Rochard Bull to Thomas Pennant

ID:	1105
From:	Richard Bull
To:	Thomas Pennant
Date:	1790-07-18
Repository:	County Record Office
Identifier:	WCRO CR2017/ TP 189, 22
Editors:	Transcribed by Ffion Mair Jones; edited by Ffion Mair Jones; encoded by Vivien Williams. (2019)
Cite:	'Rochard Bull to Thomas Pennant 1790-07-18' 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/1105]

Dear Sir

North Court, Isle of Wight July 18. 1790.

Well do you chide me for not writing to you, by sending me some choice engravings of others, but not a line – or letter press from yourself. I kiss the rod, and humble myself to the dust before you, laying in my claim to your forgiveness because I had nothing to write about, and no frank to convey that nothing to you, if I had written. I left London very unwell, and indeed was so almost the winter through, but good air, and regular exercise on horseback, have recover'd my faculties. We see nobody here but those we wish to associate with, but the fleet at Spithead has brought such a busy hum of men to Portsmouth, and to this Island, that of late our company here has been somewhat too constant, and too numerous for me, and my infirmities. Quiet is my business, and being past the pleasures of youth, I should try to place myself above its troubles. Admiral Barington is our particular friend, and of course we visited the fleet before it sail'd for Torbay; I understand from good authority, it was very ill in readiness, with respect to Men; only 18 of the Line sail'd from Portsmouth. the Royal George, and three other large ships were to Join the fleet at Torbay, from whence I had a letter yesterday, stating the numbers altogether, at only 20 of the line even now, and many without their proper compliments of men. on the other hand, the vessels arriving from Cadiz, and Gibraltar, report the Spaniards to have five, or six and thirty ready for Sea.[1] I know not how many Dutch Ships have join'd our Fleet.[2] of our own, which you must have heard of, but cannot believe, for however well inclin'd the crown'd heads of Europe may be, to a counter Revolution in france, this is neither the method, nor the moment to attempt it. What do you think of the fête at Paris? the petit concert of 3000 people dining altogether in the Plaine de Sablons, must be quite Roman, but when we are told of the probability of half a million of men, and women being expected to be in arms the same day, one trembles for the possible consequences.[3] Charles Fox, Jack Payne, and M^{r} Fitzpatrick, and others are gone thither, and no doubt it will be, hail fellow, well met! tag, rag, and bob tail, all hudled together; the Duc de Nivernois, is now M^{r}. La Porte, another great man is M^{r} Chasse Poux, and another M^{r}. Piere Vilain.[4] How is all this to end? Will it give Liberty, and freedom to the World, or will Tyranny, and arbitrary Power recoil with redoubled oppressions? If your *french tour* carried you to the Walls of Paris, futurity would, I am sure, owe you much for the account you would give us of July 14. 1790. can't you give it us, en abregé,[5] in a postcript to the main history? – I have got with me, all the materials to compleat my Copy of your admirable *history of London*, but I don't see any likelihood of advancing in the business here, unless the ^Idea of War is at an end, for almost every day brings us fresh Visitors, and all last week we were 26 in family, without chance customers for ale, and cold victuals.

My daughters[6] have made this old place very comfortable indeed, but at the ill judg'd expence of (I suppose) a thousand pounds, because our term in it, is not likely to be more than five Years at farthest, unless we buy it, which we talk of doing at any reasonable price, 'tho we have not gone the way to make it so. I certainly shall rejoice to have the augmented Copy of your *litterary life*, at the low estimation of 15 Shillings, but how can I, in decency accept the *first Edition* as a perquisite? – I shall adorn it with heads, and views. –

I implore you to let your secretary copy for my use the *journey of 1787, from the temple ^stairs to Dover*, which I will ~~be~~ thankfully, & readily be accountable to him for. I did not forget, (nor will forget) to enquire of Burrell respecting the alienation of Goodwood. He was in Sussex, when I receiv'd your letter, and was not return'd before I left town. My daughters[7] are both well, & thankful for being in the remembrance of you, and yours, to whom we return our best good wishes.

I am, my Dear Sir, always yours.

Rich[d]: Bull

Marginalia

Endorsement on the top of the first page, in Thomas Pennant's hand: answ[d]

Editorial Notes

[1] Orders for HMS *Royal George* and HMS London to join the fleet at Torbay are recorded in the *Oxford Journal*, 17 July 1790. Quoting information dated London, 15 July, the paper also reports that 'twenty-nine Sail of the Line and some Frigates' were ready to sail at Cádiz.

[2] The Times reported on 1 July 1790 that 'The report that the Dutch Fleet had joined Admiral Barrington off St. Helens is premature' but that 'five Dutch Men of War, two frigates, two armed ships and a cutter' sighted 'off the back of the Goodwin Sands' was the 'fleet which is to join Admiral Barrington, and it is supposed it will meet him at Torbay. The rest of the Dutch fleet are supposed to be sailed to the Baltic'.

[3] Louis XVI conducted reviews of the National Guard in May and July 1790 on both the Champ de Mars and the Plaine de Sablons. The former took place on 14 July, as part of the first 'Fête de la Fédération', celebrating the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. David Andress (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 2015), p. 318; Jones, *Longman Companion to the French Revolution*, p. 14.

[4] Satirical nicknames for French politicians, real of imaginary. Mr La Porte ('the door'), Mr Chasse Poux ('lice hunter') and Mr Piere Vilain ('Villain Pierre').

[5] 'abbreviated'.

[6] Elizabeth and Catherine Bull.

[7] Elizabeth and Catherine Bull.