

Letters to the Commissioners No. 17 1789 - 1791

Transcribed from the Book held at the National Archives reference CUST 61/9.

26 October 1789 We beg leave to lay before you the inclosed Account of Seized Tobacco remaining in the Kings Warehouse at this Port on the 10th Instant, and as the operation of the late Tobacco Act which gave the Officers of Excise a Cognizance over all Tobacco & Snuff as well as that which is seized as what is Imported commences from that Period.

We humbly submit for your consideration the following Proposals & Recommendations which occur to us as necessary in order to carry the Act into execution:

1st That a separate Warehouse district from the Kings Warehouse which is now used indiscriminately for storing all seized Goods should be provided for receiving Tobacco imported here, and for securing seized Tobacco after condemnation as well as such as is seized & condemned at this Port as that which after condemnation may be brought from other Ports.

2nd That upon all future seizures of Tobacco brought to the Kings Warehouse Notice be given to the Excise Officer as directed by the 147 Sect of the Late Act and as is now practiced upon seizure of other Exciseable Articles.

3rd That a duplicate of the Account now laid before you as far as the same relates to Quantity & Quality to be delivered to the Excise Officer surveying the Custom House Warehouse, that he may if he may if he thinks proper take an Account of the Stock in the Warehouse on the 18th October and such part thereof as is already condemned be, as soon as a proper Tobacco Warehouse is provided removed from the Kings Warehouse to the Tobacco Warehouse to be subject to the regulations of the late Act either as to the Sale thereof or Burning as you may hereafter direct.

4th That the Person who your Honors may think proper to appoint as Tobacco Warehouse Keeper at this Port (for which Office we took the liberty in our Letter of the 6th June last to recommend John Pain the Collectors First Clerk and who having acted in that Capacity in the Importation and Exportation of four Cargoes of Tobacco has performed the Duty regularly and properly) to be furnished with a proper Warehouse Book to enter an account of all condemned Tobacco which may hereafter brought from other Ports and lodged in that Warehouse and that every Quantity brought to, or delivered from the said Warehouse be signed for by Customs & Excise Warehouse Keepers.

With respect to the 57 Sect. of the Act which enacts that no Person shall be employed by any Importer in a Tobacco Warehouse without previously being Licenced by your Honors and giving Security, we are apprehensive great difficulty will arise in carrying this Clause strictly into execution, as the Persons employed by the Merchants here in storing Tobacco and working in the Warehouse when Importations occur are not regular Servants retained for that purpose, but day Labourers occasionally employed in that or other Business and constantly changing. At the same time we have no hesitation in saying that such is the situation of this Port and of the Warehouse we propose to use as to a Tobacco Warehouse that there will be no difficulty in adopting such regulations and guarding this Warehouse in such a manner as will effectually prevent embezzlement by those who may be employed thereon altho' they are not Licenced.

28 October 1789 Mr. Thomas Amos, Commander of the Swallow Revenue Cutter appointed to cruize on this station during the absence of the Swan Cutter which is now in London, having by the inclosed Letter represented to us that he had met with the misfortune to carry away his Boom and praying forthwith to be supplied with a new one.

We have to prevent the Cutter being detained in this Port caused a new Boom to be provided on the best and cheapest terms, and inclosed we transmit the Bill for the same certified by Mr Amos and amounting to Thirteen Pounds Eight Shillings and Five Pence for payment of which we pray your directions.

20 November 1789 Mr Francis, Tide Surveyor having reported William Gregory Tide Waiter and Boatman at this Port for neglect of Duty in quitting the Ship Columbus laden with Tobacco, without Leave and not returning on Board when required so to do.

We thought it our Duty to charge him with the Offence and inclosed transmit the Charge given him with his Answer thereto upon which we beg leave to observe that the fact of Quitting the Ship without

leave is admitted by the Officer, who assigns as a reason for doing it, his suddenly being taken ill and that he was unable to return to his Duty when required so to do, but this Officers Complaint as well as those we have occasion to make against him originate we believe from the same Cause, namely too great a Love of strong Liquor, and his want of resolution to withstand any temptation or opportunity that offers of getting it, has often rendered it often necessary to admonish him on that account, as our annual Report of Officers Ages & Capabilities will show.

Of late, complaints against him have been less frequent than they were previous to the serious admonishment given him under your Order of the 17th May 1786 which appeared to have a good effect on him.

We believe him an honest Man and he expresses great sorrow for his Fault and promises future amendment of Conduct, what reliance can be placed on those Promises is respectfully submitted for your Honors consideration.

The Charge In consequent of the Complaint exhibited against you by your Tide Surveyor, we hereby Charge you with the following Neglect of Duty namely:

That having on the 9th Instant been placed as a Tide Waiter on board the Ship Columbus John Donald Master from Virginia laden with Tobacco; you the same day went on Shore without Leave from your Tide Surveyor and notwithstanding he afterwards sent you with directions to repair on board the Ship you neglected to do it and remained on Shore all Night contrary to your Duty as a Tide Waiter, and in opposition to Orders received from your Superior Officer.

To the above Charge you are required to give a plain and distinct Answer before Monday the 16th Inst.

William Gregory's Answer I acknowledged being stationed as a Tide Waiter on board the Ship Columbus and being suddenly taken ill with a dizziness in my head (a Complaint I am very much subject to) inadvertently without asking Leave went on Shore for some assistance to remove the same which very unfortunately could not be immediately offered and from long continuance of extreme pain, I was absent in a state of intoxication and very imprudently neglected acquainting my Superior Officer therewith, which with greatest submission I humbly ask forgiveness for, promising in future to make every amend in my power by a steady deportment to any Superior and an indefatigable assiduity to my Duty.

26 November 1789 George Hewson and Richard Coombes two of a notorious Gang of Smuglers who sometime ago infested the neighbourhood of Christchurch being under Prosecution for Smugling were through my means arrested in the Year 1785 and committed to Jail.

Hewson died in Prison and Coombes after suffering Imprisonment was some time through your Clemency released as appears by your Order of 23rd February 1786.

In an account of the Law Charges afterwards craved I made the usual charge of Four Guineas for the Expences of arresting and carrying to Jail each of the above Defendants one having been secured in Pool Jail, the other at Winchester, but by your Order of the 27th January 1787 the same was disallowed because the Prosecutions were originally carried on under the Treasury Regulations.

But I beg leave to observe to you Honors that by Letter dated 26th June 1786 you were pleased to signify to me that you had allowed Mr Arnaud then Acting Supervisor of Riding Officers at Christchurch his Bill of Expences for Arresting sundry Smuglers of the same Gang and that in consideration of all the Circumstances of the case you thought proper to direct that the future Prosecution of the said Offenders should be carried on at the Crowns Charge, and that Mr Arnaud and myself were to be considered the Officers concerned therein.

I therefore humbly hoped, as I have been at very considerable trouble and some Expence in endeavouring to break up a notorious Gang of Smugglers who carried on their illicit Practices to a great degree and with a high hand and have never derived any Advantage from the Prosecutions altho' several of them have been arrested that your Honors will have the goodness to allow me the customary sum of Eight Guineas on account of the two before mentioned Arrests or make me such other Allowance as your Honors may be of the opinion that my Services on this occasion merit.

27 November 1789 In return to your Order of the 24th Inst. we beg leave to Report that no regular Charge has been given to William Gregory Tide Waiter and Boatman at this Port prior to that

transmitted in our Letter of the 20th Inst.

That we have frequently privately admonished him to refrain from an excess of drinking and having reason to believe when he was stationed as a Boatman at St Hellens that the Smuglers purposely tempted him to drink to put him off his guard and render him incapable of Duty, we for reasons stated in our Letter of 19 November 1783 proposed to move him from St Hellens to act as a Tide Waiter at Cowes that he might be more immediately under the Tide Surveyor and has accordingly performed his Duty at Cowes since that time. When Mr Miller, late at this Port, he at our request exhorted him to attend to the admonitions we had frequently given him and in consequence of Mr Mondays Report he was publicly admonished for his fault by your order of 17 May 1786 and since that time has we have had but few occasions to complain of him and in consequence of the Tide Surveyors Reports frequently made to us we have from time to time in our Annual Report of Officers Ages and Capacities how far we thought his Conduct amended or that he had profited from admonitions given him.

27th November 1789 In return to your Order of 17th Inst. we beg leave to Report that the undermentioned Seizures have been made by Charles Ritchie Sitter of a Six Oar'd Boat stationed at this Port during the time he and his Boat Crew have Cruized in the seized Lugger which we permitted them to make use of for the reasons stated in our Letter of the 1st Ult.

The Swan Cutter which has some time been at the Port of London to be refitted is now returned to her Station and the propriety or necessity of continuing the use of the Lugger to the Boats Crew is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

1789

Sept. 27 th	1 Cask Manufactured Tobacco	26lbs
	53 Casks Brandy	210 Gallons
	11 Casks Rum	41 Gallons
	52 Casks Geneva	182 Gallons
	A Boat and Materials	
Oct. 22 nd	2 Casks Brandy	6 Gallons
	1 Cask Geneva	3 Gallons
Nov. 24 th	16 Casks Brandy	57 Gallons
	22 Casks Geneva	77 Gallons
	A Boat, two Oars & Rudder	

3 December 1789 The small moveable Office appropriated to the use of Coast Waiters upon Newport Quay being decay'd and so entirely worn out as not to be worth repairing, having been in use many years, but the exact time we cannot ascertain.

We have caused an Estimate to be made of the Expenche of building a new One deducting the value of the old One, which the builder has agreed to take, will amount to the sum of Fourteen Pounds ten shillings and inclosed we submit the Estimate for your consideration praying your directions thereon.

(A marginal note states ' Estimate too high, if the Tradesman will build it for Twelve Pounds it may be done'.)

13 January 1790 We are directed by your Order of the 11th Ult. to break up the Hull and sell the Materials of the Cutter mentioned in the inclosed Account which has be Seized at this Port and since condemned.

But we beg leave to represent to your Honors that the Cutter in question is not particularly calculated for the Smugling Trade only but may be usefully employed in the purpose of fair Trade and would we apprehend if put up to Public Sale in the state it now is, sell for the appraised value of One hundred and seven Pounds or more, and that it will be for the interest of the Crown and the Seizing Officer that she should be so disposed of, unless your Honors should have occasion to employ her in the Service on any Station where small Cruizers are wanted for the Quarantine or otherwise.

15 March 1790 In return to your Order of the 4th Inst. we beg leave to acquaint you that it is the practice in this Port to allow any Quantity of Coals to be Shipped free of Duty for the use of Crews employed on Vessels on the Coasting Trade or on the Fisheries.

But the Masters of Vessels bound on Foreign Voyages are allowed to take on board without paying the Export Duty any Quantity of Coals not exceeding the Quantity limited in the Victualling Bill transmitted with your Order of the 3rd November 1773 but in all those cases the Coals have previously paid the Coast Duty of 5/6 per Chalder.

19 March 1790 Herewith we transmit an account of Seizures brought to this Port since our last Account dated 2nd Ultio; and pray your Orders for prosecuting the same to condemnation.

Inclosed is an Affidavit of particulars relative to the Seizure in Article No. 3 and we submit if your Honors will not think it expedient to Order a prosecution in the Exchequer against the Persons employed in running the Goods.

The Boat in Article No. 3 of Non Enumerated Seizures we find on enquiry is the property of a Man who is a Pilot and not suspected of being concerned in Smugling, and it appears that the Boat was taken from her Moorings in the Night unknown to the Proprietor by two Lads who on being discovered by the Officer threw their Cask overboard, and *ran* off, the Officer knowing the Boat afterwards seized her at her Moorings, but we submit if under the Circumstances of the Case it should not be returned to the owner.

The Sloop in Article No.6 was seized and sent in by Lieut. Brisac of His Majesty's Cutter Speedwell in consequence of an Information of her having unlawfully imported a Quantity of Foreign Spirits in the Month of December last as the return of his Seizure Specifies, we have not yet have an opportunity of calling on Mr Brisac for an Affidavit of Facts to Support his Seizure but propose doing it as soon as he comes back into Port and shall take care to transmit the same as soon as it can be obtained.

24 March 1790 Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port having by his Letter of the 15th Inst. herein inclosed reported to us that in securing a Seizure consisting of a Cutter and the Goods particularized in Article No. 15 of our Seizure Account submitted on the 19th Inst. he had the misfortune to loose one of his Cutters Boats which he was obliged to cut adrift and a new one to supply the place of it is necessary for the Service.

We herewith transmit an Estimate amounting to eleven Pounds twelve Shillings and six Pence of the expence of Building a new Boat and praying your directions for providing the same. (Approved 1st April.)

1 April 1790 Application having been made to us by John Jeram residing in this Port for a Certificate of Registry for a Sloop he says he purchased from Sarah Edwards of Alderney and the inclosed papers being produced to induce us to Register the said Vessel.

We beg leave to state our Reasons for refusing to grant a Certificate of Registry without previously submitting the case to your Honors and receiving your directions thereon.

Independant of the Person making the application being a know Smugler, and that we have every reason to believe the Vessel is intend'd to be used by him solely in the Smugling Trade, we observe that the Papers produced do not correspond with each other so as to satisfy us that the Vessel is legally intituled to a Register.

The Certificate from the Principal Officers at Portsmouth of their having sold a condemned Vessel at Public sale on the 4th Inst. expresses that it was the Sloop Prosperous of Guernsey but does not state that the Person applying for a Register was the Person who bought the Vessel at such a Sale, indeed the contrary appears to have been the fact by the Bill of Sale now produced / and which we must here observe is by any means not conformable to the 27th Sect. of the late Registry Act / which Bill of Sale states that John Battershell was the Purchaser of the Vessel, and that she was of the Burthen of Eighteen Tons or thereabout whereas the Certificate of Registry for the Vessel states that the Vessel belonged to Alderney and not to Guernsey and admeasured only Sixteen Tons, so that if the Vessel in question is the actual Vessel sold at Portsmouth and as such legally intituled to a Certificate of Registry, it appears that the Property has passed through different Hands without being legally transferr'd or duly Registered, and it is not clear that the Certificate now delivered up to be cancelled was the Certificate originally granted for the Vessel & belonging to her at the time of Seizure.

On this occasion we take the liberty of submitting to your Honors consideration, some Regulations which we think it may be proper to adopt in Cases where condemned Vessels are sold at Public Sale under your Orders namely;

That any Seized Vessel being condemned, the Register under which she was before navigated / if the same can be obtained / should be cancelled and upon the Vessel being sold at Public Sale a new Certificate of Registry should be granted to the Purchaser if residing in that Port by the Collector and Comptroller of the Port where the same is sold stating amongst other things, the Vessel having been Seized and condemned with the time when, and that it has been sold on at Public Sale at for the sum of and in Cases where the Purchaser declared at the time of sale, shall not reside at the Port or Place where the Vessel is sold, that a full and perfect Certificate of the above and such other particulars from the original Certificate of Registry as may be necessary, be delivered to the Purchaser with the Vessel to enable him to obtain a Register at the Port where the owners reside.

These, or similar Regulations if adopted, we are humbly of the opinion may often be the means of preventing Certificates of Registry being granted or obtained improperly.

15 April 1790 In obedience to your Order of the 16th Ult. we have Charged Joseph Goodridge Deputed Mariner of the Swan Cutter at this Port and three other Mariners ([John Torin](#), [John Mundell](#) & [John Clarke](#).) belonging to the Cutter with being concerned in embezzling a considerable quantity of Tobacco and Snuff part of a Seizure made by the Swan in conjunction with the Tartar Cutter of Dover and inclosed we submit the said Charges with Answers given thereto, submitting also for your consideration the following observations.

The Persons Charged together with John Dawkins who since the Seizure was made has been discharged from the Cutter for Drunkenness and other Misbehaviour appears to have been the only Person belonging to the Swan who had any opportunity of being concerned in an embezzlement, and they all positively deny the Fact.

From the Evidence of Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan it appears that when the Seized Vessel was stuck upon the Bar it was deemed expedient to take out the Goods into 3 Boats & send them on board the Tartar Cutter for safety which service he superintended himself and that Torin & Mundell were immediately afterwards sent on board the Swan without going on shore consequently he thinks it impossible they should have been concern'd in any embezzlement of the Goods.

It showing Fresh at the time the Boats took in the Goods the Officers did not think it prudent to detain them to rummage the Vessel closely but left Goodridge, Clarke and Dawkins with the Deputed Mariner and some men belonging to the Tartar to take care of the Prize & carry her into Dover.

Goodridge says that having been out in the Boat two Nights he was much fatigued and after the Vessel was made safe by a Rope carried on Shore he turned in to get some rest, Mr Chapman Deputed Mariner of the Tartar agreeing to take the Watch, that during the time he & Clarke remained on Deck no Boats came off from the Shore and their own Boat went on Shore only once after the Vessel was made fast, and that was for a Cask of Water, that Dawkins and some of the Tartars People went in the Boat but does not believe any Goods were taken from the Vessel by them at that time as they must have been seen it if they had, nor was it discovered that any part of the Seizure had been left on board the Vessel 'til they got along side the Tartar in the Harbour in the Morning, when on a Rummage they found 4 Bags & 4 or 5 Rolls of Tobacco all of which was put on board the Tartar.

Upon the whole we beg leave to report that the Parties have been strictly & closely examined and all positively deny to have any concern in the embezzlement, nor from anything we have been able to discover do we have cause to think them Guilty of the Charge. ([They we acquitted 22nd April.](#))

16 April 1790 As directed by your Order of reference of the 13th Instant we have called upon the Mate of the Swan for his observations on that part of the inclos'd Paper which relates to the supposed ill treatment of the Crew of a French Vessel called St Pierre lately Seized by the Tartar and Swan Cutters in conjunction & inclosed we transmit the said Mates report thereon.

And having also examined Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan and several of his Mariners relative to the said accusation we beg leave to observe that we do not discover any ground for the complaint of ill treatment, on the contrary Mr Sarmon says that when Beef and Potatoes were sent from the two

Cutters for the Mariners which they had put on board the French Vessel the French sailors partook of it, they not having Meat of their own & that the French sailors in return gave them Cyder and an Ullage Cask of Spirit which they had on board, and that he neither saw or heard any fighting or beating.

That the Swan Cutter being going to Sea upon the look out the evening after the Seizure and the Tartar to take the Goods on board it was not thought expedient to take the French Sailors on board either of the Cutters, as there were so many of them say fifteen it was intended to put them on the Shore at Dungeness where it was thought they would meet Friends to procure a Vessel for them as it was supposed the Cargo was to have been landed near there but finding it impractical on account of the Wind & Tide Mr Sarmon directed his Mate to put them on Shore at the first convenient place that when they left their Vessel, Sarmon himself desired them to take everything belonging to that they accordingly did take their bags with what bedding they had which consisted only of a few blankets and their provisions consisting of 4 or 5 loaves & a small piece of Cheese, that on rummaging their bags as they got into the Boat Mr Sarmon found in several of them from two to four Pounds of Tobacco which he took from them, and as a further proof that the assertion of their being put on Shore with only the clothes on their back is not true, the Mate and one of the Mariners that when they got to Dover they were told by a Mr Bowler of that Place, that the French Men belonging to the Prize they had taken were arrived before them and had brought their Things into Town in a Cart they had hired for that purpose.

With respect to the danger it is said they were in by being put on shore in an open Boat it does not appear that there was any and if there had the Mariners belonging to the Swan who were in the Boat shared it with them. [\(There are no details of the Complaint.\)](#)

29 April (should be March) 1790 - Charge to William Robey In pursuance of directions from the Honorable Commissioners dated the 16th Inst. we hereby charge you with great negligence and inattention to your Duty by not indorsing the proper Quantity of Wheat shipp'd on board the Good Intent of this Port Richard *Rattew* Master for Portsmouth by virtue of a Sufferance dated 8th February for 150 Quarters of Wheat.

It appearing that on delivery of the said Wheat at Portsmouth that the actual quantity on board was 96 Quarters and a half whereas the Cocket granted here on the 11th Instant was only for 54 Quarters the Quantity which by your Endorsement and that of the Coast Waiter at Newport on the back of the Sufferance appear'd to have been shipped, and the Coast Waiter at Newport being positive that the Quantity shipped by him Viz 42 Quarters was the actual Quantity shipp'd in his presence, it becomes necessary to call on you to account for the Quantity shipp'd by you or for the Error in your Indorsement of the Sufferance.

To the foregoing Charge you are required to give a plain and distinct Answer in Writing before Thursday the 1st April.

1 April 1790 - Answer In reply to your Charge of the 29th of last Month I beg to state to you the following facts:

On the 16th of February last my Supervisor appointed me to meet him at Newport in the Afternoon to consult on particular Business, about 10 O'Clock I returned home and was informed that a Quantity of Wheat was shipp'd on board the Good Intent Richard *Rattew* Master early the next Morning. I attended the Vessel the Master of which reported to me he had taken on board 12 Loads and I by mistake endorsed 12 Quarters, as the Corn was shipp'd with a considerable Quantity from Newport for the Kings Mill, the Distance small and the Corn Trader Mr John *Aslot* a Person of an unexceptional Character I thought there would be no Injury to the Revenue in indorsing the Sufferance, I flatter myself will become some small extenuation of my *Fault*. [\(This was examined and stated to be true by John Grimes, Supervisor of Riding Officers.\)](#)

15 April 1790 As directed by your Order of the 16th Inst. we have called on William Robey Riding Officer and Coast Waiter at this Port to account for the error committed by him on a Sufferance granted by us for Shipping a Quantity of Wheat at this Port on board the Good Intent of this Port Richard *Ratten* Master for Portsmouth and inclosed we transmit the Charge given with the Answer thereto upon which we beg leave to observe.

That it appears upon investigation of the Business and is acknowledged by the Officer that he was not actually present when the Wheat was put on board the Vessel that having been by the particular appointment of his Supervisor to meet him upon Business at Newport he found upon his return home in the Evening of the 10th February a Sufferance left at his House for Shipping Wheat, that in the Morning he went down to the Key to enquire when it was to be shipt and was thereon told by the Master that it had been put on board the Afternoon before & that the Quantity was 12 Loads, that knowing the Master had to go to Custom House for a Cocket and that it must subject him to great inconvenience and delay if he refused to endorse the Sufferance, and knowing also that the Wheat was going to the Kings Mill at Portsmouth & shipt by the Contractor to the Government he was induced upon the Masters word to certify the shipping of it but though by mistake endorsed only 12 Quarters instead of 12 Loads or 60 Quarters which was the Quantity he told him had been shipt but by the Evidence of the Merchant & Owner of the Storehouse where the Wheat was lodged at Ryde it appears upon Weighing the Wheat Five Quarters was found not to come up to the Standard Weight at which it could be received at the Kings Mill, when to prevent the whole being rejected he ordered it to be left behind as was the case and it has been satisfactorily proved to us that it remains at this time in the Storehouse at Ryde, and the Merchant acknowledges that he was going to Portsmouth himself to attend the delivery of the Wheat and he did not tell the Master at the time of Shipping that any less quantity was put on board than was first intended as accounted for the deficiency of 5 Quarters, the deficiency of 5 Bushels may arise from the difference of two Persons measuring it especially as Corn shipt for the Victualling Office is not measured with great exactness it being always remeasured upon delivery and paid for according to that measurement. The Officer appears fully sensible of his fault in relying upon the Masters Word for the Quantity take on board and assures us that he will in future pay more particular attention to his Instructions and the Special Orders given him by us on the 22nd November last, a Copy of which we beg leave to transmit. He is we believe a sober and very honest Man and has not before been charged with any neglect of Duty. (He was ordered to be severely reprimanded.)

3 May 1790 Mr John Cheverton Coast Waiter of this Port having as directed by your Order of 23rd June last attended upon the Keys to complete his instruction as a Landing Waiter to enable him to act occasionally in that capacity as the service may require and it appearing by the inclosed Certificate of the proper Officers that he had attended accordingly and is qualified to do the Duty of a Landing Waiter.

13 May 1790 In return to your Order of the 7th Inst. we beg leave to report that, William Fry has long had the character of a Smugler and his Affidavit on which you have thought proper to Order the prosecution of the Atalanta Sloop sometimes seized by Lieut. Brisac, and also that which foundation for the Seizure of the Sloop Sally both prove he was on board the Vessels at the time they carried out the illicit Trade.

His evidence may be corroborated by the several Persons named in his Affidavit if they can be got at, but we much doubt if they will come forward as voluntary evidence.

His motives for giving Information we understand from Mr Brisac was to be revenged on some *People* who had used him ill and with a view of having *clemency* shown against him in some prosecution which has been commenced against him at a Port for particulars of which we desire to refer to the Officers of that Port.

Mr Brisac reports to us that Fry voluntarily waited on board the Speedwell where he now serves as a Mariner and has been especially useful in making several Seizures and discovering the names of Smuglers.

That the Vessel in question has been chiefly employed in Smugling we think there is no doubt and Mr Brisac informs us that at the time she was stopp'd there was no Register on board and that upon his Boat making towards her the People on board *pulled up* their cable and attempted to get away and he has strong reason to believe a Cargo of prohibited Goods had a very little time before been landed from the Vessel.

To all which we beg leave to add that upon the Tide Surveyor Rummaging the Vessel when she was delivered up to us, he found concealed under a locker in the *Cabb*in in a place capable of containing a considerable quantity of Goods a Bag in which was Fourteen Pounds weight of Manufactured

Tobacco and upon our particularly questioning him whether he had from any circumstances that gave reason to suspect that the said Bag of Tobacco had been put there after the Vessel had been stopp'd or that any of the persons then on board had any knowledge of the concealment he assured us that he did not.

29 May 1790 In return to your Order of 21st Instant directing us to call upon Mrs Edwards for the authority by which she sign'd the Bill of Sale to John Jeram, which was transmitted to your Honors in our Letter of the 1st Ultimo.

We beg leave to inclose another Bill of Sale sign'd by Jonathan Edwards – Husband of Mrs Edwards, and which within these four days has been produced by Jeram who claims a Certificate of Registry for the Sloop Prosperous lately seiz'd, condemn'd and sold at Public sale at Portsmouth to a Person of the name of Buttershall, who Jeram informs us bought it for Edwards who was the owner thereof at the time of Seizure & of whom Jeram has since bought it, but Edwards being in France his Wife signed the Bill of sale for him.

29 May 1790 Inclosed we transmit an Account of Goods saved out of the General Goddard an Indiaman lately stranded within this Port, and since shipped upon the 3 Brothers of this Port Robert Clarke Master to be conveyed to the Port of London under the care of two Tidesmen at the risque & Expence of the East India Company as directed by your Order of the 27th Instant.

The original Numbers on the different Packages, being greatly defaced & obliterated from the Goods having been under water, a new Progressive Number has been put on each Package of the different Goods.

The Ship was got off on the 27th Inst. and has now been towed into Cowes Road where the remainder of the Cargo which appears to be much damaged is now transshipping into other Vessels to be forwarded to London with all possible Dispatch.

29 May 1790 Upon the inclosed Memorial of Lieut. Brisac referr'd to us by your Order of reference dated the 19th Inst. we beg leave to report it appears to us that a very small part only of the Goods would have been seized and secured, if it had not been for the activities and exertions of Lieut. Brisac & his Men.

The Persons who laid claim to the Seizure when Mr Brisac's People got on Shore at the place where the Goods were lying was Mr Thomas Mead a Boatman in the Service at Christchurch, but it does not appear he made any signals to the Cutter that was then lying off for assistance, tho' he could scarcely expect singly to secure the Seizure if he had made it as he pretended.

Mead was upon the Shore when part of the Goods were carried off by the Smuglers & ventured alone amongst them it may be presumed he knew some of them & we submit if it may not be proper to call upon him to state all he knows of the transaction & the Parties. Mr Brisac seems to have done all he could under the Circumstances of the Case his pursuing the Boat which he afterwards seized with some Casks in her shows diligence on his part and the circumstance of a Compass and Pump being in the Boat is presumptive proof of her having imported the Goods found in her as also those upon the Beach which they saw landed from the Boat.

The Seizure was made on 21st February last was returned in Article No. 9 of our Account of Seizures transmitted 19 March & by your Order of 27 April we are directed to pay the Officers only one Third of the Produce.

1 June 1790 The Brigantine Louisa Peter L Carvel Master from *Castle* Town, laden with Tobacco & Rice consigned by Bills of Lading & the Manifest herewith transmitted, for Cowes & a Market is arrived at this Port.

By the opinion of the Attorney General & of an Advocate in Scotland communicated by your Order of the 18th August 1787 and by a subsequent Opinion of the Attorney & Solicitor General taken upon a case which occur'd at this Port, and transmitted in your Order of the 17 April 1789. Tobacco so consigned is deem'd an Importation & to come legally within the Regulations & Restrictions of the Acts of 25 Geo. 3 Ch 81.

We are not aware that any subsequent Act relative to Tobacco alters this Law with respect to Tobacco so imported for the 30 Section of the 29 of the King Ch 68 only goes to permit Vessels laden in the whole with Tobacco to wait either at Cowes or Falmouth a certain time for Orders and the Vessel in question being only part laden with Tobacco, the greater part of the Cargo consisting of Rice does not appear to come within that Clause & consequently must under the construction of the Law before stated be deemed as being imported into this Kingdom and such Importation not being within the terms of the 13 Section of the Tobacco Act of the last session Ch 68 but being in a Foreign Ship & not belonging to the United States of America, we humbly apprehend both Ship & Cargo become forfeited and we shall think it our Duty to stop the same for further directions.

2 June 1790 At the desire of the Secretary of the East India Company were have delivered to Mr George Dominiou the Company's agent, a Chest, said to contain Treasure, landed from the General Goddard East Indiaman lately stranded within this Port.

The said Chest is under the Seals of Office and addressed to His Majesty's Warehouse Keeper at the Custom House, London that it may be properly examin'd when opened.

30 June 1790 A New Office for the Coast Waiter at Newport Quay having been provided under the directions and conditions of your Order of the 5th January and the same appearing to be finished agreeable to the Contract we inclose the Tradesman's Bill for the same amounting after deducting Forty Shillings which is allowed for the old House to the sum of Ten Pounds, we pray your Order for payment of this.

9 July 1790 The Swan Cutter being at present employed under the Admiral at Plymouth and the Rose Cutter of Southampton now under repair, this coast is left without any Revenue Cruizer and the Smuglers thereby afforded great opportunities of carrying on their illicit Trade.

And having at this Port a small Clinker built Vessel of the Berthen of 26 Tons which has been seized & condemned and waiting for your Orders to be disposed of. We propose to employ her as a temporary Cruizer under the Charge of Mr Charles Ritchie Sitter of the six Oar'd Boat stationed here who with his own Boats Crew and the addition of 3 or 4 Extramen who can be best spared from other Duty, will be enabled to Man the Vessel and we are humbly of the opinion may to the benefit of the Service cruize round the Isle of Wight and upon the North Shore between the Island and Portland.

The expence of making the experiment will be trifling & Mr Ritchie appear sanguine in his expectation of success if he is permitted to make Tryal of this Vessel for six Months we deem it right encourage his active zeal and humbly hope what we have done in the present unguarded state of this Coast will meet with your approbation and considered as done for the good of the Service, and that the Vessel may be permitted to cruize upon Tryal for the time proposed unless we should see cause sooner to recall her.

10 August 1790 Inclosed we transmit a Letter from Mr Sarmon Commander of the Swan Cutter in the Service at this Port requesting we apply to your Honors on his behalf, in order to procure his release from attending with his Cutter upon the Admiral at Plymouth on which Service he has been employed for the last three Months.

We beg leave to represent to your Honors, that from the long absence of the Cutter from her Station the Smuglers upon this Coast are afforded greater opportunities of carrying on their illicit Trade and the Officers and Men belonging to the Cutter are deprived of the benefit arising from making Seizures.

That the principal Business in which the Cutter has been employed at Plymouth has been carrying impressed men from Hamoaze to the Sound, that as several other Cutters have been discharged from their attendance upon the Admiral and as the Plymouth Custom House Cutters which are stationed upon the Spot have been for some time released from that disagreeable duty, we humbly submit to your Honors if you will not think it expedient that application should be made to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury or Admiralty that the Swan Cutter may also be discharged & directed to return to her station at this Port.

1 September 1790 As directed by your Order of the 13th March last, we have called upon Mr Francis Tide Surveyor at this Port to state to us what has been the Conduct of Arthur Whitcomb

Waller Tidewaiter and Boatman during the last six Months and whether he has abstained from inebriety, and inclosed we beg leave to transmit his report thereon, and he also informs us that Charles Leigh, Boatman at Yarmouth has appeared to be more active in the discharge of his Duty since he was admonished to be so in consequence to the Order above mentioned.

Copy of Mr Francis's Letter In answer to your Letter dated 1st Instance A W Waller has been employed several times, during the last three Months I have no complaint from any Master of a Ship, where he has been boarded, neither have I heard on him being in Liquor in the time mentioned.

10 October 1790 We are desired by Mr Gely, builder of a cutter at this port for the service at Falmouth, to request of your Honors that he may be permitted to launch the said cutter which is now quite ready to be put in the water.

Mr Gely will engage to take Care of the Cutter afloat 'til Captain Bray arrives to take Charge of her, but as he is much in want of the Blocks upon which the Cutter at present stands to lay down the Keel of another Vessel, which has induced him through us to make application.

15 October 1790 Mr Francis, Tide Surveyor having represented to us that two new Boats to supply the place of others which have become nearly unserviceable and not worth replacing are much wanted for the Service at this Port, One for the use of the Watch House and the other for the use of the Officers stated at Yarmouth, we have caused an Estimate to be given in of the Expence of furnishing the same which amounting together to the Sum of Seventeen Pounds sixteen Shillings and six Pence are respectfully submitted to your Honors for your further directions thereon. (This was approved.)

23 October 1790 Mr Francis, Tide Surveyor at this Port has represented to us that he is much in want of a telescope for the use of the Watch House having had only a small one his own property which is now broke and unserviceable and that he also wants a two feet Rule to assist him in admeasuring Boats and Vessels.

And being of the opinion that both are necessary for the Service we humbly pray your Honors will order the same to be sent.

3 November 1790 It being necessary for the Service at this port that a Kiln should be erected for burning such damaged and condemned Tobacco & Snuff as will not sell for the Duties, of which there is at present a considerable Quantity in the Warehouse. We beg leave to submit for your approbation a plan and estimate of one which we apprehend will answer the purpose and which we propose to have erected as near the Tobacco Warehouse as a convenient Spot can be got, as the Warehouse will not admit of its being erected thereon.

The Estimate amounts to the Sum of £38 – 2 – 9 which is respectfully submitted.

15 December 1790 We beg leave to lay before you the inclosed letter from Mr Sarmon, Commander of the Swan Cutter containing a particular description of an armed Smugling Lugger which has been carrying on an illicit Trade upon this Coast and stating also an outrage committed by the Master and Crew of the Smugling Lugger upon the Deputed Mariner and Boats Crew of the Swan's Boat who they compelled to go on board the Smugling Vessel and kept them Prisoners a considerable time whilst they landed part of their cargo and made use of the Swan's Boat with their own in the Business.

On examining the Mariners we do not find that they know any of the Smuglers except one man who belongs to Hastings, his name John Coborn or Colbourn and was known by Nicholas Moore one of the Swan's Mariners. Many of the Smuglers had their faces blacked with Gunpowder and by the conversation which pass'd on board whilst the Officers were detained they learnt that the Smuglers came from Guernsey and intended to return there as soon as the Cargo was all landed. They also understood that the Evening before they had fired at a Revenue Boat which belonged to the Rose Cutter to keep her off & that the same Evening they chased the Cutter and would have fired into her but were afraid of alarming the Coast and thereby frustrating their intention of landing the Cargo.

When the Smuglers in the morning sent the Swan's Boat and Men away they put into their boat two small Casks of Spirits, but detained the Stores and Materials belonging to the Boat, as specified in Mr Sarmon's Letter.

As it is impossible for the Revenue Cruizers to defend the Coast against armed Vessels of such Force and we conceive it to be highly necessary that some vigorous Measures should be adopted to punish such daring violations of the Law, we submit to your consideration, if it may not be proper to send to Guernsey to have the Vessel secured there not only on the Account of the Piracy which we think has been committed by plundering the Swan's Boat of her Materials but if the Parties are not known so as to be prosecuted for the Offences, we presume the vessel is forfeited for Smugling which can be proved by the two Casks of Spirits unshipped from her and which have since been seized and returned to the Custom House by Mr Sarmon whose People during the time they were confined on board made such private Marks as will enable them to swear to hear again and are willing to go over to Guernsey to identify the Vessel if your Honors are of the opinion it is necessary or proper for them to do.

16 December 1790 In return to your Order of the 18th Ult. we beg leave to acquaint you that it has for several Years been the Practice in this Port to require from Masters of Ships who deliver Coals here, the Certificate directed by the 9th of Anne Ch. 28 Section 2 which after the same has been registered in a book kept for that purpose is returned against the Master, but we have observed that such Certificates are often incomplete, the Coals on them being not otherwise expressed than as a full lading without specifying the actual Quantity in Tons or Chaldrons, and the price paid is very frequently omitted.

We also beg to observe it very often happens that Masters of Colliers dispute our right to demand such Certificates & say are seldom required of them at other Ports which may presume may be owing to that Section of the Act which requires the production of a Certificate having been omitted in the volume of Acts of Parliament printed for the use of Outports which your Honors will see is the case on a reference to Volume 1 Page 435.

With respect to the Certificate directed by the 25th Geo. 3 Ch. 54 Section 1 we are in the practice of demanding that also from Masters of Ships discharging Coals here, and when no objection is made to deliver it the same is filed in the Office, but we do not know that the Act requires the production of it at the delivering Port tho it does at the Loading Port.

4 January 1791 The Telescope and two Feet Rule craved in our Letter of the 23rd October for the Tide Surveyor's use at the Watch House are duly received.

We beg leave to report in obedience to your Minute of the 30th October 1777 that the number of Official Letters addressed by us to your Honors in the preceding Years Correspondence is 140.