

## Letters to the Commissioners 1769 1774

Transcribed from the book at the National Archives reference CUST 61/4

6 June 1769 Inclosed we return the Memorial of Mr Margesson relative to some Haberdashery Goods found in a Cask of Tobacco and seized by Andrew Moucher Waiter and Searcher, Newport for being taken Coastwise from London in the Prince Edward John Harvey Master without any Dispatch and beg leave to report that an account of this Seizure was sent to your Honours the 29<sup>th</sup> April last, and though it is very wrong to pack any goods with Tobacco, yet we apprehend there was no design of Fraud and the Goods are all of British manufacture.

29 June 1769 Yesterday died Mr John Wilkinson Deputy Comptroller of this Office. Mr James Gill will if your Honours approve thereof take care of the Duty until a proper person is appointed to succeed him.

10 July 1769 From a Book kept in this place it appears that the weights, scales, corn & coal bushels, stamps for hides, skins, linen, seized goods and sail cloth made use of in the preceding month were tried and tested and found to be just and true and in good repair.

15 July 1769 The petition of John Munt Salt Maker at Newtown in the Isle of Wight

That your Petitioner bought at Lymington in this County for the use of his Salt works at Newtown forty two chalders of Coal which he had brought over twice in the Liberty, John Oak Master, cockets dated 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> May last but through ignorance he landed his Coal at Newtown before the cockets were put into the proper Office at Cowes & Sufferances granted for landing them.

Your Petitioner therefore prays your Honours will be pleased to direct your Officer at Cowes to grant him returns to discharge the Bonds given for said Coals at Lymington as there was no design of fraud & the omission happened through ignorance and you Petitioner shall ever pray.

21 August 1769 In obedience to your Commands of the 27<sup>th</sup> Ultimo we have strongly recommended it to the Extra Tidesmen and Boatmen of this Port who had previously refused to pay towards raising a Fund for the Support of Incidental Officers in the Out Ports; and they have all agreed to pay towards the same; and we pray to be informed if the deduction is to begin to be made out of last Quarter's Pay of the Incidental Officers.

30 August 1769 In obedience your Command of 25<sup>th</sup> Instant we have called upon Thomas Mead to know whether he is willing to be appointed Tidesman at Bristol at Two Shillings per Day when Employed or One Shilling per Day when attending to be Boarded, or whether he had rather be appointed a Boatmen at Chester at a Salary of Twenty Pounds per annum; and Mead after considering the same prays your Honours will be pleased to appoint him a Tidesman at Bristol.

4 September 1769 In obedience to you Command of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ultimo we transmit the Affidavits of Elias Rayner and Thomas Mead relating to One Hundred and seventy six pound of Tea Seized by said Rayner 6<sup>th</sup> last month which we beg to refer.

Affidavit from Elias Rayner, 26 August Elias Rayner Tidesman and Boatman in the Port of West Cowes in the Isle of Wight in the county of Southampton maketh Oath and saith that about Ten or Eleven of the Clock in the Night time between the sixth and seventh of this instant August as he the Deponent and Thomas Mead of West Cowes in the Isle of Wight aforesaid Mariner were in a field of oats near West Cowes aforesaid they met three persons with some bundles or parcels on their backs, who upon seeing this Deponent, and the said Mead immediately threw the same upon the Ground and ran away. Whereupon he the Deponent examined such parcels and discovered them to be Twenty nine small Oil Skin Bags of Tea containing in the whole about One Hundred and seventy six pounds of Tea which he immediately Seized and carried the Next Day to His Majesty's Customs House at Cowes aforesaid. And this Deponent further saith that soon after he had Seized the said Tea one David Sanders of the Parish of Northwood in the Isle of Wight aforesaid mariner came up to this Deponent and desired him not to take any notice of what had passed, mention his name and this Deponent also saith that David Sanders came to his House the Next day and confessed he was one

of the Persons that he the deponent had met the Evening before and again desired him not to say anything of the matter.

Affidavit from Thomas Mead, 2 September 1769 Thomas Mead of West Cowes in the Isle of Wight in the County of Southampton Mariner maketh Oath and saith that about Ten or Eleven of the Clock in the Night time between the sixth and seventh days of this instant August as he this Deponent and Elias Rayner Tidesman at Boatman of the Port of Cowes in the Isle of Wight aforesaid were in a field of oats near West Cowes aforesaid they met three persons with some bundles or parcels on their backs, who upon seeing this Deponent, and said Rayner examined such parcels and discovered them to be Twenty nine small Oil Skin Bags of Tea which he immediately seized. And this Deponent further saith that whilst Rayner was examining the Parcels he watched the said Persons whither they went, and that soon after one of them returned to the said Rayner and this Deponent, and desired them not to take any notice of what had passed, or to mention his name, and that the Person who so returned was David Sanders of the Parish of Northwood in the Isle of Wight Aforesaid Mariner, and this Deponent also saith that he well knows the said Sanders was one of the three Persons who had such Tea, for that he had not lost sight of them when the said Sanders returned to said Rayner and this Deponent aforesaid, but either of the other two Persons this Deponent knows not.

12 September 1769 We beg leave to report that John Andrews, Sitter of the six oared boat at St Hellens in this port has hitherto demean'd himself in every respect as he ought and we believe he has used his best endeavours as wind and weather would permit to render this boat as useful as possible but after all his endeavours we are humbly of the opinion he cannot do much towards making of seizures with so small a boat especially in such seas as we often have upon this coast of this Island, but if his boat was larger she would be fitted to go out round Bembridge ledge and into the Bays at proper times and he would unavoidably have it in his power to make a great many more seizures than he possibly can with this boat in bad weather which is the chief time for smuggling.

19 September 1769 We received your Command of the 12<sup>th</sup> Instant to Report whether David Saunders who was lately sworn against by Elias Rayner and Thomas Mead for being concerned in Smugling One Hundred seventy six Pounds of Tea is able to pay the Penalty in case the same should be Recovered, or to make an adequate Composition; and having Examined into his Circumstances, we believe from the best Information we can at present obtain that he is able to pay a large Composition if not the full Penalty, and desire the Prosecution may be carried on under Treasury Directions.

20 September 1769 John Miller, Tide Surveyor at this Port has for the advantage of the service removed to dwell in the Watch House where he can better observe and examine all ships coming in and going out and see that the Tidesmen and Boatmen are on their duty, but he prays in regard to the Watch House is near the Waterside, whereby he will be more exposed to cold that he may have an allowance of one chalder and a half of coals and three dozen pounds of candles for the use of his office every year as was allowed to his predecessor. (A chalder (chaldron) appears to have been 36 bushels, weighing 5936 pounds or 2692.52 kilograms.)

29 September 1769 We have communicated to Thomas Mead your Honour's order of 26th instant and desired him to inform us if he was content to be appointed boatman at the Port of Chester at twenty pounds per annum, and tho few are better qualified for the management of a boat than himself, yet he is doubtful about accepting of this place fearing it will not be bread for his family as he has a wife and six children and therefore he desires to wait untill something offers that will be better maintenance for them.

4 October 1769 In obedience to your Honors command of 21 Ult. we have again made strict enquiry & cannot obtain any proof that Isaac Mitchell harboured and concealed the Brandy and Geneva in his Boathouse & we have greatest reason to believe him innocent, from his voluntary offering to make an affidavit (if required) that he was not the owner.

10 November 1769 The Humble petition of David Saunders of West Cowes:-  
Sheweth that your Petitioner has lately been arrested on an Exchequer Capias by your Honours

directions requiring bail for £88 to which he with great difficulty procured bail to prevent his being carried directly to gaol.

That he has a wife and no less than six children, the eldest of which is not yet thirteen years of age, to maintain entirely by his daily labour, and which he is with the greatest difficulty but barely able to do and is more over in very low circumstances, and therefore unless your Honours are pleased to put a stop to the said prosecution he must surrender himself to gaol and his said wife and a numerous family be irretrievably ruined.

To prevent which fatal consequences he will by endeavouring to borrow of his neighbours in compensation to such, his wife and family's distress, to raise the sum of five pounds and the charges hitherto accrued in the said prosecution and which he hereby must humbly offers as a composition and which he beseeches your Honours acceptance and thereby be a means of saving himself and his said wife and numerous family from such otherwise unavoidable ruin and distress and he is moreover ready and willing to give his Bond in any Penalty your honours shall think proper for Ever to Restrain him from being guilty of any Act of Smuggling in any manner whatever.

25 November 1769 Inclosed we return the petition of David Sanders under prosecution for being concerned in the running of One hundred and seventy six pounds of tea praying the sum of five pounds and costs may be Accepted for his offence and having enquired into the same we beg to Report that he bears the character of a reputed smuggler and is able to pay much larger Composition, so that unless he makes a more adequate offer we are humbly of the opinion that the prosecution should go on.

17 January 1770 The 22<sup>nd</sup> August last your Honours sent us a Commission for John Preston to be a Tidesman and Boatman at this Port in the room of John Alexander who before his Death had resigned that Employment, but as the said Preston hath not since applied to us to take up his Commission and we don't know where he now lives we desire to be informed if we must keep the Commission for any longer or return it to your Honours.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1767 John Joliffe was recommended to your Honours for a Commission to succeed William Russell late Tidesman and Boatman at the Port deceased and as we are in daily expectation of the want of such Officers we pray a Commission may be sent for him.

Joseph Woods an Extra Tidesman and Boatman at this Port, and one who also has your Honours Commission is so old and infirm that he is no longer capable of being boarded or rowing the Watch Boat, on which we beg to recommend your Honours Henry Twyman to succeed him and inclose a Certificate of his Qualification, praying a Commission may be sent us also for him.

We beg likewise to inform your Honours that there is very much wanted for the Service at St Hellens in this Port a new Boat, the old one being entirely worn out and Christopher Bullock, John Mew and Nicholas Devenish Boatman there pray your Honours will be pleased to give us directions to have a New Boat built for them fit for the Service, which is humbly submitted.

23 January 1770 We have in obedience to your Honours Order of the 16<sup>th</sup> Instant Examined into the inclosed Complaint of Thomas Mead and Robert Twyman against Elias Rayner Tidesman and Boatman at this Port, and beg leave to Report, That on the 6<sup>th</sup> August last in the Evening it was agreed between Elias Rayner and the five following Extra Tidesmen viz. Thomas Mead, Robert Twyman, William Jeffery and Richard Craddick that as they suspected some Run Goods would be brought into the Town of West Cowes that night they would keep a good lookout and Endeavour to Seize some of them, accordingly they agreed with the Approbation of Mr Miller Tide Surveyor to leave Richard Craddick at the Watch House and the other four to set out different Ways, that is to say two one way and two another and to meet at a place called Three Gates about a mile and a quarter from West Cowes; Rayner and Mead Watched in a field of Oats and they had not been there many Minutes before three men came up to them, each loaded with a large bundle on his back and upon Mead's calling out very loud and Swearing at them they were in such confusion that they fell down one upon another and threw their Bundles off and immediately got up and Runaway to a distance of about forty or fifty Yards, and then stood still for some minutes, then David Sanders one of the three Persons returned and came up to Rayner at a little Distance from the three Bundles of Tea which lay on the Ground Guarded by Mead and talked with him for near a Quarter of an Hour, and Mead heard

Sanders say to Mead you did not see me throw the Tea off my Back, therefore you need not say any thing of me at the Custom House, but he could not hear the rest of the Conversation. Mead promised Sanders not to bring his name in question, but it was in Order to bring off the Goods safe, not knowing how many Smugglers might be at stand, besides the three. The Tea was carried to the Watch House that Night, and the next day brought to the Warehouse when Rayner, after he had been examined about making said Seizure gave the following account:

“Last night between Ten and Eleven of the Clock I was Watching with Thomas Mead in a field of Oats near West Cowes belonging to William Storey, we met with three men whose names are unknown / who immediately upon seeing us threw of their Backs and Runaway / Twenty nine small Oil Skin Bags containing One Hundred seventy four Pounds of Tea, Which I Seized for being Run. Witnessed my hand 7<sup>th</sup> August 1769. Signed Elias Rayner.

The account of Seizure was sent to your Honours the 9<sup>th</sup> August and the 16<sup>th</sup> Mead discovered to us that David Sanders was on of the three men; upon which we acquainted your Honours and received for an answer that we should cause an Affidavit to be made by Mead and another by Rayner before a Commissioner in the Courts of the Exchequer which was accordingly done and sent to your Honours and Sanders is now under Prosecution for Running the said Tea.

Mead says that Rayner the same night at the Watch House after the seizure was made, proposed to him not to discover Sanders, if he would agree to bring another parcel of Goods of Equal value for them only to Seize, which proposal Mead rejected, and said to Rayner he might do as he would, but Mead have no hand in doing it. Notwithstanding Mead rejected this proposal, yet the next morning before the Tea was brought to the Warehouse Rayner saw Sanders go bye his House, called him in, and proposed the same thing to him he never would discover him if he would bring another parcel of Goods of equal value and let him and Mead only Seize them, with the further addition he gave him up to a month to do it.

David Sander's second Petition to your Honours was referred to us to report whether he was able to pay any and what further Sum by way of Composition for his said Offence than his offer of Fifteen Pounds and charges and that we might get the best Information we could with respect to his Circumstances, we desired Mr Miller, Tide Surveyor as he lived in his Neighbourhood to inquire into the same, and he did so accordingly, and also consulted with the Officers concerned in the said Seizure, and they all agreed (except Elias Rayner who was rather for Excusing him) that he was able to pay Forty Guineas and Charges of which we acquainted your Honours on the 15<sup>th</sup> Instant.

We have on examining all Parties give your Honours as particular Account of the Circumstances of this Seizure as we have been able to obtain; and beg leave to observe that Rayner throughout the whole affair hath acted a very partial, Selfish part which his collusive proposals fully evince.

Mead we think is not without some share of the blame because he stood bye when Rayner was Examined, and heard him give a false account of said Seizure, which he did not contradict until nine days afterwards.

10 February 1770 In obedience to you command of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ultimo, inclosed is an Estimate of the Charge for building a New Boat for the Service at St Hellens in this Port amounting to Thirteen Pounds and Six Shillings to which we beg leave to refer and pray for your Honours Order.

Estimate from William Richardson 10 February 1770 An Estimate of a New Boat to be built for the Service of the Customs at St Hellens in this Port. Nineteen Feet Long, Seven Feet Broad and Three Feet Deep; to be Clenker built, with Oak, Three quarters of an Inch thick, Ring Bolts, Rudder Irons, Paint Work and a four Inch wash Streak around & fastened to the Gunwale and all to be Completed in a Workmanlike Manner in three Weeks after bespoke for the Price of Fourteen Shillings per Foot amounting to Thirteen Pounds.

14 February 1770 We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that we have in Cowes Roads Reisntje Pieterise De Graaf Master of the Dutch Hoy called the Juffroua Debera of Friesland of the Berthen Eighty Tons from Amsterdam laden with Tea and Hogsheads of Geneva pretending to be bound to Cherburgh; and Claas Stockman Master of a Dutch Sloop called Jorge Jacob Anna of and from Amsterdam Berthen Thirty six Tons laden with Thirty two Hogsheads of Geneva pretending to be bound for Lisbon, but first to Falmouth to take in Fish. We have given a strict charge to the Tide

Surveyor to keep a good lookout while they continue at this Port, for we believe they are illicit trade along the Coast.

21 February 1770 The 14<sup>th</sup> Instant we acquainted your Honours that there was and still is in this Road a Dutch Hoy called the Juffroua Debera, Reisntje Pieterise De Graaf Master of Amsterdam pretending to be bound for Cherburg, but we are informed she is really bound for Alderney, she has on board about One hundred eighty three large Chests or Cases of Tea and about Forty Hogsheads of Geneva we make no doubt that she is upon an illicit Trade, because here is a Small Cutter in Ballast attending upon her belonging to Alderney called the Free *Mason* Nicholas Oliver Master and we are informed there is two Men on board the Dutch Hoy belonging to Alderney for Pilots and one of them tis said to belong to this Cutter.

17 July 1770 The inclosed Memorial of Elias Rayner to your Honours relating to the Fine David Saunders has incurred with two other Persons as yet unknown to us for Running One hundred and seventy six Pounds of Tea on the 6<sup>th</sup> August last, being referred to us we beg leave to report that on 23<sup>rd</sup> January last we laid before your Honours as *full* a state of this Seizure as it was possible for us to obtain upon a complaint made to your Honours by Thomas Mead and Robert Twyman against the said Rayner. And on this occasion we have examined Rayner as to his intent of writing the inclosed to your Honours and he declares it was with the *intention* of Preventing Sanders of making up the Prosecution he is under for being concerned in Running the said Tea, for less than the whole Penalty because the connexion he has with the Person therein mentioned and the success they have had lately in Smuggling it is believed that he is now able to pay it or at least more than he has already offered, which is forty Guineas and the Crowns Charges.

Upon enquiry we are informed that Sanders did give Mead a Guinea, but as he is not here to Answer for himself, we cannot pretend to be certain upon what account he received it, we suppose it was to render Sanders what service he could in the Affair.

As to Mr Gill being Partial to John White or any other person under Prosecution for Offences committed against the Crown as Rayner (who is a very Equivocating Fellow) thinks, is void of all truth, and from his Character without least Foundation.

18 August 1770 The Industry, William Colville Master is arrived at this Port from Georgia with a Cargo of Rice, Skins, Staves and about Fifteen hundred Reeds, the latter of which are not mentioned in the Plantation Certificates but on discharging the Cargo there was found nine Hundred Reeds and one Barrel of Rice more than were Reported, upon this disagreement we called upon the Master who has made Oath before us, which is enclosed, by which it appears he verily believes the Reeds and Barrel of Rice are of the Produce of the British Plantations, and that no fraud was intended, although they were omitted to be inserted on the Plantation Certificates.

1 September 1770 Inclosed we transmit to your Honors a Letter we have received from Mr John Miller Tide Surveyor at this Port inclosing a Copy of one he had received from Mr James Broadfoot relative to a Seizure of five Boxes and one Truss of Linen and Woollen Drapery Goods and Fifty six yards of Muslin which your Honors were pleased by your Order of the 27<sup>th</sup> July last to direct to be restored to him on his making the Officer a moderate Satisfaction but tho' Mr Miller has offered to deliver the said Goods on receiving such a satisfaction, yet the Proprietor refuses to give any, and threatens to Arrest the Officer if the Goods are not delivered according to his Order. On which we observe if this Officer is Obligated to deliver up these Goods without any Satisfaction being made to him, it will intimidate the Officers of the Waterguard that they will be afraid to stop Goods coming into the Island without Dispatches which will open an inlet to the practice of great Frauds. And we are therefore of the humble opinion that Mr Miller who was strictly in performance of his Duty on this occasion should be defended at the Crown's charge if Mr Broadfoot should proceed as far as bringing any action against him for Seizing these Goods which is humbly submitted.

29 October 1770 Inclosed we return the application of Daniel Dore of Freshwater in this Island Shoemaker, to your Honors relating to two Hundred and six Pounds of British Tanned Leather which was Seized by Mr John Miller Tide Surveyor at this Port for being brought Coastwise from Portsmouth without any Dispatches and returned in our Account of Seizures dated the 16<sup>th</sup> Instant tho' this Leather

was brought without and Dispatches contrary to the Law, it does not appear that any Fraud was intended, which we submit for your Honors consideration.

14 November 1770 Some time last month the Collector received a renewed Capias from the Solicitor against John Hall who belongs to a large smuggling lugger whereof John Studdard is the master. In the night of 10th instant, the said lugger being in this road and many of the men belonging to her on shore, dispersed in the Public Houses at West Cowes, William Moucher and Thomas Duke found Hall at the "Plume of Feathers" and arrested him and was conveying him to the Watch House in order to keep him therein safely till next morning, but on their way, meeting with John Parkman, a notorious smuggler, he immediately got together with the luggers men and fell upon the officers and rescued the said Hall who upon getting clear fired two pistols amongst the officers and people that were gathered together in the street upon the fray, but it so happened no mischief was done. After this some of the luggers men rioted about West Cowes and meeting with the Excise Tide Surveyors and some of their boatmen, three of them were taken. Upon hearing this Mr Miller called a constable and with the assistance of the Excise Officers and others took three more of Studdard's men but could not meet with Hall or Parkman. The next morning the Constable with proper assistance carried the six men who were all stout able seamen to Portsmouth and delivered them to the care of Lieutenant Newnham on board the "Hunter" Cutter, concerning the rescue of John Hall we pray your Honour's directions.

24 December 1770 In Obedience to your Command of 20<sup>th</sup> Instant John Mingham Gill was admitted to be a Waiter and Searcher at this Port the 22<sup>nd</sup> Instant in the room of Thomas Gill resigned. William Goodwin one of the Officers on the Superannuation List at this Port Died the 8<sup>th</sup> Instant.

31 December 1770 Cowes, An account of the tobacco saved out of the King George, John Hudson, Master from Whitehaven bound for Rotterdam, stranded at Southmoore Point on the Isle of Wight on 22 December 1770.

When bought to the Warehouse at Cowes	By Whom	Number of Hogsheads
Nov 29	Sloop, Three Brothers	53
Do	Seven Wagons	14
Dec 1	Eleven Wagons	22
Dec 3	Sloop, Three Brothers	25
Dec 4	Thirteen Wagons	26
Dec 6	Eleven Wagons	22
Dec 8	Twelve Wagons	24
Dec 8	Sloop Friendship	5
Dec 11	Nine Wagons	20
Dec 13	Twelve Wagons	25
Dec 15	Sixteen Wagons	32
Dec 18	Six Wagons	<u>12</u>
Dec 20	Besides sundry wagons with loose tobacco and ships materials.	280

(The vessel was en route from Whitehaven to Rotterdam and was 'so much damaged and broke that she cannot be repaired')

13 April 1771 We received your Command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Instant acquainting us that your Honors had discharged Elias Rayner Tidesman and Boatman at this Port on the Complaint made against him by Thomas Mead and Robert Twyman touching a Seizure of One Hundred and seventy four Pounds weight of Tea made by him and the said Mead in August 1769, and particularly for his proposal not to discover David Sanders one of the Persons concerned in Running the said Tea, for which Offence he

hath since been prosecuted and paid a Composition of Forty two Pounds and Costs. We accordingly the 6<sup>th</sup> Inst. acquainted Rayner with his Dismissal & told him to bring in his Deputation before he could be paid his Salary.

13 July 1771 Inclosed we transmit to your Honors an account of expenses of Witnesses in the cases against Henrick Van Bergh and Frederick *Hentner* on two Seizures of Spirit, Tobacco, Coffee and a Brigantine called the Marianna amounting to Two Hundred and six Pounds five Shillings and six Pence of which Mr John Miller Tide Surveyor was paid in London by the Solicitor one hundred and twenty six Pounds, concerning which we pray your directions.

24 July 1771 In obedience to your Commands signified by Mr Stanley in his Letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> Instant, we acquaint your Honours that the Creeks or Places, (except the legal Quays) within the Limits of this Port where goods are chiefly permitted to be Landed or Shipped to or from Foreign Parts are Point Quay, East Cowes, Point Quay West Cowes and Day's Wharf in Cases of real necessity by Special Sufferance and when it can be done without any detriment to the Revenue, and the Service can be attended by the proper Officers in pursuance to your Order of 19<sup>th</sup> June 1756. There are some other places where goods are landed by Special Sufferance such as Cowes Beech, Newport, Ride and Yarmouth but the last two places are very seldom made use of. As to timber, it is quite impractical to land it at the free Quays at this port. Goods are landed or shipped coastwise from any quay at Cowes and Wool is permitted to be shipped at Newport by your Honours Order dated 4th January 1741.

7 August 1771 Mr Hugh Rose having by the inclosed application applied to your Honours for an Order to land fourteen old broken Iron Pipes now lying at this Port to Lymington, on which we report that the fourteen Iron Pipes weigh about five or six Tons, and we suppose they were designed for the conveying of Water. They were saved from the Wreck of a French Sloop, lost on or about the 18<sup>th</sup> day of November one Thousand seven Hundred and sixty six at Freshwater Cliff and every Person on Board drowned. They are claimed by the Governor of the Island as Vice Admiral of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and although the Charges of taking them up out of the Sea may come to almost as much as they are worth, being Cast Iron, (but not broken as set forth in the Memorial) yet as there is a Claim on them we think it would not be advisable to grant any Dispatch to carry them to Lymington or elsewhere untill Mr Stanley is satisfied or has given up his claim to them.

7 August 1771 We beg leave to acquaint your Honours that there is wanting for the Service at this Port two sets of Gauging Instruments, which we pray may be sent us

We have received the Weights your Honours were pleased to send us on 14<sup>th</sup> June last.

14 August 1771 Inclosed we transmit to your Honors a list of all Forfeited and Uncertified Coast Bonds taken at this Port to Christmas last on which we observe the Masters for the five Cargos of Lamb viz. Hatfield, Hockley and Proutan through Ignorance of the consequences omitted to deliver the Proper Officers at Portsmouth their Cocketts and obtain their leave for landing the Lambs, but did it without, and therefore they cannot get Certificates or Returns to Discharge those Bonds. We are well assured the Lambs were landed at Portsmouth because they were for the London Market. Proutan was sometime since impressed on board a man of War; where he is still continued; and Hatfield and Hockley are but in mean Circumstances. We pray your Honors will be pleased to inform us if the Masters or Shippers Affidavits upon treble sixpenny stamps, sworn before a Commissioner in the Exchequer, that the Lambs were landed at Portsmouth will not now be sufficient to discharge those Bonds / that innocent Bondmen may not suffer for the misconduct of those Masters / if the Affidavits are sent to the Solicitor, in any reasonable time, after your Honours have given us directions herein.

14 September 1771 In obedience to your Honors command signified by Mr Stanley in his Letter of 27<sup>th</sup> July last inclosed is a Certificate of the Qualification of James Grove who is recommended to be an Extra Tidesman and Boatman at the Port in the room of Joseph Moucher.

These are to Certify James Grove is Qualified for Rowing and Managing a Boat.  
John Read, Collector, James Gill, Deputy Comptroller, John Miller, Tide Surveyor

3 October 1771 We beg leave to observe that William Phipps, Riding officer at Newtown upon incidents, is very capable of his duty, but greatly addicted to drinking. He promised us last Christmas that he would leave off, but we find he has not and we think it is greatly owing to his living in a public house, and tho' we have advised him to remove from thence, he says he cannot because there are but a few houses in the place and he can't get a lodging at any of them, but where he is.

7 October 1771 In obedience to your Command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Instant we have called upon Thomas Duke, William Jeffery & Henry Twyman Tidesmen at this Port to know whether they had any objection to the proceedings being stopped against George Corke for Obstructing them in the Execution of their Duty & rescuing a Boat after Seizure; and they have given for Answer; that in their humble Opinion he ought to pay Ten Pounds and the Charges for what was the greatest aggression (they think he ought not to be let off for less than Edward Corke paid).

14 October 1771 In obedience to your Command of the 10<sup>th</sup> Instant, as soon as William Attrill arrived at Cowes with news that there was a Vessel laden with Wines Stranded at Bembridge Ledge we immediately dispatched Mr Lancelot Foquett Landwaiter and several Tidesmen, who with the Officers at Bembridge Watched and Guarded the Wine Saved out of the Two Brothers untill they were sent and Secured in Proper Warehouses at Cowes under the King's locks, and after the hurry of saving them was over the Examination of the Master and his Ships Crew was taken before Thomas Woodford Esq. one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Borough of Newport the 26<sup>th</sup> December 1769 and a copy thereof was sent to the Secretary of the Admiralty the next day; in which the Examination of the Master and the Ship's Crew have that the Distress or Loss of the Vessel was occasioned by an exceedingly thick fog and violent swell of the Sea which forced the said Vessel on the Rocks.

5 February 1772 Several disputes have arisen between the Tidesmen and Boatmen concerned, and others who think themselves concerned, about the Division of the Seizures made by Mr John Miller Tide Surveyor at this Port out of the Marianna; we beg leave to State their several pretensions to your Honors for Determination. Robert Twyman, Henry Twyman, William Jeffery and Thomas Whitticom were in the Watch Boat and they agreed to take William Davis to their assistance when the Ship was rummaged and to make him a present of an equal part with them if any Seizure should be made because he was the Officer by whom the cask of Rum was Seized, that was put out of the Marianna into a Boat owned by John Quee, provided he gave them part of his Seizure, which he has accordingly done and to Craddick also, but as Richard Craddick was boarded with Davis on the Charlotte that lay near the Marianna and saw the Cask hoisted out of her that was seized by Davis and done his Duty while he went to make the Seizure and to assist in rummaging the Marianna the next day, and was also an evidence in the Tryal of this Ship and he Cargo, he claims half of what Davis is to receive of the said Seizures.

Newport Brinewood was also boarded on the Sarah which also laid near the Marianna and likewise saw the Cask hoisted into John Quee's Boat upon which he borrowed a Boat belonging to an officer boarded on a ship in the same *Teer* and followed after Quee but could not come up with or find him, and as John Jolliffe was boarded with him and he was left in charge of the Ship while Brinewood went in pursuit of Quee, and as he was also on evidence at the Tryal he claims an equal part of Seizure with the other Tidesmen and Boatmen to be divided between him and his Partner Jolliffe, and also of that made by Davis although no agreement was made between them as they set out different ways after the same thing.

Against this division of the Seizures are the four other officers that were in the Watch Boat, and John Brown and Thomas Duke that were boarded on the Marianna, because they think Davis and Craddick, Brinewood and Jolliffe are not intitled to any share though Davis is to have one by agreement, by way of present and not by right as they say.

Mr Miller has proposed as John Quee and his Wife were principal evidence on the Tryal, and as they have hitherto been paid no more than their Bills of Expences that he be paid Twenty Guineas as an encouragement out of his and the other Officers share, as he is very much discountenanced by sundry Persons for giving Evidence for the Crown, and if your Honors should think that Quee should be encouraged as proposed and Craddick is entitled to half Davis's share and Brinewood and Jolliffe to another share that the Division of the said Seizure will be stated on the back hereof.

3 March 1772 We beg leave to acquaint your Honours with the death of Thomas Wittel Extra Tidesman and Boatman in this Port and to recommend James Wallis to succeed him for whom we enclose a Certificate of Qualification.

The 11<sup>th</sup> May last we recommended to your Honors Henry Haddon to succeed John Hill late an Extra Tidesman and Boatman at this Port, and as we are now in want of Officers, having several Ships from Carolina arrived and more expected daily, we pray your Honors will be pleased to send us Commissions for the said Haddon and Wallis.

7 March 1772 We beg leave to acquaint your Honors that Mr Richard Thorold Surveyor at this Port died the 6<sup>th</sup> Instant after a few days Illness by an Accident in hurting one of his legs in going across the Water in the Ferry Boat.

We appointed Mr Thomas Gill Deputy Customer who was bred to the Waterside Business and understands the Duties of a Surveyor very well to take care of his Duty during his Illness, and if your Honors approve of it he can find sufficient time from his own Duty to do that, untill another person is appointed to succeed Mr Thorold.

18 June 1772 In obedience to your command of 2nd Dec last, we reprimanded William Phipps, Riding officer at this Port and enjoined him to more temperance in future and acquainted him that he must provide himself with another lodging, which he has accordingly done, and he has, we have been assured by the Supervisor, behaved very well ever since.

20 August 1772 Inclosed is the Account of a Seizure of Three Hundred thirty eight Pounds of Tea, Three Hundred thirteen Gallons Brandy, Two Hundred thirty six Gallons Rum and four Gallons Geneva, and beg leave to observe that Robert Twyman and Henry Fetter Extra Tidesmen claim the sole right to the Seizure, John Miller Tide Surveyor likewise claim the seizure be returned in his name, for which reason we have not inserted any officers name in the Account untill your Honors have been pleased to consider who ought to be deemed the Seizing officer & for this purpose, we have required them to make Affidavits of the several circumstances relating thereto which are inclosed as also their respective Accounts to which we beg leave to refer and pray your Honors directions.

14 September 1772 Pursuant to your Commands, inclosed we transmit to your Honors and Affidavit of Michael Tracey and John Jolliff Extra Tidesmen at this Port touching the insults and abuse received from Mr Miller Tide Surveyor from Thomas Downer sworn before a Commissioner in the Court of the King's Bench to which we beg leave to refer.

Affidavit from Michael Tracey and John Jolliff, 12 September 1772 Michael Tracey of West Cowes in the Isle of Wight in the County of Southampton Extra Tidesman and John Jolliff of East Cowes in the Isle and County aforesaid Jointly and Severally make Oath and say and first these Deponents say that on Saturday the Twenty ninth Day of August in the year of our Lord One Thousand seven Hundred and forty two they set out with Mr John Miller of West Cowes aforesaid Tide Surveyor of the Port of Cowes in the Custom House Boat belonging to the Port of Cowes at two o'clock in the afternoon and went on Duty and went on Shore at Leap in the County of Southampton about four o'clock and were there 'till between six and seven upon the lookout from the Hill that directly after said Mr Miller got into his Boat with these Deponents in order to return to Cowes they saw Thomas Downer of the Parish of Fawley in the County aforesaid manner upon the Hill with a small Cask on his back when the said Thomas Downer called to said Mr Miller and said Damn you Miller, you sail making Son of a Bitch, come here, here is some of the Rum you stole at East Cowes that you was burnt for and I saw you burnt. Upon that Mr Miller returned and went on shore and just as he got on Shore the said Thomas Downer threw the Cask of his back down the Hill, which cask was empty. And the said Thomas Downer ran on board a Sloop which lie dry on the Shore unloading of Dung. And this Deponent Michael Tracey for himself makes Oath and saith that as said Mr Miller was going on board the said Dung Sloop with an intent to see if any prohibited Goods was on board the said Downer jumped out of the said Sloop and took Mr Miller by the Coat near his Collar which hindered said Mr Miller from going on board and Mr Miller asked them to take Downer away which they would not do then Mr Miller told Thomas Downer to stand off and gave him a push from him and told him he should take another Course with him, then he attempted to take hold again but Mr Miller prevented him. And these Deponents Michael Tracey and John Jolliff further jointly make Oath and

say, there was four or five men in the said Dung Sloop and that the said Thomas Downer often repeated Damning of Mr Miller and saying he saw him Burnt at Cowes. Then said Mr Miller got into his Boat with these Deponents Tracey and Jolliff and just as Mr Miller had push'd his Boat from the shore the said Thomas Downer ran down to the Waterside and took up several large Stones and threw them at Mr Miller, one of which struck the said Mr Miller on his left arm, two or three lodged in the Boat and two or three went over the Boat, that the said Thomas Downer still kept on Damning and abusing Mr Miller as before 'till they these Deponents and Mr Miller got out of hearing.

13 October 1772 We beg leave to acquaint your Honors that Ann Pridgeon the person who now brings and carries the Letters from the Custom House at this Port to the Post office is paid five Shillings per quarter by a Standing order of your Honors dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1741 and since the alteration of the Post an Incident bill has been craved Quarterly for five shillings more because the Letter Carrier is Obligated to Attend and cross a ferry double the Number of times that were usual for the Post office is at West Cowes and the Custom House at East Cowes we therefore esteem it a reasonable Charge and no more than the Merchants of this Place pay the Letter Carriers per Quarter and for the encouragement of the Poor Woman we desire your Honors will give us a Standing order to pay her ten Shillings per Quarter by which means she will be paid her whole Allowance immediately after the Expiration of the same and save her the trouble of giving in a Bill Quarterly.

28 January 1773 Inclosed we return the Petition of John Miller Tide Surveyor at this Port to your Honors; which we have duly considered, and beg leave to Report that we think the reasons he gives for a constant Boat Crew appear to us to be very just, and we apprehend if put into Execution will be greatly for the advantage of the Revenue. And if your Honors should think it proper to try Mr Miller's proposal in order to put the Crown to as little charge as possible, we beg leave to recommend that six of the ablest Extra Tidesmen that at present bear your Honors Commissions in this Port, and are fittest for the Fatigue of Watching and Rowing be taken to compose a Boats Crew, that is to say William Moucher, Richard Craddick, William Jeffery, William Davis, Thomas Duke and Henry Twyman. (This appears to have been put into effect in April 1773)

We likewise beg leave to recommend Robert Scriven and Thomas Rimer to be Extra Tidesmen and Boatmen in the room of Robert Twyman and Charles Fetter dismissed by your Honors Order of the 5<sup>th</sup> Instant.

18 February 1773 Letter to the Collector from John Grimes, Supervisor of Riding Officers As Messrs Squire & Jeram, Riding Officers in my supervision have lately met with insults as well as obstructions in the seizure of goods and are without fire-arms to the prejudice of the Revenue, the latter indeed received a carbine from his predecessor which is very useless and as there is a standing order from the Board to crave those things when required, beg the favor of you to apply that they may be furnished with a pair of pistols to execute their duty more effectually. (Forwarded to the Board 17 April 1773)

8 May 1773 This is to Certify Thomas Whitticom, Thomas Rimer, James Robertson, James Tracey and James Jolliffe are Qualified for to management of a Boat.

John Read, Collector, Thomas Gill, Deputy Comptroller, John Miller, Tide Surveyor

29 May 1773 Joseph Ashton, Master of the Unity in his passage from Lisbon to this port, took up floating about seven leagues South West of Start Point, 28 hds French Wine which have been landed and claimed by the Admiralty & is now in the warehouse at this port under King's locks.

10 July 1773 In obedience to your Command signified by Mr W Stanley in his Letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> Instant we report that Mr Serrall the Coastwaiter computed the Twenty one Bags of Pease at four Bushels each which makes Ten Quarters and four Bushels, but as some of them were not full he allowed the four Bushels to make good the Bags that were not so. We cannot immediately call upon the Master to Account for this difference as he is not here and doth not belong to this Port but we have applied to William Daniel Baker to whom the Pease were sent and we find by Examining the said Bags that some of the contain five Bushels and some less and the whole quantity is eleven Quarters and three Bushels.

10 July 1773 We beg leave to Report in Obedience to your Commands signified by Mr Stanley in his letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> instant, relative to Two Pair of Pistols craved for Stephen Squire and John Jerome, Riding Officers; that we have examined and do not find that these Officers or their Predecessors were heretofore allowed Pistols; but as they are very diligent and Active Officers and had been Assaulted and Obstructed in the Execution of their Duties, we at the request of the Supervisor requested them.

4 September 1773 Mr Miller Tide Surveyor at this Port has informed us that Thomas Duke and James Lamb about one of the Clock in the Morning of the 30<sup>th</sup> Ultimo went on Board a small Sloop, which was just come into this Harbour, whereof James Hollis is Master, and as James Lamb was proceeding to Rummage her the said Hollis took up a hatchet and swore if he offered to go under the Deck he would chop him down and Damned them and called them Thieves and Rascals and drove them from doing their Duty. Mr Miller prays that James Hollis may be prosecuted for hindering and obstructed the said Officers in the Execution of their Duty in order to prevent the like for the future.

15 September 1773 Inclosed is a Certificate to obtain a Rice Licence for the Brigantine Rainbow of Glasgow William Gordon Master together with a Plantation Certificate for the said Brigantine to which we beg leave to refer.

15 September 1773 In obedience to your Commands of the 6<sup>th</sup> February last, we admonished strictly to future Sobriety William Rimer, Tidesman and Boatmen, Mr William Andrews, Waiter and Searcher, and Nicholas Devenish, Boatman, whom we reported in our Account of the Ages & Capabilities of the Officers belonging to this Port at Christmas, to be addicted to Drinking, and this Admonishment by Order of your Honors hath had a very good effect on them and they now behave very well.

28 September 1773 We received your commands of 23<sup>rd</sup> instant, informing us it had been represented that it has been the uninterrupted practice for the Gentlemen in the Isle of Wight to be Indulged with bringing their wines from Hampshire without Cockets and Sufferances; we in Obedience thereto have made particular Enquiry into this matter, of the Coastwaiter here and of the Waiter and Searcher at Newport; and they both declared they have not in any one instance suffered Wines to pass without proper Dispatches being first produced for the same and we believe their declaration is true.

16 October 1773 We beg leave to inform your Honors that Michael Tracey, George Webb, William Moucher, Moses Morres, Richard Craddick, John Jolliff, Henry Twyman, William Davis, James Groves, James Wallis, Henry Haddon and Robert Scriven Extra Tidesmen and Boatmen belonging to this Port and who have Commissions from your Honors, and have constantly paid Sixpence per Pound of their Day pay towards raising a Fund for the Support of Incidental Officers have as well as ourselves understood your Honors Orders about this matter to be thus; that when any of them become Superannuated according to the Rules, they are entitled to a Sum not less than Ten Pounds per Annum, notwithstanding they have only Day pay when employed and no fixed Salary. But the Comptroller of the Superannuation Funds hath lately informed us that these Officers can never enjoy any Benefit from the Fund. As this will be a very great discouragement for them to continue paying, and not to be upon a certainty whether they are entitled to such Benefit or not, we pray your Honors will be pleased to clear up to us this doubt about said Officers.

18 October 1773 We have in conjunction with the Surveyor and Landwaiters viewed and Examined Three Thousand two Hundred and ten Deer Skins in the Hair lately imported at this Port by Messrs. James Mackenzie & Co. in the Rainbow, William Gordon Master from Georgia, which are so much lessened in their true Value that we and the other Officers are fully satisfied the Skins deserve an Allowance of one eighth part for Damage, but as this Allowance exceeds Ten pounds, we cannot pay the same until we have received your Honors Order for that purpose, pursuant to the Rules for examining Damage dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 1770.

21 October 1773 On the 12<sup>th</sup> November last we acquainted your Honors that the Ship Elien Bolletta of and from Arundal in Norway, Wellem Thorson Master was put into Port in Distress, and was

obliged to unladen his Cargo consisting of Barks, Timber and Deals, in order to repair his Ship. But not being able to obtain a Credit from his Owners after the ship was repaired, and the Cargo taken on board again, Mr Richard Deacon the Agent whom the Master employed, detained her for Charges, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> Ultimo the Master entered her and Mr Deacon paid the Duty on the Cargo and sold the same at a Public Sale the 14<sup>th</sup> instant and the next day the said Deacon sold the Ship for four Hundred and ten Pounds to Mr James Davis of this Place, who we are informed bought her for ----- Hill of London where we are told she is soon to be carried. This information we thought it our Duty to give your Honors, that the Surveyor of Navigation might not be Composed upon, by taking her for a British Built Ship when she arrives in the River.

7 February 1774 Mr John Miller Tidesurveyor of this Port hath informed us that Robert Armes one of the Establish Tidesmen at this Port is grown so weak and infirm that he is no longer able to perform his Duty. He is upward of sixty five Years of age; and has been in the Service thirty seven years and as he hath behaved well; we pray he may be put on the Superannuation List, having nothing else to subsist upon.

7 February 1774 We have in pursuit of your Command of the 5<sup>th</sup> Instant inquired within this neighbourhood what is the weight on an average of a Bushel of Beans and of Pease Separately by the Winchester Bushel and find it to be as under:

Beans 60  
Pease 61

(It appears that the Winchester Bushel was the standard measure, although some places had their own, for example the one used in Sunderland was almost double the size.)

14 February 1774 In the Night of the 12<sup>th</sup> instant was Stranded on the South part of the Island the Ship Morning Star of and for London, George Dempster Master from Maryland with Tobacco, we have sent out Officers to take care to Guard what can be saved, and prevent Embezelments.

19 February 1774 Mr Davis a Merchant at this Port having represented to us that he is in daily expectation of a cargo of Beans & Oats from Rotterdam. We pray your Honors will inform us if these Commodities may be Imported here, and how the price on such Importations are to be ascertained because we think it is not clear by the late Act how it is to be done.