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(1) MF 328, CM V7, 25.9.19, p.534.

(2) Haberdashers: Court of Assistants Minutes 1583-1652. GH MSS 15,842/1. I.M.Calder, Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England, 1957, xviii (n). Seaver, op.cit., pp.143, 159, 160, 161. Seaver emphasises the involvement of the Haberdashers Company in administering trusts established to support Puritan lecturers in London.

(1)

the early Elizabethan period. On the contrary, there is surprisingly unambiguous evidence of growing religious division and dissension among the assistants throughout the reign of James I.

The first signs of division are visible as early as 1603, when the death of the incumbent of St. Martin Outwich resulted in the promotion of several rival suitors by different groups of assistants, in contrast to the untroubled election of William Taylor in 1600. The supporters of London preacher John Lewes, "well knowne both for his lyef and doctryne to dyverse of the Assistantes", secured the preferment on an oral vote partly on the strength of his promise to reside in the parish despite the low stipend available, although the decision was clearly not unanimous.  
(2)

The death of Lewes in 1614 brings into sharper focus the changing balance of religious views among the Company governors, soon after the deaths of many of the leading

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(1) The Company had strong ties with Miles Coverdale, Marian Exile and a leader of dissent in the City, no doubt as a result of his relationship with Richard Hilles. Collinson, "Movement", p.74; Clode,V2,p.92. Coverdale's son became a member of the Company and he lived in a tenement rented from the Company. MF 325,CM V3,1.12.64,p.144. MF 326,CM V3.29.12.82,f.85. This is not of course to suggest that a majority of assistants were Puritans. Indeed, Nicholas Spencer, Master in 1588, was a Catholic. AMB V9, Wills Book, p.145.

(2) MF 327,CM V5,3.12.03,17.12.03,pp.104,106,107.

(1)

assistants of a decade earlier. Seven suitors for the living were presented to the court and were reduced to two in typically informal discussions and voting. The two remaining candidates were one Thomas Merriall, and Rowland Juxon, incumbent at St. Giles Without Cripplegate and more significantly the cousin of William Juxon, one of the prominent Arminians at St. John's and protégé of Laud. The controversial nature of Juxon's candidature is confirmed by decisions to refer the vote to a secret ballot and equally unusually to record the votes cast for (2) each candidate in the court minutes. In contrast to earlier election results relating to the benefice and the unanimous choice of the Master and four livery wardens by (3) the court of assistants just three months earlier, the secret ballot produced an extremely close result. The Master, three wardens and fifteen other governors in attendance elected Juxon in preference to Merriall by a (4) margin of ten votes to nine.

The identity of at least one of the supporters of

(1) Only 3 of the 17 senior members of the governing court who attended meetings in 1603 were still participating in Company affairs in 1614. Robert Dowe died in 1612, as did Alderman Leonard Halliday, former apprentice of Richard Hilles.

(2) See above, pp.27,28.

(3) Misc.Doc.A8:Election Bills of Master and Wardens 1595-1627.

(4) MF 328.CM V7,26.9.14,p.140.

Merriall is hinted at in a subsequent series of events relating to Juxon's attempts to secure financial support to supplement the meagre income provided by his parish. In 1615, the Company granted him an annual stipend of five pounds on condition that he took no other living and preached every Sunday at the parish church, but in November 1617 at a small meeting of assistants at which the foremost member was the elderly alderman William Craven, the stipend was suspended in the light of his alleged 'ingratitude'. In July 1618, Craven died leaving spectacular legacies in favour of his livery company, and the stipend was restored at the same meeting which met to  
 (1) read his will, without any reason being noted.

The decline in the traditional influence of strong Protestants like Craven, anticipating the marked diminution in the strength of Puritanism in the municipal government,  
 (2) is confirmed and illustrated by the remarkable reaction of the ruling court to a legacy offered to the Company in 1623 under the terms of the will of Lady Weld. Lady Weld was a well-known supporter of the Puritan movement in the capital, actively promoting the interests of "godly, zealous and learned preachers", and her will directed that the princely sum of £2,000 from her estate be used to buy-up

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(1) MF 328, CM V7, 4.5.15, 3.11.17, 29.7.18, pp. 159, 160, 432, 473, 474.

(2) D.A. Williams, "Puritanism", pp. 2-14.

impropriations, with a godly minister appointed to each  
(1)  
cure acquired. The assumption that the Merchant Taylors Company would agree to administer the fund and further Weld's grand design proved however to be ill-founded. The offer of the legacy was debated by the governing court at no less than six meetings extending over six months. The will was first read and considered in November 1623, and unremarkably a month later was referred to a committee for detailed examination. In January 1624, the committee reported to the full court, but surprisingly discussion of their findings was deferred. In June of the same year, a meeting was appointed exclusively to consider the matter, but at that meeting consideration of the will was again put off. Finally in July the terms of the will were read once more to the court, and while the minutes do not disclose the substance of the debate, the protracted discussions were clearly contentious. The minutes record that many opposing arguments were advanced by assistants, and that ultimately (in a move evoking the circumstances of the 1614 election of the parson of St. Martin Outwich) it was agreed that the ballot box be used to resolve the issue - the single example of the use of a secret ballot under the Early Stuarts where an electoral contest was not involved. The ballot papers showed that the court as

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(1) Seaver, op.cit., p.158.

(1)

a whole was "plainly" against accepting the legacy, suggesting that the decision to hold a secret ballot was made in order to placate one or more leading members of the ruling élite anxious to support Lady Weld's plans. The executors successfully offered the £2,000 to the  
 (2) Haberdashers Company. The majority of Merchant Taylors Company governors who voted against acceptance were no doubt swayed by a number of arguments, including the  
 (3) administrative burden which would fall on themselves, but the rejection was undoubtedly a blow to Puritan assistants.

An increasingly powerful group on the court seem not only to have been unsympathetic to Puritanism during the Jacobean period, but to have entertained at least a benevolent tolerance of antithetical doctrines. In 1605, the Company governors, ever-conscious of the Catholic sympathies of many of the townsmen of Wolverhampton, rejected the deputy schoolmaster and Merchant Taylor Burton as a successor to Thomas Madox, the head of the grammar school since 1573. Burton's enormous local support clearly made him suspect, as no doubt did his relationship in earlier years with suspected Catholic Sir

(1) MF 328, CM V8, 12.11.23, 16.12.23, 14.1.24, 23.6.24,  
 21.7.25, pp. 191, 193, 195, 214, 218.

(2) Seaver, op.cit., p. 158.

(3) A small number of legacies were rejected at other times in the earlier 17th century, but always after advice that the estate would not bear the specified legacies.

(1) Thomas Offley. The court instead appointed Richard Barnes, a "godly learned discrete peacable and modest man" who was determined to prevent the children of suspected Catholics from being enrolled at the school. His stand provoked enormous opposition in the town, culminating in 1610 with a petition to the Company signed by over one hundred leading townsmen and a suit in Chancery in support of their claim to appoint the schoolmaster themselves, without interference from the Merchant Taylors. The court of assistants, having characteristically refused to accept the replacement schoolmaster recommended by Dr. Buckeridge of St. John's, were ultimately obliged to accept the appointment of one (2) William Wilson by the townsmen.

The controversy engendered by the choice of Barnes as schoolmaster in 1605 had brought to light the existence of a minority of Company governors with religious views antithetical to men like Craven and Dowe. In 1606, the court had been palpably shocked by allegations that under

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(1) MF 325, CM V1, 13.2.73, p.635; MF 327, CM V5, 12.8.05, pp.176-179; Foster, op.cit., p.127. Offley was a senior assistant until his death in 1582.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 9.10.09, 12.2.10, 19.11. 10, 24.3.10, 6.6.10, 28.7.10, 28.8.10, 1.10.10, pp. 410-485. The court received an equally large petition from supporters of Barnes in Wolverhampton, and a majority of assistants continued to support Barnes, who was found a benefice in Kent in 1612. MF 327, CM V5, 3.12.10, p.487, 488; MF 328, CM V7, 12.11.12, p.62.

Barnes' predecessor, Thomas Maddox (who had been appointed in 1573 with the express approval of Sir Thomas Offley),<sup>(1)</sup> recusants had been free to enrol their children at the school and withdraw them from all religious services in contravention of the law and the school statutes. Further, Catholic parents alleged that certain unnamed assistants had expressly given their sanction to the practices. Those assistants undoubtedly included senior liveryman Henry Offley, son of Sir Thomas Offley, who like his father maintained close personal links with the school and the locality,<sup>(2)</sup> and draper Randolph Wooley, a less senior member of the court who would rise to the position of Master in 1614. Like Offley, Wooley displayed a special interest in the affairs of the Wolverhampton school, bequeathing part of his estate to augment the salaries of the staff. In 1609 moreover the petition of 102 alleged papist citizens against Barnes was sent directly to Wooley rather than the Master or court as a whole, although, as a former renter warden, he

(1) MF 325, CM V1, 13.2.73, p.635.

(2) Offley became a liveryman in 1556, and rose through the Company hierarchy to become Master in 1584, thereafter playing an active part in the court's deliberations until his death in 1612. Will PCC 79 Capell. He provided the school with some adjoining land. MF 328, CM V7, 8.5.12, p.36.

(1)

was at the time one of the most junior assistants. The court chose not to investigate the allegations, but instead wrote to Barnes expressing opposition to excessive tolerance of Catholics, adding that "if any pryvat men of our company shall write or move you to the contrary,... you are not any way to be directed by them".  
 (2)

From the second decade of the seventeenth century there are also clear signs of a rapprochement with St. John's College and its Arminian leadership. The regular disputes over the annual election of scholars to the College from the London grammar school came to an end; Juxon was elected as parson in 1614; and as discussed above, following the death of William Craven in 1618 the court initially approached St. John's for a replacement for the Wolverhampton deputy-schoolmaster and in addition restored Juxon's annual subsidy. In 1620, the assistants provided financial assistance to the College to support two studentships after a personal approach by President  
 (3)  
 William Laud the previous year. Furthermore, the financial accounts for the accounting period 1615-1616 reveal that five unnamed Company governors dined with Dr. Laud in a rather mysterious meeting which anticipated the

(1) MF 310.AMB V9,Wills Book,pp.347-349;MF 327, CM V5, 25.10.09,p.413. Wooley joined the livery in 1592, and served as warden in 1607 and 1610.

(2) MF 327,CM V5,26.3.06,pp.210,211.

(3) MF 328,CM V7,11.6.19,11.6.20,pp.520,568,569.

close contacts - including several similar, unexplained  
(1)  
meetings - of the Caroline period.

#### Relations with the Crown to 1603

During the early years of the sixteenth century, the Merchant Taylors Company and some of its foremost members enjoyed a close and fruitful relationship with the Crown. In 1498, Sir John Percival had become the first Merchant Taylor to be elected as Mayor of the City of London after Henry VII had written to the municipal government on his (2) behalf. In 1502 the king granted secretly-negotiated letters patent re-incorporating the Fraternity of Taylors and Linen Armourers as the Guild of Merchant Taylors and augmenting the Company's powers of self-regulation and (3) recruitment. The City authorities offered the Crown £5,000 for confirmation of the City's charter and the revocation of the charter granted to the Merchant Taylor's, but Henry VII, who had become a freeman of the guild, maintained his close ties with its leading members: he intervened to secure the election of

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(1) MF 301, Accounts V11, 1615-1616. The Master, Thomas Johnson, was allowed the cost of the dinner at "The Ship" attended by himself, two wardens, two former Masters and Dr. Laud, which came to 23s 4d.

(2) Clode, V2, pp.8-20; H. Miller, "London and Parliament in the Reign of Henry VIII", p.131.

(3) Miller, op.cit., pp.130, 131. See above, pp.19-20.

(1)

Merchant Taylors as sheriff in 1506 and again in 1508.

There is little sign that the special relationship survived into the reigns of Henry VIII or his immediate successors. William Fitzwilliam, sheriff in 1506, ensured that the Company retained the support of the Crown against the still antagonistic municipal government (2) in the earlier years of the Henrician period. However, during the middle decades of the sixteenth century the livery company suffered possibly the worst setbacks of the early modern period as a consequence of the investigations into superstitious payments. In 1549-1550 Company properties which had accounted for 26 per cent of its annual rental income were sold in order to pay £2,600 to the Treasurers of the Court of Augmentations towards the redemption of various lands and revenues connected to the provision of obits, lights and the salaries of (3) priests.

Under Elizabeth I, relations remained distant and to a

(1) Miller, op.cit., pp.132-135; MF 327, CM V5, 16.7.07, pp.272-276; F.M. Fry & R.T.D. Sayle, op.cit., pp.34-39.

(2) Miller, op.cit., pp.135, 136; J. Sherwood, Religion, Politics and the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London, 1509-1549, Penns. State Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1972, passim. The dearth of surviving records of the Merchant Taylors Company relating to the first half of the 16th century renders any general observations regarding the period tentative.

(3) MF 298, Accounts V4.1549-1550, p.168.

large degree dominated by investigations of  
 (1)  
 'concealments' of chantry lands under the authority of letters patent granted by the Crown to profit-seeking individuals. The last major success of the patentees against the Company occurred in the late 1570s, and in the later Elizabethan period the assistants were able to address the periodic demands of the patentees with greater confidence. In 1584, a study conducted by the Company's lawyers found that its properties stood "verie cleare and in noe danger", and thereafter the assistants were prepared to go to law rather than compound with  
 (2)  
 holders of new patents. Nevertheless, the regular attempts made in the 1580s and 1590s to uncover livery company concealments continued to be a matter of concern, and the Company governors remained willing to contribute to the cost of attempts to negotiate a final settlement with the Crown. The continuing vulnerability of the Company is underlined by the discovery in July 1593 of a conspiracy involving a former Master and the Common Clerk of the Company to use confidential information to their  
 (3)  
 advantage. Four active "confederates", including two

(1) For the role of Chantry lands in the lives of the London Companies, see L.S.Snell, "London Chantries and Chantry Chapels", in J.Bird,H. Chapman and J.Clark (ed.'s),Collectionea Londoniensia, Studies Presented to Ralph Merrisfield, 1978,pp.220,221.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 29.4.79,f.42; MF 326, CM V3,12.2.84, f.106; MF 326, CM V3,9.5.90,f.210v.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 3.7.93, ff.262v,263. A marginal note in the minutes refers to "confederates to have abused the Companie in sewtes of Concealments".

former apprentices of William Dodworthe, Master 1591-1592, and the assistant of the clerk, were found to have copies of a record book removed from the Hall by the latter. They furthermore implicated Dodworthe directly in the plan to obtain money through legal action concerning alleged concealments. Dodworthe denied any knowledge of the plot, but ceased attending meetings of the court from the next month.

The other main feature of relations with the Crown in the later Elizabethan period was the demands, usually through the agency of the municipal government, for loans and military personnel. As has already been noted, despite the very considerable overlap in the membership of the ruling bodies of the municipality and the livery company, the court of assistants was not always a willing instrument of municipal or royal policy. In 1588 for example, the assistants protested strongly against the demand, made directly to the Master by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Treasurer, for a loan of £5,000 towards the cost of military preparations against Spain. Three years later they were "greatly blamed" for their dilatory response to a demand for the first two-thirds of a loan of £561 12s towards naval expenses; in October 1591, the wardens were called before the court of aldermen to explain their company's failure to pay the final one-third and an additional assessment. One month later the money was finally paid, although the assistants petitioned the municipality for a reduction in the

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(1) See above, pp. 87-97.

Crown's financial demands in February, 1592.<sup>(1)</sup>

Relations with the Crown 1603-1625

The accession of James I to the English throne marked a watershed in the relationship of the Crown and the City guilds and livery companies. The Early Stuarts evidenced a greater interest in the affairs of the companies than their predecessors,<sup>(2)</sup> and it is highly significant that the period 1603-1640, and in particular the 1630s, represents the most glorious period in the history of the Merchant Taylors Company. King James' accession coincided with the election of Robert Lee as Lord Mayor, the first

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 7.8.88.9.8.88, 23.6.91-9.2.92, ff.184, 185, 229-242v. There was naturally a limit to the resistance that livery company governors could put up to such demands, although the wardens had to be threatened with 'commitment' or referral to the Privy Council in more than one instance.

(2) The promotion of new incorporations by the Early Stuarts is well-known: See G.Unwin, "Gilds", pp.297-317. In addition, the Crown increasingly intervened directly to secure the election of favoured candidates to key posts in the major companies, e.g. the Vintners. Crawford, op.cit., pp.115, 116. In the 1630s the Grocers Company were browbeaten into accepting the Crown's nominee for the parish of St. Stephen's Walbrook. GH MSS 11588/3, Grocers Company Court Minutes 1616-1639, pp.541, 542, 546, 547, 548. Henry VIII, unlike Elizabeth I, had shown a tendency to interfere in municipal affairs, nominating all 3 Mayors 1535-1538 from the Mercers Company. Sherwood, Ph.D.thesis, pp.74, 75.

Merchant Taylor to occupy that "chief place" for thirty-five years, and with the support of his livery company Lee set out to welcome the new king to London with a show of unprecedented splendour. A scholar from the London grammar school recited a short speech at the coronation, and the assistants hoped that this event would reflect  
 well on their company as well as on the school.<sup>(1)</sup>

The high status of many of the leading assistants in the early seventeenth century meant that the Company was well-placed to develop its ties with the Crown after the auspicious start in 1603. In 1604, the Company governors were able to obtain a reduction in the fee demanded for the confirmation of the corporate charter from thirty to twenty-one pounds through the influence of leading Common Councilman Nowell Sotherton, whose public service reached its climax with his appointment as Baron of the Exchequer  
<sup>(2)</sup> in 1606. Further, in 1607 a momentous political coup enhanced the prestige of the Company and consolidated the

<sup>(1)</sup> MF 327, CM V5, 9.4.03, 11.6.03, pp. 84, 85, 95.

<sup>(2)</sup> Foster, op.cit., p. 165; Rabb, op.cit., p. 380; MF 327 CM V5, 12.5.04, 13.6.04, 8.11.06, pp. 119, 135, 242. Sotherton was Master in 1597, after having served as warden in 1586 and 1591, and was a leading assistant until his death in 1610 (Will PCC 38 Wingfield). His cousin George Sotherton was Master in 1589 and a senior assistant until 1599 and his brother John was also a Baron of the Exchequer from 1592. MF 326, CM V3, 10.4.92, 10.7.98, ff. 246, 377v.

(1)

relationship of the ruling group with the Crown. Informal high-level contacts initiated by certain assistants without reference to the whole court led in June 1607 to James I accepting a formal invitation to the Election Day ceremonies due to be held the following month. A committee of assistants met daily throughout late June and early July to prepare a sumptuous banquet and to organise entertainments which included contributions from Ben Johnson, while the Hall underwent renovation and structural alterations around them.

On July 16th, the King and his entourage arrived at the Hall, and the court minutes and financial accounts record in detail proceedings without parallel in the history of the Company in terms of magnificence and extravagance. The guests included the King, Prince Henry and a host of foreign ambassadors, royal officials and nobles, most of whom became freemen of the Company before leaving the Hall after being fed and entertained at a cost of over £1,000.

(2)

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(1) For the probable role of John Swinnerton in arranging the attendance of James I, see above, p.33,121. The first the court as a whole knew of the contact with the Crown was when they were called together on June 27th and told that the royal party were to attend the Election Day three weeks later, providing an opportunity to enhance the "reputation and creditt" of their company.

(2) MF 327,CM V5,27.6.07,pp.261-276. MF 300, Accounts 1606-1607. The proceedings are set out in full in Clode,V1,cap.16.

The phenomenal expense of the 1607 Election Day was clearly justified in the minds of the Company governors, who after much argument had voted to exclude the Lord Mayor and aldermen not affiliated to the Company from the proceedings to prevent any of the goodwill generated from attaching to the municipal government.<sup>(1)</sup> The royal visit was perceived as the re-establishment of the special relationship which existed until the early sixteenth century,<sup>(2)</sup> and although the premature death of the heir-apparent Prince Henry in 1612 was without doubt a blow to the Merchant Taylors who had engineered the new

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 9.7.07, p.265. See above, p.26 27.

(2) A scroll presented to James and Prince Henry recorded the names of earlier kings who had been freemen of the Company, and emphasised the importance of Henry VII in its development. This theme was re-visited in 1630, when John Webster's pageant written for the Company on the occasion of the Mayoralty of Sir Robert Ducy was entitled "The Monument of Gratitude", extolling the benefits of the close relationship of the Merchant Taylors Company with the Crown. One verse included the lines: "View whence the Merchant Taylors honour springs,  
From this most royal conventicle of kings,  
Let all good men this sentence oft repeat  
By unity the smallest things grow great".

In view of the attacks on the great chartered import-export companies made by parliament during the previous thirty years, one might speculate that Webster's verses would strike a chord with the merchants on the court of assistants in 1630, including Ducy himself. Clode, "Memorials", Appendix F(3).

ties, warm relations were maintained with the Crown long after the initial euphoria had died down. On the following Election Day, royal chaplain Dr. Allinson was admitted to the Company, and in 1609 the assistants secured favourable treatment regarding the payment of the levy made to mark the knighting of Prince Henry.<sup>(1)</sup> The sermon on the 1611 Election Day was delivered by the Prince's personal chaplain, Mr. Price, and the court contravened a former ruling that restricted the granting of new leases in order to favour a royal official bearing a letter from Prince Henry. The assistants, anticipating "future favours", expressed their hope that their patron would meet representatives of the court to express his gratitude. In addition, both the Prince and his father supplied bucks for the Election Day dinner in several years, and provided musicians to accompany the livery at ceremonial gatherings - as did Prince Charles after the death of his brother.<sup>(2)</sup>

There were inevitably potential causes of friction between the Crown and major livery companies during the Jacobean period, but there are few indications that the unrelenting use of the London companies in the further-

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 11.7.08, p.314; MF 300, Accounts 1608-1609.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 18.5.12, pp.39, 40; MF 301, Accounts V10, 1609-1613, V11, 1614-1616, V12, 1617-1623, passim.

ance of royal and municipal policies gave rise to any serious resentment among the assistants of the Merchant Taylors Company. The great majority of the membership were reluctant to become adventurers after the Crown had obliged the City to assume responsibility for the Plantation of Ulster, and a 'proportion' of the territory was only accepted by the Company after strong pressure from the municipal authorities. In 1609, the assistants had to report that seven liverymen were considering investing, twenty-three were willing to lend only small sums, and fifty-eight had refused or were allegedly "in the Country", while only ten freemen outside of the  
 livery were prepared to adventure or advance loans.<sup>(1)</sup> (1)  
 Freemen had to be threatened with imprisonment before the Company was able to raise its share of the first municipal assessment towards the Ulster project in 1610; two years later the assistants abandoned attempts to meet municipal demands from financial contributions from the freemen, noting that with respect to the most recent assessment "not the one half has been collected from the bretheren of this company, which for the most parte are unwilling to pay".<sup>(2)</sup> (2) Thereafter, the City's levies towards the expenses of the Governor and Assistants of the Irish

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 14.8.09, pp.396-399.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 12.8.12, p.52.

(1)

Plantation were largely met from corporate funds.

From 1615, when the assistants were "pricked forward" by the Privy Council, considerable efforts were made to promote the colonisation and development of the Company's lands through its agents. By 1623 £1,835 16s had been expended directly by the court in the form of arms,  
(2)  
 building materials and furnishings for a new church. Despite the serious difficulties encountered in collecting the annual rent due from the principal lessee  
(3)  
 of the proportion, it appears that the "great hope it may turne to the Companyes great benefitt in tymes to

(1) Between 1610 and 1615 £60,000 was paid into the Chamber by the 12 major companies, of which the Merchant Taylors Company furnished £5,000 in respect of its one-twelfth share in the Planatation lands and another £1,186 in respect of its part-share in the proportion assigned to the Clothworkers Company. Individual freemen who decided to retain their private shares in the Company's proportion contributed almost 20% of the total of £6,186. By 1626, the private holdings had been consolidated into 22 holdings from the original 81 maintained after 1612. MF 327,328,CM V5.7,passim,MF 328, CM V8,11.12.26,f.287;MT Hall, MSC.DOC.A11(3), "The Book of the whole Paymentes paid towardes the Plantation in Ireland". The book includes the signatures of those freemen who assigned their interests to the Company.

(2) MF 328,CM V8,26.2.23,pp.144-148.

(3) The Company's lessee ultimately had to be imprisoned in 1629.MF 328,CM V8,9.6.29,f.353v.

(1) "come" was compensation for the Company's new responsibilities.

The attitude of the Company governors to the much smaller-scale involvement in the royal scheme to colonise

(2) Virginia was broadly similar. By March 1609, when a precept was received from the Lord Mayor requesting contributions from the Company and its members, eighteen freemen had already adventured a total of £586 14s 4d, and the court could only persuade an additional six freemen to contribute small sums totalling £15 12s 6d as adventures. Another 144 freemen gave as free gifts amounts ranging from 5s to 40s, and the total sum sent to the Chamber was made-up to £200 from the treasuries of the livery and yeomanry. The court of assistants declined an invitation to adventure a further sum in 1611, but were willing to participate in the lotteries held to raise funds for the venture in 1612 and 1614. The governors were optimistic that their initial outlay would ultimately prove advantageous: in 1618, they expressed "great hope" that profits would eventually be

(3)  
realised.

The assistants also remained confident with respect to

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(1) MF 328,CM V7,17.6.13,p.84. The involvement of the City in Ulster is fully explored in T.W. Moody, The Londonderry Plantation 1609-1641, Belfast, 1939.

(2) T.H.O'Brien, The London Livery Companies and the Virginia Company, 1960, passim.

(3) MF 327,CM V5,28.3.09,29.4.09,18.1.11,pp.363,364,369-373;MF 328,CM V7,17.6.12,6.5.14,10.8.18 pp.45,19,20,478.

the continuing efforts by speculators to uncover concealed Chantry lands under James I. In 1605, the major livery companies received letters from the royal commissioners for concealed lands demanding that they compound with the Crown or face renewed suits from individuals under letters patent. The letter addressed to the Merchant Taylors Company advised that many persons had sought grants relating to the lands of the Company. The court was however reminded by assistant and former general solicitor of the municipality Richard Wright that the Company's properties were "clere & out of danger", and refused to compound or participate in a joint defence of the City's property titles. Similarly, the assistants demanded in 1607 that any assessment towards the cost of promoting a bill to prevent future informations against the City or companies be based on the extent of "the doubtes and defectes of their title", arguing that the Mercers and Merchant Taylors Companies were in little danger. In 1619, after caution was urged by the clerk Clement Mosse, the Company governors agreed to submit certain lands with the other livery companies for final confirmation of title and settlement of all potential arrears of superstitious payments under letters patent,  
<sup>(1)</sup> and to meet a reasonable share of the related costs.

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(1) MF 327, CM V5.9.2.05, 18.4.07, pp.155, 252; MF 328, CM V7, 15.12.18, 16.6.19, pp.501, 515; MT Hall, Misc.Doc.A4.(14). There were certainly designs on the Company's lands; CSPD, 1619-1623, p.4.

The incorporation of groups of breakaway small masters has been held out as one of the major areas of dispute between the municipal and livery company authorities under the Early Stuarts. The history of the phenomenon has been examined in full by George Unwin, and more recently with special emphasis on its impact on City relations with the Crown by Robert Ashton, and there is no doubt that the municipal authorities and livery companies viewed the Crown's policy as inimical to good order in the capital.<sup>(1)</sup> The "greate rent of seperation of the Apothercaries" from the Grocers Company in 1617 meant the loss of around one quarter of its membership, including many of its wealthier members and at least three of its governors.<sup>(2)</sup> It was held up as a grievance throughout the pre-Civil War period by the company's ruling court, which seems to have been un-co-operative in implementing royal policies throughout the period.<sup>(3)</sup>

It is significant therefore that the Merchant Taylors

(1) Unwin, "Gilds", pp.297-317; Ashton, "City", pp.71-82.

(2) GH MSS 11588/3.Grocers Company Court Minutes 1616-1639,pp.39,68,81,97,98,107,161.

(3) In 1621 for example, the full £500 requested towards the Palatinate campaign was refused, with reference made to the loss of 200 of its members in 1617. In 1640, the court of assistants turned to the House of Commons for protection against further predations by the Apothecaries Company. GH MSS 11588/3,pp.161-164v;GH MSS 11588/4,p.18. Also see Farnell, Ph.D.thesis, p.94.

Company was not appreciably affected by any of the new incorporations of the earlier seventeenth century, although the assistants remained vigilant in the light of the occupational heterogeneity of the freemen. In 1607 the court obtained a copy of the charter of the artisan skinners which "without the consent of the Assistantes of their Company... gave them authority to governe, to th'end our Company may foresee that our Artizen Taylors (1) do not the like". but only one substantial member was lost during the period. In 1632, liveryman and apothecary William Clapham was finally obliged to join the company of his nominal trade, fifteen years after (2) its foundation.

Until the last years of the reign of King James, there were no major items of disagreement likely to undermine the close relationship of the Company with the Crown, at a time when the major chartered trading companies to which many of the assistants belonged were being strongly

(1) MF 300, Accounts V8, 1606-1607. Also see above, pp.93, 94.

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 13.2.32, f.437. The assistants did not oppose his translation. In 1635 however, the attempt of a number of well-to-do freemen to join the newly incorporated guild of 'Looking-glass Makers and Gallyware-makers' was firmly resisted, the court "much blaming them for there attempt". A second request for translation to the new guild in 1638 was flatly refused. MF 330, CM V9, 3.5.37, 28.8.38, ff.11, 58v; CLRO Rep.52, ff.53, 53v, 130, 130v.

(1)

criticised in parliament. In 1623 and 1624 however, relations with the Crown underwent serious difficulties as a result of one example of determined interference in the internal government of the London livery companies by the Early Stuarts.

The crucial position of the Common Clerk in the life of the Merchant Taylors Company has already been discussed, particularly with respect to the controversy of 1609-1610. The renewed controversy surrounding the office in the early 1620s was of much greater significance, for it involved the attempt of the Crown to directly nominate the successor to incumbent Richard Baldcock in the person of Lawrence Lownes, the brother of a servant of Prince Charles with friends close to the throne. Submission would have provided the court of assistants with a new channel to the Crown, but would have entailed the virtual surrender of the cherished secrecy of the court's deliberations, possibly for decades, and furnished the Crown with a strong precedent for subsequent interference in the affairs of one of the

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(1) Ashton, "City", pp.83-120. In the winter of 1620-1621, the assistants showed a surprising unwillingness to comply with the Crown's request for £525 towards the Protestant cause in the Palatinate. Their reaction may have been connected to the great enthusiasm of Puritans in the City for the cause as much as the liquidity problem faced by the Company following the recent investment of £1,000 with the East India Company. MF 328, CM V8, 13.12.20, 15.12.20, 30.12.20, 7.2.21, pp.30-33.

most powerful guilds in England. Submission would also have been highly uncharacteristic. In a typical response to external pressure, the court in 1595 had denounced the support of an aristocratic patron for a prospective parson of St. Martin Outwich as "a dangerous president to  
 (1)  
 preiudice the libertie of their own choice". In 1613 it was resolved that a request by Elizabeth, eldest daughter of King James, that her servant be appointed to the lesser position of Company cook "requires noe aunswere in  
 (2)  
 regard the place is not voide". Similarly, in 1643 suitors bearing letters from dignitaries were told that the practice was "to the preiudice of the Company in  
 (3)  
 there free election and choyce".

The King's alarming request that Lownes be appointed as reversioner to Baldcock was received by the Company on April 8th, 1622, and four days later a meeting of

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(1) MF 326,CM V3,18.1.95,f.280. The Grocers Company records show a similar opposition to all attempts to restrict their electoral freedom. In 1616, for example, the assistants rejected the possibility of electing a reversioner to the Company clerk as it would prevent free elections. GH MSS 11588/3,p.17.

(2) MF 328,CM V7,1.5.13,p.77. Conveniently the recently-married Elizabeth had left England for Germany since writing to the Company.

(3) MF 330,CM V9,17.3.43,f.162v.

seventeen assistants, including aldermen William Gore, John Gore and Robert Ducy, decided that constitutionally they were unable to overturn the order of the court made in 1610 against grants of the office being made prior to the resignation of the incumbent. The argument was not supported by the Company's ordinances, charters or any former resolutions restricting the right of the court to overturn previous decisions, and the decision to reject the demand was clearly not taken lightly. The minutes of the meeting note that "notwithstandinge the question was put to handes whether that order should be repealed or noe and thereby it appeared that noe hands were held up for the repealing of the said order but all held up for the further confirmation thereof". A written reply was drawn up, but it was subsequently decided that a short verbal answer would be more effective, and this was delivered by the Master and wardens the following day.

One month later, a letter from Principal Secretary Sir George Calvert demanded immediate compliance with the king's wishes. His letter, set out verbatim in the court minutes, strongly implied that King James expected certain assistants to ensure that Lownes was duly appointed: the King had derived "little satisfaction" from their "plaine refusale", especially as his

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(1) In fact in 1614 the court had granted a reversion of the office.

(2) MF 328, CM V8, 8.4.22, pp.90, 92.

confidence that some of the assistants supported his request made him "more sensible of the backwardnes of the rest in particuler".<sup>(1)</sup> In the face of such determination on the part of the Crown, the earlier unanimity broke down, and two days later, in a move anticipating the reaction to the controversy arising from Lady Weld's will in 1623 and 1624, the matter was put to a secret ballot. The result showed that the majority - unenumerated in the records - were opposed to backing down, and the court invoked the assistance of Sir George Calvert's brother-in-law, liveryman George Wynne. At a cost to the Company of £20, Wynne ensured, if temporarily, that the court were not "<sup>(2)</sup>further prest".

Two years later, the death of Richard Baldcock, whose ill-health had most probably precipitated the intervention in 1622, led to concerted pressure being exerted on the court of assistants by King James, Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham. In September 1624, the court met to consider two letters from Principal Secretary Sir Edward Conway and another from the Duke, and to hear the demand from the Prince - conveyed by one of his aides - that Lownes be appointed. The assistants

<sup>(1)</sup> MF 328,CM V8,22.5.22,pp.95,96;CSPD1623-1625,pp.339, 340.

<sup>(2)</sup> MF 328,CM V8,24 5.22,p.98;MF 302,Accounts V12,1621-1622. The court evidenced their relief at the outcome by cheerfully granting minor favours to the King and Sir George in 1622 and 1623. MF 328,CM V8,8.10.22,16.12.23, pp.120,194.

interpreted the intervention as a direct threat to the privileges of government and free elections provided in the charters of the Company. A committee led by Alderman Robert Ducy presented a petition to the King asking that "they might keepe the continuance of their priviledges, & free election of their Clarke to themselves", stressing that the position was one of the "greatest consequence" in the affairs of the Company. While King James proved willing to withdraw his request, the Prince was more intransigent, insisting that "he can receive no answer to his content, but the choice of Mister Lownes, a brother  
 (1)  
 to his highnes servant". After further diplomatic manoeuvring involving expenditure of over £100 by the committee in defence of their "Privileges & Charters", the Prince finally accepted the holding of an election, provided his nominee was given 'first place' in the  
 (2)  
 proceedings. The court of assistants thereupon set about electing a successor to Baldcock from numerous candidates, who included at lease six Merchant Taylors, amongst them Lownes and the clerk of the yeomanry, George Lulls.

In a series of oral votes, the candidates were reduced

(1) MF 328,CM V8,25.9.24,ff.223v,224. It is highly probable that the heir to the throne was from the outset behind the attempt to impose Lownes on the Merchant Taylors Company.

(2) MF 328,CM V8,1.10.24,f.225;MF 302,Accounts V13,1624-1625.

successively to nine, then three and finally one, who was nevertheless then entered into a final formal two-man election with the unsuccessful Lownes in deference to the Prince's wishes. The final ballot had enormous, if somewhat complex, political implications. The successful candidate in the first series of votes was Clement Mosse, an experienced professional man with conservative views. He was well-known to most of the court of assistants as solicitor to both the East India Company and the City government, and as a freeman of the livery company like (1) his father before him. His rival was a little-known freeman whose most notable qualification was his undoubtedly close relationship with the next king of England. This also represented in another sense the least attractive feature of his candidature; his election would have seriously undermined the independence and manoeuvrability of the governors of the Company, who time and again had shown great concern for the continuance of the rights and the best interests of the organisation. That concern was very clearly demonstrated in the decision taken following Mosse's initial victory, but prior to the final ballot, to end longstanding tradition by making the office of Common Clerk subject to annual re-selection rather than a life-tenure. It is no surprise to find that Mosse in the event was the victor in the final contest. Of much greater significance was the fact that, despite the lack of a secret ballot, over

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(1) See Appendix 2.

(1)

one-quarter of the court voted for Lownes. These six assistants should be viewed not as the minority among the assistants who were not 'disaffected' from the Crown: they represented one section of the court so firmly tied to the royal government that they were prepared to ignore the long-term interests of the livery company, eloquently enumerated in the earlier petitions to King James and the Prince. The influence of such men would be felt acutely in the 1630s, when the interests of Company and Crown were rarely so at odds.

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(1) MF 328, CM V8, 1.10.24, f.225. The court minutes exceptionally provide exact results of the voting, which was 17 votes to 6.

IV: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS 1625-1645Relations with the Crown 1625-1629

In 1625, Charles was crowned king of England, and despite the controversy surrounding the choice of the clerk in the earlier 1620s and the contentious atmosphere in the parliaments of the later 1620s, the Company maintained harmonious relations with the Crown. The favourable attitude of the ruling court towards the 1627 loan to the Crown, provided by the City government via the livery companies to the dismay of those hoping for the re-call of parliament, underlines the lack of resentment at the demands and intervention of the royal government among the governing élite - who had arranged for the arms of Prince Charles to be carved over their banqueting house  
 (1) only months after enduring his bullying.

In December 1627, the assistants responded to the request for a loan with a degree of enthusiasm which contrasted with the resigned or antagonistic positions adopted by  
 (2) some livery companies, agreeing that the Company's £6,300

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(1) MF 302, Accounts V13, 1624-1625.

(2) The Grocers Company initially refused to advance their full £6,000 proportion, 'leaving' £1,000 for their lost apothecary members. GH MSS 11588/3, pp.360,362. Many members of the Vintners Company resisted the assessment. Crawford, op.cit.,pp.114,115; Ashton,"City", p.180; Pearl, "London", pp.73-76.

assessment towards the initial £60,000 would be raised from individual liverymen. Repayment with interest was guaranteed, if necessary through the sale of Company property, plate and goods.<sup>(1)</sup> Only two days after the court had been notified of the decision of Common Council to provide the £120,000 loan, the assistants managed to assemble twenty-two of their own number and over fifty other liverymen, who approved the proposals and pledged a total of £4,590 after the Company aldermen and other leading assistants rated themselves "in a large and liberall proportion". Ten days later, £3,000 of the £4,590 had been collected, and on the 11th January the entire assessment was delivered to the City Chamber, with the loans supplemented with the contents of the treasury - £500 - and the money held in the hands of the Master. Not surprisingly, the Company governors had difficulty in raising the second levy of £2,100 in summer 1628; it was scraped together after a total of £1,000 was advanced by

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(1) This willingness to pledge corporate property was unprecedented, and contrasts with the court's response to demands for a loan to parliament in 1642. Although the terms of the 1627 loan were favourable to the City, the clerk Clement Mosse expressed his alarm at the decision by adding the comment "God forbid" to the minutes recording the court's deliberations. Pearl, "London", p.73; MF 328, CM V8, 20.12.27, f.315v.

the three aldermen Sir John Gore, Sir Robert Ducy and  
 (1)  
 William Acton.

It is an historical commonplace that the following year Charles I dissolved parliament after facing violent criticism of royal policies, and ruled without recourse to that body for the following eleven years. London has been presented as the centre of disenchantment with the policies of the king and William Laud, although the degree of success of those policies and the extent of opposition to them before the Bishops War are now  
 (2)  
 historically controversial. The position of one major City institution is however unambiguous: the Merchant Taylors Company enthusiastically implemented royal and Laudian policies, a phenomenon most usefully explored after examination of the personalities and power-structure of the Company during the period.

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(1) MF 328, CM V8, 22.12.27, seq., ff.317v - 330v; MF 302, Accounts V14, 1627-28. A total of £80,000 of the £120,000 was raised from the City livery companies, and the favourable reaction of certain major companies, including the Merchant Taylors and Drapers, was crucial to the success of the loan. The two companies provided 10.5% and 7.5% respectively of the entire sum raised from the companies. Girtin, "Triple Crowns", p.221.

(2) Ashton, "City", passim; Sharpe, "Personal Rule", pp.53-78; C. Russell, "Parliamentary History in Perspective, 1604-1629", History, V61, 1976, pp.1-27.

Company Government 1630-1641 : Personnel and Politics

It has been shown already that power in the Merchant Taylors Company was concentrated in the hands of a small group of the regularly-attending senior assistants.<sup>(1)</sup> Their dominance was particularly marked in those periods when the alternating numerical balance between the two sections of the court was in their favour, and the size of the court was small. The 1630s represents one of these periods. One result of the tendency for leading Merchant Taylors to pay a fine rather than serve as sheriff or as Master in the late 1620s and early 1630s was a decisive shift in the numerical balance in favour of the senior assistants, furnishing them with a majority at most meetings over the lower group. This situation prevailed throughout the 1630s and early 1640s, although the numerical imbalance was most notable in the period 1632-1638. Furthermore, the size of the ruling body greatly contracted. In 1630, the total number of assistants who answered summons at least once was thirty-seven, with an average of fourteen present at meetings; by 1635 only twenty-three men were sharing the burden of government, with an average attendance of less than twelve. The formal quorum of ten assistants was more than once ignored by the small number of regularly-attending members of the court. New members were however only co-opted in January 1637 under the direction of the

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(1) See above, pp.31-36,57-60.

(1) (2)

Master, the radical Richard Turner. As has been discussed above, this apparent reluctance to nominate additional members after 1630 may well have been engendered by political considerations.

Directive authority in the Merchant Taylors Company under Charles I clearly lay with a handful of senior assistants, and it is in consequence of great significance that their number was dominated by citizens later allied with the royal government. Table 13 identifies those key governors who attended a minimum of one-third of the courts in one or more years in the period 1630-1641 and who can consequently be presumed to have exercised a significant degree of influence in the determination of key policies. Five figures are shown to have been at the helm of the Merchant Taylors Company in the dozen years under scrutiny: merchants Alderman William Acton, William Hawkins and George Benson, and drapers Alderman Henry Pratt and Michael Griggs. The most prominent assistant was Acton, whose influence in the 1630s must have been comparable with that of Sir John Swinnerton earlier in the century. Acton and Pratt were moreover two of the decidedly royalist aldermen

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(1) See Appendix 2 for Turner's biography.

(2) See above, pp. 45, 46.

(3) It will be shown that a wider group of liverymen played a role in the determination of Company policies in 1642 and 1643.

(4) See Appendix 2 for biographical details on Acton, Hawkins, Benson, Pratt and Griggs.

TABLE 13

Senior assistants attending one-third of meetings in any year 1630-1641.

	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	Total
Sir Robert Ducy	x	x	x	x									4
<u>Sir William Acton</u>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12
Matthew Bedell	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					7
Robert Draper	x			x									2
Henry Polstead	x	x	x	x	x	x				x			7
Bartholomew Elnor	x	x	x	x	x	x							6
<u>Sir Henry Pratt</u>	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
Francis Neave	x	x											2
Sir John Gore		x											1
<u>William Hawkins</u>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
<u>George Benson</u>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			9
Edward Cotton	x	x	x	x									4
<u>Michael Griggs</u>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		9
Robert Gray		x	x	x	x	x	x	x					6
Robert Senior			x	x	x	x							4
William Stanley			x										1
Nicholas Grice			x	x	x	x	x	x					6
William Tulley				x	x	x			x				4
Simon Bardolphe				x		x	x	x	x	x	x		6
Richard Turner					x	x	x	x	x	x	x		5
Simon Wood					x	x	x	x	x	x	x		5
Thomas Wetherall						x	x	x	x	x	x		4
William Parsell						x	x	x	x	x	x		3
Sir Abraham Reynardson							x	x					2
Clement Mosse							x						1

x = attended 1/3 of courts in the year in question.

The names of assistants who regularly attended in 9 or more of the 12 years are underlined.

identified by previous research. Griggs was the paymaster of the scheme to renovate St. Paul's Cathedral and one of the most notorious of London's royalists in the 1640s: his fortune was completely dissipated by parliamentary assessments and fines. The political leanings of William Hawkins, a leading Common Councilman throughout the 1630s, are indicated by his decision to add his signature to the petition organised by conservative forces in the City against the claim of Common Hall in 1641 to elect both City sheriffs. The politics of George Benson are uncertain; his diligent attendance at the hall abruptly ceased in late 1639, although he lived in London for at least part of the time prior to his death in 1644.

It is in fact difficult to pinpoint the policies of the majority of the most influential assistants of the 1630s and early 1640s, especially as a high proportion died before the outbreak of the Civil War. However, examination of the records of the Company and of the information pertaining to the business, civic and family ties of the senior assistants indicates that a significant number were in all probability well-affected towards the Crown - including aldermen Sir John Gore and Sir Robert Lucy and concessionaire Bartholomew Elnor. Alderman Abraham Reynardson would in 1649 oppose the abolition of the monarchy, and Clement Mosse would defend the royalist Lord Mayor Richard Gurney in 1642 and

strongly oppose the loan to parliament in the same year.

Although some senior assistants were unlikely to have strongly supported the Crown in the 1630s-most notably Captain Richard Turner, Master in 1636, and Simon Wood,  
<sup>(1)</sup> Master in 1637-it is abundantly clear that they were unable to muster even minor resistance to Company policies. There was no repetition of the wrangling and closely-contested formal votes which had characterised the elections to offices in the Company's gift and the consideration of controversial issues under James I : in March 1631, at a meeting at which the Master Henry Pratt and aldermen Ducy, Gore and Acton were the highest-ranking assistants present, it was resolved to appoint the son-in-law of the Common Clerk as reversioner to that position to prevent "doubts and scruples which maie  
<sup>(2)</sup> hereafter arise". The stability, prosperity and political influence of the Company in the 1630s secured at least the acquiescence of the great majority of assistants to the policies of the most powerful members of the court - a situation unaltered by the intakes of

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<sup>(1)</sup> See Appendix 2 for supporting evidence on Gore, Ducy, Elnor, Reynardson Mosse, Turner and Wood.

<sup>(2)</sup> The appointment of Robert Marsh was made in response to Mosse's "Longe and tedious sickness", and belied the claim made in 1622 that the order of 1610 against reversions was irreversible. The decision was reviewed a month later, but was duly ratified. MF 329, CM V8, 18.3.31, 21.4.31, ff.405, 405v, 414v.

new assistants in 1637, 1638 and 1641, which included several known or probable supporters of both Crown and parliament.<sup>(1)</sup> While it needs to be emphasised again that in most cases political considerations were not the sole or even the most telling determinant of Company policies, it is inevitable that the political complexion of the court of assistants in the 1630s and early 1640s was reflected in certain areas of Company activity.

#### Relations with the Crown 1630 - 1641

Probably the single most important aspect of the ideological leanings of the Company during the 1630s was the intimate relationship of the ruling élite with William Laud, previously unremarked on by biographers of the Archbishop and historians of the City livery companies.

The roots of the special association lay in Laud's connection with St. John's College, Oxford. In 1610,

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(1) Twelve liverymen were co-opted in 1637, six in 1638 and five in 1641. There are indications that six of the twenty-three were unsympathetic to parliament in the early 1640s (Parsell, Hollinworth, Francklyn, Nash, Baker and Gardiner), and that four supported Pym and his allies (Venn, Thurlington, Stone and Pococke). See Appendix 3. Reynardson and Mosse joined the court in 1639 on their election as sheriffs.

after twenty years as scholar and later fellow at the college, Laud was elected President, and during his eleven years tenure disseminated High-Church ideas with the assistance of men like William Juxon, who went up to St. John's in 1602 after studying at the Merchant Taylors  
 Company grammar school in Suffolk Lane. As President,  
 one of Laud's duties was to attend the annual election of scholars from the Merchant Taylors school to vacant scholarships, which was followed by a dinner at the school provided by two junior liverymen for the court of assistants and their guests. Almost every year up to and including 1621 Laud attended in person, rather than delegating responsibility to his deputy. In this way he became well-acquainted with many liverymen who would dominate their company in the 1630s.

In contrast to the late sixteenth century, relations between the two institutions remained warm, and although the formal link between Laud and the Company ended in

(1) Trevor-Roper, op-cit., pp. 32-57.

(2) In 1626 Laud became Bishop of Bath and Wells, and in 1629 Bishop of London, renewing his connection with Oxford by becoming Chancellor of the University the following year. Trevor-Roper, op.cit., pp.78, 92; K.Sharpe, "Archbishop Laud and the University of Oxford", History and Imagination, pp.146-164.

1621 when Laud resigned his position at St. John's to take-up the bishopric of St. Davids, he accompanied his protégé William Juxon to Suffolk Lane in 1622 and 1623. Juxon was President from 1621 to 1633, visiting the school in person or appointing deputies who included William Bigmore, another protégé of Laud maintained as a fellow by the Merchant Taylors Company. On other occasions Juxon was represented by John Luxton, overseer of the building of Laud's Canterbury Quadrangle at St. John's, and Richard Bailey, who as Juxon's successor as President upheld the Laudian tradition at the College.  
 (1)  
 He was discharged from office by parliament in 1648.

That Laud maintained an interest in the school after 1621 is not surprising: it produced many of his academic allies under Edmund Smyth, head teacher in the 1590s, and his successors, William Haynes (Master 1599-1625) and Nicholas Gray (Master 1625-1632). Their scholars included William Bigmore, William Juxon, William Chillingworth - Laud's godson - and George Wilde, Laud's  
 (2)  
 chaplain. In 1629, Laud was enthroned as Bishop of

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(1) MT Hall, MSS Bk L5; Trevor-Roper, *op.cit.*, pp.58, 284-287; MF 302, Accounts V12, 1621-1622, 1622-1623; MF 330, CM V9, 11.6.48, ff. 286, 286v.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 15.5.91, 19.5.99, 19.6.99, ff.227, 394-396; MF 328, CM V8, 29.1.25, f.240. F.M.W. Draper, *op.cit., passim.*

London, and in April 1631 Sir Robert Ducy informed his fellow assistants that the Bishop had recommended William Bigmore as reversioner to school-master Gray. Although the Company governors strongly resisted attempts to limit their right to freely elect masters to Company schools in  
 (1) the 1640s, the Bishop's wish was immediately granted by the Master, Henry Pratt, and his colleagues. Laud made clear his satisfaction at the result by accepting an invitation to the annual election at the grammar school in June 1631, after earlier dining with Pratt and his  
 (2) wardens.

Of even greater significance is the evidence provided by the financial accounts that unenumerated assistants visited the Bishop on several occasions in late 1630 and early 1631, inaugurating a series of mysterious meetings with Laud and (occasionally) Juxon which symbolizes the intimate relationship established between the livery company and its controversial patrons. In contrast to comparable items of expenditure relating strictly to Company business, these entries never reveal the purpose of the visits and exclude the cost of arranging transportation - but were guaranteed to be passed by the

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(1) See below. Bigmore had furthermore been classed as a "poor towardly scholar" while at the Suffolk Lane school. E.P. Hart.(ed.), Merchant Taylors School Register 1561-1934, V1 (no page nos.)

(2) MF 302, Accounts V15, 1630-1631; F.M.W. Draper, op.cit., pp.54,55,; MF 329, CM V8 21.4.31, 11.6.31, ff.414, 419v-420.

passed by the auditing committee, which invariably  
 (1) included prominent later royalists. Michael Griggs, for example, was appointed as one of the handful of auditors every year from 1634 to 1639 inclusive.

In early 1632, Gray resigned as head teacher of the grammar-school, and as Bigmore had recently died, Laud sought to nominate Gray's successor afresh through Sir Robert Lucy, who signified the Bishop's preference for John Edwards - another protégé educated at the school in Suffolk Lane and at St. John's. In the subsequent election, the court expressly took the recommendation into account in appointing Edwards in preference to two  
 (2) well-qualified rival candidates. Just one month later, the Company governors assembled to consider Laud's personal letter urging them to support his scheme to restore St. Paul's Cathedral, decrying its condition as "a disgrace to religion happily established in this Kingdome". The ambitious plan to restore the cathedral church of the City was one which appealed to many citizens who did not otherwise support Laud's  
 (3) religious programme, but he can only have been pleased at

(1) In the year ended July 1634 for example assistants met Juxon or Laud on several occasions on recorded business, and at least once regarding unspecified matters. MF 303, Accounts V16, 1633-1634.

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 13.2.32, f.436; F.M.W. Draper, op. cit., p.55; Hart, op.cit., V1.

(3) Puritan Sir James Cambell in 1642 bequeathed a sum towards the re-building. Pearl, "London", p.295.

the court's exemplary response. The livery company rulers expressed a "pious inclination to the furtherance of work of that nature", and agreed to advance the sum of £500 in ten annual instalments. Shortly afterwards, Michael Griggs, Master of the Company in 1632, was entrusted with the office of Paymaster of the restoration programme, while assistants Acton and Ducy served on the commission set up to oversee the implementation of the  
 (1)  
 renovation plans.

Laud clearly had useful allies in the City of London, and his concern to strengthen his bond with the Merchant Taylors Company led him to attend at the grammar school once again in June 1632. Furthermore, in a symbolic move previously unremarked on by scholars of Laud's life and political activities, he afterwards "intimated unto the Master Wardens and Assistants of this society the singular good affection hee beareth to this Companye and in testimony thereof desired to bee admitted and accepted a brother of the same." Laud was gratefully admitted as an honorary freeman and "professed himselfe to remayne a  
 (2)  
 true and affectionate brother to this society". The following year, he was elevated to the See of Canterbury and was succeeded as bishop of London by William Juxon,

(1) MF 329, CM V8, 14.3.32, ff.438; 438v; CSPD, 1631-1633, pp.6-7, 527. The Grocers Company contributed £350 and the Vintners Company £100. GH MSS 11588/13, 9.12.31, p.470; Crawford, op.cit., p.115.

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 11.6.32, f.405v.

providing the Company with unprecedented access to the highest levels of government.

The newly-acquired influence was highly-valued by the rulers of the livery company and was put to good use. In October 1633, Griggs and the current wardens were directed to present plate to Laud as an expression of the court's goodwill towards him and as an acknowledgement of his "many favours to them." Some months later, a similar gift was presented by the assistants to Juxon to underline their "earnest desire for the continuance of his Lordshippe's favour towards them".<sup>(1)</sup> The advantageous position of the Company provides one of the keys to understanding the ease with which men like Acton and Griggs determined the political orientation of the organisation in the 1630s and early 1640s.

The Merchant Taylors Company or appointed agents had on a number of occasions sought remedies for grievances through parliament, especially regarding the regulation of the City tailoring trade, but had experienced a singular success in promoting restrictive legislation. By way of contrast, the Company had a long tradition of close and rewarding relations with the Crown, and from 1630 enjoyed the most successful decade in its history: political influence unknown since the reign of Henry VII was acquired, apprentices and freemen were

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(1) MF 329. CM V8, 25.10.33, 8.2.34. ff.489, 496v, 497;  
MF 303, Accounts, V16, 1633-1634.

enrolled on an unprecedented scale, and corporate real estate and disposable income reached their highest levels.<sup>(1)</sup> This happy state of affairs may explain why the minority of assistants with political and religious views antithetical to those of the most influential members of the ruling court were unable to muster support from their colleagues against potentially contentious Company policies.

The relationship between the livery company and its patron remained close after 1632. The financial accounts reveal that delegations visited Laud to discuss a variety of matters, including the administration of the Company's grammar school, alien tailors working within the franchises of the City, a number of unspecified matters,<sup>(2)</sup> and the entertainment of Charles I at the Hall in 1634. This event underlined the good relations between the Crown and the Company. When arrangements were made for the King to watch the performance of a masque in the City, it was not exceptional for the Hall of the Merchant Taylors Company to be selected as the venue, as one of the most magnificent and spacious of the halls of the City livery companies.<sup>(3)</sup> The opportunity was however

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(1) See above, pp.62-65.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.37, f.22v,23; MF 303, Accounts V16, 1633-1634, 1634-1635, 1636-1637.

(3) See below,pp.272-273. The Hall had been used for a masque and banquet two decades earlier to mark Princess Elizabeth's marriage. CSPD 1611-1618,p.220.

seized on by the governing élite to emphasise their regard for Charles I. A delegation led by Griggs met Laud to discuss the intention of the King to visit the Hall on February 9th, and the Master and wardens sat at the Hall to make preparations and were present on the day of the masque. They arranged for the purchase of a picture of the King and for the hanging of curtains around the royal arms in the Hall, and in a symbolic gesture, hung from the ceiling the large model ship which had represented the centre-piece in the entertainment of  
 (1)  
 James I in 1607.

The special relationship between the governing body of the livery company and the Archbishop of Canterbury in the 1630s was beneficial to both parties. The dominant group on the court of assistants evinced remarkable support for Laud's policy of promoting schemes to restore dilapidated ecclesiastical buildings in London. The Company governors pledged a total of almost £1,000 in the 1630s, not only towards the scheme to restore St. Paul's Cathedral, but to projects involving the restoration of numerous other churches, some (such as Barking parish church) being outside of the City franchises. Their 'pious inclination' to assist such projects led to the refurbishment of the organs of the Collegiate Church of

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(1) MF 303, Accounts, V16, 1633-1634; MF 329; CM V8, 8.2.34, f.496v.; CSPD 1633-1634, p.464; CLRO Rep.48, f.103v seq..

Wolverhampton, after the townsmen had alleged that the instruments had been originally installed by Merchant Taylor Sir Stephen Jenyns in the sixteenth century. The Company at no point favoured such Puritan organisations as the Feoffees for Impropropriations, and extended no support to Puritan lectureships or unbeneficed preachers in line with Laud's policies in the capital. The court of assistants in addition responded generously to requests from their two episcopal patrons concerning the provision of gratuities to favoured teachers at the grammar school, and regularly arranged for the presentation of gifts to Laud and Juxon-whose influence was greatly augmented by his nomination as Lord Treasurer in 1636 - right up until New Year 1640, despite the obvious political indiscretion of manifesting support of any sort for 'Laud the Fox' by that date.

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the relationship was the consistent willingness of the Company governors to accept Laud's appointees as schoolmaster of their famous London grammar school, a phenomenon illustrating

(1) Pearl,"London, p.79; Ashton,"City",pp.197, 198; MF 329, CM V8, MF 330, CM V9, MF 302, Accounts V15, MF 303, Accounts V16, V17, passim. The court declared itself to be "piously inclined to further and advance workes of that nature", although the open-handed policy was suspended in 1635 and 1636 as a result of the great demands of freemen beset by economic hardship; MF 329, CM V8, 18.3.31, 20.1.35, ff.404v, 518v.

(2) Trevor-Roper,op.cit.,p.118.

(3) Pearl, "London", pp.107,108.

both the interventionist nature of Laudian policy and the submissive response of the livery company. John Edwards had proved an unsatisfactory master as a result of his continuing preoccupation with St. John's College and assignments from Laud, and in 1634 announced his intention to vacate the position. The court then considered three possible successors, including Edward's deputy John Phillips, but were informed by both Alderman William Acton and Michael Griggs that Laud favoured another of the three contenders, William Staple. The court "taking notice of the especial recommendation" duly appointed Staple, who was ejected in 1644 by parliament after being found to "bee very superstitious in his practices and to have expressed malignancy against the Parliament."<sup>(1)</sup>

Laud was not slow to reward his allies in the capital. After meetings between Company representatives and the Archbishop in late 1634 and early 1635, royal letters were obtained annulling the traditional immunity of alien tailors in London from prosecution, assisted no doubt by Laud's antipathy for the rights of Protestant aliens

(1) In 1633, Laud noted that he had "occasion to make use of Mr. Edwardes for the transcribing of some Schollerlike Papers" and other scholarly business. F.M.W. Draper, op.cit., pp.56,57.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 14.4.44, ff.195-196; MF 329, CM V8, 31.10.34, ff.514, 514v.

residing in England. This concession, the first substantial legal advance secured for the handicraft for nearly eighty years, was of considerable value not only to the artisan freemen, but to the ruling élite; it diminished the likelihood that the economic problems of freemen outside the livery would spill over into constitutional criticism. In addition, in 1637 the influence of the livery company governors with Laud eased the passing of the licence in mortmain required to allow the construction of the new Company alms-houses at Tower Hill. A committee led by Griggs met the Archbishop and made payments which included a gratuity to his secretary for the "extraordinary favour the company received."<sup>(1)</sup>

The rapport between Laud and the Merchant Taylors Company provided both parties with less tangible but equally valuable benefits. The Company enjoyed direct access to leading figures at Court, a privilege which not only facilitated the implementation of policy decisions, but imparted a sense of security and confidence in the future of the organisation which can be sensed in the court

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<sup>(1)</sup> PRO, SP 16, 535, no.73; SP 16, 289, no.44. MF 329, CM V8, 8.10.34, f.512v. MF 303, Accounts V16, 1634-1635. See below, pp.342, 343.

<sup>(2)</sup> MF 303, Accounts V16, 1636-1637; MF 303, CM V9, 5.4.37, f.7.

minutes of the 1630s. As Bishop of London and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury, Laud was furnished with an enhanced ability to feel the pulse and influence the life of the capital through frequent meetings with executive officers and leading assistants like Griggs and Ducy, some of whom he had been acquainted with for twenty years by the mid-1630s.<sup>(1)</sup> And what of the meetings organised for unspecified reasons, at least sometimes at the request of Laud rather than the livery company rulers? Those tete-a-tetes fortuitously revealed in the Company account books as a result of petty expense claims may but hint at the extent and purpose of the liaison and collaboration between the two parties. What is certain is that Laud received support for his policies, and for the policies of the government of which he was a central figure until its collapse in 1640.

This support is clearly manifested in the attitude of the governing body towards the payment of ship money, perhaps the most celebrated constitutional issue of the 1630s. While less co-operative groups on the governing councils of some of the principal City livery companies were at least strong enough to initiate debate on the issue, the Master of the Merchant Taylors Company paid the annual

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(1) He attended dinners at the grammar school provided by Francis Neave and William Hawkins in 1614 and 1615 respectively.

levy without formal reference to the court of assistants until 1640. In early 1639, the ship money quota of the municipality was levied as an additional assessment on the twelve leading livery companies, and some not surprisingly responded unenthusiastically. In the absence of its leading member, the later royalist Edmund Wright, the court of assistants of the Grocers Company proved receptive to the arguments doubtless advanced by Alderman Thomas Soame and his allies, and strongly opposed the decision of the City authorities to pass the responsibility for raising the sum to the companies. The Haberdashers Company only agreed to pay their share of the levy if the seven most senior livery companies paid their contributions first. The Merchant Taylors Company (1) however contributed the additional sum without quibbling. Indeed, only with the mounting crisis of mid-1640 was the issue of the Company's annual payment of the ship money raised at all at a meeting of the ruling group where the controversial levy was one of only two items discussed.

The meeting was held on July 9th, five days before the Election Day, which had been appointed by a meeting held on July 3rd. Traditionally, no full courts of assistants were convened following the assembly at which the date of

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(1) Haberdashers court minutes 1583-1652, GH MSS 15842/1, 16.11.39, f.302; GH MSS 11588/3.3.4.39, 18.4.39, pp.631-633; MF 330, CM V9, 9.4.39, ff.70, 70v. For Wright and Soame, see Pearl, "London", pp.307, 308, 191, 192. Soame was the second most senior member of the Grocers Company, and a supporter of parliament in the 1640s, sitting as one of the four City M.P.'s.

the Election Day was announced and the Election Day itself, although small, ad hoc assemblies sometimes met to consider urgent business in the meantime. The meeting on July 9th represented one of these occasional meetings, summoned to hear the report of the committee negotiating the payment of the substantial legacies of late assistant Robert Gray. The meeting of fourteen, which included three important parliamentarians of the 1640s, was however just large enough to be constituted as a formal court of assistants able to make policy decisions, and the 'parliamentarian' group, no doubt encouraged by the absence of William Acton and Abraham Reynardson, took the opportunity to attempt to alter the direction of a decade of Company policy.<sup>(1)</sup> The subsequent debate at last saw a challenge to the automatic payment of ship money; its course is characteristically not revealed in the court minutes, but the outcome was unequivocal. In a terse entry, the clerk noted that the court resolved that the demand for ship money should be met, and the levy was duly paid at a time when the Lord Mayor was desperately attempting to raise the City's contribution by means of a house-to-house collection.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) GH MSS 11571,V12: Grocers Company. Quires of Wardens Accounts 1632-1642, f351; GH MSS 11588/3,23.1.35, p.541; MF 330,CM V9, 3.7.40, 9.7.40, f.105. For the 'parliamentarians' Langham, Venn see pp.213, 46.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.90,91; Ashton, "City", pp.187, 188. Ship money was at least discussed by the Grocers Company in 1635, and was certainly not paid in 1640 despite the issuing of a warning by the municipality.

The raising of the issue of ship money was one of a number of indications that the "dangerous disturbance of  
 (1)  
 the..tymes" was endangering the facade of unity maintained by the governors of the Merchant Taylors Company, and causing political divisions on the ruling court to become more open and pronounced. In March 1640, it came to light that Captain John Venn had advised a provincial merchant who was unwilling to accept his election as a yeomanry warden that "there are but two things to bee done, the one to submitt, th'other to oppose the government of that Company" - of which he was of course a member. Only months earlier the court had urged a yeomanry warden-elect who was a leading royalist alderman of Oxford in the 1640s to come to London to take-up the position, stressing that the work of the yeomanry wardens was "of great importance for the advancement of the King's service." A further indication of mounting tension was the shockingly contemptuous behaviour of leading freeman Samual Lewis towards one of the wardens in mid-1640: Lewis was a prominent political  
 (2)  
 independent in the 1640s.

Of greater significance was the decision of a meeting headed by Alderman Pratt in June 1640 to cancel the Election Day dinner at which the choice of the new Master

(1) MF 330, CM V9, 18.5.40,f.101.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.39, 4.3.40, 19.6.40, ff.81v,95v, 104v; Farnell, Ph.D.thesis, p.361. Lewis joined the livery in 1646.

and wardens was traditionally announced by their immediate predecessors before a large number of dignitaries and the whole body of liverymen. It was unexceptional for the large-scale gathering and dinner to be cancelled in difficult times: in 1639, the Election Day was restricted to a dinner for the assistants at the express order of the City government as a result of the hard times and "dednes of tradeing". The evidence suggests however that in 1640 the decision was a political one. In May 1640, the court stocked up on gunpowder "to bee in reddynes whensoever there shall bee use thereof", and a month later cancelled the Election Day, with no reasons noted in the minutes to justify the decision. What is clear is that some assistants interpreted it in a sinister light. At a small meeting on July 3rd which included all the main assistants who evinced support for parliament in the early 1640s - Turner, Wood, Venn and Captain Langham - a compromise was hammered-out on the nature of the Election Day, the single issue discussed. It was agreed that the proceedings should be conducted "in as private manner as conveniently may be", but that nonetheless the liverymen were to be allowed to attend. Six days later, on July 9th, the second extraordinary meeting assembled to discuss the issue of ship money, although Turner and his ideological allies were unsuccessful in this instance in  
(1)  
their attempt to change Company policy.

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(1) MF 330, CM v9, 9.4.39, 26.6.39, 19.6.40, 3.7.40,  
ff.70v, 76, 103, 105.

On July 15th, the probable cause of the move to restrict attendance at the Election Day became apparent when Abraham Reynardson was elected as Master of the Company.

(1) As has been shown above, the pattern of elections had been distorted since the second decade of the seventeenth century by the shortage of assistants willing to accept the office, and by the extension of the pool of potential Masters to those who had fined as sheriff. Before 1640, the only election possibly affected by political factors was the election of Michael Griggs as Master in 1632 immediately after he had been snubbed by the citizens after his election as sheriff: he had not joined the (2) ruling court until the day of his election as Master.

Reynardson was eligible for election in 1640 as he had been admitted to the court of assistants in August 1639 after having been discharged as sheriff-elect. By 1640, however, a pool of ex-wardens suitable for further promotion existed, including four assistants who had served twice as warden between 1635 and 1638 and went on to act as Master during the earlier 1640s. Reynardson moreover had been re-elected as sheriff on July 6th, and his attempt to fine blocked by the court of aldermen including Acton and Pratt, leading to his acceptance of the office on July 21st. No sheriff or alderman had concurrently held office in the Merchant Taylors Company for at least a century, but at the "earnest request" of

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(1) See pp.49-56.

(2) See Appendix 2.

his colleagues, Reynardson agreed to hold both positions, "every of the Assistants promiseinge to give him all the assistance they could".<sup>(1)</sup>

In the charged atmosphere of mid-1640, the conservative instincts of Reynardson no doubt appealed to the majority of the eleven senior assistants eligible to vote in the election of the Master, who included aldermen Acton and Pratt, Michael Griggs, Clement Mosse and Reynardson himself, and certainly made him preferable to one of the main potential contenders, George Langham. Langham was closely associated with John Venn in the City trained bands, and in the 1630s was active in the Artillery Garden of the City, a centre of Puritan secular activities. As a prominent wine importer and fluent French-speaker, he rose to become deputy-governor of the French Company, but died a Colonel in arms in 1643.<sup>(2)</sup> The election of Reynardson rather than Langham, an assistant

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<sup>(1)</sup> CLRO, Rep.53,f.239, Rep.54, f.252 seq.;MF 330, CM V9, 23.9.40, f.110v.

<sup>(2)</sup> They are found acting in concert throughout the 1630s and early 1640s in the Company court minutes and City Repertories. Every year 1640-1642 they were active in stocking-up the Company's arsenal. MF 330, CM V9, 23.9.40, 7.4.41, 9.3.42, ff.112,123,143v.

<sup>(3)</sup> CLRO, Rep.47, f.154; CSPD 1631-1633,p.332; CSPD 1633-1634,p.292; MF 330, CM V9, 11.7.43, f.176v; Pearl, "London",pp.170,171. Langham was also a prominent member of Common Council in the 1630s and early 1640s, and in the 1640s his son and namesake rather confusingly became a Colonel, Common Councilman, Merchant Taylors Company liveryman and a supporter of the political independents. Farnell, Ph.D.thesis, p.125.

of eleven years standing who had served as warden in 1636 and 1638, was not impossible to justify in terms of recent electoral practices, but was likely to have been unpopular with many liverymen. In the event, disturbance was avoided, although just two months later the City liverymen decisively rejected the Company's leading member, William Acton, as Lord Mayor, casting only 200  
 (1) out of 1,500 votes for his nomination.

Under Reynardson's direction the Company élite remained close to the Crown, expressing strong support for Acton in October 1640 after his humiliating re-buff the month before, and immediately acceding to the request received in the same month for the first instalment of the controversial £200,000 municipal loan to the Crown that the City had agreed would be advanced on the security of  
 (2) the sixty-one lords assembled at York. Unlike the rulers of some of the major companies, including the Grocers, the assistants did not attach qualifications to their decision to raise their 10 per cent of the initial £50,000. "Well weighing" the request, the court resolved that "his Majesttie should be supplyed", and energetically set-about raising the £5,000 by calling-in loans made under bond to the East India Company, the Merchant Adventurers Company and other parties. Over £3,300 was assembled by this means, with the shortfall furnished from the surplus funds held by the Master and

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(1) Pearl, "London", pp.110,111.

(2) Ibid,pp.103,104; Ashton, "City", pp.199,200.

wardens. The entire sum was deliver to the Exchequer in under a month by Company representatives who twice dined at Westminster while paying the assessment. The enthusiasm of the livery company governors to assist the King once it was politically feasible was unmistakable, and contrasted with their attitude towards the Long Parliament, which met one month later. Although a few of the major City livery companies approached parliament with petitions of grievances, again including the Grocers, the Merchant Taylors Company (in common with the majority of the companies) conspicuously made no complaints to either House touching monopolies, new incorporations or any other matter. Per contra, in 1641 petitions hostile to the Merchant Taylors Company were presented to parliament concerning fees charged to newly-enrolled apprentices and freemen, and the administration of the trust bequeathed for the

(1) GH MSS 11588/4,7.10.40,p.14;MF 330, CM V9, 9.10.40, 117v,118; MF 303, Accounts V17, 1640-1641.

(2) The livery companies had refused to lend the Crown money in July 1640. When Lord Mayor Henry Garway after three attempts and forcing a vote on the issue failed to obtain a favourable majority on the Drapers Company ruling court, Reynardson avoided controversy by not convening a formal court of assistants to consider the matter. Johnson, op.cit., V3, pp.145,146; Pearl, "London", pp.102,103.

(3) GH MSS 11,588/4,18.12.40,p.18.

(1)

maintenance of the grammar school at Wolverhampton.

In July 1641, only weeks after Pym's allies in Common Hall had initiated a constitutional crisis after claiming the right to elect both of the sheriffs, the court of assistants assembled in a highly-charged political atmosphere to elect a successor to Alderman Reynardson. The composition of the upper section of the court made the election as Master of an assistant well-disposed towards the Crown from the two candidates nominated by (2) Reynardson and his wardens highly probable. The seven senior assistants included Acton, Pratt and Reynardson himself, while of the other four ex- Masters (Bardolphe, Turner, Wetherall and Parsell) only Turner can be identified with the City parliamentarians. The upshot was the election of the conservative Comptroller of the City Chamber, Clement Mosse, as Master for the subsequent year. He was eligible for election as he had been recruited to the court of assistants in 1639 after fining against the office of sheriff, but the municipal

(1) HOL Journals iv, 448; MF 303, Accounts V17, 1640-1641; HMC, 4th Report, HOL MSS, p.77.

(2) George Francklyn, Warden 1640-1641, was one of several middle-ranking Merchant Taylors to sign the petition of July 1641 against the claim of those "not well affected to the present Government" to elect both sheriffs. HOL MSS, Victoria Tower, July 17th-26th 1641.

employments (which had obliged him to resign his position as Common Clerk five years earlier) hardly made him a more suitable potential Master than the many former wardens available for nomination, including George Langham. Mosse was a man trusted by the foremost assistants: only months after his term of office as Master had ended, he was defending the royalist Lord Mayor Richard Gurney by drawing upon his decades of experience in the City administration in an attempt to refute the allegations of those advocating his impeachment.

The wardens who served with Mosse were all chosen according to their precedence in the livery. They included George Nash, who during his term of office signed the petition of February 1642 circulated by the City royalists and conservatives against the power of the radical City militia committee - a petition supported by at least fifteen other liverymen and leading freemen of the Company. His fellow renter warden John Venn accepted the burdensome office with some reluctance, and clearly saw little chance of manoeuvering the Company into a position favourable to the cause he was energetically advancing through other channels. He attended only three of the courts of assistants held under Mosse, while by way of contrast his fellow renter-warden Nash was present  
 (1)  
 at all fourteen meetings.

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(1) For Mosse see Appendix 2; Pearl, "London", pp.149, 150, 156; HOL MSS, Victoria Tower, Main Papers, February 24th 1642. Nash became Master in 1647, as did fellow signatory and leading Presbyterian Walter Pell in 1649. Liu, "Puritan London", p.81.

Relations with the Long Parliament 1641-1645

Political controversy was avoided under the guidance of Mosse until the closing months of his term of office. In November 1641, over thirty assistants and liverymen were directed to line the streets to mark the return of Charles I to the City, but the participation of several prominent adherents of parliament underlined the formal nature of the welcome accorded by the City liverymen to the  
 (1) King. A situation of much greater gravity was occasioned in June 1642 by the receipt of a demand for 10 per cent of the £100,000 loan to parliament granted in extraordinary circumstances by Common Hall on the  
 (2) security of an ordinance of the House of Commons.

The possible responses to the demand were limited. Outright refusal was certainly not an option open to the court, even if the most influential governors had been prepared to risk serious divisions among the assistants and other liverymen. The rulers of the principal livery companies were rarely willing to stand alone against unwelcome demands made by the national or municipal

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 7.11.41.ff.133v-135v. The reception party included George Langham and fellow parliamentarians John Stone, John Pococke, Samuel Avery and Maurice Gething, although the Lord Mayor was probably correct in judging that "the Cheifs of the severall companies of this City" were "his Majesty's most loyall subjects". For Stone, Pococke, Avery and Gething see respectively pp.228, 46, 227, 409.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.208, 209.

governments, and by the time the Company met to consider the loan on June 10th several of the major companies had already consented to provide their proportions without quibbling.<sup>(1)</sup> Furthermore, the order of parliament compelled the court to put the issue to an assembly of the livery and other able freemen, weakening the position of the royalist assistants still further. The body of liverymen contained representatives of both sides in the approaching Civil War, and had not manifested opposition to the direction of Company policy in the 1630s or after the 1640 and 1641 Election Days through such tested methods as boycotting Quarter Day gatherings.<sup>(2)</sup> However, the logic of events in summer 1642 gave the initiative to the allies of Pym present at the assembly, especially Member of Parliament John Venn.

Clement Mosse as head of the assembly made the sentiments of the majority of the assistants quite plain. After reading in full every precedent for the provision of loans to the national government since the late sixteenth century and informing the assembled freemen that the Company's finances were wholly exhausted, he prevailed upon Venn in front of the assembly to secure the return of the £5,000 lent by the Company in 1640. Further, he

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(1) The Haberdashers immediately accepted the terms of the loan on June 9th, two days after the Grocers. GH MSS 15842/1, f.311v; GH MSS 11588/4, pp. 49-52. The Drapers were less enthusiastic, complaining on June 10th that "they do not know how the said loan may concerne the good and safety of the King and this City," but 'condescending' in view of the alleged necessity. Johnson, op.cit., V3, pp.153-155.

(2) See above, p.39.

secured support for a compromise resolution deplored the use of Common Hall to gain consent for the loan, while agreeing that the £10,000 would be furnished "as much as in them lay." In marked contrast to their attitude in 1627 and 1640 moreover, the assistants had no intention of advancing any part of the loan from the not inconsiderable funds in the Master's hands or of even guaranteeing the repayment of the contributions volunteered by individual liverymen. Indeed, Mosse declared forthrightly to the assembly that "he had rather lose such part of his own than the Company's money's." In circumstances which anticipated the complete loss of control by the Company élite over a similar assembly in 1643, the strong feeling among sections of the assembly forced a vote on the issue which resulted in the court agreeing not only to guarantee the loan and to provide interest, but promising that if necessary, corporate lands, plate and other possessions would be sold to facilitate repayment.

The parliamentarians in the Company had won their first victory, but although as customary the foremost assistants assessed themselves at an exemplary rate, few of the other assistants, liverymen or well-to-do freemen were willing to contribute. Their reticence to lend money cannot be viewed in a purely political light, as leading radicals like Venn made no contributions and many freemen were facing burdensome financial demands from

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 20.6.40, ff.148-150. The accounts for the year to July 1641 showed net income of £749. MF 303, Accounts V17, 1640-1641.

sundry quarters: it was nevertheless remarkable. Hundreds of written summons were issued to members of the Company between June 15th and August 23rd, after the Clerk had carefully scrutinised the ordinance tendered as security for the loan and the Master and three aldermen had advanced £500 each. By the end of the term of office of Clement Mosse a month later, their example had been followed by only the most senior ex-Master, George Benson, two of the wardens and just one other assistant. Together with the contributions of twenty-four other liverymen - only around one third of the total number in 1642 - and nine leading freemen, £7,000 had been scraped together. During the subsequent five weeks only five additional assistants and liverymen could be induced to contribute towards the £3,000 outstanding. The new Master, Nathaniel Owen, eventually advanced a paltry £50 towards the loan despite his membership of the committee appointed two months earlier to raise the £10,000. The bulk of the outstanding sum was ultimately furnished by the wealthy alderman Abraham Reynardson, who was obliged to provide £2,400 in August to allow the Company  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
to pay their assessment in full.

From mid-1642 to mid-1643, the executive officers of the Merchant Taylors Company were Owen, who revealed a marked lack of sympathy for the parliamentary cause, and wardens, George Nash, John Venn, Roger Gardiner and

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 15.6.42, f.151; MF 303, Accounts V18, 1641-1642, 1642-1643.

George Antrobus. George Nash was a signatory of the 1642 citizens petition, while Roger Gardiner, resident in the Barbican, refused to advance money to parliament in 1644. An order for his arrest was made, and it was established that he had land in Berkshire, Kent and London, and that his pleas of indebtedness were spurious. "He takes orphan's money out of the Chamber at four per cent, and lets it out at eight per cent, and then saith he owes  
<sup>(1)</sup> money." In contrast to the diligent attendance of his three colleagues, Venn did not attend any of the meetings of the court in the following twelve months, a reflection perhaps of both his pre-occupations and the ascendancy of eminent royalist citizens on the court.

In early 1643, the assistants resolved that the annual dinner provided for the livery on the anniversary of the coronation of Charles I was no longer appropriate considering the "distraction" of the kingdom, but under Owen maintained a position as hostile to parliament as was practical. In May 1643, Owen argued vigorously against compliance with the weekly assessment of £30 on the Company by the City Committee which sat at Weavers Hall to implement the ordinance imposing the assessment  
<sup>(2)</sup> from November 1642. Owen quite correctly pointed out that the Company was greatly indebted after the 1642 loan

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(1) CFAOM, v1. p.390.

(2) Pearl, "London", p.253

to parliament, but went on to emphasise "that the Companies revenues are intrusted to theire care and charge by charitable benefactors deceased," and that "hee did conceive hee was bound by his oath taken to the Companie, and the trust committed to him to declare to this court the inhability of this Company to pay the same." After Owen obtained his colleagues' "serious consideration and advice for prevention of future inconvenience," it was agreed to formally submit a petition against the demands to the City government.

At the same meeting, the Lord Mayor's letter demanding the loan of the Company's armoury for the defence of the City was considered, and it was agreed to deliver the arms to Sergeant-Major Richard Turner only with the express proviso that they were used to defend London "and  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
for noe other use or imployment whatsoever." Further, in July 1643 the senior Company governors finally elected Colonel George Langham as Master, and subsequently refused to excuse him although he was known to be engaged in the parliamentary army, and had procured an order of the House of Commons exempting him from service and any fine in lieu. Only on his unexpected death soon afterwards was a new Master, Richard Andrews, elected in

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 10.5.43, f.164 seq.. The Grocers Company also opposed the weekly assessments as their finances were "extremely exhausted". GH MSS, 11588/4, 12.4.43, p.71.

his turn. In July 1643, a committee under Nathania Owen was established to look into the complaint of certain assistants that the hangings used to decorate the Hall on important occasions included "offensive and superstitious pictures and resemblances of the Holy Trinity, and of other superstitious things"; nearly a year later the removal of the offending items was still far from (1) complete.

In August 1643, the Company received a third demand for a major loan in as many years in the form of a letter from the radical Lord Mayor Isaac Penington concerning the need for a loan of £50,000 from the principal companies towards the cost of defending the City. The Haberdashers immediately ordered that their proportion be raised "with all speed;" the Merchant Taylors deferred consideration of the letter on August 16th, 22nd and 25th, although the Company had (somewhat unrealistically) been ordered to pay their assessment of £5,000 on the 18th August. On August 28th, an assembly of assistants, liverymen and leading members of the yeomanry were asked directly whether the Company should pay the £5,000 or refuse to grant Penington's request - a choice which reflected the unco-operative mood of the most influential assistants. The assembly proved more enthusiastic than the Company

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 11.7.43, 20.7.43, 10.5.44, ff. 175-177v, 197. Elsewhere in London, 1643 saw the wholesale destruction of 'images'. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans, 1987, p.89.

governors however, agreeing that the £5,000 should be provided as quickly as possible and that the Company's seal should be extended as security to freemen willing to contribute. As in 1642, control of the unwieldy body of liverymen and freemen then slipped from the hands of the Master and foremost assistants. "Diverse of this assembly" proposed - clearly from the floor of the Hall - that some of the Company's plate ought to be sold towards the provision of the £5,000, and went on to suggest that if necessary the Master and wardens should be authorised to sell the properties and goods of the livery company to re-pay all the monies advanced towards the loan. The suggestions were taken-up by the assembly, but must have sorely disappointed senior assistants such as Mosse and Owen who had on previous occasions stressed the obligation of the court of assistants to protect the possessions of the Company.

The rulers of the Merchant Taylors Company encountered even greater problems in raising the £5,000 than they had experienced in 1642. The loan was paid to the treasurers at the Guildhall in numerous instalments as sums were raised from freemen and non-freemen alike: the first payment was made only in January 1644, and although over £4,000 had been paid-in by May 1644, it appears that the loan was never fully provided. The assistants moreover made only a token gesture towards the resolution concerning the sale of a proportion of the Company's

enormous holdings of silver plate: at a dinner which set the Company back 50s, two pieces of plate were weighed and sold to Sir Henry Pratt and Simon Bardolphe for a total of £13 16d. The Grocers Company in 1643 raised £1,000 by selling all the plate stored at their hall except for certain pieces valued at £300.<sup>(1)</sup>

In April 1644, the governing élite found themselves once more in conflict with parliament after the Committee of Sequestrations for Plundered Ministers had ordered schoolmaster William Staple of the Suffolk Lane grammar school to be ejected as a 'malignant', following his disappearance in March and his failure to appear before the committee. The committee in addition directed the Merchant Taylors to replace Staple with Nicholas Augar M.A., a godly and learned man "approved by the Reverand Assembly of Divines." Augar had been rejected as schoolmaster in 1632 by the assistants, and insisting on the right to a "free election to that place," they elected William Dugard in preference to Augar and three other candidates in May 1644. Early in 1645, printing presses discovered in the school under Dugard's custody were seized by parliament; after being warned in 1649 for printing seditious literature, he was committed to Newgate in February 1650 for publishing the English

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<sup>(1)</sup> MF 330. CM V9, 16.8.43,-24.1.44, ff.180-191; MF 303, Accounts V8, 1643-1644; GH MSS 11588/4, 8.5.43, 22.8.43, 7.9.43, pp.74, 83, 84; GH MSS 15842/1, 22.8.43, ff.316v, 317.

(1)  
version of "Defensio Regia Carolo Primo."

For the remainder of the 1640s the Merchant Taylors Company stood-out as a reminder of the incomplete nature of the revolution in the City government and the continuing influence of conservative forces in the capital who in 1647 almost succeeded in bringing back the defeated Charles I. The government of the livery company continued to be run on oligarchic lines by a wealthy élite still largely dominated by those favouring accommodation with the king. The eight to ten senior assistants on the court in the 1640s included Henry Pratt until 1646 and Clement Mosse until 1648, while William Acton, Abraham Reynardson and Nathaniel Owen served on the court into the 1650s. Despite the co-option of (2) 'political independent' Alderman Samuel Avery in 1645, the balance of power on the influential upper section of the court continued to rest with the conservative elements. Their ranks were swollen by the election as Master of George Nash in 1647 and Walter Pell in 1649, although their power was tempered by the influence of men like Avery and Richard Turner and the presence on the more numerous lower section of the court of radicals such

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(1) MF 330 CM V9, 13.4.44, 10.5.44, ff.195v-196v; CFAOM, V1, pp 517, 518; F.M.W. Draper, op.cit., pp.59-65.

(2) Farnell, Ph.D. thesis, pp.32,53,69-71.

(1)  
as John Stone.

Although in their capacity as assistants of their livery company there were limitations on their ability to assist the King and the peace party in the capital, the livery company provided a power base for citizens like Pratt, Acton and Reynardson who in 1641, 1643 and 1649 respectively resigned or were stripped of much of their

(2)  
civic authority. Under their influence the policies of the much impoverished livery company continued in some respects to reflect traditional loyalties and allegiances even after 1645. In 1648, the court extended financial help to Dr. Bailey, President of St. John's College, Oxford, and two senior fellows, after they had been ejected for "high contempt and denial of authority of Parliament". When faced with demands by the Council of State to oust Bigmore as schoolmaster in 1650, the assistants replaced him with Thomas Stevens, who before the end of the year was before the Commissioners

(3)  
for Sequestrations for 'delinquency'. In late 1650, the arms and representations of the late king were taken down in the Company Hall only on the order of the Council of

(4)  
State.

(1) Stone was a Commissioner of State and a Member of Parliament in the 1650s, having sided with the political independents in earlier years. He became Master in 1650, after serving as warden in 1644 and 1645. Farnell, Ph.D. thesis, p.234.

(2) See Appendix 2.

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 11.6.48, 8.2.50, ff.286-289v, 338, 338v, 361.

(4) MF 330, CM V9, 13.12.50, f.365

### Conclusion

Royalist propaganda during the Civil War made much of the role of the capital in fermenting the troubles, describing London as "the great nest of Rebellion". That propaganda also recognised that "the king's good subjects, Gentlemen of quality, were tyrannically dealt with in that wretched City".<sup>(1)</sup> The foregoing account has confirmed that throughout the 1630s, Charles I and William Laud had reliable allies in London. They were indeed "minority groups", but they were not a tiny number of outstanding concessionaires, greatly outnumbered by governors who would have "moderate parliamentary sympathies" in 1640.<sup>(2)</sup>

How was it that the Merchant Taylors Company could be relied on for support by the King and the Archbishop? A number of factors have already been alluded to, not least the importance attached to the relationship with the Crown by the Company governors of the early seventeenth century. The significance of the Crown as the sole source of the Charters, liberties and privileges of the Company was explicitly referred to on a number of

(1) "Mercurius Aulicus", G.E. Aylmer et al.(ed.'s), The English Rev.III. Newsbooks 1. Oxford Royalist, 1971, V1, p.405; V2, p.25.

(2) R. Ashton, The English Civil War, Conservatism and Revolution 1603-1649, 2nd edn 1989 pp.95.96.

occasions, and found expression in the entertainment of James I in 1607 and in the strengthening of the Company's power of trade regulation in 1634. In contrast, approaches to parliament in for example 1601 had proved fruitless. A high number of leading Merchant Taylors had direct economic ties with the Crown, and those among them who were dominant in the exclusive governments of the municipality and the chartered trading organisations had compelling reasons to support the <sup>(1)</sup> status quo. Frustration at often heavy-handed royal policies was unlikely to undermine significantly traditional loyalties and the importance attached to the maintenance of order, obedience, privileges and power.

There was of course at no point unanimity among the assistants in matters of politics or religion. It has been shown that those leading governors with Puritan beliefs in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries sat alongside Catholics and Catholic <sup>(2)</sup> sympathisers, and one of the main themes of Chapter III was the existence of ideological dispute beneath the calm surface of the court minutes of the Jacobean period. The hostile attitude to Arminian St. John's College, Oxford

(1) See above, pp.140-142.

(2) For the political implications of competition for power between established Levant and East India company merchants and 'colonial-interloper' merchants, see Brenner, Ph.D.thesis, passim.

(3) See above, pp.157,163,164.

was replaced by an increasingly close association in the 1620s, and an intimate relationship between elements of the ruling court and William Laud. The transformation was furthermore marked by divisions over the appointment and remuneration of Parson Juxon 1614-1618 and over the plans of Lady Weld to promote Puritanism in London posthumously. While the personal commitment of individual assistants to Laudian ideas cannot readily be ascertained,<sup>(1)</sup> the undoubtedly widespread antipathy for Arminianism was clearly far from universal among London's ruling élite.<sup>(2)</sup>

Religious tensions in the early 1620s coincided with royal intervention in the election of the Company clerk; the Crown was resisted by a majority of assistants in the same way as demands of both the City and the Crown had been resisted on many previous occasions. The support of

(1) Robert Ducy (liveryman 1606) and Michael Griggs (liveryman 1624) were strongly committed to Laud's programme in London. See Appendix 2.

(2) The divisive influence of Arminianism was first emphasised in N.Tyacke, "Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution", in C.Russell (ed.), The Origins of the English Civil War, 1973, pp.119-143. For emphasis on the importance of the dependence of the Arminian school on an unpopular royal government, see Trevor-Roper, "Catholics", pp.98-103. Kevin Sharpe, ("Archbishop Laud", History Today, V33, 1983 pp.26-30) convincingly argued that in one sense Laud was a traditionalist. but his emphasis on inter alia ceremonialism was seen as innovative and 'papist'. See W. Lamont, "The Rise of Arminianism reconsidered: comment", P & P, V101, 1985, pp.227-231.

a significant (if minority) body of governors was however a watershed; Charles I's reign saw a distinct change of mood among the most powerful assistants. The promotion of the Company's Arminian patrons, Laud and Juxon, brought a new level of influence and self-confidence to the élite governors, strengthening the hand of men like Ducy, Acton and Griggs. Between 1630 and 1640, support for royal fiscal and religious policies was automatic, with frequent meetings held between leading assistant and Laud, who joined the Company in 1632.

All this is not to say that there were not deep divisions, within the livery company and in London generally. Disputed municipal elections occurred many years before 1640, when Acton was rejected as Lord Mayor by the City liverymen in Common Hall. In 1632 Griggs faced ill-defined 'discouragement' after his election as sheriff in 1632, and was excused service. Pratt was consistently rejected by the wards in aldermanic nominations in the early 1630s, and obtained office only (1) after the intervention of the Crown. Within the Company, opposition was relatively muted: in 1635, an assembly lacking the requisite quorum of assistants suspended the remarkably open-handed contributions to Church renovation (2) in favour of greater poor relief: in 1640, the automatic

(1) For the electoral set-backs of Acton, Pratt and Griggs, see Appendix 2.

(2) See above, p.204. The assistants present included Gray, Wood and Langham - see Appendix 2, and p.213 (Langham).

payment of ship money and the decision to restrict attendance at the forthcoming Election Day were challenged.

If issues such as ship money and the renovation of St. Paul's were so unpopular in London among the citizens and their governors alike,<sup>(1)</sup> why was there so little effective opposition among the assistants to the direction of Company policy? It has already been shown that the livery was a small, cohesive body, and that long-term trends had led to smaller courts and to the election of Masters relatively inexperienced in Company affairs. However, there are significant indications that the élite of active senior governors set-out to tighten their grip on the governing court during the 1630s and early 1640s. The recruitment of new assistants was curtailed, with meetings becoming smaller and top-heavy; political considerations appear to have played some part in the elections of the Masters in 1632, 1640 and 1641; and the succession to the vital position of Common Clerk was safe-guarded. In 1622, King James had been told the court could not appoint reversioners to the office. In 1631, it was resolved without solicitation that Clement Mosse would eventually be succeeded by Robert Marsh, the protégé and son-in-law of Mosse and friend of William Dugard.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Ashton, "City", pp.185-188, 197-198.

(2) MT Hall, MSS Bk L5 (AMB 55) - letter from Dugard to Marsh 11.6.50. For Dugard, see above, pp.226, 227.

It is improbable that the ruling élite of the Merchant Taylors Company were unique in their loyalties and allegiances. They enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Laud, and their livery company suffered less from royal policies than for example the Grocers Company; they were however also governors of the allegedly-alienated (1) municipality and chartered trading companies, and the principal livery companies as well as the City government (2) lost their interests in Londonderry in 1635. They were "the King's good Subjects, Gentlemen of quality", and they remained in control of their livery company after the municipal revolution of 1641-1642 and the outbreak of Civil War.

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(1) Ashton, "City", pp.120-156.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.81-87; Ashton, "City", p.158-160. The Company appointed a committee to look into the sequestration, but did not protest. MF 329, CM V8,18.3.35, f.523.

V THE BACHELORS COMPANY 1580-1645Introduction

Probably the most neglected aspect of the history of the guilds and companies of early modern London is the ubiquitous subordinate organisation known as the yeomanry or bachelors company. Many narrative histories of individual companies make only passing reference to the existence of a yeomanry, and dismiss the organisations as transient and insignificant with functions of little importance apart from the collection of the quarterages of the freemen. To some extent this neglect can be explained by reference to the relatively meagre records which survive for the yeomanry companies, and the inevitable difficulties faced by historians seeking to construct coherent accounts of the development of individual companies over many centuries. The records of many companies make only incidental references to sub-organisations, which furthermore have histories much shorter than those of the parent livery companies. However, historical treatments of a number of London guilds and companies with highly informative extant minutes or financial accounts relating to sixteenth and seventeenth century yeomanry bodies fail to mention their existence, concentrating on the development, constitutions

(1)  
and ceremonies of the liveries.

Most of the London companies appear to have maintained yeomanry sections during the early modern period, generally charged with undertaking important delegated functions and duties, with a varying degree of discretion (2) and autonomy. However, while every company possessed a yeomanry in the sense of freemen outside of the livery, a number did not develop complementary institutional structures, including some of the principal livery companies. The Grocers Company managed without a permanent yeomanry organisation notwithstanding a membership estimated at between 800 and 1,000 in the 1600s; the livery governors found it necessary to establish short-lived yeomanries with wardens and a

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(1) See for example M. Ball, The Worshipful Company of Brewers, 1977. This work does not mention a yeomanry, yet the accounts of that body are extant for 1556-1618. GH MSS 7885/1, 7885/2. The neglect of the yeomanries also extends to general treatments such as T.F. Reddaway, "The Livery Companies of Tudor London", History, LI, 1960, pp.287-299. Rappaport's reappraisal of the role of the companies in promoting stability in London does not allude to the significance of the yeomanries in the major companies, where undeniably most freemen were excluded from the livery for life. Rappaport, Part 2, passim.

(2) Guilds with 16th or 17th century minutes or financial accounts stored in the Guildhall Library include the Merchant Taylors, Brewers, Pewterers (GH MSS 6156 and 7094), Ironmongers (GH MSS 16,963, 16,964 and 16,987-7 vols), Tallowchandlers (GH MSS 6155, 6156), Armourers and Brasiers (GH MSS 12,073) and Haberdashers (GH MSS 15,868).

beadle whenever the role of the company in municipal ceremony was expanded upon the election of a Grocer as  
 (1) Lord Mayor. Other companies had yeomanry organisations which lacked strong historical and institutional roots and traditions, undergoing periodic dissolution and re-establishment during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The yeomanry of the small guild of Barber-Surgeons was abolished in 1532, only to be re-established in 1555 and again in 1625 after a second  
 (2) dissolution; it was dissolved for a final time in 1635.

A majority of the early modern London guilds maintained more durable yeomanries than those of the Grocers or Barber-Surgeons. They usually had their own wardens, courts of assistants treasuries and social activities, and among some of the leading companies (which accounted for the bulk of freemen in the capital) they developed into quasi-autonomous organisations with wide-ranging powers and responsibilities. The Haberdashers, Skinners, Ironmongers, Drapers, and (in particular) the Clothworkers, Weavers and Merchant Taylors companies - with their enormous artisan memberships - all developed

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(1) GH MSS 11,588/3, ff.53,55,66v-68, 161,164v, 362. The membership of the Vintners Company was relatively small and no yeomanry body seems to have emerged. Crawford, op.cit., pp.78,79.

(2) J.Dobson and R.M.Walker, Barbers and Barber-Surgeons of London, 1979. pp.49-51.

(1)

flourishing sub-companies during the sixteenth century. The yeomanries were responsible in most cases for the regulation and representation of the nominal trade, the provision of poor relief and social gatherings, the collection of quarterages and other financial levies, and the general government and disciplining of the freemen.

The yeomanry of the Merchant Taylors Company, nearly one and a half centuries old when Elizabeth became Queen of England, represented to an extraordinary degree a company within a company in the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, it had acquired responsibility for the government of the vast majority of the Company's membership. To most contemporary and modern observers, the dazzling wealth, magnificent ceremonies and eminent members were the most intriguing aspects of the history of the Merchant Taylors Company;

(2)

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(1) The Haberdashers, Ironmongers and Merchant Taylors have yeomanry records in the Guildhall Library. For the other companies, see J.J.Lambert (ed.), Records of the Skinners of London, Edward I to James I, 1933, passim; T. Girtin, Golden Ram, 1958, passim. Johnson, op.cit., passim; Plummer, "Weavers", pp.43-55.

(2) C.M. Clode devoted 15 of the 415 pages of his 1st volume on the early history of the Company to the yeomanry, mainly narrating the disputes between wardens and assistants which came to the attention of the livery governors. These disputes led Clode to conclude that "in the interests of the Yeoman Taylors the organisation was not successful". He believed that "all their records have been lost or destroyed", and felt that the history of the yeomanry 1608-1662 could be dealt with in "a few sentences". Clode, V1, pp.60-74.

to the poor artisans below the livery these matters were of less significance. It was the yeomanry organisation which regulated their trade, extended financial relief in hard times and old age, and provided fellowship. It also represented a stage on which handicraftsmen unwilling or unable to compete with the merchants and drapers of the livery could play a role attracting real authority and respect.

The historical sources through which the development of the yeomanry can be studied are varied, but of the greatest importance is the survival of one of the major manuscript books of the yeomanry itself. Incidental references indicate that during its 250 years of existence the organisation accumulated a considerable collection of records, but only two survive: the accounts book of pageants organised by the yeomanry between 1556 and 1568, and the ordinance book of the late sixteenth century. The collection of ordinances was compiled between 1577 and 1598, and contains ordinances and oaths of the yeomanry ratified in the early sixteenth century, together with additional rules established in 1529, 1533 and 1577. The book includes 19 of the 54

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(1) MF 310, AMB V7, Pageants 1556, 1561, 1568; AMB V6, Ordinances Book. The original yeomanry ordinance book, a large bound volume of 45 folios, is stored in Merchant Taylors Hall.

(2) Probably in the 1590s; the last dated ordinance was promulgated in 1577, but the subsequent informal entries commence in 1598.

oaths and ordinances included in the Company regulations approved by the Crown in 1507, but ten of the total of 29 regulations relate exclusively to the yeomanry. Furthermore, the value of the ordinance book as an historical source is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of all important decisions made by both the livery and Bachelors Company governors which affected the yeomanry between 1598 and its abolition in 1662. The extracts from the yeomanry court minutes are particularly extensive for the period 1600-1605. Other entries include informal notes on disputes between the yeomanry governors, detailed reviews of the operation of the government of the Bachelors Company in 1598, 1609, 1627 and 1645, and a small but valuable amount of biographical information regarding the assistants of the early seventeenth century.

The minute books of the livery court of assistants represent the second main source of information regarding the lower-section of the Company. The minutes of the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries contain hundreds of references to yeomanry affairs, including the annual election of the wardens, summaries of annual financial accounts, and the presentation of petitions by members of the yeomanry to the livery governors. The accounts books of the Master and livery wardens also provide information on the Bachelors Company, as well as the financial transactions of the yeomanry wardens with

respect to their organisation of pageants, and lists of freemen taxed on behalf of the livery. They also incorporate the full financial accounts of the yeomanry for just two years, 1587-1588 and 1594-1595.

The records of the municipal government provide relatively little information regarding the yeomanry, although the repertories of the court of aldermen refer to the lodgement of petitions by yeomanry officers and the Chamberlain's Book of Fines throws much light on the industrial regulation undertaken by the Bachelors  
 (1) Company.

### Origins

The yeomanry of the Merchant Taylors Company had been founded in the early fifteenth century by a number of "yeoman tailors", young men described as servants and apprentices whose misdemeanours and tumultuous assemblies  
 (2) had led to complaints to the municipal government. By 1415 the young craftsmen had established their own fraternal social organisation, meeting on the anniversary of the Decollation of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of the master's guild; they were also organising themselves in communes "against the licence or will of their superiors of the ... City or the masters of the same art". The fraternity

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(1) See below, pp.333, 334.

(2) Cal. of Letter Book I, pp. 136, 137.

was dissolved on the order of the City Fathers, but its membership was brought under the wing of the guild.

While the master's guild (or livery) continued to impose serious restrictions on apprentices and journeymen (1) wishing to set-up on their own account, the yeomanry body quickly developed its own administrative machinery and traditions. Ordinances of 1437 refer to the yeomen meeting on their original assembly day and at Quarter Days, with their own treasury and wardens. The fragmentary ordinances also reveal that the yeomanry did not long retain its character as an organisation of apprentices and journeymen. In 1437, the yeomanry wardens were authorised to nominate as their successors "whom thei like ... whether thei be houholders or sowers", and in 1450 "freemen Householders" of the yeomanry complained to the Masters guild that certain "servantes sewers" would not work for them despite being (2) "newe comen fro theire apprentice hode". In 1488 the

(1) M.T.Hall, MSC.DOC.A2, Ordinances 1429-1455, ff. 8,10.

(2) Ibid, f.9.

(3) Ibid, f.10v; Cal. of Letter Book K, pp.337.338. By 1500, the unfree journeymen of the earlier 15th century had become freemen, styled "fresewers", although they required a guild licence before setting-up in business. MF 298, Accounts V3, 1470-1484; passim; Cal. of Letter Book L, 1494, p.302.

name of "lez yoman tayllors" was officially changed to "the Company de lez Bachelors", and the late fifteenth century minutes and oaths portray the Bachelors Company, its four wardens, assistants and clerk as an integral part of Company life.<sup>(1)</sup> A century later the yeomanry had assumed a role of critical importance not only within the Merchant Taylors Company, but in the capital generally; it was responsible by the mid-seventeenth century for the regulation and welfare of approximately 23 per cent of the freemen of London.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### The Government of the Bachelors Company from 1580

##### I Wardens and Assistants

The constitutional arrangements under which the yeomanry were governed in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries in many respects mirrored those of the livery, although some significant differences existed. In common with most London companies, the Master had no equivalent in the yeomanry, and the

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(1) MF 312, AMB V37, 15.9.1488.f.3v and passim: MF 310, AMB V1, Form of Oath (C.1491).

(2) Based on a London-resident membership of 7,000 and a total number of freemen in the capital by 1650 of 30,000. See V. Pearl, "Social Policy in Early Modern London", p.118, and below, p.304.

(1)

'Wardens Substitute' were of equal status, although the Watling Street warden was responsible for convening meetings when he considered that sufficient business had

(2)

arisen. The four wardens were selected each year on August 28th by the livery governors from four pairs of names of freemen below the livery who had not previously held yeomanry office. Most of the candidates, who were chosen by the out-going wardens in consultation with the assistants of the yeomanry, eventually became wardens, unless they were prematurely taken onto the livery. In the 1590s, 53 of the 60 freemen named in the election bills ultimately became Wardens Substitute or liverymen; only two of the seven not appointed were nominated but subsequently rejected as Warden Substitute more than once. The choice of the wardens, while subject to the oversight of the livery rulers, thus effectively lay with the yeomanry officers. However, in contrast to the elections of the livery officers in the early seventeenth century, the governors of the livery were able to choose freely between candidates named in the four paper election bills. In 1613 for example, the results of the

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(1) Most London yeomanries were governed by 4 wardens (although the number varied from 2 to 6), serving in office for between 1 and 3 years. Some officers were designated 'master' or 'prime' warden, and the Tallowchandlers yeomanry boasted a Governor and 2 wardens.

(2) Yeo. Ord. Bk, 2.9.02, f.2.

(1)  
four elections were 4:9, 5:8, 4:9 and 2:11.

The names of the freemen elected as wardens were announced to the members of the yeomanry at their assembly on August 29th, although the new wardens did not assume full authority until the following January or February to allow the existing wardens to clear all outstanding business. The duties they acquired from the out-going wardens were extensive: they included the collection of the quarterages and other occasional loans and levies; the regulation of the London tailoring trade; the nomination and payment of almsmen; and the holding of Quarter Day assemblies and dinners. The demands on the purses and above all the time of the incumbents, especially with respect to the "burthen and charge of travell", increased pari passu with the size of the membership of the Merchant Taylors Company. Those demands, together with the wardens' special responsibilities towards the handicraft and the poor, made the office "contemptible" to the merchants and retailers among the freemen from the late sixteenth century.  
(2)

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(1) The election bills for 1596-1608, 1611 and 1613 are extant in Merchant Taylors Hall (MSC. DOC. A17.1). Both nominees in a bill could be rejected, although between 1580 and 1645 this occurred only once, in 1595. MF 326, CM V3, 28.8.95, f.304.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 28.8.84, f.115v. The characteristics of the office and its occupants are discussed fully in Chapter VI.

Election as Warden Substitute did not however commit a freeman to a very substantial level of personal expenditure, and conspicuous wealth was not a prerequisite for nomination. In 1586, the 'inability' of tailor and recent warden William Browne resulted in his liability to make good uncollected quarterages of around 32s being waived, although in general the wardens were drawn from the better-off sort of freemen. In 1596, broker and money-lender Philip Cotton was elected on the basis of the high level of monies known to pass through his hands, "the which diverse of this Company have supposed and thought to be his owne". He was discharged  
 (1) after correcting this impression. Cotton's financial means were clearly regarded as insufficient to allow him to bear office in the yeomanry, although the contributions required towards the cost of dinners held on Quarter Days and other occasions were relatively  
 (2) modest; the Election Day dinner was paid wholly from corporate funds. The wardens were also required to pay from their own pockets quarterages still outstanding at the end of their terms (if deemed collectable by the yeomanry assistants), although amounts demanded appear to have been small in recognition of the gargantuan task of

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(1) MF 325, CM V2, 8.7.86, f.187; MF 326, CM V3, 14.12.96. f.337.

(2) The contribution required towards the cost of each Quarter Day dinner was set at 30s per warden in 1609, and at 33s 4d in 1636.

(1)

collecting the levies in the earlier seventeenth century.

Service as Warden Substitute naturally brought with it advantages as well as costs, although the nature of those advantages made them of little interest to well-to-do prospective liverymen. The office of warden brought with it considerable rank and status within the Company, with severe punishments meted out to freemen who were insolent or disobeyed them. In 1608 for example, one Robert Johnson was fined 40s for "uncivil words" spoken to a Warden Substitute, and was required to apologise (2) publically. The wardens were entitled to wear formal gowns of office, and were publically sworn-in on August 29th with a solemnity which rivalled the livery Election Day. The four wardens-elect were presented with silver (3) Election Cups filled with ippocras, and were crowned with blue damask garlands capped with silver representations (4) of the head of St. John the Baptist. Their rank within the livery company was reflected in their attendance as guests at livery Quarter Days, and their ceremonial role at the Election Day of the Master and his wardens, where they carried the Election Cups of their livery

(1) In 1647, the clerk of the Bachelors Company was promised 20% of the quarterage arrears he managed to collect. Yeo. Ord. Bk, 21.3.47, f.31v.

(2) MF 327, CM V5. 9.3.08, p.302.

(3) Wine flavoured with spices.

counterparts. Further, following their term in office, those yeomanry wardens who did not join the livery continued to enjoy the authority and privileges of office as assistants of the Bachelors Company. Those wardens who were elevated to the livery were ranked above all freemen of the same call who had not participated in yeomanry government.

In addition to enhanced status, freemen who became Wardens Substitute enjoyed some material benefits. These included small sums paid to them when Company pensions were distributed, a proportion of penalties levied for infringement of the apprenticeship regulations, and exemption from some taxes levied on well-to-do freemen. The most tangible benefit accruing to yeomanry wardens was however the right on elevation to the livery to pay only the fifteenth century entrance fee of 20s, which included 13s 4d in gratuities to livery officers.<sup>(1)</sup> Freemen who had not acted as Warden Substitute paid a 'fine' which (as Table 14 indicates) was regularly increased from the 1570s in response to both inflationary pressures and the petitions of the yeomanry governors. By 1608, the fine stood at £33 6s 8d for freemen who actively sought promotion to the livery, an 85-fold increase in 36 years, and certainly the highest admission

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(1) Yeomanry wardens in the Drapers Company enjoyed a similar privilege. Girtin, "Triple Crowns", p.249.

fee charged before the eighteenth century. The low charge imposed on former Wardens Substitute probably allowed some freemen to wear the livery gown who would

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TABLE 14

Entrance 'fines' of liverymen who had not acted as yeomanry warden

To - 1572	6s 8d
1572 - 1576	£ 3 6s 8d
1577 - 1583	£ 8 6s 8d
1584 - 1591	£10 6s 8d
1592 - 1597	£15 -
1598 - 1601	£18 6s 8d
1602 - 1607	£23 6s 8d
1608 - 1626	£28 6s 8d or £33 6s 8d
1627 - 1680	£23 6s 8d or £28 6s 8d

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otherwise have been unable to afford the privilege, although fewer yeomanry wardens in fact joined the livery  
 (1) as the seventeenth century progressed.

The Wardens Substitute were assisted throughout their terms by freemen who had preceded them as wardens, known as 'Overseers', an office in existence since at least the  
 (2) 1430s. The duties of the four ex-wardens were informal and ill-defined, although the yeomanry minutes show them playing an active part at meetings and on searches. In

(1) See Chapter VI, Table 17. In 1651, 3 or 6% of the 54 new liverymen were ex-wardens.

(2) MT Hall, MSC.DOC.A2, 1437, f.9.

1608, the assistants of the Bachelors Company postulated that the role of the overseers was "to inform (the wardens) for their proceedings therein", but a committee established in 1639 concluded "howe they are to take place and have voice we have not sene anie order in that  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
behalf". The original purpose of the office was in all probability to provide the freemen with a means to oversee the activities of the yeomanry governors; in the earlier sixteenth century, the overseers were chosen by the freemen at a Quarter Day from the names of eight ex-wardens put forward by the Wardens Substitute. This practice had however lapsed before 1600. In 1609, the livery court decreed that the overseers should always be the wardens of the previous year or the most senior yeomanry assistants when the wardens were taken onto the livery, and the yeomanry records indicate that this was  
<sup>(2)</sup>  
in fact normal practice by at least the 1590s. The overseers may still have been presented to the freemen for nominal approval, but any electoral participation had long disappeared by the early seventeenth century.

The most numerous and powerful group among the governors  
<sup>(3)</sup>  
of the Bachelors Company were the assistants, freemen who

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(1) MF 327, CM V5. 3.12.08.p.338; MF 330, CM V9,  
24.1.40, f.94.

(2) Yeo. Ord. Bk, f.25v and passim.

(3) All of the City yeomanries appear to have had sizeable bodies of assistants. The Tallowchandlers had no less than 39 assistants in 1631. GH MSS 6156, f.70v.

(following service as warden and overseer) had been nominated by the existing wardens and assistants and presented to the Master and his wardens to take oaths of office. The Company ordinances allowed the livery officers to veto nominations, but the right was never exercised and in practice even the formality of presenting the new assistants for approval was sometimes neglected.

The assistants were known as the 'Sixteen Men' from at least 1489, and while most Wardens Substitute became assistants unless they were first co-opted to the livery, their number never seems to have exceeded sixteen. Many of the Sixteen Men were ultimately made liverymen, but others - especially members of the handicraft - acted as yeomanry assistants for decades in the same way as their counterparts on the livery. They held office for life unless subject to "absence, sickness, decay of estate, weakness of memory or other extraordinary cause, and were

(1) MF 312, AMB V37. 7.8.1489, f.12v.

(2) 14 of the wardens of 1600-1609 joined the livery months after completing their terms in office. Of the remainder, only 5 have not been identified as yeomanry assistants.

(3) See Chapter VI, pp.318-322.

(4) MF 327, CM V5. 29.5.09. In 1598, the yeomanry court had agreed to dismiss assistants who did not attend meetings for four consecutive years or who moved over 20 miles from London without leaving an address in the capital where summons could be delivered. Yeo. Ord. Bk, f.1.

frequently consulted by the livery governors regarding matters affecting the freemen. Their brief was only to assist and advise the Wardens Substitute, but their authority was inevitably greater over wardens who - unlike most livery wardens - had not previously participated in livery company government. The wardens furthermore included in most years men engaged in mercantile trades, unlikely to take an active interest in yeomanry affairs.

The increasing dichotomy in the late sixteenth century and earlier seventeenth century between veteran assistants, and wardens anxiously awaiting promotion to the livery,<sup>(1)</sup> is reflected in the domineering attitude of the leading Sixteen Men - which in 1608 finally led three of the incumbent wardens to protest strongly at their treatment to the livery court. In 1587, the 1572 ruling of the livery governors allowing the Wardens Substitute to dispense with house-to-house collections of quarterages was overturned, with strong opposition from the wardens in office ignored following the complaint of the Sixteen Men that "ther officers" were neglecting their duties.<sup>(2)</sup> The disputes two decades later reveal a system of government functioning with minimal livery supervision, and dominated to an extraordinary degree by

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(1) See below, pp.316, 317.

(2) MF 326. CM V3, 11.2.87- 1.3.87. ff.156v, 157.

senior yeomanry assistants who had assumed responsibility for industrial regulation, the collection of quarterages and the financial and general management of the Bachelors Company. During the course of the controversy, the foremost assistants expostulated that they "must governe their Wardens, or els there wilbe noe quiett in them, and that "They have much business which must be concealed from their wardens". Financial controls were monopolized by the assistants, and the senior Sixteen Men accused the three wardens of opposing a system which "their predecessors have pursued with much peace, love and contentment". They justified their dominance by reference to their "industry" in seeking out unfree tailors and boosting quarterage receipts to the benefit of the poorer freemen.

The major review of yeomanry government undertaken as a result of the revelations of 1608 and 1609 introduced joint financial control by the wardens and assistants, and prohibited the assistants from concealing information or acting without consulting the Wardens Substitute. There is however little indication that the role of the

(1) See below, pp.287-288.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 17.11.08-6.2.09, pp.333-357. The Sixteen Men were represented during the dispute by John Webster, Warden Substitute 1589. John Burnford and William Mormay. For further discussion of the careers of Burnford and Mormay, see below, pp.320,321,369.

Sixteen Men diminished; by 1639 they had won the right to participate in the annual nomination of the wardens, a development at odds with the ordinances of 1613 and all previous regulations. In disputes in 1639 and 1640 narrated in the yeomanry records in the hand of one of the assistants, some of the wardens opposed the right of the Sixteen Men to reduce sixteen nominees of the wardens to the eight presented to the livery governors. A committee established by the livery court found in favour of the assistants in view of their long experience  
 (1)  
 in yeomanry affairs.

The wardens and Sixteen Men were assisted in their duties by a number of full-time officers found in most early modern London guilds. A yeomanry clerk was employed by the late fifteenth century, and a beadle was appointed at the request of the over-stretched Wardens Substitute in  
 (2)  
 1572. Both officers were nominated by the governors of the Bachelors Company and served for life, receiving salaries from yeomanry funds and a proportion of fines

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(1) Yeo. Ord. Book, 4.12.39, 7.10.40, ff.42v,43. Warden and draper John Underwood refused to take part in the 1640 selection process due to the involvement of assistants who included George Furseman, warden 1624, and John Hayman, warden 1616. For further discussion of the careers of Furseman and Hayman, see below,pp.321,322.

(2) Most City yeomanries appear to have employed their own full-time employees, including the Pewterers, Tallow-chandlers, Skinners and Drapers.

levied on contumacious freemen. Although rarely a professional man, the clerk played a central role in yeomanry life in the same way as the Common Clerk did with respect to the livery, particularly as a repository of knowledge accumulated during many years service. Apart from advising the wardens and writing-up all yeomanry records, the clerk read aloud the ordinances of the Bachelors Company at Quarter Days, attended the searches of both the livery and yeomanry wardens, and was responsible for maintaining contact with the members of the Company. He was expected to enter in his "callying

TABLE 15

## Clerks and beadles of the Yeomanry 1580-1645

<u>Clerks :-</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>	<u>Original Occupation</u>
C.1579-1600	Richard West	
1600-1622	Roger Silverwood	Draper
1622-1634	George Lulls	Scribe
1634-1644	William Bailey	
1644-1653	Thomas Tarbuck	Tailor

Note: tailor George Ricknor held the reversion to the office from 1603, but Lulls became deputy-clerk in 1614.

Beadles :-

1572-1603	Samuel Dowle	
1603-1622	William Griffith	Tailor
1622-1640	Henry Crowshawe	
1640-1641	William Symonds	Tailor
1641-1646	Robert Farr	Tailor

booke" the names of all new freemen so "that they may pay their quarterages & other duties", and he or his appointee accompanied the livery warden who presented new  
 (1) freemen at the Guildhall. Further, the clerk and beadle occasionally conducted surveys of the careers of all freemen enrolled in certain periods; in 1604 the yeomanry court instituted an investigation into the fate of all  
 (2) freemen enrolled before July 1603. The duties of the clerk were extended in 1645 when he was directed to read two chapters of the Bible before each meeting of the  
 (3) yeomanry governors.

The main function of the beadle was to issue summons to meetings of the Bachelor Company court at the behest of the Warden Substitute for Watling Street, whose house the  
 (4) beadle visited twice a week to receive instructions. Often a master tailor by trade, the beadle also participated in the collection of quarterages, attended searches and all other yeomanry meetings, and increasingly assisted the livery beadle in his duties from circa 1615. In 1625, Henry Crowshawe was awarded 4s for carrying letters for the livery governors, mainly to officers-elect residing in the provinces: in 1628 his

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(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk,f.18v;MF 330,CM V8B,9.7.45,(unfoliated).

(2) Yeo.Ord.Bk,8.8.04.f.3v. The results of the survey sadly are not extant.

(3) Ibid, 11.3.45.f.30v.

(4) Ibid, 2 9.02, f.2v.

(1)

deliveries took him to Lincolnshire, Cambridge and Coventry. Both the beadle and the clerk were in addition heavily involved in the organisation of pageants for Merchant Taylors who became Lord Mayor; in 1624 Crowshawe took breakfast at the Hall sixteen times on business  
 (2) relating to the pageant of John Gore.

The record book of the Bachelors Company also chronicles the appointment and remuneration of minor employees  
 (3) common to many guilds, including informers, a pewterer, cook, porter and butler. Crowshawe for example was yeomanry butler from 1618 until his promotion to beadle  
 (4) in 1622. All of these employees together with the clerk and beadle were chosen exclusively by the Bachelors Company governors until the later years of the reign of James I. The yeomanry minutes record elections and the granting of reversions without any reference to the livery, although there was uncertainty regarding the need for livery approval after the review of procedures and practices in 1609. In 1610, the Wardens Substitute chose to present their nominee to the senior court of assistants when replacing their late cook Allyn Wallis,

(1) MF 328, CM V8, 23.11.25, 21.10.28, ff.264, 339.

(2) MF 302, Accounts V13, 1624-1625.

(3) See Chapter VI, p.335.

(4) Yeo.Ord.Bk, ff 37.37v.

who had been appointed by the yeomanry alone in 1603.<sup>(1)</sup> Four years later, the clerk of the Bachelors Company took the precaution of approaching both courts of assistants for permission to appoint a deputy, and in 1614 and 1617 new informers were selected by the livery governors from the nominations of the yeomanry.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1618 and 1622, the Wardens Substitute and their assistants elected butlers on their own initiative, but the death of beadle Crowshawe in 1622 precipitated a minor constitutional showdown. The yeomanry governors had been advised to draw up a short-list of suitable successors for consideration by the livery court, but instead merely presented their appointee to be sworn-in by the senior governing body "contrary to (the) Maisters Commannd and without any authoritie in themselves". Despite being reprimanded, the yeomanry officers had to be read the oath of the Warden Substitute (which stipulated a duty of obedience to the Master and his wardens) as they seemed a while to maintaine the same".<sup>(3)</sup> In the event, it was almost certainly the choice of the yeomanry, Bachelors Company butler Crowshawe, who was chosen from six

(1) Ibid, 6.10.03, f.2v: MF 327, CM V5, 7.5.10. pp.449, 450. It is probably significant that the 3 complainants of 1608-1609 would still have been in office as overseers in May 1610.

(2) Yeo. Ord. Bk, f.5v; MF 328, CM V7, 7.2.14, 29.8.14, 14.8.17, pp.112, 134, 418.

(3) MF 328, CM V8, 24.5.22, pp.97.98.

nominees, but thereafter the livery governors always had the final say in the selection of Company officers.

## II Courts and Quarters

The Wardens Substitute and their assistants held meetings in their own first floor section of the Hall known as the Bachelors or Long Gallery, with windows overlooking (1) gardens adjacent to the Hall. The yeomanry's treasury box, manuscripts, plate, linen and other possessions were stored in the Gallery, to which in 1624 was annexed a small chamber which overlooked the wainscott table and (2) forms used at court meetings. The 'courts of assistants' were convened at 9 a.m. in the summer months and 10 a.m. in the winter, and were held on traditional assembly days (3) such as the Quarter Days as well as on other dates appointed by the wardens-dates which did not always coincide with meetings of the livery governors at the

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(1) MF 300, Accounts V9, 1607-1608. The Tallowchandlers yeomanry met in a gallery over the main entrance-way to the guild's hall. GH MSS 6155/1, f.3v.

(2) MF 311, AMB V12, Inventory 1618; MF 328, CM V8, 11.8.24, 28.8.24, ff.219. 220. In 1608 the yeomanry had won the right to use a garret over the gallery for storage, and an order prohibiting the tenant of the chamber from using the door into their gallery. MF 327, CM V3, 9.1.08, p.294.

(3) An 'audit day' was held in February in the 16th century. This had been changed to May by 1605 to allow the outgoing wardens more time to collect overdue quarterages. Yeo.Ord.Bk,ff.16v, 24.

Hall. Sitting in order of precedence around the table, the court heard the minutes of the previous meeting read before proceeding to discuss the day's business, with decisions reached by formal votes when necessary. The meetings and the dinners which followed them were attended by the yeomanry clerk and beadle and an average of five wardens or overseers and nine assistants, and without representatives of the livery.

(1)

Every Merchant Taylor below the rank of liveryman was expected to attend the formal Quarter Day assemblies, and fines were levied on absentees. The assemblies usually met at 9 a.m. on a Tuesday appointed by the Wardens Substitute and approved by the Master and his wardens, some of whom were present as observers. The Quarter Days were in fact held more regularly than their title suggests, with assemblies in most years appointed for late February, late May or early June, late July or early August, early November and late January. In addition, the Election Day of the Bachelors Company was

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(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk, ff.1.4v, 30v.

(2) Livery delegates were present at meetings of the governors of a number of City yeomanries. Liverymen often acted as yeomanry wardens in the Elizabethan Skinners Company. Lambert, op.cit., p.219.

(3) The fifth Quarter Day on Trinity Tuesday in late May or early June had apparently emerged in the later 16th century to coincide with the revised audit day, but was abolished in 1609. Yeo.Ord.Bk, f.26. The four livery Quarter Days included the Election Day of the Master and wardens.

traditionally held on August 29th, and the small group of alien tailors affiliated to the Merchant Taylors Company met at a 'Strangers Quarter Day' in December. The aliens, who numbered no more than 35 in 1595, assembled at the Hall to hear statutory and livery company regulations read by the yeomanry clerk, and until 1609 dined afterwards with the yeomanry officers. In 1609, the dinner was restricted to the latter body, as they saw "noe reason that the strangers should be better entertained than the kings natural subiects".<sup>(1)</sup>

On the Quarter Days of the freemen their names were 'called' by the clerk at 9 a.m. to identify absentees, and the yeomanry ordinances and the Common Prayer of the Merchant Taylors Company were read aloud.<sup>(2)</sup> Modest refreshments were probably available for the freemen while the yeomanry governors, their wives and the Master and wardens were provided with dinner even when the general assembly was cancelled in times of plague or financial stringency. By 1645, it was not uncommon for the entire membership of the Bachelors Company to attend

(1) MF 299, Accounts 1594-1595, f.133.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 29.5.09, p.382. The dinner was abolished altogether in 1652 as only 1 stranger authorised to work as a tailor was still alive. MF 330, CM V9, 10.11.52, f.407v.

(3) Until the early 16th century, the financial accounts of the wardens had been read at a Quarter Day, and overseers had been elected by the assembled freemen. Yeo.Ord.Bk, ff.12v, 16v, 18v. The freemen continued to witness the installation of the wardens. See below, p.271.

(1)

only two Quarter Days a year, in February and August.

Apart from the formally-constituted courts of assistants and Quarter Days, meetings of the yeomanry governors were regularly held to elect almsmen and to distribute quarterly pensions, and from 1602 wardens and assistants met in rotation at 'Fortnightly Courts' to deal with industrial regulation and other disciplinary matters. The yeomanry governors in addition assembled at St.

(2)

Paul's Cathedral on Search Days before dispersing, met in taverns while engaged on Company business and sat in committee at the Hall to raise financial levies and to organise pageants: in 1624, the wardens and assistants met at least 21 times at the Hall while arranging the pageant

(3)

of Lord Mayor John Gore. The growing number of yeomanry meetings and the associated costs borne by the Company gave rise to concern among the Caroline livery governors; in 1627 the Wardens Substitute were told to restrict their meetings to one a month when possible, and two years later were ordered not to hold separate meetings to

(4)

elect almsmen. All the members of the ruling body of the

(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk, ff.29-30.

(2) For meetings associated with industrial regulation, see Chapter VI, pp.335, 338, 339.

(3) MF 302, Accounts V13, Accounts of the Wardens Substitute for the Triumph 1624-1625.

(4) Yeo.Ord.Bk, f.26v.

Bachelors Company participated in decision making and undertook general administrative duties, but the main strength of the yeomanry's institutional structures lay in the special responsibilities assigned to each overseer, warden and assistant for one of the four Quarters into which the City and franchises had been divided by 1507. These territorial units were centred on Candlewick Street, Fleet Street, Watling Street and Merchant Taylors Hall in Threadneedle Street, each with precisely - delineated boundaries. These were occasionally adjusted to take account of the relative wealth of their inhabitants. In 1609, the south side of Newgate Market and St. Paul's Churchyard and adjacent streets were transferred from Watling Street Quarter to Merchant Taylors and Fleet Street Quarters respectively, in recognition of the fact that "Watling Streete quarter, in Multitude of noble and ritch men, doth farr excell the residue".  
 (1)

On election, wardens assumed responsibility for the Quarter in which they were resident, and the greater part of their duties - including poor relief, searches, quarterage collection and the financial assessment of

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(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk,29.5.09,f.25v. In 1595, Watling Street Quarter accounted for 41% of quarterages collected, compared to 20% and 22% for Fleet Street and Merchant Taylors Hall Quarters respectively. MF 299, Accounts V7, 1594-1595. Candlewick Street Quarter included Southwark.

freemen - related exclusively to Merchant Taylors and unfree tailors with houses and shops within that area. The quarterage collection books and the annual financial accounts were based on the four divisions, and furthermore the overseers and assistants maintained their association with the Quarters they represented as wardens. This system allowed the yeomanry officers to gain and maintain an intimacy with the residences, businesses and financial circumstances of both freemen and unfree handicraftsmen, and was invaluable - if less than wholly adequate - as the number of freemen grew by leaps and bounds in the earlier seventeenth century. The "knowledge of the whole company" was fundamental to the relatively benign nature of the government of the Company; poor freemen were exempt from paying quarterages, and financial assessments were based strictly on the ability to pay of a very wide body of potential contributors. There is no doubt however that the phenomenal scale of admissions to the freedom under the Early Stuarts undermined the universality of that 'knowledge'. By 1641, the yeomanry officers had to rely on freedom papers to establish the right of claimants to yeomanry alms and pensions.

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(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk,f.5.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 18.8.41, f.127. The problems noted in 1641 may have arisen in part as a result of the death in 1640 of the veteran beadle, Henry Crowshawe, and his replacement by the aged tailor William Symonds, an almsman since 1626.

Functions and Powers

## I Powers of Enforcement

The yeomanry organisation between 1580 and 1645 undertook a range of duties comparable to any of the smaller City guilds, with the exception of the enrolment of apprentices and freemen. The remarkable scope of the responsibilities necessitated the assumption of considerable disciplinary powers. The yeomanry had its own set of ordinances, and freemen who refused to pay quarterages, were absent from Quarter Days, or in some other manner contravened the regulations were summoned before the wardens and assistants, reprimanded and (if appropriate) fined or occasionally referred directly to the Lord Mayor. Only in extremis did the Wardens Substitute bring offenders before the senior court of assistants. In 1608, a number of yeomanry assistants advised their livery counterparts that one Robert Johnson had not only uttered "uncivill words" to a Warden Substitute, but had made an "undecent speech" against the Master and wardens, "being wordes unfitt to be recorded

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(1) The major role of the Bachelors Company with respect to regulation of the London tailoring trade and the associated power to levy fines and confiscate garments will be discussed in Chapter VI. Some City yeomanries appear to have assumed control of the presentation and binding of apprentices, e.g. the 17th century Haberdashers yeomanry. GH MSS 15,868, passim.

(1)  
in any booke". In 1636, William Blackstone refused to answer a summons relating to "some conceites and other miscarriadges" until ordered to appear before the Wardens Substitute by the Lord Mayor. On appearing before the wardens and assistants "then sitting in court", he paid fines and costs relating to irregularities uncovered in the search of the Bachelors Company, non-appearance on due summons, and associated municipal fees. He then disdainfully told the court to "goe and gussle therewith". The matter was finally brought to the attention of the livery governors when Blackstone publically reviled one of the Wardens Substitute who (2) happened to be passing his shop in St. Paul's Churchyard.

## II Collection of Quarterages

All the authority available to the Bachelors Company officers was required during the collection of the affiliation dues of freemen below the livery, a role universally delegated to yeomanries in City companies possessing such organisations. The Wardens Substitute traditionally undertook door-to-door collections in their Quarters on or around the four principal Quarter Days, armed with books containing the names and addresses of freemen and aliens affiliated to the Merchant Taylors

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(1) MF 327, CM V5, 9.3.08, p.302.

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 13.3.34, ff.497, 497v.

Company and some indication of their financial circumstances. For not all freemen were liable to pay the quarterly 6½d membership fee: in 1596, the Master and wardens agreed that the Wardens Substitute should discharge a number of freemen from accumulated arrears as "their liability was so meane", and in 1605 the yeomanry governors resolved that arrears of poor freemen would not (1) become payable "till god make thyme better abill".

The task of collecting the affiliation dues of a steadily -increasing membership was already formidable in 1580. In the early 1570s, the wardens had complained that to levy quarterages they had "to go very often to some particular persons houses", and as aforementioned had obtained permission to appoint a beadle to collect (2) amounts due from freemen summoned to Quarter Days. The new system proved less effective however, and ultimately in 1587 the status quo ante was restored by the livery governors: the Wardens Substitute were directed to "goe aboute them selves to gather the Quarterage monie ... the (3) custome used in this house tyme out of mynde". The

(1) MF 326, CM V4, 3.5.96; Yeo.Ord.Bk, 4.3.05,f.5. The registration of a new apprentice was taken as an indication of improved fortunes.

(2) MF 325, CM V1, 19.3.72, 15.12.72, 21.1.73, pp.568, 627, 631.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 11.2.87, f.156.

yeomanry records indicate however that some contributions were collected at the Hall in the earlier seventeenth  
 (1) century.

Problems persisted notwithstanding changes in the method  
 (2) of collection, and this led to administrative innovation in the early seventeenth century. In 1601, the new fortnightly courts were established to address inter alia the problems of non-payment of quarterages, and in 1605 the Bachelors Company governors revised the procedures for collection of sums not received by the wardens by the  
 (3) end of their terms in office. Four years later, on the recommendation of the Sixteen Men, a 'Charge Day' was introduced at which five months prior to the audit day, they would examine the quarterage books and 'charge' the wardens with the dues of freemen deemed able to contribute. That proportion of the total quarterage liability was as before to be "accompted for" by the  
 (4) wardens whether or not it was actually received. The

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(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk, 2.9.02 11.3.45. ff.2,6v,29v. Practices varied between yeomanries. The Haberdashers employed 2 quarterage-gatherers in the early 17th century, but the Ironmongers freemen paid their dues at their Hall.

(2) See Chapter VI for the amounts collected in certain years from 1580 (p.301).

(3) Yeo.Ord.Bk, 7.12.01.28.5.05,ff.5,22.

(4) MF 327, CM V3.8.6.88, 21.6.95, 30.7.95, ff.179v, 180, 298,302.

difficulties of the wardens were however increased further in this respect by the irregularity of the nominally triannual 'great dinner' of the generality. In 1588, the Wardens Substitute and Sixteen Men reported that "a greate number of the younger sorte of the batchelors either withhold or grudge to pay their Quarterage", a phenomenon they attributed to the postponement of all Merchant Taylors Company dinners while the Hall was being re-built. In mid-1595 similar difficulties were encountered when the livery court deferred a decision on the date of the dinner.<sup>(1)</sup> Reticence to pay affiliation dues was associated with the irregularity of the dinner in 1602, 1608 and 1609, and the disappearance of the dinner during the reign of Charles I must have seriously undermined collection efforts. In 1664, the total receipts of £128 were 19 per cent less than the total in 1608, notwithstanding the steady increase in the number of freemen.<sup>(2)</sup>

### III Fraternity and Poor Relief

To the ordinary freeman with no hope of reaching the dizzy heights of the livery, the yeomanry was an

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 8.6.88, 21.6.95 30.7.95, ff.179v, 180, 298, 302.

(2) MF 304, Accounts V22 1663-1664.

alternative fraternal organisation able to provide social benefits in the same way as an independent guild. The Bachelors Company possessed its own ornate funeral cloth, and freemen were expected to bear the corpses of deceased members when summoned by the Wardens Substitute. The yeomanry records of 1598 and 1601 indicate that attendance at "buryalls" was a regular duty of the wardens, and well-to-do freemen often set aside small sums in their wills for banquets or suppers for yeomanry representatives present at their funerals.

The members of the Bachelors Company met regularly at the Hall on Quarter Days, although the fraternal aspect of the yeomanry found perhaps its clearest expression in the triannual 'great dinner' held "for the assemblie or meetinge of the whole generalitie". The dinner, held on an annual basis on the anniversary of the Decollation of St. John the Baptist from the early fifteenth century until early in the reign of Elizabeth I, had by the later sixteenth century come to represent one of the largest gatherings of freemen in London. The Bachelors Company

(1) MF 311, AMB V12, Inventory 1618; Yeo.Ord.Bk, f.16.

(2) Yeo.Ord.Bk, ff.1,22v; Wills PCC 116 Russell (John Burnford, warden 1594), 99 Dorset (Gilbert Lloyd, warden 1597), 228 Fines (George Furseman, warden 1624), 67 Essex (Jeremy Rawsterne, warden 1617), 180 Twisse (John Hayman, warden 1616). The Wardens Substitute attended at least some almsmens' funerals. MF 300, Accounts V8, 1602-1603.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 8.6.88, ff.179v, 180.

assembled at the Hall for a roll-call, then in a long column two abreast filed to the church of St. John of  
 (1) Jerusalem in Smithfield to hear a sermon. They then returned to the Hall for dinner, musical entertainment and to witness the ceremonial installation  
 (2) of the new wardens. The meal provided for the freemen, while inferior to the gastronomic delights available to the livery and other guests, contrasted with the traditional diet of bread and cheese provided by many City yeomanries. In 1559 the freemen enjoyed "xxx bukes, be-syd odur meetes" and in 1562 were served with stewed rabbits followed by custard, with sturgeon and baked  
 (3) venison available for the more distinguished guests. By 1595, the preparation of pies and pudding for the freemen, 1,500 of whom may have been present, was  
 (4) becoming a prohibitively costly and complex operation.

The "general callinge together" was much-valued by the

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(1) From 1592 the church of St. Helen in Bishopsgate was used in most years.

(2) Yeo.Ord.Bk,ff.12v,13; "Diary of Henry Machyn",pp.13, 149,208. Machyn described how in 1555 the livery took mass at St. John's, "And after the iij wardens of the yeomanry, and all the Compene of the taylors a id a pesse, and the quyre hange with cloth of arres, and after masse to the Tayllers halle to dener".

(3) "Diary of Henry Machyn",p.208; MF 325, CM VI, 3.8.62, p.9.

(4) For consideration of the numbers present in 1595 and the menu, see Chapter VI, pp.302,303.

freemen, and found parallels in the other City yeomanries. The yeomanry of the Haberdashers witnessed the annual crowning of their six wardens with garlands of purple velvet before sharing dinner. the Tallowchandlers freemen attended church at St. Botolph without Bishopsgate before dinner and the presentation of (1) garlands. The Election Day of the Merchant Taylors Company yeomanry was however exceptional both in scale and cost. In 1595, only £43 was collected towards the bill for the dinner of £129, and when the dinner was authorised in 1616 total Bachelors Company expenditure jumped to £1,455, compared to an average level of (2) expenditure in the previous three years of £381. The assembly was cancelled in several years because of the prevalence of plague in London, and although the dinner was held on six occasions 1580-1603 and in 1609, 1616 and 1623, the number of freemen arriving at the Hall in the later years must have stretched capacity to the limit. The Hall was one of the most spacious and popular public halls in early modern London, being used for example to entertain the king and hundreds of distinguished guests in 1607; to stage a major Artillery Garden exercise in (3) 1636; for a dinner of both Houses of Parliament and Common

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(1) GH MSS 15,868, ff.16,24; 6155/1,f.7v. The Drapers continued to stage the yeomanry's annual dinner even after abolition of their wardens in 1657. Girtin, "Triple Crowns", pp. 246, 250, 251, 255.

(2) MF 301, Accounts V11, 1613-1617.

(3) W.Barriffe,"Mars His Triumph or The Description of an Exercize Performed the XVIII of October 1636 in Merchant-Taylors Hall by Certain Gentlemen of the Artillery Garden", 1639.GHL (STC(2) 1505).

Council in 1644; and for a "cockney feast" attended  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
allegedly by 3,300 citizens in 1656. In 1595, the  
livery, guests and yeomanry governors sat at tables at  
the upper end of the Hall, while the freemen were  
accommodated by the erection of dozens of trestle tables  
and the loan of forms from St. Paul's; it is however  
improbable that seating - even on the floor - was  
available for all. It is perhaps not surprising that the  
dinner was not provided after 1623, although there were  
still plans to revive the meeting during the 1630s. In  
1632, the livery governors made a donation towards the  
repair of St. Helen's Church after recalling that the  
freemen "at their great and generall feast due usually  
<sup>(2)</sup>  
resorte thither to hear a sermon".  
<sup>(3)</sup>

As the great dinner became less frequent, almost all  
yeomanry expenditure - which never fell below 6 per cent  
of the expenditure of the Master and wardens - came to be  
directed towards the relief of the poorer freemen. The  
Bachelors Company throughout the period operated an  
extensive system of social insurance for those freemen  
and widows of freemen who were unable to support  
themselves and their families. Help was available for

(1) R.R. Sharpe, London and the Kingdom, V2, 1894, p.198.

(2) CSPD 1656, p.396.

(3) MF 329, CM V8, 10.12.32.f.460. As early as 1595 the  
Goldsmiths were finding it difficult to assemble all the  
freemen within the confines of their hall. Prideaux,  
op.cit., p.89.

TABLE 16

Average annual expenditure of the yeomanry and livery to  
 (1)  
 1645.

	<u>Yeomanry</u>	<u>Livery</u>
1580-1589 (8)	£100	£1,636
1590-1599 (1)	£236	£1,684
1600-1609 (-)		£1,990
1610-1619 (6)	£587	£5,575
1620-1629 (7)	£481	£5,612
1630-1645 (3)	£396	£6,174

the elderly and widowed; freemen maimed or blinded; to yeomanry officers falling on hard times; and to Merchant Taylors incarcerated for debt when encountered by the (2) wardens and assistants on their tours of City prisons. Further, while the livery court from time to time intervened to ensure that a freeman received assistance or to investigate the burden of the poor relief payments on the Company, it was the yeomanry governors who administered the system, awarded the monies and determined the criteria to be applied when considering eligibility for relief. The court minutes of the Bachelors Company record the Wardens Substitute and Sixteen Men voting to exclude certain categories of

(1) The livery expenditure represents the expenditure of the Master and renter wardens (excluding the costs of corn provision), shown as an annual average based on figures for every 3rd year 1580-1645. The bracketed figures represent the number of years for which financial data was available for the Bachelors Company.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 9.1.08. p.294.

cleric from the scope of yeomanry poor relief, setting limits on quarterly pensions and on the discretion of individual wardens in granting alms, and establishing  
 (1)  
 dates and procedures for payment.

The system of poor relief was two-pronged. Full pensions of up to 26s 8d per annum were paid in quarterly instalments to the most needy, especially the elderly and widowed. However, not only freemen unable to work were assisted. Many small masters were under-employed, especially during periods of economic stagnation such as  
 (2)  
 the 1590s, and looked to the Bachelors Company for some measure of financial support. This took the form of one-off payments of 12d or more made at the discretion of the yeomanry governors. In 1594-1595, payments to the poor including small sums paid to the clerk and beadle of the Bachelors Company totalled approximately £89; by 1609 expenditure stood at £182, of which £60 represented

(1) Yeo. Ord. Book, passim.

(2) The '4 nobles pensions' (26s 8d) remained a favoured level of pension from the late 16th century onwards despite the inevitable decline in real value.

(3) Rappaport, Part 1, p.125. In 1625, as plague raged in London, the livery governors channelled £100 through the Wardens Substitute to assist the poor and "to relieve such other poare brethren of this Company as they shall conceive have most need". MF 328, CM V8, 12.7.25, f.259v.

(1)

ad hoc payments and £122 represented pensions. If all the pensioners in 1609 had received 26s 8d, they would have numbered just 94, but in practice many received much lower levels of relief. In the 1640s, some pensions amounted to only 4s per annum, and in 1641 proposals advanced by the yeomanry officers estimated the average quarterly pension to be 3s. At this rate 203 pensioners were on the books in 1609 and 100 freemen received ad hoc payments. It is perhaps not surprising that the livery governors began to express anxiety over the cost to the livery company, suggesting in 1610 that only 100 regular pensions should be awarded.

(2)

(3)

The pressure on the Wardens Substitute and Sixteen Men to extend assistance to the growing body of poor freemen in their charge could however not be easily ignored: by the 1620s expenditure on pensions and alms had risen to approximately £380, and may have reached over 600 (4) freemen. In 1623, the livery court expressed alarm at "have liberallie the Wardens Substitutes and Sixteen Men

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 3.12.08. p.338.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 18.8.41. ff.126v, 127

(3) MF 327, CM V5, 7.5.10 p.449.

(4) £380 represents 85% of average annual expenditure in the 1620s, excluding the single year in which the feast was held. In years when the 'great dinner' was not provided, poor relief always accounted for the vast majority of payments made (e.g. 83% of payments in 1594-1595 excluding the cost of the Election Day dinner). £380 would represent 633 pensions at 3s per recipient per quarter. Some pensions were of course much higher, and ad hoc payments by their nature would vary in amount and would not be paid on a regular basis. The average weekly pension in Southern England in the early 17th century was 6d, or 6s 6d per quarter. Slack, "Poverty and Policy", p.179.

do give great somes of mony out of theire stock to poore  
 (1)  
 people at their pleasures", and imposed restrictions on  
ad hoc alms-giving on occasions such as the yeomanry  
 Election Day and on the expenses claimed at meetings held  
 to administer poor relief. In 1640, the belated  
 implementation of the charitable intentions of the late  
 master tailor and junior liveryman Nicholas Wynyffe led  
 to 300 pensions of 2s 6d a quarter becoming available for  
 (2)  
 distribution by the yeomanry governors, and the following  
 year the wardens themselves submitted detailed written  
 proposals for the reduction of the number of almsmen paid  
 by the Company. The wardens intimated that they believed  
 that up to one-sixth of the 400 freemen and widows still  
 in receipt of Company pensions were not Merchant Taylors,  
 basing their claims on borrowed freedom papers, and that  
 of the remainder a significant number "have noe need of  
 the said charity". There is however little indication  
 that their proposals to streamline the system by reducing  
 the number of pensioners to 250 and instigating  
 investigations of the needs and status of claimants were  
 implemented; even the nominally "half-crown pensions"  
 established by Wynyffe were in practice distributed to  
 freemen "accordinge to their severall wants and  
 necessities". Payments as low as 4s per annum were made  
 "promiscuously to severall people for the most parte at

(1) MF 328, CM V8, 13.8.23, 28.8.23 pp.178, 181.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 16.6.19, p.514; MF 303, Accounts V17,  
 1640-1641; Will PCC 73 Cope.

(1)

the discretion of the Wardens-Substitutes". Indeed, it is probable that by the early 1640s some 800 poor Londoners - 10 per cent of the membership of the Merchant Taylors Company - were receiving assistance from the Bachelors Company to supplement incomes derived from employment or other sources of charitable relief such as the parishes.

(2)

It should be emphasised that over and above amounts paid by the yeomanry, many freemen received alms, gowns and similar benefits under the terms of various wills. By the Civil War period, the Merchant Taylors Company were making yearly charitable disbursements to members of over £850 including over 100 almsmen and widows. Further, the yeomanry governors played a central role in the allocation and distribution of gifts and legacies. Although the renter wardens were responsible for the majority of payments, the wills of several freemen

(3)

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 18.8.41, 29.8.45, 8.12.46, ff.127, 217v, 247.

(2) In 1571, 5% of the yeomanry of the Pewterers guild were almsmen. GH MSS 7094, ff.109-115.

(3) It has been estimated that the City poor rate may have yielded £15,000 a year in the 1650s. Slack, "Poverty and Policy", p.176.

(4) This expenditure excludes legacies payable to Londoners not affiliated to the Company and to persons resident outside of the capital, including employees and students of universities and schools. By the 1640s, the outgoings of the renter wardens, which principally related to charitable bequests, stood at approximately £1,500.

assigned a principal role to the Bachelors Company governors, directing that the yeomanry wardens should distribute bequests or should at least be present when distribution took place. In 1605, tailor Arthur Medlicott, who had served as a Warden Substitute before joining the livery in 1592, left assets to provide £20 per annum to be distributed by the yeomanry wardens. In 1615 the £13 6s 8d bequeathed to the poor by liveryman Francis Evington was paid out by livery wardens in the presence of their yeomanry counterparts - who no doubt (1) were able to advise on the suitability of applicants. The arrangements made by Robert Dowe between 1589 and 1612 for the benefit of the handicraft stipulated that each almsman should be chosen from four yeomanry nominees, and other alms were distributed on the advice (2) of the yeomanry clerk and beadle.

The Merchant Taylors Company was the source of an impressive array of pensions and alms, responsive to the level of need and dependent on the administrative machinery of the Bachelors Company and the intimacy of (3) the yeomanry officers with individual freemen. Further,

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(1) Wills PCC 58 Hayes (Medlicott), 90 Lawe (Evington); MF 328, CM V7, 18.11.15, p.206.

(2) MF 303, Accounts V12 1621-1622.

(3) Rappaport emphasised that it "would be foolhardy .... to exaggerate the scope of the companies poor relief". He may however had underestimated the scale of the relief dispensed by the yeomanries of some of the largest livery companies. Rappaport, Part 2, p.111.

the very existence of an organisation with responsibility for the ordinary freeman and run largely by members of the handicraft ensured that the needs and demands of the poor were forcefully articulated before the great merchants of the livery throughout the early modern period. The dissolution of the Bachelors Company in 1662, coupled with the post-Civil War indebtedness of the livery company and the effects of the 1666 Fire, led quickly to the neglect of charitable trusts and the yeomanry pensions. In 1666, the pensions were terminated, and in the 1680s the Company was accused of non-performance of several wills.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### IV Taxation, Financial Assessments and Related Duties

The yeomanry organisation was an invaluable medium for raising money from the freemen, as well as channelling relief to the poorer members of the livery company. The concern of the Company élite not to make demands on the

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<sup>(1)</sup> MF 330, CM V10. 21.9.1666, p.116; MF 331, CM V13, 21.8.1689, f.30v; MT Hall, Box 147. MSS 8; MT Hall, MSC. DOC. A17.4. In 1666 the livery governors acknowledged that loan monies worth £1.400 had not been made available since the early 1660s. MF 330, CM V10. 27.6.1666, p.87. Many charities were neglected by the Drapers Company by the 1670s following the abolition of the yeomanry in 1657, and accusations over non-payment of charitable trusts in the 1740s contributed to the decision of the rulers of the Clothworkers Company to dissolve the yeomanry in 1754. Girtin, "Golden Ram", pp. 177-181; Johnson, op.cit., v3, pp. 235, 286.

(1)

the poorer freemen ensured that the majority of Merchant Taylors were exempt from all taxes and charges, and yeomanry officers were invariably co-opted onto assessment committees to facilitate identification of members of "knowen habilitie". In 1603, of 219 non-liverymen taxed towards the Company's proportion of the City's costs regarding the coronation of James I, no less than 110 or 50 per cent would live long enough to become yeomanry wardens or liverymen. When in the same year it was necessary to make a second assessment to raise funds for the pageant of Lord Mayor Robert Lee, the taxation net was thrown wider by the Wardens Substitute: 31 different contribution rates varying between 2s 6d and £5 were applied to 624 freemen of the "Habler sorte". In the economically-depressed early 1630s, the pool of well-to-do freemen fell to just 179, and consequently in early 1633 when the City was fined for the death of John Lambe, the 'generality' were also assessed at 12d. As many as 1,000 freemen may have contributed, a testament to both the administrative efficiency of the yeomanry and perhaps the poverty of the greater part of the Company membership. At least 85 per cent of the freemen were not

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(1) In 1624 the yeomanry governors were asked to ensure "to theire best understanding" that only 'able'freemen were required to contribute to a levy. MF 328, CM V8,1.10.24, f.226.

(2) MF 300, Accounts V8, 1602-1603, pp.317-407.

taxed, although the assessment was fully raised from the  
 (1)  
 selected contributors. .

The assistance of the Wardens Substitute and Sixteen Men was also sought when military accoutrements and conscripts had to be provided on the instruction of the Lord Mayor. In 1580, 296 freemen were required to serve as soldiers at a muster, and in response the livery governors arranged for the yeomanry wardens and their immediate predecessors to 'search' their Quarters to  
 (2)  
 identify suitable nominees. Five years later, the wardens and assistants perused their Quarter Books to establish a short-list of Merchant Taylors considered able to provide arms or money towards the muster at  
 (3)  
 Greenwich.

The importance of the Bachelors Company as an agency of livery company government was magnified in years when the Lord Mayor-elect was a Merchant Taylor. The water-borne

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(1) MF 302, Accounts V15. 1630-1631; MF 329, CM V8, 21.1.33, f.404v. Only 179 better-off contributors were found in 1630, and on this basis 840 other freemen out of a total of around 7,000 must have contributed 12d towards the £69 collected by the yeomanry. Rappaport concluded from studying a sample of guilds that two-thirds of 16th century freemen above the rank of journeyman contributed to assessments. In the Merchant Taylors Company the proportion was far lower, possibly because of the high number of well-to-do potential contributors available. Rappaport, Part 2, p.118.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 16.2.80, ff.53v, 54.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 17.4.85, ff.112v, 123; Sharpe, op.cit., V1, p.529.

procession and the magnificent show staged in honour of the City's new chief executive was entirely organised by the yeomanry officers. They appointed poor men to receive ceremonial gowns and the many hundreds of participants - "Bachelors in Foynes", "Bachelors in Budge", ushers, supervisors, "target-men" - and taxed the freemen towards the cost of the show. An enormous amount of preparation lay behind the festivities, ranging from the purchase of gowns, banners, fireworks and streamers to the organisation of the main displays and decoration  
 (1) of the Company barge. In 1602, one of the Sixteen Men recorded the results of a meeting with the Master where they had asked to be excused service as "bachelors", arguing that "thye have bene occupyd For the Bying of things and seing theinings donn that daye some in one  
 (2) plase and some in another plase".

## V Arbitration

One of the major roles of early modern guilds was the provision of a forum for the resolution of members trade  
 (3) and personal disputes. By 1600, the number of cases heard by the Master and wardens was minimal, and although there are no extant references to yeomanry

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(1) The complete financial records of the Wardens Substitute survive with respect to the pageants of 1602, 1605, 1610, 1624 and 1630 incorporated within the livery accounts.

(2) Yeo.Ord.Bk,f.44v.

(3) Rappaport, Part 2, pp.112,113. See above.pp.80,81.

officers presiding in specific cases, it is clear that this function fell increasingly to the Bachelors Company. The oath of the Sixteen Men anticipated that such matters would come to their attention, but bound them to report "causes in betweene partie, and partie" with their comments to the livery governors. By 1609 however, the yeomanry assistants were regularly hearing and determining causes alone, to the exasperation of the wardens, and were instructed by the livery court to "only assist and counsell" the Wardens Substitute when disputes were heard. There was certainly no question of re-introducing arbitration by the rulers of the livery company.

#### Funds and Financial Affairs

The Bachelors Company was not an incorporated guild and could not legally hold landed property, and no part of the substantial rental income accruing to the Merchant Taylors Company during the early modern period was collected directly by the yeomanry officers. Nevertheless, although taxes and loans could only be demanded from Merchant Taylors on the authority of the livery rulers, the yeomanry was essentially a self-

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(1) Yeo.Ord.Bk, f.11v.

(2) Ibid, f.24v.

(3) Unwin, "Gilds", p.159.

financing organisation. The wardens collected and retained quarterages and fines from members, and were entitled to recover the 3s 4d admission fees or 'first years quarterages' paid by newly-registered freemen. Both sources of income varied in their yield from year to year, but normally represented the greater part of the receipts accounted for by the wardens.

The Bachelors Company was also entitled to the 'fines' imposed on new liverymen who had not occupied the position of Warden Substitute, which traditionally were utilized to finance the 'great dinner' of the freemen.<sup>(1)</sup> The increase in both the level of admission charge and the scale of recruitment to the livery, coupled with the diminution in the number of yeomanry wardens joining the livery, gave rise to highly substantial windfalls in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In 1602, £420 gathered from 18 freemen promoted to the livery was made over en bloc to the yeomanry, although from 1610 - following the review of the affairs of the Bachelors

<sup>(1)</sup> Income disclosed in the 1587-1588 yeomanry accounts was composed exclusively of quarterages and freedom fees. MF 299, Accounts 1587-1588.

<sup>(2)</sup> In 1605 the dinner was cancelled partly as no co-option of liverymen was planned. MF 327, CM V5, 19.6.05, pp.164, 165. The dinner of the Haberdashers yeomanry was funded in the same way. GH MSS 15,868,f.24.

Company in 1609 - the receipts were entered into the account books of the Master and Wardens and only a proportion transferred to the Wardens Substitute. In 1616, £336 out of receipts of £636 was allocated to the yeomanry, which was however benefiting greatly by that date from a new source of funds - the penalties of up to £40 levied from 1609 on freemen who were allowed to commute their service as Warden Substitute. In 1614, £120 levied on three freemen was paid straight into the hands of the yeomanry wardens for the benefit of the poor. Although in 1616 the claim that the fines accrued to the Bachelors Company by right was rejected, most were transferred to the yeomanry - including a total of £200 levied in 1616.

The income of the Bachelors Company, devoted primarily to the provision of poor relief and the 'great dinner', was expended wholly at the discretion of its officers, and despite the steady growth in the level of transactions indicated by Table 16, the livery governors exercised minimal supervision over yeomanry financial affairs. The funds, plate and other possessions of the junior section

(1) MF 328, CM V7, 20.7.16, p.246.

(2) See Chapter VI, pp.317,318.

(3) MF 328, CM V7, 2.10.16,p.357; MF 301, Accounts V11, 1614-1615, 1616-1617.

(4) Other expenditure included gratuities to Company employees and the gowns of the wardens.

of the Merchant Taylors Company were stored in the Bachelors Gallery, and keys to the treasury chest were deposited with yeomanry officers only. The livery assistants rarely sought access to the treasury; in the three decades from 1580, the contents were examined only once when a large loan was required towards the renovation of the Hall. Until 1609, the annual accounts were audited by a committee of yeomanry officers, with a summary of receipts, payments and the balance carried forward presented to the Master and his wardens and noted in the Ordinary Court minutes. Detailed figures were evidently not required, and the summaries were certainly never challenged. In the late sixteenth century, even the delivery of the transaction totals appears to have lapsed.

The insight into the financial management of the Bachelors Company afforded by the petitions of the disgruntled wardens of 1608-1609 reveals that control lay exclusively with the "auntientes" assistants. It was furthermore unsatisfactory in several respects. No inventory of the contents of the treasury was available, the wardens were rarely allowed access to the chest, and the leading assistants made unminuted withdrawals and

(1) The wardens of the 16th century Founders yeomanry were unable to gain access to their treasury without the presence of a livery warden. J CC, V10, f.304v.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 20.12.85 23.2.86, ff. 135v, 137v.

(3) See Table 16 for the consequent lacuna in financial data in the two decades after 1590 (p.274).

drew-up informal annual financial statements on their own initiative. They denied the out-going wardens sight of the accounts of their predecessors, and (according to the wardens) authorised bills of expenses "by themselves without our allowance, as yf wee were Ciphers". The revelations led to the introduction of more sophisticated accounting procedures, along with some measure of livery involvement. Inventories of plate and money were to be established and regularly up-dated, and the number of keys to the treasury was increased with both wardens and senior assistants appointed custodians. In addition, new procedures for the preparation of accounts were laid down. They were to be prepared "not in grosse but in particulers", showing reconciled balances at the beginning and end of the accounting period, and were to be "orderly kept and written faier in the same manner as the accomptes of the Master". Once completed, the accounts were to be audited by two yeomanry assistants and two livery wardens, and bills of expenses were only to be passed if they bore the written authorisation of two Wardens Substitute and two senior Sixteen Men.

While day-to-day financial administration remained firmly in the hands of the yeomanry's own governors, the role of representatives of the livery in the annual audit marked a new phase of greater livery interest in the financial

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(1) These developments again reflect widespread improvements in accounting and record-keeping during the period. See above, p.67.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 13.1.09 29.5.09, pp.348, 349.  
379-382.

affairs of the Bachelors Company, albeit only through concern at the escalating cost of poor relief and yeomanry assemblies under the Early Stuarts. The livery governors had had cause for their earlier complacency; the yeomanry had been self-funding, and the accounts of the Wardens Substitute had invariably yielded a surplus of receipts over expenditure. Further, the treasury of the Bachelors Company represented a useful source of loans and contributions until the second decade of the seventeenth century. Loans were regularly advanced under Elizabeth I towards the cost of the stock of corn, and in 1586 the yeomanry wardens were persuaded to lend £400 from corporate funds towards the renovation of the Hall; the accounts of the Master revealed that the 'loan' was  
 (1)  
 "never to be paid then agayne". In 1604 and 1613 respectively, 9.5 per cent of the contributions of the Merchant Taylors Company towards loans to the Crown and municipality were met from the Bachelors Company treasury, which in 1609 was found to contain £433 in gold  
 (2) and silver coins. The provision of relief to freemen - among whom the poor seem to have been growing  
 (3) proportionately as well as absolutely-meant however that

(1) MF 299, Accounts V6, 1585-1586, f.168.

(2) MF 327, CM V5, 26.9.04, 10.2.09, pp.143; MF 328, CM V7, 4.9.13 pp.97,98.

(3) The increasing number of poor freemen is a recurrent theme in the earlier 17th century, and may reflect the long-term economic difficulties of the handicraftsmen. See below, pp.372-375.

despite contributions from livery funds the accounts were in deficit almost every year after 1613, and the treasury  
 (1) was regularly empty. Reviews of yeomanry costs became commonplace from the 1620s, with restrictions imposed on the number of meetings and discretionary alms-giving. As the debts of the Merchant Taylors Company mounted in the 1640s and 1650s, and the proportion of livery assistants who had experience of yeomanry government and its worth  
 (2) fell, the expenditure of the Bachelors Company must increasingly have been regarded as an extravagance the Company could ill-afford.

### Conclusion

The foregoing account has emphasised the remarkable scope of the self-government of the yeomanry of the Merchant Taylors Company in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries, and the highly - pronounced administrative bifurcation of one of the major City livery companies - phenomena which found expression to some degree within a high proportion of the guilds and companies of early modern London. No contemporary

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(1) From 1613-1636, a summary of yeomanry financial transactions was incorporated in most years within the livery accounts. Thereafter the new Common Clerk only recorded the annual excess of expenditure over income, which peaked at £116 in 1647.

(2) Only 4 of the 35 liverymen joining the court of assistants in the 1640s had acted as Warden Substitute, and none of the 4 joined the senior section of the court.

observer would however have doubted that the Bachelors Company formed an integral and subordinate part of its famous parent company. The livery governors licensed the more important assemblies and made final choice of the wardens. Representatives of both parts of the Company attended livery and yeomanry Quarter Days, and the Master and livery wardens retained prime responsibility for the enrolment of all apprentices and freemen. The livery assistants were able to issue directives affecting Merchant Taylors of every status and any area of yeomanry life, and major administrative reforms and approaches to parliament or the municipality were generally undertaken after consultation with the livery authorities. Further, the governors of the Bachelors Company had no independently-constituted legal rights; the 1502 charter and 1507 ordinances made only passing reference to the century-old body of yeomen tailors, and the revised ordinances of 1613 reflected the enhanced importance of the yeomanry organisation only to the extent of including the oaths of the Wardens Substitute and Sixteen Men and  
<sup>(1)</sup> alluding to the procedures for electing the wardens.

While clearly subject to the authority of the livery, the Bachelors Company was nevertheless in no sense a mere

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(1) MF 310. AMB V2, passim. In the late 17th century, the Company governors dismissed legal claims relating to the dissolution of the yeomanry in the 1660s, stressing that the Wardens Substitute "were never Incorporated or had any power or authority". MT Hall, MSC.DOC.A17,13.

administrative agency of that body, employed from time to time to implement specific decisions or to carry-out delegated routine duties. On the contrary, the yeomanry represented a self-regulating and self-sufficient industrial and fraternal social organisation, with long-standing traditions, wide-ranging duties and powers and its own evolved ethos. The officers sat in court in their own section of the Hall, governing by reference to separate orders, and surrounded by record books dating from the fifteenth century, paintings of distinguished Bachelors Company governors, a treasury, silver plate and similar material trappings; inevitably they developed a strong sense of the independent origins and identity of the organisation under their charge. Indeed, during the Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods, the yeomanry functioned almost wholly independently of the livery, with the approval of the new Wardens Substitute and the

(1) In 1606, the Bachelors Company was required to reimburse the livery for repairs made to "their Gallery". MF 327, CM V5, 12.8.06, p.236.

(2) These included pictures of William Lane, Warden Substitute 1618 and an assistant until at least 1649, and Jeremy Rawsterne, Warden Substitute 1617 and an assistant until at least 1645. MF 330, CM V9, 3.6.46, f.230.

(3) In 1618, yeomanry possessions were initially excluded from an inventory taken of all moveable items in the Hall. One month after completion of the inventory, the livery governors decided to also draw-up an inventory of yeomanry goods, "parte of the state of this society". MF 328, CM V7, 18.8.18, p.478; MF 311, AMB V12, Inventory 1618.

Quarter Day attendances representing the only formal points of contact.

From 1609, livery wardens acted as joint auditors, yeomanry meetings including the annual dinner were scrutinised and circumscribed to reduce costs, and the appointment of employees of the yeomanry was brought under the auspices of the livery governors. These changes may well have been unpopular with veteran assistants such as John Burnford, who in 1598 had considered it beneath his dignity to have to stand in an election for the position of livery beadle, and in 1608 had disputed the right of the Master to cancel a yeomanry

(1)

Quarter Day meeting. The changes which Burnford witnessed did not however seriously erode the autonomy and distinctive character of the yeomanry. In 1645, the Wardens Substitute and assistants were still meeting independently to effect the representation, relief and regulation of the freemen in general and the handicraft in particular, and yeomanry traditions continued to be upheld by tailors and other ex-wardens who remained

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(1) MF 326, CM V3, 96.98.f.373; MF 327, CM V5, 3.12.08. p.338. When the Wardens Substitute had obtained permission to cancel a Quarter Day in 1608, Burnford had informed them that while he and his colleagues acknowledged "a power in our Master and Wardens of themselves to lymtt the day for the keeping of our Quarter Day", it was believed that they could "not quite ... abrogate it and take it away without the full consent of this court of Assisstantes".

active in its government for the length of their working lives. London underwent enormous topographical and economic change in the early modern period, and it is no exaggeration to present the yeomanry of the Merchant Taylors Company - and no doubt the yeomanries of other major livery companies - as a major force for stability and continuity. It lacked the degree of participation available in the wards and parishes, but brought considerable advantages to the many thousands of citizens affiliated to an institution often viewed as remote and monolithic.

VI: FREEMEN, TAILORS AND INDUSTRIAL REGULATION

This chapter examines the size of the body of freemen below the livery, emphasising the significance of the yeomanry organisation and its officers, the representatives of one of the largest bodies of London citizens. The continuing association of the freemen and the Bachelors Company with the City tailoring trade will be explored in detail, particularly the role of the long-serving yeomanry assistants in the still vigorous efforts of the Merchant Taylors Company to regulate its nominal trade in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries.

This section of the Company's history cannot be logically concluded in 1645: in the early 1650s the yeomanry's regulatory role was revised and extended following representations from the industrial element, yet in 1662 the yeomanry organisation was abolished, only to be briefly revived from 1688 to 1690 for the sole purpose of enforcing the apprenticeship regulations in the City tailoring trade. Events subsequent to 1645 will be considered in the final section of this chapter, as they represent the final stage in a long process of adaption and ultimately decline in the involvement of the livery company with its original trade.

The Generality - Numbers

One of the most significant features of the Merchant Taylors Company during the early modern period was its responsibility for, in all probability, the single largest association of London's citizenry. By the mid-sixteenth century, it undoubtedly possessed a larger membership than any other guild in the capital, and by extension in England. Of 1,002 freemen enrolled by the municipal authorities between December 1551 and September 1553 as members of over sixty guilds and companies, 133 became freemen of the Merchant Taylors Company; the Clothworkers Company was the only other guild attracting more than 5 per cent of the total.<sup>(1)</sup>

No complete list of the membership of the Company exists for any year in the early modern period, and estimates of the number of affiliated freemen must be based on two primary sources of data, the annual admission lists and quarterage receipts.

The most statistically reliable evidence is drawn from the lists of new freemen contained within the annual

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(1) 95 or 9.5% of the new freemen were Clothworkers. These figures are based on the analysis in Ramsay; "London Freemen", p.532. The analysis has been corrected in some respects by Stephen Rappaport, but Ramsay's figures remain materially correct.

financial accounts of the livery officers. Table 20 sets out the decennial totals of freemen and apprentices joining the Company during the century following 1580, together with the annual averages for each decade; it is supplemented by Appendix 1 which illustrates graphically the scale of admissions during a longer period stretching from 1545, the first year for which reliable figures survive, to 1745, by when the level of admissions had reached a relatively low and steady annual rate. The entrance figures for freemen, which peak prior to the Civil War and fall sharply from 1670, reflect fundamental developments in the topographical and economic landscape of early modern London: the enormous expansion in population and built-up area after 1580 and the decline in the attractiveness of the freedom of the City after  
 (1)  
 1660. Table 20 forms the final page of this chapter.

The numerical strength of the Company reached an astonishing level during the first half of the seventeenth century, when an average of 586 apprentices and 225 freemen were enrolled annually. These averages far exceed the normal level of admissions to the London companies: during the period 1630-1660 the average annual

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(1) R. Finlay, Population and Metropolis. The Demography of London, 1580-1650, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 51, 66; V. Pearl, "Social Policy in Early Modern London", pp. 117-120; D.V. Glass, "Socio-Economic Status and Occupations in the City of London at the End of the 17th Century", in Studies in London History, 1969, pp. 384-386.

number of apprentices enrolled with freemen of the Merchant Taylors Company was 526, while the average for the sample of nine companies studied by S.R. Smith for  
<sup>(1)</sup>  
the same period was just 80.

If a typical young man was twenty-eight years old when he became a citizen and could expect to enjoy that  
<sup>(2)</sup>  
citizenship for thirty-two years, the total free membership of the Company on the eve of the Civil War was 7,844, although a proportion of the membership would not be resident in London. The disparity in the numbers of young men enrolling as apprentices and those who subsequently took up the freedom is well-known; at least 60 per cent of apprentices taken on by Merchant Taylors during the period 1580-1645 either died, abandoned their careers or did not bother to take-up the freedom on  
<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> S.R. Smith, "The Social and Geographical Origins of the London Apprentices, 1630-1660", The Guildhall Miscellany, IV no.4, April 1973, p.197 (hereafter "London Apprentices"). The sample included three of the twelve great companies, with the Grocers admitting the highest average annual total of 154.

<sup>(2)</sup> This approximation is based on Wrigley and Schofield, The Population History of England 1541-1871 A Reconstruction, 1981. p.250 and Rappaport, Part 1, pp.115-117.

<sup>(3)</sup> The great majority of Merchant Taylors acquired the freedom after serving an apprenticeship, although patrimony and redemption (purchase) were alternative methods. Of the 1,921 admissions listed in the accounts 1600-1609, 164 (8.5%) were 'by patrimony' and 132 (7%) 'by redemption'. The proportions of admissions other than by apprenticeship in 1580 and 1650 were respectively 13% and 15%.

(1)

completion of their terms. However, a further appreciable (if unquantifiable) number acquired the status of a freeman before departing for their home towns and villages in the provinces. During the first decade of the seventeenth century, John Escott served his apprenticeship with a woollen draper free of the Merchant Taylors Company, and over thirty years after becoming a citizen of London drew attention to his subsequent career in a letter to the court of assistants: "I never lived in London after I had served mine apprenticeship but was ymediately fetcht from thence by my father unto his (2) habitation in Cornewall there to exercise my profession".

How many other freemen like Escott returned to the provinces after learning their chosen trade with a citizen of London is unclear, although when the Company from 1608 began to elect provincial freemen to the position of yeomanry warden as a financial expedient, there were numerous men of rank in provincial towns to choose from. The freemen initially elected as Warden Substitute in 1639 for example were residents of Salop, Devon, Leicestershire and Bristol; Thomas Colston, alderman and merchant of Bristol noted in his defence

(1) After allowing for admissions by patrimony and redemption, this proportion rises to nearer 70%. The Masons, Carpenters, Stationers, Cordwainers and Drapers Companies had drop-out rates in the seventeenth century of between 27% and 52%. Smith, "London Apprentices" p.197.

(2) MF 330, CM V9,7.12.41 f.138 v. On becoming freemen, 13% of members of the Brewers, Butchers and Coopers appear to have left London in the early 1550s. Rappaport, Part 2, p.122.

that "many of us who have bourne the office of Sheriff  
here have bin longe before members and free of severall  
worthy Incorporations in that honorable Citty of London".<sup>(1)</sup>

In addition, many freemen and liverymen who made the capital their home retired to the provinces, or moved outside of the franchises: in 1598 the yeomanry governors resolved that members of their court living more than twenty miles from the City should appoint a place in London where summons could be left if they wished to continue to attend meetings.<sup>(2)</sup> The figure of 7,844 clearly represents a maximum for Company membership in the capital in the early 1640s, compared to a maximum for 1600 of 4,600, using the same assumptions.

The surviving evidence regarding quarterage or affiliation dues provide some indication of the proportion of the membership actively participating in the life of their livery company. Freemen in business on their own account were required to contribute 2s 2d per annum in quarterly instalments, while journeymen paid a levy of 8d per annum. Alien masters and journeymen affiliated to the Company paid slightly different amounts, 2s and 1s respectively, which like the rates of their English-born counterparts remained fixed from the early sixteenth century to beyond 1660.

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(1) MF 330, CM V9.28.8.39, ff.79v-81.

(2) MF 310, AMB V6, Yeomanry Ordinance Book, f.1.

Before the 1660s, records of even the total annual receipts survive only in the livery court minutes for 1563 and 1608 and in the two sets of yeomanry financial accounts for 1588 and 1595. Estimation of the number of freemen contributing in these years is complicated by the fact that a high proportion of freemen were always in arrears, and even more by the widespread withholding of quarterages in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by freemen unhappy with the irregularity of the yeomanry dinner. The impact of the latter phenomenon is reflected in the slight decrease in the total receipts declared in 1595 in comparison to 1563, despite the steady annual increase in the number of members enrolled in the late sixteenth century.<sup>(1)</sup>

In 1608 the Wardens Substitute collected £152 8s 10d after considerable efforts and despite a widespread campaign of non-payment following a six year interval since the last yeomanry dinner. If all the contributions were at the highest rate and were paid in full, then 1,407 freemen paid their quarterages in 1608, representing 28 per cent of the members admitted during the previous thirty-two years. Extrapolating, in 1642

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(1) The total quarterages collected were £88 13s 3d in 1563 £89 7s 9d in 1588 and £88 12s 10d in 1595. The yeomanry accounts analysed the receipts between the area of jurisdiction under each yeomanry warden, and between freemen and aliens in each area. In 1595, the receipts entered in the "Strangers Quarter Bookes" totalled £3 10s 6d, or one fifth of 1 per cent of total receipts.

2,196 freemen resident in London would have acknowledged their membership by paying their affiliation dues, but such estimates clearly represent a small proportion of all Merchant Taylors residing within the capital. Free and alien journeymen paid lower sums, many members were always in arrears, and furthermore the least able freemen were exempt from all Company dues, including in practice (1) quarterages. When the boycott is added to these factors - in 1588 the livery financial accounts reveal that only thirty-one or around 40 per cent of liverymen paid their 3s 4d affiliation dues after the cancellation of their dinners - it is evident that the projections for 1608 and 1642 must account for no more than one-third of London freemen under the jurisdiction of the Company in those (2) years.

Some further indication of the number of freemen participating in the life of the Company is provided by the fascinating detail contained in the six pages of yeomanry accounts for 1595, one of the years in which the Great Dinner of the freemen was observed. The fare for the ordinary membership included fowl pies, for which 372 pigeons and 420 geese and other birds were provided,

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(1) Yeomanry Ordinance Book, f.24v.

(2) The Drapers Company were unable to collect the quarterages of more than 37 per cent of its London membership, which was a substantially smaller body than that of the Merchant Taylors Company. T.Girtin Triple Crowns, 1964, pp.203.239.

together with a cake or dessert, the preparation of which required over fifty pounds of fruit, 1,600 eggs, seventy pounds of butter and over seventy pounds of sugar. Estimation of the number of diners from the quantities of food made available is not straight-forward. Well-to-do sixteenth century Englishmen consumed meals of very large (1) proportions, but the fare provided for the ordinary freemen rather than their distinguished guests was no doubt meagre. The scale of the preparations for the dinner for the generality suggests that those in attendance numbered thousands - perhaps 1,500 or around one-third of the freemen enrolled in the previous thirty-two years - rather than hundreds, an impression supported by the assembling of over 1,000 wooden platters for the use of the diners, and the provision of over 1,500 loaves of bread. Extrapolating once more, a similar assembly in 1640 may have attracted over 2,700 members, and not surprisingly the dinner was not held (2) after the 1620s.

The historical evidence regarding the scale and nature of membership of the Company in the early modern period is unsatisfactory in many respects, but is sufficient to

(1) In 1594, no more than sixteen livery governors sat down to an Audit Dinner for which inter alia thirty-two birds and sixty eggs were provided. MT Hall, AMB V54, f.115.

(2) The Great Dinner and the capacity of the Hall were discussed in more detail above, pp.270-273.

allow reasonable estimation. It is probable that in 1642 there were in the region of 7,800 freemen affiliated to the Merchant Taylors Company, of whom only one-third may have regularly attended quarter days and paid their affiliation dues. The majority of the remainder would have been resident in and around London, subject to the Company search and financial assessments and enrolling their apprentices at the Company Hall, with the residue (possibly 10 per cent or approximately 800) working in or  
 (1)  
 retired to the provinces

The significance to the Company of the distinction between the body of freemen nominally under its jurisdiction and those who played an active part in its financial and social affairs grew as the total membership expanded in the earlier seventeenth century. By the 1640s, the much-valued 'knowledge' of the freemen

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(1) This general pattern is supported by the equally patchy evidence regarding the Drapers and Grocers companies. The Drapers Company on average admitted one quarter of the number of freemen who joined the Merchant Taylors Company in the earlier 17th century, and in the 1640s had 1,400 members on record of whom only 516 paid quarterages. The Grocers on average had an admission rate three times smaller than that of the Merchant Taylors Company, but were able to collect the dues of only 514 freemen in the early 1630s, representing no more than 25% of its country-wide membership. Girtin, "Triple Crowns", pp.203,239; Johnson,op.cit.,V3.p.236,V4,pp.251-253; GH MSS 11571/12, Grocers Company:Quires of Wardens Accounts, 1632-1642, f.3.

maintained by the officers of the yeomanry was no longer sufficient to allow them to identify poor and aged Londoners who turned-up at quarter days brandishing freedom papers borrowed from Merchant Taylors in order to support bogus claims for Company alms and pensions.<sup>(1)</sup> After the fire of 1666, many 'good' members were "not ... discovered or knowne to be free", and the livery governors in 1670 ordered all members to certify the names and addresses of former apprentices who were still living.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### The Generality - Occupations and Employments

Membership of the Merchant Taylors Company was never confined to artisans engaged in tailoring, and from its inception the guild welcomed freemen involved in other trades and professions. The fifty-six new brothers of 1400 included twenty-five tailors, three merchants and twenty-eight assorted tradesmen and artisans.<sup>(3)</sup> While it is unlikely that tailors ever accounted for much more than half the total membership, it is of significance that they remained by far the single largest and best organised occupational group within the Company until the mid seventeenth century and beyond. The traditional picture of the larger London livery companies rapidly losing touch with their nominal trades in the early

(1) MF 330, CM V9,18.8.41, f.127. See above, p.277.

(2) MF 331, CM V10,18.3.1670, p.292.

(3) MF 297, Accounts V1.1398-1444.

modern period does not apply here: the raison d'être of the yeomanry organisation was the regulation and representation of the members of 'the handicraft', and while again data for statistical analysis is sparse, it is clear that those handicraftsmen constituted between one-third and one-half of the membership until beyond 1660.

In 1634 for example, the number of self-employed 'working Tailors' using "handy labour" within the franchises was estimated to be at least one thousand, to which would have to be added the growing class of large employers and 'salesmen tailors'; scores of Company pensioners formerly engaged in the trade; and several hundred free journeymen, who banded together in 1634 to present their own petition to the livery governors. When sixteen years later the Master and wardens commented that "the generality of the said Company are & for many yeares past have been very numerous consisting for the moste parte of Cutting Taylors", it is probable that their impression was materially correct. In 1660 when the apprentice binding book reveals the trades of 83 per cent of masters binding apprentices, 35 per cent were tailors and a further 9 per cent were involved in ancilliary trades (as

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(1) MF 329, CM V8,4.2.34,8.10 34 ff.496v,512. See below,  
pp.372-374.

(2) MF 330, CM V9,8.5.50.f.348.

(1)

for example milliners and salesmen tailors). With the tailoring trade still based in a majority of cases on a  
 (2) small working unit, the binding books are likely to understate rather than overstate the proportion of householders belonging to the handicraft prior to the Restoration. Indeed, in the thirty-six months from May 1607, no less than 79 per cent of the masters whose occupations were incidentally referred to in the unusually detailed Ordinary Court minutes were cutting tailors. Even as late as 1676, after a high proportion of free tailors had deserted the City for the suburbs and the Company had lost touch with many of its poorer members, a surviving quarterage book containing over one thousand names refers to 23 per cent as working tailors, with closely allied trades accounting for a further 6 per  
 (3)  
 cent.

While the handicraft clearly encompassed a significant proportion of the membership as a whole, the flexibility inherent in the "Custom of London" meant that not all tailors were affiliated to the guild nominally responsible for their trade. It is apparent however that the historical links of the Merchant Taylors Company with the London tailoring trade militated against the formation of large bodies of tailors outside of the

(1) Trades are first recorded from 1658. MF 318. Apprentice Binding Books, V15, 1660, pp.41-87. Drapers, the second largest occupational group, accounted for 8% of the masters in 1660.

(2) See below, pp.358,359.

(3) MT Hall, MSS BK L4.(AMB V32).

Company's jurisdiction.

The court minutes refer to apprentices being 'translated' to freemen of a wide range of City guilds and companies, albeit on condition that the apprentices ultimately became members of the Merchant Taylors Company. However, only the Drapers Company seems to have attracted more than a handful of master tailors. In 1555, the two companies co-operated with the municipal government in taking action against foreign tailors in the capital; of 528 freemen paying quarterages to the Drapers Company in 1624, 116 were described as tailors. Complaints about the existence of tailors not affiliated to the Company were conspicuous by their absence in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries; although dissatisfaction was expressed in 1649 by the working tailors of the Merchant Taylors Company, they soon found it more expedient to elicit the support of the freemen of other companies following their trade for their main demands. The "divers cutting tailors freemen of severall Companies" whose representatives submitted an ancilliary petition in December 1649 were estimated to number "many hundreds", but the speed with which demands for their absorbtion into the Merchant Taylors Company were dropped by its handicraftsmen reinforces the impression that Merchant Taylors represented the great majority of tailors working legally in London.

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(1) CLRO, Rep.13(2), 1555-1558, ff.349v, 352; Johnson, op.cit., V4, p.98.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 5.12.49, ff.332v, 333.

Representation of the Freemen

The existence of small bodies of wealthy liverymen in the larger London companies with little interest in the trade or general welfare of ordinary freemen has been viewed as a recipe for unrest and division in early modern London. The merchants and retailers who dominated not only the liveries but, earlier in their careers, the offices of the yeomanry organisations have been linked to the neglect of industrial regulation in the capital, illustrated by the lapse of the 'search' for artisans working outside of the framework of the apprenticeship regulations and for deficient workmanship.<sup>(1)</sup>

While in a number of the major London companies there were outbursts of discontent emanating from the industrial element before the Civil War, the yeomanry organisation of the Merchant Taylors Company was maintained as a vehicle to represent and regulate the industrial element by the Elizabethan and Early Stuart

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(1) Ashton, "City", p.51; M.James, Social Problems and Policy During the Puritan Revolution, 1966. p.194; Unwin, "Industrial Organisation" pp.42-46.

(2) These have received much attention from historians, e.g. Unwin, "Industrial Organisation", pp.42-46 and Ashton, "City", pp.51-58, but are not representative of the affairs of the larger companies in general nor necessarily of any one company throughout the early modern period.

livery governors. The argument that the interests of handicraftsmen could only be protected by representatives of their own class was expounded repeatedly. To the artisan skinners in 1606 the lack of representatives of their trade among the governors of their livery company was unacceptable: "they have noe compassionate feeling of the abuses in the sayd Art or misterye". Similarly, the artisan goldsmiths in the 1620s argued that regulation of their trade demanded "exquisit skill & knowledge" which was all too often lacking among the guild officers.<sup>(1)</sup> The maintenance of harmony and stability within the Merchant

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(1) Quotations in Ashton, "City", pp.55, 56. The yeomanries of both companies had some deficiencies in comparison to the well-established organisations within the Merchant Taylors (to 1662), Clothworkers (to 1739), Drapers (to 1657), Haberdashers and Ironmongers companies. The goldsmiths yeomanry set up in 1542 does not seem to have acquired independent functions and powers, with industrial regulation retained in the hands of the livery. The governors of the Skinners Company prior to 1606 were unwilling to adequately finance the yeomanry organisation, which discouraged artisans from accepting office. Sir W.S. Prideaux, Memorials of the Goldsmiths Company .. between 1335 and 1815, 2 vol's 1896,passim; T.Girtin, "Golden Ram", passim; J.J. Lambert ed., "Skinners of London",passim; Johnson, op.cit., vol's 1-3, passim; G.H. MSS 16,963, Ironmongers Yeomanry Act and Ordinance Book; GH MSS 16,987, Ironmongers Yeomanry Quarterage Books (7 vol's); GH MSS 15 868, Haberdashers Yeomanry Accounts 1601-1661.

Taylors Company in no small measure depended on the extent to which the yeomanry government could be regarded as a representative and effective body acting in the interests of the ordinary freemen. the handicraftsmen were fully aware that the charter and ordinances of the Company committed its governors to protect their economic interests.

Prima facie the officers of the Bachelors Company appear more closely identified with the livery than with the generality. A high proportion of the yeomanry wardens were co-opted onto the livery soon after completing their term of office, and many were merchants and retailers well-known to historians of early modern London. Geoffry Elwes was one of the leading drapers in the capital by the late sixteenth century, and acquired the status of a liveryman in 1583. He went on to become Master in 1604 and ultimately alderman in 1605, thirty-three years after his election as a yeomanry warden. Indeed a total of 40 per cent of liverymen who were elected as Master in the period 1580-1645 had previously served as yeomanry warden, and such rising stars, only rarely artisans, must have had at best a perfunctory interest in regulation of the City tailoring trade. Furthermore, the rapid elevation of ex-wardens to the upper section of the

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(1) Lang, Ph.D. thesis, passim; Beaven, I, p.345.

(1)

Company would inevitably have hindered the development of a cohesive group of senior freemen sharing the priorities and able to promote the interests of the ordinary members.

It is therefore of great interest that while only 125 (or 30 per cent) of the 414 Merchant Taylors who became liverymen between 1580 and 1645 had previously served as Wardens Substitute, no less than 52 per cent of all the yeomanry wardens of the period were regarded by the Company governors as unsuitable for co-option to the livery. As the wealth and prestige of the senior section of the Company grew apace under the Early Stuarts, the degree of overlap declined, as illustrated by Tables 17 and 18.

TABLE 17

Wardens of the yeomanry becoming liverymen, grouped decennially except for the period to 1645, shown as percentages.

1580-1589	54%
1590-1599	59%
1600-1609	63%
1610-1619	52%
1620-1629	40%
1630-1645	30%
Average :	48%

(1) Yeomanry wardens who went on to act as Master of the Company during the period had waited on average only two years before promotion to the livery.

TABLE 18

Percentages of the 414 liverymen admitted 1580-1645 who had previously served as yeomanry warden, grouped decennially except for the period to 1645.

1580-1589	46%
1590-1599	47%
1600-1609	37%
1610-1619	34%
1620-1629	24%
1630-1645	17%
Average :	30%

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The office of Warden Substitute was clearly far from being a minor administrative office occupied exclusively by well-to-do freemen en route to the livery and civic office, and sufficient biographical data relating to the leading freemen not entitled to wear the livery survives to illustrate the more complex nature of the office. In particular, it reveals that a minimum of one, and in general at least two, of the four nominations accepted by the livery governors each year were master tailors; often of many years experience in their trade, they were in many cases considerably older than fellow wardens on the threshold of their careers. Richard Selby, a freeman since 1557, had come to the attention of the livery governors in 1565 for 'marring' the frock made for a Grocer's wife; in 1591 he was elected as a warden of the yeomanry notwithstanding his protestations and

relatively advanced years.<sup>(1)</sup> Similarly in 1639 tailor Samuel Bridge was appointed warden after no less than forty years as a freeman.<sup>(2)</sup>

The pattern of appointments is well evidenced by a brief study of the Merchant Taylors elected as Bachelors Company wardens in 1584 and 1596, when the careers of the majority of the wardens can be reconstructed.

In 1584, the four wardens appointed by the court of assistants from eight candidates presented by the yeomanry governors were William Pryce, Alexander Hickes, John Glascocke and William Browne. Pryce was a successful draper who had borrowed money from the Company in the mid-1570s; immediately after completion of his term he was offered the livery, going on to serve twice as livery warden and to secure nomination to the Common Council.<sup>(3)</sup> His career stood in contrast to that of his three colleagues in 1584. Alexander Hickes, a master tailor who had been a freeman for thirty years, was unable to accept the offer of a place among the livery-men in 1586, and instead became one of the Sixteen Men of the Bachelors Company in 1588.<sup>(4)</sup> William Browne was discharged as warden after some months in office as a

(1) MF 325, CM V1 13 4.65,p.178;CM V2.30.8.91.

(2) Bridge became a freeman in 1599, and joined the tailors sub-committee in 1649.

(3) MF 325,CM V2,14.11.75,f.27;Foster,op.cit.,p.171.

(4) Ralph Yardley, who trained with Hickes, assisted the search of the handicraftsmen in 1592, and became a yeomanry warden in his turn in 1597.

result of financial problems, and in 1607 was awarded one of the pensions reserved for aged members of the handicraft. Less is known of John Glascocke, who like Browne was never offered a place on the livery, and held no other offices in the Company or municipality.

In 1596, the four wardens included three men who subsequently made their mark in the City: John Slaney, William Greenewell and Richard Oteway. Slaney was a prominent Merchant of the Staple and member of the East India Company, whose brother-in-law Richard Venables was Master in 1598. A freeman of only five years standing when elected Warden Substitute, Slaney joined the livery in 1598 and went on to act as Master in 1619 and to sit (2) on the Common Council. Fellow merchant and Common Councilman Greenewell joined the livery with Slaney in (3) 1598, and became Master in 1618. Oteway also joined the livery in 1598, having enrolled as a freeman in 1574. He had become a leading City draper with the assistance of (4) Company loans in the 1580s and went on to act as livery warden in 1613 and in 1616; he paid a fine rather than accept nomination as Master in 1618. The fourth warden,

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 15.6.07, p.260.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 14.3 97.12.12.98, ff.342, 387; Rabb, op. cit., p.377: CLRO, Rep. 40, 1625, f.120; Will PCC 42 Audley.

(3) CLRO, Rep. 23, 1592-1595, f.311v; Rabb, op.cit., p.302.

(4) In 1595 Oteway was admonished for cutting the fingers of assistant and fellow draper Roger Abdy when negotiating the sale of cloth at Blackwell Hall. MF 326, CM V3, 14 5.95, f.291.

John Cockyn, can be firmly identified as a small master tailor engaged in the manual side of the trade. He was one of the experienced masters appointed in 1592 to assist in a search of City tailors, and brought with him first-hand experience of abuses of the apprenticeship regulations. In 1573, one year before Cockyn was enrolled as a freeman, his master Miles Exilby was accused of attempting to free an apprentice after only four years and of employing six live-in unfree workmen. An inhabitant of Chancery Lane, Cockyn was never offered the livery, but the yeomanry record book reveals that he acted as an assistant of the Bachelors Company into the first decade of the seventeenth century, and records his  
 (1)  
 death by 1614.

The custom of selecting a proportion of the yeomanry wardens on the basis of their trade rather than simply their economic condition reflected the identification of the office with the regulation of the tailoring trade and the affairs of the mass of ordinary freemen. Many well-to-do Merchant Taylors were anxious to avoid nomination: in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, the governing body of the Bachelors Company complained repeatedly that "divers yong men reccon it a kynde of disparagement to be called to the said place of warden substitute and therefore desire to

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(1) MF 325, CM V1, 4.12.73, p.686; MF 326, CM V3.9.2.92,  
 f.242v; Yeo.Ord.Bk, f.21v.

be taken on to the lyvery & to passe over the said place". By 1608, the problem of "high mynded yong men" of "countenance credite and welthe" petitioning for direct admission to the livery had become so serious that an additional entrance fee of £5 on top of the current £30 was imposed on liverymen who had set out to "overleap" less desirable positions.

As well as increasing the entrance fee of liverymen who had not served as Warden Substitute from 1s to £30 (or £35) between 1572 and 1608, from 1609 the court of assistants began electing non-resident freemen and overseas merchants as yeomanry wardens as a means of raising substantial sums in the form of fines. In the twenty-nine years between 1580 and 1608, a total of five wardens-elect were allowed to pay a fine rather than accept office; the protestations of John Slaney in 1596 had been overruled although "he was very unwilling to undertake the said office in regard his trade (being a merchant of the Staple) lay much abroad in the Sommer". In the same number of years following 1608, no less than fifty-eight freemen were discharged after election, usually in return for a fine of £40. They included Richard Turner (1614), draper and Master in 1636; Henry

(1) MF 326, CM V3.13.5.98,f.371.

(2) MF 327, CM V5,9.3.08,p.301.

(3) See above, pp.248,249.

(4) MF 326, CM V3,14.3.97,f.342.

Milliam (1627), a former Mayor of Coventry; and Thomas Coale (1635), a lawyer working in the Court of Common Pleas and a resident of Saffron Walden.

One of the most intriguing results of studying wills and several thousands of folios of London manuscript records was the steady identification of citizens who accepted the office of Warden Substitute as tailors. Many became long-serving yeomanry assistants strongly attached to the traditions and institutions of the Bachelors Company. The careers of these citizens of middling social status deserve as much attention as those of the distinguished members of the senior governing body, as in many ways they hold the key to a proper understanding of the social and economic role of one of the major City companies. Membership of the Merchant Taylors Company was as important to them as it was to the prominent merchants and retailers who wore the livery, and their role at the head of a well-organised and centuries old sub-organisation represents perhaps the most neglected aspect of Elizabethan and Early Stuart London History.

(1)  
Thomas Taylor 1577-1599

Thomas Taylor became a freeman in 1562, and first came to

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(1) Dates given represent period of service in the yeomanry government.

the notice of the livery governors in 1572, when, engaged in a dispute which reveals his occupation, he accepted arbitration regarding a woman's gown he had made "to little".<sup>(1)</sup> In 1577 he was appointed Warden Substitute for the Candlewick Street area, and thereafter acted as a yeomanry assistant for that Quarter for over two decades. From 1588, he was the most senior yeomanry governor. He frequently represented the yeomanry before the ruling court of the livery, arguing for example in 1597 that the yeomanry governors should not contribute to a financial levy as some of their finances were "so weake that they are unwilling that the same should be called in question."<sup>(2)</sup> During the 1590s, Taylor rented a Company property for £4 a year and diversified his business activities by erecting corn mills near Stratford Bow, purchasing his initial stock of corn from the Company; in 1599 he was provided with lodgings and alms after seeking the help of his livery company after being imprisoned in Ludgate prison by his creditors.<sup>(3)</sup> He died an almsman in 1603, two months before his two sons William and Derek took up the freedom by right of patrimony.

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(1) MF 325, CM V1, 14.1.72, p.560.

(2) MF 326, CM V3, 15.1.97, f.338.

(3) MF 326, CM V3, 7.7.99, f.397.

## John Burnford 1594-1633

John Burnford was apparently a native of Worcester, and enrolled as a freeman of London in 1567 following seven years as an apprentice with one John Barnes. Burnford was elected as Warden Substitute in 1594 and as overseer in 1595; as one of the Sixteen Men from 1596 to 1633 he actively promoted the interests of the yeomanry and of the handicraft in particular. He was one of the small group of yeomanry assistants who invigorated efforts to enforce the apprenticeship regulations and to raise quarterage dues for the benefit of poorer members in the early seventeenth century. He was also conspicuous in negotiations regarding alien tailors in the capital; in obtaining authorisation for the yeomanry dinner between 1609 and 1623; and in reviewing the finances and practices of government of the Bachelors Company. He was not especially wealthy and was never offered a place among the liverymen, having sought the post of livery beadle in 1598. Burnford's will reveals that he was a devout and literate man, possessing some silver ware and interests in leases in Worcester and London, but with no substantial material possessions. He was buried in the parish church of St. Thomas Apostle after a funeral procession by the yeomanry, who were provided with a banquet at the Hall provided by Burnford. His legacies included small gifts to the clerk and the beadle of the

Bachelors Company, and during his lifetime he made provision for poor aged master tailors who unsuccessfully applied to become almsmen of the late Robert Dowe.  
<sup>(1)</sup>

John Hayman 1616-1646

Burnford's death in 1633 left John Hayman, Warden Substitute in 1616 and one of the Sixteen Men by 1622, as the senior yeomanry governor.

Born in Dorchester, Hayman became a freeman of London in 1594 and settled in St. Saviour's Southwark, where he served as church warden in 1624. He was of some substance in later life, with leasehold and freehold property in Hertfordshire, Stepney and Southwark. The trade he followed is unknown, but he was deeply involved in the affairs of the lower section of his livery company. The record book of the Bachelors Company reveals that his role in its affairs continued until his death in 1646; his will, summarised in the record book, included provision for two poor "artisans tailors free" chosen by his colleagues and their successors, and for a supper for his fellow Sixteen Men.  
<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Will PCC 116 Russell;MF 328,CM V8.28.1.29,f.345.

(2) Will PCC 180 Twisse:Yeomanry Ordinance Book,  
ff.29,31.

## George Furseman 1624-1647

A close colleague of Hayman was George Furseman, who joined Burnford and Hayman on the yeomanry court in 1624 and acted as a yeomanry assistant until 1647. Furseman was the son of a provincial yeoman, taking up the freedom in 1607 following a seven year apprenticeship with one William Marshall. The livery court minutes in an incidental reference describe him as a tailor resident in Basing Lane in 1641, and his will suggests that he was a man of moderate means: his estate was valued at £342.<sup>(1)</sup> Furseman's legatees included his fellow assistants and his cousin George Endebrook, a tailor who acted as Warden Substitute in 1637.<sup>(2)</sup>

The role of middle-ranking citizens such as Burnford and Furseman in promoting the interests of the ordinary freemen has important implications for historians seeking to explain the social stability of early modern London. Two qualifications remain to be made however. Firstly, not all the long-serving Sixteen Men were involved in the tailoring trade, as indicated by Table 19, which analyses the full membership of the court in 1601 as listed posthumously in the yeomanry record book.<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.41, f.170; Will PCC 228 Fines.

(2) For Endebrooke, see below, p.375.

(3) Yeomanry Ordinance Book, f.21v.

TABLE 19  
The Sixteen Men of 1601

<u>Name</u>	<u>Warden</u>	<u>Substitute</u>	<u>Liveryman</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
Rowland Okevor	1581	-		Merchant
Edward Sleep	1581	-		?
John Webster	1589	-		?
Thomas Fletcher	1592	-		Tailor
Raphe Smyth	1594	1602		Tailor
John Burnford	1594	-		Tailor
John Froome	1595	-		?
William Thoroughgood	1595	-		?
John Cockin	1596	-		Tailor
John Proud	1597	1602		Draper
Rauf Yardley	1597	-		Tailor
Gilbert Lloyd	1597	-		?
Peter Towers	1597	1602		Tailor
Richard Tenante	1598	1602		Draper
John Earle	1598	1602		?
Richard Danyell	1598	-		?

The governing body of the yeomanry attracted representatives of the merchants, drapers, haberdashers, stocking-sellers and other minority groups among the freemen, as well as the predominant tailors. They included two of the leading Sixteen Men of the period, well-to-do Cornhill stocking-seller Jeremy Rawsterne, a yeomanry officer from 1617 to 1648 who turned down an offer of the livery in 1621; and draper William Lane, a

(1) Will PCC 67 Essex.

yeomanry officer from 1618 to at least 1649.

The yeomanry government did not exclusively act for the handicraft, and furthermore while tailors were still the largest group among the officers in the mid-seventeenth century, in some cases the nature and scale of their businesses undermined their links with the body of handicraftsmen. The relatively subdued agitation of some of the "poore working taylors" in 1649-1650 brought to light their dissatisfaction with a number of the yeomanry wardens and assistants appointed in preceding years, including no doubt assistant Nathaniel Potts - one of the 'salesmen tailors' whose activities were resented by the petitioners.<sup>(1)</sup> When the livery governors in 1650 appointed a committee of ten prominent Company tailors, eight of them former yeomanry wardens, the working tailors objected to four of the nominations.<sup>(2)</sup> Perhaps of equal significance however is the fact that no objections were raised to six of the original ten nor to the ex-yeomanry wardens that the livery governors agreed to appoint in the place of three of the four rejected nominees.<sup>(3)</sup> Further, three of the final ten committee members were

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.49, ff, 323.323v.

(2) See below, p.375.

(3) The replacements included Samuel Bridge (see above, p.314).

yeomanry assistants in the 1650s. The livery assistants were still willing in 1650 to maintain a representative and effective handicraftsmens' organisation, but could do little to alleviate affects of fundamental changes in the tailoring trade in the capital, personified by the four large employers and salesmen tailors objected to by the  
 (1)  
 petitioners.

#### Industrial Regulation 1580-1645

The continued association of the Merchant Taylors Company with its nominal trade. and the functioning of its yeomanry first and foremost as an organisation of master tailors. has major implications with regard to the "decline" in the industrial role of the greater London livery companies. The guilds have been regarded as "the  
 (2)  
 principal area of conflict" in early modern London, with the 'usurpation' of power by merchants and traders opposed by the craftsmen, not least because it lead to an early decline in the observance and effectiveness of the  
 (3)  
 'search'.

(1) See Chapter VII,pp.374,375.

(2) P.Clarke and P.Slack, English Towns in Transition 1500-1700,Oxford,1976 p.69. This picture of intra-and inter-guild conflict also dominates Ashton,"City",pp.43-82.

(3) J.R.Kellett,"The breakdown of Guild and Corporation Control",pp.381-387.

George Unwin in his study of the divisions within the early modern livery companies regarded the Clothworkers as a special case among the larger companies in that "it could not very well be as entirely transformed into a merchant company as the Drapers or the Merchant Taylors", with "exceptional circumstances" - including the development of the yeomanry organisation - explaining the "unusual degree of equilibrium" within the company in the  
 (1)  
 early modern period.

It has since been generally accepted that the aspirations of the more influential members of the yeomanries of the dominant London companies were "more closely aligned with those of the merchant liverymen than with those of the craftsmen", presenting "an important obstacle to the use of the yeomanry organisation as an economically  
 (2)  
 homogenous pressure group". The records of the Merchant Taylors Company and the municipal government paint a very different picture however: industrial regulation was vigorously exercised by the Elizabethan and Early Stuart yeomanry governors with the full support of the élite of the largest London company.

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(1) G.Unwin, "Industrial Organisation", 1957 edn, pp.59.  
 60,116 seq..  
 (2) Ashton, "City", p.51.

Industrial regulation in the later Elizabethan period centred on the maintenance of the free tailors monopoly of local economic production. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the guild had attempted to limit both entry to the trade and uphold standards of workmanship by prohibiting journeymen from setting-up as masters until they had acquired a costly licence certifying their skill in shaping garments and the adequacy of their financial means. Fragmentary early fifteenth century ordinances denied freemen the right "to schape or to sette up any borde in his hous" until approval had been gained from the Master, wardens and "IIII - sufficaunt werkmen of the crafte", and the late fifteenth century court minutes record the granting of licences at 10s a time to artisans who had been freemen  
 (1)  
 for a period ranging from one month to nine years. These restrictions were frowned on by the Royal Commissioners who in 1507 examined the ordinances of the livery company, and were outlawed by Act of Parliament in 1536, making economic independence in the tailoring trade  
 (2)  
 considerably easier to acquire.

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(1) MSC.DOC.A2, Ordinances 1429-1455, p.8; MF 314, AMB V37.  
 Court Minutes 1486-1493.

(2) SOTR, 27H8.c.v.654. The rates for enrolling apprentices and freemen fell to 3-4d and 2s 2d respectively, probably after a 1531 Act. V. Pearl, "Social Policy in Early Modern London", pp.115, 118.

The removal of restrictions on journeymen setting up as masters also effectively relaxed the guild's control over the quality of workmanship, although the enforcement of the apprenticeship regulations was itself viewed as a means of upholding standards. In addition, the Company operated a system of arbitration to deal with the occasional complaints of customers of handicraftsmen: in 1572 for example, widow Mary Stacey lodged a complaint against freeman Thomas Taylor for making-up an under-sized cassock, and Taylor was ordered by the Master and wardens to repay any monies received from the widow and to retain the cassock for re-sale. Similarly, in 1630 one Mr Cater alleged that Merchant Taylor Henry Calcott had cheated him in respect both of the quantity of cloth used and the price charged for two suits of apparel and two cloaks.

(1)

The pattern of decreasing restrictive practices is also observable in the area of limitations on the number of apprentices a master could maintain at one time. In the fifteenth century, freemen were assigned a maximum of two apprentices, but by the turn of the century, when merchants and retailers were coming to the fore in the

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(1) MF 325, CM V1, 14.1.72, p.560; MF 328, CM V6A, 24.1.30, p.586. Standards of workmanship only became a very serious issue with the advent of salesmen tailors. See below, pp 365-367.

Company, an ordinance was promulgated enabling freemen to take-on unlimited numbers of apprentices subject to a penalty of 20s for the third and subsequent apprentices. By the later sixteenth century, the fines were rarely imposed, although large employers were occasionally prevented from enrolling additional apprentices. In the new set of ordinances issued in 1613, the rule was dropped.

The main thrust of the Company's industrial regulation by the later sixteenth century was therefore directed against unfree workers in the tailoring industry and the freemen who employed them. Self-employed members of the Company were required to 'present' prospective apprentices before the Master and wardens at an 'Ordinary Court' within one month of employing them, so that it could be ensured that they were "free of birth and neither crooked, lame, ne otherwise deformed". Indentures of apprenticeship and related documents had to be drawn-up by the Common Clerk, and the apprentice had to swear an oath of loyalty to the Crown and livery company and be enrolled by the Chamberlain within 366 days of his presentment. After dutiful service for at least seven years, a period affirmed by the 1563 Statute of Artificers, the apprentice had to be enrolled as a freeman by the Company, and accompanied by a livery

(1)

warden to be registered at the Guildhall.

The function of enrolling apprentices and freemen, translating apprentices between masters, and related business,<sup>(2)</sup> was retained in the hands of the livery governors, although yeomanry officers often attended at their courts and at the Guildhall. Fines were regularly levied by the Master and wardens on freemen who presented or enrolled apprentices outside of the time limits - 35 individuals in 1588-1589, 45 in 1610-1611, and 63 in 1619-1620 - but it appears that by the mid-1620s the enormous level of presentments and admissions, which could mean queues of freemen at the Company Hall, led to a reduction in the attention paid to technical breaches of the regulations. From 1625, detailed lists of presentments, admissions and fines relating to the Ordinary Courts were no longer included in the annual financial accounts, and from 1627 to the Restoration, a standard sum of £6 13s 4d was entered as total receipts from fines. This practice, whereby most probably the sum

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(1) MF 310,AMB V2. This manuscript book contains the ordinances of the Company of 1507 from folio 44 onwards.

(2) Complications arising at the courts included imperfectly prepared indentures; apprentices whose masters had died, given up their trades or turned them out; improper translations of apprentices to new masters; and apprentices who had married within their terms.

was provided by the Master for the benefit of the Company poor, reflects the growing ineffectiveness of the regulation exercised by the livery governors. This trend also finds some expression in the conduct of the search, the principle method of detecting wholesale evasion of the apprenticeship regulations.

The 1507 ordinances and oaths assigned responsibility for exercising the Company's right of search to the Master and livery wardens. The Master was responsible for ensuring that the wardens held as many searches as necessary each year to identify breaches in the apprenticeship regulations as well as false weights and measures. By 1580 the 'General Search Day' had become an annual event held between February and April, conducted by two groups including representatives of the Lord Mayor and the yeomanry, who made their way "throughout the whole Cytie & Surburbes thereof beginning in Paules Churchyard". The fines levied on the spot for false yards and breaches in apprenticeship regulations were put towards the cost of the dinner held after the

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(1) MF 310,AMB V2 ff.51v-53,75-75v. The Company also had the right from 1449 to search the measures and yards of its members who were drapers at the annual fair held on St. Bartholomews Day in West Smithfield. H. Morley, Memoirs of Bartholomews Fair, pp.74,75,112,113 (undated).

(2) MF 325,CM V1,16.2.73,p.638.

search in a tavern for the participants and other members of the livery. In 1599, the cost of the dinner and gratuities to officers was £4 10s 8d "over & above the money collected in the searche being xxvs iiii<sup>(1)</sup>d".

The annual search continued until the early 1640s, disappearing during the pre-occupations of the Civil War years. Increasingly under the Early Stuarts it had come to resemble the annual visit to St. Bartholomews Fair, with references only to checks of the yards of freemen using the symbolic silver yard carried aloft by the Lord Mayor's officer at the Fair. The search was still attended by yeomanry representatives with knowledge of the tailoring trade, and could last for the best part of a day, with a porter paid to carry away defective yards. The impact of the procession on the tailoring trade even within the City franchises was however clearly limited by 1580, and probably minimal by 1625, and it is therefore of great interest to find extensive parallel regulation exclusive to the tailoring trade being exercised by the yeomanry throughout the early modern period.

The independent role of the Bachelors Company means that the main sources of information regarding the supervision

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<sup>(1)</sup> MF 299, Accounts V7, 1598-1599, f.365. In 1605, penalties ranging from 6d to 2s were imposed on 29 freemen. MF 300, Accounts V9, 1604-1605.

of the trade are the records of the yeomanry and the municipal government, rather than the mainstream livery company manuscript books. The sources reveal that throughout the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries, the yeomanry governors made regular searches throughout the City and liberties. In 1602, the yeomanry court, which included artisans Thomas Fletcher, John Burnford and Peter Towers, set down the procedures for the searches: the yeomanry wardens and assistants were to meet quarterly at six a.m. at St. Paul's Cathedral before splitting into four groups to search the businesses of free and (in particular) unfree "bocherers & all otheres that dothe work menes garments and womenes garmentes" in  
 (1)  
 the capital.

The tangible results of the searches, at least two of which were held each year even during the 1640s, are recorded in detail in the City's fines book which contains hundreds of entries regarding the tailoring  
 (2)  
 trade between 1517 and 1628. The yeomanry wardens levied fines on foreign masters and freemen with "forrens a worke", and confiscated garments of new cloth found in the hands of unfree tailors, carrying them to the Chamberlain. Half of the fines, which were increasingly paid over to the City periodically rather than on the day of receipt, were normally retained by the municipal

(1) MF 310, Yeomanry Ordinance Book, 16.4.02, f.2.

(2) CLRO, Chamberlain's Book of Fines.

authorities and half by the 'presenters' - often wardens of the yeomanry identified by name. In August 1604 for example, eleven Merchant Taylors were fined for employing foreign workers, and in April 1607 the yeomanry wardens levied 74s on English and alien foreigners working on new garments and "found out in their search to be offenders".<sup>(1)</sup> In May 1614, the items confiscated by the wardens from foreign taylors included a nightgown, the 'back side' of a gown of mild saye, a "payre of stiffe hose & doublet of changeable silke saye" and the "bodies & sleves of a black satten gowne".<sup>(2)</sup> Clearly the authority of the Company to enter the premises of those suspected of unlawful tailoring work was enforceable and enforced, while freemen could not ignore the apprenticeship regulations with impunity. William Astell, Warden Substitute in 1633, was fined in June 1624 and again in April 1627 for employing unfree labour.<sup>(3)</sup>

The harrassment of unfree workmen extended beyond the formal searches. The dispute between the leading yeomanry assistants (including tailors John Burnford and William Mormay) and three of the yeomanry wardens of 1608 - 1609 underlined the enthusiasm of the assistants for regulation. The accusations of the wardens that the

(1) Ibid, ff.236v, 241. 74s at the average rate of 2s 6d represents fines levied on around thirty individuals.

(2) Ibid, f.254v.

(3) Ibid, ff.265, 267.

assistants had wasted Company money at numerous meetings "about forreyners" and at "idle meetings in Tavernes" were countered by the claims of the Sixteen Men that by their "industry" in preceding years, quarterage receipts had nearly doubled and foreign tailors in the City and (1) liberties had been reduced by over one thousand.

The yeomanry governors furthermore oversaw the activities of two or more semi-professional 'informers', who received a small stipend from the Company as well as a share of penalties or compositions reached before (2) judicial procedures were completed. The activities of determined and ruthless informers could have a major (3) impact in discouraging illegal working practices, and their use by the Merchant Taylors Company was a crucial aspect of efforts to protect - and furthermore to be seen to protect - the interests of its handcraftsmen.

Throughout the period 1580-1645, informers experienced in the tailoring trade harrassed artisans who infringed the apprenticeship regulations, bringing cases before the Company and courts against free employers and unfree workers themselves. Sessions records of the early 1650s,

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 3.12.08, 13.1.09, pp. 338, 348.

(2) M. G. Davies, The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship 1563-1642, Cam. Mass., 1956 pp. 25, 50.

54-59, 147.

(3) Ibid, pp. 149-156.

when the Company employed eight artisan informers, record the results of numerous actions against unfree tailors under the 1563 statute. In December 1651, Henry Hollyman was involved in the prosecution of alien tailors John Delackley of Blackfriars and Nicholas Hendricke of Aldgate. Delackley eventually compounded with Hollyman through his lawyer, the ubiquitous John Lee, while Hendricke was fined £50 for working as a tailor for 25 months between October 1649 and November 1641. In February 1642, informer Edward Lindsay successfully prosecuted three foreign tailors whose activities had first been noted in March 1651, all of whom were fined £2  
(1)  
per month.

The groundwork which formed the basis of the work of the informers is illustrated in an extant report covering the period 1598 to 1601 which was presented to the livery court in late 1601. Richard Levitt and Raphe Ledsham were appointed by the Bachelors Company in 1598 in response to complaints regarding the corrupt practices of septuagenarian informer Gilbert Lylly and the economic plight of many of the poor handicraftsmen, which characteristically was blamed on foreign tailors. The two young men expended considerable time travelling around London "as well within the Cittie as without"

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(1) CLRQ, Sessions of the Peace 1651, 1652.

while searching out alien and native-born tailors and recording their names and addresses. Within the City, they identified 418 masters and 910 journeymen and unregulated apprentices, who were energetically prosecuted and harrassed despite counter-actions and violent assaults which put them "in danger of their  
(1)  
lives".

The list of names was also presented in March 1599 to the court of aldermen by the Master and livery wardens, and the municipal élite agreed that "the encrease of theis forrens & strangers" in the City was "tending to the overthrowe of the estate thereof". Arrangements were made for all the offenders to be summoned before them to enter recognizances to cease working; in late March and early April over 100 unfree workers attended and entered recognizances, with legal action instituted against a number who did not attend. The real threat to the livelihoods of so many artisans, many of whom were married householders who had been resident in London for many years, engendered considerable unrest; the Lord Mayor's fear of "a mutiny or inconveyence" led to a revised course of action. After consultation with the yeomanry wardens the Company and municipal authorities agreed that long- resident householders should be admitted by redemption as freemen with the Merchant

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(1) MT Hall,AMB V54,f.114v. In 1599 the two informers were authorised to compound with a freeman employing a foreign tailor by the court of aldermen. CLRO, Rep.25, 1599-1600, f.1.

Taylors Company paying fines varying according to their means, while more vigorous efforts were made to prevent  
 (1) unfree tailors from setting up businesses in the City.

In late 1601 a "true Certificate" recorded by geographical area the results of actions against 481 of the offenders named in 1599; 207 had been "removed" and were "gonne", 68 had been admitted to the Company and a further 206 were "still resident".<sup>(2)</sup> The yeomanry officers informed the livery governors that notwithstanding the efforts of the previous years, the number of tailors arriving in London were still undermining the Company handcraftsmen; a joint committee of three assistants, two Wardens Substitute, one liveryman and yeomanry assistants John Burnford and Peter Towers was therefore established to promote legislation in parliament to authorise the wholesale expulsion of unfree tailors from the capital. The draconian proposals were rejected on a second reading after the livery company had expended over £100, and the livery court accepted the subsequent recommendation of the committees that the regulatory powers and institutional structure of the yeomanry be strengthened. A yeomanry sub-committee was directed to meet on every second Monday to co-ordinate searches, the activities of the informers, and the general disciplining

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(1) CLRO, Rep.24, 1596-1598 ff.379-411; MF 326, CM V3,  
 21.3.98 - 2.5.99, ff.367 seq..

(2) MT Hall, AMB V54, f.114v.

of the freemen. Long-resident handicraftsmen with children born within the franchises were to be admitted to the Company but not to the freedom of the City, and allowed to employ only "freemen as Journeymen, or freemens sones for apprentices, such as may be made free by their fathers copies". Young men and new arrivals found to be making new garments were after due warning to be committed to a City jail on the Lord Mayor's authority  
 (1)  
 every time they were found working.

The outburst of activity in defence of the monopoly of production of the free tailors in London reflected the seriousness with which both the livery and yeomanry governors viewed their responsibilities towards the "handy trade men" during a difficult economic period, and helps explain the absence of the type of industrial discontent which engulfed the Skinners Company in 1606. The new disciplinary courts were convened on a regular basis in subsequent years , albeit not fortnightly, and were found on review in 1609 to "greateley tend to the  
 (2)  
 peace, and good and orderly government of the company".

(1) MF 326, CM V3. 3.10.01-30.10 01, f.439 seq.; MF 310, Yeo. Ord. Bk,f.22.

(2) Yeo. Ord.Bk,f.25. In 1627, the Company governors directed that where possible meetings should be restricted to one per month, and the attendance rota at the sub-committee meetings was set down in detail by the yeomanry court in the same year. Even during the Civil War period, the Bachelors Company governors agreed that at least one meeting should be held every other month. Yeo.Ord.Bk, ff.26v,28.

The efforts of the yeomanry officers and informers meant that the threat of prosecution, confiscation of work or harrassment was real for interlopers under the Early Stuarts. The Bachelors Company minutes show that where they saw fit the yeomanry governors on their own authority extended the cognizance of the Company to unauthorised tailors. In January 1605 for example, it was agreed that George Williams, a foreigner resident in Fleet Street for thirty-three years who had taken-up tailoring, should be admitted to the Company for 40s providing he paid his 2s 2d annual affiliation dues and  
 employed as journeymen only sons of freemen.<sup>(1)</sup> Freemen were questioned when their workers were rumoured to be  
 foreigners,<sup>(2)</sup> and actions brought against French and Dutch tailors led the ambassador of the Low Countries, Sir Noel De Caron, to write directly to the Bachelors Company in 1608 on their behalf. A conference in October 1608 involving the ambassador, Elders of the Dutch and French churches in London, and livery and yeomanry assistants drew up articles allowing twenty-four aliens who had come

(1) Yeo. Ord. Bk, f.4v.

(2) In 1611, Merchant Taylor John Collyns complained to the Master after harrassment by an informer over his alleged employment of a foreigner, who turned out to have been duly translated from a freeman who had left the capital. MF 327, CM V6, 2.8.11, pp.266-268.

(3) Sir Noel was a staunch defender of alien artisans in London. See for example CLRO, Remembrancia, 1579-1664, p.259.

to London many years previously to escape persecution to work as tailors, employing between them a maximum of (1) thirty-four alien workers. Harrassment of the aliens excluded from the 1608 agreement continued unabated, leading the ambassador in 1626 to complain to the Privy Council that Dutch and French tailors were "delaied, molested, and debarred from their worke and labour, because they were not freemen of the Cittie of London", suffering "sutes, troubles, arrests or proceedings by (2) way of informations or otherwise".

It is clear that while the City of London could never be clear of unfree handicraftsmen, sufficient pressure was maintained by the Merchant Taylors Company to satisfy the freemen and to have an appreciable impact on the unfree workforce: in 1616, tailor John Sonmers was admitted to the freedom by redemption on the recommendation of the Lord Mayor as he had been "questioned for working", and in 1621 Sir George Calvert wrote to the municipal government requesting the freedom for a tailor who had taken a house in Temple Bar and was in danger of being (3) 'troubled'. As a result, only in the economically

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 28.6.08, 14.10.08, pp.310, 330; PRO, SP16, 535, no.73. By 1635 only four or five of the aliens were still alive, and in 1632, the agreement was rescinded as the sole survivor, Cornelius Drake, was found to be an employer of several aliens and foreigners. MF 330, CM V9, 10.11.52, f.407.

(2) PRO, SP16, 289, no.44.

(3) MF 327, CM V6, 9.10.16, p.572; CLRO, Remembrancia, 1579-1664, p.163.

depressed early 1630s did the yeomanry officers again turn to the livery for assistance against interlopers. The livery governors agreed to the temporary appointment of four additional informers out of the handicraft, and over the next two or three years a waive of successful suits were prosecuted in the City courts and the Court of Common Pleas, with financial support from the livery treasury.

Considerable attention was paid to the alien community, which included an estimated 500 tailors in and around the City. The alien communities traditionally looked to the Crown for protection against restrictions imposed by municipal authorities and the guilds, and in 1635 Royal letters granted on the accession of Charles I were found to be impeding the prosecution of Dutch and French aliens and their children. A joint committee of livery and yeomanry governors in response exploited the Company's connections with Archbishop Laud with spectacular results. In May 1635 after meetings with Laud and Secretary Windebank, royal letters were published allowing the free prosecution of "Taylory Strangers" in London whenever the laws of the City or the Merchant Taylors Company were infringed.<sup>(1)</sup> One major barrier to guild regulation was therefore demolished in the 1630s.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) MF 326, CM V3.2.5.99. f.392; PRO, SP16.289 no.44; CLRO Remembrancia, 1579-1664, p.258.

(2) PRO, SP16. 535, no.73; SP.16.289.no.44;MF 329,CM V8. 4.2.34, 8.10.34 - 17.11.35, ff.496v-541v. MF 303, Accounts V16, 1634-1635, 1635-1636.

Regardless of the impact of the change on the streets of London, the success of the Company must have demonstrated conclusively to its freemen that their governors could and would continue to act on their behalf.

Industrial Regulation From 1645 A Postscript

In late 1649 encouraged by the continuing emphasis on "reformation and maintaining the peoples rights & privileges",<sup>(1)</sup> the "Mechanicall Taylors" of the Company, with the support of tailors affiliated to other guilds, once again sought the revitalisation of action against foreigners and strangers in London. Their demands for a yeomanry sub-committee appointed by themselves to oversee the activities of an enlarged body of informers was not supported by the yeomanry officers, who viewed themselves as "the sub-committee to this company to certifie the abuses of the working Taylory". However, the livery governors appointed on a temporary basis ten working tailors to join with the yeomanry officers and the enlarged body of informers in "regulating the trade of Taylory & the abuses therein". The representatives of the handicraftsmen initially insisted on the "sole nomination" of the sub-committee, but three weeks later

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(1) MF 330, CM V9, 5.12.49, f.332v-333.

apologised for their "rash & foolish expressions" and  
 (1)  
 accepted the new regulatory body.

The redoubled efforts in the field of industrial regulation had tangible results. the court of aldermen accepted the proposal that the admission of tailors as freemen by redemption should be curtailed and limited to admissions to the Merchant Taylors Company. Further, the regulatory authority of the Company was for the first time extended into several "privileged places" which (to a greater or lesser degree) were outside the jurisdiction  
 (2)  
 of the municipal government. The attempts of the Company governors to "level the immunities of the precincts" failed, but it was found that the Company's writ could be enforced in areas such as Blackfriers, Whitefriers and St. Brides Churchyard, where the City's authority had  
 (3)  
 been extended under the municipal charter of 1608. Legal actions were initiated "especially against such (who be

(1) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8 49-5.12.49, ff.323v-332v. See pp.374, 375.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.23-29,

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 29 1.50, 8 5.50. ff.337v, 348v; CLRO, Sessions of the Peace, 1651, 1652; W. De Gray Birch, The Historical Charters and Constitutional Documents of the City of London, 1884, pp.143, 144 Only in 1688 was a determined attempt made to enforce the apprenticeship regulations in Dukes Place. CLRO, Rep.93, 1681-1682, f.112.

now very many) as pretend privileged places", while the guidelines laid down in 1601 were followed with respect to long-resident tailors. In March 1653, the sub-committee accepted eight handicraftsmen as members of the Company but not freemen of the City, including John (1) Pepys, father of the diarist.

Despite the vigorous efforts made and the measure of success achieved, the impact of guild regulation by the middle of the seventeenth century was increasingly out of step with the high associated financial costs. The growth in capitalist masters and salesmen tailors, together with the increased incidence of residence and employment in the liberties and rapidly-expanding suburbs, seriously undermined the businesses and status of the "workmen" tailors and efforts to enforce the local monopoly. By 1650 the extra-mural area (including Westminster) was beginning to outstrip the City proper in (2) size and population, and although references exist to searches and informations undertaken in the suburbs, it is clear that the Company's writ was far less effective outside of the City franchises. The charter of 1502 was never updated to specifically include designated

(1) MF 330.CM V9, 18.5.53, 16.11.53, ff.415, 424v.

(2) Pearl, "Change and Stability", p.7. For criticism of Finlay and Shearer, "Population Growth and Suburban expansion", where inter alia it was estimated that only 25% of Londoners were under the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction by 1680, see Pearl, J.H.G.13.(3), 1987, pp.323-325.

(1)  
 suburban areas, and the Company in any case lacked the administrative apparatus to make effective extensions to its territorial jurisdiction.

The complaints of the poorer freemen and the problems encountered in enforcing their exclusive right to cut new clothing in the City in the 1650s had altered tangibly since the 1630s. "Rich man ... takeing over great multitudes of Apprentices"; the "multitude of Forreyne Taylors ... within the walls & liberties ... & likewise out of the liberties"; and master tailors and salesmen tailors with often several "sale shops" who subcontracted to workers in the suburbs - these were factors beginning to have a major impact on the London tailoring

(2)  
 trade at a time when the post-Civil War indebtedness of the Merchant Taylors Company was undermining the traditionally sympathetic attitude of the livery governors. In August 1651, the Court of Assistants intimated that it had "little or no encouragement to continue the ... committee" as "so little fruit has arisen thereby notwithstanding the expense of about C LI in prosecution of suites against Forreyne tailors & in  
 (3)  
 charge of the Committees sitting"; finally in mid-summer

(1) See above, p.20.

(2) See Chapter VII, pp.368-378.

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.51, f.385v.

1654 the extra informers and the committee meetings were ended. Furthermore, in the different political environment of 1662 the yeomanry organisation itself was  
 (1) abolished, and with it the surveillance and searches of the Wardens Substitute and Sixteen Men and the main link between the generality and the livery body.

Attempts to exclude foreign tailors did not end in 1662. In 1678, a group of master tailors won municipal support for an ultimately unsuccessful parliamentary bill to prevent unfree tailors from working in the City. Two years later "several Taylers freemen" secured the appointment of one of their number by the court of aldermen to oversee the prosecution of unlicensed workers  
 (2) in the name of the Chamberlain.

In 1687, the governors of the Merchant Taylors Company responded favourably when the master tailors under their jurisdiction turned to them for assistance against unfree tailors. Renewed searches were conducted jointly by the livery wardens and six master tailors, and the artisans were allowed to use the "little Parlour" in the Hall in early 1688. In mid-1688, the court of assistants in a remarkable move swore in twenty master tailors as Wardens

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(1) See pp.290, 382.

(2) CLRO, Rep.83,1677-1678, ff.56v seq.; Rep.85, 1679-1680, ff.171v, 177v.

Substitute and Sixteen Men, including Jeremy Mitchell and two other masters who had assisted the search earlier in the year. The artisans were given "full power & authority" to regulate the London tailoring trade, after they had given "good & sufficient security" to protect the Company against counter-actions in the courts. The access given to Company documents quickly provoked a crisis however: the yeomanry wardens established that several wills benefiting the freemen had not been performed for many years, and drew-up papers "reflecting on the justice & integrity" of the livery governors in mid-1689. The dispute dragged on for over a year, until the court of assistants concluded that the yeomanry officers were "burthensome & prejudiciale" and refused to swear-in new wardens in October 1690, offering to extend assistance to individual tailors in matters of industrial regulation. In February 1691, the disowned yeomanry officers sought the support of the municipal government, arguing that under the charter of the Merchant Taylors Company the "Government and inspection" of all City tailors lay with the officers of the Bachelors Company, and that the livery governors were obliged to swear-in the new wardens. Not surprisingly, the municipal élite eventually found in favour of their peers in the livery company, accepting in 1692 that the Wardens Substitute (1) and Sixteen Men "have bin of late Altogether Useless".

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(1) MF 331, CM V12, 1.5 87-7.3.88 p.384 seq.; MF CM V13, 11.4.88-26.11.90.f.2v seq.; CLRO Rep.95, 1689-1691, ff.221, 229, 279; Rep.96, 1691-1692, ff.100 101.

Mitchell and his fellow Sixteen Men continued however to act as a coherent body acting in the interests of the masters of the trade, and in the mid-1690s they fought the Merchant Taylors Company in the Court of Chancery. The case revolved around the non-payment of an annuity bequeathed to the Company poor, but widened to include demands for the restoration of the "goodes plate Bookes and stock" of the Bachelors Company for the use of the yeomanry governors. Although the action ultimately failed, Mitchell and his colleagues continued to demand that the Company take action to regulate the trade; after meeting with a committee of livery assistants in 1699, they agreed that searches would be made by the masters accompanied by the senior livery warden and that (1) prosecutions would be commenced on their recommendation.

### Conclusion

The Merchant Taylors Company was one of the most magnificent of the City livery companies, dominated by aldermen and merchants, and might be expected to fully illustrate the tendency for exclusive élites to ignore the traditional role of the guild in upholding the

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(1) MF 331, CM V13, 16.4.97, 18.12.97, 13.5.98, 23.6.99, 30.6.99, ff.121 seq., 135v seq.. The court case documents, originals and contemporary copies, have survived in the Company archives as MSC.DOC.A17,5-13.

apprenticeship regulations and with them industrial standards. Per contra, the livery company governors until the Restoration remained sensitive to the interests of the freemen, maintaining a yeomanry organisation with a core of artisan wardens and long-serving assistants with authority to regulate the London tailoring trade. The existence and role of the yeomanry meant that the handicraft could still identify with their livery company and feel that their interests would still be protected.

The scale of the regulatory activities undertaken varied in accordance with the demands of the Company handcraftsmen, but had a real impact on untrained and unauthorised individuals working as tailors within at least the City franchises, and undoubtedly had a considerable deterrent effect. Furthermore, the Company was seen to be seriously tackling the perceived causes of the freemen's difficulties, a major factor in the ability of the Company to maintain internal stability even during the Civil War period. By 1650, efforts to enforce the economic monopoly of the freemen were hampered by suburban growth and changes in the internal structure of the City tailoring trade, but it is significant that even half a century later in a very different age the Company élite were still prepared to reactivate the sadly anachronistic spectacle of the search of tailors working within the City walls.

TABLE 20

SUMMARY OF NUMBERS OF APPRENTICES AND FREEMEN  
ENROLLED IN THE MERCHANT TAYLORS COMPANY IN THE 100 YEARS  
AFTER 1580

	<u>Freemen Admitted</u>	<u>New Apprentices</u>	<u>12 month averages</u>	
			<u>Freemen</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>
1580-1589	1,408	3,045	141	304
1590-1599	1,571	4,865	157	487
1600-1609	1,921	6,378	192	638
1610-1619	2,607	6,612	261	661
1620-1629	2,250	6,123	225	612
1630-1639	2,496	5,519	250	552
1640-1649	1,994	4,678	199	468
1650-1659	2,220	5,588	222	559
1660-1669	2,140	3,758	214	376
1670-1679	1,366	2,848	137	285

VII: SOME ORGANISATIONAL FEATURES OF  
THE TAILORING TRADE IN THE CITY OF LONDON  
IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Introduction

Chapter VI of this thesis focused on two of the most salient features of the Merchant Taylors Company in the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries: the predominance of tailors among the freemen, and the attention paid to the regulation and representation of the Company's handicraftsmen by the thriving yeomanry (1) organisation. The majority of London's crafts and trades and their related guilds and companies are not the subject of major studies of their nature and development (2) in the early modern period. General studies of industrial history tend furthermore to commence at 1700, when more substantial statistical sources become (3) available. The end-result of the transformation of the

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(1) It has been shown above that although the guild's authority extended into the suburbs, attention was focused on the area under the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor. This Chapter follows a similar pattern.

(2) The importance of London as a centre of manufacturing, and the dearth of historical research into the non-mercantile economic function, has been emphasised recently by A.L. Beier, "Engine of Manufacture", pp.142, 146. Useful modern histories of London guilds and their nominal trades include Jones, "Butchers": Alford and Barker, "Carpenters"; Hadley, "Founders"; and Plummer, "Weavers".

(3) Coleman, "Economy of England", p.159; Beier, "Engine of Manufacture", p.142.

tailoring trade by the early eighteenth century is well-known through the observations of Cambell and Galton's collection of petitions, but the chronology and nature of the wide-ranging changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their impact on the livery companies with responsibility for the major London handicrafts are still largely unchartered waters.

The manuscript collections of the guilds and companies have been viewed as primarily sources of general data regarding the origins, background and careers of London apprentices, but they also represent an essential starting-point for any attempt to reconstruct the internal development of the manufacturing trades. The records of the larger companies with industrial bases are full of references to their nominal trades, often narrating verbatim the petitions of their yeomanry governors; in some cases it is possible to establish the occupations and careers of the more prominent

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(1) Cambell. The London Tradesman, 1747. pp.190-196.

(2) F.W. Galton, Select Documents illustrating the History of Trade Unionism. I. The Tailoring Trade, 1896.

(3) Unwin and more recently Beier noted that the modes of production were becoming more capitalist during the 17th century. Unwin "Industrial Organisation", pp.197-199; Beier, "Engine of Production". p.142. Rappaport stressed the unexplored nature of early modern London's social and economic history, observing few signs of incipient capitalism in the 16th century. Rappaport, Part 1, pp.107 126.

(4) Beier, "Engine of Production", p.143. See for example Rappaport, passim and S.R. Smith, "London Apprentices", pp. 195-206. Further consideration of this theme is not appropriate here.

(1)

handicraftsmen of the liveries and the yeomanries. This chapter is intended to provide a backdrop for the examination in Chapter VI of the nature of the relationship of the Company with its nominal trade and the practitioners of that trade, and to illustrate the importance of the records of the London guilds for historians of industrial development in the capital. It draws on a range of supplementary sources, including probate inventories of tailors, the accounts of the Royal Household and Great Wardrobe, and the archives of the municipal government - which include lengthy and invaluable petitions of later seventeenth century London tailors which have previously gone unnoticed by historians. The incomplete nature of the sources, and in particular the difficulty of gathering reliable

(2)

quantitative data, must render the analysis unsatisfactory in many respects. However, the sources examined do allow a tentative picture to be built-up of the internal developments and tensions within the London tailoring trade and their inevitable repercussions within the Merchant Taylors Company.

#### The 'Accustomed' Trade

In one sense, the tailoring trade of the early modern

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(1) For details on some London tailors, see below, pp. 138, 313-316, 318-322, 369-370, 374-375, 437.

(2) The occupations of most freemen are not recorded in the Company's records 1580-1645. Incidental references identify some freemen as tailors, but apart from sometimes barely-legible entries recording the registration of apprentices, little information can be recovered regarding their businesses. (See Appendix 6 for one successful tailor's career). The records of law courts often provide invaluable incidental data regarding the status, employees and stock of artisans, but only a limited range could be examined during the preparation of this thesis.

City of London defies generalisation. The City lay close to the royal court and law courts, and had many well-to-do inhabitants supplemented by seasonally-resident gentlemen and others who made special trips to the capital to buy new clothing. These factors provided the skilful and enterprising master tailor with enormous  
 (1) business opportunities. The most successful among them could attain a status which marked them out from the mass of small masters, often beset by under-employment and  
 (2) prey to vagaries in general economic conditions. Demand for new clothing inevitably slumped when times were hard, and large numbers of freemen turned to their livery company and other bodies for support in periods such as  
 (3) the 1590s.

Despite the social gulf separating the struggling young masters and the well-to-do liverymen and Common Councilmen engaged in supplying the luxury end of the

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(1) F.J. Fisher, "London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption", T.R.H.S., 1948, pp.37-50; E. Lamond (ed.). The Common Weal of this Realm of England (1581), Cambridge, 1893, p.126. A sense of fashion was pervasive in the capital, despite Elizabethan sumptuary legislation. In 1612 an imaginary visitor to London was told "that here, men were look'd upon only for their outsides". N.B. Harte, "State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England", in D.C. Coleman and A.H. John (ed.'s), Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England, 1976, passim; "O Per Se O.Or a new Cryer of Lanthorne and Candle-Light", p.23, BL C.27. b19.

(2) The large body of tailors in early 17th century Southwark were uniformly among the more humble tradesmen. Boulton, op.cit., pp.68, 118

(3) Rappaport, Part 1, pp.128.129. See above pp.275-276.

(1) market, the trade prior to 1650 was remarkably homogenous. Even the largest masters were involved in the manual side of the business, and most tailors manufactured all types of garments for men, women and children: thus it is possible to explore the primary characteristics of the trade without undue simplification.

The quintessential early modern London tailor was a man of small means, working with his hands with little in the way of tools and equipment. The newly-qualified tailor did not require a large amount of capital to set-up on his own account, and his tools did not generally extend beyond a wooden rule; needles and thimbles; one or more pairs of tailors scissors or 'shears'; and one or more cutting boards. He would also own 'shopboards' on which he or his apprentices sat cross-legged while stitching  
 (2)  
 and sewing. In contrast, the prospective master

(1) Tailors were elected to Common Council and the governing court of the Merchant Taylors Company throughout the Elizabethan and Early Stuart periods, although not to the court of aldermen. See Appendix 4.

(2) Useful sources referring to the tools of 17th century London tailors are probate inventories in the PRO (mainly post-1650), and an ingenious mid-17th century political satire which refers by way of puns to many facets of contemporary handicrafts. PRO, Prob. 5, 1481 (1676), 2331(1702), 2393(1674), 3245(1684); Theodore de la Guarden, "Mercurius Anti-Mechanicus Or The Simple Coblers Boy", Cap.4, 1648. BL E470/25. The importance of the inventories was drawn to my attention by London University postgraduate student David Corner (thesis on post-1660 London Clothing trade in progress).

clothworker needed to expend considerable sums in acquiring tenter grounds, "housinge, and other ymplementes" - over £100 in some cases as early as the (1) 1560s. The yeomanry wardens when conducting their 'searches' of the City's garment-makers would in most cases have found them exercising their trade in small workshops attached to their residences, allowing an (2) essentially retail shop at the front of the premises. The shops of tailors taking-up leases or loans from the Merchant Taylors Company were spread throughout the City (3) and liberties, with some concentrations in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries in areas such as Lothbury, the Old Bailey and especially the liberty of (4) Blackfriars.

(1) MF 325, CM V1, 13.12.68 pp.366-369.

(2) Will PCC 25 Holgrave, 1504 (George Lovekyn, Merchant Taylor and tailor to Henry VII); PRO, Prob.5,2393 (1674).

(3) Occupational zoning was still strong in Restoration London, although tailors were to be found in a high number of the City's yards and alleys, and often in the main streets and lanes. M.J. Power "The Social Topography of Restoration London", in Beier and Finlay (ed.'s), op.cit., pp.211, 212, 216-218; MT Hall, MSS Bk P7, Quarterage Book 1664-1665; Boulton, op.cit., pp.186, 187.

(4) Blackfriars was popular with artisan hose-makers, and the many tailors resident there included Merchant Taylors Walter Fysshe and Raphe Ledsham. D.H. Bowler (ed.), Publications of the Catholic Records Society - London Sessions Records 1605-1685, V34 passim; CLRO, Rep.15, 1561-1566, ff.72v, 74; Will PCC 53 Brudnell (Fysshe); MF 327, CM V5 11.2.07, (Ledsham), p.250. For Fysshe and Ledsham, see above, pp.138, 336 & 361.

Small master tailors required little in the way of tools or specialised premises, and needed to maintain only a small stock of materials. A quantity of stiffener, trimmings and linings would normally be on hand, together with remnants and work-in-progress, but expensive items such as silks velvet and gold were normally provided by the customer; bills of charges in most cases covered only labour and "small furnishings" such as canvas and buckram.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1612 the workshop of tailor William Rogers in Chancery Lane contained stock and work-in-progress valued at a little over £15 comprising twelve pairs of cuffs, ten ruff-bands, fifty-one 'falling bands', four yards of canvas, four pieces of lace and finally the items which would be examined by the trade regulators - three shirts, a number of pairs of hose and five caps.<sup>(2)</sup>

Although the evidence is patchy, it is also apparent that the pre-1650 tailoring trade was usually based on a small working unit. The clauses of the 1563 Statute of

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(1) The numerous sources for the bills of early modern London tailors include N.H. Nicholas, *op.cit.*, *passim*, and the Wardrobe and Household Accounts in the PRO. The latter records include bills from Merchant Taylors Richard Gibson, Master in 1530 (PRO E101,418/7), and Patrick Black, tailor to Charles I and a leading freeman (PRO, E101, 433/8); CSPD, 1625-1626 p.568.

(2) W. Le Hardy (ed.), *Middlesex Sessions Records. New Series*, V3, 1937 pp.34-35. In 1613 the shop of John Cooke in Cripplegate contained 3 items under preparation and 4 yards of "striped stuff" provided by a customer. *Ibid*, V1 pp.63,64.

Artificers (and similar provisions in an Act of 1550) which obliged the masters of principal handicrafts to hire journeymen for periods of at least twelve months and, moreover, to maintain one journeyman for every third and subsequent apprentice, were vigorously opposed by the handicraftsmen of the Merchant Taylors Company. Many London tailors were prosecuted under the Acts, and it is clear that journeymen continued to be employed as necessary to complete orders - sometimes two or three days-and that the majority of masters worked with a handful of apprentices and perhaps one journeyman. In 1609, 24 alien tailors were after negotiation licenced to work within the City franchises with 34 'servants' between them, while ten years earlier a survey of unfree tailors within the franchises had allegedly found 418 masters with 910 journeymen and apprentices.

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(1) CLRO, Rep.12(2), 1549-1552 f.454v MF 325, CM V1, 25.1.63 p.43; J HOC,I,23.2.63, 4.3.63, pp.60,67; SOTR, 3 & 4 EVI,c.xxii,121;SOTR,5E1,c.iv,414-418.

(2) Rep.12, f.454v; M.G. Davies, The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship 1563-1642, Cam.,Mass.,1956,p.8.

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.49,f.323v.

(4) Rappaport concluded that many 16th century handicraftsmen employed only one journeyman. Rappaport, Part 1, p.115 Also see D.C. Coleman, Industry in Tudor and Stuart England", 1976,p.19. There were no tailors among the larger employers in Southwark in 1622. Boulton, op.cit.,pp.78 79.

(5) See above pp.336-337.

The reluctance of independent producers to retain large numbers of journeymen in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries did not result in the establishment of a distinct class of journeymen as had existed in the early fifteenth century.<sup>(1)</sup> Notwithstanding the 1536 Act of parliament prohibiting guilds from preventing journeymen setting-up on their own accord,<sup>(2)</sup> between 1536 and 1562 the Merchant Taylors Company imposed a requirement for new freemen of the handicraft to "bee with some free mane"<sup>(3)</sup> (usually their former masters) for twelve months, if offered employment. In 1575, William Style was made free by prominent tailor and livery governor William Phillips and was punished "for that he refused to serve the saide Phellipes taking one penny to serve him for a yeare".<sup>(4)</sup> The small number of recorded contracts show that journeymen were usually offered a fixed wage plus meat and drink in return for one year's labour, although many journeymen tailors in London were paid partly in kind, receiving

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(1) See above, p.241-242.

(2) SOTR, 27H8,c.v,654

(3) MF 325 CM V2, 11.11.75 f.27. The ordinance was probably passed in the 1550s during a labour shortage in the cloth-related crafts. Rappaport, Part 1, p.121.

(4) The contracts made were not strictly Company business, and their terms are mentioned on less than 20 occasions 1569-1609, four soon after the election of a new clerk in 1595.

expensive remnants which could be re-sold to brokers.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Company apprenticeship records certainly indicate that a short period of employment was the norm in London. William Jones, later royal tailor and a liveryman, worked as a journeyman for nearly two years from August 1569 but had his own journeyman by late 1572; tailors and Company informers Richard Levitt and Raphe Ledsham became freemen in May 1588 and February 1596 respectively, but only registered their first apprentices in January 1590 and February 1597.<sup>(2)</sup><sup>(3)</sup>

A number of the features of London tailoring gave rise to problems for the livery company charged with its regulation and with the welfare of the large body of tailors under its jurisdiction. The more successful masters had major account customers who were invoiced periodically, sometimes annually, and while the extended credit terms must have caused cash flow difficulties, the arrangements at least give rise to some certainty of

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(1) Both the yeomanry and the municipal government took steps to prevent this practise, which was linked to the trade in stolen remnants. MF 325, CM V1, 28.8.74, pp.742,743;CLRO, J CC, V21, 1579-1584. ff.294v,295.

(2) MF 325 CM V1, 29.8.69, 21.11.72, pp.412,613. For Jones, see above p.138.

(3) MF 299, Accounts V6,V7,passim. For Levitt's and Ledsham's role as informers, see above,p.336.

(1) demand. The small producer faced uncertainties even in periods of general prosperity as a result of the highly uneven and seasonal nature of demand for new clothing in the capital. In the earlier sixteenth century the Merchant Taylors Company was prepared to allow freemen to employ aliens and foreigners (i.e. unfree Englishmen) "if it be for some noble tryumph ... or for some other sodeyn cause for a great estate ... which in all hast (2) possyble must needly be done". The seasonality of demand (3) became marked under Elizabeth I, and was emphasised in (4) the wide-ranging petitions of the 1670s and 1680s, when the master tailors justified their demands for a flexible workforce by explaining that "trade consists principally in the Spring and the Foure termes in the yeare funeralls & some weddings which comonly require a quick despatch".

(1) GH MSS 1719 for example is a tailor's bill for nine garments made in the year to February 1659. Royal tailor George Lovekyn in his will blamed his financial difficulties in the early 16th century on his many debtors among "grete estates".

(2) MF 310 AMB V2, f.54v.

(3) Fisher, "Conspicuous Consumption", p.43.

(4) The two lengthy petitions, one of 1671 or 1675 and one of 1681, are uncatalogued except for references in the handwritten "Alchin's List of Miscellaneous Papers", Book 2, p.53 1842-1845 in CLRO. They represent detailed surveys of the current state of the trade in the metropolis by masters free of the City.

The underemployment of many small producers and their workforces led to the development of an impressive system of poor relief by the Merchant Taylors Company and to fierce antagonism to unregulated tailors and their employers. In 1555 it was the City's tailors who through the Merchant Taylors and Drapers companies engineered the Act of Common Council which established a prohibitory £5 penalty from freemen employing unfree handicraftsmen; they more than any other major body of artisans - excepting possibly the clothworkers - demanded and obtained guild and municipal protection for their local monopoly of production.

Despite the barriers erected to the employment of unapprenticed labour and the inherent problems of the trade, the incidence of non-freemen turning their hand to tailoring was high, and cannot be explained simply by reference to the wide market for new clothes in London. Tailors required reasonable physical fitness and good

(1) See above, pp.273-280.

(2) CLRO, Rep.13(2), 1555-1558, ff.349v, 352. Licences could be obtained from the Chamberlain allowing temporary employment of foreigners, and some tradesmen including bakers and cordwainers obtained partial exemption. Ironically it was exemption from the Act - conditionally obtained in 1681 - that was the primary demand of the master tailors in the very different circumstances of the 1670s and 1680s. CLRO, J CC, V49, 1681-1682, ff.277v, 278.

(3) See above, pp.332-349.

(1) eye-sight, but not the start-up capital or robust  
 (2) constitutions required by many trades. Successful  
 producers had to be able to make-up and decorate a wide  
 range of garments for both sexes, and versatile enough to  
 adapt to changing fashion: "ingenuity" allowed new  
 freemen to establish rapidly flourishing businesses even  
 in the 1670s, and in the sixteenth century repair work  
 undertaken by elderly tailors lacking the "experience or  
 Cunnyng to Cutt or shape Garmentes of the newe & dyverse  
 fassions" was brought under the auspices of the Merchant  
 (3) Taylors Company. The skill required to cut-out and  
 stitch together the constituent parts of basic garments  
 in a "clouterly" manner was however limited and  
 (4) widely-held; tailoring was as simple or as sophisticated  
 a trade as the skills of individual manufacturers  
 allowed, and consequently the problem of untrained  
 workers was one which required constant attention from  
 the guild authorities.

(1) CLRO, J CC V.11, 1506-1517, ff.336,336v; MF 326, CM  
 v3, 23.3.90,f.206.

(2) Later 17th century publications poked fun at the  
 tailor's unmanliness and sexual incompetence. "The  
 Taylors Vindication", 1670, BL.C.121.g.9.(30); "The  
 Taylors Wanton Wife of Wapping", BL Rox II, 493.

(3) CLRO, 1671-1675 petition p.2;J CC V11,ff.336,336v.

(4) "Mercurius Anti-Mechanicus", p.16 J. Nevinson, "The  
 Dress of the Citizens of London 1540-1640", in  
Collectanea Londoniensia, p.266. Poorer Londoners made  
 their own clothes or purchased second-hand items. CLRO, J  
 CC, 1579-1584,f.295.

### Household and Specialist Tailors

Not every London tailor worked in his own shop producing the full range of contemporary garments. A number of citizens emulated the nobility in maintaining tailors as domestic servants, a practice linked by Merchant Tailors to evasion of the apprenticeship regulations by freemen who did not register apprentices and subsequently placed them as "servinge men in gentilmens houses".<sup>(1)</sup> Their existence in London per se was not an issue until the mid-seventeenth century, although in 1634 the yeomanry governors took legal advice regarding 'serving-men' who "under coulour of domesticall servants make garments for others".<sup>(2)</sup> By 1650 the increasing difficulties of the poorer small masters led to general condemnation of the "Aldermen Merchants & other persons of quality" maintaining domestic tailors and the Company governors demanded action from Common Council, including as a first step the removal of the 'delinquents' from the houses of Common Councillors themselves.<sup>(3)</sup>

By the mid-Elizabethan period, the area around Birch Lane,<sup>(4)</sup> extending into Lombard Street and Cornhill, was an

(1) MF 325, CM V1, 28.8.74 pp.742, 743.

(2) MF 329, CM V8. 8.10.34, ff.496v.

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 8.5.50 f 348v. The protests appear to have been without effect.

(4) CLRO, Rep.20, 1579-1583,f.313v. The area was still dominated by retailers of mens' garments in Maitland's day. W.Maitland, The History of London, 1756,V1,p.898.

established centre for the retail sale of ready-made garments. The 'salesmen' were generally trained tailors throughout the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, although some were purely retailers who combined the sale of cloth and ready-made clothing made under contract. Merchant Taylor William Hicks of Watling Street was described as a draper in 1630 and a salesman in 1632 and 1634 when applying for loans; Edward Mountford, a yeomanry warden in 1647, was similarly described as a 'salesman draper' in 1633 and a draper in 1637. The enthusiastic selling techniques and Sunday opening hours of the salesmen were unpopular with some citizens in the 1580s, and their complaints are borne out in the 1612 tale of a visitor to London being "most terribly and sharply set upon" by Birch Lane apprentices: they persuaded him with much "bawling in his ears" to purchase a new suit of apparel with every conceivable accessory. Such ready-made garments were cheaper than tailor-made, but were often of dubious quality. In 1616 joint searches by representatives of the Merchant Taylors and Drapers companies were initiated encompassing the "shoppes and houses" of City salesmen,

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(1) CLRO, Rep.32.1615-1616, f.256; MF 330, CM V9, 18.9.49, 8.5.50 ff.327v, 348v.; "The Trade of England Revived", 1681, pp.37,38, GHL 712,g.16(20).

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 10.3 30, 14 7.32,3.7 33,28.8.34,ff. 372v, 452v, 479,511; MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.37.f.24v.

(3) Rep.20 f.313v.

(4) "O Per Se O", p.24

many of whom allegedly sold clothing "deceiptfully made  
 either in the outside or Lyninge".<sup>(1)</sup> The lack of guild  
 regulation of one area of the clothing industry was  
 clearly viewed as inimical to protection of the consumer  
 as much as the producer, and complaints about the quality  
 of salesmens' work were repeated in the 1640s and 1680s.<sup>(2)</sup>  
 The ferocity of the later complaints may reflect the  
 increasing scale of the ready-made trade from circa 1625.  
 A growing number of salesmen applied for loans to the  
 Merchant Taylors Company from the 1620s, and in the 1680s  
 it was alleged that men still living could remember the  
 days when few salesmen operated in the City.<sup>(3)</sup>

Both the 'workman tailor' and the 'salesman tailor'  
 usually sold a full range of garments, although some  
 degree of specialisation existed. Cloakmakers and cloak-  
 sellers are occasionally mentioned in Elizabethan and

(1) CLRO, Rep.32, 1615-1616, ff.218v, 255v, 256.

(2) MF 330 CM V9, 28.8.49 f.323V; "Trade of England  
 Revived" p.51; N.H.Merchant, The Compleat Tradesman or  
the Exact Dealers Daily Companion, 1684 pp.32, GHL  
 A.8.3.(35).

(3) The author of "The Trade of England Revived"  
 lambasted London salesmen for using cheap materials and  
 inferior or secondhand linings, and for making garments  
 in one quarter of the time taken by the "accustomed  
 Tayler".

(4) "Trade of England Revived", p.36.

(1)

Early Stuart livery company and legal records, and in the sixteenth century a class of artisan hosiers existed. They were eclipsed in the early seventeenth century by retailers selling the new knitted stockings joined to the upper garment by garters, manufactured through the 'putting-out' system rather than by independent producers.

(2)

### A Trade in Transition

From the second quarter of the seventeenth century, there are unmistakeable signs of 'incipient capitalism' taking hold in the London tailoring trade, and of an irreversible breakdown in the manufacturing monopoly of producers who had served a seven year apprenticeship with a City freeman.

Early modern London, with its lucrative markets and abundant business opportunities, always boasted an élite of handicraftsmen who became well-to-do and influential

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(1) In 1615 the shop of cloakmaker Gabriel Okeman in Watling Street contained 17 cloaks and 2 riding hats. Middlesex Sessions, op.cit., V3 p.162.

(2) PRO, SP 12, 23,no.12; HMC, Salisbury MSS,V19,1607, pp.438, 439; CLRO,Rep,15 1561-1566 f.74; Joan Thirsk, "The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: the English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700", in N.B. Harte and K.G. Ponting (ed.'s), Textile History and Economic History. Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann, Manchester, 1973,pp.52-71; Coleman, "Tudor and Stuart England",p.32.

citizens. They were often succeeded as market leaders by their former apprentices; the numerous freemen who were taught the craft by royal tailor Walter Fysshe included William Baxter, who joined the livery in 1570, and William Edney, never a liveryman but a major employer and one of the wealthiest freemen below the livery by the early 1570s. During the twelve months to October 1568, Edney registered thirteen apprentices, and subsequently enrolled as freemen several trainees taken-on prior to 1567. His apprentices included William Mormay, a leading yeomanry officer until co-opted to the livery in 1610, and Anthony Holmeade, who served as livery warden in 1608. Holmeade had joined the livery in 1592, the same year as equally-successful tailor Arthur Medlicott, who by the time of his death (while in office as renter warden) had accumulated an estate which included over £2,000 in cash and property in and around Shrewsbury. His fortune was almost certainly derived from close involvement in the manual side of the craft: he learnt his trade to 1565 with leading freeman Richard Tysdale as part of a working unit of only three, and retained close

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(1) MF 325 CM V1, 30.7.74, f.734. Edney became a freeman in 1555-1556.

(2) Mormay acted as yeomanry warden in 1603 and as a yeomanry assistant 1605-1610 but did not become a member of Common Council or the court of assistants. In 1608, he was fined for employing an apprentice of another City tailor without permission. CLRO, Chamberlain's Book of Fines, f.242v ; Will PCC 108 Cope (1616).

(1)

ties with the yeomanry organisation after 1610. By the late sixteenth century however, he was employing at any one time up to seven apprentices and three or more journeymen, trading from premises in the prestigious St. Paul's Churchyard area.

(2)

As sixteenth century tailors, Edney and Medlicott stood at the apex of a hierarchy of success and wealth in the same way as George Lovekyn had between 1470 and 1504. By 1625 however, the process whereby a numerous but minority group of larger employers and retailers came to dominate the trade was already underway. In the early seventeenth century, fixed-term and interest-free loans - generally available only to drapers and merchants, with a number reserved for clothworkers - were increasingly sought by 'makers of garments', leading to pressure to ignore the restrictions imposed by original benefactors. In December 1600 tailor William Greene of Blackfriars was denied £25 reserved for the use of drapers, but the following year obtained £12 10s reserved primarily (but not exclusively) for clothworkers. In 1607, Budge Row

(1) Will PCC 58 Hayes (1604); MF 325, CM V1, 3.8.62, 15.6.65, pp.11,186. Medlicott's legacies included £20 to be paid to the poor by the yeomanry wardens and a gift to his friend John Froome, a yeomanry assistant 1597-1605.

(2) MF 313, Apprentice Binding Registers, V1, f.101. See Appendix 6 for Medlicott's civic and business career.

(3) A.F. Sutton, "George Lovekyn, Tailor to Three Kings of England, 1470-1504", Costume, V15, 1981, pp.1-12.

(4) MF 326 CM V3, 15.12.1600, 10.2.01, ff.426v.

cloakmaker Roger Olton obtained £50 left in trust for merchants, and seven years later one of the £25 loans sought by Greene in 1600 was awarded to a Dowgate (1) cloakmaker. The demand for business capital among tailors led to the establishment in 1626 of four £25 loans for 'young artificers', which were immediately taken-up by tailors; in July 1617 another four £25 sums were provided for young men using "the handicraft of (2) Taylery", all of which were allocated within weeks. In the five years from 1630, 100 loans were made to Merchant Taylors, of whom 32 were tailors and another twelve were salesmen or other clothing retailers. 'Makers of garments' such as Richard Herbert and John Sutton, who borrowed £100 technically reserved for merchants in 1646 (3) and 1651 respectively, were clearly investing in greater stock levels and larger workshops or more attractive retail premises. One tailor's shop in St. Clement Dane in the third quarter of the century contained luxurious trimmings and materials valued at £420 stored in a street-front area, with eye-catching remnants displayed

(1) MF 327, CM V5, 15.6.07 p.259; MF 328, CM V7, 11.4.14, p.117.

(2) MF 328, CM V7, 4.3.16 - 19.4.16, 4.7.17 - 28.8.17. p.220 seq., p.404 seq..

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 8.7 46, 13.5 51, ff.235, 377. £100 represented a highly-substantial investment for a mid-17th century artisan. In 1747, £100 was still considered adequate start-up capital for London tailors. "A General Description of All Trades", 1747, p.206, GHL A.5.1. Cambell recommended £500. Cambell, op.cit., p.338.

in the shop-window and manufacturing undertaken in an  
 (1)  
 adjoining workshop.

The impact of capitalists on the London tailoring trade between 1625 and 1675 can be assessed only imperfectly, but was clearly profound. In 1633, the Merchant Taylors Company in a submission to the municipal government reported that the number of 'able' freemen had greatly  
 (2)  
 diminished, an assertion which appears to be borne out by the fascinating developments of 1634 when for the first time in over two centuries a coherent body of journeymen tailors is referred to in Company records.

In February 1634, the yeomanry governors drew attention to the grievances of the "exceedingly impoverished ... working Tailors", householders "living soley by their handy labour", referring to alien, foreign and household tailors and (for the first time) the number of handi-  
 (3)  
 craftsmen resident in the suburbs. Of greater significance was the presentation of a second petition by "diverse Journeymen working Tailors freemen" to the livery governors in October 1634. The journeymen had met with journeymen affiliated to other City guilds and established a network of contacts to ensure that "the Maisters" could at the shortest notice draw on the labour of free "workemen"; they were however anxious to acquire

(1) PRO, Prob.5, 2393 (1674).

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 21.1.33, ff.464v, 465.

(3) MF 329, CM V8, 4.2.34, f.496.

the authority and legitimacy of the Merchant Taylors  
 (1) Company. There are no indications that bodies of journeymen had formed even during the worst years of the  
 (2) 1590s, and while the 1634 network may have been a temporary phenomenon, it clearly resembled the "House of  
 (3) Call" system described by Cambell over a century later.

It is difficult to assess the significance of the 1634 references to suburban competition and the extra-guild journeymen's association. Early in 1634 the Privy Council had mooted plans for an independent incorporation of suburban tradesmen and artisans, an idea much disliked in  
 (4) the City. Nevertheless, in 1636 the Crown established the 'Incorporation of the Suburbs' with authority over not only Westminster and the suburbs, but over the liberties within the City, including (from 1637) freemen resident within the liberties. It is highly likely that the concern of the masters and the organisation of the journeymen was linked to the planned incorporation or to

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(1) MF 329, CM V8, 8.10.34, f.512. The journeymen were referred to the "care and consideration" of the yeomanry authorities.

(2) Whether or not the 1590s saw a 'crisis' in London, great difficulties were faced by many freemen, as graphically recorded in the Company and municipal records. The early 1630s had also seen plague and shortages, especially in 1630. M.J. Power, "A 'Crisis' Reconsidered: Social and Demographic Dislocation in London in the 1590s", The London Journal, 12,(2), 1986, pp.135-145.

(3) Cambell, op.cit., p.193.

(4) Brett-James,op.cit.,pp.223-238;Pearl,"London".  
 pp.31-37;CSPD 1635-1636,pp.359.360.

another of the many schemes promoted by Courtiers during the period. It has not proved possible to substantiate  
 (1)  
 this hypothesis.

The impression that many less wealthy freemen were beginning to struggle to acquire or maintain the status of independent producer is however strengthened by the 1649-1650 agitation of "divers poore men being Working Taylors", directed not only against traditional adversaries such as foreign workers, but against "divers rich men" who "by takeinge over great multitudes of  
 (2)  
 Apprentices" were undermining all "mechanicall Taylors". The "rich men" included salesmen with City "sale shops" used as outlets for garments manufactured by sub-contracted suburban workers,  
 (3) and former yeomanry wardens. When in 1650 the livery governors appointed a committee of ten cutting tailors, including livery warden Francis

(1) For the many schemes for new incorporations under the Early Stuarts, See Unwin, "Gilds", pp.293-328; Ashton, "City", pp.71-81. No references to a scheme involving the journeymen tailors were found in for example the CSPD or in secondary works.

(2) MF 330, CM V9, 28.8.49 f.323v. In 1673 one London commentator blamed under-employment among handicraftsmen on masters taking-on increasing numbers of apprentices. Barber Tooth "The Citizens Companion or the Trades-man's Mirror", 1673, pp.154,155,GHL, A.8.4.(9).

(3) MF 330, CM V9, 16.1.50, 8.5.50, ff.337, 348v. In 1632 the court of aldermen had investigated the activities of salesman Samuel Randall of St. Thomas Apostle for maintaining 7 shops and numerous journeymen and apprentices, and for employing foreigners. CLRO, Rep. 47, 1632-1633, ff.27v,116-116v.

(1) Taylor, the petitioners rejected four of the nominees - Fleet Street tailor and liveryman George Endebrooke, salesman and liveryman Edward Wallis, liveryman Robert (2) Russell and ex-yeomanry warden John Cobden.

Between 1665 and 1681, the masters of the trade - invariably distinguished from the journeymen from 1660 - campaigned for the right to employ unfree workers as necessary to allow them to compete more effectively with suburban producers. The two extant petitions to the City Fathers reveal that freemen were unable to attract sufficient numbers of apprentices, and that many former apprentices failed to take-up the freedom - "a burthen (3) rather than a priviledg". As "ingenious" freemen were able to become masters soon after completing their apprenticeships, the City masters were obliged to employ

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(1) Committee Chairman Taylor was a livery warden in 1649 and again in 1650, and died in lodgings in his 80s in 1667. His estate, valued at less than £1,000, was modest for a senior liveryman. Will PCC 31 Carr.

(2) Endebrooke, Wallis and Cobden were yeomanry wardens in 1637, 1644 and 1646 respectively; Endebrooke, Wallis and Russell all served twice as livery wardens in the 1650s and 1660s. Cobden, a freeman since 1618, never joined the livery and only became a yeomanry assistant in 1653. His appointment to the committee was upheld by the livery governors. See above, pp.343-344.

(3) The decline in the value of the freedom had been noticed as early as the 1630s. Pearl, "London", p.33.

journeymen who not only demanded high rates of pay, but were not competent in all aspects of the trade. Half a century before the 'emergence' of combinations of journeymen in the metropolis,<sup>(1)</sup> large employers and salesmen were contracting with master tailors to produce only mens' suits womens' gowns or childrens' coats, restricting the training and experience of apprentices and journeymen who were found by small independent producers to be in "noe way fitted for our businesse".<sup>(2)</sup> The differentiation of economic function within the tailoring trade was clearly observable in Restoration London, with "Journeymen handicraft Taylers" organised by the 1660s in opposition to the employment practices of the masters and by reason of lack of work.<sup>(3)</sup>

The demands and petitions of 1649-1650 and 1670-1681 also allude specifically to two further major aspects of change in seventeenth-century London which undermined the "accustomed" tailor and the efforts of the Merchant Taylors Company to protect his interests. The most

(1) S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, 1926, pp. 30-32; Galton, op.cit., pp.1-5.

(2) Tailors Petition, 1671-75, p.2.

(3) CLRO, J CC V49, 1681-1682, f.278; Rep.70, 1664-1665, f.590;Rep.80, 1674-1675, f.258;Rep.91,1685-1686,ff.141v, 142. In 1681 the masters were estimated to be out-numbered 5:3 by the journeymen.

conspicuous development was the expansion of the suburban  
 (1) area, where many foreign masters had "greate trades both  
 (2) for (the) Citty & Countrey". The shift in the centre of  
 the trade to the West accentuated by the 1666 Fire and  
 (3) "the building of the Covent Garden", sounded the  
 deathknell for the industrial importance of the Merchant  
 Taylors Company, and was reflected in the precipitous  
 drop in the number of apprentices enrolled with its  
 (4) freemen after circa 1670.

The second development is one which deserves far more attention than is possible here, and is only incidentally referred to in the historical sources examined. The role of women in the London tailoring trade prior to 1650 is largely 'invisible'; women could not become members of

(1) See above, pp.345,346.

(2) Tailors petition, 1671-1675 p.2; D.De Marly, "Fashionable Suppliers 1660-1700: Leading Tailors and Clothing Tradesmen of the Restoration Period", The Antiquaries Journal, V58 1978, pp.333-351; N.G. Brett-James, The Growth of Stuart London, 1935, pp.151-182.

(3) Kellett, "The breakdown in Guild and Corporation Control", p.383; T.F. Reddaway, The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire, 1940 p.47; Tailors Petition, 1681, p.1.

(4) See Appendix 1. The number of apprentices enrolled in each quarter century from 1625 was 13,794 (1625-1649) 10,878 (1650-1674), 5,602 (1675-1699) and 3,621 (1700-1724).

the guilds, but when widowed could take-over and make free their late husbands' apprentices, and furthermore must have helped-out in their husbands work from time to  
 (1) time. Only in the mid-seventeenth century however did their involvement in the trade as 'salesmen' become a grievance to the freemen of the Merchant Taylors Company; thirty years later the masters objected to the "great number of men & women" working as tailors in the City in  
 (2) contravention to the apprenticeship regulations. By the Restoration, women were emerging not only as independent  
 (3) retailers but as independent producers: in 1654 seamstress Mary Bickerstaff was prosecuted in the Lord Mayor's Court for allowing her female apprentice to  
 (4) trade on her own account.

### Conclusion

The foregoing account has illustrated the degree to which

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(1) The role of women in industry generally has received considerable attention in recent years. See for example L.Charles and L.Duffin (ed.'s), Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England, 1985; Boulton, op.cit., pp.81,82. In the early 16th century Richard Gibson invoiced the Crown for "wemenes werk sewyng ii dayes". PRO, E101,418/7.

(2) MF 330,CM V9,8.5.50 f.348v;CLRO,Rep.85,1679-1680,  
f.171v.

(3) De Marly, "Fashionable Suppliers", p.341; M. Ginsburg, "The Tailoring and Dressmaking Trades 1700-1850", Costume, V6 1972,pp.64-67.

(4) CLRO,Calender of Interrogatories in Lord Mayor's Court, no.72.

industrial organisation and change in early modern London can be explained through the often undisturbed documentary archives stored by the City guilds and the municipal government, notwithstanding the limitations imposed by such sources, not least in terms of geographical scope. From 1580 London was subject to enormous suburban expansion and to major industrial developments much in need of further study. It is clear that both phenomena gave rise to serious difficulties for the thousands of freemen under the jurisdiction of the Merchant Taylors Company, and it is the remarkable responsiveness of the livery company to the requirements of its membership, manifested in the form of poor relief, industrial regulation and institutional adaption, which constitutes one of primary themes of this thesis. Ironically, the Company was at the same time a source of finance for salesmen and larger employers coming to the fore in the capital in the earlier seventeenth century,<sup>(1)</sup> and many of their number became liverymen and assistants.

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(1) See above, pp.370,371; for a contrary view, see Coleman, "Tudor and Stuart England", p.21.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined in depth the operation and development of one of early modern London's foremost social organisations. Attention has been focused on the government of the Company; the nature of the livery body; the political and religious leanings of the élite governors; and the role of the yeomanry. Restrictions on scope have been imposed not only by the nature of the sources, but by the adopted approach to the Company's history: a thematic and in-depth study covering a relatively short period. The results are however presented as a blueprint for the use of the records of the major livery companies in illuminating many features of London's early modern history. Major studies of for example the Clothworkers Company (with its well-organised and durable handicraftsmens' organisation) and the Grocers Company (prima facie a centre of resistance to royal policies under Charles I) might be particularly rewarding.

The government of the Merchant Taylors Company was highly oligarchic, notwithstanding a strong commitment to formal voting procedures. Leading assistants exercised a decisive influence over Company affairs, including the selection of new liverymen and the allocation of desirable properties. Their dominance within the livery was however uncontroversial; most junior liverymen could

expect to join the ruling court, although many in fact shunned executive office in the earlier seventeenth century. The livery as a whole, governors and non-governors, represented a tiny minority of the freemen, with a membership closely-connected by a variety of social bonds and predominantly mercantile in character.

The period 1580-1645 was one of expansion, in corporate wealth, membership and influence. The acquisition of substantial property holdings and associated charitable trusts underlay major developments in government and the increasing importance of the Company in municipal affairs. The status of the Company and its leading governors also led to renewed attention from the Crown, and under Charles I a rapport was established with the king and William Laud which both reflected and reinforced the reliance of the ruling élite on the Crown for protection of their power, position and privileges. While London tailors and other artisans were notorious (1) for their radicalism in the 1640s, it was merchants not tailors who determined the policies of the Merchant Taylors Company.

There are however no signs of resentment at the nature of the livery and its government. It was the yeomanry

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(1) See for example "These Tradesmen are Preachers In and About the City of London", 1647, BL 699.f.11/6.

organisation which embodied the early traditions of the guild, promoting the interests and welfare of the freemen and undertaking remarkably extensive and effective industrial regulation. The yeomanry governors held jurisdiction over a high proportion of London's freemen, and there can be little doubt that this neglected layer of government in the capital was a major force for social stability and continuity until the middle of the seventeenth century. The abolition of the Bachelors Company in 1662, almost certainly as a cost-cutting measure,<sup>(1)</sup> should not obscure the importance of the organisation in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. The yeomanries of the major livery companies represented one central element in the confusion of jurisdictions and allegiances which was early modern London.

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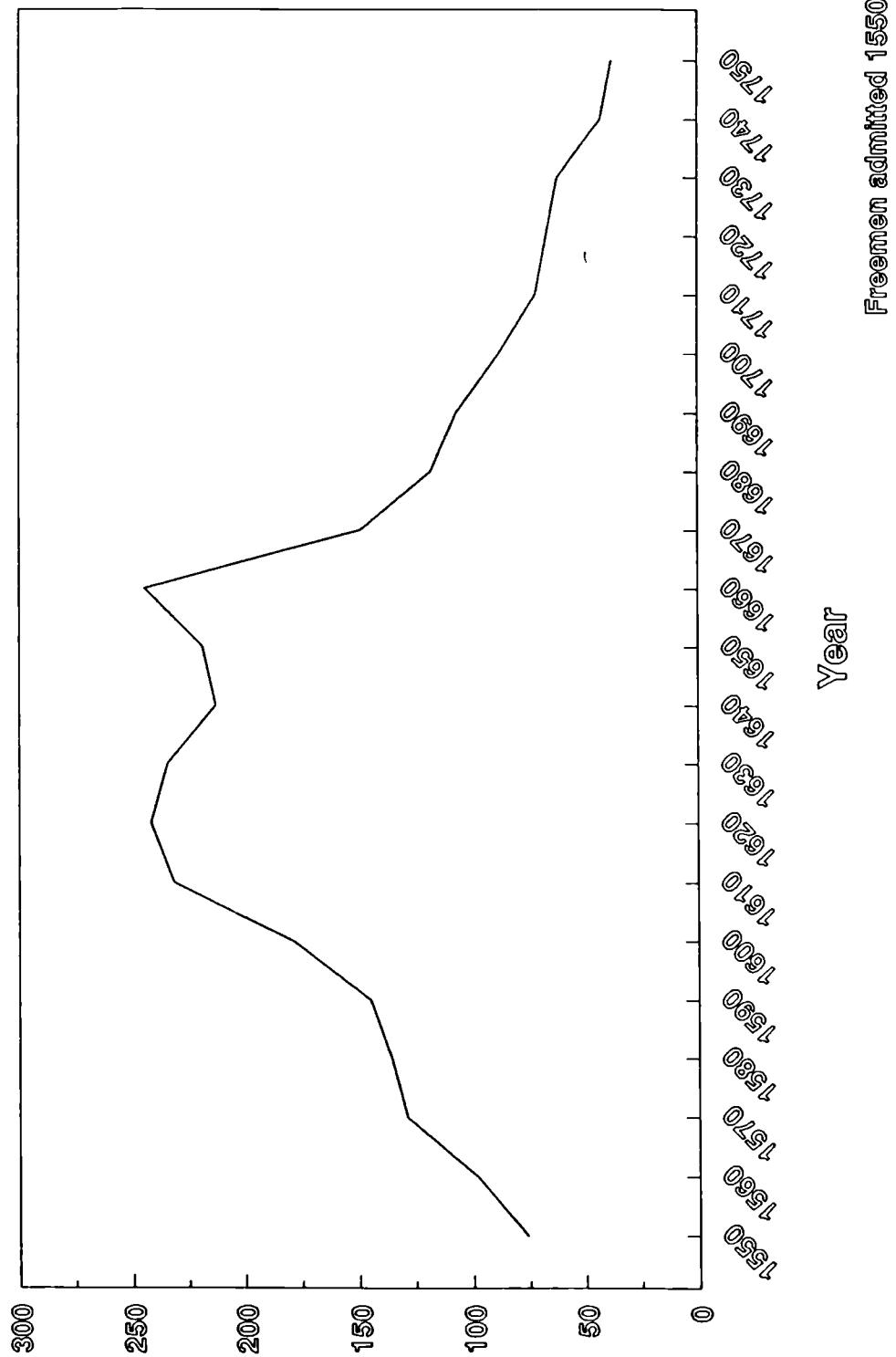
(1) The Company's loans and contributions to the Crown and parliament during the 1640s resulted in serious financial difficulties. By 1660 the Company was servicing debts of almost £20,000 and in the 1660s demands for fines from freemen unwilling to join the livery became commonplace. Loan monies were rarely made available, and after the calamitous 1666 fire, pensions and alms payments were ended. MF 304, Accounts V21, 1659-1660; MF 330, CM V10, 1663-1673, passim. In 1662, the Cutlers yeomanry was without warning declared to be "useless and burdensome", and was summarily abolished. T. Girtin, The Mark of the Sword, 1975, pp.276, 277.

**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1

Freemen

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APPENDIX 2

This appendix sets out biographical information on assistants of the Merchant Taylors Company who attended a minimum of one-third of meetings in at least one year 1630-1641 while members of the senior section of the ruling court (relevant years in parentheses). It is intended to illustrate the background, occupations, civic career and where possible political and religious leanings of the leading members of a major livery company in pre-Civil War London, including many citizens below the much-investigated haute bourgeoisie. Information included in the biographical treatments of R. Lang and V. Pearl is not extensively duplicated, but some material included in Chapter IV and Appendix 4 is repeated for the sake of completeness and chronological continuity.

(1)

I SIR ROBERT DUCY, BART. and ALDERMAN (1630-1633)

Robert Ducy was born in London in St. Lawrence Cheape Ward, and took up his freedom with the Company in 1600 after serving an apprenticeship with Alderman Leonard Halliday. He quickly became one of the pre-eminent merchants of his day as a leading member and director of (2) the East India Company and a Merchant Adventurer, and

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(1) Lang, Ph.D. thesis, passim.

(2) Rabb, op.cit; p.283; CSP Colonial: East Indies, 1625-1629, 1884, passim; CSP Colonial: East Indies and Persia, 1630-1634, 1842, passim. Also see Lang, Ph.D. thesis, passim.

after just six years as a citizen was co-opted to the livery. His election as an alderman in 1620 brought him onto the court of assistants, and he served as sheriff 1620-1621 and Lord Mayor 1630-1631, having been made a baronet in 1629 - an unusual honour as it preceded his election as Lord Mayor and the normal fees were waived.<sup>(1)</sup> Although exempt from office in his livery company as an alderman, he regularly attended as an assistant 1620-1634<sup>(2)</sup> and was a close friend of Clement Mosse. As Lord Mayor, the "pious zeal" of Ducy and his fellow aldermen was praised by Laud, Bishop of London, after their offer of £2,000 towards rebuilding St. Paul's; Ducy served as a commissioner on the body overseeing that work and was regularly in contact with Laud regarding the affairs of the municipality and his livery company until his death<sup>(3)</sup> in 1634.<sup>(4)</sup> His will suggests that he genuinely supported Laud's religious programme: apart from bequeathing £500 of his substantial fortune to the Merchant Taylors Company to build almshouses, he left sums towards the renovation of St. Paul's and his local parish church, St. Michael's Bassieshaw, and to St. John's college, Oxford. Ducy's son and namesake, a freeman of the Merchant Taylors Company from 1621-1622, was an ardent royalist

(1) Beaven, II, p.55; CSPD 1629-1631, p.88.

(2) Will PCC 61 Seager.

(3) CLRO, Rep. 45 1630-1631, f.499-500v.

(4) CLRO, Rep.45 ff.499,500v;CSPD 1631-1633,pp.6,7; Rep. 46, f.169v.

and assisted the King's party militarily and financially  
 (1)  
 in the 1640s.

(2)

II SIR WILLIAM ACTON, BART. and ALDERMAN (1630-1641)

Acton's status and diligent attendance - he attended 123 out of a total of 181 meetings held in the 1630s and was the most senior Company member in terms of civic status from 1636 - meant that he was the most influential governor of the Merchant Taylors Company under Charles I.

(3)  
 A silkman and leading member of the East India Company, he took-up interest-free Company loans after being enrolled as a freeman in 1602 by his master Thomas Henshawe, upper warden in 1608. Acton became a liveryman in 1616, and his election as sheriff and alderman in 1628 brought him onto the court of assistants, together with exemption from the offices of warden and Master. He was active in the scheme for repairing St. Paul's Cathedral, lent large sums to Charles I and was a Customs Farmer  
 (4)  
 1639-1640. Acton's unpopularity with the citizens resulted in his rejection as Lord Mayor in 1640 in contravention of City custom. He was discharged as

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(1) MF 302, Accounts V12, 1622-1623; CFAOM, V2, pp.1124,1125; HMC, Sixth Report, HOL MSS, p.1046.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.291,292.

(3) Rabb.op.cit.,p.233; CSP Colonial: East Indies, 1625-1629, passim; CSP Colonial: East India and Persia, 1630-1634, passim.

(4) CSPD 1631-1633. pp.6,7; Pearl "London",p.291.

alderman in 1643. In January 1644 his remaining London houses were seized, but after eight months absence he returned to the Company Hall in April 1644. He remained an active and influential assistant and a leading parishioner of St. Peter's Westcheap until his death in  
 (1) 1651. Acton left £200 to the Merchant Taylors Company in his will to be used for the loan of monies to young merchants.

### III MATTHEW BEDELL (1630-1636)

Bedell was a leading City draper who invested sums in the London overseas trading companies, including the East  
 (2) India Company. The son and namesake of a Bedfordshire  
 (3) merchant, he was made free in 1596 by the executors of liveryman Titus Westby, and was co-opted onto the livery in 1602. Elected renter warden in 1620 and upper warden in 1622, Bedell was discharged from the latter office as  
 (4) he was elected alderman soon afterwards. Although he only briefly served in that capacity, Bedell's new status

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(1) Tai Liu, Puritan London. A study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes, 1986, p.237; Pearl, "London", pp.291,292; CFAOM, V1,pp.235, 236; CSPD 1640-1641, p.115; MF 330. CM V9, 28.8.51. f.386; Will PCC 48 Gray.

(2) Rabb, op.cit., p.243. Bedell was one of the 39 Company drapers who signed the petition to the Privy Council in 1598. Cecil Papers, 186/101.

(3) MF 313. Apprentice Binding Registers, V1,f.121.

(4) Beaven, II, p.56.

brought him onto the upper section of the court of assistants in 1622. He was one of the most enthusiastic lenders to Charles I in 1627 and remained an active assistant until his death in 1636, by which time he had accumulated considerable interests in land in Norfolk and around London.

#### IV ROBERT DRAPER (1630-1633)

A liveryman from 1610, Draper had been made free by patrimony in 1596 and had served as a Warden Substitute of the yeomanry in 1609. By 1617, he was a Common Councilman,<sup>(2)</sup> and three years later was appointed to the court of assistants. Having served as a livery warden in 1623 and 1626, he became Master in 1628. Draper was one of the leading traders to Spain and Portugal in the 1620s and 1630s and as such was frequently consulted by the royal government on matters touching on trade and relations with those countries.<sup>(3)</sup> Apart from the Company aldermen and the incumbent Master (who rated themselves at especially high rates to encourage their colleagues), he and Francis Neave advanced the largest sums towards the 1627 loan to King Charles. A resident of Allhallowes the Great parish, he paid a fine as sheriff-elect in

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(1) Will PCC 95 Pile.

(2) CLRO, Rep.33, f.91v.

(3) CSPD 1627-1628, p.567; 1631-1633, p.473.

1630, and served on his Company's ruling court until his  
 (1)  
 death in 1635.

V HENRY POLSTEAD (1630-1635 1639)

Assisted by Company loan monies, Henry Polstead became a liveryman in 1602, a decade after being enrolled as freeman by his father and namesake. He served as warden in 1621 and 1623, and after election as Master in 1625 continued to attend meetings until 1640, if only during the winter months in 1636, 1637 and 1638. In 1625, he provided £500 to the municipal government towards £60,000 to be lent to the new King, and advanced £100 in 1627 through his livery company. Polstead was a member of Common Council but paid a fine rather than serve as (2) sheriff in the late 1630s. He was also a director of the East India Company and a member of the French, Irish, (3) North-West Passage and Merchant Adventurers companies. By 1640 the elderly merchant was one of the principal inhabitants of Bishopsgate Ward where he had lived for (4) over twenty years, and he continued to live in the (5) capital in retirement until 1652.

(1) CLRO, Rep. 44 f.267; Will PCC 83 Sadler.

(2) CLRO, Rep.53, 1638-1639, f.134. CLRO, Rep.'s 45, 47, 48, 53,  
*passim*.

(3) Rabb, op.cit., p.358.

(4) W.D. Harvey(ed.), List of the Principal Inhabitants of the City of London 1640, Bath, 1969, p.3.

(5) Will PCC 12 Bowyer.

VI BARTHOLOMEW ELNOR (1630-1635)

Elnor became a freeman in 1578 after serving his apprenticeship with Robert Dowe a leading overseas merchant and Master of the Merchant Taylors Company in that year. Elnor was elected as yeomanry warden in 1602 and as an assistant of the yeomanry in 1603, joining the livery three years later. He paid a fine to avoid future service as Master in 1625, after being co-opted to the court of assistants in 1620 and acting as warden in 1622 and 1625. In 1618 he is mentioned as a merchant living in Aldgate ward, and in 1622 was granted a life interest with Richard Cheney in the office of Comptroller of the petty customs of the Port of London, a concession which (1) he already held during the pleasure of the King. A friend of Robert Gray, Elnor died in 1637 whilst resident in the parish of St. Catherine Creechurch, where he was (2) buried without 'vain ostentation'.

VII SIR HENRY PRATT, BART. and ALDERMAN

(3)  
(1630-1631, 1633-1641)

(4)  
A draper with premises in St. Paul's Churchyard, Pratt had taken-up his freedom in the Company in 1595 after learning his trade with one Roger Walters. Assisted like

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(1) MF 328, CM V7, 8.5.18 , p.460; CSPD 1619-1623, p.377.

(2) Will PCC 7 Goare.

(3) Pearl, "London", pp.303,304.

(4) MF 327.CM V5,21.8.02,p.54.

many young contemporaries by a Company loan early in his career, he became a liveryman in 1610 and a warden in 1627, by which time he was also a member of Common Council.<sup>(1)</sup> After several assistants paid a fine rather than serve as Master in 1630 he was promoted to that position from his post as second warden-elect, and a year later was elected as sheriff. It was customary for sheriffs to be elected as aldermen soon after completing their twelve months in office, but in late 1632 Pratt was omitted from nominations put forward by the Wards of Bishopsgate, Cornhill and Queenhithe. Pratt's omission was in defiance of the Lord Mayor's recommendations, and was interpreted in a sinister light by both the aldermen and the Privy Council. The wards were criticised for "pretending to have in themselves an absolute and free power of nomination", and a commission under Clement Mosse was appointed to investigate the affair. In July 1633 Pratt was still without a nomination, and after the Lord Mayor rejected the four candidates nominated by Bridge Ward three times, for "weighty reasons" the aldermen put forward their own candidates: the Merchant Taylor was finally elected by the prerogative power of the aldermen.<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> CLRO, Rep. 41, 1626-1627 f.300v.

<sup>(2)</sup> CLRO, Rep. 46, 1631-1632, ff.271v; Rep. 47, 1632-1633, ff.292v, 294.

In 1641, Pratt was knighted and made a baronet, but in July he secured his discharge from City office, probably in the light of the growing political crisis. He nevertheless remained active in his livery company and (1) his parish of St. Olave, Silver Street. He paid his parliamentary assessments in the 1640s on his property in Silver Street and in Coleshill, Berkshire, but in 1643 surreptitiously funded the royalist war-effort to the tune of £1,000. His son Sir George Pratt actively assisted Charles I in the period 1643-1647, sheltering and financing royalists from 1643 and conveying intelligence from London to Oxford. In 1647, Sir Henry Pratt was declared a delinquent, but died soon (2) afterwards.

#### VIII FRANCIS NEAVE (1630-1631)

Francis Neave was the son of a Norfolk yeoman, who placed him as an apprentice for eight years with Thomas Pearson (3) of Cornhill. A freeman from 1598, Neave was sworn as a liveryman in 1610 and elected renter warden in 1624. One of the small group of enthusiastic contributors to the

(1) Liu, "Puritan London", p.237.

(2) CFAOM, V2, pp.799, 800, 999. Will PCC 41 Fairfax.

(3) MF 313, Apprentice Binding Registers, V1, p.156.

1627 loan to Charles I, he was drawn from early retirement in Norfolk in 1628 and again in 1629 to serve as upper warden and Master, although he paid a fine when  
 (1) elected sheriff in 1631. He was a substantial Norfolk landowner, with his income supplemented by the rents of  
 (2) property in Lombard Street. In 1643 Neave was assessed at £1,500 by the Committee for Advance of Money, and in February 1644 that committee ordered that he should be brought to London in custody after he proved reluctant to  
 (3) contribute. His nephew Oliver Neave became an assistant of the Company in 1646 and sat on the court until 1649, when he moved to Norfolk to administer the estate of his  
 (4) recently-deceased uncle.

(5)

IX SIR JOHN GORE, ALDERMAN (1631)

A member of the Gore dynasty of London merchants, John Gore was related to Raphe Gore, Master in 1623, and was the son of ex-Master Jerrard Gore, who made John and his brother William free by patrimony in 1590. John Gore was co-opted onto the livery only five years later, and was chosen as warden in 1611 and in 1614, although he was discharged from serving in 1614 as he was elected

(1) CLRO, Rep.45,f.414V.

(2) CSPD 1637-1638 pp.330.331.

(3) CFAOM, V1. p.313.

(4) MF 330. CM V9, 10.11.52. f.407.

(5) Lang, Ph.D.thesis, passim.

sheriff. He sat on the court of aldermen 1615-1636, and  
 became Lord Mayor and a knight in 1624. A parishioner of  
 St. Holy Trinity the Less, in 1615 he paid a fine after  
 being elected Master under new regulations which ended  
 the exemptions of assistants who had been discharged as  
 sheriff. Gore was a prominent East India Company  
 merchant based in Trinity Lane, and also a director of  
 the Irish Company in 1613 and New Merchant Adventurers in  
 1615. He held interests in the Levant, French, Spanish  
 and Eastland companies, and also became the owner of  
 extensive provincial estates by the time of his death in  
 1636. His son William, made a freeman in the Company by  
 patrimony in 1630, was a notorious royalist in the 1640s,  
 as were several other close relatives. They included the  
 alderman's namesake Sir John Gore, an executor of his  
 will named as a 'delinquent' in 1643.

#### X WILLIAM HAWKINS (1631-1641)

William Hawkins was the son and namesake of an  
 Oxfordshire 'husbandman'. Made free by prominent City  
 merchant and alderman Sir Robert Hampson in 1594, Hawkins  
 was a Merchant Adventurer, and was probably the William  
 Hawkins identified by T.K. Rabb as a member of the East

(1) Beaven, II, p.54; G.E. Cockayne, The Lord Mayors and Sheriffs of London (1601-1625), 1897. Gore paid a fine when elected sheriff in 1614, but was re-elected in 1615.

MF 328, CM V7, 26.9.14, 4 8.15, 1.9.15, pp. 140, 178, 189.

(2) Rabb. op.cit., p.300; Will PCC 1 Goare.

(3) Farnell, Ph.D. thesis, p.217; CFAOM, V1, pp. 149, 525, 526.

(4) MF 313, Apprentice Binding Registers, V1, f.39.

(1)

India Company and the New England Venturers in 1602. Assisted in his trade by Company loans, he became a liveryman in 1610 an assistant in 1625, and served as livery warden in 1626 and 1629. He was excused from the office of Master in 1630 for personal reasons, revealed  
 (2) later to have been a set-back in his fortunes. He was a  
 (3) leading member of Common Council from 1629-1640, and an active assistant until his death in late 1641. One of Hawkin's last public acts was to sign the City  
 (4) conservatives petition of June 1641, in the unsteady hand of an old man, registering his opposition to the attempt of parliamentarian citizens to alter the method of electing the City sheriffs.

#### XI GEORGE BENSON (1631-1639)

Benson served as an apprentice to one William Robinson and became a freeman of the Merchant Taylors Company in 1595. A liveryman from 1610, he was elected as an assistant in 1625, as warden in 1628 and 1630, and as

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(1) MF 311, AMB V17. Correspondence with Merchant Adventurers, 1631; Rabb, op.cit., p.310.

(2) MF 329, CM V8, 22.8.33 f.484V.

(3) CLRO, Rep.'s 44-54, passim.

(4) Will PCC 31 Evelyn. The 1641 will is almost certainly that of the William Hawkins under scrutiny, but some uncertainty exists because the name was commonplace in the mid-17th century.

Master in 1631, when he was refused leave to commute his service. A member of Common Council in the late 1620s and the 1630s, Benson paid £400 in 1640 rather than accept the office of alderman, after having previously  
 (1)  
 eschewed service as sheriff. A merchant who took advantage of a series of interest-free loans in the first decade of the century, he was an active trader with the East India, Levant, Spanish and French companies, and a director of the new Merchant Adventurers organisation in  
 (2)  
 1615.

In 1622, Benson had been en route to Naples on the "Prudence" of London when the ship was attacked by pirates near Sardinia, with all hands killed except  
 (3)  
 Benson, two other men and a boy. The experience clearly had a major impact on the London merchant; over twenty years later his will included the provision of £200 for captives of Turkish or Moorish pirates, and he showed a cautious attitude to the events of the early 1640s. He attended at the Hall regularly until late 1639, whereafter he did not once attend a Company meeting despite continuing to reside in the City until his death  
 (4)  
 in early 1644. Benson did however lend generously to

(1) Harvey, "Principal Inhabitants", p.17; CLRO, Rep.55, f.28.

(2) Rabb, op.cit., p.245.

(3) HMC, Fourth Report, HOL MSS, p.313.

(4) Will PCC 192 Twisse; MF 330, CM V9, 5.3.44, ff.191v.  
 192.

(1)

parliament through the Merchant Taylors Company in 1642,  
 suggesting that he may not have shared the political  
 views of his former apprentice Thomas Colston, a leading  
 royalist alderman in Bristol in the 1640s. On his death  
 Benson left land and properties in Essex,  
 Northamptonshire and London, including the lease of the  
 "Red Lion" in Cornhill, with a small bequest to his  
 'loving friend' Simon Bardolphe.

(2)

## XII EDWARD COTTON (1631-1634)

A freeman from 1588 following service with William Griffin, Cotton was elected as warden of the yeomanry in 1615 and was taken onto the livery in 1616. He was made an assistant in 1620, and after he paid £500 rather than  
 (3)  
 serve as alderman in 1627 was elected Master in that year despite having not served as livery warden. This set a useful precedent for the elections of Griggs, Reynardson and Mosse in 1632, 1640 and 1641 respectively. He died in March 1635 leaving considerable property in Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey and London, including two quays on the Thames. He was buried

(1) MF 303, Accounts V18, 1641-1642, 1642-1643. Absentee Benson contributed £1,000, more than any liveryman except aldermen Pratt and Reynardson.

(2) A&O, V2, p.797.

(3) CLRO, Rep.41,f.92.

at his express wish at ten p.m. in St. Pancreas parish church. His substantial benefactions included £100 for  
 (1)  
 poor, godly ministers.

### XIII MICHAEL GRIGGES (1632-1640)

Grigges was the son and namesake of a London tailor who had been forced to take-up the freedom after imprisonment  
 (2) on the order of the court of aldermen in 1599, and represents possibly the most interesting man on the court whose career has not been previously investigated by historians of the Civil War. Grigges became a freeman of London in 1615 after serving liveryman Thomas Gifford for seven years, and took a house in St. Paul's Churchyard from where he traded as a draper. He supplied £1,503 8s 4d worth of cloth for the funeral of James I in  
 (3) conjunction with fellow Merchant Taylor Thomas Brandwood. A liveryman from 1624 and member of Common Council by  
 (4) 1627, he served as sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1630. In 1632, he was elected sheriff of London by the Lord Mayor's prerogative and characteristically showed no sign of being reticent to accept office, entering into the customary bond of £1,000 to appear at a set time to be sworn-in. On June 1st, Grigges returned to the court of

(1) Will PCC 28 Sadler.

(2) MF 313, Apprentice Binding Registers, v5, f.179.: CLRO, Rep. 24, 1596-1598, f.380v.

(3) CSPD 1628-1629, p.16.

(4) CSPD 1629-1631, p.315.

aldermen to report having received "great discouradgments" in relation to his election, and after declaring his 'reasons and motives' was allowed to cancel his bond  
 (1) and fine £400 rather than accept office. His colleagues on the court of assistants immediately made a show of solidarity with him. On July 17th, he was summoned before them, sworn as an assistant, and elected Master of the Company on the same day by the Master, wardens and six members of the upper section of the court (who included Alderman Acton and Sheriff Pratt). In his early 40s, Griggs was probably the youngest Master of the Merchant Taylors Company in the seventeenth century.

In February 1633, he was appointed Paymaster for the reparation of St. Paul's Cathedral by the Commissioners for Pious Uses, a controversial and demanding post which  
 (2) he held until the end of the decade. He was in close contact with Laud in the 1630s, and when in May 1639 he was mistakenly marked as one of a number of alienated property-owners in Bedfordshire, Griggs indignantly retorted that he would "sooner find arms for ten men,  
 (3) especially at this time, than refuse one". He lent (4) considerable sums to the Crown in the 1620s, and in 1639 sent advice to Charles I concerning a test case in the Court of Star Chamber which he anticipated might provide

(1) CLRO, Rep. 46, ff.182, 214.

(2) CSPD 1631-1633, p.528.

(3) CSPD 1639, p.224.

(4) CLRO, Rep. 53, f.327v.

a precedent for securing several thousands of pounds  
 (1) annually to shore-up the beleaguered royal government.  
 In 1640 he was, curiously, assessed jointly with the wife  
 of the Dean of St. Paul's as one of the richer  
 inhabitants of the parish of St. Gregory's adjoining St.  
 (2) Paul's. He also owned property in Hadley, Middlesex, and  
 (3) Dunstable in Bedfordshire.

In May 1642, as the political crisis reached a critical point, Griggs' attendance at the court of assistants ceased except for one appearance in December 1642: it was later revealed that he was resident at the royalist centre of Oxford for at least part of the following three years, renting-out his London house for £100 per annum to a fellow draper. By 1644 his property had been sequestered by parliament and an order was issued for him to be taken into custody for non-payment of the 1643 assessment. In October 1645, in great financial difficulties and unable to support his fourteen children and aged mother, he took the extraordinary step of disguising himself as a serving-man in order to gain access to parliament and present himself to the Speaker, before whom he ignominiously took an oath to the National Covenant. The Committee for Advance of Money at once despatched him to New Prison in Maiden Lane where he

(1) CSPD 1639-1640. p.115.

(2) Harvey, "Principal Inhabitants", p.8.

(3) CCC, V2. p.1018; CFAOM, V1, p.283.

remained until March 1646 when he was discharged of his remaining assessment. Three months later the hapless Merchant Taylor was fined £1,060 for his delinquency by the Committee for Compounding. He then faced over two years searching investigation into his accounts for the thousands of pounds which passed through his hands as Paymaster for the reparation of St. Paul's by several parliamentary committees, and only in September 1649 was (1) he finally able to pay-off his fine for delinquency. Significantly, as soon as the investigations into his financial dealings regarding St. Paul's were complete in 1648, his colleagues on the governing body of the Merchant Taylors Company voted to invite him once again to assemblies and courts of assistants. In 1650 he took his place on the court for the first time in over seven (2) years. In 1657 Griggs died while resident in St. Gregory's parish leaving no material possessions of any (3) value.

#### XIV ROBERT GRAY (1633-1638)

Born in Taunton, Robert Gray became a freeman of London

(1) CCC, V2 pp.1018, 1019; CFAOM, V1, pp.283-285.

(2) MF 330. CM V9. 16.8.48 11.7 50. ff.297. 354v. The decision in 1648 was taken by a meeting which included Acton, Reynardson, Mosse, George Nash and Walter Pell.

For Nash and Pell, see above, p.217

(3) Will PCC 265 Ruthen.

in 1600 after training with merchant Ralph Hamer — a liveryman from 1595 and warden in 1610 and 1612. A silkman employing numerous "workfolkes" including (1) "Callenders and Cotteners and other workmen", Gray was taken onto the livery in 1610. and accepted the office of warden in 1628 and 1631. In 1633 he was discharged as Master-elect in return for a promise to bequeath £500 to the Company to be used to provide loans for young freemen — a facility he had taken advantage of early in his career. A leading Common Councilman by 1626, he paid a (2) fine when elected as sheriff in the early 1630s. Gray and John Venn were among ten London wholesale tradesmen who in 1637 petitioned the Privy Council for the removal of obstructions placed in the way of their trade with the (3) West Country. Gray died soon afterwards while resident in the parish of Allhallows Bread Street, providing shortly before his death and in his will a total of £3,500 for loan monies and almshouses in London and (4) Taunton. Ideologically, he may have been close to his business colleague Venn he was known as 'godly and (5) pious', and was a close friend of George Langham.

(1) Will PCC 150 Lee.

(2) CLRO, Rep. 46,f.232.

(3) CSPD 1637, p.51.

(4) MF 330 CM V9, 28.8 38, 10 12.39, ff.23.23v,63-65.

(5) MF 330, CM V9, 6.11.39, ff.84-85v; Will PCC 150 Lee.

For Venn and Langham, see above pp.46,213 & 214.

XV ROBERT SENIOR (1634-1637)

Senior was co-opted to the livery in 1616, after being enrolled as a freeman in 1592 by William Wither and serving as yeomanry warden in 1612. A draper by trade, he had taken-up a series of Company loan monies while plying his trade in Candlewick Street and later Canning Street, and supplied cloth to the Company in the 1630s  
 (1) to be made-up into almsmens' gowns. Senior was a Common Councilman 1610-1638, and was allowed to pay a fine as Master-elect in 1634 as he was "infirm". He died four  
 (2) years later.

XVI WILLIAM STANLEY (1634)

A freeman from 1586 after serving an apprenticeship with one Griffin Powell, Stanley was elected as a Warden Substitute in 1610 and a yeomanry assistant in 1613. Joining the ruling court of the Company in 1629 after thirteen years on the livery, he served as warden in 1630 and 1632 and Master in 1633, and was a member of Common  
 (3) Council by 1630. He did not attend the meetings of the Merchant Taylors Company after 1634, leaving a relatively  
 (4) modest estate including property in Essex.

(1) MF 330, Accounts V16, 1637-1638.

(2) Will PCC 63 Lee.

(3) CLRO, Rep.44, f.185.

(4) Will PCC 19 Crane.

XVII NICHOLAS GRICE (1634-1639)

Grice's career suggests that he was one of the small group of leading artisans who sat on the court of assistants in the seventeenth century.

Born in County Durham, Grice was made a freeman in 1583 by the undistinguished Merchant Taylor Humphrey Watson, and was elected as yeomanry warden in 1607, remaining a governor of the yeomanry for nearly nine years. Only in 1616 was he taken onto the livery, having been excluded from the call of 1610. A warden in 1629 and 1632, Grice paid fines rather than serve as Master and sheriff in  
<sup>(1)</sup> 1633. In the early 1630s he was one of eleven lay vestrymen prosecuted in Star Chamber for imposing illegal fees on the parishioners of the parish of St. Botolph's without Aldgate, and for misapplying monies collected  
<sup>(2)</sup> towards the re-building of a Sussex church. He died in  
<sup>(3)</sup> 1640 while a leading parishioner of St. Botolph's, and his legacies support the idea that he was a tailor: provision was made for seventy-six poor workmen and for loan monies for six freemen who lived "by makinge of men and womens garmentes". Provision was also made for his son and namesake of St. Lincoln's Inn, who in 1645 would

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(1) CLRO, Rep.47 f.263v.

(2) CSPD 1633-1634, p.353.

(3) Harvey, "Principal Inhabitants", p.1.

be in trouble with the Committee for Advance of Money for  
 (1)  
 not paying his assessments. Like most of his peers Grice  
 left considerable property interests, including messuages  
 and tenements in St. Antholin's parish and properties in  
 (2)  
 Buckinghamshire, Kent, Essex and Nottinghamshire.

#### XVIII WILLIAM TULLEY (1635-1637. 1639)

A freeman from 1589 after serving one Isaac Holloway, Tulley served as a yeomanry warden in 1613, and became a liveryman in 1616. In 1630 he was made a member of the ruling court, and was duly elected as warden in 1632 and 1634, and as Master in 1635. He died in 1640, leaving property in Lincolnshire and in London, including his leased house in St. Anne's Lane, although he was not  
 (3) outstandingly wealthy. His son and namesake of St. Martin's was imprisoned for over a month in 1644 for  
 (4) refusing to pay his assessments.

#### XIX SIMON BARDOLPHE (1635. 1637-1641)

Simon Bardolphe (or Beardall) was the son of William Bardolphe, a yeoman of Staffordshire, and became a freeman in 1596 after serving as the apprentice of William Wither, the master of Robert

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(1) CFAOM, V1, p.41.

(2) Will PCC 90 Coventry.

(3) Will PCC 6 Coventry.

(4) CFAOM, V1, p.340.

(1) Senior. By 1610 Bardolphe was constable of the ward of Candlewick Street, and was defended in Kings Bench by City Solicitor Clement Mosse when accused of falsely imprisoning an attorney found one night to be involved in

(2) unspecified misdemeanours. Bardolphe was co-opted onto the livery in 1616 (the same year as Senior) soon after serving as warden of the yeomanry, and was made an assistant in 1629. He was elected as Master in 1634,

after two terms as warden in the early 1630s. He was a

(3) Common Councilman by 1626 and until at least 1641. As a draper in Candlewick Street Bardolphe had taken advantage of Company loans, and his business success meant that he was consulted by the Privy Council regarding the cloth

(4) trade. In the 1630s he was an assistant of the New

(5) Plantation in Ireland, and by 1640 had accumulated sufficient wealth to allow him to retire from his trade, although he continued to reside in London in a large house incorporating shops and cellars in Canning Street

(6) which he leased from the Company. In 1642, his former apprentice, liveryman George Mawhood, signed the petition of City conservatives regarding constitutional

(1) MF 313 Apprentice Binding Registers, v1, f.127.

(2) CLRO, Rep. 29, f.309.

(3) CLRO, Rep's. 40-55, passim.

(4) CSPD 1633-1634, p.443.

(5) MF 329, CM V8, 14.3.32, f.439v.

(6) Harvey, "Principal Inhabitants", p.5; MF 330.CM V9, 7.12.42, ff.158-159.

innovation, and it is likely that his erstwhile master was the Bardolphe who also signed the petition (although the first name is indecipherable). An active assistant of his Company into the 1650s, Bardolphe died in Richmond in 1655 after avoiding political controversy, and in his will was able to refer to himself as a gentleman.<sup>(1)</sup>

## XX RICHARD TURNER (1637-1641)

A draper in Watling Street, Turner was at the centre of a strongly parliamentarian group on the livery of the Merchant Taylors Company. He was the son of clothier William Turner of Staplehurst,<sup>(2)</sup> and became a freeman in 1597 after serving Edward Kimpton, Master in 1596. for eight years He took full advantage of Company loans in the following decade and his success as a businessman led to his election as yeomanry warden in 1614. Two years later he was taken onto the livery, and he was a member of Common Council by 1626 and until at least 1648.<sup>(3)</sup> In 1629, Turner was co-opted onto the ruling court of his livery company, and was elected as second warden and Master in 1634 and 1636 respectively. Four years later, in 1640 he was discharged as sheriff after proving that he did not command the requisite financial resources.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Will PCC 212 Aylett.

(2) MF 313, Apprentice Binding Registers, v1, f.124.

(3) CLRO, Rep.'s 41-59, passim.

(4) CLRO, Rep.54, f.204v.

Richard Turner was a leading parliamentarian throughout the 1640s, working closely in civic business and political life with a number of fellow Merchant Taylors. Maurice Gething served as apprentice with Turner and became a liveryman in 1630; Tempest Milner was Turner's son-in-law and a liveryman from 1637; and Richard Turner, son and namesake of Turner, became a liveryman in 1633. All four were drapers and active parliamentarians in the 1640s. Richard Turner senior, Gething and Milner jointly advanced nearly £43,000 to parliament in the early 1640s, and Turner, his son and Milner were added to the City Militia Committee in August 1643. Richard Turner senior was a Colonel with a Regiment of Horse in parliament's service, and in October 1645 he was appointed a Tryer of the Twelfth Classis of London for St. Augustine's parish. Along with his son he also served on the radical Militia Committee in 1647.<sup>(1)</sup> In the early 1650s he accepted the office of alderman, and continued to attend livery company meetings until at least the mid-1650s, dying in 1660 in Totteridge, Middlesex.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### XXI SIMON WOOD (1637-1641)

Wood was enrolled as a freeman in either 1598 or 1600.

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(1) CCC, v1, pp.799-807; A&O, pp.223, 990, 793, 487 and *passim*; Farnell, Ph.D. thesis, pp. 125, 220; Liu, "Puritan London", p.55, 56.

(2) Beaven, II, p.81.

and became a liveryman in 1616 and an assistant thirteen years later. A draper by trade, by 1631 he was also a member of Common Council. After serving as a renter warden in 1635 he accepted the office of Master in 1637, although by that date he had given-up his residence and his trade in the City, returning from time to time to attend meetings of the court of assistants and law suits at Westminster. Although he remained the owner of property in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and of messuages, warehouses and tenements in Watling Street, he spent his last years in the house of one Mr. Trafford in Walthamstow, situated close to the house of Sir William Rowe. In 1643, aged seventy years, he protested at his inability to pay his assessments, emphasising his many contributions to the parliamentary forces and the occupation of his northern possessions by the king's army. In 1646 he was buried in the parish of Allhallowes in Bread Street without 'vain pomp'. His will indicates that Wood almost certainly harboured religious sentiments antithetical to the popular perception of Laud's views he bequeathed various sums to provide for an annual sermon on November 5th to commemorate "Godes mercifull and wonderfull deliverence of this land from the fearful and horrible Powder plott or Papists conspiracy"; for annual bell-ringing on November 17th in memory of Elizabeth I; and for a sermon and bell-ringing each July 23rd to celebrate the defeat of the Spanish Armada during

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(1) CFAOM, V1, p.314.

(2) Will PCC 86 Fines.

his teens.

XXII THOMAS WETHERALL (1638-1641)

Wetherall was made free in 1594 by Thomas Boothby, discharged as Master in 1615. A liveryman from 1616, Wetherall was chosen as an assistant in 1629 and served as warden in 1634 and 1636 and Master in 1638. He was a member of Common Council by 1629, and an assistant of the  
 (1) Irish Plantation by 1634. A merchant and ship-owner, he was a member of the Virginia Company and Spanish Company, and participated in the New Adventurers in 1615 and the  
 (2) privateering operations of 1625. Wetherall was a principal resident of Cordwainer Ward, and frequented meetings of the court of assistants until 1644, dying a  
 (3) few years later in retirement.

XXIII WILLIAM PARSELL (1639-1641)

Parsell became a member of the ruling court of the Merchant Taylors Company in 1637, following service as a yeomanry warden in 1618 and co-option to the livery three years later. He was elected renter warden in 1638 and Master in 1639 after paying to be excused service as sheriff. He continued to act as a senior assistant until

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(1) CLRO, Rep.49, f.13.

(2) Rabb, op.cit , p.401.; CSPD 1628-1629, p.440.

(3) Harvey, "Principal Inhabitants", p.13; Will PCC 153 Twisse.

1644, but died in November of that year while resident in the parish of St. Botolph's, Aldgate. He avoided political controversy, and very little is known concerning his business or civic affairs. He left property in Aldgate and in Bedfordshire, although he was apparently not a particularly wealthy man at the time of  
 (1)  
 his death.

XXIV ABRAHAM REYNARDSON, ALDERMAN (1640-1641) (2)

Reynardson was the son of Thomas, a Plymouth merchant, who enrolled him as an apprentice with Edward James,  
 (3)  
 Master of the Company in 1620. He became a freeman in 1618 and only nine years later joined the ranks of liverymen. A leading member of the East India and Levant companies, (4) Reynardson was chosen as an assistant of the Merchant Taylors Company in 1639 after paying to be excused service as sheriff of the City, and a year later was elected Master by the outgoing officers and the eleven-strong upper section of the court, which included Acton, Pratt, Griggs, Mosse, Hawkins and Reynardson himself. Prior to his election as Master, Reynardson had been re-elected sheriff, and on July 6th his attempt to pay a fine had been blocked by the aldermen, including Acton and Pratt. On July 21st, he accepted this re-election, and should have been automatically

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(1) Will PCC 80 Rivers.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.305.306.

(3) MF 313 Apprentice Binding Registers, V6, p.16.

(4) Rabb, op.cit., p.365.

discharged as Master. Following the deferment of the matter in August, in September Reynardson agreed to hold the offices of Master and sheriff simultaneously "at the earnest request" of his colleagues. Reynardson was rumoured to be a royalist as early as 1643, and although he avoided serious political controversy as an alderman and assistant in the earlier 1640s, his conservative inclination was revealed in 1649 when he was deposed from the mayoralty and fined £2,000 for refusing to publicise (1) the Act abolishing the monarchy. He continued to frequent meetings of his livery company, and was knighted by Charles II in 1660. He declined to serve again as Lord Mayor due to ill-health. He died in 1661, and was (2) buried in St. Martin Outwich church.

#### XXV CLEMENT MOSSE (1641)

Mosse was one of the most successful attorneys of his time, and the following account illustrates the status, wealth and influence which could be attained by seventeenth century bureaucrats and lawyers in early modern London.

As the son of the late Thomas Mosse, he took-up his freedom in the Merchant Taylors Company by patrimony in

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(1) Pearl, "London". p.305; Farnell, Ph.D.thesis, p.95; CFAOM, V2 pp.1188 1189.

(2) Pearl, "London", pp.305-306; Beaven II, p.65; Will PCC 163 May.

in 1605. He had studied at the Merchant Taylors Company grammar school 1594-1598 and worked as a clerk for the  
 (1) City government from 1599. In 1608 he is referred to as the servant of Robert Smith, Comptroller of the Chamber, and in that year he secured nomination as City Solicitor. In 1610 he was rewarded for his "extraordinary paynes and travel" in that capacity. In the 1620s he worked both in the Lord Mayor's Court and as solicitor to the East India  
 (2) Company. In 1624 he was elected to the sought-after post of Common Clerk of the Merchant Taylors Company, which brought him onto the livery and meant that he was responsible for much Company litigation regarding loan sureties and rents. In addition, by 1627 he was Comptroller of the Chamber of the City and by 1628 Under-Chamberlain, keeping the book of receipts for the re-  
 (3) building of St. Paul's in the Hall of his livery company. In July 1635 he proffered his resignation as Common Clerk as a result of physical weakness, but Acton, Pratt and their colleagues on the court of assistants persuaded him to stay in office for one further year. In 1636 he

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(1) Hart, op.cit., V2; Pearl, "London", p.156. The Alumni of Oxford and Cambridge graduates confirm that Mosse did not attend university. Surprisingly, he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, only in 1628. The Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, V1, 1896, p.206.

(2) CLRO, City Cash Book, V1, p.67v; Rep. 29, f.68 263v; Rep. 32, f.57v; CSP Colonial: East Indies, 1625-1629, p.429.

(3) CLRO, Rep.41, f.324v. CSPD 1635, p.129; CSPD 1635-1636 p.226; CSPD 1637-1638 p.507; CLRO, City Cash Book, V1, p 53; Lincoln's Inn, "Records", p.206.

resigned, while promising to continue to serve the Company, and was succeeded by his deputy and son-in-law,  
<sup>(1)</sup> City Solicitor Robert Marsh. Three years later he paid a fine as sheriff-elect along with a series of other citizens, but in March 1640 was discharged from the fine on the recommendation of one of the members of the  
<sup>(2)</sup> aldermanic bench, probably Acton. His new status led to his co-option as an assistant of his livery company in 1639, and in 1640 the "atturnie" was one of the leading  
<sup>(3)</sup> inhabitants of the ward of Bassieshaw. In the crisis year of 1641, he was elected Master notwithstanding the considerations which had prompted his resignation as Company Clerk five years earlier. Political factors clearly were not wholly absent in the choice of Mosse as Master by Reynardson, Acton, Mosse and other senior governors, even though the election of ex-Clerks was not without precedent. As Master, Mosse vigorously opposed the granting of the loan to parliament in June 1642, and one month later he was equally vigorously defending the royalist Lord Mayor Gurney against those seeking to impeach him. He was able to draw upon his huge reserve of knowledge regarding traditional constitutional practice in the municipality, and kept his notes and

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(1) Marsh was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1631.  
Lincoln's Inn, "Records", V1, p.214.

(2) CLRO, Rep.54. f.124v.

(3) Harvey, "Principal Inhabitants", p.2.

documents regarding the affair in the Threadneedle Street  
<sup>(1)</sup>

Hall. He continued to act as an assistant and as Comptroller of the Chamber until the late 1640s, when he, the Town Clerk and the Chamberlain lost their offices as a result of political disaffection and resistance to political developments: all three were subsequently elected as aldermen during a financially-motivated series  
<sup>(2)</sup>

of elections to that office. Mosse had continued to attend the meetings of the assistants of the Company until 1648, and in the mid-1640s had been a prominent figure in the Presbyterian parish of St. Michael's  
<sup>(3)</sup> Bassishaw. He died in February 1649, nominating as executors his three sons-in-law, including Robert Marsh. The success of Clement Mosse, a City and Company lawyer and bureaucrat steeped in the traditions and precedents he experienced at first hand over half a century, is reflected in his wealth on his death. He left houses in Lothbury, property in Edmonton, a lease of woods held from the Dean of St. Paul's, and a lease of grounds near Newington. His collection of manuscripts was bequeathed  
<sup>(4)</sup>

to Marsh.

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(1) Pearl, "London", p.305; MT Hall, MSC.DOC. B22.1-14.

(2) Farnell, Ph.D.thesis, p.228.

(3) Liu, "Puritan London", pp.81, 235.

(4) Will PCC 35 Fairfax.

APPENDIX 3

This appendix summarises the information available on the political and religious positions of the assistants of the Merchant Taylors Company 1640-1642. The 33 individuals are ranked in accordance with their status on the court in 1640 or on first admission.

Key to Symbols

x attended at least one meeting in the year heading the column.

\* treated in Appendix 2.

R probable supporter of Charles I in the 1640s.

P probable opponent of the government of Charles I in the 1640s.

A resisted the assessments for parliament in the 1640s (if not identified as R or P).

41 signed the petition of City conservatives against the claim of Common Hall to elect both sheriffs in 1641 (HOL Main Papers, July 26th, 1641).

42 signed the overtly political petition against the power of the radical Militia Committee in 1642 (HOL Main Papers, February 24th, 1642).

<u>1640</u>	<u>1641</u>	<u>1642</u>	<u>Note</u>
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Senior Assistants

Alderman Acton*	x	x	x	R	
Alderman Pratt*	x	x	x	R	
Alderman Reynardson*	x	x	x	R	
Michael Grigges*	x	x	x	R	
Isaac Jones	x	x	x	?R	1
Nicholas Grice*	x				
Simon Wood*	x	x	x	P	
Clement Mosse*	x	x	x	R	
William Hawkins*	x	x		41	
Simon Bardolphe*	x	x	x		
Richard Turner*	x	x	x	P	
Thomas Wetherall*	x	x	x		
William Parsell*	x	x	x		
Henry Polstead*	x				

Other Assistants

Nathaniel Owen	x	x	x	?R	2
George Langham	x	x	x	P	3
Richard Andrews	x				
George Mellish	x				
William Thurlington	x	x	x		
George Francklyn	x	x		41	
Nicholas Herne	x	x			

	<u>1640</u>	<u>1641</u>	<u>1642</u>	<u>Note</u>
<u>Other Assistants (cont'd)</u>				
Daniel Hollinworth	x	x	x	(1) A
Roger Marsh	x	x	x	
George Nash	x	x	x	42
John Venn	x	x	x	P (2) 4
Roger Gardiner	x	x	x	A
George Antrobus	x	x	x	
William Baker	x	x		?41 (3)
John Pococke		x	x	P 4
Thomas Tavernor		x	x	
John Stone		x	x	P 4
John Idle		x	x	
Thomas Robinson		x	x	42

NOTES

1. Isaac Jones was a ship money collector in the 1630s, and was unwilling to contribute to parliamentary assessments in the 1640s. His apprentices included conservative Walter Pell, a junior assistant by 1646 (see p.217).

(1) CFAOM, V1 p.334.

(2) CFAOM, V1, p.390.

(3) The signature is almost certainly that of the Merchant Taylor, but there is some uncertainty as the name was commonplace.

(4) CLRO, Rep.49, 1634-1635, f.52; CFAOM, V1, pp.42, 143.

2. Nathaniel Owen resisted parliamentary assessments on both his Company while Master 1642-1643 and on his
  - (1) own estate.
3. George Langham was a parliamentary commander until
  - (2) his death in 1643.
4. John Venn, John Pococke and John Stone were among the main supporters of parliament in London during the
  - (3) 1640s.

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(1) CFAOM, v1, p.49; see above, pp.222,223.

(2) See above, pp.213,214.

(3) See above, pp.46, 228.

APPENDIX 4

Some details of the careers of the 414 freemen promoted to the livery of the Merchant Taylors Company 1580-1645. The names of individuals treated more fully in Appendix 2 are underlined, and occupations have been indicated where known for the minority of liverymen who were not cloth merchants, wholesalers or retailers. Only partial reconstruction of periods of service on Common Council has been attempted, drawing on perusals of half of the 45 Repertories of the Court of Aldermen relevant to the careers of the Merchant Taylors encompassed by Appendix 4 and Appendix 5. For individuals who became aldermen, dates of service on Common Council are not shown. The data provided by municipal records was supplemented by references from the studies of F.F. Foster and J. Farnell.

Key to Appendices 4 and 5

A = Alderman	Ap = Apothecary
B = Beadle to the Livery	BOE = Baron of the
C = Clerk to the Livery	Exchequer
CL = Clothworker	CH = City Chamberlain
E = Exempt from service as livery assistant	D = Discharged from livery offices
FFF = Reference from Foster, op.cit. (no dates given)	F = Fined in lieu of service as Warden Substitute
G = Goldwire Drawer	GS = Goldsmith
H = Haberdasher	HR = Hosier
M = Milliner	R = City Recorder
S = Salesman Tailor	T = Tailor
WS = Warden Substitute	

<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
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1581

Richard Gore	-	1589	1593 - 1611
Gregory Smithe	1578	1590	1593 - 1597
William Evans	1565	1587	-
Richard Shepham	1580	1591	1593 - 1601
John Rowe	-	-	-
Robert Lee	-	1590	A1593 - 1605
John Mansbridge	1576	1592	-
William Linforde	-	1591	1597
John Davanet	-	1592	-
Richard Bingham	-	-	-

1583

Christopher Thatcher	1570	1595	-
Roger Heley	1581	1594	-
Thomas Juxon	1581	1594	1600 - 1617
Geoffrey Elwes	1582	1593	A1605 - 1616
John Hulson	-	1595	1600 - 1618
Francis God	-	-	-
Nicholas Cullam	-	-	-
William Craven	-	1593	A1601 - 1618

1586

William Pryce	1584	1597	1597 - 1604
John Johnson	1585	1597	1597 - 1610
Richard Rodway	1577	1597	-
Robert Bye	1583	-	-
John Harrison	1582	1593	-
Thomas Rowe	-	1599	1609 - 1620
William Wilkes	-	-	-
John Vaux	-	1598	1600 - 1604
John Vernon	-	1599	1600 - 1610
Peter Legate	1577	-	-
Humphrey Street	1585	1598	1595 - 1626
John Swinnerton	1577	1596	-
John Tedcastle	1579	1611	1586 - 1588
William Jones (T)	-	1599	-
Edward Wotton	1582	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
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1587

Barnabas Hilles (C)	-	-	-
Richard Wright (C)	-	1600	1594 - 1610

1589

Richard Cox	1583	1600	1601
Thomas Thomas	1585	1601	-
William Dassett	1586	-	-
Robert Draper	1587	-	-
William Barrowdaill	1587	-	-
Jerrard Gore Jnr	-	1601	1589 - 1610
John Leake	-	-	-
William Chambers	-	1602	-
William Hawes	-	1602	-
Thomas Owen	-	1603	1610
Andrew Osborne	-	1603	1610
Simon Clynt	-	D	-
Henry Page	-	-	-
Miles Willis	-	-	-

1592

Francis Bradburne	1580	-	-
John Hide	1583	1604	1598 - 1604
John Hodgkins	1586	-	-
Arthur Medlicott (T)	1589	1604	1604
Richard Scales	1589	1604	1610 - 1618
Thomas Henshawe	1589	1605	1610
Anthony Holmeade (T)	1590	1605	-
John Jones	1591	-	-
Richard Selby (T)	1591	-	-
Edward Atkinson	-	1606	-
William Albany	-	1606	1610
Richard May	-	-	-
John Wooler	-	1607	1610
Randolf Wooley	-	1607	1610
Thomas Lawson	-	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<b>Titus Westby</b>	-	-	-
<b>George Lidiott</b>	-	1608	-
<b>Francis Evington</b>	-	1608	A1612
<b><u>1595</u></b>			
<b>Richard Langley (C)</b>	-	1611	-
<b>Richard Carmarthen</b>	-	E	-
<b>George Hothersall (T)</b>	1586	1609	1610
<b>Robert Jenkinson</b>	1591	1609	1598 - 1615
<b>Ralph Hamer</b>	1592	1609	1610
<b>William Stitch</b>	1593	-	-
<b>Martin Leather</b>	1593	-	-
<b>John Bonner</b>	1595	-	-
<b>Peter Collett</b>	1594	D	A1599
<b>Thomas Boothby</b>	-	1611	1609
<b><u>John Gore</u></b>	-	1611	A1615 - 1636
<b>William Gore</b>	-	1612	A1615 - 1624
<b>John Robinson Jnr</b>	-	D	-
<b>Thomas Johnson</b>	1593	1610	1598 - 1626
<b>Charles Hoskins Jnr</b>	-	1612	-
<b>Mathias Springham</b>	-	1613	1609 - 1618
<b><u>1598</u></b>			
<b>Isaac Holloway</b>	1591	1612	-
<b>Anthony Williamson</b>	1595	1612	-
<b>Richard Oteway</b>	1596	1612	-
<b>William Greenewell</b>	1596	1612	-
<b>John Slaney</b>	1596	1612	1620 - 1625
<b>Walter Fletcher</b>	-	-	-
<b>Thomas Franklin</b>	-	1612	-
<b>Edward James</b>	-	1612	1617
<b>John Stokely</b>	-	1612	-
<b>Thomas Marsham</b>	-	1612	A1622
<b>Godfrey Bradshawe</b>	-	-	-
<b>Humphry Hackshawe</b>	-	D	-
<b>Nicholas Hurdes (B)</b>	-	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<u>1602</u>			
John Swinnerton Jnr	-	1602	A1602 - 1616
Robert Lee Jnr	-	D	-
Raphe Smythe (T)	1594	D	-
John Proud	1597	1615	-
Peter Towers (T)	1597	1615	-
Richard Tenante	1598	1615	1610 - 1617
John Earle	1598	-	-
William Adderley	1598	-	-
Henry Moody	1600	-	-
George Wynne	1600	-	1610
Otho Mawditt	1600	-	-
John Merrick	-	1612	-
Robert Gore	-	-	-
Raphe Gore	-	1618	-
Jacob Prockter	-	-	-
John Harrison	-	1618	-
James Travers	-	1618	-
William Brett	-	D	-
<u>Matthew Bedell</u>	-	1619	A1622
Edward Katcher	-	1619	1604 - 1617
Edmond Creech	-	1618	1604 - 1617
William Bond	-	1618	1617
Edward Davenet	-	-	-
Anthony Sprott	-	-	-
John Haughton	-	-	-
Thomas Offley	-	-	-
<u>Henry Polstead</u>	-	1619	1630 - 1634
George Sotherton	-	-	-
William Speight	-	1619	1618
<u>1603</u>			
Thomas Mills	1601	1618	-
John Collett	1601	D	-
George Gibson	1601	-	-
Richard Osmotherley	1601	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<u>1604</u>			
William Priestly	-	1619	-
Jeoffry Prescott	-	1619	1620
<u>1606</u>			
Richard Draper	-	1620	-
<u>Robert Ducy</u>	-	1620	A1620 - 1634
<u>Bartholemew Elnor</u>	1602	1620	-
Nicholas Bosvile	1603	-	-
John Hanbury	-	1620	1610 - 1617
Richard Hearne	1602	1618	A1618 - 1625
<u>1607</u>			
Jeramy Gay	-	1620	1610 - 1626
Richard French	-	1620	-
<u>1608</u>			
John Halliday	-	-	-
John Lee	-	D	-
<u>1609</u>			
William Haynes	1599	-	1617
<u>1610</u>			
William Mormay (T)	1603	-	1609
Robert Hill	1603	-	-
Walter Briggin	1603	-	-
John Archer	1604	-	-
William Webb	1605	-	1609
Thomas Havers	1605	-	-
Robert Barnes (T)	1606	-	-
Richard Bigg	1606	1620	-
Thomas Jennings	1606	-	-

<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>		<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
Edward Warner	1607	1620	1625
Nicholas Elton (T)	1608	1620	1620
Walter Unett	1608	-	-
<u>Robert Draper</u>	F	1620	1617
Daniel Cowper	F	-	-
Thomas Gifford	1609	1620	1617
Roger Drury	1609	1620	-
Edward Elwes	-	1620	-
John Browne	-	1620	-
William Taylor	-	-	1634
Nicholas Wyniff (T)	-	-	-
Edward Plomer	-	-	1618
George Johnson	-	1625	-
John Marden	-	-	-
Peter Bradshawe	-	1625	-
Thomas Harrison	-	-	-
Thomas Stokely	-	-	-
Oswald Hoskins	-	-	-
William Field	-	-	-
<u>William Hawkins</u>	-	1625	1629 - 1640
Richard Francis	-	1625	-
John Baker	-	-	-
Thomas Browne	-	-	1627 - 1633
<u>Henry Pratt</u>	-	1625	A1633 - 1641
Robert Wadeson	-	-	-
Francis Pendleton	-	-	-
Richard Crumpton	-	-	-
Daniel Elliot	-	1625	-
John Dade	-	1625	-
<u>George Benson</u>	-	1625	1627 - 1635
William Barnard	-	-	-
<u>Robert Gray</u>	-	1625	1626 - 1633
Richard Baldcock (C)	-	-	-
Thomas Plommer	-	1626	-
<u>Francis Neave</u>	-	1624	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<u>1616</u>			
<u>Nicholas Grice (T)</u>	1607	1629	-
<u>Robert Briggs</u>	1610	1629	1617
<u>William Stanley</u>	1610	1629	1630
<u>Elias Lavender</u>	1611	-	1618
<u>Richard Hill</u>	1611	-	-
<u>Robert Senior</u>	1612	1629	1610 - 1633
<u>Simon Bardolphe</u>	1613	1629	1626 - 1641
<u>William Tulley</u>	1613	1630	-
<u>Amynadab Cooper</u>	F	-	-
<u>Richard Turner</u>	F	1629	1626 - 1648
<u>Henry Kinnersley</u>	F	1629	-
<u>Nathaniel Weston</u>	1614	1629	-
<u>William Clapham (Ap)</u>	1614	-	1634
<u>Francis Brittridge</u>	1614	-	-
<u>Thomas Barte</u>	1615	-	-
<u>Edward Cotton</u>	1615	1627	A1627
<u>George Wynn</u>	1615	-	-
<u>William Angell</u>	1615	1630	1627 - 1634
<u>Robert Hendley</u>	-	-	-
<u>Thomas Wetherall</u>	-	1629	1629 - 1634
<u>John Dodd</u>	-	-	-
<u>Thomas Bradford</u>	-	-	-
<u>William Short</u>	-	1630	-
<u>John Halsey</u>	-	-	1625 - 1627
<u>William Acton</u>	-	1628	A1628 - 1643
<u>Simon Wood</u>	-	1629	1631 - 1632
<u>John Layton</u>	-	-	-
<u>John Juxon</u>	-	-	-
<u>George Donscomb</u>	-	-	-
<u>Benjamin Henshaw</u>	-	1629	-
<u>Thomas Moore (T)</u>	-	-	-
<u>Nathaniel Owen</u>	-	1635	-
<u>George Langham</u>	-	1629	1630 - 1640
<u>Richard Andrews</u>	-	1636	-
<u>Edward Abbot</u>	-	-	-
<u>William Heath</u>	-	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<u>1617</u>			
Robert Churchman (B)	-	-	-
<u>1618</u>			
Jeremy Elwes	-	1637	-
Henry Elwes	-	1637	1630
Jarvis Elwes	-	-	A1629
Jerrard Gore	-	-	-
Thomas Franklin	-	D	-
Robert Greenewell	-	1637	-
<u>1621</u>			
Richard Pierson	F	-	-
Thomas Phillips	1616	-	-
John Miller	F	-	-
William Gelsthorp	1617	1637	-
Richard Aldworth	1618	-	1626 - 1633
<u>William Parsell</u>	1618	1638	-
Phillip Culme	1619	D	-
William Draper	1619	-	-
George Mellish	F	1637	-
Robert Herne	F	-	-
Richard Warwick	-	-	-
John Crich	-	-	-
Roger Marsh (S)	-	1638	1633 - 1640
Nicholas Herne	-	1637	1632 - 1641
Samuel Paske	-	-	-
Daniel Hollinworth	-	1637	1639
George Franklyn	-	1637	-
George Nash	-	1638	1627 - 1630
William Perkins (T)	-	-	1641
John Foy (T)	-	-	-
Richard Dabb	-	-	-
John Venn	-	1638	1630 - 1641
Titus Westby	-	-	-
John Orrengshawe	1618	-	-
William Thurlington	1620	1637	1633 - 1639
John Beliald	1620	-	-
Walter Eldred	1620	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<b><u>1624</u></b>			
William Rodway	F	1625	-
Isaac Jones	F	1625	1631 - 1635
Thomas Farnaby	-	-	-
George Antrobus	-	1638	1634 - 1639
John Idle (M)	-	1641	-
Thomas Tavernor	-	1641	1629 - 1631
Thomas Scales	1621	-	-
William Atwell	1622	-	-
Morgan Hanbury	1622	-	-
Roger Gardiner	1622	1638	1625 - 1637
Thomas Robinson	-	1641	1620
John Stone	-	1641	A1651
John Paperill	-	-	-
John Pococke	-	1641	1633
<u>Michael Griggs</u>	-	1632	1627
William Baker	-	1638	1634 - 1639
John Wainwright	-	-	-
Pierce Salisbury	-	-	-
<u>Clement Mosse (C)</u>	-	1639	-
<b><u>1627</u></b>			
Richard Perry	1625	1643	-
William Aylott	1625	-	1630
Roger Nott	1625	1643	1633
<u>Abraham Reynardson</u>	1625	1639	A1640 - 1649
Thomas Brandwood	-	-	1634 - 1639
Anthony Diaper	-	1643	-
Richard Newman	-	1648	-
Thomas Hinksman	-	1643	1630 - 1639
Andrew Stuckey	-	1643	-
Nicholas Jerrard	-	1643	-
William Godday	-	1644	-
Andrew Stone	-	1644	1634
Henry James	-	1644	-
Richard Mantle	-	-	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
Osias Churchman	-	1644	-
Francis Constable	-	-	-
George Long	-	1644	1639
Nicholas Beale	-	1644	1639
Richard Malbine	-	-	-
George Marshall	-	-	-
William Gibson	-	1644	1639
Henry Clarke	-	1644	-
Roger Draper	-	1644	A1649
Robert Newman	-	1644	-
Roger Corbett	-	-	-
James Vickars	-	1644	1649 - 1650
John Randolph	-	-	-
John Orlibeare	-	1644	A1663
Sidrack Williams	-	-	-
 <u>1628</u>			
Henry Gardiner	-	1641	1634 - 1639
 <u>1630</u>			
John Strange	F	1646	-
Francis Taylor (T)	1626	1646	1629 - 1641
Francis King (G)	1627	-	-
George Alporte	1629	1646	-
Randall Wilbraham	1629	-	-
Richard Orme	-	1646	-
William Gore	-	1652	A1651
Walter Pell	-	1646	1634 - 1647
Richard Swifte	-	-	-
Robert Neave	-	-	-
Oliver Neave	-	1646	1633 - 1640
Benjamin Honywood	-	1646	1633
Abraham Yeend	-	1646	-
William Bayley	-	-	-
Jerrard Jones	-	-	1639
James Church (H)	-	1646	-

	<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
Bryan Coles	-	-	-
Richard Stephenson	-	-	-
John Sharowe (S)	-	-	-
Richard Cooke	-	-	-
Richard Only	-	-	-
John Terrill	-	1650	-
Anthony Paule	-	-	-
Samuel Turner (H)	-	-	-
William Kendall (H)	-	1650	1639
William Weston (T)	-	1650	1639
Alexander Bradshawe	-	-	-
George Hough	-	-	-
John Mellish	-	1650	1631 - 1633
Thomas Warren	-	-	-
Simon Finchman	-	-	-
Richard Cuthbert	-	-	-
Emmanuel Proby	-	-	-
John Kerril	-	-	-
Thomas Blackwell	-	1653	1635 - 1642
Henry Futter (GS)	-	-	-
Francis Brendnell	-	-	-
Maurice Gething	-	1653	1641 - 1657
Nathaniel Weston	-	-	-
Forth Goodaie	-	1653	-
Francis Parsons	-	-	-
Edward Bradborne	-	-	-
Robert Holte	-	1653	A1656
Nathaniel Lavender	-	1653	-
Thomas Nevill	-	1653	-
Ellis Juxon	-	-	-
<u>1633</u>			
Humphry Barr	-	-	1634 - 1640
Samuel Avery	-	1645	A1645 - 1653
William Perkins (T)	1628	-	-
Thomas Sontley	-	-	-
Nathaniel Withers	-	1655	-
Richard Turner Jnr	-	C.1654	A1653 - 1654
Charles Chamberlaine	-	1656	-
Robert Marsh (CC)	-	-	-

<u>YEOMANRY WARDEN</u>	<u>LIVERY ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
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1637

Richard Latham	1631	1656	-
John Bate	1634	-	-
John Johnson (T)	1634	-	1646 - 1648
Thomas Robinson (HR)	-	-	-
John Smart	-	1657	1642
Henry Davie	-	1657	-
George Mawhood	-	-	-
Anthony Webb	-	1658	-
Tempest Milner	-	1654	A1653 - 1662
Raph Hawtrey	-	-	-
Robert Lant	-	C.1658	A1656
Thomas Forster	-	-	-

1640-1645

43 liverymen were appointed in this period, 8 after service as yeomanry warden. The 43 included 1 button-seller (Edward Parkes, Warden Substitute 1637), 2 tailors (George Endebrooke, Warden Substitute 1637. and Samuel Bridge, Warden Substitute 1639). 2 salesmen tailors (John Smith, Warden Substitute 1638. and William Rawson), and 1 haberdasher (George Kendall). None of the 17 individuals known to have joined the court of assistants did so prior to 1653, and dates of promotion are uncertain as no court minutes exist for 1654-1663. In addition, no post-1645 Repertories were examined in their entirety; consequently details of municipal careers are minimal. A full list of names is therefore not provided.

APPENDIX 5

The 228 governors of the Merchant Taylors Company 1580 – 1645. See Appendix 4 for key to symbols.

	<u>LIVERYMAN</u>	<u>ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
<b>A. Liverymen already assistants by 1580:-</b>			
William Merrick	1547	1563	1559 – 1571
Raffe White	1547	1552	–
Richard Hilles	1550	1554	1554 – 1573
Jerrard Gore	1551	By 1562	1563 – 1566
William Albany	1551	1561	1561 – 1576
John Sparke	1551	1569	1560 – 1573
Thomas Offley Jnr	1554	1565	1559 – 1566
William Kympton	1555	1564	A1574 – 1585
Henry Offley	1557	1570	–
William Hodgson	1557	1566	1554
Thomas Wylford (CH)	1557	1566	1561 – 1599
Nicholas Spencer (CL)	1557	1568	1571 – 1593
William Fleetwood (R)	? 1557 – 62	By 1562	–
Robert Hawes	? 1557 – 62	1573	1576 – 1601
Arthur Dawbeney	? 1557 – 62	1567	1575
Walter Fysshe (T)	? 1557 – 62	1569	1573 – 1581
Robert Dowe	? 1557 – 62	1571	1562 – 1593
Richard Offley	? 1557 – 62	1571	–

	<u>LIVERYMAN</u>	<u>ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
Giles Jacobe	? 1557 - 62	1572	-
Charles Hoskins	? 1557 - 62	1573	1564 - 1565
Richard Borne	1562	1572	-
Anthony Ratclyffe	1564	1574	A1586 - 1596
William Phillips (T)	1564	1574	-
Richard Maye	1564	1575	FFF, p. 171
Robert Brette	1564	1576	1576 - 1583
George Sotherton	1567	1564	1589 - 1599
Oliver Rowe	1567	1577	FFF, p. 171
Reignolde Barker	1567	1578	-
Thomas Pope	1567	1578	FFF, p. 171
Christopher Darrell	1570	1579	-
William Wydnell	1570	1578	1574 - 1578
John Pounte (T)	1570	1576	1576
William Dodworthe	1573	1579	FFF, p. 169

## B. Liverymen becoming assistants 1580 - 1645:-

John Tappe	1567	1580	-
William Offley	1570	1580	-
George Quernbye	1570	1580	-
Richard Procktor	1570	1581	1589 - 1602
John Churchman	1570	1581	1604
William Whittle	1570	1584	FFF, p. 172
Thomas Peyrson (CL)	1570	1584	1562 - 1566
Richard Peter	1575	1583	-
John Marden	1571	1583	-

	<u>LIVERYMAN</u>	<u>ASSISTANT</u>	<u>ALDERMAN (A)/ COMMON COUNCILMAN</u>
Edward Kimpton	1571	1582	1593 - 1604
John Robinson	1571	1585	A1592
Hugh Henley	1573	1582	-
Nowell Sotherton (BOE)	1575	1586	1589 - 1608
William Salte	1575	1586	-
Richard Venables	1575	1585	1597
Hugh Hunlock	1575	1584	-
Roger Abdy	1575	1583	-
Henry Palmer (T)	1575	1587	-
Henry Webbe	1579	1586	1586 - 1604
Walter Plomer	1579	1587	1598 - 1604
Humphry Corbett	1579	1597	A1608
Leonard Halliday	1579	1588	A1594 - 1612
Robert Hampson	1579	1588	A1597 - 1607
Thomas Aldworthe	1579	1589	-

Numerical Reconciliation of  
Assistants 1580 - 1645

New assistants 1580-1645 (Table 2)	195		
Assistants 1580-1645 appointed pre-1580 [Appendix 5(A)]	33	33	
New assistants 1580-1645 already liverymen in 1580 [Appendix 5(B)]		24	
All new liverymen 1580-1645 later assistants (Appendix 4)		218	
New liverymen 1580-1645 appointed as assistants post-1645 (Appendix 4)		(47)	
		—	—
Liverymen serving on the court of assistants 1580-1645	228	228	
	—	—	

APPENDIX 6

The business and career of tailor and liveryman Arthur  
Medlicott from 1565 to 1604.

<u>Apprentices Employed</u>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrolled in</u>	<u>Maximum Employed/</u> <u>(Adjusted total)</u>	<u>Other</u>
	<u>Year</u>	<u>(1)</u> <u>(2)</u>	<u>Details</u>
1565	-	- (-)	Freeman
1568	1	1 (1)	
1572	2	3 (2)	
1579	2	4 (2)	
1580	3	5 (5)	
1581	2	7 (7)	
1583	2	9 (7)	
1584	2	11 (6)	
1586	1	12 (3)	
1588	1	8 (2)	
1589	3	9 (5)	Warden Substitute
1591	1	8 (4)	
1592	1	7 (2)	Liveryman
1594	1	7 (2)	
1595	2	8 (3)	3 Journeymen (3)
1598	2	7 (2)	
1601	1	6 (1)	
1602	1	6 (2)	
1603	1	5 (3)	
1604	2	7 (4)	Renter Warden - deceased

Notes to Appendix 6

- (1) Based on eight year apprenticeship terms.
- (2) Assuming a minimum 60% drop-out rate (see above, p.298), the average notional apprenticeship lasted a little over 3 years. This figure therefore represents the minimum number of apprentices employed in each year.
- (3) The hire of 3 former apprentices for one year in 1595 is fortuitously recorded in the minutes of 1595 by the new clerk. See above, p.370.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

(Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated)

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES1. Records of the Merchant Taylors Company

The 'ancient records' of the Company were indexed and calendered in the early 20th century. They include original charters and letters patent from the 14th century onwards, and a vast number of title deeds, few of which were relevant for the purposes of this thesis. The main sources used were the 'Ancient Manuscript Books' (AMB) numbered 1-55. They range in period from the 15th to the 18th centuries, and some represent a series of documents or volumes rather than one manuscript book. Not all the AMB are easily identifiable in Merchant Taylors Hall; several bear older reference numbers, and it is not always apparent which 'boxes' are included within one AMB. This applies to box 147, MSS No.8 (committee meeting regarding the yeomanry, 1689). All of the AMB consulted have been listed for convenience, although sometimes only the principal contents can be described. Many of the manuscripts can be viewed on microfilm (MF) in the Guildhall Library, London.

A large number of miscellaneous documents are included in two separate series, Miscellaneous Documents A and B. Those documents consulted have also been listed.

I am grateful to the Merchant Taylors Company for access to the archives in the Company Hall.

Ancient Manuscript Books:-

- V1 MF 310 Form of Oath - Oaths of office circa 1491, and list of obits.
- V2 MF 310 Large early 16th century collection of inter alia 14th and 15th century religious privileges, Charters and the oaths and ordinances of 1507 with some later additions.
- V3 MF 310 Oaths and ordinances of 1613 and 1661. The 1661 ordinances relate to admission fees only.
- V4 MF 310 Collection of late 15th and 16th century treasury transactions and inventories.
- V5 MF 310 The Memorial or Ledger Book - 1578 abstract of property holdings.
- V6 MF 310 Ordinance book - ordinances and court minutes of the yeomanry (see p.239).
- V7 MF 310 Yeomanry accounts for Lord Mayor's pageants of 1556, 1561 and 1568.
- V8 MF 310 Evidence Book - copies or extracts from title deeds in 1605, and leases extant at that date.
- V9 MF 310 Wills Book - extracts from Wills of Merchant Taylors, started in the early 16th century.
- V10 MF 311 Orders and Statutes relating to the London grammar school (late 16th and early 17th centuries).
- V11 - Translation of 1502 Charter by Richard Langley (clerk 1595-1610).
- V12 MF 311 Inventories and calenders of record books, 1609 and 1618.
- V13 MF 311 1689 inventory and calender.
- V14 MF 311 Abstract of leases commenced by Richard Langley in 1608.
- V15 MF 323- List of freemen from circa 1530, commenced 324 by Richard Langley (2 volumes).

- V16 MF 311 Proceedings of Common Council regarding agreements with the Crown (1617, 1625-1628).
- V17 MF 311 Miscellaneous Documents 1586-1651, including bonds for loans to the East India Company, letters to tenants and officers, and letters to the Merchant Adventurers Company regarding apprentices bound to freemen also affiliated to the Merchant Adventurers.
- V18 MF 311 Accounts relating to the Ulster Plantation, 1626-1629.
- V19 - Rental Book 1632 - details of property views and rentals.
- V20 MF 311 View Book 1643-1664 - details of property dimensions and fixtures.
- V21 MF 311 Wardens accounts relating to the corn stock, 1637-1642.
- V28 MF 311-  
to 31 312 Benefactors gifts, 1566 onwards. (V22-27 relate to post-1660).
- V32 - Quarterage Books 1664-1665. 1676, 1694-1695 - these are 2 volumes numbered P7 and L4. P7 is the quarterage book for Watling Street and Merchant Taylors Hall Quarters 1664-5, with a few entries made 1694-5 Addresses are given, and sometimes trades. L4 relates to 1676 and gives names, addresses and trades (V32 on MF 312 is an 18th century manuscript book).
- V33 - Names of liverymen from 1665-1709. (V34-35 relate to the school library from 1662; V36 represents Elizabethan writs).
- V37 MF 312 Court Minutes April 1486 - December 1486, November 1487 - August 1493 (2 vols).
- V38 MF 325- Court Minutes from 1562 - see below.

- V39-40 - Draft or copy Court Minutes for certain years from 1628 These do not include any additional information.
- V41 MF 351- "Presentment books" from 1622 - these are draft Ordinary Court minutes, and contain some details excluded from the formal minutes. From 1648 they replace the Ordinary Court minutes.
- V42-43 MF 313- Apprentice Binding Registers from 1583. (V44-45, 50-52 relate to post-1660, or 17th century charities).
- V46 MF 297- Financial accounts from 1397 - see below.
- V47-49 - Draft financial accounts for various years from 1622, including some years missing from the main series.
- V53 - Miscellaneous papers from 1575, including original precepts, printed summons to municipal elections (1650s), bills, receipts, petitions. The petitions include a survey of unfree tailors 1599 (see p 338).
- V54 MF 312 Builders receipts 1592-1670.
- V55 - Volume of letters and election bills relating to the London grammar school, mainly from 1589-1660 (see p.152). The volume is numbered L5.

Court Minutes:-

(OC = Ordinary Courts COA = courts of assistants)

V1	MF 325	OC & COA	1562-1574
V2	MF 325	OC & COA	1574-1595
V3	MF 326	COA	1575-1601
V4	MF 326	OC	1595-1607
V5	MF 327	COA	1601-1611
V6	MF 327	OC	1607-1619

V6A	MF 327-8	OC	1619-1630
V7	MF 328	COA	1611-1620
V8	MF 328-9	COA	1620-1627
V8A	MF 329	OC	1630-1642
V8B	MF 329	OC	1642-1648
V9	MF 330	COA	1637-1654 (1654-1663 missing)
V10	MF 330	COA	1663-1673

Financial Accounts:-

V1-3	MF 297-8	1397-1445. 1453-1484 (many pages illegible)
V4	MF 298	1545-1557 (1557-1569 missing)
V5	MF 298-304	1569-1648 (continuous)
V20-21	MF 304	1652-1660 (1648-1652 missing)
V22	MF 304-5	1663-1669 (1660-1663 missing)

Miscellaneous Documents:-

A2	-	Ordinances 1429-1455 (folios 8-10)
A4	-	Chantry land documents.
A7	-	Rough account books 1582, 1586
A8	-	Election bills of Master and wardens 1595 -1627 (see p.51)
A11	-	Documents relating to Londonderry, including list of Contributors and maps.
A17	-	Sundry documents relating to the yeomanry: wardens election bills 1596-1608 1611, 1613; letters; documents regarding legal action by the disowned yeomanry officers against the Company in the 1690s.
B22	-	Papers relating to the election of the sheriffs 1641.

2. In the CLRO

Journals of the Court of Common Council, vols 10-49.  
 Repertories of the Court of Aldermen. vols 3-86.  
 Chamberlain's Book of Fines, 1517-1628 (MSS 87).  
 Sessions of the Peace 1650-1652.  
 City Cash Book V1.  
*Remembrancia*, 1579-1664  
 The Petition & Reasons of the Freemen Taylors, 1671 or 1675.  
 The Petition & Reasons of the Freemen Taylors, 1681.  
 Lord Mayor's Court, Calender to Interrogatories.

3. In the GHL, London

GH MSS 16,967	Ironmongers Company Court Minutes Book (1629-1646)
GH MSS 6155/1	Tallowchandlers Yeomanry Accounts Book (1519-1549)
GH MSS 6156	Tallowchandlers Yeomanry Court Book (1607-1695)
GH MSS 15 868	Haberdashers Yeomanry Accounts Book (1601-1661)
GH MSS 11,588	Grocers Company Court Minutes (1616-1668, 2 vols)
GH MSS 7,094	Pewterers Yeomanry Accounts Book (1512-1635)
GH MSS 11 571/12	Grocers Company Quires of Wardens Accounts (1632-1642)
GH MSS 16 987	Ironmongers Yeomanry Book (1523-1559)
GH MSS 16,963	Ironmongers - Ancient Orders of the Yeomanry
GH MSS 12,073	Armourers and Brasiers Yeomanry Minutes (1552-1604)
GH MSS 7885/1	Brewers Yeomanry Accounts (1556-1618 2 vols)
GH MSS 15,842/1	Haberdashers Company Court Minutes (1583-1652)
GH MSS 2,942	Subsidy assessment 1572
GH MSS 1719	Tailor's Bill (1657)

4. In the PRO

SP 16,535, No.73 Merchant Taylors Petition (1635)

SP 16,289, No.44 Leave to prosecute aliens (1635)

SP 16,312, No.95 Tailors bills (1633-1636)

SP 12/23, No.12 Hosiers recognizances

Wardrobe and Household Accounts (E101 series)

Paper Inventories 1661-1725 (Probate 5):-

1481 (1676), 2331 (1702), 2393 (1674), 2739 (1712),  
3245 (1684), 3790 (1695), 4951 (1720)

PCC inventories 1417-1661 (Probate 2):-

44 (1490), 98 (10H7), 130 (13H7)

5. In the Victoria Tower

HOL MSS.Petition of the Citizens of London.February 24,  
1642.

HOL MSS, vol. July 17-26 1641 (Petition July 26th).

6. Wills

The wills examined were an invaluable source of data regarding the trades, social bonds, and views of leading Merchant Taylors; by throwing light on key personalities, they facilitate greater understanding of Company history:-

## Liverymen Included in Appendix 4 or Appendix 5:-

ALBANY	William	PCC	17	Drury	(1589)
ARCHER	John	PCC	103	Lawe	(1614)
BARDOLPHE	Simon	PCC	212	Aylett	(1655)
BARKER	Reignolde	PCC	38	Wingfield	(1608)
BEDELL	Matthew	PCC	95	Pile	(1636)
BENSON	George	PCC	192	Twisse	(1646)
COTTON	Edward	PCC	28	Sadler	(1635)
CRAVEN	William	PCC	75	Meade	(1618)
DRAPER	Robert	PCC	83	Sadler	(1635)
DUCY	Robert	PCC	61	Seager	(1634)
ELNOR	Bartholemew	PCC	7	Goare	(1639)
ENDEBROOKE	George	PCC	197	Quire	(1661)
EVANS	William	PCC	57	Drury	(1590)
FOY	John	PCC	149	Clarke	(1625)
FYSSHE	Walter	PCC	53	Brudnell	(1585)
GORE	Jerrard	PCC	7	Windebank	(1608)
GORE	John	PCC	1	Goare	(1636)
GRAY	Robert	PCC	150	Lee	(1638)
GRICE	Nicholas	PCC	90	Coventry	(1640)
GRIGGES	Michael	PCC	265	Ruthen	(1657)
HAWES	Robert	PCC	88	Woodhall	(1601)
HAWKINS	William	PCC	31	Evelyn	(1641)
HILLES	Richard	PCC	36	Drury	(1587)
HILLES	Barnabas	PCC	19	Spencer	(1587)
HURDES	Nicholas	PCC	114	Weldon	(1617)
JONES	Isaac	PCC	11	Fines	(1647)
MEDLICOTT	Arthur	PCC	58	Hayes	(1605)
MORMAY	William	PCC	108	Cope	(1616)
MOSSE	Clement	PCC	35	Fairfax	(1649)
OFFLEY	Henry	PCC	79	Capell	(1613)
PALMER	Henry	PCC	33	Scott	(1604)
PARSELL	William	PCC	80	Rivers	(1645)
POLSTEAD	Henry	PCC	12	Bowyer	(1652)
PROCKTOR	Richard	PCC	75	Wingfield	(1610)
REYNARDSON	Abraham	PCC	163	May	(1661)
ROWE	Oliver	PCC	70	Windebank	(1608)
ROWE	Thomas	PCC	145	Clarke	(1625)

SENIOR	Robert	PCC	63	Lee	(1638)
SOTHERTON	Nowell	PCC	38	Wingfield	(1608)
SPRINGHAM	Mathias	PCC	93/94	Soame	(1620)
STANLEY	William	PCC	19	Crane	(1643)
STREET	Humphrey	PCC	58	Ridley	(1629)
SWINNERTON	John (Snr)	PCC	8	Dorset	(1609)
SWINNERTON	John (Jnr)	PCC	125	Cope	(1616)
TAYLOR	Francis	PCC	31	Carr	(1667)
TOWERS	Peter	PCC	11	Hele	(1626)
TULLEY	William	PCC	6	Coventry	(1640)
VERNON	John	PCC	9	Weldon	(1617)
WETHERALL	Thomas	PCC	153	Twisse	(1646)
WOOD	Simon	PCC	86	Fines	(1646)
WRIGHT	Richard	PCC	80	Weldon	(1617)
WYNYFF	Nicholas	PCC	73	Cope	(1616)

## Non-Liverymen:-

BRIGHTON	Stephen (Southwark Tailor)	PCC	134	Clarke	(1625)
BURNFORD	John	PCC	116	Russell	(1633) WS 1594
FURSEMAN	George	PCC	228	Fines	(1647) WS 1624
HAWKINS	Humphry	PCC	129	Rivers	(1645) WS 1628 (F)
HAYMAN	John	PCC	180	Twisse	(1646) WS 1616
LLOYD	Gilbert	PCC	99	Dorset	(1609) WS 1597
PARKER	William	PCC	47	Cope	(1616)
RAWSTERNE	Jeremy	PCC	67	Essex	(1648) WS 1617
ROSWELL	Andrewe (London Tailor)	PCC	106	Goare	(1636)
STINT	John	PCC	157	Quire	(1658) WS 1637
THOROUGHGOOD	William	PCC	94	Lawe	(1614) WS 1595

(WS = Warden Substitute; F = paid a fine in lieu)

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