

TO WILLIAM HANNING, ESQ.

High Sheriff of the County of Somerset.

SIR,

WE, whose names are hereunto subscribed, Freeholders, others Landholders and Inhabitants, Male and Female, of the County of Somerset, many of us who pay directly towards the enormous County Rate; and all of us who pay our share of the same in the price of the Bread we eat and the Beer we drink, beg leave to call your attention to the state of our County Gaol at Ilchester, and the sufferings and privations of the Prisoners confined therein; and particularly we address ourselves to you, Sir, as High Sheriff, upon the treatment of those Prisoners who are consigned to your immediate custody: first, the Debtors; second, Mr. Hunt, a State Prisoner, sentenced by the Court of King's Bench, for the protracted period of TWO YEARS and SIX MONTHS, for having accepted the invitation of his distressed fellow-countrymen, and presided at a peaceable and orderly meeting at Manchester on the never-to-be-forgotten 16th of August, 1819, in order to petition the Legislature for a Legal and Constitutional Reform in Parliament; and last, all those Prisoners who are sentenced to the County Gaol, and who, not being in the House of Correction, we presume the Law has placed them in your immediate and safe custody, as Sheriff of the County.

It has been represented to us, and pretty generally believed—first, that the prison is supplied with very bad water; second, that the prisoners are crowded together in great numbers without sufficient room and air, in consequence of the very small County Gaol of Ilchester having had added to it, within its already too circumscribed walls, the House of Correction, which at some periods have increased the number of inmates to nearly THREE HUNDRED persons, confined and huddled together within the space of one acre of land, being surrounded and intersected with high walls, which, together with a neglect of cleanliness, has produced for many years an alarming Epidemic Gaol Fever.

It has also been confidently asserted, that the persons whose misfortune it is to be committed to this Gaol for debt, are, in consequence of the above circumstances, crowded together, and thrust in great numbers into the same Bed-room to sleep: that they are locked up in a very small yard, which is rendered still more incommodious from a considerable portion of it being appropriated to the Gaoler's private use as a garden. That the Debtors are prevented seeing their Friends for more than three hours in the day, and then only in a small Public Room, never being admitted to visit them in their own rooms. That the Poor Debtors are not allowed to purchase any Beer or Cider; that they are absolutely prohibited from receiving a Pint of Beer or Cider as a gift from a Friend or Relation. They are never allowed to see their Wives in private, which leads to scenes which are disgraceful to human nature, and too revolting to mention here. That such is the inconvenient and confined state of this Gaol, for which such an immense sum is annually appropriated out of the County Rate, that some of the Debtors, even sick persons, for want of an Hospital, are placed in solitary cells, the usual abode of refractory felons and convicts; and that other Debtors are actually placed amongst the convicts and felons, contrary to the statute prohibiting such intermingling.

We further beg to state as a notorious fact, that Henry Hunt, Esq., a State Prisoner, sentenced for a Political offence for a lengthened imprisonment in our County Gaol, was treated with unnecessary and vindictive harshness; and amongst other things, cruelly excluded from the society of his Family, till he was relieved by the manly and humane interference of Sir Charles Bampfylde, the late Sheriff, who directed that he should be treated with proper attention, and that his friends should be allowed to see him at reasonable hours in the day time; and we lament to hear, that since the late worthy Sheriff went out of office, Mr. Hunt has been subject to the same privations and ill-treatment; and, to the disgrace of the County of which we are Inhabitants, that his Family have actually been again driven from the Prison, and refused all admission to him.

We therefore beg most respectfully, but earnestly to call your immediate attention to these grievances, that you, who have not only the power, but whose duty it is, will have them investigated, and, if found true, removed and remedied. And we further trust, that you will, without delay, rescue our County from the disgraceful stigma of suffering the Prisoners confined within the Gaol thereof to be treated with less humanity and comfort than they are in other Gaols—and lastly, should any political bias prevent you from treating Mr. Hunt with that liberality to which we think he is entitled, yet, for the character of the high official situation you hold, we confidently hope that you will render him at least justice, and take care that, while he is in your custody, he is not deprived of the society of his Family, those necessary comforts which are allowed to captives of his class in other Prisons all over the kingdom.

James Burge	James Creed	Adin Graham	Thos. Wignall
Natter Tupole	William Coled	Simon Bord	Robt. Hunt
Thomas Martin	George Sticklings	Jno Brown	Giles Atcourt
John Lanywell	George Namham	Thos. Larkcomb	Thos. Hodges
Robt. Gatchouse	Sarah Namham	Basan Sugrue	Jno. Ingecove
Thos. Goodson	Tom Namham	Josiah Lester	Lucy Inger
John Marsh	Ann Namham	Wm. Laker	Geo. Strange
John Austin	Esau Sealy	Sam. Brooks	Wm. Nutty
Thos. Wherton	Edith Sealy	Seth manice	Jno. vowel
Josiah Lucas	Joseph Sealy	Mitty Inman	Timothy fooks
Stephen Newport	Cary Creed	Josiah Gregory	Wm. Kimpster
Wm. DAWNEY	Wm. Sheate	Jos. Rogers	Thos. Telham
Stephen Sheate	John Sheate	am ward	Robt. Hodges
John Sheate	Thos. Sugar	Jno. Green	Wm. Harvey
Stephen Sheate	Sophia Cannon	Jno. P. Croft	Jos. Gollidge
Elizabeth Lucas	Thos. H. Bruce	Giles Barker	Wm. Clayton
William Brock	Ben. H. H. H.	Ralph Grigg	Jos. Long
John Martin	ambrose apples	Lucy Hoag	Jacob Long
Martha Lucas	Alex Knight	Sarah Gunzel	Jos. Reeves
John Sheat	Sam. Garbace	Solomon Sealy	John Crooker
Robt. Lucas	Josy Croker	hot windner	Giles Jacob
Sarah Lucas	Wm. Powell	Charles Sudmer	Jno. Jacob
		Jno. Lester	Rich. Lucas
			Martha Lucas
			Sulamith Lucas

TO WILLIAM HANNING, ESQ.

High Sheriff of the County of Somerset.

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My dear Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the case of *John Smith* vs. *John Doe*, and in reply to inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst. in relation to the case of *John Smith* vs. *John Doe*, and in reply to inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th inst. in relation to the case of *John Smith* vs. *John Doe*, and in reply to inform you that the same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

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We therefore beg most respectfully, but earnestly to call your immediate attention to these grievances, that you, who have not only the power, but whose duty it is, will have them investigated, and, if found true, removed and remedied. And we further trust, that you will, without delay, rescue our County from the disgraceful stigma of suffering the Prisoners confined within the Gaol thereof to be treated with less humanity and comfort than they are in other Gaols—and lastly, should any political bias prevent you from treating Mr. Hunt with that liberality to which we think he is entitled, yet, for the character of the high official situation you hold, we confidently hope that you will render him at least justice, and take care that, while he is in your custody, he is not deprived of the society of his Family, those necessary comforts which are allowed to captives of his class in other Prisons all over the kingdom.

<p> <i>Paris Hopkins</i> <i>Jas. Windon</i> <i>Jn. Carver</i> <i>Wm Luff</i> <i>Eli Bray</i> <i>Samuel Raynolds</i> <i>Wm Chislett</i> <i>Dan Chislett</i> <i>John Lucas</i> <i>Elizth Lucas</i> <i>John Lucas</i> <i>John Chassy</i> <i>Jas Cliffland</i> <i>Mary Chapin</i> <i>Jos. Con</i> <i>El. Higgins</i> <i>Jn. Higgins</i> <i>Jas. Higgins</i> <i>Jane Higgins</i> </p>	<p> <i>Mary Withers</i> <i>Jane Withers</i> <i>George Calling</i> <i>John Rickard</i> <i>Samuel Bailey</i> <i>Charles Grant</i> <i>John Say</i> <i>Mark Derrick</i> <i>Daniel Ridwood</i> <i>Wm Waloron</i> <i>Stephen Hasey</i> <i>John B. Higgins</i> <i>Petter B S Higgins</i> <i>Thos. P. Taylor</i> <i>Jn. Tucker</i> <i>Ordd Burge</i> <i>Giles Chambers</i> <i>Jas King</i> <i>Reuben Wilkins</i> <i>John Colley</i> </p>	<p> <i>Edw. Pincher</i> <i>May Pincher</i> <i>J. Curner</i> <i>J. Curner</i> <i>Job Court</i> <i>E. Dunbarton</i> <i>C. Tuck</i> <i>E. Clothier</i> <i>Jn. Clothier</i> <i>James Gellings</i> <i>Geo. Gellings</i> <i>Hydon James</i> <i>Wm. Freeman</i> <i>Harry Forman</i> <i>Allen Ansty</i> <i>Wm. W. Weston</i> <i>Hon. Lefman</i> <i>Fitas Clarkson</i> <i>Balf. Jones</i> <i>John Hodges</i> <i>Geo. C. Lees</i> <i>Mary Losp</i> <i>Hen. Bates</i> <i>Wm. Wigmore</i> <i>Ben. Maidment</i> <i>Forman Guy</i> </p>	<p> <i>Hm. Hore</i> <i>Wm. Hooper</i> <i>Jn. Carver</i> <i>Wm. Herram</i> <i>Thos. Tarror</i> <i>Geo. Bush</i> <i>Calib Evans</i> <i>Jn. Rowley</i> <i>Sam. Brooks</i> <i>Geo. Raymond</i> <i>W. Edwards</i> <i>Jane Darnley</i> <i>Crispen Kappel</i> <i>Thos. Lospenter</i> <i>Wm. Rawls</i> <i>Geo. Bowls</i> <i>Wm. Lovel</i> <i>Jas. Taylor</i> <i>Jane Taylor</i> <i>Geo. Kneller</i> <i>Jn. James</i> <i>Wm. Layton</i> <i>Hm. Mullens</i> </p>
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TO THE HONOURABLE

THE SECRETARY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1833

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the petition of the County of Somerset, and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. H. [Signature]

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High Sheriff of the County of Somerset.

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Edward Francis	John Gatehouse	Mr. Jollyman	Mary Evered
William Bourton	Ann Brown	Mr. Cook	Sam. B. Deleomb.
John Pope	John Eastment	W. Marks	Simon Harvey
Thomas Clarke	Isaac Napper	Giles Marchant	Seth Stuckel
Abraham Taylor	Robert Eastment	Robt. Leach	Wm. Wideman
Elaron Taylor	E. Wilcomb	John. Castle	Mr. Miller
Wm. Higgins	James Lucas	Tim. Evans	Mr. Johnson
Thos. Austin	Sarah Lucas	Isaac Crapnell	Mr. H. Crocker
Elizabeth Austin	Elizabeth Lucas	Titus Hancock	Sam. Dawney
Sarah Austin	Sam. Crad	Robt. Dimmock	Jo. Touse
Walter Pittman	Raishley Hill	Wm. B. B. B.	Ralph Toogood
Betty Pittman	Betty Larkson	W. B. B.	James Badman
John Close	Thos. Tucker	Josiah Dawson	Isaac Adams
Gugious Giffys	Mr. Davis	Rich. Laws	Thos. Harmar
Thomas Cox	Erasmus Newman	Rich. Cradock	Levi Lucas
William Sherring	Mr. Hopkins	Betty Knowlton	Rufus Aborrow
James Lucas	John Thomas	Mr. Morton	
Mr. Dawkins	Mr. Spencer	Mr. Head	
Giles Libbets			
Sarah Gibb			
Sam. Russell			

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