TO WILLIAM HANNING, ESQ.
High Sheriff of the County of Somerset.

SIR,

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, Freetholders, 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 disreputable fellow-countrymen, and presided at a meanable 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 absolute custody, as Sheriff of the County.

It has been represented to us, and pretty generally believed—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 added to it, within its already too circumstanced 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 escaping felons in other Prisons all over the kingdom.

James Beale
John Harcourt
Thomas Martin
Robert Gathorne
John Fox
Elizabethէ
John Martin
Jacob Lucas
John Lucas
James Lucas
Sarah Lucas
Martha Lucas

Printed by T. Dilly, 399, Strand, London.
TO WILLIAM HANNING, ESQ.

High Sheriff of the County of Somerset.

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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 confined 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—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 crowded walls, the House of Correction, which at some periods has 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 conclusively asserted, that the persons whose imprisonment 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 cell-room to sleep; that they are locked up in a very small yard, which is rendered still more incongruous 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 a 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, 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 reduced 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 subjected 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 there 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Higgin</td>
<td>Freeholder</td>
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<td>Mary Higgin</td>
<td>Wife of Higgin</td>
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<td>Samuel Higgin</td>
<td>Freeholder</td>
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<td>John Edwards</td>
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<td>John Evans</td>
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<td>John Hunt</td>
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<td>John Channer</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Jones</td>
<td>Freeholder</td>
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Printed by T. Divett, 100, Marsh, London.
TO WILLIAM HANNING, ESQ.

High Sheriff of the County of Somerset.

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It has been reported 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 to move; and, in consequence of the very small County Gaol of Devizes having having had added to it, within its already too overcrowded walls, the House of Correction, which at some periods have increased the number of inmates to nearly three hundred persons, confined and subjected 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 bedroom to sleep; that they are locked up in a very small yard, which is rendered still more inconsiderable 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 inhuman 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 shade 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 Country Gaol, was treated with unnecessary and vilifying harshness; and amongst other things, cruelly excluded from the society of his Family, till he was relieved by the many and humane intercessions 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 subjected 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, rescind 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 convicts of other Prisons all over the kingdom.

Edward Frams
William Warner
John Rose
Thomas Clarke
Abraham Taylor
Harlow Taylor

Sarah Lucas
Elizabeth Lucas
Simcox

Mary Lewis
Jane Hallay
Mrs. Bickelet

James Day
John Davis
Mary Johnson

Charles Styles
Edward Styles

Robert Smith
E. Wilson

John Gatrebose
Ann Brown

Mr. Bayman

John Cartwright
Joseph Napper

Robert Atfield
E. Wilson

Edward Hepple

Sarah Austin

Wm. Richardson

Dolly Pyman
John CLOSE
Samuel Williams
William Sherring

Dowery, niece
Betsy Lister

Thos. Tuck

Josiah Dawson

Richard

Wm. Cradock

Robert Jas. Lucas

William Lucas

Thos. Brown

Jas. Martin

Annes

D. Parsons

Sam. Smith

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