

Cowes Letters to the Commissioners No. 19 1792 - 1794

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17 October 1792 In obedience to your Order contained in the Secretary's Letter of 28th August we acquaint you that Mr Gregory's Estate at Cowes of which the Watch House & Tide Surveyors Office at this Port held by your Honors under a Lease of which about 11 years are unexpired, is advertized for Sale at the Rainbow Coffee House in Cornhill London on the 30th Instant.

As the printed particulars of the Estate which we beg leave to inclose contain, we think an exaggerated description of all the Premises, we also transmit an Account of the Dimensions of the different Rooms of Lot 3, which altho conveniently situated for the purpose it is wanted for, and your Honors have for many Years permitted the Tide Surveyor to occupy Part of the House for the convenience of being near the Watch House, yet it by no means is entitled to the denomination of a spacious Dwelling House, nor has it the conveniency of a single Inch of Ground as an Outlett except that in Front which runs down to the Low Water Mark & over which the Boats out of the Boat House are launched into the Water, so that the Tide Surveyor is obliged to rent at his own Expence a small adjoining Tenement for the sake of having the use of a bit of Ground as a Yard, under which circumstances we are humbly of the opinion that the Rent paid by your Honors is the full value.

17 October 1792 Herewith we transmit an Account of sundry Seizures which have been brought to the Warehouse at this Port and humbly pray your directions for Prosecuting the same to condemnation.

We beg leave also to transmit an Affidavit taken upon a treble Sixpenny Stamp & Sworn before a Commissioner in the Court of the Exchequer stating the particular circumstances of the Seizure of Plaster of Paris Article No. 6, and submit to your consideration if it may not be proper to commence Prosecution in the Exchequer under the Act 8th of Ann Ch 7 Sect 17th for the Treble Value of 5 Tons of Plaster of Paris shipped without payment of Duty by George Board & Henry Cawse who it appears were Principals in the transaction, one of them having purchased the Goods and with Cawse who acted as Interpreter hired the other 4 Persons as Labourers to assist in Landing the Goods, as we believe both Board & Cawse knew they were acting illegally, which we think the others did not.

For the purpose of committing this Fraud it appears that two Barges the property of Mr Urry, a Proprietor of Sand Pitts in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth were clandestinely taken without his Privity or Consent, and it appears by his Letter to the Collector which we inclose, that the detention of the Boats would subject him to great loss & inconvenience, we thought it right to permit him to resume the use of them, first causing them to be appraised by two proper Persons and taking Security for the full Value in Case they should be condemned, which is respectfully submitted & we humbly hope under the circumstances of the case will be approved by your Honors.

27 October 1792 The Premises referr'd to in your Secretary's letter of yesterday's date being advertised for sale on the 30th Inst. we lose no time in obeying your Commands, and be beg leave to report that by the Lease you covenant to keep the Premises in good repair, and they are so at this Time except for the Fence that encloses the Slip where the Boats are kept and which being decayed & worn out should be immediately replaced with a new One, but the Expence of that by the Estimate we laid before you will not exceed 5 Guineas and thereto about 5£ more for some trifling repairs to the Slip, Causeway & Look out Stage which have since become necessary to be done, we do not apprehend any material repairs to be wanted for some Years.

We think under the Circumstance of your being the Tenants and that the Convenience of the Situation for a Watch House may probably be an inducement for you to renew that Lease, that Purchasers would be found to give £300 for the premises or more, but we cannot recommend your Honors at any rate to exceed £320. The Land Tax is moderate and does not exceed 20/- per annum.

14 November 1792 The Brig Brothers of & for London Robert Smith Master from Bilbao laden with Chestnuts anchored in this Road Yesterday. On the Tide Surveyor going on board to ask for a copy of the Manifest of the Cargo, the Master said he had no Manifest, nor did he know any was necessary, but if it was the Merchant would make it out when he got to London.

The Ship soon after sail'd from this Port, but as we have much doubt if the Masters or Shippers of the Goods could be ignorant that the Law requires a Manifest to accompany the Cargo, or if the Master did not know if he had one, that he might have produced it to the Officer we think it our Duty to state the Circumstances to your Honors that such Directions may be given on the Ships arrival in London as you may think necessary.

15 November 1792 Not having had Orders from you upon the Subject of an Application from Mr Francis Sarmon transmitted in our letter of 11th August praying to be allowed a Moiety on the Appraised Value of a Cutter Seized by him and which after condemnation was taking into Service as a Revenue Cruizer, we are requested by Mr Sarmon to transmit the enclosed renewal of his Application, and begging to refer to our Letter before mentioned. (The value was given as £707 – 11 – 6.)

16 November 1792 As directed by your Order of 4th September last we have endeavour'd to procure some corroborating Evidence of the Facts as stated by Thomas Chiverton in his Affidavit transmitted in our Letter of the 28th April last relative to the Smuggling transactions of Phillip Riddett Master and Owner of a Vessel wherein Chiverton was employed as a Mariner.

We beg leave to report, that after having seen Chiverton twice upon the Business we do not find he is able to state any additional Circumstances, or assist us in procuring any Evidence to corroborate his own Testimony nor are the Persons who he states in his Affidavit to be present with Himself, willing to come forward to confirm the facts he has sworn to, as he informs us & he expresses his doubts whether if they are served with Subpoenas they would be able to give very clear Testimony alleging that they were very much intoxicated at the time the Goods were landed from the Vessel.

Upon the whole we have no doubt of the Truth of the Facts stated by Chiverton in his Affidavit, but whether it will be expedient to Prosecute under the Circumstances of the case without some corroborating Evidence will be for your Honors consideration.

We humbly beg leave to add that we are in possession of an Execution against Chiverton transmitted by the Solicitor in his Letter of the 28th September on account of a conviction against him for a Smuggling transaction but have not thought it proper to cause it to be served upon him during the Time we have been communicating with him on this Business or until you have decided upon his Petition which we reported upon on the 24th April last.

4 December 1792 Inclosed we transmit a Letter from Mr C Ritchie Sitter of the Six Oar'd Boat upon Incidents at this Port praying on account of his ill health to Resign his Employment.

Mr Ritchie not having for some time past been able to give that attention to Business which the Service requires, we found it necessary of the 3rd Ultimo to direct Robert Willis a Boatman upon the Establishment of this Port to act as Sitter of the Boat during Mr Ritchie's indisposition so that the Boat may not remain unemployed.

And we propose that he should continue to act in that capacity for which he is in every respect qualified until we receive your Honors further directions. (The resignation was accepted on the 11th December.)

8 January 1793 We have just been informed by Mr Grimes, Supervisor of Riding Officers at this Port that the Brigantine Garland of London Robert Dowd Master from Malaga to London laden with a Cargo of Wine and Cork was this morning stranded at Chale Bay on the South Part of the Isle of Wight, that the Vessel is in Pieces and the Cargo floating along Shore. We have sent out several Officers to assist if possible in saving the Goods and to prevent Embezzlements. (Mew in 'Back of the Wight' states the Vessel went on shore at Walpen Heath and that the Master and 3 Crew were drowned.)

10 January 1793 The Six Oar'd Boat in the Service at this Port being much in want of a new Suit of Sails those in present Use being nearly worn out and unserviceable, we beg leave to transmit an Estimate of the Expence of a new Suit amounting to £6 – 16 – 4 & pray your Orders for providing the same.

11 January 1793 The Bowsprit & Boom of the Swan Cutter having been carried away in a Gale of Wind and the former replaced by one belonging to the late Swan Cutter which Mr Sarmon *obtained*

from the Custom House at Shoreham as represented in his Letter herewith transmitted. We on application of Mr Sarmon, and to prevent the Cutter being detained in Port longer than was necessary consented that a new Boom should be forthwith provided and the same and the same having accordingly been done on the best & cheapest terms, we transmit the Tradesmans Bill for the same amounting to £9 – 10 – 1 attested by the Commander & Mate praying your Order for paying it.

12 January 1793 Inclosed we transmit an Account & Duplicate thereof, of Wheat & Wheat Flour Exported from this Port in the Week ended the 9th Instant.

PS We humbly beg to be informed if it is necessary to continue to send a Weekly Nil Account of Wheat & Flour exported, now the Exportation is prohibited by Act of Parliament, unless any Quantities should be Exported for the Purposes & to the Places where Exportation is permitted by Order in Council.

13 January 1793 I beg leave to transmit you the Answers to Quarantine Questions which have this Morning been put to the Master of the Danish Sloop the Anna Maria from Messina for Hamburg laden with Fruit and which Vessel was stranded in the Afternoon of the 11th near Niton at the Back of the Isle of Wight and also the Bill of Health delivered to me by the Master of the said Vessel. I can no way Account for the apparent neglect of the Officers of the Revenue stationed upon the Coast, where the Accident Happened in not acquainting me with it for I have not at this Minute had any official Notice given me of it but heard by accident that a Vessel was stranded and that the Master was this Morning at Cowes. I sent to him and have obtained the particulars which I now transmit in addition to which I am informed that the Cargo is all on Shore and there is a probability that the Vessel will be got off, in the mean time and until I can receive your directions, I have desired the Master to return to the Place where the Ship was stranded, and with his Crew to keep as much as possible to themselves but under the Circumstances of the case it is totally impossible to enforce the Regulations of Quarantine properly. I have also sent out Tidesmen to assist in guarding the Goods saved from Embezzlement and the Deputy Comptroller is himself gone to the Spot to give such further Direction as he may find necessary & to enquire of the Riding Surveyor of Riding Officers in whose District the Sloop was stranded why no communication has been made to us upon the Business, and your Honors shall be informed of the reasons they assign for not having done it. (Mew in "The Back of the Wight" states that the Vessel was stranded between Rocken End and Blackgang and that it did get off.)

13 January 1793 The Brigantine Nancy of Milford Thomas Richardson Master Arrived at this Port Yesterday Laden with Salt Petre as expressed in the two inclosed Bills of Lading from Hamburg bound to Marseilles and consigned as by the Letter herewith also transmitted, the reason assigned by the Master for coming in was contrary Winds and a leaky Vessel.

We are doubtful whether this case comes exactly within the meaning of the Order in Council prohibiting the Export of Salt Petre & the Vessel being from one foreign Port to another.

But the Cargo now being in a Port in this Kingdom and avowedly destined for France we think it our Duty at the present Crisis to lay the Case before your Honorable Board & shall not suffer the Ship to sail until we have received your directions.

29 January 1793 As directed by your Order of the 22nd Inst. we have made an enquiry respecting the Exportation of Gold Coin from this Port without being able to discover that any Quantity has been clandestinely exported from hence. At the same time we suspect it is the Practice of the Smugglers who go over in small Vessels from St Hellens and other small Creeks within this Port to Alderney and Guernsey and occasionally to France to purchase Tea, Spirits and other Goods which they bring over to collect from the different persons for whom they are to bring Goods, Money to pay for it before they go, but the Secret Manner in which it is done, as the Vessels generally sailing without any communication with the Custom House under the pretence that they are going Piloting, renders it almost impossible to detect them, nor do we believe that they carry over considerable Sums at any one time.

We have also been informed that it has been usual for the Masters of the Vessels who go over to France for Oysters to pay for what they purchase of the Fishermen upon the Coast in Money which

they carry over, but that they often stop at Guernsey to exchange it for French Money which they can do to more than by taking it to other Places where they buy Oysters.

We shall continue our Endeavours to discover the clandestine Exportation of any Gold Coin and if possible to detect those who are in the Practice of Exporting it.

3 March 1793 Mr Elias Bruce Arnand nominated to the Office of Collector of the Revenue at Portsmouth having in pursuance of your Order of the 30th August last attended at this Port for six Months to be instructed, we transmit a herewith a Certificate.

6 March 1793 Inclosed we transmit the Account required by Mr Secretary's Letter of the 28th Ult. of the Names, Tonnage & Descriptions of the French Privateers brought into this Port by Captains Sarmon & Watson.

The 2 Vessels brought in by Captain Sarmon having been captured before, Letters of Marque were granted to Mr Sarmon for the Swan Cutter, Mr Gosling the Admiralty Proctor has acquainted the Collector by Letter dated the 28th Ult. that they are liable to confiscation as Droits of Admiralty, and having sent down the Form of an Affidavit to be Sworn before one of the Commissioners appointed by the Admiralty Court at Portsmouth, we presume it will be proper for Mr Sarmon to follow Mr Gosling's Directions in the Business, and have communicated the same to him.

30 March 1793 In obedience to your Command we herewith transmit a List of Ships & Vessels laden with Naval or Military Stores & those which have been or are now under detention at this Port.

4 April 1793 Inclosed we transmit an Application from Messrs Thomas & James Day praying to be permitted to land and secure under the Kings Locks some Bales of Merchandize out of the Spanish Ship La Prudentia now under repair here on her voyage from Ostende to Cadiz for Security of the same from damage until the repairs are effected.

We beg leave to report that the Ship put in here on the 4th Ult. at which Time the Reason assigned by the Master was contrary Winds, but no mention then made of Damage being received but it is now represented that on a Survey the Vessel was found to want considerable Repair, and it being necessary to strip the sides & take up the Deck Planks the Goods on board will be exposed to Damage from wet if they remain on board as they consist of Linen in Bales.

The ship is partly in Ballast and the Quantity of Goods on board not considerable, and the Tide Surveyor having reported to us, that the sides of the Ship are now open, and the Goods much exposed and that the Ship is likely to be a long time under repair.

If your Honors under the Circumstances of the Case think it proper to allow the Goods to be taken on Shore under the Inspection of proper Officers at the Proprietors Expence, and secured under the Kings Locks until the Ship is ready to receive them again, it may tend more effectively to prevent Embezzlement and will save the Crown the Expence of keeping Tide Waiters on board the Ship. (This was granted on 15th April.)

5 April 1793 The Coal Bushels in present use at this Port & which were received on the 25th January 1790 being nearly worn out, we humbly pray to be supplied with six new ones, and when the same are received such of the old Ones as are unserviceable will be returned.

12 April 1793 Not having received any Orders upon our Letter of the 13th March 1792 transmitting an Estimate of £5 – 5 – 3 of the Expence that would attend repairing the Fence inclosing the Watch House Slip where the Kings Boats at this Port are secured, and the Tide Surveyor having repeatedly reported to us the necessity of those Repairs, we humbly beg to call your Honors attention to the said Estimate and pray your directions thereon. (Repair authorised 30th April.)

1 May 1793 A Quantity of Tobacco which had lain in the Warehouse at the Port of Portsmouth unentered for upwards of 6 Months, was sent to this Port for Sale on the 22nd September last & the same having since been sold publicly to the highest Bidder in obedience to your Order of the 5th May 1791 for the Sum of £136 – 6 – 5¼ there remains in the Collectors Hands after having paid the

Duties of Customs, Excise & Charges out of the produce the Sum of £4 – 5 – 11¼ for the disposal of which we pray your directions.

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|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Tobacco sold for | | 136 – 6 – 5¼ |
| Excise Duty paid to the Collector of Excise | 77 – 8 – 0 | |
| Applied to Customs | 51 – 12 – 0 | |
| Charges at Portsmouth & Cowes | <u>3 – 6 – 0</u> | |
| | | <u>132 – 0 – 6</u> |
| Remains to be applied or disposed | | 4 – 5 – 11¼ |

10 May 1793 In return to your Order of the 8th Inst. we beg leave to acquaint you that the Bills therein mentioned were only given in to us a very short time before we transmitted them. We do all in our power to enforce a compliance with your Standing Orders respecting the Delivery of Tradesmans Bills not only by acquainting the different Tradesmen with the Regulations you have laid down, but also by desiring the Officers of the Waterguard for whose Boat the work is done frequently to call upon them for Bills, which they assure us they do. The excuses generally made by Tradesmen are, that they thought the sum too trifling to send in a Bill, or that they forgot to make it out at the time required.

We would beg to submit to your consideration if it may not be proper to issue a General Order that in future no Bill to 20/- or any lesser Sum you may fix upon which are not delivered to the Collector & Comptroller Quarterly & those under that Sum at the End of six Months shall not be received or transmitted by those Officers, but that the Tradesmen be left to make their own Application for Payment & to assign if they can satisfactory reasons to your Honors why the Bills were not delivered in proper Time.

Such a Regulation would we humbly apprehend would enable your Honors to judge whether inattention to your Orders lies with your own Officers or the Tradesmen & we think it would also be proper that every Tradesman should be required to specify upon his Bill the day when he delivers it in.

14 May 1793 As directed by your Order of the 10th Inst we have called upon Mr Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter stationed at this Port for a List of the Mariners belonging to the Cutter and inclosed we transmit the one delivered by him containing the Names of twenty two of the Men now on board the Cutter for whom he humbly prays your Honours to grant Protections.

Mr Sarmon informs us that several of the Mariners having lately deserted from the Cutter, his complement is not at present complete, but as soon as he has entered proper Persons for the Service he will make out & deliver to us an additional List of their Names, which when received shall be transmitted.

6 June 1793 The small Boat belonging to the Crown and used by us in crossing the Ferry to & from the Custom House and other occasional Services at this Port being nearly worn out and unserviceable having been twelve years in use.

We beg leave to transmit an Estimate amounting to £6 – 13 – 0 of the Expenche of a new Boat to supply the place of the old one and humbly pray your directions for providing the same.

14 June 1793 The cargo of Salt Petre landed at this Port out of the Nancy of Milford from Hamboro' bound for Marseilles having been reshipped in the same Vessel under the directions of the Order in Council dated the 13th Ult. and Security by Bond given that the same should be conveyed to & landed at the Port of London.

We as directed by your Order of the 3rd Inst. beg leave to acquaint you that the ship has sail'd from this Port for London with the Salt Petre on board.

22 June 1793 A new Suit of sails for the six oar'd Boat at this Port having been provided pursuant to your Order of 28th March, we transmit the Tradesmans Bill for the same amounting to £6 – 13 – 0 which does not exceed the Estimate and being attested by the Tide Surveyor we humbly pray for Orders for paying it.

23 June 1793 Observing by your General Order of the 20th Inst. that the Sails belonging to the Prize Ships legally condemned in the High Court of the Admiralty are exempt from all Duty whatsoever, we humbly beg to be informed whether such Sails when passed by the Officers are to be Stamped with the Stamp now used to denote the payment of Duties on foreign made Sails, or whether it may not be proper that a particular Stamp with the Words Free or Prize Goods, and the Name of the Port at which the Duties are fixed on the Ships, her Tackle, Apparel & Furniture should not be affixed on all Prize Sails at the time of the Entry is passed to prevent Frauds upon the Revenue by other foreign Sails being introduced into this Country without payment of Duties.

2 July 1793 As directed by your Order of the 15th May, we have examined into the state and condition of the Guns on board the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port & find 8 of them to be short guns not exceeding 3 Feet in Length & carrying Shot of 4 lbs wt, the other six carrying shot of the same weight but are 4 ft 3 in Long.

The last mentioned guns were supplied in London when the Cutter was refitted are undoubtedly the best and most fit for Service, the other 8 which are represented by Mr Sarmon are light and apparently not of so good construction, were found on board the vessel when she was seized from the Smuglers & if the Cutter was only to Cruise against Smuglers we think and hope those guns would answer all the purposes of that Service.

But being now fitted out a Privateer and so employed under your Orders it is possible she may have to contend as well with Vessels belonging to the Enemy as the Smuglers who availing of the opportunity, which the War affords them of taking out Letters of Marque will probably attempt to carry on their illicit Trade with an armed force, on which account it may be proper for your Honors' consideration whether the guns should not be exchanged as proposed by Captain Sarmon, unless you should be of the opinion that those he is already furnished with are sufficient & better calculated for the number of Men he has to work them.

PS By your order of the 28th February Captain Sarmon was allowed to increase the number of his mariners to 30 but from the difficulty of getting men we find he has not yet been able to complete his complement.

22 July 1793 Two French Privateers L'Europe & Calvados sent into this Port by Mr Sarmon Commanding your Cruizer the Swan previous to any Letter of Marque issued to the said Cutter, having since been condemned as Admiralty Droits.

The Collector having received Correspondence from the High Court of the Admiralty directing him to advertize and sell the said Privateers, their Stores and Materials and having so done to transmit the proceeds to Mr Gosling the Admiralty Proctor.

But observing that the 10th Sect. of the Act of the last Session Chap. 66 which has been lately sent to this Port contains particular directions respecting the application and disposal of Vessels and Goods captured by Cruizers belonging to your Honorable Board.

The Collector does not think it proper to proceed in execution the Orders he has received from the Admiralty Court without your approbation.

And we humbly beg to be informed if the Clause in the before mentioned Act has any reference, or relates to the Admiralty Droit in Question.

30 July 1793 Inclosed we transmit a letter from Mr. Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter renewing his application to be paid a moiety of the appraised value of the Greyhound Smuggling Cutter seized by him the 27th December 1790, afterwards condemned and by your Order delivered to Mr John Case to be used in the Service at Portsmouth.

We beg leave to report that the said Cutter the Greyhound was returned into the Exchequer in Hilary 1791 Appraised by Mr John Gely & Robert Fabian, two experienced builders at the sum of £707 - 11 - 6 and was afterwards by your Order of 11 April, 1791 delivered to Mr John Case, Commander of the Antelope Cutter at Portsmouth, to be used in the service there.

Mr Sarmon's former application to be paid a Moiety of the Appraised Value was sent from hence in our Letters of the 11th August 1791 & 15th November 1792, but no Orders have yet been received thereon by us.

PS In our Letter of 22nd September in return to your Order of the 17th we reported that no charges had been incurred here on account of this Vessel, the charges of condemnation having been paid out of the Produce of the Goods found on board and Seized at the same time.

17 August 1793 Mr Dobbins who is appointed Commander of the Diligence Luggur now fitting out at this Port by your Order as a revenue Cruizer has delivered us the enclosed List of Stores which are necessary in the Equipment and fitting out of the said Luggur, and also an Estimate of the Price at which Mr Godsell the Rope Maker will undertake to supply such Cordage as may be wanted.

26 August 1793 Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port having represented to us that he is in want of a new cable and some running Rigging for the Cutter and also desires us to obtain your order that the Cutter may be refitted, the same being necessary and having delivered to us the enclosed Estimate of the Price at which the Rope Maker can supply the Cordage viz 34/- per *cwt*.

28 August 1793 Not having observed in any Act of Parliament that has been transmitted to us relative to the Revenue that the 31 Sect. of the Act of 26 George 3 Ch 73 prohibiting Dealers in Spirits from having in their Custody foreign Spirits of a lower degree of strength than 1 in 6 Hydrometer Proof & which Act was continued by several subsequent Acts & by Sch 31 of His present Majesty Ch 1 Sect 9 has been continued to any subsequent period.

We humbly beg to be informed if the before mentioned Clause in the Act of the 26th of the King is considered as any longer in force and if not whether we may not be permitted to sell seized Spirits of any degree of strength to all persons indiscriminately as allowed by your Order of the 14th March 1789 notwithstanding the restriction in your subsequent Order of the 27th August following as we are humbly of the opinion it will benefit the Revenue and the Seizing Officer so to do.

4 September 1793 Mr William Dobbin and Mr Thomas *Stap* have this day been Sworn into Office as Commander & Mate of the Diligence Luggur fitting out at this Port in obedience to your Order of the 8th Ult.

12 September 1793 Since our Letter of the 28th Instant requesting to be informed whether that part of the Act of the 26th of his present Majesty Ch 73 which prohibits Dealers in Spirits from having in their possession foreign Spirits of a lower degree of Strength of 1 in 6 under Hydrometer Proof had been continued by any Act passed in the last Session of Parliament.

We have had a communication with the Collector of Excise here upon the Business, and he informs us that the restrictions particularized in the before mentioned Act, are by an Act passed in the last Session Ch. 61 Sect. 35 continued 'til the 1st December 1795 and thence to the End of the next Session of Parliament, which we humbly pray may be sent to us for our information and Government in the disposal of condemned Spirits.

24 September 1793 William Goodridge who was Deputed Mariner on the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port being / as is supposed / unfortunately drowned not having been heard of since the 8th March last when he was left with six other Mariners on board a French Privateer a Prize to the Swan Cutter.

Mr Sarmon Commander of the Cutter has requested me to apply to your Honors to appoint another deputed Mariner in the room of Goodridge and has also represented to us that it will be for the benefit of the Service to have two deputed Mariners in the Cutter as he shall thereby be the better enabled to keep a proper look out for the Smuglers in his Boats and having recommended Thomas Lane and John Torin two of his Mariners as proper Persons to have Deputations.

We submit his request to you for consideration and beg leave to report, that the number of Mariners being lately increased, we think a second deputed Officer necessary, and that the two Mariners named by Mr Sarmon having been in the Service several Years, and as is represented to us

conducted themselves properly in their Stations. We are of the opinion it will be an encouragement to others and of Benefit to the Service to grant them Deputations.

26 September 1793 Enclosed we transmit a Letter from Mr John Gely who is employed in building a Cutter for the Service praying that he may be paid a second Payment of Two Hundred Pounds on account of the Said Vessel. We have at the request of Mr Gely survey'd the Cutter and find as reported by him that the Deck is laid, and he further informs us that it is in such a state of forwardness that it will be fit to launch in six weeks.

10 October 1793 Several of the large Casks in the Warehouse used for Storing of Seized Spirits which were purchased as second hand casks & have since been some Years in Use, are now nearly worn out & becoming unserviceable, and a Quantity of Spirits having lately been lost by the sudden bursting of a Hoop on one of them.

We beg to submit to your Honors that it is necessary for the Service to replace some of them with new ones, and having made enquiry of the Expence of providing 6 new ones each to contain 150 to 200 Gallons. We find that the Lowest Price at which we can get them in the neighbourhood is at the rate of Three Pence half per Gallon, and we humbly pray that we may receive your Orders for providing the same, if the price appears reasonable, which we believe it is.

24 October 1793 Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter in your Service at this Port, having represented to us that the Jolly Boat belonging to his Cutter is worn out and become unserviceable having been in use since 1790. We have caused an Estimate to be given in of the Expence of a new Boat fit for the Service to Supply the place of the old one, and transmit the same amounting to £13 – 11 – 6 praying your directions thereon.

11 November 1793 On the 8th Instant Mr John Cheverton Coast Waiter found on board the Alert Sloop of this Port Thomas Corke Master said to come from Portsmouth 60 Bundles of Sail Cloth which the Master having no Sufferance for or any Custom House Dispatch with he stopp'd and brought to the Warehouse.

Since which the inclosed Certificate has been procured and produced certifying that the Canvas now under Stop had been loaded on board the Alert from his Majesty's Dock Yard at Portsmouth to be made into Sails for his Majesty's Service by *William Butcher* Sail Maker here who has a contract for the same.

Under which circumstances and the Sail Cloth having the Kings Mark on them, the Officer has no objection to delivering the same if your Honors approve of his so doing but being informed it is the Practice not only for Sail Cloth but Hemp, Cordage and other Naval Stores to pass to and from each Yard and this Port, and also Southampton & Poole to be work'd up by Tradesmen residing at the different Places without be accompanied by any Sufferance or Document whatever either from Portsmouth or when returned thither.

We submit to your consideration whether it is proper such Practice should be continued as it certainly affords Opportunity for Committing Frauds. We apprehend that no goods whatever can legally be shipped to be carried Coastways without a Sufferance or other Coast Dispatch, and at this particular Time the Exportation of all Naval Stores is prohibited and instances of Embezzlement of the Kings Stores frequently Occur.

It therefore appears particularly necessary that Goods which are conveyed backwards & forwards in the Manner we mention and not in any Vessel belonging to his Majesty should be under some cognizance of the Officers of the Revenue or if your Honors see Course to dispense with their being Accompanied with the usual Coast Documents, they should pass under such Restrictions & Regulations as are most likely to prevent Frauds being Attempted or Practiced, respecting which we pray your directions.

20 January 1794 The Earl of Moira, Commander in Chief of the Troops on board sundry Transports now at this Port having acquainted the Collector that he has an order from Mr Dundas, one of His Majesty's Secretarys of state, which Order he was pleased to show here, to hand a number of foreign horses belonging to the Hessian Troops

And His Lordship having also signified that he has made application to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury that a dispensing order with respect to the Duties on the said Horses might be issued but that the said order has not yet been received & that it is necessary that the horses should be forthwith landed.

We have under the Circumstances of the Case & at his Lordships request consented thereto, on the Commissary General's giving the Collector Security by his Note of Hand equal to the Amount of the Duties due, to pay the Same provided the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury and your Honorable Board should not think it fit to remit the Duties.

Considering it incumbent on us to aid the public Service as much as in our power we humbly hope our Proceedings herein will meet your approbation.

31 January 1794 In return to your Order of the 17th Inst requesting our opinion upon a Clause transmitted marked B whether if the same is carried into Law and extended to the Coast of Great Britain generally it would be likely to embarrass fair Trade and if so in what instances.

We beg leave to report that as far as we have any knowledge of the Coast, we think the proposed enlargement of the Limits would materially harass & frustrate the operation & schemes of the Smuglers but we are not aware that would embarrass the fair Trader who as the Law now stands we apprehend is frequently obliged in going up and down the Channel not to pass within the prohibited distances of 4 Leagues from the Coast without suffering any inconvenience therefrom, for we have no instances where a Merchant or Coasting Vessel furnished with regular Clearances or other Dispatches, and found at Anchor waiting Tide in coasting up and down the Channel has been molested or inconvenienced on account of being found within 4 Leagues of the Shore unless there have been circumstances to warrant Suspicion of them being on a fraudulent Trade.

By extending the Limits to a supposed straight line from one Headland to Another along the Coast, that is from Beachy Head to St Catherines Point on the Isle of Wight from there to the Start and from Start to the Lizard to the Lands End about 3 or 4 Leagues to seaward from such supposed Line, the Smugler would be kept during the Day Time at such a Distance from the Coast as it would render it much more difficult than it now is to Run upon the Shore to any particular Spot upon the approach of Night to land their Cargoes, whereas we are informed their present practice is on some parts of the Coast to get even with the Head Land in the Day Time taking care to keep without the 4 Leagues til Night comes on when they are directed by Signal *having* previously agreed upon what part of the Shore to run for or avoid – it is also not infrequently the Practice we believe for Smuggling Vessels of large Burthen to remain for several days just without the 4 Leagues and then unload into large Tub Boats / incapable of crossing the Channel without Danger / their Cargoes to be run on Shore by the Boats while the Vessel remains secure from Seizure from the Goods not having been unshipt within 4 Leagues of the Shore.

By extending the limits as proposed a Power is to be given to the Commanders of Revenue Cruizers to detain & Search Vessels found at any Time within these Limits, it may be perhaps be necessary to confine it to vessels of a particular Size or Description such as are usually employed in Smuggling and the Masters of which are not furnished with regular Clearances, so that the Officers should exercise his Power with great discretion when there are no other Circumstances attending the case than the Vessel being found within the prohibited *area* otherwise the fair Traders may sometimes be much impeded in proceeding his voyage.

10 February 1794 Since receiving a Treasury Order dated the 24th Ult. transmitted in yours dated the 29th directing that 903 Horses for the public Service should on application of Alexander Davison Esq. Commissary General to the Forces in the Expedition under the Earl of Moira be landed free of Duty and which has accordingly been done.

We have been informed that several of the said Horses have already been sold by the individual Officers to whom they belong and that many more are offered for sale. We think it is our Duty to appraise you Honors thereof and to submit whether it was the intention of the Government that such of the Horses as are sold in this Country should be exempted from payment of Duties either by the Buyers or Sellers.

12 February 1794 Inclosed we beg leave to transmit a Letter from Mr Taylor the Person some time since Employed in making alterations and repairs to the Custom House at this Port accompanying a Bill amounting to £11 – 0 – 9 for extra work and alterations not included in the Estimate at the time Custom House was enlarged.

The Estimate given in amounted to £40 & the sum which has been paid by your Order of 21st January 1792 is £39 – 17 – 0. The Bill now transmitted, is for the work done & sundry articles supplied & which were necessary to be done in fitting up the Office & making the Desks convenient when the Office was altered, and being such Charges as we apprehend could not be included when the Estimate was given in, but as such arose out of the proposed alterations, we humbly submit the Bill to your Honors & pray your directions for paying the same.

12 February 1794 It having been represented to us by the Acting Sitter of the six Oar'd Boat in the Service at this Port that the said Boat which has been built Nine Years is nearly worn out & unserviceable. We think it necessary previous to transmitting a new Boat to submit to your Consideration whether it is expedient at present to put the Revenue to the Expence of a new Boat for this Station as the very few Seizures made in the past two Years as will appear by the Account we transmit do not in any degree Answer the Expence incurr'd by the Establishment.

And no regular Sitter having been Appointed to Supply the place of Charles Ritchie whose desire to resign we signified to your Honors by our Letter of the 4th December 1792 & by your Letter of the 11th following you were pleased to acquiesce in, the Boat since that time has been kept Cruizing under the Command of Robert Willis a Boatman at Yarmouth and William *Rous* one of the Boatmen who on Willis's being taken ill and unable to continue the Charge of the Boat was directed to act as Sitter until a successor to Ritchie should be nominated by your Honorable Board and which we have long been daily in expectation would take place.

As the Boat is represented to us as unsafe to go out in at present, and as the Tide Surveyor here is in want of some Additional Hands at the Watch House & to assist in visiting & guarding the Ships in the Road & Harbour at this Time numerous, we propose to employ some of the Boats Crew in that Service & to recommend the rest to fill some Vacancies on board the Swan Cutter until we shall receive your further Directions upon the Business.

| Seizures Year 1792 | | Seizures Year 1793 | |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Brandy | 36½ Gallons | Brandy | 3 Gallons |
| Rum | 8 Gallons | Geneva | 37½ Gallons |
| Geneva | 130 Gallons | | |
| Tea | 16½ lb | | |
| Tobacco | 158½ lb | | |
| A Wherry and materials | | | |

(A marginal note states "Proposal Approved & Boat to be discontinued, broken up & sold & Men employed as proposed. Order 13th May.)

11 March 1794 We have made the enquiry by your Order of the 7th Inst. and cannot hear that any Person was saved belonging to the Boat in which the late Captain Cook was unfortunately drowned or any of the Bodies except the Captains taken up on the Island Shore. Two Hatts supposed to have belonged to some of the Boats Crew were picked up much about the time the Body was found.

24 March 1794 We beg leave to lay before you a Charge which we have found it necessary to give to Stephen Saunders one of the Coal Meters at this Port for Drunkenness and Misconduct in the execution of his Duty.

We also transmit his Answers to the same by which your Honors will observe that he does not deny the truth of the Charges, but expresses his sorrow for part Misconduct and a determined Resolution of better future behaviour in which if we thought any dependance could be placed we should be much inclined, particularly on Account of his Family who are truly objects of compassion to solicit your Honors to pass over the Offence but his general Conduct is so extraordinary and so much complained of by Merchants & masters of Ships that we are almost precluded from urging anything in his favor for

exclusive of having been twice reprimanded by your Orders of the 12 April 1787 & 2 May 1788 the First time in consequence of a Complaint against him by some Coal Merchants for false admeasurement and the Second on a Charge given him by us for disobedience of Orders. We have had frequent occasion to admonish and Reprimand him upon various Complaints which we were unwilling to trouble your Honors with.

At the same time we desire to observe that he is capable of doing his Duty as a Coal Meter properly if he would but attend to it and keep himself sober and we have thought that the Complaints which have been made of improper admeasurement have arisen more from his Negligence and inattention than any willful design of acting fraudulently in discharge of his Duty nor does the Reprimand given by your Order of the 12th April 1787 on Account of the Charge of false Admeasurement being fully proved but for ill behaviour to one of the Complainants.

Answer of Stephen Saunders The Charges exhibited against me in writing on the 20th Inst., I am sorry to say in this instance are not altogether unfounded, was I therefore to attempt a full justification of my deportment it might justly be deemed an additional apparition. Nevertheless I hope it will be found from the Subsequent particulars to admit of some extenuation it behoves me to state generally in the Idea of Truth that in my deportment as Coal Meter; I have to the utmost of my ability performed my Duty alike to His Majesty and to his Subject but have been easily overcome with Liquor, I with Compunction that I sometimes have been overtaken by its affects. In particular I beg leave to state my book being blotted when doing Duty on board the Providence was occasioned by an admixture of strong Spirit ordered for me by the Mate of the said Vessel to assuage in some Measure the Anguish of a wound I received on my left leg by a large Coal which fell off the measure and struck me so violently as to occasion it bleeding excessively. I am moreover compell'd to answer that the period just alluded to is not the only one I have been inebriated when loosing sight of the deference due to you Gentlemen as being infinitely my *expression* not only in your Official Department but in every point of view I have sometimes replied indiscreetly, but Gentlemen I request you will do me the Justice to believe me since in saying that I am truly sorry anything exceptionable should have escaped my lips as of my determined resolution hence forward to deport myself in such ways as to give no Cause Whatever of future *complaint* either when on actual Duty or on Shore.

My Family as is well known and wholly dependant for support on the Casual employment of my appointment which were I unfortunately deprived of, Consequences of the most unfortuitous Nature would most probably ensue as I understand no *handicraft* occupation whatever. That I have justly merited Censure I do with deep Regret acknowledge and trust that my heart may be amended by a burning sense of past demerit but Gentlemen I hope the liberality of your Sentiment will humanely be drawn to the view Charity over the Remembrance of past Misconduct and that from your known humanity you will among other circumstances take into consideration the Convalescent State of my Wife's health whereby she has been for some time confined and incapacitated from performing the usual role of domestic *applications*.

(Marginal note: 'Guilty of the Charge, to be Severely Reprimanded and acquitted that for the next Offence of any kind he will be discharged'.)

2 April 1794 As directed by your order of the 27th Ult. we have called upon Mr Gely, Ship Builder at this Port for an Estimate of the Expence of Building a fast Sailing Cutter of 145 tons and inclosed we transmit his Estimate for the same & are desired by him to add that he can set about building it immediately if your Honorable Board think proper to give him the Order.

1 May 1794 Having in obedience to your Order of the 22nd February last given a Charge to Mr F Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Revenue Cutter forwarded in a Complaint from Lieut. Dunbar of his Majesty's Ship Pearl, we herewith transmit the said Charge together with Mr Sarmons Answer thereto & to acquaint your Honors that desirous of affording Mr Dunbar an opportunity of substantiating by Evidence if he could so do the Complaint her preferred, we have waited some time for the Pearl Frigate returning to Spithead, but being informed she is still at Sea & not soon expected in this neighbourhood, we do not think it right any longer to withhold our Report upon the Business, but respectfully to say the same before you with such observations as we think it necessary to make on the Facts as they appear to us.

Mr Sarmon being on a Cruize fell in with an American Ship from Philadelphia laden with Sugar & Coffee and bound for Amsterdam, and having been informed that by an existing Order in Council Ships so laden would be liable to confiscation if the Cargoes were Produce of the French West Indian Islands conceived himself warranted in detaining her which he accordingly did & put his Mate on board with Orders to carry the Prize into Port, soon after which a Man of War hove in sight on which he hoisted his Colours and laid to. That on the Man of War coming up with a hailing *signal* he answered his name was Sarmon Commanding the Swan Revenue Cutter of Cowes and that the American Ship was his Prize that upon being desired to send his Boat on board the Frigate he immediately complied and his Mate then being aboard the Prize he sent with the Boat John Torin, then an acting Deputed Mariner to Answer any Questions they may wish to put to Him, that some Time after his own Boat returned on board the Cutter manned by the Frigates People & Commanded by Mr Dunbar by whom he was told that he