

Letters to the Commissioners No. 24 1802 - 1803

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5 January 1802 In return to your Order of inquiry of the 2nd Inst. we have to acquaint your Honors that Mr John Roach nominated as Landing Surveyor at this Port informed us it must have been a mistake as he never applied for that Office – no other Person of that Name is known to us here.

11 January 1802 Inclosed we transmit the Waterside Officers Account of the remainder of the Goods from the Adeona shipped on Board the Hope William Hollis Master in virtue of your Honors Order of 15 Ult.

Robert Miller an Extra Tidewater accompanies the same for the due delivery of which at the Port of London we have also taken the usual Coast Security.

19 January 1802 In obedience to your Order of the 15th Inst we transmit a Copy of the Registry of Baptism for Mr John Roach nominated to be a Coastwaiter at this Port. Mr Roach is a Young Man of Good Character is sufficiently Capable and Active to acquit himself properly of the Duties of the Office to which he is nominated. (He was born in 1782 and Baptised the following Year in Newport and admitted on the 29 May.)

25 January 1802 Inclosed is an Account of Fees received from Vacant Patent Offices at this Port between 5 July & 11 August 1798 by Mr Arnold late Acting Customer amounting to £5 – 11 – 0 which has this Day been remitted to the Receiver General in obedience to your Order of 20th January Inst.

This Money was directed to be retained by the Honorable Boards Letter of the 3 August 1798 and we discontinued receiving Fees on Vacant Patent Offices on the 11th of that Month.

25 January 1802 Inclosed we transmit an Account of the Seizure of Flour made since our last Return on which we pray your Honors Directions.

Wootton Bridge is within this Port and a Sufferance was granted on the 18th Inst. to Mr Cooper a Miller at that Place to put on board the Peggy William Gawn Master under the inspection of the Coast Waiter Mr Snudden to whom the Document was addressed 30 Quarters of British Wheat Flour to be brought as the Sufferance express'd to Newport.

Though Mr Cooper was appraised about a fort Night since by the Coastwaiter and also the Master that no Corn or Flour was to be Shipt but in his presence, to which the Officer is ready to make Oath, he chose to act in direct opposition and without giving the Coastwaiter any Intimation he wish'd to ship Flour, he gave Orders for putting it on board at his Mill and the Vessel sail'd accordingly with it to the mouth of the Creek, near the Motherbank for purposes better known to Mr Cooper than ourselves.

It has very much an appearance of an attempt to effect a Clandestine exportation though we doubt whether we doubt if we should be able to obtain proof to support it. When the Coastwaiter asked Cooper if he had any Sufferance for the Flour he told him he had, but he would not show it to him, and that he had nothing to say to him Snudden on the subject but to his Masters.

We beg leave to state further to your Honors that it is impossible Mr Cooper can plead any Ignorance in this transaction, for the practice has been for the Coastwaiter to attend the Shipping of Corn and Flour at Wootton Bridge ever since we received Mr Secretary Gale's Letter of the 1st December 1789 and we submit if it would not be opening a great door to the Illicit Exportation of Corn if a small Vessel is permitted to take in Flour without the presence of an Officer and proceed uninterruptedly to a Spot contiguous to a number of Vessels Foreigners and outward bound and in many respects favourable to the shipping of it unobserved.

Snudden the Coastwaiter begs permission to say has acted with vigilance and we trust your Honors will approve his Conduct.

21 February 1802 In return to your Order of Yesterday we beg leave to inclose a Copy of the Account Current for last Month, with a more Explanatory reason for the Collector retaining in his Hands £1557 – 7 – 1¼ arising from Seizures which we trust will be deemed satisfactory. With the exception of Six Guineas a Moiety of a Penalty the whole of the above Sum was produced by a sale of Tobacco here in July last received from different Out Ports the Account of which was forwarded to your Honors for Adjustment on the 2nd October following and to wait your Orders for the distribution of the Money, and of the Specific Sums to be remitted to other Out Ports, which cannot be done without your Order for them to receive the proportions in which they are respectively entitled.

9 March 1802 As directed by your Order of the 6th Inst. on the Petition of William Kingswell we beg to acquaint your Honors that we have not been able to find Proof that the Goods of the Petitioner were absolutely Run or illegally removed.

But we are still humbly of the opinion from the length of Time the Goods remained on Newport Quay in the Wharfingers possession under the sanction of a expired permits / three Months out of date / great opportunity was offered to the Wharfinger, had he been a fraudulent Trader, to have carried on his Illicit Practices, and was an additional inducement for the Coast Waiter to bring the former to the Kings Warehouse to wait your Honors directions thereon.

2 April 1802 On the 26th Ultimo a Brig called the Phoenix English built property French burthen about 90 Tons put into this Port with the loss of her main mast Captain Gabriel Marc Chapelier a frenchman Master has reported at this Office the Circumstances of this accident and has further declared it will be Impossible for him to proceed on his voyage Viz. from Morlaix to Jersey without replacing his Mast, and causing some necessary repairs to be done to his Vessel. By an Invoice exhibited at this Office it appears the small Quantity of Goods on Board consist of 48 Dozen Pairs Boots with Soles being Prize Goods purchased in Morlaix and of English Manufacture. No Application has been made to land the same.

5 April 1802 The interior of the Custom House Offices above stairs at this Port being much in want of painting your Honors having been at no expence thereon since 1792 when the Lease was granted by the late Collector Mr Arnold to the Crown.

We take the liberty of transmitting a Painters Estimate for completing the same amounting to £9 – 17 – 3 which we humbly entreat your Honors will permit us to have done as it will render the Officers more comfortable, and be the means of preserving the Premises, which your Honors have covenanted by Lease to keep in Repair.

15 April 1802 We are requested by several of the Coal Merchants residing at Cowes and Newport to transmit you the inclosed complaint against Tobias Derrick one of the Sworn Meters of this Port who was admitted to his Office the 1st March 1779.

We beg leave to report that Derrick is about 56 Years of Age, was often reprimanded by the late Collector for Drunkenness and altho' never charged, no specific Complaint of Neglect of Duty having be preferred against him, his book has been so badly kept lately, owing as we understand to weakness and general Debility occasioned perhaps by Drink, that it has been with great difficulty, we were at all enabled to Check his Account. The Tidesurveyor reports that in his Surveys, when Colliers have been discharging he never found Derrick disguised in Liquor to prevent his doing his Duty but that he considers his age and Infirmary too great for an employ that requires no small action of bodily strength, an opinion in which we fully acquiesce.

30 April 1802 In transmitting to your Honors on the 15th Inst. a Complaint preferred by the Coal Merchants of the Isle of Wight against Tobias Derrick, one of the Sworn Meters of this Port on account of his Age and Inability to execute his Office properly, we erroneously stated him to be 56 Years of Age instead of 72 having been borne in the Year 1730, a Circumstance we think it our Duty to represent to your Honors in order to Correct the Error we were inadvertently led into by a wrong insertion in the Office Book of Ages and Capabilities.

8 May 1802 In obedience to your Order of the 4th Instant Mr Isham Chapman was this day admitted to the Officer of Comptroller of His Majesty's Customs at this Port.

The Sufficiency of his Sureties has been Certified to A. M. Raymond Esq. the Examiner.

14 May 1802 In Obedience to your Order of the 11th Inst. we have this day admitted Mr John Harris to the Command of the Fox Revenue Lugger Stationed at this Port.

The Sufficiency of the Securities have been duly Certified to Mr Raymond the Examiner. Pursuant to your Permission Captain Harris begs to nominate Mr John Ferris to be his Mate.

15 May 1802 Inclosed we transmit a Letter from Captain Ferris of the Swan recommending Edward Bartlett to be a Deputed Mariner in the room of John Harris Promoted. (Admitted 21 May.)

Also one from Mr John Harris recommending Mr John Ferris to be his Mate and William Arnold to be a Deputed Mariner of the Fox Lugger under his Command. (Admitted 26 May.)

19 May 1802 The Fox Lugger under the Command of Mr John Harris being in want of an Anchor and Cable and two Boats as well as some Arms and Ammunition Inclosed we transmit his Applications and Estimates for providing the same which he humbly prays your Honors will be pleased to allow him for the preservation of his Vessel and the Advantage of the Revenue.

19 May 1802 Inclosed we transmit a Letter from Captain Ferris of the Swan Cutter submitting for your Honors Consideration a Statement & an Affidavit of his Loss sustained in Victualling the Crew of the Cutter between the 10 October 1801 and the 5th April 1802 amounting to Sixty three Pounds Eight Shillings and a Half penny which he humbly prays your Honors have the Goodness to reimburse him.

19 May 1802 We humbly hope we do not incur your Honors displeasure in taking the liberty to renew an Application on behalf of William Gregory a Boatman on Incidents at this Port to be put on the superannuated List who on Account of Defect of Sight and General Infirmary has not been Employed since 17th November 1801 when we returned him to your Honors Incapable of further Service and in Consequence he has been devoid of all means of Support receiving only from us £1 – 5 per Quarter which we have thought ourselves justified in paying him under the Honorable Boards General Order of the 11th April 1801. The Answers to the printed superannuation Queries were transmitted in our Letter of 5 December last by which it appeared Gregory was near 58 Years of Age & had paid 25 Years and upwards to the superannuation Fund. As the Man is reduced to extreme Indigence we humbly presume to hope your Honors will Compassionate his miserable Situation by placing him on the List, considering it our Duty to assure your Honors that we should be guilty of great deception if we were to say he is in any way capable employed to the benefit of the Revenue.

27 May 1802 As directed by your Order of the 25th Inst. that we conceive if Vessels belonging to this Port under 40 Tons were furnished with Admiralty Licences, to go to Foreign Parts, it would be a great and real accommodation to the Fair Trader who may under such Permission Clear out for France or elsewhere and Import such Articles of Merchandize as the Existing Revenue Laws and Regulations will allow him.

And we are further of the of the opinion that the Illicit Trader living at this Port, or within the limits of it carries on his practice in Sloop Rigg'd Craft and would reject an Admiralty Licence if one was offer'd him on account of the heavy Penalty that would be levied on him in the event of his being detected in Smuggling, we have pretty good evidence there are Eighteen Vessels of this Description belonging to St Hellens solely engaged in the Contraband Trade, whose Owners and Masters if they were compelled to have an Admiralty Licence as much dread the Condition of the Bond as a Capias Penalty on Conviction.

With great Submission to your Honors, we venture to affirm if the Acts of the 24 – 34 and 35th of the King pass'd for the prevention of Smuggling had enacted that every Registered Vessel should be compelled to have an Admiralty Licence before she sail'd out of Port (taking away the option of an application from the Owner altogether) such compulsion would have operated more as a safeguard to the Revenue than any restriction we can point out.

When Owners of Vessels have personally enquired at this Office to know if they could obtain Foreign Licences and have been answered in the Negative of their Vessels if their Vessels did not Register 40

tons they have replied Do you think Gentlemen, we should require Licences if Smuggling was our Trade? no, it is only the Smuggler that will not have a Licence! – we want to employ our Vessels in a fair and lawful way.

Believing this to be the Fact, it is our Duty frankly to assure your Honors, that we did not see any risk of the Interests of the Revenue being prejudiced by granting Foreign Licences to small Vessels under 40 Tons, on sufficient Security being entered into for the good Conduct of these Vessels, which when done, we flatter ourselves the Masters will be less liable to commit Fraud on the Revenue than when they sail at large with fixed Bowsprits and liable to no responsibility.

5 June 1802 Inclosed we transmit the Bill of Health of the *Filea* Brig of Stockholm arrived this morning from Malaga with a Cargo of Wine Raisons &c as specified in the answers to the Printed Quarantine Questions which we also transmit for your Honors Information.

The *Filea* was run foul off the Isle of Wight in the Morning of the 3rd Inst. by an English Ship by which accident her Bows were stove in and the Brig otherwise so much damaged in Hull that it was with difficulty that the Crew could prevent her sinking before she reached Cowes.

She is placed under the Immediate Superintendence of the Tide Surveyor who has Officers on Board to debar all Communication on a Sand Bank some distance from the entrance to Cowes Harbour where only she can lay in safety during the restraint of Quarantine it being deemed by the Master, the Crew and our Tide Surveyor totally impossible in the State the Vessel is now in to bring her to Anchor in Cowes Roads or elsewhere without inevitable danger to ship and Cargo. As the position of the *Filea* is in line with the Watchhouse, your Honors may be persuaded no person can possibly approach her without being detected by the Officers whom we have enjoined to the utmost vigilance in this case till your directions are made known.

7 June 1802 Inclosed we transmit an Application from Mr Robert Willis Sitter of the Six Oared Boat at St Hellens who by your Honors Order of the 7th March was removed from Yarmouth in this Port to that Station and who in consequence of which removal we have the Satisfaction to State has Seized and brought to the Warehouse between that period and the 27th Ultimo 252 Casks of prohibited Spirits St Hellens being a place principally inhabited by Smugglers who send to Sea no less a number than 18 small Vessels for the purpose of carrying on their Trade, it is not expected Mr Willis can receive much civility from them but on the contrary every hostility they can shew him and the Crew without proceeding to Violence, in addition Willis's endeavours to obtain accommodation for himself and people we have Interested ourselves with a Gentleman of Landed property and influence in that Neighbourhood to assist him but without effect.

A Public House of all places we consider the most improper for Revenue Officers to Resort to for reasons so obvious that we apprehend it unnecessary to detail them, we submit to your Honors as the practice of the St Hellens Smugglers is Systematic and of long standing and likely to continue, if it would not be desirable to erect a small watch House on the Beach if land can be obtained for that purpose or for the present to order some Seized Sloop, their being none at this Port, to be brought from some other and to be moor'd in St Hellens Harbour which would afford lodging and accommodation for Mr Willis and his Crew and protection to the Boat when unemployed which must be reasonably the Case at Intervals. Mr Willis begs us to inform your Honors a Sloop that would answer the object suggested is now under Seizure at Portsmouth as he has been informed.

8 June 1802 In return to your Order of 25 Ult. respecting Mr John Ferris nominated to be Mate on a Temporary Cruizer at Poole, we beg to acquaint you that the said Ferris is in his Twenty Second Year, has from a child been bred to the Sea and for several Years has been with his Father on the Swan Cutter, a young Man of Character and never concerned in Smuggling.

9 June 1802 Inclosed we transmit an application from Captain Ferris requesting us to represent to your Honors that the Swan Cutter under his Command is in great want of a refit both in Caulking & Cordage as also a new Bowsprit and some Water Casks & that it would very much assist the Cutters Sailing to have the upper Works reduced 8 Inches.

We take the liberty of inclosing an Estimate from Mr Gely a Ship Builder for completing the alterations and likewise from the Rope Maker to supply the Cordage humbly craving your Honors directions thereon.

10 June 1802 We transmit an application from Mr John Harris Commander of the Fox Luggger at this Port who humbly prays your Honors to permit him to name Joseph Langrish as a proper Person to be his Mate in the room of John Ferris who is nominated to a Cruizer at Poole. Said Langrish is an experienced Man in the Revenue Service and has been a Mariner several Years on board the Swan Cutter and is competent to the Situation.

14 June 1802 As directed by your Order of the 3rd Inst we inform your Honors that Messrs Brown & Dunne Boat Builders have advised us that in less than 5 Weeks the two Boats for the Fox Luggger will be completed..

5 July 1802 As directed by your Order of the 18th Ultimo we have procured from the Officer at Portsmouth the description of a Sloop condemned at that Port (the particulars of which we inclose) that would afford Mr Robert Willis the Sitter of the Six Oared Boat and his Crew accommodations and shelter it being impossible to obtain any from the inhabitants of St Hellens ⁹/₁₀ of them being Reputed Smugglers. We have also in obedience to the said Order applied to Sir Richard Worsley the Lord of the Manor of St Hellens and Bembridge, who approving much of the Scheme of Erecting a Watchhouse has Authorised us in a very liberal manner to acquaint your Honours he will readily lease to the Crown for 99 years determinable on three lives, sufficient space of ground on any part of the Shore that shall be thought most Eligible to give efficiency to the Plan, at the annual quit rent of Ten Shillings. We humbly apprehend a Building to answer the purpose suggested would not be required, to be more than 30 feet by 14 feet, six feet high in the lower part for Stowing the Boat and her Materials, with a Room over the same fitted with 3 or 4 Cabin Berths and a fire Place for the Crew when the Boat is housed on account of the Badness of the weather to Cook occasionally their morsel, and that could be erected at Moderate Expence, we take the liberty to submit the proposal for your Honors Consideration being satisfied in our own minds that very beneficial Consequences to the interests of the Revenue may arise from such Establishment.

16 July 1802 The Swans Tender the Fox having been ordered to be continued in the Service by your Honors Letter of 27 March last some necessary repairs were indispensable before she could proceed to Cruize, and the same having been completed at the least possible expence, inclosed we transmit a list of Tradesmens Bills and Duplicates thereof amounting to £21 – 1 – 7½ for payment of which we humbly pray your Honors directions.

16 July 1802 The Fox Luggger under the Command of John Harris being by your Order of 11th May last appointed a Temporary Cruizer at this Port Independent of the Swan – inclosed we transmit Bills and Duplicates for Work done and Articles supplied agreeable to your Honorable Boards Order of 3 June last amounting to £44 – 16 – 2 for payment of which we humbly pray your Honors directions.

21 July 1802 William Cooper a Tidewaiter on the Establishment at this Port having met with an Accident while on duty has Requested Us to transmit to your Honors the inclosed Bill of the Surgeon for his Cure amounting to £3 – 3 which he humbly prays your Honors will take into consideration and Order the Payment as he is unable to pay the same.

23 July 1802 At the request of William Gregory one of the Boatmen on Incidents at St Hellens, who is in the State of Indigence we transmit to your Honors the inclosed Petition humbly recommending its prayer to your Consideration.

We take the liberty of reminding your Honors, by a Report made before the select Committee of Finance in the Year 1797, of which we have had perusal, it strikes us by the Appendix, your Honors then had it in Contemplation, not to fill up the Boatmans place at St Hellens in cases of Vacancy, by Resignation or Death.

Should your Honors think it proper to continue permanently the Six Oared Boat at St Hellens under the Command of Mr Willis we are humbly of the opinion that the position of William Gregory and George Granger may hereafter be dispensed with by which resolution the Crown would save £100 per Annum salary.

The Sitter & his Crew, would be equal to guarding the Harbour and Shore, and the little Coasting Business there may be transacted by the Riding Officer at Ryde it being no more than 3 Miles distant from his Station and within his District.

23 July 1802 Your Honors having been pleased by your Order of 11 May to appoint the Fox Luggier at this Port to be separate and Independant of the Swan Cutter without specifying the amount of Wages to be paid to the Commander and Crew.

As the Quarter is expired we take the liberty of inclosing a crave for the same humbly praying your directions thereon.

9 August 1802 Inclosed we transmit the Tidesurveyors Certificates of Three Smacks and One Open Boat as particularized on the back hereof. The Owners of the Smacks are desirous of obtaining Admiralty Licences to enable them to go to France with Freight and Passengers and for Oysters and in any other Lawfull and fair Trade that may Offer, Neither the Master nor Owner has be concerned in or convicted of Smuggling to our Knowledge.

Value £300	Smack Jane	Edward White Master	Cowes
Value £360	Smack Edward & Mary	William Mitchell Master	Cowes
Value £370	Smack Pricess	Moses Rogerson Master	Rochester
Value £16	Open Boat 4 Oars	Stephen Goss Owner	Cowes

17 August 1802 We beg to acquaint your Honors that the Smack Lord Nelson of this Port has been seized this Day by the Tide-surveyor the owner Mr Richard Harris having navigated the Vessel to France though his Admiralty Licence restricts her to four Leagues of the Coast and from London to Scilly.

We inclose for your Honors Information his Report and Licence, praying to receive your directions thereon.

18 August 1802 On the 16th Inst we forwarded under the Seals of Office addressed to the Kings Warehouse, St Hellens 5 Trunks and one Package containing the Baggage of Captain Murray and Mr *Darby* Two English Gentlemen landed here out of the American Ship Franklin Alexander Shaw Master from Manilla.

The Master of the Vessel that conveyed the Goods to Southampton says that the Waggoner could not ascertain the Charge of Carriage to London for want of Scales to weigh the Trunks.

19 August 1802 In obedience to your Order of the 14th Inst. we transmit another Bill for the cure of William Cooper, one of the Tidewaiters on the Establishment at this Port, who while on Duty fell and fractured a Rib. The Tidesurveyor has reported for your Honors Information such Circumstance as have come to his knowledge respecting the Accident (and we have to state in addition that the Surgeon says he is not in the habit of delivering Bills till after the expiration of Twelve Months unless they are particularly demanded) which will account for the lapse of Time from the Cure to the transmission of the first Bill.

23 August 1802 Inclosed we transmit a Charge we have been under the necessity of giving William Cooper a Tidewaiter at this Port for breach of your Honors Orders and Neglect of Duty. On further enquiry we find from Information of the other Tidewaiter Cooper returned to his Station before 9 Oclock and we have to add it is the first time he has been Charged.

27 September 1802 Mads Kerkegaard Master of the Danish Ship General de Dority of Copenhagen bound to Brest with a Cargo of Masts, Deals, Spars & Cordage Having made Oath before us that his Ship is so much damaged by the Violence of the weather he met with at Sea, that she makes at this time, Forty one Inches of Water every four hours, and that his Crew in consequence

have refused to proceed with the Ship in her present State to her Port of Destination, and it having been Certified to us by Five at this Place Competent Persons that the Leaks are under Water and that it is impossible to stop the same without unloading a part or whole of the Cargo. We have at the request of Messrs. Day Agents to the Master granted a Special Sufferance for depositing in a secure Warehouse under the Kings Locks the Deals, Cordage and small Spars and have directed the Landing Surveyor and Landing Waiters in case it should be needful to take out any of the Masts not to permit it to be done till they receive a further Warrant certifying that a sufficient Sum is lodged in our hands to answer the Duty thereon.

We have further enjoined the Waterside Officers to strict attendance on this occasion and to take all possible care to prevent the Revenue receiving any Injury by this or similar Indulgences to Vessels arriving at this Port in Distress.

27 September 1802 We beg to acquaint your Honors that the Six New Coal Bushels were craved in our Letter of the 23rd June are not yet received and as from the representations of the Coal Meters the Bushels now in use cannot be used with Justice to the Crown or the Public, we humbly pray your Honors will be pleased to direct that Six New Coal Bushels to be forwarded as soon as possible. (These were received on the 15th October.)

11 October 1802 The Swan Cutter having met with an Accident at Sea while under the Command of Mr Richard Comben the Mate the Captain having been much indisposed since his return from London as not to be able to do his Duty on board.

Inclosed we transmit to your Honors Combens Account of the Incident with a Statement of the Damage received by the Cutter in consequence, for the replacing and repairing of which we pray your direction.

20 October 1802 As instructed by your Letter of the 14th Inst. we transmit inclosed a Sketch of a Watch and Boat House proposed to be erected at St Hellens and an Estimate for building the same amounting to £232 for the purpose of affording Shelter to the Crew of the Six Oared Boat and housing occasionally the Boat and her Materials as suggested to your Honors in our Letter 5th July last to which we now beg to refer for the Terms and Conditions on which Sir Richard Worsley the Lord of the said Manner will permit the same to be put up.

When we assure your Honors that we have most incontrovertible Authority for believing $\frac{4}{5}$ of the Inhabitants of St Hellens and its opposite Shore Bembridge exist from Smuggling only, who send to Sea 20 Sloop Rigged Vessels purposely to carry on their fraudulent practices and that several of these people have and are now enriching themselves by their clandestine Trade with Guernsey and Jersey; we trust we shall not be thought too zealous in the discharge of our Duty by earnestly recommending the expediency of immediately providing some accommodation for Men whose Services are more often engaged by Night than Day and to whom all Shelter and Lodging have been refused by those People whose conduct they are appointed to Watch for these last Eight Months.

In support of which we inclose a Letter from Mr Robert Willis the Sitter, expressing the Inconveniences and Hardships himself and Crew have experienced this last Summer.

Should your Honors after consideration of the Facts (we have thought fit to lay before you) feel disinclined to Order the Plan of this Building to be carried into effect, we are humbly of the opinion if your Honors were pleased to grant Mr Willis and Crew, the use of some Seized Vessel of the Burthen of 30 or 40 Tons he may employ her, without any additional hand, in Cruizing round the Isle of Wight to much advantage and when the Weather might prove to boisterous, to keep and Watch the Coast, she might be moored in St Hellens Harbour which would answer the united purpose of accommodations and being a Check on the Smugglers when they run into Creek for Shelter from the Winds.

The Six Oared Boat may be used by them alternatively, that is in Calm and Moderate Weather.

On this Subject we have conversed with our Tide Surveyor and the Supervisor of Riding Officers both of whom from their local knowledge of St Hellens, Bembridge and the Isle of Wight Coast in General, assure is they have no doubt, the most favourable consequences may result from giving Willis a Vessel to Command.

The Collector and Comptroller of Southampton having by Letter the 11th Inst. apprised us, that in Christchurch and Needles Shores, would be in great degree left unguarded, by the absence of the Rose and *Batt* Ligger now under Repair at Deptford, we have directed Mr Willis and his Crew to keep a strict Watch on these parts of the Coast and to make Yarmouth pro tempora, that is until some arrangement made at St Hellens his place of Rendezvous which we hope under the circumstances before mentioned your Honors will approve.

9 November 1802 Inclosed we transmit an Account of Wages and Victualling due to the Commander, Mate and Crew of the Fox, Temporary Cruizer at this Port amounting to £139 – 18 – 0 humbly craved to be allowed for Michaelmas Quarter ended the 10th Ultimo.

And we humbly beg leave to request to prevent the Crew being distressed for want of their Pay when due, to receive your Honors Directions for pay the Fox Quarterly in future. (A marginal note states this should be £149 – 5 – 6.)

25 November 1802 We transmit inclosed an Estimate from Mr John *Godsell* Ropemaker here to supply the Tidesurveyor with a new Mooring for the use of the Watch Boat which he prays your Honors will please direct to be provided.

25 November 1802 The Tidesurveyor having represented to us that the Chimney of the Watch House is in fact fallen down and the remainder is in such a state of decay as to render some immediate repairs indispensably necessary. And finding your Honors have covenanted by lease granted by Lord Mount Edgecombe dated 14th April 1783 to keep the premises in repair, we take the liberty of transmitting the inclosed Estimate for rebuilding the Chimney and repairing the top of the Watch House which is injured by the fall of the same.

Amount of Estimate £5 – 0 – 0

21 December 1802 We are requested by Mr Willis Sitter of the Six Oared Boat representing to your honors that in the Evening of the 12th Instant when himself and Crew were endeavouring to intercept a Crop of Contraband Goods which he had received Information would be run in Freshwater that Night.

Several disposed Persons went on board the six Oared Boat then lying off Yarmouth Quay took out the Plug from the bottom of the Boat and sank her whereby the Oars and materials left in her were floated alongshore and some arms remaining in the Chest have become considerably injured.

To discover the Offender Robert Willis the Next Morning offered a Reward of Five Guineas and a Person by the name of John Broadly has given information and is willing to depose on Oath that about half past 10 o'clock on Sunday ninth the 12th Instant he saw a Young Man named Robert Squire get into the six Oared Boat stoop down it being moon light and he verily believes took out the Plug and sunk her that during this transaction James Cammell a reputed Smuggler, in whose employ the said Squire is sometimes engaged, passed the Quay with a view as Broadly believes to give the Alarm and that he has no doubt Cammell also aspiring to the Act. We think it our duty to communicate the foregoing particulars to your honors hoping that you will be pleased to direct such steps be taken against the Offenders as may prevent similar outrages being made on the Kings Boats. (A footnote states the Oars and Materials were recovered.)

5 January 1803 As directed by your Order of the 4th Ultimo we transmit inclosed an Estimate for building with Brick a Watch House on land at St Hellens to be leased by the Sitter of the Six Oared Boat amounting to £201 – 14 – 5.

We take the liberty of stating to your honors that from the increase in Smuggling at the Back of the Isle of Wight we have considered it our Duty to confer with Captain Ferris of the Swan Cutter and the Supervisor and Riding Officers who are Stationed on that part of the Coast for the purpose of receiving their opinions as to what plan may be submitted to your honors to suppress Smuggling which is these parts since the end of the war has increased beyond any former instances.

These Officers unanimously agree that as the sinking of Casks now practised by the Smugglers and frequently done in open day, a small Vessel of about 40 Tons to be Commanded by Robert Willis with the addition of two Men and a Boy to the present Compliment of the Six Oared Boat would stand as

much chance of intercepting the Illicit Traders than a Boat and prove ultimately of less expence to your honors than building a Watch House to afford shelter to the Sitters Crew. It is well known that Cutters from 80 to 100 Tons *do not work* in the Bays at the Back of the Isle of Wight on account of their draught of Water and a Vessel of 40 Tons could act in such places safely and we are confident with success as we have no less than 20 Vessels from 15 to 40 Tons belonging to this Port where owners have no other employ but smuggling.

We would recommend in case your Honors feel inclined to adopt our proposal, which we submit from a Sincere Conviction that it would be attended with Success, that Robert Willis should be confined to Cruize round the Island only and under no pretence ever to extend his Limits farther than the Owers or Portland and that the place of Rendezvous when in Port on account of bad Weather should be St Hellens Harbour which is surrounded by People who exist by Smuggling alone and who we have already represented to your honors have refused Willis and his Crew Lodgings to accommodate them from the Inclemency of the Winter and it further being their policy to keep Revenue Officers at a great a distance as possible.

13 January 1803 We take the liberty under the Boards General Order of 11th April 1801 to transmit the inclosed statement of Salary received by William Gregory a Boatman on Incidents at this Port between the 5th January 1802 and the 3rd January 1803 and humbly to Crave from your Honors an Allowance of Twenty Five Pounds being the difference between the Sum he has actually received this last Year and his former Salary of £30 per Annum.

Gregory's Health and general debility with defect of Sight will not warrant any expectation of his ever being capable of serving your Honors again and we beg to be permitted to renew our recommendation that he may be placed on the Superannuation List.

Gregory is now 59 Years of Age and has paid 26 Years into the Superannuation Fund, the particulars of which, with our answers to the Printed Questions were transmitted to your Honors in our Letter of the 5th December 1801. We trust your Honors will with as little loss of time as possible extend your compassion to an old Servant who has been maintained these last 12 Months by a poor Family, on the assurance of their being paid for the same at the expiration of the Year.

21 January 1803 In obedience to your Order of 4 Instant directing us to set forth the Circumstances of the sinking of the Six Oared Boat at Yarmouth in an Affidavit on a two Shilling Stamped Paper, we have to report that Thomas Broadley, the only Person who saw the Act and the Informant against the parties is not to be found within the Isle of Wight.

Robert Willis the Sitter of the Boat acquaints us that about the 20 Ultimo a Week subsequent to the transaction Mr Serani of Alderney, a Person who supplies Smugglers with Contraband Goods came to Yarmouth in a Cutter belonging to himself and took Broadley with him. One of Willis's Crew John Dyer was told by Broadley that Serani should say he would not have had the Boat sunk for 50 Guineas, that it would be a most serious Business if anything happened to Cammel and Squire, the People who sank her, and that Broadley the only Evidence should not stay in Yarmouth and that he Serani would provide for him in his Employ which we understand to be the case. Broadley has not been on the Island since, but is supposed to be on board a Smuggling Vessel.

13 April 1803 The Tidesurveyor being in want of some New Oars for the use of the Watch Boat and none being made here to answer the purpose he humbly prays your Honors to direct that four pairs be forwarded him from London – we beg leave at the same time two large red Colours one for the Custom House and one for the Watch House none having been received since the Union.

13 April 1803 We herewith transmit an Affidavit from Captain Ferris by which it will appear that between the 10th October 1802 & the 5th January 1803 he suffered a Loss in Victualling the Crew of the Swan Cutter of Forty Pounds and Eleven Pence humbly praying your Honors to reimburse him the same.

23 April 1803 It is our Duty to appraise your Honors that the Lease of the Watch House and Tide Surveyors Office West Cowes granted by Lord Edgecombe for 21 Years to the Crown from St Thomas's day 1782 will expire Christmas ensuing.

The property which is in every Respect desirable for the occupation of the Tide Surveyor and the Watch Employ has lately devolved to a Minor of 12 Years and the Guardians authorise Us to inform your Honors that they have no Objection to renew the Lease for 9 Years or to lett the premises annually on the same Terms and Conditions as expressed in the Old Lease Viz. £18 – 0 – 18 per Annum and the Crown to keep the same in tenantable repair.

As the Value of Property is increasing in Cowes we are humbly of the opinion it is advisable to take a fresh Lease.

5 May 1803 This Watch House cannot be dispensed with and we can reason no situation in all respects so eligible for the Tide Surveyors occupation as the site on which the Watchhouse stands, it being at the entrance to the Harbour commanding all vessels that come in and Cowes Roads being constantly in view.

23 May 1803 As directed by your Order of the 21st Inst. we acquaint your Honors that the Brandy salved out of the Gosport and Havre Packet in this Port in the Year 1787 was sold by your Order of 26th March 1789 a copy of which we subjoin.

For the cause which prevented this matter be brought to an earlier termination, we beg to refer your Honours to our letter of 13th August 1801.

24 May 1803 It being reported that the Coast of the Isle of Wight and from the Needles westwards will in a short time be infested with small French Privateers and Boats as was the Case at the Commencement of the last War.

We submit to your Honors if it may not be thought expedient to employ under the Command of Mr Robert Willis a fine fast Sailing Lugger Seized at this Port 34 Tons register called the Fox of Dover returned in the Court of the Exchequer this present Term and we presume now condemned.

The Vessel is in a Good State well found in Sails Stores and a proper Boat and may fitted out at a few Pounds Expence.

Mr Willis is Sitter of the Six Oared Boat and would require only three Men in addition to his Boats Crew to make his Complement 10 altogether which would be sufficient.

He is an Intelligent active Officer and has lately taken two very good Prizes of Contraband Spirits and a Sloop.

For his Character and merit when he Commanded a Temporary Cruizer last War similar to that we are now recommending, we beg leave to Solicit your Honors perusal of a Letter wrote by the late Collector to Mr Secretary on Mr Willis's Capture of a French Privateer off Portland on the 25th April 1797.

15 June 1803 In obedience to your Order of the 13th Inst. we have to report that the Cargoes of detained Vessels at this Port have in no instance been permitted to be taken out since the Order in Council for laying the same under Embargo.

Prior to the said Order the Cargoes of two Vessels which arrived here in distress, and whose Cargoes are detained were allowed to be discharged and secured under the King's Locks, an Account of which we beg to enclose.

Hoop of Middleburg	Gerritt Redker	<i>Dunesara</i> – Middleburg Coffee, Cotton & Sugar pemitted to be landed & stored under the King's Locks by Special Sufferance the Vessel having put into this Port in <u>Distress</u> a part only of the above Cargo having been unshipp'd when the Order in Council was received.
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Gord Vousagting of Hadwick Holland	Peter Green	Bourdeaux – Konigsburg Wine and Fruit permitted to be landed & stored under the King's Lock by <u>Special Sufferance</u> the Vessel having put into this Port in <u>Distress</u> & none of the above Cargo reshipp'd.
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18 June 1803 The Fox Lugger, commanded by Mr John Harris being much in need of Four new Sails, the old ones that were seized in her some Years back, being scarcely fit for further Service he has requested us to forward your Honors the inclosed Estimate of the Expence for providing new

ones amounting to £38 – 15 – 10 which he prays your Honors Order may be issued with the loss of a little time as possible.

18 June 1803 As directed by you Order of the 15th Inst. he have to report it is our invariable practice to deliver to all Tide Waiters and Extramen in your Honors employ at the time of being to admitted their respective situations a copy of the Honorable Boards resolutions agreeable to the inclosed Specimen for which we take their Receipts in a Book kept for the purpose of acknowledging the delivery of Commissions.

8 July 1803 We feel it our Duty to represent to your Honors that Tobias Derrick one of the Sworn Coal Meters at this Port is now so advanced in Years being 73 as to be unequal in bodily Strength to the exertion required in the admeasurement of Coals.

On the 15th April 1802 in our Letters No. 56 and 64 we transmitted to your Honors a Complaint against Derrick from the Coal Merchants of the Isle of Wight stating his inability to perform his Duty a copy of which we beg to inclose. We then suspended him from being employed about six weeks waiting your Honors Orders but none having been received thereon we again permitted him to be appointed to meter Coals on his Assurance that he was in better Health and would attend rigidly to the Duty.

The 24th Ultimo the Blessing of Sunderland Whitfield Bourgh Master arrived here with a Cargo of Coals Sixty two Chaldrons Of Cocket NM Derrick having the Delivery of them made up according to his Book One Hundred and Twenty One Chaldrons and nine Bushels being nearly Three Chaldrons short of double Coal, on enquiry Mr Cooper the Coal Merchant for the Cause of the deficiency he informed us that Derrick had kept an incorrect Account and that it was not within his power to keep a proper one as he was too old for Duty and that he Cooper had received from the Ship Blessing one Hundred and Twenty Four Chaldrons and 9 Bushels as will appear by the inclosed Declaration that he paid the Master for that Quantity and on which he had no objection to pay the Duties which have accordingly been taken by us and carried to Account. Derrick having been obstinate enough to have sworn to his inaccurate score as being the whole of the Cargo, had we thought ourselves Justified in refusing him after the Merchants Confession before stated and until we had laid his misconduct and incapacity before your Honors and received thereon such Instructions for our future Government with respect to our playing Derrick again or discontinuing his Services altogether you may think proper to issue in the mean time it is incumbent on us to avow to your Honors that it is not in the power of this old Man as Meter to do Justice to the Crown or Public and as Debility increases with Age can we see the least probability of his ever being Capable.

20 July 1803 Robert Scriven to whom the Honorable Board on the 9th March 1773 issued a commission to act as a Boatman & Tidesman but without any Salary or Allowance from the Crown died this Morning.

8 September 1803 We transmit inclosed an application from the Deputy Searcher at this Port who prays for your Honors to grant him Leave of absence for one Month on account of ill health. ([The Deputy Searcher was William Holloway.](#))

14 September 1803 The request by an old and we believe faithful Officer belonging to this Port to submit to your Honors the inclosed Petition the object of which is to obtain your permission that Charles Leigh who stands on the Establishment as Coastwaiter and Boatman at Yarmouth in this Port may hereafter be denominated Boatman only, hoping thereby he may be entitled like other Boatmen, to receive 2/6 per Day when employed and praying that your Honors will be pleased to allow him as stated in the within Papers £31 – 7 being the difference between his Emoluments as Coastwaiter for Two Years from 5th April 1801 to 5th April 1803 and what he would have received as a Boatman @ 2/6 per Day under the Honorable Boards Regulations of 11th April 1801 – Charles Leigh has been in your Honors Service upwards of 21 Years and his principal Duty is to guard the Coast and board all Vessels that come to Anchor in Yarmouth roads and to attend the Shipping and Landing of Goods Coastwise. Leigh has frequently applied to us to represent respectfully to your Honors the insufficiency of his income to maintain himself and Family and to state for your Consideration that he is the only inferior Officer at this Port that has not benefited from your General Order of 11th April 1801 being excluded from its advantages merely on account of his being called a Coastwaiter though his particular Duty is that of Boatman.

3 October 1803 The Fox Lugger Commanded by Mr John Harris being much in want of a new Boat the one now in use having received so much Injury in boarding a Prize about three Weeks ago so as to be Scarcely sea Worthy and likewise of a partial refit some Caulking and Cordage.

Inclosed we transmit your Honors his Application expressing the particulars of his Crave and an Estimate of the Expence of a New Boat amounting to £19 – 6 – 4 which he humbly prays you will be pleased to grant him that he may without hazarding the Lives of his People send a Boat along Shore to fulfil the Duties of his Command and which in blowing Weather he cannot now do for want of a safe Boat.

We beg to represent to your Honors Captain Harris's vigilance has lately been rewarded by the Capture of two Sloops laden with 460 Casks of Contraband Spirits the whole of which he has delivered to our Custody.

10 October 1803 Yesterday died Mr John Grimes Riding Surveyor at this Port. *To cover* the Vacancy we have appointed Mr William Robey an active and competent Riding Officer to act as Surveyor.

21 October 1803 We transmit inclosed an Estimate from Mr Thomas Goodall Rope make to supply the Watch Boat with a mooring Rope which the Tide Surveyor humbly craves him as it is much wanted.

22 October 1803 The usual Quantity of Coals having been laid in for the Custom House and Tide Surveyors Office and Watchhouse for the ensuing Winter, inclosed we transmit the Tradesmans Bill for the same amounting to £18 – 12 for the payment of which we pray to receive your Orders.

10 November 1803 Yesterday Morning was Wrecked at Mottiston on the South part of this Island the Hamburg Brig Louisa J Jacobs Master Oporto to Christiansand laden with Sugar, Hides &c. the Comptroller has gone to the Wreck with several trusty Tidesmen to assist in the Salving of Goods and to prevent Embezzlement. (Mew in 'Back of the Wight' states that the wreck was at Sudmore Point and that the Vessel was loaded with sugar, hides, bags of bay leaves, berries and other drugs. Ship and cargo mostly lost, crew all saved.)

22 November 1803 Captain Ferris of the Swan Cutter and Mr John Harris of the Fox Lugger having paid into our hands Thirteen Pounds and Thirteen Shillings and one half Penny Prize Money due to several mariners by forfeited by reason of them having been Run for Misconduct by their respective Commanders.

We humbly Crave your directions for applying the same.

Captain Ferris £7 – 14 – 7

Captain Harris £5 – 10 – 5½