

Letters to the Commissioners 1749 - 1753

Transcribed from the book at the National Archives reference CUST 61/1.

Note: Until 1752 England and Wales followed the Julian calendar whereby the year commenced on Lady Day, 25 March and ended the following year on 24 March. This explains the apparently curious dating at the beginning of this document.

18 December 1749 We beg leave to acquaint you Honors that there have been lately taken up at different Places on this Island two Casks of Oil, One is lodged in the King's Warehouse and the other at Newport in the care of Mr Redstone Steward to the Earl of Portsmouth who Claims both the said Casks of Oil for his Lordship and Governor and Vice Admiral of this Island. We have put a Lock upon the Cask of Oil lodged at Newport till we have received your Honors Commands.

23 December 1749 December the 18th came in His Majesty's Sloop of war called "Hazard" commanded by Capt Thomas Hanbury, appointed to cruize on owlers and smugglers and sailed the 20th.

15 January 1749 To the Collector and Comptroller of his Majesties Customs at Cowes. A Petition setting forth the hardship the Extraordinary Tidesmen of this Port labour under on Account of a late Order from the Honourable Commissioners, by which they are to be Discharged from any Ship they may happen to be Boarded as soon as there are Established Tidesmen off from Duty to Board in their Place, which Lessens their Wages very much; and that being Employ'd in the Service of the Customs, makes other People unwilling to set them to work, therefore are under great Difficulties to Support their Families.

The Petitioners therefore Jointly thought Proper to Lay the Hardship they Labour under before you, and Humbly beg the Favour of you to be so Good, as to represent the same to their Honours. The Said Petitioners humbly Request being to Pray their Honours that, when they are Boarded on Ships, they may not be Dismissed from the Same, till the Ships Sail or the Cargo Discharged that being the Practice at Southampton and Portsmouth.

And their Honours said Petitioners as in Duty Bound shall ever pray.

Signed by 13 men. (This was subsequently submitted to the Board by the Collector with a supporting letter)

7 February 1749 We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that Richard Rogers Riding Officer at Niton has informed us that the undermentioned Persons carried off Raisons belonging to the Warren Sloop lately Stranded on this Island notwithstanding he opposed them all he could. If your Honours should think fit to prosecute the persons undermentioned tho' it appears to be but for Small Quantities we are of the Opinion that information will be given by some of them against others for Larger Quantities, which is humbly submitted. (The Sloop was stranded at Brixton.)

3 March 1749 In obedience to your Commands Signified by Mr Wood in his Letter of the 27th Ult. we have heard that at the Latter End of the Year 1747 One Urry of Freshwater in this Island was found Dead in his Boat Suppos'd to be Murdered by Smugglers, he was no Officer in this Port, neither can we get knowledge of any further particulars.

2 April 1750 Inclos'd is Mr John Wilkinson's Deputation from Mr Edward Treadcroft, Esq. Patent Comptroller of the Port of Southampton, appointing him his deputy at this port bearing the date 24th November, 1749, was not received by him till February last, copy of which was sent to your Honours the 3 March last and pray your Honours approbation of him. (The Patent Comptroller was appointed by the Crown, not the Board of Customs. He appointed his own Deputy Comptroller in each port, although the Deputy part of the title was frequently omitted locally. He did not draw any salary, but relied on Fees and did not normally appear in Establishment records.)

23 April 1750 We beg to acquaint your Honours that William Goddard Riding Officer at this Port is dangerously ill with a fever we desire to know if we should send any Officer to take care of his district otherwise we are of the opinion that the Service must Suffer.

7 July 1750

On the 29th Ult. Richard Rogers Riding Officer at Niton acquainted that in the same day he watched a small Boat on shore at St Lawrence belonging to one James Cotton on which was a hogshead but he was not Suffer'd to Examine what sort of Liquor was in it notwithstanding he had hold of the Boat at the time because Cotton who was in the Boat and one Matthew Boyce who came down upon the shore at the time Rogers had hold of the Boat and assisted Cotton in setting her off to sea with the hogshead in, which Rogers Suppos'd there was Wine or Brandy taken out of a vessel that then laid off that place which he took to be a French Smuggling Cutter.

Cotton told Rogers he had better take two or three Guineas that would be more than would come to his share, but he did not offer it to him, how far that will amount to Bribery is humbly submitted.

16 July 1750 Answer to Charge received by Michael Facey

I received the charge laid against me by Mr. Godwin, Tidesurveyor in answer to which I make bold to inform you that according to the Charge laid against me on the ninth instant that about ten o'clock at night he found me asleep during the time of my Watch, that I could not be wakened by being called too several times, that I allow I was asleep by the reason I had laid on a hard chest for five Nights and my cloths not off all the time, that by lying so very hard and by the weather being so excessive hott, it had drawn me to sleep but a small space of time before my Tidesurveyor came on board. That the next morning where I am Charged with being on shore between four and five o'clock, is that I went on shore to ease myself and seeing the watchboat on shore went to her to see what they might want and as I went on my way my Tidesurveyor on board another, that I missed of him and this I assert for truth, but I am certain that there was not any Detriment to his Majesties Revenue and that I have never been Charged with any such thing since in the Employment, I hope you'll be so good as to take it in Consideration and for the future I shall be caucious and endeavour never to do the like again.

30 July 1750

We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that George White Boatman at Bembridge still continues there and hath not been to do Duty in the Room of Edmund Potts Tidesman and Boatman sent thither to do his Duty pursuant to your Honours Order to the Surveyor General of Hants and Dorset dated 18th May 1849.

The 30th August and 15th January last we wrote to your Honours about said White to which your Honours have not pleased to give us any Answer.

As your Honours have not yet Dismist said White we are at a loss what to do about paying him what is due to him since Lady Day 1749 the time he was last paid to – we therefore pray your Honours will be pleas'd to inform us if he is only to be paid to the time he did Duty which was 22nd May 1749 when Potts was Sent to Bembridge to do duty in his Room.

15 August 1750

We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that in the night between 11th and 12th Instant was Stranded near Atherfield Rocks on the back of this Island the *Speeding Snow* of Scarbro' Robert Grange Master from Seville for London laden with 10 Hides and small Bales of Silk, 5 bags bitter Oranges, 30 Bags and 8 Baskets of Spanish Dollars and a Parcell of Portuguese Gold Coin – all which Goods were Saved and Secured under the Kings locks and all bought to Cowes except the money. At the same time was Stranded on Atherfield Rocks a Snow called St Johannes of and for Gottenburgh Neils Borgerson Master from France laden with Salt of which we believe none will be saved.

29 August 1750

We have to Acquaint your Honours in Obedience to your Command of the 22nd February last that the persons who had carried off Raisins belonging to the cargo of the Warren Sloop Stranded on this Island have been Examined before Sir Edward Worsley one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace and as their offences upon examination appear'd to him to be very small and trifling he did not think it proper to Commit them, but told them if ever they were bought before him again for the crime he would show them no favour.

Inclos'd are the Bills of Expenses attending this affair Amounting to One Pound for the Payment of which we Pray your Honours Directions.

Robert Clarke Attorney and Justices Clerk – his Bill

March 2nd 1749 For Drawing and Engrossing Roger's Information.

0 – 3 – 4

March 2 nd 1749	Attending Justices at Gatcombe	0 – 6 – 8
March 3 rd 1749	Attending ditto at the George in Newport	0 – 3 – 4
		<hr/> 0 – 13 – 4 <hr/>
Mr John Read, Collector – his Bill		
March 3 rd 1749	For his Expenses and Horse hire in attending the Justices	<hr/> 0 – 6 – 8 <hr/>

5 September 1750 In Obedience to your Honours Command of the 4th Ult. George White Boatman at Bembridge came here the 3rd Instant to do what Duty he can in the room of Edmund Potts agreeable to your Honours former Orders and we desire to know if we may Employ and pay him from that time.

7 September 1750 Inclos'd we transmit to your Honours an Account of the Charges of serving a Capias on James Shotter Elder and carrying him to Winton Goal and in Endeavouring to serve Capias's on James Shotter the Younger and Barnaby Hale amounting to £10 – 10 – 4 for the payment of which we Pray for your Order.

3 October 1750 Mr Godwin has this day stopt out of the Speedwell of and for this port, Edward Corke, master, from London, one bale containing six pieces of British canvas for want of proper dispatches; directed to William King of this place.

31 October 1750 From William Godwin, Tide Surveyor to the Collector

In answer to yours of the 30th Inst. I have only to say that I have not received any Information of any Vessells appearing on our Coast which are suspected of intending to run any Customable or Prohibited Goods or any such Goods having been landed or run nor of any Smugglers passing or repassing in our parts But I must Observe you that there is a small Sloop called the Molly of Cowes about eight Tons Burthen whereof *Cuslie* Collins is Master and there Generally goes with him one William Wardel of Cowes both of which have no visible means of maintaining themselves and family's and are sometimes absent with the Sloop from Cowes a week or fortnight at a time at which times it is rumour'd here they are gone to Guernsey on the Smuggling accounts which I apprehend (for the reasons before mentioned) may be true and he brings Goods and runs them on this Island or some parts of the Neighbouring Coast.

12 December 1750 We shall send to Portsmouth to be forwarded to London by the Waggon that sets up at the White Hart Inn in the Borough and it will be there on Wednesday next a Box containing the undermentioned Accounts. The Carriage to be paid is two shillings.

General Incidents with the Establishment Surveyors Certificate, Supervisor three Certificate, Surveyor Generals Certificate, Two Original Orders, Two Copies of Orders & Eight Tax Receipts.

Debentures	Nine
Damages and Over Entrys	Four
Portages	Four
Reports Inward	Fourteen
Reports Outwards	Twenty One

Collector and Comptrollers Quarter Books

Civil List Account

Superannuation Account

Wool etc. brought and sent Coastways

State of Bonds

Merchants Bonds in Process and Wool Bonds Undischarged

Personal Prosecutions

Surveyors Jerque Account

Journals of the Officers at Leap & St Hellens.

For Michaelmas Quarter 1750

9 January 1750 In obedience to your command of the 22nd Ultimo, we have made best enquiry we could in relation to the undermentioned Superannuated Officers Viz:

John Fursman, Riding Officer at Ride
John Charlton, Tidesman
Henry Facey, Boatman

And humbly acquaint your Honours the Fursman was employed in the service about Seventeen Years, Charlton Twenty four and Facey Eleven, and we never heard anything to the contrary but they faithfully and diligently discharges their respective Duties and were put upon the Superannuation List as being no longer capable of the Service.

Fursman is now living and resides in the Parish of Binstead in this Island, follows no employment whatsoever and as to his Circumstances according to the best Information we can get he hath two Houses the rent whereof / after deduction of Taxes and repairs / amounts Annually to about four pounds.

As to Charlton, he hath not been known of in these parts for many Years, we have been informed but cannot certainly say that he lives at Greenwich.

As to Facey he is now living in this place, hath no other income from the Government but the Charity allow'd from the Superannuation Fund and as to his Circumstances he keeps an Ale House in order to better provide a maintenance for his Family having a Wife and five Children being unable to do anything for them by working because greatly afflicted by a nervous complaint.

1750 (Undated) The Custom House in High street East Cowes with its various offices and Long room where captains of visiting ships 'made their number'. Responsible for the Island and miles beyond. John Read, Collector, John Wilkinson Comptroller, William Godwin Tide Surveyor. 23 permanent staff and 20 plus engaged as needful.

17 April 1751 In August last St Johannes bound for Gottenburgh Neils Borgerson Master was Stranded on the Island which said ship was Sold on the Shore to Sir Edward Worsley, Barnabas Everleigh Leigh Esq. and others for £21 since which they have laid out in getting her off and repairing her £300. They have applied to us desiring we would grant them a register pursuant to the Act of Navigation Section 10 or any other Act as they have laid out so great a Sum and must lay out as much more before she will be fit to go to Sea, concerning which we pray your Honours Directions. ([The salvage of the cargo from this vessel caused considerable conflict, the Correspondence is too lengthy to include here](#)).

29 April 1751 We beg to leave to Report to your Honours in Obedience to your Commands signified by Mr Wood in his letter of the 27th Instant that the Cask of Oil about which William Thomson has wrote to you Honours was taken up with another Cask of Oil at different places on this Island, the Cask that Thomson took up he carried to Yarmouth where John Lemon Waiter and Searcher there secured it & brought it to the Warehouse here, the other was lodged at Newport under the care of the Steward to the Earl of Portsmouth who claim'd both Casks of Oil for his Lordship as Governor & Vice Admiral of this Island as our letter to your Honours of 10 December 1749 and your letter to us of the 13 February following that if they were stranded they should be stored for the Duties if wrecks they were Lord Portsmouth's which has not been made appears to us but the misfortune is, the Cask of Oil that was lodg'd in the Warehouse here is Leak'd Out, notwithstanding we took all the care we could of it and had it Cooper'd several times. The Collector acquainted Thomson with the misfortune of it being Leaked Out but never promised him payment as he alledges, and we are inform'd the value of it when brought hither did not amount to Forty Shillings.

12 June 1751 In Obedience to your Honours Command Signified by Mr Wood in his letter of 8th Instant, we beg leave to report that the Practice in this Port in the Admeasuring of Corn and Grain whereon there is a Bounty is, if exported loose to measure the whole by the Bushels alongside of the Ship, if exported in Bags to trye and examine as many by the Bushel on Board, as the Surveyor, Searcher and Landwaiter think proper. The utmost care is take here that the full Quantity actually put

on Shipboard and the said Waterside Officers and Waterguard have had a watchful Eye that the same remains on board till the Ship sailed out of Port, the Printed Rules have been duly showed here not to deliver up any Bond but as the Law Directs – we have given Strict Charge to the Surveyor, Searcher and Landwaiter at this Port to be particularly careful in the measuring of Corn or Grain intended for Exportation and actually to see the full Quantity shipped for which they sign Debentures and not to take their amount from other Officers and we have in the Strongest manner *encouraged* the several Officers to a diligent discharge of their Duties. We likewise beg leave to report that we have in this Office the Printed Rules for Officers Government in the Shipping of Corn etc.

2 August 1751 Letter from Wm Joliffe, Churchwarden, Marmaduke Bootflower, Jno Sketchly, Overseers, Alverstoke Parish

One John Fleming has been so indiscreet as to take his boat or wherry half a anchor of gin which some of your officers have seiz'd together with the boat. As the man has a wife and several children & the boat his all, for want of which he must come chargeable on our parish, we the officers of this parish do request the favour of you to take the man's poverty and family into consideration & order the boat restor'd to him, which will oblige many, particularly in Alverstoke parish.

4 September 1751 In Obedience to your Honours Command Signified by Mr Wood in his letter of 29th Ultimo Inclos'd is a list of the Riding Officers stationed at this Port for the Guard of the Coast by which it would appear that there is but four including the Supervisor that Surveys them to Guard the whole Coast of the Isle of Wight being an extent of almost sixty miles.

We have considered and beg leave to Report that the said Officers cannot be better stationed than they are to prevent Frauds committed by relanding or running of tobacco or any other Goods tho' we are of the Opinion that very few Frauds are committed in the Tobacco trade at this Port.

List of Riding Officers at the Port:

William Phipps	Newtown	This Officers District extends from Newtown to the Needles Westward and to Cowes Eastward being an extent of about 15 Miles.
William Godard	Ride	This Officers district extends from Ryde South East to Bembridge Ledge and on to Sandown Fort and West North West to Cowes being an extent of about 15 Miles.
Richard Rogers	Niton	This Officers District extends from Puckaster Cove North West to Atherfield Rocks and East by North to Dunnose Point and also on to Sandown Fort being an extent of about 15 Miles.
James Blake (Supervisor)	Brook	This Officers District extends West from Brook West and by North to the Needles Point and South East to Atherfield Rocks being an extent of about 15 Miles.

15 January 1752 Petition of James Shotter and William Shotter, sons of James Shotter, now a prisoner in the goal of Winchester and in execution for running of uncustomed goods.

Most Humbly sheweth

That your petitioners by supporting their father with the common necessaries of life during his confinement have expended all their substance and are reduced to the utmost extremities that can possible attend persons in such distressed circumstances. That had not we his sons out of our hard labour now and then sent a small pittance to our Father he must long ago have perished through want. That at the same time our poor mother (who is also very aged) depends upon us entirely for her subsistance , that we have a very sensible and dutiful concern for our unhappy father and were it in our power (which God and all the world knows it is not) woud willingly offer something by way of recompence to the Government for his great offence. That as we have hitherto lived in our neighbourhood with the reputation of Honest and industrious men, the utmost we can do is implore the charity of well disposed persons on behalf of our distressed and we believe with their assistance we may be able to offer your Honours twenty pounds if your Honours be pleased to accept of that sum by way of atonement for his past offence. We humbly beg your Honours to take this our petition into your

compassionate consideration and be pleased to let us know whether this offer in favour of our unhappy father for whom our hearts are bleeding, will be accepted. We are,

May it please your Honours

Your Honours most distressed supplicants and most obedient servants

1 February 1752 Richard Rogers Riding Officer at this Port having by his letter of the 29th Ultimo acquainted us that he was obstructed in the Execution of his Duty by one Henry Matthews of Godshill, as set forth in his said letter to which we beg leave to reply and pray your Honours Directions. (Rogers letter was not attached, but see oath of 15th February, below.)

12 February 1752 – Letter to Collector from Thomas Foley of His Majesty's Sloop Savage

On the 10th Instant I cut my Cable in a Gale of Wind at Studland Bay and gave Chace to a smuggling Cutter called the May Flower of Rye George Hemings Master which I took two Miles to the south of Christ Church Head and found in her Two Hundred and fifty four small Casks of Rum and Brandy which I took on Board as the Cutter was very Leaky and had suffer'd greatly by bad Weather the preceding Night. There was part of the Cargo concealed in the Cutter under a false Platform and I sent my Master and seven Men on Board of her to rumage her effectually, and when he has done so, he is to deliver all the Goods he finds concealed, together with the said Cutter and all her furniture, to be proceeded against according to Law and I desire you will communicate to the Board of Customs, Being willing to prosecute the Cutter & Cargo at my own Risque and Charge by an Act of the 9th Year of His present Majesty I herewith send you a Copy of the Orders my Master is under for your information, but I do not expect the Cutter here while the Wind is Westerly, as she is in a bad condition. I desire you will Order the Casks to be carefully Examined as soon as they are landed and as they are all raw unseasoned Casks some what damaged by the bad Weather, I desire you will give me leave to start the Liquor into Iron bound Hogsheads and Punchons which I will procure at my own Expencc for it will be a very considerable Advantage both to the Crown and me; but if you have no Authority to do so I desire you with represent the Case forthwith to the Board of Customs as you find it to be on viewing the Casks, and I hope you will approve of its being started accordingly.

15 February 1752 Inclosed we transmit to your Honours an account of the seizure of 1251 Gallons of Brandy, Rum and Compound Waters seiz'd by Captain Thomas Foley of his Majesty's Sloop Savage and also a Letter received from him dated the 12th Instant desiring leave to start the same into larger Casks for the better security thereof on which we beg leave to observe that on Examining the Casks many of them were leaky which leaks as the Casks are very thin will not be easily stopt and there will be a great decrease we fear occurring to their being made of new and porous wood and beg leave to add that in case of a claim and recovery Captain Foley will at his own expence, will reinstate the same in the original packages, concerning which we pray your Honours directions.

PS Inclosed is an account of a seizure made by R Rogers which we beg leave to refer.

The Cutter seized by Captain Foley is not yet brought in.

15 February 1752 Richard Rogers one of the Riding Officers of the Port of Cowes in the Isle of Wight in the County of Southampton makest oath that on the Twenty seventh Day of January last he had Information that some Prohibited or uncustomed Goods would be lodged in the Dwelling house of Henry Matthews within the Parish and Manor of Godshill in the Isle of Wight aforesaid Schoolmaster whereupon the Deponent went the next Day to Joseph Jerem Constable of the said Manor and desired him to go with this Deponent so they went both together to the said House and met the said Matthews at or near the Door thereof and this Deponent then told the said Matthews that he had an Information that run Goods were concealed in his House and that he was come to search for the same but the said Matthews standing with his back against the Door of the Room (where the Deponent believes the Goods were concealed) told this Deponent that he should not Search unless he was a better man than him (the said Matthews) or had brought a Justice of the peace Warrant or would tell him who was the informer and so prevented this Deponent from going into the same for a considerable time notwithstanding he informed the said Matthews that he had a peace Officer with him and shewed him his Deputation for Riding Officer and a Writ of Assistance. And this Deponent further saith that afterwards the said Matthews going away from the Door of the said Room bid this Deponent search

and be damned whereupon he went into the said Room and found the Window and Bar thereof to which the glass was fastened down but no Goods there and being afterwards informed by this Deponents son (who is near the age of fifteen Years) that he saw Three Tubs (which the Deponent understood to be Casks of Liquor) carried towards the Barn, belonging to the said Matthews's Mother, the Deponent went to the said Barn (which is out of the Jurisdiction of the said Constable as this Deponent has been informed and believes) in Order to search for the said Goods the said Matthews following him and when this Deponent came into the said Barn the said Matthews taking this Deponent by the Coller insisted that he should not search there and the said Matthews's Mother laying hold on this Deponents Arm they both together pulled this Deponent out of the said Barn and prevented him from searching the same and this Deponent further saith he verily believes that some prohibited or uncustomed Goods were taken out of the said window and arrayed into the Barn and to some adjacent places for that he this Deponent did afterwards find half an Anker of Rum in a ditch near the said Matthews Dwelling house and did take half an Anker of Brandy from a person a small distance from said Dwelling house. (Deponent - a person who makes an affidavit, in this case the Riding Officer.)

19 February 1752 Francis Morris of West Cowes in the Isle of Wight and County of Hampshire Marriner and late Master of the Prince of Wales Voluntarily maketh Oath that on or about the Twenty second day of February One thousand seven hundred and Fifty the said Francis Morris did take on Board the said Vessel at Havredegrece in France six Casks Containing Thirty six Gallons of Brandy and Rum, One Oil skin Bag containing Fifty six pounds of Tea One hundred weight of Burnt Coffee in Bottles and two Dozen pounds of soap all of which, Brandy Rum Tea and Soap was for and on account of Frederick Todd of West Cowes and by him the said Morris put on Shoar within the Port of Cowes and this Deponent further sayeth that on or about the Nineteenth day of February last past he took on Board the said Vessel two Stone Bottles containing six Gallons of Foreign Geneva which Geneva was delivered to him by Roger Parkman of West Cowes to be delivered at Southampton, which he this Deponent accordingly did, and further this Deponent sayeth not.

22 February 1752 Inclos'd we transmit to your Honours copy of a letter we received from Mr John Wilkinson Deputy Comptroller here, Copy of an Affidavit taken before a Commissioner in the Exchequer against a Sloop called the Prince of Wales for running Tea, Brandy etc. and copy of a letter he since received from the Widdow Todd of West Cowes relating to the same to which we beg leave to refer and to add that on Examining the times mentioned in Mrs Todd's letter we find by the Books in their Office that Morris cleared here with Salt for Shoreham the 16th day of January 1750 and did not return to Cowes with said Vessell till the 15th March following by which it is very improbable that what he has sworn to is fact, as he cannot get any body that sailed with him to corroborate his evidence.

As the said Vessell is Employed in the Revenue of the Post Office Mr Wilkinson the Officer / on the owner he might not be hindered the service / deferred Seizing her till your Honours Pleasure is known, but he is unwilling to carry out a prosecution at his own expense and therefore begs leave to relinquish to the Crown all right and all title to any benefit that may Accrue from any Prosecution that should be commenced upon Morris's Affidavit.

17 April 1752 From Thos Foley - On Board the Savage Sloop of War to the Collector and Comptroller of His Majesty's Customs at Cowes

The Mayflower, lately seized by me for running brandy and condemned to be burnt, may be of great service to my sloop of war as a tender to cruize on the smugglers in shoal waters, where my sloop cannot go. I desire you will lay before their Honours the following proposals.

- 1st, I will take the cutter together with all her materials and victual and man her at my own expense.
- 2nd, I will keep the vessel in wear and tear during the time I shall be commissioned at the expiration of which time she shall be delivered up, (or before, if required) but that I will not be accountable for the loss of the vessel in which case I should not only loose the reward of ten shillings p. ton for burning, but also half the value of the materials, which would be sufficient loss.
- 3rd, When their Honours require the cutter to be delivered up, that I be paid my moiety of the materials agreeable to the appraisement together with ten shillings a ton for burning.

Lastly, If by stress of weather the mast, boom or bowsprit should be carried away or the sails split or otherwise so damaged that I should be obliged to purchase new, in such case, to have the liberty to take away the same leaving the remainder of the old, when I am called to deliver her up.

22 April 1752 In obedience to your command of the 9th Instant inclosed is the Affidavit of Richard Rogers Riding Officer at this Port relating to the Tea Seized by him the 27th Ultimo in a Barn belonging to John Sanders at Chale to which be beg leave to refer and to observe that as the said Rogers could not swear or procure any other evidence that the said Sanders conspiracy of the Harboursing or Concealing the said Tea we did not take the said Affidavit before a Commissioner in the Exchequer but if your Honours should be of the Opinion that Rogers Affidavit alone is sufficient Evidence to carry on a prosecution against the said Sanders we will get it sworn before a Commissioner in the Exchequer.

18 May 1752 Letter from Mrs Frances Shotter.

Agreeable to my Sons late Petition to your Honours on behalf of my poor aged & unfortunate Husband still a Prisoner in the Goal at Winchester I be leave to acquaint your Honors that I have by asking the Charity of well disposed people obtained the sum of Twenty Pounds of which I make your Honours an offer by way of Composition for my Husbonds offence; But as to the Charges of Prosecution, I am not any way able to raise the full demand and therefore hope your Honours in Compassion to my miserable Circumstances will be pleased to accept of my following proposal; of paying Thirty Pounds Viz. Ten Pounds toward the Charges of the Prosecution and Twenty Pounds by way of Composition, and if your Honours shall be pleased to accept that Sum it shall immediately be paid to the Collector of Cowes upon your Order, but if I should be so unhappy as not to succeed in this Petition to your Honours, it must be my Husbonds inevitable fate to remain a prisoner during Life & my hard lot also, to spend the few days I have to live in misery and want.

I am, may it please your Honours, Your Honours most obedient and most humble petitioner and servant. (This payment was accepted)

6 June 1752 We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that John Taylor Waiter and Searcher being appointed a Landwaiter at the Port of Greenock in Scotland has resigned his Employment here and delivered up his Deputation the 4th Instant and we are of the Opinion it will be necessary that an Officer should be sent to Newport to take care of the Duty there till another is appointed in his room which we pray your Honours Directions.

13 June 1752 We received your Honours Command of 6th Inst. relating to John Andrews's being appointed a Waiter & Searcher at this Port and likewise for him to be instructed at one of the Ports therein mentioned but he hath acquainted that he is settled in Gosport with his Family and therefore hopes your Honours will be pleased to give him leave that he may be Instructed at Portsmouth which will be a very great saving to him.

The said Andrews is to be a Coastwaiter at Newport but pursuant to your Honours Order of 30 April 1744 he is to assist the Landwaiters in Discharging of Foreign Goods when we have more ships than the Officers here can attend we therefore Submit to your Honours whether he is to be Instructed six months or only Two.

22 June 1752 John Brown hath been employed as an extraordinary tidesman and boatman at this port for upwards of two years. Replaces Peter Manners decd. Recommend Joseph Moucher of West Cowes, seafaring man to succeed Brown.

24 June 1752 Having lately had more seizures bought hither than our Warehouses would contain we have been obliged to secure some considerable Quantity of Goods in a Warehouse near the Custom House belonging to Mr James Gill, and have likewise been obliged to let Boats etc. which have been seized remain out of doors for want of room in our Warehouses by which they have been very much damaged and as the said Warehouse is the Cheapest and more Convenient for our use than any other here we are of the Opinion it will be for the Interest of the Revenue to Rent it by the year the owner being willing to let it out at Eight Pounds per annum which we think is very reasonable for if in

case it is only taken occasionally it may often happen that it may be otherwise made use of when we want it for the service.

29 June 1752 Estimate of a Boat for the use of the Officers at Leap:

Length 16 – 0 Depth 2 – 2 Breadth in the Midships 5 – 0 to be Clinker Built with Fore sheets, Stern sheets, Locker, Benches, Wherry *Thoules*, Fore thwarts Keelson, Bottom Boards, *Sarboards*, Rising Keelband, a step under the main Thwart for a mass to be fully completed, joyned, painted and Smiths work in a workman like manner for 8/6 per Foot amounting to £6 – 6 – 0. ([Leap \(Lepe\) was at that time part of the Isle of Wight Collection.](#))

16 September 1752. We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that we have burnt five hundred and forty one pounds of tobacco and four pounds of rotten tea to your order of 6th June last and the officers concerned desire that they may be paid their reward for seizing and burning the said tobacco and tea amounting to four pounds sixteen shillings and two pence as is particularly set forth on the back hereof.

To Robert Armas for 137 lb tobacco seized 4 Nov 1751 at 2d p. lb. £1 – 2s – 10d

To William Godwin for 404 lb tobacco seized the 9 & 10 Nov 1751 at 2d per lb. £3 – 7s – 4d

To ditto for 4 lb tea seized 27 Nov, 1751 at 1/6d p. lb 6s – 0d

([Customs officers were given seizure rewards for goods seized. This continued until the early 1980's.](#))

3 February 1753 The Coast Officers at this Port having represented to us that Tobacco is frequently brought Coastwise and landed on unlawful Quays at West Cowes where there are no Scales or Weights, and for want of which great inconvenience arise in examining such Tobacco to see if it agrees with the certificates accompanying the same, and therefore if all Tobacco that is brought Coastwise must be weighed at the delivery thereof we desire your Honours will be pleased to give Orders that a new Beam 18 half hundred and small Weights be *sent* to us and that we may provide an new set of *Triangular* Ropes and Scale Boards to be fixed at West Cowes for Weighing and Examining Tobacco which is brought in Coastwise and landed at that place, otherwise we presumed it, cannot be done without expense to the Government as the Masters of the Vessels out of which it is landed refused to bring it to the scales on the lawful grounds they are at East Cowes.

21 February 1753 On the 16th instant was stranded on this Island the Ship Deacon of London bound to London with Cheese and Lead; out of which Vessel there have been saved 160 Cheeses all the rest of the cargo being loss and the ship broke to pieces by the Violence of the Seas the above cheeses which were saved a brought to Cowes and secured under the Collectors Lock until such time as all the Charges of Salvage are paid.

26 March 1753 We beg to acquaint your Honours that the Warehouse at this Port for seized Goods being full we have been Obliged to put 1823 lb of Tobacco brought in yesterday by a Cutter belonging to the Savage Captain Thomas Foley and also part of the materials of a Cutter seized yesterday by William Godwin Tidesurveyor into a Warehouse belonging to Mr James Gill and as we are often at a great loss where to put seized Goods brought in we desire your Honours Directions to hire the said Warehouse or some other.

3 April 1753 On the 31st ultimo Thomas Barter Master of the Weymouth made his report here from Lisbon of 100 tons of Salt and his Merchant to whom the same was consigned made an entry for 1000 Bushels of the said Salt and having lay their Memorial of the 2nd instant to us to suffer the remainder without landing as it was intended to be carried Directly in the same Vessel to Newfoundland without landing as it was intended for that place, but by mistake of the Master was reported for this Port we pray your Honours immediate Directions, as the Vessel will be ready to sail the first fair wind.

25 April 1753 Yesterday morning between 7 & 8 o'clock was stranded at the Needles his Majesty's Ship of War, the "Assurance", Capt. Scrope, Commander, from Jamaica and Lisbon, part of

the money on board her is saved and carried to Yarmouth and we have given instructions to give what assistance they can and if an customable goods are saved out of her, to secure them under King's Locks.