

## Letters to the Commissioners No. 18 1791 - 1792

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February 1791 - Charge given to George Granger, Boatman at Bembridge A Seizure consisting of seven small Casks of Spirits brought to the Warehouse on the 14<sup>th</sup> Instant as having been made by you in conjunction with some of the Boatmen belonging to the six Oar'd Boat in the Service at this Port on the 12<sup>th</sup> Inst. appearing to be deficient in Quantity, One of the Casks containing only about a Quarter of a Gallon and another one of them of which the bung appears to have been drawn three Gallons and a Quart of weak Liquor have the appearance of having been mixed with Water and of inferior Strength to the rest to the rest of the Seizure, affords cause of suspicion that some unfair practices had been used with the said Goods after Seizure and before the same were brought to the Warehouse.

It becomes our Duty therefore to call on you to account for the said deficiency in one Cask and the apparent Mixture of Liquor in another with Water, which we hereby Charge you, requiring you on or before Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> Instant to give if you can a clear and satisfactory Answer to this Charge in writing annexing the same thereto

Mr Granger's Answer In respect of the Seizure Casks of seven Casks of Spirit made my me in conjunction with some of the Boatmen of the six oar'd Boat stationed at St Hellens in the Port of Cowes the Afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1791 that the said casks we found conceal'd in a Ditch, one of them having two Pegs in, we tasted it and found it of very weak quality and a considerable quantity out of it, also another cask that did not seem quite full having suspicion of some more Goods being near, we deposited the aforesaid Casks in a Public House at Shanklin known by the sign of the Crab and Lobster kept by Edward Pope, left one of the Boatmen in charge of them, went out in search of more for the space of two Hours to no purpose, during my absence the Boatman was left in charge of the above Casks and having no Boat there to convey the said Casks to my Lodgings he spoke to some People who was at Shanklin and had a Vessel in the Bay belonging to Bembridge and asked them if they would convey him with the aforesaid Casks thither, which they did, he the said Boatman delivered the Casks into my Lodgings, soon after the Casks were put into the Doors and under Lock Charles Ritchie, Boat Sitter and William Rant, Boatman came in and desired to see the said Casks & tasted that Cask that there was a considerable quantity out of and will affirm that it was no better than a good Grog and the other Cask above mentioned wanted something of being full. Continued the above Seizure at my Lodgings the Wind blowing Hard went by Land in Company with Charles Ritchie as Lookout the most part of the time 'til the opportunity offer'd 14<sup>th</sup> February sent the aforesaid Casks by a Vessel to Cowes with one of the Boatmen with the said Seizure, and there was a quantity in the peg of Cask when I sent it from my Lodgings, as for clandestinely drawing out or mixing with Water any Cask whatsoever after Seizure I never did and will attest on Oath as likewise will my Mother & Housekeeper.

23 February 1791 Charge to Mr George Granger Boatman at Bembridge and William Rant Boatman in the six oar'd Boat in Service at this Port

A Seizure of 25 small Casks of Spirits having been brought by you to the Warehouse on the 18<sup>th</sup> Inst. part of a Seizure of 35 Casks made by you on the 15<sup>th</sup> of which 10 Casks are said to have been rescued by six Men unknown armed with large sticks.

And 3 of the said Casks appearing to have been pegg'd or spoil'd in several places, and the Liquor therein of a very weak Quality having every appearance of Spirit mixed with Water being also very deficient in Quantity, One containing only two Gallons and a half, another only half a Gallon and a Third only a Quarter of a Gallon, each of which casks when full would contain at least three Gallons and an half.

We think it incumbent on us to call upon you to account for the deficiency as well as apparent mixture of the Spirits which we hereby charge you with, with Requiring you to give in Writing a satisfactory Answer if you can to the said Charge on or before Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> Inst. Returning both the Charge and the Answer.

The Answer to the foregoing In Answer to your request concerning the 35 casks of Spirit Seized at Luccomb on the Night of 15<sup>th</sup> February 1791 jointly by George Granger and William Rant 10 of which

Casks were rescued by six Men unknown armed with large Sticks, the other 25 Casks we delivered at the Custom House Warehouse East Cowes.

That on the 15<sup>th</sup> Inst. in the Evening at about 7 o'clock we made the Seizure and immediately after we, George Granger and William Rant, concluded to peg two of the said Casks with the intent to know what we had so seized that we may in case of any dispute ascertain what was within those Casks – at or near 10 o'clock that same Night six Men came to us as before mentioned and demanded some of the Liquor to drink we refused them for sometime and at last a scuffle ensued & terminated in our favour, they immediately went away some distance & return'd each of them with a large Stick they swore they would have what Liquor to drink they pleas'd & also some of the Tubs accordingly they laid hold of the two spoilt Casks & began Drinking after they had drink'd as much as they pleas'd they threw away the Pegs as also the Casks some Distance and swore if we made the least resistance in obstructing them from taking away what Casks they thought proper they would beat out our Brains / the which we were obliged to submit to / having no arms to defend ourselves and their Number too many for us, they rescued 10 Casks after examining which were full & which were slack. After the six Men were gone we went and took up the two Casks they throw'd away which were almost leak'd out. We then *ascertained* with the others the easiest way to save the other Goods & decided it was the most expedient to launch the Boat if possible we had also seized for not being mark'd, the which we did, but with very great difficulty she being very heavy & the surf was running very high on the shore, we had no sooner done this put the Casks in the Boat and got her off the Shore than the same People came down again with the same intent. We took to our Oars but owing to the contrary Tide & Wind at NW blowing fresh did not reach our Harbour until 5 o'clock the next Morning almost perish'd with Cold being wet to our Middle all the Night. This we are ready to attest on Oath as likewise the said mixing with Water or Drawing out any Liquor out of any Cask whatever committed to our Charge after Seizure.

24 March 1791 Collector and Comptrollers Report Some Casks of two different Seizures lately brought to the Warehouse at this Port not being full and others having the appearance of being mixed with Water, we thought it necessary to call on the Officers to Account for the apparent deficiency & mixture of the Liquor & inclosed we transmit the Charges given to them by us together with their answers thereto, upon which we beg leave to observe, -

That the Officers in both cases positively deny having mixed Water with the Spirits and say the Casks of one Seizure had been pegg'd when they found them concealed in a Ditch, and some of the Casks were not full, they admit they did at the time of the Seizure taste the Liquor and it was of a weak Quality, but say they drank no more than to just refresh themselves after the fatigue they had undergone in searching for and securing the Goods & positively assert that they never otherwise disposed of or consented to any Embezzlement of any part of the Seizure made by them, and the Boatman in whose care the Seizure of seven Casks was left at the public House at Shanklin declared no part was drunk or medl'd with there.

The apparent contradiction in the Answers of Granger & Rant on the Seizure of 35 Casks, who after admitting they had pegg'd two Casks to ascertain what the contents were afterwards say that they are ready to attest on Oath the *not* pegging not mixing with Water or drawing out any Liquor from any cask committed to their Charge after Seizure is explained as *saying* that no Cask was pegg'd subsequent to the time of seizure or have they spoil'd two Casks because they apprehended a Rescue which it appears did actually afterwards take place.

Under the circumstances attending the making of these Seizures, it is probable the Facts may be as stated by the Officers, nor can we *contradict* what they assert.

At the same time tho it may be difficult for & perhaps hardly to be expected that persons who are under so much fatigue in making and securing should in situations such as these refrain from drinking a small quantity of the Spirits they Seize, yet we think it necessary in order to guard against abuse of what may be the Custom to admonish and caution Officers against the Practice as much as possible. (A marginal note states 'Acquitted of the Charges for lack of proof but the Board were by no means satisfied with the Officers Accounts of the transaction and direct that they be strictly enjoined to avoid giving any grounds to suspect their being guilty of similar practices in future. Order 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1791'.)

14 April 1791

The inclosed Certificate of Registry belonging to a Vessel lately Seized at this Port and returned in our Seizure Account of this date having been delivered to us by the Seizing Officers. We beg leave to observe that in Certificates of the appointment of new Masters to the said vessel endorsed on the back of the Register by the Governor of Alderney No mention is made that the Security by Bond by the Act of the 27<sup>th</sup> of his present Majesty Ch 19 sect 7 to be given so often as the Master shall be changed, was in either instance taken and indeed the Master Joseph Bennett declared to us that he had not given Bond, nor been required to do so, nor did he believe it was ever done at Alderney when Masters were appointed to any Vessels.

Now if the Governor of Alderney is authorised to Certify on Certificates of Registry any Change of a Master, we submit if he ought not to take the Bond required at all other Ports, tho the same may not be liable to stamp Duties, and to specify on his Certificate that such Security has been taken, otherwise the Masters of Vessels belonging to that Island or who may frequent it for the purpose of Smuggling will not be liable to the Penalties which other Masters of Vessels are for making an improper use of their Certificates of Registry.

16 April 1791

We beg leave to submit to your consideration some alterations we think necessary and humbly propose to have made in the Custom House at this Port to facilitate the execution of Business and accommodate the Public & Officers.

The Collectors Office being separated from the public Office only by a slight partition is not so private upon many occasions it necessarily should be, all conversation therein being easily overheard in the public Office, which when anybody comes to communicate information or express any private Business whatever, is not only improper but has often been attended with much inconvenience.

The Landing Surveyor & Landing Waiters have long complained of the smallness and inconvenience of their Office which being taken out of the Warehouse under the Custom House will not admit a fireplace, nor sufficient room for each Officer to have a proper Desk, besides it takes from the Warehouse space that is wanted for other purposes.

The public Office at present will not afford room to accommodate with Desks Gentlemen who are occasionally sent to the Port for Instruction who of whom are at this time here.

To remedy which and other inconveniences, it is proposed to appropriate part of a Room in the House adjoining the Custom House now held by your Honors upon Lease and used as a Storehouse as an Office for the Collector being on a Floor with the Long Room, to open a door from it to the Long Room which may be done by removing a Stair Case, and to give the Comptroller the Room at the other end of the Public Office.

By removing the Stair Case leading to a Store Room and making the access to it at another place, the public Office will be enlarged four Feet and the Door removed further from the Fire Place near which it is now inconveniently situated so as often to occasion the Chimney Smoking, and when enlarged we apprehend it will answer the purpose of a Sale Room and by removing the Partition and some other alterations the Comptrollers present Room may be made big enough to take an additional Desk for Officers under Instruction and by appropriation of part of what is now used as a Sale Room into a Landing Surveyor & Waiters Office these Officers will be better accommodated, and the Warehouse considerably enlarged and made more convenient for storing Seized Goods.

These alterations have long been much wanted but the Premises having been different tenures and the Proprietors not choosing to consent to alterations, the inconvenience could not be remedied, but the Collector being now become Proprietor of the Custom House and adjoining Warehouse has no objection to the alterations and by an Estimate that has been take and is now inclosed will not exceed the sum of £40, we are of the opinion that they may be made for less Money and if your Honors will be pleased to allow £30 towards the expence and permit us to fit the Office up in the way we find most convenient the Collector will engage to pay whatever exceeds that sum and previous to us having the new Lease engaged which you have been pleased to direct to be taken of the Custom House, he begs leave to submit the following proposal to you, namely to extend the existing Lease of the Warehouse of which you have ten years unexpired and to grant one Lease, both for the term of 21 Years or any longer Term you please at the present Rent, which will not be attended with any additional Expence and we apprehend it will be a mutual advantage that the leases of both should terminate at one and the same time. (A further Letter and plan, copy not available, were sent on 13<sup>th</sup> May.)

29 April 1791 Mr John Bushby who has been nominated to be Collector of Customs at the Port of Arundell, having in pursuance of your Order of the 7th October last attended at this Post Six Months to receive Instructions and being in our Opinion properly qualified to execute the Duties of the Office to which he is nominated, we beg leave to transmit the Inclosed Certificate thereof.

4 July 1791 Inclosed we transmit an application from Mr John Gely, Ship Builder praying payment of £300 on account of a Cutter now building by him for the service at Shoreham. We beg leave to report that we have been on board the said Cutter which appears to be in such a state of forwardness as to be ready to be launched the next Spring Tides and Captain Hawkins concurs with us in opinion that the work done has been properly, which is respectfully submitted.

20 July 1791 Amongst the Papers found on board a Smugling Vessel lately brought into this port by Capt. Lee of the Wasp Sloop of War as represented in our Letter of this date was the inclosed Letter from a Mr Weston to John Early, a noted Smugler giving an account of the Military force stationed at Poole.

The very strong similitude between the Writing of the Name of Weston in the letter and the Signature of the Comptroller at Poole to several Dispatches from that Port, now in this Office leads us to apprehend he may have been so imprudent as to give intelligence to Early, of the soldiers quartered there to act against the Smuglers

And altho' we hope, if your Honors should think it necessary to cause any enquiry to be made that Mr Weston will be able to satisfy you that it is not his Hand Writing or at least that he had no improper view in writing the Letter, yet we should not think we discharged our duty faithfully if we withheld our suspicions from your Honors in any case where the interest of the Revenue or Conduct and Character of any Officer whose Duty is to guard & protect it appears to be as much afflicted – Several Warrants have at different times been taken out against Early by the Collector who has been at much pain and some expence to cause him to be arrested being a Smugler of great notoriety & property tho' hitherto without success.

28 July 1791 Having been subpoena'd to attend a Tryal at Guildhall London on Monday next, and also received a subpoena from Mr Samuel Cooper to be at the Assizes at Winchester on the Wednesday following to give evidence in a cause there to be tryed being an action against Mr William Ferris late Mate of the Speedwell Revenue Cutter on account of a Seizure made by him, I shall be obliged to be absent from the Port for a short time and propose leaving Mr John Pain my Senior Clerk to act for me during my absence which I hope will meet your Honors approbation.

10 August 1791 A Kiln for burning Tobacco having in pursuance of your Order of the 16<sup>th</sup> December last, been erected at this Port, we beg leave to enclose the Tradesmans Bill for the same amounting to the sum of £37 – 16 – 3 which does not exceed the Estimate transmitted and we pray your directions for paying the same.

26 August 1791 The Long Room and other Offices at this Port are much in want of new painting the same not having been done since the Year 1778 and several alterations having been made in the Custom House in pursuance of your Orders for that purpose. We think it necessary that the same should be painted and beg leave to transmit an Account of the process at which the Tradesman is willing to do the Work and which we believe are reasonable. (After submission of a further Estimate this was approved.)

4 September 1791 Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port having represented to us that in a hard Gale of Wind on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Instant the Cutters Bow Sprit was carried away, and that since he made a crave of sundry Articles necessary for the Cutter, and which you have thought proper by your Order dated 8th July last to direct should be provided, he has frequently when in chase been obliged to set his Square sail which is now become unfit for Service.

We have caused an Estimate to be made of the Expence of providing a new Bowsprit & Square sail for the Cutter and amounting together to the sum of £40 – 5 – 7 and beg leave to transmit the same for your further direction.

27 September 1791 Your Honours having been pleased by the Secretary's Letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Inst. to call upon us to recommend to you a proper person to officiate as Comptroller of Poole until a successor shall be appointed to Mr Weston whom you have seen cause to dismiss from the Service.

We beg leave on this occasion to name to your Honors Mr Thomas Thorold, the Collectors second Clerk, who has been in the Office between five and six years and who is, we believe competent to the business and very trust worthy.

In recommending Mr Thorold the Collector begs leave to observe that he must undoubtedly subject himself to some inconvenience and to the trouble of instructing another Person to supply Mr Thorold's Place during his Absence, both of which he is inclined to submit to, from a desire he has at all times of assisting the Service, and the *work* he entertains of encouraging a young Man who has conducted himself with propriety in his Station, who may desire advantage from the temporary appointment to another situation, and who at any rate will be afforded an opportunity of improving himself in seeing the variety of Business at another Port.

In justice to the Person who is his first Clerk, the Collector hopes he shall stand excused for intruding on your Honors time by observing that his faithful Service added to more than nine years experience in the Business of this Port would undoubtedly give him a prior claim to our recommendation to your notice on this or any other occasion, were it not that his absence could not be so well dispensed with at this time, without damaging the business more and subjecting the Collector to still greater inconvenience.

12 October 1791 The Ship Valley of Whitby Robert White Master from Baltimore in America laden with Tobacco, Iron and Staves put in at this Port for Orders, the inclosed copy of the Manifest of the Cargo was delivered by the Master to the Tide Surveyor, and the same appearing to be very imperfect and defective in many of the particulars required by the 18<sup>th</sup> Section of the late Tobacco Act, and it being very improbable that at this distance in time since the Act passed and after so many Cargoes of Tobacco have been exported from Baltimore that the Manifest should be imperfect through ignorance or mistake, we think it our Duty to transmit the to your Honors that you may take such measures as you judge proper.

The ship sailed from hence Yesterday for London as the Master declared, and we have sent two Tide Waiters in the Vessel for Security of Revenue and prevent embezzlement.

12 October 1791 As directed by your Order of the 28<sup>th</sup> Ult. we have called upon the Tradesmen therein mentioned, Mr James Day, Rope Maker and Mr John Lallow, Sail Maker to account for the overcharges in their Bills for Sails and Cordage supplied to the Hound Cutter lately built at this Port for Service at Shoreham. Inclosed we beg leave to lay before you the Answers we have received from them upon the Business.

15 October 1791 As directed by your Order of the 11<sup>th</sup> Instant we have procured and transmit an Estimate from John Ratsey, Sail Maker of the expense of a new Square Sail for the Swan Cutter. We beg leave to observe that the Quantity & Price are both considerably less than the Estimate given in by John Lallow and transmitted in our Letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> Ult.

But by your Order of 10 August 1791 we were directed to employ particular Tradesmen amongst whom Mr Lallow was named as one, for all future work for the Customs at this and neighbouring Ports, which not only precluded us from any discretion in the choice of proper Persons but obliges us to discontinue Tradesmen we against whom we were not apprized that any complaints had been made.

1 November 1791 As directed by the Secretary's Letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Ult. we herewith transmit an Estimate of the Expence of painting Custom House & other Offices at this Port which amounts together to the Sum of £12 – 19 – 5 and we humbly pray your further directions.

8 November 1791 Arthur W Waller a Tide Waiter & Boatman upon the Establishment at this Port died Yesterday.

12 November 1791 As directed by your Order of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ult. we have called upon *Joseph Heal* who is under Prosecution for Smuggling to know if he is able and willing to make any discoveries for the

benefit of the Revenue.

He acquaints us that he has occasionally be employ'd by Phillip Riddett a noted Smugler at St Hellens to go over to Alderney in his Vessel & assisted in bringing from thence Spirits, but that he cannot recollect at what particular times, nor what Quantities, or who went on the Voyages besides himself.

He appears to be a very ignorant illiterate Man we are informed, has a large Family to be maintained by his Labor, and we do not think he is able himself to pay even the Composition that has been offered, which is respectfully submitted.

17 November 1791 James Russell a Tide Waiter and Boatman upon the Establishment at this Port died on the 15<sup>th</sup> Inst.

21 November 1791 As directed by your Order of the 7<sup>th</sup> Inst. we herewith transmit a Certificate of Age of Mr Harcourt Roe who has been nominated to be Deputy Comptroller at Chepstow. We beg leave in obedience to your Order aforesaid to report upon Mr Roe's Abilities, Character & Connections are such as to leave us no room to doubt him being a proper Person to be admitted into the Service.

And having for the last Eighteen Months performed the Deputy Customers Duty at this Port in the absence of his Brother and previous to that time being employ'd in your Surveyor General's Office in London we think him sufficiently qualified without further Instruction to execute the Duty of the Office he is nominated to.

It appears by the Parish Register Book of Portsmouth Church in the County of Southampton that Harcourt, the Son of Henry and Elizabeth Roe was baptized on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 1769.

29 November 1791 Inclosed we transmit the Account and Duplicate thereof of Ships fitting out or likely to be fitted out at this Port for the Greenland Whale Fishery for the ensuing season, as directed by the Treasury Order of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Inst. and your Order of Yesterday.

31 December 1791 In return to your Order of 29<sup>th</sup> Inst. we beg leave to report that no Notice by the Tide Surveyor or any other Officer at this Port to the Master of the Ship Jonge Jacob Heindick Drikehen Master that she was subject to Quarantine.

And we find that the Ship in question did not stop here to afford any opportunity of doing it but being since she has been released from Quarantine come to this Port to repair damage received on the Voyage, we learn from one of the Boatmen belonging to the Tide Surveyors Boat / the Tide Surveyor attending a Tryal in London / that it is the same Vessel that pass'd thro the Road early in the Evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> Instant and his reason for particularly recollecting it, is that they had heard there was a foreign Ship coming up from the Westward & expecting that she would Anchor got two Tide Waiters ready to put on board, that on her coming in sight of the Watch House they *sail'd* off in order to board the Officers but before they could get along side she bore away & did not come to Anchor here, nor did they know she was a Ship liable to Quarantine or whether she had any Quarantine flag flying.

We beg leave to add that having enquired in what Boat Mr. Van Stock a Clerk of Mr *Greberg* who afterwards boarded the Vessel when lying at the Motherbank went off, we have sent for the Man who row'd it and upon examining find that he was called up early on the Sunday Morning the 18<sup>th</sup> to go on board a ship with Mr Van Stock, that he did not then know where he was going, but when they got near the Motherbank they saw a Dutch Ship lying there & row'd along side, that Mr Van Stock got from the Boat on the Sides of the Ship and he says might be upon the Deck talking with the Captain ten Minutes or a Quarter of an Hour, but what pass'd between them he does not know, that it was then blowing fresh he put Mr Van Stock on Shore at Wootton Bridge as he chose to walk home, he says there was no Cutter attending the Ship at the time they went along side, nor did he know that she had been past Cowes in Quarantine, but admits that just before he went along side a Flag denoting it to be a Quarantine Ship was hoisted, he positively denies having been on board himself and says that Mr Van Stock by advice he supposes from his Friends the next day went to Portsmouth to the Officers of Customs to tell them what had happened and did by their directions return on board & perform Quarantine.

10 January 1792 The several alterations improvements to the Custom House at this Port which

were proposed by the plan transmitted to your Honors in our Letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> May last & by your Order of the 3<sup>rd</sup> June directed to be made having been completed we beg leave to transmit the Tradesman's Bill for the same amounting to £39 – 17 – 11 which is respectfully submitted.

31 January 1792 The usual Quantity of Coals for the Custom House, Watch House and Tide Surveyors Office at this Port the present Winter having be laid in, in November last at the lowest Market price we transmit the Tradesman's Bill for the same amounting to £11 – 3 – 1 for the payment of which we pray your directions.

22 February 1792 (extract) Your General Letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> Inst. having been communicated to the Officers of this Port, several Seizures of Sails have in consequence been made & taken to the Warehouse and amongst other, a Mainsail belonging to the Smack Industry of Malden John Richmond Master for not having the Sail Makers Name and Place of Abode legible thereon.

The sail on examinations appears to be British Canvas with the Manufacturers Name & Place of abode stamped on it, but the Sail Makers name is not visible, nevertheless by the Masters Affidavit which we herewith transmit it appears that when the Sail was new & sold by the Maker to him, it was stamped with his Name & Place of Abode, and he attributes it not being visible to the Sails having sometime in constant use, and to the stamp having been affixed in the aft cloth of the Sail which is more exposed to the wet, than the Body of the sail where the Name of manufacturer of the Cloth is normally put.

He therefore humbly prays that your Honors will direct his sail to be returned to him as the *detention* will be a great loss and inconvenience to him to him being a distance from home and employed in Oyster dragging which season is just commenced.

We take this opportunity to humbly represent to your Honors our doubts, whether the intent & meaning of your aforesaid Order is not misunderstood by the Officers who seem to think themselves justified in Seizing every old sail found on board any Vessel of Boat on which the Names of the Makers of the Cloth & Sail are not visible, whereas we apprehend it was the intent of your Order to enforce the directions of 9<sup>th</sup> Geo 2<sup>nd</sup> Ch 37 Sect 3 & 19<sup>th</sup> Geo 2<sup>nd</sup> Ch 27 Sect 10 with respect to new British Sails and to direct the Seizure of foreign sails found on board British Ships.

13 March 1792 A Storehouse to secure & preserve the Stores & Boats belonging to the Swan Revenue Cutter at this Port being necessary for the Service, Mr Sarmon, Commander of the Cutter has for a considerable Time past made use of one belonging to himself for that purpose and humbly hopes your Honors will be pleased to Allow him to charge some Rent for the same.

We have Survey'd the Storehouse, which appears to be in good repair and conveniently situated for the purpose, & we are humbly of the opinion that five Guineas per annum with which Mr Sarmon will be satisfied is a reasonable rent for the same.

13 March 1792 Mr Thomas Francis Tide Surveyor at this Port having represented to us that the Fence which incloses the Watch House Slip where the Kings Boats are secured is broken down & unserviceable, we have caused an Estimate of the Expence of repairing it to be made & transmit the same amounting to the Sum of £5 – 5 – 3 for your further Orders therein.

30 March 1792 By your Order of 15<sup>th</sup> April 1790 leave was granted on the application of Mr T Novella Commissioner of the Admiralty of Holland to sell upon payment of the Duty Articles of Stores saved out of the Juno a Dutch Ship of War stranded within the limits of this Port and which was accordingly done.

But amongst other Things were several Jars & Cases of *Sweet Meats* which would not sell for one Shilling & six pence per lb, the Duty by which the Consolidation we apprehend they are liable to, as being imported from the East Indies, and therefore the agent refused to enter them, and having also neglected to import them to Holland although repeatedly called upon for that purpose.

We humbly submit to your Honors if it will not be proper to advertize the said Goods to be sold for the payment of the Duties at our next Public Sale, if the Agents still neglect or refuse to enter & pay the

proper Duties or export them to Holland, as they only *block* the Warehouse and decrease in value the longer they are kept.

5 April 1792 In return to your Order of Yesterday's Date we beg leave to acquaint you that the Watch House, Tide Surveyor's Office, Boat House, Stage and Slip thereto belonging at this Port is held under a Lease granted by Lord Mount Edgcombe on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1783 for 21 Years from St Thomas's Day preceding to the Collector in Trust for his Majesty his Heirs & Successors at a Yearly Rent of £18 – 18 – 0 with a covenant to repair in the Terms and Words particularized on the back hereof.

We take this opportunity also to acquaint you further that about 4 Years ago the above demised Premises with other Property was purchased of Lord Edgcombe by Mr Mark Gregory who lately became Bankrupt, it is expected that his Estate here will very soon be sold at a Public Auction, and the situation of the Watch House being at the Entrance of the Harbour consequently a convenient one for the purpose it is rented for, and the value of Land at Cowes apparently increasing, we submit to your consideration how far it may be advisable for your Honors to Purchase the Premises in Question for the use of the Crown provided it can be done at a fair and reasonable Price respecting which we pray to receive such directions as you may think proper to give, so soon as conveniently may be.

16 April 1792 Several Importations of French Oysters having occur'd at this Port we have charged the Duty thereon by a single Winchester Bushel heap'd up not knowing that we are authorized to take the Duties by any other method.

But the Importers having frequently complained that they cannot import foreign Oysters here with the same Advantage as at other Ports where a larger Measure is made use of, and that when they have been prevented by contrary Winds from carrying their Cargoes to the Ports of London and Rochester and are obliged to enter and pay the Duties here they have been considerable losers thereby.

We humbly beg to be informed whether any and what allowances are made in the admeasuring of foreign Oysters in the Port of London and by what Measure it is their practice to admeasure Oysters for the Duties thereon.

17 April 1792 Thomas Harris owner of a Sloop called the Thomas & Ann of this Port employed as a Pacquet Boat between this Place and Southampton and occasionally as a Pleasure Vessel, being desirous of obtaining a Licence from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to navigate his Vessel with a longer Bowsprit than he can otherwise legally do.

We inclose a Certificate from the Tide Surveyor at this Port of the Dimensions & other Particulars of the Vessel to entitle him to such Licence to which we have no objections to offer. (A marginal note states that the Licence was received from the Admiralty on the 29<sup>th</sup> April.)

18 April 1792 As directed by your Order of the 12<sup>th</sup> Inst. we transmit a Certificate of the Age of Mr Ralph nominated to be a Tidesman & Boatman at this Port, and we beg leave to report that the said Ralph can write sufficiently to keep the Book directed to be kept by Tidesmen stationed on board Ships and appears very capable and fit for the Duty of a Tidesman and by the inclosed Certificate of the Tide Surveyor who has tried and examined him he is sufficiently qualified for the employment as Boatman. (Ralph was Baptised in the Parish Church of Newchurch, I.W. 13 August 1769, it was in a later letter confirmed he was not suspected of any Smuggling activities. He took up his position on 18<sup>th</sup> May.)

26 April 1792 Mr Sarmon having in obedience to your directions delivered to us his report upon the several particulars mentioned in your General Letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Ult., we transmit the same herewith to your Honors.

That we agree with his opinion that the present complement of Mariners belonging to the Swan Cutter is not more than is necessary, nor do we think taking into consideration the size of the Cutter that the Service requires any addition thereto, unless your Honors should be of the Opinion that the second Deputed Mariner of which Mr Sarmon is desirous of having appointed for the reasons stated by him, should be an additional Man.

We think that appointing a second Deputed Mariner to the Cutter will be very proper, and if it be in addition to the Crew it will enable him occasionally to man a third Boat to strengthen the look out upon the Coast, when Smuglers are expected to Land their Goods at any particular Spot, and Smugling is very much carried out upon this Coast by Boats into which the Goods are unshipped when the importing Vessels get within a few miles of the Shore, or in the Summer Time by large Tub Boats which Import their Goods, and are most likely to be intercepted by well guarding the Shore near the Spots where they are expected to Land.

We believe that very few of the Smugling Vessels even those which do not exceed 20 or 30 Tons go with less than 5 or 6 Men which enables them to send off 3 or 4 Men in a Boat leaving the others to take care of the Vessel in Ballast.

28 April 1792 Since our Report of the 24<sup>th</sup> Instant on the Petition of Thomas Chiverton under Prosecution for Smugling, he has been to the Collector to Lodge an Information against Phillip Riddett for being concerned in the month of June last in unshipping and clandestinely landing in this Kingdom a Quantity of foreign Spirits from a Vessel of which Riddett was Owner & Master and wherein he Chiverton was employed as a Mariner.

An Affidavit of the facts having been sworn before a Commissioner in the Court of the Exchequer we beg leave to transmit the same to your Honors and as Riddett has long been considered a noted Smugler and is we believe a Man of some Property, we submit to your consideration that if it may not be expedient to commence a Prosecution against him on the ground of Chivertons Information, in preference to proceeding against Chiverton any further, as he is a very poor Man with a Family who have nothing to subsist upon except his Labors.

4 May 1792 As directed by your Order of the 26<sup>th</sup> Ult. we transmit a Certificate of the Age of John Urry nominated to be a Coalmeter at this Port in the room of John Powis deceased and beg leave to report that the said Urry appears to be sufficiently active and capable of performing the Duty of the Office to which he has been nominated.

He has not to our knowledge been concerned in Smugling or obstructing any Officer of the Revenue in Execution of his Duty, but was bred up as we are informed to Husbandry and Farming Business in which time he has had the misfortune to fail. (John Urry Baptised 5<sup>th</sup> April 1762 at Calbourn.)

11 May 1792 Your Honors having been pleased by your Order of the 5<sup>th</sup> December last to direct that the Custom House and other Offices at this Port to be repainted. We enclose the Tradesman's Bill for the same amounting to £12 – 19 – 5 which sum corresponds with the Estimate before transmitted and the Work appears to have been properly done.

1 June 1792 We have this day received a letter from Mr Francis Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter in your Service upon Incidents and stationed at this Port informing us of the loss of the Cutter which Accident happened on the 26<sup>th</sup> Ult. about 8 or 9 miles to the Westward of Shoreham in Chase of a Smugling Cutter belonging to one Wenham. He further informs us that he has saved the greatest part of the Materials and delivered the same to the Custom House Shoreham.

We humbly beg leave to add that Mr Sarmon has shewn himself an Active diligent Officer during the time he has been in your Employ and if it should turn out upon Enquiry as we hope it will, that the loss of this Cutter has not been owing to his neglect, but from an unavoidable Accident.

We presume to hope that you may be pleased to continue him in your Service, and to order another Cutter to be provided for him, as we are humbly of the Opinion, that this is a proper Station for a Revenue Cruiser.

11 June 1792 James Greenfield a Mariner belonging to the Swan Cutter Stationed at this Port having when in the execution of his Duty met with an Accident by falling from a Waggon employed in carrying a Seizure from *Bourose* Bottom to Poole the wheel of which grazed & much hurt his leg.

We beg leave to inclose the Surgeons Bill for the Cure thereof amounting to £2 – 6 – 6 which Greenfield humbly prays your Honors will be pleased to Order will be paid for him. The bill appears

reasonable and the Commander of the Cutter certified that the accident happened when the Man was employed in guarding a Seizure to the Custom House. (Marginal Note: To be paid from the Kings share of the Seizure. Order dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June.)

15 June 1792 Mr Chapman, Landing Surveyor having represented to us that the Officers Blue Houses on the Quays at this Port are very much out of Repair and that 3 Pair of new Triangles are wanted by the Service to supply the Place of same that have been many Years in use and are now unserviceable or nearly so and not worth repairing.

We have caused Estimates to be taken of the Expence that would attend repairing the Blue Houses & of providing three Pair of Triangles and transmit the same herewith for your consideration & direction.

James Masters Estimate for repairing 4 Blue Houses	£10 – 12 – 8½
– do – for 3 Pairs of Triangles	<u>£9 – 15 – 10</u>
	£20 – 8 – 6½

22 June 1792 In obedience to you General letter of 7<sup>th</sup> June we have take the opinion of Merchants upon the propriety of changing the hours for the Landing & Shipping of Merchandize at this Port to those which you have it under consideration to adopt in the Port of London.

And we beg leave to report that we find that most are not inclined to adopt the alteration proposal which they think would not afford any accommodation to them in their Business but on the contrary may be attended with inconvenience & *possibility* of delay, because the Labour employed by them occasionally on the Quays are *booked* by the day and accustomed to have a certain amount of Time allowed for Breakfast and Dinner which they would not consent to give up provided the Officers were willing to attend from 6 o'clock 'til 3 without interruption.

The force of reason assigned by the Merchants against any change in the Hours of Officers attending the lawful Quays here is apparent and however desirable to the Officers the alteration proposed may be, we are humbly of the opinion it would not be expedient to adopt it at this Port.

11 July 1792 In return to your Order of the 30<sup>th</sup> Ult. be beg leave to report that the Warehouse now used as a Tobacco Warehouse was originally a temporary Storehouse hired for Seized Spirits and by your Order of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1788 directed to be continued from Time to Time as the Service required it upon a Rent of £30 for the time retained.

Upon the commencement of the Tobacco Act it was found to be the most commodious and convenient Place for a Tobacco Warehouse & accordingly appropriated to that purpose and since that time a Tobacco Kiln has been erected in it.

The first Charge for Rent was included in a Bill transmitted the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1790 and directed to be paid by your Order of the 7<sup>th</sup> October following and since that Time the Rent has been craved regularly in our preparatory Account of Incidents.

Other Tobacco warehouses have been hired occasionally & discontinued when no longer wanted, but an Account of Tobacco seized at this Port and what is sent here from other Ports for Sale by Officers of the Excise as well as Customs the Warehouse in question cannot be dispensed with, and we think the Rent charged for the same is very reasonable.

3 September 1792 The inclosed letter has been deliver'd to us by Mr Gely a Builder at this Port at whose request we transmit it to your Honors, and humbly beg leave to observe that Mr Gely is a Cutter Builder of great eminence and has the reputation of building very good & fast Sailing Cutters, has on many occasions been employed to build and repair Vessels for the Revenue Service & we believe him to be a very honest Man.

We further beg leave to add that the Liberty Cutter which is at present employed upon this Station with the Commander & Crew of the late Swan Cutter is too small a Vessel to Cruize with any advantage upon this Coast & that a fast Sailing Cutter of about 120 & 130 Tons Burthen would in our opinion be a better calculated for the purpose, of which opinion is also Mr Sarmon who Commanded the Swan & now Commands the Liberty Cutter & we think it would be for the good of the Service that such a Cutter should be built & employed here.

3 September 1792 In return to your General letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> Ult. we beg leave to report that there are three Coal Meters employed at this Port & who under Commissions from your Honorable Board as Coal Meters receiving from the Crown two Pence per Chaldron & from the Master of the Collier three Pence per Chaldron for the Quantity delivered by each of them respectively.

Nor are any other Persons employed as Coal Meters here except in Cowes when more than three Colliers are discharging at the same time which does not often happen a then a Coal Meter is drawn by Lot out of 5 or 6 of the most capable of the Extra Tidewaiters under your Commission or by Certificate from us who when appointed to the discharge of any Collier receive the same Allowance from the Crown and the Master of the Vessel as Established Coal Meters but is not paid day-pay during the time he is employ'd nor have the Established Meters any fixed salary.

19 September 1792 As directed by your Order of the 28<sup>th</sup> Ult. we have procured and hereby transmit a Certificate of the Marriage of Mary Coward with her late husband John Coward by whom she had four children and who are now living and whose names are particularized below. We beg leave further to report that by the Testimony of Joseph Goodridge the Deputed Mariner of the Swan Cutter who commanded the Boat at the time the Accident happened by which Coward lost his Life, it appears that he was perfectly sober when the Boat overset.

Names of the Children of John Coward deceased

Elizabeth Coward	Aged 12 Years
Sarah Coward	Aged 1 Years
Kitty Coward	Aged 8 Years
John Coward	Aged 6 Years