Richard Bull to Thomas Pennant

ID:	1056
From:	Richard Bull
To:	Thomas Pennant
Date:	1786-12-27
Repository:	WCRO
Identifier:	WCRO CR2017/TP189, 4
Editors:	Transcribed by Ffion Mair Jones; edited by Ffion Mair Jones; encoded by Vivien Williams. (2019)
Cite:	'Richard Bull to Thomas Pennant 1786-12-27' transcribed by Ffion Mair Jones; edited by Ffion Mair Jones; encoded by Vivien Williams. (2019) in Curious Travellers Digital Editions [editions.curioustravellers.ac.uk/doc/1056]

Dear Sir.

Stratton Street Dec^{r}: 27. 1786.

I did not receive the favor of your letter, till I return'd again to England, and the dear bought pleasures of this vile London, which my poor daughter begins to feel the Effects of already, tho in truth such weather as this, would make the teeth of a Laplander chatter. I have not answer'd your ~~kind~~Obliging letter, because nothing therein particularly requir'd it, except to ask when, and ^to whom I can pay the contents of the little account due to M^{r}. Griffith, for the drawings you had the kindness to send enclos'd in your last. I much want a view of Nanney House, If Moses has ever taken it, and a portrait of David Gamm, and I don't recollect where I am to place Lord Donnegal's Seat, call'd Fisherwyck, or the portrait of Ch:*[Chief]* Justice Glynn.

I have a friend in the custom House ^at Cowes preparing an e~~[illegible]~~xact and faithful account of the exportation of Grain, and flower from the Island, which is much encreas'd since the publication of Sir Rich^{d}: Worsley's *book*, & I have learn'd from an ~~old~~ old & very intelligent ^[illegible] Tenant of my own, that Ground <u>well</u> marl'd, will find the good effects of it for 20 years, but after it has once receiv'd this measure, it answers no purpose to apply it a second time; experiments have been made after 25, and 30 years, and the only effect produc'd even at such a distance of time, has been to make a stiff Soil work rather more free: the quantity generally laid on, is 20 waggon loads to an Acre. I have been round the Island, and have observed nothing romantic or uncommon among the vast Cliffs, which surround the South and South West part of ^it ~~the Island~~ except what has been already notic'd in Sir Rich^{d}: Worsley's *publication*. The high land of S^{t} Albans in Dorsetshire, and S^{t} Catherine's Point in the Isle of Wight, from a great ^[illegible] Bay, and in <u>blowing weather</u> with the wind to the South West, hardly any vessel, that gets within it, escapes without coming ashore; to prevent this the Trinity House a few years since erected at the expence of £7000, two light houses, one upon S^{t}. Catherine's hill, and one upon the high downs just above the needle Rocks, and a third upon Hurst: beach; the two last were lighted for the first time the 29th. of last September, but the former has never yet been illuminated. a Toll or duty of one shilling, for every coasting vessel passing the lights is collected by the Trinity House. British vessels bound on foreign pay ½ per ton, Foreigners double. Sailors doubt whether the lights upon the two high Points of the needles, and S^{t} Catherine's will answer any good purpose; they say they had been better seen upon the beach, than where they are, because in bad weather, when most wanted, those high hills are almost always envelop'd in clouds, and of course the lanthorns invisible ^at any little distance, and that for some time to come, they will be liable to be mistaken for the Portland lights; one fatal instance of which, has already happend, for the night before we left the Island a Dutch Frigate of 36 Guns and 250 men came bump ashore, (mistaking the lights) and was beat to pieces, & tho most of the crew were sav'd at last, the surf ran so high, it was one night, and two days before they could be brought off.[1] I saw myself, for four hours together, the Captains wife, and other women, waving their handkerchiefs, and shewing every sign of distress, and I make myself believe I was the means of saving eight men

by bribing a desparate Smugler to go off to them in his boat.[2] The Fishermen who ~~have~~ ^used to get a miserable livelyhood on the back of the Island are ruin'd by the vigilance of the Government cutters, and by the tea act, for tho' fishing was the pretence, Smugling was their trade. they tell me the tide is not particilarly affected by Storms, and that ^[illegible] at Spring tides it seldom rises above 8 feet, and (what seem'd to me very extraordinary) that it flow'd there 9 hours out of the 12. ———

I have not seen M^{r}. Chiswell, to lament the downfall of my book[3] - Storer is still at Paris, where he went to make a bow at the King for his picture. the rest of ~~di~~ Our friends are dispersed, but I hope we shall all meet in the Spring. I shall be glad to hear all your family enjoy their healths, and that your usual chearfulness and agreeable spirits do not forsake you – valeat Possessor![4] as for me I am old, quite deaf, and almost blind, and of course my family ought to kill me and eat me, as I have read the children of some parts in Africa, do their parents, when they grow old, and good for nothing like,

my Dear Sir,
Yours very sincerely

Rich^{d}: Bull

Editorial Notes

[1] This refers to the Dutch frigate 'Juno' (36 guns) which came aground in Freshwater Bay on the Isle of Wight on 20 December 1786. See *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 15 December 1786, quoting a letter of 12 December 1786 which corroborates Bull's account of the difficulty of the rescue operation; and here [accessed 9 August 2018].

[2] The following section is bracketed to the end of the paragraph.

[3] It is not clear to which book Bull refers here nor what its connection with Chiswell might be; but on a later offer for Bull to have Chiswell's Ingleby drawings for *A tour in Wales* copied by Moses Griffith, see 1065.

[4] Bull quotes from Horace, *Epistles*, I, II, l. 49: 'valeat possessor oportet' ('may the owner thrive').