

Letters to the Commissioners No. 20 1794 1796

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9 May 1794 Inclosed we transmit an Incidental Bill amounting to £3 – 2 – 6 humbly craved to be allowed by Mr Francis Terrell Coast Waiter at Newport in this Port for Expense he has been put to in the Shipping and Landing of Corn & Flour brought and carried Coastwise at a distance from his Place of Residence where the Principal Part of his Duty is Executed.

We think it necessary particularly when the Exportation of any of the Articles is prohibited that the Officer should be very attentive to the Quantities Shipped & Landed and have repeatedly cautioned him against certifying any Quantities Shipped or Landed without being actually present.

This Officers Salary is only £30 per annum, and we are humbly of the opinion that the allowing of so reasonable a Bill as this appears to be will operate as an Encouragement to a faithful discharge of Duty. (Payment was agreed 3rd June 1794.)

27 May 1794 We hereby transmit an application from Mr Robert Willis a Boatman at this Port praying to be allowed the Salary of the Sitter of the six Oard Boat in addition to his own Salary as Boatman during the time he was acting as Sitter of the Boat under our Order of which we acquainted your Honors by our Letter of the 4th December 1792.

We have known no Instance where your Honors have allowed the Salary of two Officers to one Man but Willis who receives a Salary of £30 per annum on the Establishment having acted as Sitter of the Boat from the 3rd November 1792 to the 30th April following the Resignation of Charles Ritchie who was paid a Salary of £40 per annum by Incidents.

We submit to your Consideration if it may not be proper to allow him the difference of Salary for the time he was acting as Sitter of the Boat & which at the rate of £10 per annum Amounts to Four Pounds Eighteen Shillings which is respectfully submitted. (Payment of £5 – 0 – 6 agreed 6th June 1794.)

17 June 1794 As directed by your Order of the 13th Inst., we have with the Assistance of Mr Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter survey'd the new Cutter building at this Port by Mr John Gely for Service of the Revenue at Rye – and beg leave to report that the Kiel is laid, the Stem & Stern Posts up and the greater part of the Timbers in, which we presume entitles the Builder to his first Payment thereon.

8 July 1794 No Deputed Mariner having been appointed for the Swan Cutter since the death of William Goodridge and the Crew now augmented to 30 Men, we are humbly of the opinion that it is necessary and will be for the benefit of the Service that there should be two Deputed Mariners appointed to the said Cutter and Mr Sarmon having recommended Thomas Lane and John Torin, two of his Mariners who have been Employed in the Cutter Service some Years as proper Persons for the Station, we humbly pray your Honors to grant them Commissions.

By our Letter of the 24th September last we made a similar application to the above but not having received any Answer thereto we apprehend it must have been miscarried or mislaid.

16 July 1794 We humbly beg leave to represent to your Honorable Board, that on the 14th Inst., Mr. James Day, the Younger, who acts as Agent to Foreign Ships putting into this port, came to the Custom House with two other persons, one of whom was Captain of a Dutch Brig the Joseph lately under Seizure, and out of which a considerable quantity of Geneva had been seized and since condemned and he demanded some Boxes of Tobacco, Wine and Tea, part of the said Vessels Cargo, which had also been Seized, contending they ought to have been given up with the Vessel, and unless it were he would not have the Vessel, which after condemnation, the Attorney-General had consented would be delivered to the claimant on payment of £200, and it has been delivered accordingly with all that Cargo except the prohibited Articles, which under your special Orders have been directed to be prosecuted.

On being told that every thing had been delivered that we were authorised to deliver, and that the articles he applied for had been *retained* by your Honors to be prosecuted and that altho they were not returned into the Exchequer with the Geneva because at that *Time* we had receiv'd no directions to do

it, that they had since been returned into the Court and without a Special Order to give them up, we were not warranted to do it, and which indeed we had told the Master and Passenger not only when the Ship and unprohibited part of the Cargo were given up to them but at different times when they have spoken to us individually upon it, always intimating to them that they might make an application to your Honors that they thought proper. Not satisfied with this, and with our reading to him of your Order of the 20th Inst, which directed the prosecution of the Tobacco, &c., Mr. Day insisted that the Collector had said nothing but the Spirits were intended to be prosecuted and that the Solicitor knew nothing of the prosecution of any other Article or had ever advised it, and upon being told by the Collector that he had never said so, and that it was impossible either he or the Solicitor could have said so, as the contrary was the Fact, he replied "You are a Lyar! It is an infamous Transaction! You have robb'd and plunder'd the Captain! You are perjurd! You swore falsely in the Exchequer! Your Character is well known in London, and I'll take care it shall be more known!" and on being told by the Collector to get along out of the Office, for he would say nothing more to such a fellow, he advanced toward the Desk / on the opposite side of which the Collector was sitting / in a menacing manner, and with his fist clenched repeated, You are a damned lyar, and if you don't like that I will serve you worse!

That such an attack, insult, and abuse merits the severest censure and punishment the Law can inflict, it is unnecessary for us to add; and having offered it to your Collector in the execution of his Office, and when sitting at his Desk in Custom House, we cannot but consider it a very great aggravation of the Offence and humbly hope your Honorable Board will, not only from regard to the office which the Collector has the Honor to hold, but from the Opinion which he flatters himself you entertain of his character and conduct from almost seventeen Years knowledge and experience of them, assist him in punishing this offender in the present case by giving such directions as you may judge necessary to effect it.

21 July 1794 We transmit here a letter mark'd No. 1 and addressed to your Honors and deliver'd to us by Messrs T & J Day Junior Agents at this Port complaining of the Conduct of Mr Chapman, Land Surveyor here, and charging generally all the Officers here with exacting immense sums of money for illegal Fees. We subjoin Mr Chapman's answer to which we beg to refer. We also add mark'd No. 2 his letter of 28th April assigning his reason for not attending the Special Sufferance which we had that Day granted. You have also our answer to him on the Business to add, notwithstanding Mr Chapman did immediately give his attendance on the Sufferance Wharf to reship the Cargo, they afterwards gave him Notice of an Intention to Commence an action against him for detention of the Ship and have already served him with a Copy of a Writ, but conceiving it impossible they can proceed further on so groundless an action he has desired an Attorney to enter an appearance for him reassuring himself a Declaration is filed to lay the Case before your Honors and to solicit your Support --- Not content with this mode of harassing him, tho' they did not insult or obstruct him on the Wharf, they actually on the same day so abused him with Public Streets that he was obliged to apply to a the Bench of Justices who bound over both Brothers Thomas and James Day to keep the Peace towards Mr Chapman.

With respect to the Charge of not attending the Cargo of the Ship and to which Messrs. Days Letter to us and our answer Mark'd No. 3, we are humbly of the opinion that under the circumstances of the Case the degrading manner in which the *threats* had been afforded and the treatment Land Surveyor had received he was justified in refusing to give them further indulgence unless he would be assured of better *treatment*.

It is not only the Landing Surveyor and his Tide Waiters who have complained of Fees withheld but other Officers experience the same, even the Tidesmen occasionally employed to open the doors and attend the Warehouses, where the Cargoes of Distressed Ships are deposited, where necessary to let in air or for other purposes after complain they cannot get paid without great difficulty and other Tidesmen placed on board Ships are often refused Ships Provisions, and as it has appeared by advice of the Agent to the Masters. In reply to their general Charge of vexatious manoeuvres carried *on by Collusion, Business ignored & Neglected and the extraction of illegal Fees* we can only answer generally we believe it false and groundless and whenever they think fit to state any specific Instances, as your Honours shall to cause to call upon to so do, we trust that the Officers will be able to controvert it or to justify themselves to your satisfaction, for it has been our uniform Practice to excite the Officers to moderation in their Fees and to take no more than the usual and customary ones, for any extra Business done and all assure us that they do not – and we have always

endeavoured with as much impartiality and Justice as in our Power to settle all disputes and Complaints of the kind that have been referred to us, without troubling your Honors therewith, but to such Persons as Messrs. Days we find it impossible to give satisfaction. Your Honors will be enabled to some degree to form a judgement of them from what has already been stated, especially when added to the late Conduct of one of them to the Collector which we were under the necessity of stating to you in our Letter of the 16th Inst. subsequent to which behaviour the present Charge and Complaint are proper – we shall only at present beg leave further to add that almost the whole of the Business done at this Port by Messrs. Days is as Agents to foreign Ships putting in to repair and whose Cargoes are permitted to be landed without Payment or Entry of Duties, we do not *in the circumstances* as we are, and ill treated as we have been either feel inclined or think ourselves bound to grant any similar Application that may be made in the future without your express directions previously obtained and the Sanction of your approbation to the recompense the Officers are entitled to for such extra Service.

21 August 1794 Phillip Riddett against whom a prosecution was commenced in the Exchequer on the 4th August having paid as a Composition One Hundred and Twenty four Pounds four Shillings and Eight Pence which has been remitted to the Solicitor.

The Officers concerned in the Prosecution humbly prays your Honors will allow them such part of the Penalty as you may think them entitled to.

30 August 1794 Mr Francis, Tide Surveyor at this Port having represented to us that a Seized Boat 15 feet Long which was returned into the Exchequer appraised at £5 – 10 – 0 has been since condemned and is by your Order of the 15th May 1793 directed to be broke up, would be a very useful Boat at the Watch House for occasional Service when his other four oar'd Boat is painting or repairing, and that the same if broken up would not Produce one fourth Part of the appraised value.

We submit to your consideration if it may not be proper to comply with the Tide Surveyors request and to allow him to make use of the said Boat for the Service. (The request was granted 9th October.)

4 September 1794 Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Revenue Cutter in the Service at this Port having represented that the Cutter is in want of Sundry Articles of Cordage and some running Rigging, we transmit the Tradesmans Estimate of the price at which he can furnish the same namely Thirty Eight Shillings per cwt. made of the best clean St Petersburg *material*.

23 September 1794 Inclosed we submit a Letter addressed to us by Mr Francis Tide Surveyor at this Port representing to us the Conduct of Mr Thomas Day a Ship Agent here upon his going on board the Dutch Ship *Vigilantia* on her arrival Yesterday with the loss of her Mizen Mast.

[It] has always been the practice at this Port for the Tide Surveyor on the arrival of any Foreign Ship in the Road or Harbour whether putting in on account of damage or otherwise to go on board & after questioning the Master as to the cause of his coming in, his voyage & the contents of his Cargo, to rummage the cabbin & other parts of the Ship in the best manner he can in order to ascertain whether any prohibited Goods loose or in small packages are in the cabbin or any other part of the Ship, that the Tidewaiters placed on board may be acquainted therewith & cautioned against suffering such articles to be run on Shore.

Was not this precaution taken it would be impossible to prevent Smugling if the parties were inclined to attempt it for the Masters when they do come to the Custom House which is not always the case except they want to take their Cargoes out only report generally of what they consist without specifying the Quantity of any particular Articles, and they very frequently bring their Ships along side the Wharf or close to other Vessels stationed in the Harbour, it is obvious that prohibited Goods might be Smuggled out of the cabbin Windows or from the Ship notwithstanding the best intentions of Officers to prevent it, if they are not allowed to inform themselves of what Articles of the kind are on board, because the Ship is a transient one & bound from one Foreign Port to another.

It is the first time we have ever known the right of Officers to go on board & search any Ship or Vessel coming into Port whether Foreign or English disputed, but it does appear from the determination of these Agents whose principal Business in unloading & the Cargoes of Foreign Ships putting into Port on account of casual damage received on the voyage to give all possible trouble & obstruction to the Revenue Officers almost all of whom at one time or the other experience violence & abuse if obliged

from their Duty to act contrary to what they may require of them in any Instance. (Marginal note states "Mr Day to be Acquainted that the Revenue Officers have the right to rummage transient Ships, that they have insisted the Tide Surveyor do his Duty in that respect" – Order 27th September.)

12 October 1794 As directed by your Order of the 3rd Inst. we hereby transmit an Account of Prohibited East India Goods for the half Year ended the 10th Instant and the Quarterly Account of Naval Stores Imported at this Port in the Quarter ended the same day.

15 October 1794 The Certificate of admeasurement of a Hog Boat call'd the Porpoise mention'd in your Secretary's Letter of the 8th Ult having now been made out by the Tide Surveyor on the proper Form we now transmit the same together with Eleven Certificates for Vessels & Boats the Owners of which have applied for Admiralty Licences.

We beg leave to report that the Owners of the Vessels the Certificates of which are mark'd with a **S** are reputed Smuglers and have at different times lost Vessels or Boats employ'd in Smuggling, but they Now assert they do not mean to follow that trade and are willing to give the Bond required by Law if Licences are granted to them.

29 October 1794 Inclosed we transmit an application from Mr Aldjo an Agent for the Portuguese Consul praying that the Guns, Stores & with some Vinegar, Wine and Oil salvaged out of the Portuguese Frigate lately stranded upon this Coast may be sent from hence to Plymouth to the Admiral commanding the Portuguese fleet there which provided the salvors are satisfied and which the Agent is willing to give Bond, we have no objection to offer against the request being complied with, and submit the Goods may either under the care of a trusty Tidewaiter to be paid by the Agent or by Coast Dispatches provided they are assigned to the Collector & Comptroller Plymouth that the Goods may be transhipped under the inspection of an Officer to be appointed by them for that purpose.

Part of the Goods being Exciseable Articles we have apprais'd the Agent that it may also be proper to apply to the Board of Excise for their consent to his request.

4 December 1794 We hereby transmit a Letter addressed to your Honors by Mr Chapman Landing Surveyor at this Port accompanying a copy of an Information delivered to him in an Action that has been commenced against him, and in which he humbly prays your Honors will be pleased to Order the necessary Appearance to be entered for him and that he may be defended at the Crowns Charge.

We beg to report that in our judgment the Action is a very groundless and vexatious One & appears to have been commenced by or at the instigation of Messrs. Thomas & James Day Junior Ships Agents at this Port and without any direction or authority from the Person in whose name it is brought, which is confirmed by a Letter received by the Officer from Hamburgh and now transmitted.

The pretended Cause of Action is the Surveyor having delayed to execute a Special Sufferance granted by us for reshipping a Cargo which had been landed from a Ship which had put in here in distress under the Kings Locks whilst the Ship was under repair, the delay is stated to have been five Days and the Damage sustained thereby rated at £500.

The fact is that on the 28th of April last a Warrant was granted by us and addressed to the Landing Surveyor and two Landing Waiters to authorize the reshipping of the Goods that had been landed and secured under the Kings Locks whilst the Ship was under repair – on the same day Mr Chapman addressed a Letter to us expressing his unwillingness to attend Messrs. Days Quays upon the Business, on account of some abuse he had received he had received from them until he could be assured of future better Treatment – on the following Morning we answered Mr Chapmans Letter, recommending him as the abuse received was of a private Nature he should notwithstanding attend his Duty & if he met any obstruction it would be proper to apply to your Honors for Protection. Mr Chapman did as we are informed accordingly immediately attend and the Business went on in the usual Way. Notwithstanding which on the very same day after Mr Chapman had quitted the Quay he was abused and insulted by these Agents as to be under the necessity of binding them over to keep the Peace towards him.

These Circumstances having already been stated to your Honors, and the several Letters which passed transmitted in our Letter of the 21st of July.

8 December 1794 We beg leave to transmit the enclosed Letter from Mr John Taylor a Landing Waiter who is desirous of resigning his Employment.

20 December 1794 Inclosed we transmit a list of Tradesmen's bills for Building and Goods supplied the Stag Cutter in the Service of His M. Customs at the Port of Rye together with the original Bills for the same amounting to £1339 – 15 – 0 for the payment of which we humbly pray your directions.

22 December 1794 As directed by your Order of the 9th October we transmit enclosed an Account of Fees which we deem reasonable to be paid under the Act of the 6th & 7th of William 3rd Ch 7 Sect 14th to Officers appointed to execute Special Sufferances by Merchants for whose Accommodation such Sufferances are granted, and for extra Services and Attendance in consequence thereof. We beg leave to add, that they are agreeable to what has been the Custom of this Port for many Years.

To the Landing Surveyor & Landing Waiters attending the Landing or Shipping of any Goods & Special Sufferances 5/- per Day each for each Ship & for Hollidays double Fees.

To the Tide Surveyor for himself 10/6 & his four Boatmen 1/6 each for Rummaging & clearing a foreign Ship after the Cargo has been landed & Warehoused and before the Ship goes under the Carpenters hands to be repair'd.

To the Tide Waiters appointed at the request of the Merchant to attend the Warehouses in which Goods are secured under the Kings Locks at such Times as the Merchants and Agents are desirous of Inspecting the Cargoes, or having the Warehouse opened to dry & air the Goods 2/6 per day.

8 January 1795 In return to your Order communicated by the Secretary's Letter of Yesterdays date, we beg leave to report that it has not been the practice in this Port to charge with any Duty, Coals brought from Portsmouth to this Port when accompanied with Coast Dispatches certifying that the Coal Duties on such Coals has previously been paid.

13 January 1795 We herewith transmit an Account of the Seizures brought to the Warehouse at this Port since our last on the 26th November and we humbly pray your Orders for prosecuting the same to condemnation in the Exchequer.

The Officer who Seized the Cutter in Article No. 1 with the small empty Casks on Board in his report to us says, that when he fell in with her the Master declared he was bound for Alderney and produced as the Register and Licence to protect the Vessel, a Clinker built Cutter with a running Bowsprit, the papers we herewith transmit, and which it not appearing to him to be sufficient for that purpose he seized the Cutter and sent her in, in doing which we are humbly of the opinion he has acted properly, and we beg leave to submit to your Honors, whether it may be proper to cause an enquiry to be made what is become of the Original Certificate of Registry granted for the Vessel and whether any second Certificate has issued, lest the same should be made use of for any other Vessel whilst the owner was attempting to navigate the Cutter in question by a Bill of Sale instead of a Register.

The Licence also appears to be invalid, the Person to whom the same was granted not being now either the Owner or the Master of the Vessel, and the Trade in which she was employed at the Time of the Seizure different from that the Licence was meant to protect her in. (Prosecution was approved 24th March.)

Not having received your Orders upon the Seizures returned in our Letter of the 26th November last, we humbly pray as the Term is about to commence that we may receive your Directions thereon, if it is your pleasure that the same should be prosecuted in the Exchequer.

7 February 1795 The Swan Cutter in the Service of the Revenue at this Port having been refitted and supplied with new Cordage and Rigging by your Order of the 30th September last, we herewith transmit the Bills for the same attested by the Commander and Mate & amounting to the Sum of £320 – 1 – 4¾ for sundry Repairs done to the Cutter in the preceeding Year which Bill by Accident

having been mislaid by Mr Sarmon was not delivered to us before, an Omission which he humbly hopes your Honors will pardon, and we pray to receive you Directions respecting the Same.

8 February 1795 The Treasury Orders of the 30th Ult. & 2nd Inst directing the delivery of a large Quantity of Bullion brought to this Port from France in the American Ships Columbus & *Hannah* & Mary have been duly obey'd, but being in doubt as to the Line of conduct it may be proper for us to pursue upon future similar Importations of *Specie* from France, whether it will be incumbent on us to take any cognizance thereof when brought in American or other Neutral Ships or to requires any or what proof as to the Actual Property of the same, we humbly pray we may receive directions thereon for our Government that we may neither throw unnecessary impediments in the way of American Trade where it can be legally carried on, or suffer any improper Traffick with France to the injury of this Country if in our power to prevent it.

27 February 1795 It is not for me to presume to say whether the enclosed Application merits any or what attention from your Honorable Board. So far as it respects me the inquired individual does not contain I conceive the smallest submission or apology, for conduct the most violent & abuse the most gross and slander the most foul & unremitting that could be attempted to be thrown on the Character of any Man and although the Offence was committed so long back as July last it was not until 3 Days ago a friend of his came to offer mediation and wish'd that I would stop the prosecution, that I could entertain the slightest reason to suppose Mr Day was in any degree sorry or ashamed of what he had done, on the contrary if I have not been greatly misinformed it has frequently been a matter of boast to him how he had used the Collector and that he did not care if it cost him £500 or £1000.

My Answer to the person who applyed three Days ago was the same I had given to his, Mr Days, Brother who since I begun this Letter has for the first Time been with me to offer Apologies in his Brothers Name, namely that at this late moment and in the present Stage of the Business it was impossible for me to say or do anything of myself, that your Honors were in full possession of the Case and Facts having committed myself into your Hands for protection and support in my Official Situation, that for me to express any inclination to a compromise might perhaps be construed into a supposition that I was some degree conscious that the slander and abuse was merited, which God knows I am not – that he had his Brother felt that Sorrow and regrett at what he had done which he seem'd to say he now did soon after the Offence was given, and had then made those concessions and apologies he now seem'd disposed to do, and your Honorable Board had thought them such as I ought to be satisfied with, and which publicly made in as publick a manner as the Offence was given, would have free me in your opinion and that of the World from the imputations so wantonly attempted to be thrown upon my Character I should certainly have shewn that deference and respect to your judgement and Opinion which I always wish'd to do, and have been much inclined to have sacrificed any feelings of my own to what might have been your wishes upon the occasion especially as you were pleased in so handsome a manner to take my cause in hand and for which I most humbly thank you.

30 March 1795 In obedience to your Order of the 25th Inst. we herewith transmit a Form of Certificate granted to Extra Men acting under our Authority at this Port with a copy of the Oath of Office take by them on Admission also the Substance of Instructions verbally given to them at the Time they are Appointed and when each Man gives Bond of with two Sureties in the Sum of £100 for the due and faithfully execution of his Duty.

We beg leave to Add that no Persons are employed under our Authority by any other Denomination than Extra Men, and the Certificate by which they Act has always been considered by the Officers in the Impress Service as Protection for the Person producing them, and are suffered to remain in their own Custody so long as they continue at the Port because the Number of Established Tide Waiters & Boatmen being very few, Extra Men are very often wanted, but when they quit the Port Voluntarily on their own Business they are directed to deposit their Certificate with us or the Tide Surveyor until they return and are always given to understand that they can receive no protection from their Employment as Extramen any longer than they remain in the Place where their Services are likely to be wanted, and attend at all Times when called upon Duty – and we desire further to add that we have never Employed more Extra Men than were necessary for the Service for the sake of protecting them from the Impress as we trust will Appear by reference to the Dates of their Appointments specified in the list transmitted on the 3rd Inst.

9 April 1795 In return to your Order of the 1st Inst accompanying the Copy of a Letter from W Cottrell of the Council Office we beg leave to acquaint you that we do not know that any of the Pilots belonging to this Port are Registered as Pilots or Act in that capacity under any Authority given them or Certificate of Qualification for that Branch of the Business – but there are about Twenty fast Sailing Vessels fro 20 to 40 Tons Berthen which we believe follow no other employ than that of Piloting Ships which they meet in the Channel.

And there are many more which pass under the denomination of Fishing & Piloting Vessels the Owners of which are suspected of being employed chiefly in Smugling.

17 April 1795 The Collector having been directed by your Order to attend with other witnesses and the Solicitor the Assizes at Winchester, we herewith transmit an Incidental Bill of Expenses amounting to Eleven Pounds 16/- which we humbly pray your Honors will be pleased to allow.

13 May 1795 Herewith we transmit an Account of the Age, Construction, Condition etc. of a Vessel called the Dundas returned into the Exchequer in the Easter Term last together with our Report & opinion for which purpose she is calculated.

13 May 1795 In answer to your Order of the 6th Inst. we beg to acquaint you that the only Extraman at this Port, who has not been employed in the Service during the last six Months is John Clark who in consequence of the Permission given in your of 14 May last, resumed his Station upon the extra list on the Boat stationed at St Hellens, in which he was a Mariner.

Clark being a Grade A Sail Maker and having an opportunity of employing himself more advantageously by working on a Contract for making Sails for the Government we at his request excused him from being boarded in his turn as an Extra man during the time he is so employed upon his depositing in our hands, the Certificate he held as an Extra man which he accordingly did.

But the man always having conducted himself properly in his Station and having a Family we have not yet cancelled his Certificate. It being our attention to Employ him again in the Service should he in future make application when Extra Men are wanted, if your Honors have no objections thereto.

19 May 1795 We beg leave herewith to transmit a Letter addressed to us by Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port representing the leaky State of the Cutter, and that she will not be fit to Cruize the ensuing Winter without undergoing a thorough repair which he is of the opinion will not Answer the Expense attending it.

Mr Gely the Builder concurs also in the opinion that the Cutter which was a Seized Vessel when taken into the Service being Slight Built & a tender Vessel, it would not be proper to incur the Expense of great Repairs upon her, adding that if from any Accident she were to touch the Ground she in all probability would not be got off again without throwing her Guns overboard.

21 May 1795 The Lydia of Boston in America, Russell Hubbard Master from Charles Town arrived her lately laden with Rice, Rum, Tobacco, Gum, Cotton & Hides. The Mate on the 20th Ult. reported that the Ship was bound for Amsterdam, but on account of that now being in the Hands of the French had stopped here for Orders which the Master was gone to London for.

On the Masters return & declaring he was bound for London the Tide Surveyor directed William Warder and Established Tide Waiter & William Snow an Extra Man the two Offices boarded on the Ship to proceed with her to the Port of discharge as the Cargo consisted partly of Rum & Tobacco.

On the 23rd Ult. the Ship sailed from hence, but the officers have not since returned to their Duty or been heard of, otherwise than by a Letter the Tide Surveyor received ha received from a Person at Dover informing him that the Ship had Sailed from that Place for Amsterdam and that the Master had taken the Officers away with him, a Circumstance we think it our Duty to apprise your Honors of, submitting to your consideration if it may not be proper that enquiry should be made of the Collector & Comptroller at Dover whether any particulars of the transaction have come to their knowledge or if the Ship has touched there on her way to or return from Holland.

3 June 1795 Inclosed we transmit a Bill amounting to Twenty four Pounds thirteen Shillings & nine pence for repairing the Custom House Warehouse at this Port and we beg leave to acquaint your Honors that the part of the Roof having been blown off by the Wind so as to lay open the Warehouse at that time full of Goods and the Beams upon examination to have Started from the Walls so as to endanger the falling of the Building if not immediately Repaired, is the reason no Estimate was transmitted previous to the Work being done but we took care that no unnecessary Expence should be incurred and humbly pray your Orders for paying the Bill.

13 June 1795 We hereby transmit an Account of a Seizure which have been brought to the Warehouse since the last Account on the 8th Inst. and we pray your directions for prosecuting the same to condemnation in the Exchequer in the present Term.

We beg leave to acquaint your Honors that as the Officer was bringing the Seizure to the Warehouse he was boarded between Spithead and Cowes by a Man of War the Crew of which plundered the Seizure of about 15 Casks of Spirits, and we have sent the Officer with a Letter to the Commanding Officer at Spithead to give him information of the Particulars of the transaction desiring his Assistance in endeavouring to discover the Offenders.

4 July 1795 We have forwarded from here under the Seals of Office addressed to the Warehouse Keeper at Custom House London:

5 Large Trunks
1 Case
1 Bundle of Bedding &
1 Table with a Locked up Drawer

said to be the Baggage of Captain Hemmings in the East India Company's Service and two other Persons who came home Passengers in a Danish East Indiaman the Hercules Captain York from *Tranquebar* for Copenhagen out of which Ship they were taken at the Back of the Isle of Wight by a Pilot, and brought to the Warehouse at this Port and forwarded the Warehouse in London for examination in obedience to the Directions given in your Order of the 8th April 1784.

The Sum to be paid for Carriage, Porterage and other Expenses on delivery of the Goods is £3 – 9 – 4 which is respectfully submitted.

7 July 1795 In return to your Order of Yesterdays Date we beg leave to acquaint you that there is not any Foreign Salt Fish in Detention at this Port.

13 July 1795 We beg leave to enclose a Letter addressed to us from Mr Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter in the Service of this Port representing that in chasing a Smuggling Luger on the 11th Inst off Shoreham he carried away the Cutters Mast and praying that a new one may be ordered to be provided as without it the Cutter cannot proceed to Sea.

As the Swan Cutter with several others has been ordered upon a special Service by your Orders of the 9th Inst. we propose giving directions to Mr Gely, the Builder here to endeavour to provide a proper Mast for the Cutter as soon as possible that no time may be lost in getting the Vessel ready for Sea to join the Service to which she is appointed.

13 July 1795 James Drayton Master and Owner of the Sloop Dove belonging to this Port has applied for a new Certificate of Registry to be granted for the said Vessel in lieu of the former one stated to be lost.

And having made Oath of the particulars of the said Loss, and that there is no probability of the Certificate of Registry being recovered we transmit herewith his Affidavit, and pray your further Directions thereon having no objections to offer against a new Certificate of Registry being granted as desired.

18 July 1795 A Commission out of the Admiralty Court directing the Sale of Goods now in the Warehouse under the Kings Locks was yesterday produced to us by Mr Christopher Ratsey and Mr James Day and application made to us to permit the Warehouse to be open'd for the purpose of

sorting the and preparing the Goods for Sale.

The Goods in question are part of the Cargo of the Dutch Brigantine one of the Ships under Detention and included in the List transmitted by us on the 17th March & 30 Ult. We are informed that the Ship & Cargo in question have been *libill d* in the Admiralty Court for debt which is the reason of the present mode of proceeding of which we think it proper to acquaint your Honors that in the case of the Sale of the Ship & Cargo under the Commission product should not be with the knowledge and approbation of the Commissioners appointed under the late Act of Parliament for Disposing of Dutch property or there are any objections in admitting the Goods in Question to be enter'd and deliver'd on payment of Such Duties as may appear to be due thereon we may receive Directions previous to the Sale and Delivery thereof.

29 August 1795 Upon the enclosed Application of Mr Peter *Fromnow* we beg leave to report that the Goods therein mentioned are part of the Cargo of a Dutch ship call'd the Joseph which sometime since put here on a voyage from Amsterdam to *Dimuray* – have been sold under an Order of the Admiralty Court in consequence of proceedings held in that Court against the Ship & Cargo for Debt. We are humbly of the opinion it would have been more regular to have enter'd & paid the Duties on the Goods before the Sale took place, and to have distinguished between those intended for home consumption & such as were intended for Export but those who have had the direction of the Business not knowing what Articles would answer to pay the Duties & what would not, sold the greater part of them subject to payment of Duties by the Purchaser or to be exported under such Regulations as your Honors may consent to.

The Tea we apprehend is a prohibited Article & cannot legally be admitted to Entry & payment of Duties for home consumption, but if your Honors think fit in the circumstances of the Case to allow the Tea & other Articles which the Purchasers do not think fit to pay the Duties for to be exported to Guernsey or Ireland as desir'd.

We submit if it may not be proper that the different Purchasers should be required to export all the Goods intended for Exportation at the same time and in the same Vessel, the more effectively to prevent Frauds upon the Revenue which might more easily be committed if the Goods are permitt'd to be remov'd to other Ports for Exportation and Exported in small quantities at different times.

And as it is probable similar Applications to this may be made by other Purchasers, we humbly pray we may receive your Directions to the Regulations & Security under which the Exportation may take place.

31 August 1795 As directed by your Order of the 27th Instant an Account of the Moneys paid by the Collector in the Nature of Bounties to Men who have enter'd voluntary at this Port for the Service of His Majesty's Navy under the Authority of an Act of the last Session of Parliament.

10 September 1795 We beg leave to transmit the enclose Petition of William Warder an Established Tide Waiter and William Snow an Extra Man at this Port praying your Honors will be pleased to make them some Allowance on Account of Expenses incurred by them in Holland and returning from thence in consequence of being carried to Amsterdam by Russell Hubbard Master of the American Ship the Lydia on which they were placed as Tide Waiters.

On our being informed that the Master had proceeded to Amsterdam instead of going to London Port to which he declared he was bound on the Ship's sailing from hence, we represented the same to your Honors by Letter of the 21st May to which we beg to refer.

It appears by the Officers Account that when the Master received Orders off Dover to proceed to Amsterdam he endeavoured to get the Officers put on Shore and paid Two Guineas to a Person of the Name of Woodward to land them at Dover, but that Woodward after taking the Money left them on board the Ship.

It further appears that the Master did his endeavour to protect them as Americans whilst in Holland and gave them each Two Guineas for their Services on board the Ship, and for assisting in unloading the Cargo, which money they were obliged to afterwards pay for their Passage to London inclusive of other Expences incurred to the amount of a Guinea & Half.

Mr Warder has a Salary on the Establishment of £30 per Annum & W Snow has been paid and Extra mans pay of two Shillings per Day during the time he was absent from this Port. They are both sober honest Men & their Application is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

26 October 1795 The wives of several of the mariners belonging to the Swan Cutter have applied to us since an Account of the Cutter being captured by the French has been received, representing that they are in distress for want of money to support their families as some of the Tradesmen who have been accustomed to supply them with necessaries from one quarter day to another refuse any longer to give them credit from the uncertainty they alledge of being paid.

We beg leave to acquaint your Honors that exclusive of a considerable Sum of Money in the Collectors Hands that is due to the Commander & Crew of the Cutter on Account of Seizures, there is also due to them a Quarters Wages, and that under the sanction of your approbation he has no objection to pay the whole or any part of the latter to the Wife of any Mariner whose name was in the Salary Book at the end of the Midsummer Quarter or who was known to be on board when the Cutter sailed from hence in the Service of the Navy, but we submit it would not be proper that such payment should be confined to the Wives only, and not made to any other relations who may apply for the same, respecting which we pray your Honors directions. (This is the first mention of the loss in the Letters Book.)

27 October 1795 In obedience to the Commands of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury communicated in your Order of the 7th Inst. we have endeavoured to obtain the best information we could respecting the present state of Smugling within the Limits of this Port in order to ascertain whether the fraudulent Trade has or has not increased in the last year or two.

That it has not increased within this Port in the last two Years we are decidedly of the Opinion, on the contrary think it has much decreased owing as we apprehend to various cause & amongst others to the following:

1st The War which has taken away a number of Persons who used to be employed in the Smugling Vessels which also are now otherwise engaged as Tenders or employed for other purposes than Smugling or laid up from not being able to get men to Navigate them.

2nd The Smugling Trade to Dunkirk and the French Ports being stopp'd and the great advance in the Price of Spirits in Guernsey and Alderney since the demand at that market has increased owing to the East Country Smuglers frequenting it in consequence of the French being in Possession of Holland.

3^d The Smuglers in and about the Isle of Wight are supposed not to be Men of much Property, and many of them being probably indebted to Merchants for the Goods purchased in the Islands of Alderney & Guernsey find a difficulty in getting Credit whilst Trade from other Quarters is brisk and when they do purchase Goods they are either of inferior Quality or afterwards lowered or adulterated, for their chief Trade is in Geneva or Tobacco, that many of those who used to deal with them finding the price advanced and the Commodity worse in Quality have had recourse to the Custom House Sales to supply their wants to which there is another inducement namely that the Smugler sells his Cask of Spirits as a Four or Six Gallon Cask and is paid for as such, although it is generally short of Measure, whereas at our Sales for no more than they have.

The Supervisor of Riding Officers who is an intelligent sensible Man and an old Revenue Officer concurs in our opinion that the foregoing causes may in a great degree be imputed the decrease in Smugling here, and he says he can with great certainty assure us in the period of 5 Months, Viz from the latter end of March to the latter end of August not more than 100 Casks of Spirit were fraudulently landed between Bembridge and the Needles.

The Great Demand for Spirits at our Custom House Sales and the advance in Price in consequence is a corroborating Proof it is not so easily to be got from the Smuglers, as we now sell at 8 or 9 Shillings per Gallon Spirits of the same Quality which would only Produce 4/- or 4/6 per Gallon some years ago.

And amongst other causes of the decrease of Smugling on this Part of the Coast, the vigilance & exertions of the Commanders of our Revenue Cruizers ought perhaps to be considered as a principal one, and that the Cutter stationed at this Port has not been inactive, the great number of Seizures

brought in by her tend to prove and will also Warrant us in supposing that altho' the Smugling may have received a check in some particular Places, that the illicit Trade in general is not decreased but only diverted into other Channels.

1 November 1795 In obedience to the Directions contained in your Order of the 26th Ult. we have convened the several Officers at this Port & consulted with them on the subject Matter of the said Order and beg leave to report, that neither from their information or from any we have been able to obtain elsewhere, have we the least ground to believe that any Corn or Flour has been fraudulently carried from this Port out of the Kingdom to foreign Countries contrary to the existing Prohibitions, at least for a considerable time past, whatever reason there may have been for suspecting it to have been done soon after the French Revolution took place or in the early part of the present War.

And we are *aware* of the General Orders issued by your Honors on the 1st December 1789 and of which the Officers have since been reminded when the present Prohibition on Exportation commenced, are duly and properly attended to in the Shipping & Landing of Corn & Flour sent from one Port to another, it will not be easily practicable under Coast Dispatches to make fraudulent Exportations, which may be attempted by the Smuglers if they were admitted into the French or other Foreign Ports upon the Coast, by purchasing parts of Cargoes to export & barter for Spirits or other Goods.

We hope it will not be deemed altogether Foreign to the subject of this report if we beg leave to offer an opinion founded on enquiries made into the Cause in a great degree of the present high Price of Corn.

The last crop of Wheat in this part of the Country from the best information we can get is in general much lighter than it has been for many preceding Years, add to which the high prices & great demand for it previous to the last Harvest exhausted all old Stock, and the Farmers having sold what they had at Hand at a very great Price, added to the advance in the price of Cattle and every other Article with which they supply the Markets, find it perhaps less necessary for them to break in among the present Crop to discharge their annual Payments of Rent etc. which generally fall due about Michaelmas than it may some times have been.

13 November 1795 The Betsey, William Radley Master for Jamaica who appears to have clear'd at Gravesend on the 26th September with Debenture and Bounty Goods of different kinds by 19 Cockets produced is on Shore off Ryde within the Limits of this Port and having bulged we are informed it will be necessary to take out the Cargo of which we acquaint your Honors that Orders may be given to suspend Payment of the Debentures until the Goods are reshipped, of which we shall take care to give good Notice.

We have instructed the Tide Surveyor and proper Officers to assist in saving and securing the Goods and to use their utmost endeavours to prevent embezzlements

3 December 1795 We have in conjunction with the Tide Surveyor survey'd the two new Cutters building here by Mr Gely to replace the Swan Cutter at this port and the Diligence at Milford and beg leave to acquaint you that the Keels are laid & the Stem and Stern Posts of each Cutter are up and of the Swan cutter, some of the Floor timbers in.

4 December 1795 On examining the Goods from the Sloop Mary W Williamson Master from London for Barbados lately stranded within the Limits of this Port, the several Articles particularized on the other side hereof were found amongst the Cargo which were not upon the Cockets and being all except a Cask containing 15 Dozen of Hatts bound with different colour'd Binding in the manner of Soldiers Hatts, Articles prohibited to be Exported the Landing Surveyor and Landing Waiters have thought it their Duty to seize the same as Goods prohibited to be exported, and shipped without Entry or Warrant and submit their proceedings to your Honors.

25 Barrels containing 62 cwt 2 quarters Pickled Herrings
20 Kegs containing 19½ Bushels Split Peas
11 Kegs containing 11 Bushels Scotch Barley
28 Coils containing 23 cwt Cordage
20 Hams weighing 3 cwt 2 quarters 20 lbs

7 Baskets containing 14 Bushels Potatoes
1 Butt containing 15 Dozen round Hatts

15 January 1796 We beg leave to acquaint you that Mr Francis Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter taken by the French on the 14th October return'd yesterday from France where he was sometime detain'd a prisoner and he begs to receive your Honours' Commands.

19 January 1796 On examining the Baggage of Mr *Ketland* & his Family who came as Passengers from Havre de Grace in an American Ship, the Officers found a Dozen Fans which Mr *Ketland* said were English Fans and had been purchased in London but some amongst them being in our opinion of foreign Manufacture we did not think ourselves warranted in allowing them to pass and therefore sent the whole under the Seals of Office to the Kings Warehouse Keeper at the Custom House London, that your Honors may give such directions for the delivery or prosecution of the same as you may think right - and we recommended Mr *Ketland* who says he lives at No. 18 Gower Street to make such application to your Honorable Board respecting them as he may judge advisable.

1 February 1796 William Sampson one of the Mariners belonging to the late Swan Cutter has represented to us that he was landed at Liverpool about the 21st December last with two other Mariners belonging to the Cutter by the Master of an American Ship who gave them a Passage from France, that being desirous of getting home to his Family he left Liverpool before any Order was receiv'd by the Collector there to advance any Money for travelling Charges, that having had the misfortune to strain his Leg upon the Road it was almost 5 weeks before he could reach home, during which time he was reduced to great distress spent the little Money he had, obliged to sell part of his clothes & to beg his way home & having been since informed that the other two Mariners were paid under your Honors Order the sum of £3 – 8 – 0 each for travelling Charges from Liverpool he humbly prays to be allowed the same Sum here towards reimbursing his Expences home.

We beg leave to report that William Sampson has belonged to the Cutter some Years, and we believe the facts stated to be true.

February 1796 (no date) We hereby transmit an Account of Postage paid on Official Letters in the Quarter ended the 5th Ult. & amounting to £1 – 0 – 3 for the payment of which we humbly pray your Orders.

The Collector begs leave to submit to your Honors that he has made some little alterations in the Terms of the Oath directed by your General Letter of the 3rd November last and which he hopes you will not disapprove as he apprehends it equally embraces the object intended of excluding any charge for private Letters, but it often happens that Letters addressed to him are not strictly on the Service of this Revenue tho' they are in fact official and public Letters – nor does it always happen that the true and proper Charges of Postage are made on the Letters, as from a mistake unavoidably perhaps in the Post Office, Letters are sometimes undercharged and altho' overcharges on Letters are generally claimed, it is seldom when they are undercharged that the Persons receiving them take the trouble of paying up what he has been undercharged.

22 February 1796 In return to your Order of the 20th Inst. we beg leave to acquaint you that four of the Mariners who were on the Swan Cutter when she was taken by the French are now working on board the Nancy Cutter stationed at this Port and we are informed two others are on board the Greyhound Cutter at Weymouth, One on board the Roebuck & One in the Antelope Cutter at Portsmouth and One or two of them Sail out of this Port in Vessels belonging thereto and we apprehend the greater part of them may be got together upon proper Notice in case their attendance should be required.

29 February 1796 In reply to your Order of the 9th Inst we beg leave to report that we have made enquiry into the value of the Mother of Pearl Beads in Article No. 3 of our Seizure Account transmitted on the 30th December and find them an article of very fluctuating value but that they will not be overrated if valued at this time at Two Hundred Pounds.

They were seized by Information of East India prohibited Goods having been landed and concealed on the Premises of Phillip Riddett of the Parish of St Hellens upon which the Officers obtained a Warrant from the Justices of the Peace to search his House.

They found nothing in his House but on searching a Hay Rick in his Garden adjoining his House they found a square Place had been cut and thatched over, and upon opening the concealment it was found to contain a chest containing 104 Strings of Mother of Pearl Beads which the Officers seized.

Riddett is a notorious Smugler and has been prosecuted for Smugling and convicted in the Exchequer & before the Justice of various Offences – the Hay Rick is not more that 10 Yards distant from his Dwelling House & situated in his Garden adjoining thereto.

15 March 1796 In return to your Order of the 10th Inst. we beg leave to report that the Nancy temporary Cruizer at this Port is of the Berthen of 34 Tons & commanded by Robert Willis, a Boatman on the Establishment of this Port. The only Seizures hitherto made by this Cutter are Six small Casks of Spirit & one Cask of Snuff, nevertheless we think it but justice to add that we believe the Cutter since she was appointed to the Station has kept cruising as much as the Season of the Year would admit of, and that it has not been for want of a look out that the Commander has not yet met with more Success.

The Cutter is also very much in want of a proper Boat but as we are as yet without any Orders to provide one although an Estimate was transmitted in our Letter of the 10th November last.

23 March 1796 We beg leave to transmit an Estimate of the expence of building a New Boat for the Service at this Port in lieu of the one used by the Tide Surveyor which was by accident so much damaged when employ'd in assisting the Salvage of the Cargo of a Stranded Ship as to be totally unfit for Service and not worth repairing.

The Amount of the Estimate is Seven Guineas, and the Collector having received from the Proprietors of the Cargo of the Stranded Ship Four Guineas the estimate Value of the old Boat if the same is applied in part of payment for the New one is humbly proposed, the remaining sum to be paid by the Crown will only be Three Guineas.

1 April 1796 In obedience to your Order of the 8th Ult. we have Charged Mr Francis Sarmon late Commander of the Swan Revenue Cutter with having thro' negligence, inattention & other misconduct suffered the said Cutter to be captured by the French on the Coast of France on the 14th October last, which Charge he Answers thereto, and the Evidence of the several Witnesses who have been examined upon the Business are herewith transmitted, and we beg to submit to your Honors the following remarks thereon.

By the concurring testimony of all the Witnesses it appears that it would have been impossible for the Cutter to have escaped after it was discovered that the strange Sail were Enemies Ships, and Captain Sarmon says he was not furnished with any Signals either private or other when he sailed with Dispatches from Sir John Warren to enable him to distinguish the Ships of the Enemy from English Ships if he fell in with them, but none of the Witnesses except Richard Comben, Mate, think it would have been practicable to have got away after the strange Sail were first seen had they been chased, owing to the Cutters Bottom being very foul that she would neither stay nor wear, as it was not more than an Hour from the time they were first seen to their being close on board the Cutter as they all agree – Comben on being asked his reason for thinking the Cutter might have got away had she altered her course on first seeing the strange Ships as he had admitted her Bottom was very foul said he thought as Night was coming in they might have stood a chance of escaping in the Dark, but it does not appear that he either proposed or recommended the Commander to attempt, and all on board agree in saying nobody on board suspected them to be an Enemy until they were close on board the Cutter and hoisted their Colours.

And the circumstances of these English Sloops cruising from the Fleet having been *enquired* after by the English Frigate which they had spoke in the Morning may naturally enough be supposed to induce them at first to think that the Ships they saw were those Ships.

We observe the evidence of George Stiles that he states their Distance when first seen by him to be about 3 or 4 Miles which all the rest describe as considerably more, but we have to remark that Stiles

was at the Helm consequently not in a situation to see them so soon as those who were forward of aloft.

Upon the whole we beg leave to report, that it does not appear by any of the Witnesses we have had and opportunity of examining that the loss of the Cutter was owing to any willful neglect, inattention or misconduct on the Part of the Commander but owing to his being unexpectedly surprised by a superior force from which had not an opportunity of escaping, and the Witnesses when asked the question separately at the close of their examination all concurred in the same opinion.

18 April 1796 In return to your Order of the 13th Inst. we beg leave to report that neither of us have ever Resided in the Custom House but considering it highly proper that some Person should always be upon the Spot both as a Guard to the Custom House and Warehouses adjoining as also to receive Letters or Seizures, to see the Fires & Candles out and secure the Windows & Doors. We have since the Custom House was altered and enlarged permitted One of the Established Tide Waiters and his Wife to occupy two Rooms under the Custom House Roof without paying any Rent for the same.

And as it did not subject the Crown to any additional expence we did not think it necessary to apply for any particular Order upon the *matter*. The Tidesman now residing in the Custom House as above stated is Robert Flux whose Salary upon the Establishment is only £30 per Annum.

22 April 1796 Having communicated to Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter your Order of the 11th December last, we have received from him in return thereto the Letter herewith transmitted, representing it is impractical for him to furnish the Account required according to the prescribed Form having lost the Tradesmens Bills when the Cutter was taken but stating generally the Price paid for Provisions for some time past and that he had been a great loser by Victualling the Cutter.

We beg leave to report as our own opinion that within the last two Years every Article of Provisions has considerably advanced in Price & some of them full One third part dearer at this time that they were three or four Years ago.

27 April 1796 The Susan a French built Ship but said to be American Property, Elisha Shepherd Master is arrived at this Port from the Island of Mauritius laden with Coffee, Cotton, Ebony and 1 Bale of Merchandize as the Master Reports, he further Reports that the Cargo is intended for Hamburgh, but he put in here to receive Orders from a Mr Vaughan of London to whom he is now gone for his Orders.

We beg leave to acquaint your Honors that we are informed there is on board a Mons. Taleson a French Merchant who the Master says is a Passenger and has nothing to do with the Cargo.

But the Circumstances of a French Merchant being on board a Ship with a Cargo of Goods from a French Island and putting into a British Port for Orders we think gives cause to suspect that the Frenchman is *owner of the* Cargo and availing of a Neutral Bottom to dispose of at such Market as may best suit, Goods which tho' represented to be American, are in all probability French Property.

The Ship which is French Built is stated to have been purchased on the Island of France with the Produce of the Cargo carried from America to that Island.

The Master said the Frenchman was desirous of going with him to London but upon being ask'd what his Business was there, he said none, only curiosity, upon which he was told he could not Land without an Order from the Secretary of State, when he said that he should remain on board as we believe he has done.

We have thought it our Duty to state these Circumstances to your Honors that you may have an Opportunity of giving such Directions thereon as you may think the Case requires.