

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY  
Series One: The Boulton and Watt Archive and the Matthew Boulton Papers  
from Birmingham Central Library  
Part 13: Boulton & Watt Correspondence and Papers (MS 3147/3/286-404)

DETAILED LISTING

**REEL 231**

**3/336 Henry Williams, 1779-1783 (12 items)**

Henry Williams was an engine erector who mainly worked on engines in the Midlands. These included the Wren's Nest Forge engine near West Bromwich, and the engines at Coalbrookdale, Ketley and Donnington Wood in Shropshire. The letters are addressed to Matthew Boulton, James Watt, Watt's assistant William Playfair and the engine firm's clerk, John Buchanan.

1. Letter. Henry Williams (Wren's Nest) to James Watt (Soho). 28 Aug. 1779.  
*Docketed "An experiment."*
2. Letter. Henry Williams (Wren's Nest) to William Playfair (Soho). 23 Jan. 1780.
3. Letter. Henry Williams (Ketley) to William Playfair (Soho). 2 Apr. 1780.
4. Letter. Henry Williams (Ketley) to James Watt (Soho). 24 Apr. 1780.
5. Letter. Henry Williams (Ketley) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 23 Aug. 1781.
6. Letter. Henry Williams (Ketley) to John Buchanan [Soho]. 5 Sep. 1781.  
*The bottom half of the letter has been torn away. The back of the sheet has been used for calculations.*
7. Letter. Henry Williams (Ketley) to John Buchanan (Soho). 21 Jan. 1782.
- 8a. Letter. Henry Williams (Coalbrookdale) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 27 Mar. 1782.  
*Enclosing (b) below.*
- b. Letter. Dr. William Moore (Penryn-dee) to Henry Williams. 20 Mar. 1782.
9. Letter. Henry Williams (Coalbrookdale) to John Buchanan (Soho). 28 May 1782.  
*Docketed "Balance of engine."  
His progress with the Coalbrookdale engine. Details of the pumps, expected performance etc.*
10. Letter. Henry Williams (Coalbrookdale) to John Buchanan [Soho]. 11 Jul. 1782.
11. Letter. Henry Williams (Coalbrookdale) to John Buchanan (Soho). 29 Sep. 1782.  
*Has started the Coalbrookdale engine. It goes very well, there are no leaks and the boiler raises steam very quickly. They will not want it immediately as there has been so much rain they have water to spare. Will experiment with coal consumption.*
12. Letter. Henry Williams (Ketley) to James Watt (Soho). 3 Dec. 1783.  
*Docketed "Dimensions of ground for Donnington engine." Dimensions and sketch of the engine house for Donnington Wood colliery.*

**3/337 Thomas Wilson, 1777 (10 items)**

Thomas Wilson was Boulton & Watt's Cornish agent. He also had considerable other business interests in Cornwall.

1. Letter. Thomas Wilson for Fenton & Co. (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 20 Feb. 1777.  
*Summarised "Concerning the ordering of a steam engine with comments on savings, also time required for delivery."*
2. Letter. Thomas Wilson for Fenton & Co. (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 10 Mar. 1777.  
*Summarised "Have been induced to close with Watt's proposal viz to pay 2/3 of the savings during the time of working, till equal to the amount of 1/3 for 5 years, if it should work long. Re. delivery of castings. Comments upon coal consumption not being settled owing to difficulty of comparison between Welsh and other coals."*
3. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 24 Jul. 1777.  
*Summarised "Expects Watt in Cornwall. Disappointed at the delay in delivery of materials. Mentions Mr. Bouge."*
4. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 11 Oct. 1777.  
*Summarised "Mentions incident to Watt on the Bath road. Will attend to specimens of stones, but not plants. Trouble with wooden pumps, will replace with iron ones. Remarks on performance of engines and Trevithick's theory of working. Working with ½ inch of steam. Vacuum 27½ inches. About grease in cylinder. Gives sizes of various (atmospheric) engines."*
5. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Birmingham). 18 Oct. 1777.  
*Summarised "Had misfortune with flat rod shaft pump. Pump split, have put in new pump above the fracture. Remarks about various engines. Mentions a residence for Mr. Watt."*
6. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 5 Nov. 1777.  
*Summarised "Comments on the power of the new 63 inch engine. Vacuum 27 inches average. Mentions Carkeet's bricks."*
7. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Soho]. 23 Nov. 1777.  
*Summarised "Comments on the size of the new cylinder, 63 inches. Sends section and plan of Chacewater engine house. Cylinder is 72 inches diameter, 1¼ inches thick. Send bed for beam gudgeon, remarks on other parts of engine and boilers. Steam pipes 12 inches diameter. Water engine at work. Consumption of coal with Bouge's boiler. Seven engines required, also three for North Downs."*
8. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 7 Dec. 1777.  
*Summarised "Send draft of engine house. Concerning delivery of castings. When will Wheel Union materials be sent. Particulars of a residence in Cornwall for Watt."*
9. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 18 Dec. 1777.  
*Summarised "Concerning the ordering of a steam engine with comments on its diameter of 63 inches. Particulars and plan of a residence for Watt in Cornwall." The floor plan is on the same sheet.*
10. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 29 Dec. 1777. 2 sheets.  
*On the second sheet:*  
Sketch plan of the layout of engine at Chacewater [?]. *Summarised "Enclose Smeaton's sketches of engines etc. Removing copper tube to mend end of boiler with. Sorry Watt so confined to work, should procure assistance that he may enjoy the fruits of his labours. Rented house for Watt 13 guineas. Iron work is 4<sup>d</sup> per lb. Wheel Spirit's performance. Great coat on cylinder."*

**3/338 Thomas Wilson, 1778**

**(6 items)**

Thomas Wilson was Boulton & Watt's Cornish agent. He also had considerable other business interests in Cornwall.

1. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 12 Jan. 1778.  
*Summarised "Difficulty in getting castings delivered. Cylinder to be lengthened. About arrangement of boiler flues. Wheal Spirit engine (Wheal Busy) gives satisfaction – goes 16 strokes, also all say 13 strokes with half an inch of steam. Will soon have flat rods in. Concerning the various mines. Imagines the Wheal Virgin engine will be the last of the type built for the county. About furnishing Watt's house. Can Watt fix a price for engines supplied to Chacewater."*
2. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 22 Jan. 1778.  
*Summarised "Will observe Watt's restriction about cutting cylinder. Have engaged two good smiths. Also with Wheal Union people about the carriage of goods. Will hand the piston on 3 chains as they will be strong enough."*
3. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 24 Jan. 1778.  
*Summarised "About delivery of castings. Submits to Watt's method of applying fire to boiler. Are to have order for Hallamanin engine. The Wheal Prosper engine order overthrown by Bouge recommending a small cylinder in the same house, to increase the power. Have been asked if you will sell out the engine for £200."*
4. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 9 Feb. 1778.  
*Summarised "Concerning cylinder lid. Cannot raise the stone work until the inner cylinder is within the outer. Can arrange boiler nearer cylinder. Wheal Virgin in a bad state. Poldice losing in vein. Had to throw off flat rods owing to water being equal to 12 strokes, although engine could run 13 per minute. A clergyman leaving Cornwall for Essex – his goods to be sold, what is to be done."*
5. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 8 Mar. 1778.  
*Summarised "Concerning delivery of castings not received. Pasteboard required. Are they to fit condenser buckets. In favour of blowing into a small cistern distinct from large one. Alterations to boiler progressing. Masonry proceeding. Will cast furnace lid whole. Ting Tang quiet. Jabez and Jethro Hornblower secretly at work about a new engine. Have met with difficulties in condensing part but had overcome them."*
6. Memorandum. Consumption of Coals at Wheal Busy Engine. Sep. 1777–1 Apr. 1778.

**3/339 Thomas Wilson, 1779**

**(27 items)**

1. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Jan. 1779.  
*Docketed "Wheal Union account." Summarised Wheal Union performance. Mentions a mistake in calculating table of savings. Repairing Hallamanin boiler. Chacewater boiler cleaned and injection cap broken. Scorrier water abated."*
2. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 12 Jan. 1779.  
*Summarised "Gives locality of Ale & Cakes boiler, to be the reverse of Poldory. Wheal Chance articles will be signed, have not heard about Hallamanin articles."*
3. Letter. Thomas Wilson [Chacewater] to James Watt [?] (—). ? Jan. 1779.  
*Docketed "Mr. Wilson – prices of copper."*
4. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 14 Jan. 1779.  
*Summarised "Concering signing of articles. Chacewater engine in excellent order. Gives Wheal Maid's consumption."*
5. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 21 Jan. 1779.  
*Summarised "Trevithick raises objections to savings. Failure in mending Hallamanin boiler, thinking of having a copper one. Defects in pumps overcome."*

- 6.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 28 Jan. 1779.  
*Summarised "Remarks on calculations of savings. Received instructions from Boulton not to explain engines to foreigners. Remarks on the position of boilers. Pin of air pump chain broken. Hallamanin's loses vacuum when working slower than 6 or 7 strokes."*
- 7.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 4 Feb. 1779.  
*Docketed "Conversations with Mr. Edwards about Wheal Union."  
Summarised "Remarks on a conversation with Mr. Edwards on the savings effected and about the engine being so large. Hornblower thinks 1000 lbs. is a reasonable allowance for flat rods. Captain Paul thinks it too much. Double with pump work."*
- 8.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 11 Feb. 1779.  
*Summarised "Gives details of examination of Hallamanin engine. Remarks on way of estimating coal used. Trouble with boiler."*
- 9.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 18 Feb. 1779.  
*Summarised "Hallamanin engine going on fairly well. Remarks on the various meetings. There seems to be a general backwardness in signing articles, till Watt arrives."*
- 10.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 6 Mar. 1779.  
*Summarised "Back home. Remarks about the various engines, and how they work. Platforms still sinking."*
- 11.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 10 Mar. 1779.  
*Docketed "Wheal Union account."  
Summarised "Consumption of Wheal Union and Ting Tang. Hot water clack breaking. Hallamanin engine in as bad a state as ever. Remarks on various engines. Hornblower's remarks on position of boilers."*
- 12.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 27 Mar. 1779.  
*Summarised "Scorrier's boilers cleaned. Inner cylinder bottom joint bad. Hallamanin's engine better. Hot water clack in order. Concerning Hornblower's position of boilers."*
- 13.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 3 Apr. 1779.  
*Docketed "About making bottom joint of Hallamanin cylinder with lead, and with Wheal Union and Ting Tang monthly accounts."  
Summarised "Gives reading of counter for Wheal Union and Ting Tang. Remarks on consumption. Makes cylinder joints of lead rings. Re. leaks in eduction pipe. Watt suggests another injection near nozzles. Hears of an order for Wheal Trigivean."*
- 14.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 10 Apr. 1779.  
*Summarised "Comments on boilers, their design and settings. Also about lead rings for cylinder joints."*
- 15.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 17 Apr. 1779.  
*Summarised "Remarks on troubles with the Hallamanin engine."*
- 16.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 26 Apr. 1779.  
*Summarised "Remarks on boiler settings. Scorrier mine rather poor. Hallamanin's engine in better order. Fears boiler will be at fault. Goods can be sent to Hale, being the most desirable port."*
- 17.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 5 May 1779.  
*Docketed "Account of Ting Tang and Wheal Union counters from the beginning."  
Summarised "Bad performance of engines and troubles with boilers. Ting Tang in excellent order. Ting Tang and Wheal Union consumption and readings of counters."*
- 18.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 12 May 1779.  
*Summarised "Trouble with Hornblower and other erectors, only 4 out of 7 able to work. Expects to have order for Trudgevean."*

19. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 16 May 1779. *Not dated – date taken from the docket. Summarised “Remarks on J. Dudley’s conduct – an erector. Have set beam, had moved 3 inches. Scorrier is very poor. Hopes Watt will soon be in Cornwall. Will have a conversation with Hornblower Senior.”*

20. Letter. Thomas Wilson (London) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 31 May 1779. *Summarised “Sets out for Leeds. Saw Harrison at Chelsea. Wishes him to ride his mare back from Exeter to Cornwall.”*

21. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 26 Jun. 1779. *Summarised “Gives Hallamanin and Chacewater consumption. Hallamanin boilers as leaky as ever. Remarks on J. Dudley [Thomas Dudley], an erector.”*

22. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 2 Jul. 1779. *Summarised “Joseph Harrison, an erector, arrives in Cornwall and visits the Western and other engines and examines them, and reports. Gives consumption of Ting Tang and Wheal Union. Coal distress, up to 55/- per way. (Quotes tin.)”*

23. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 22 Jul. 1779. *Summarised “Remarks on tin required. Joseph Harrison examines the various engines. Scorrier cylinder out of vertical. Still got air leaks in eduction pipes. Troubles with Chacewater boilers. Will try the London method of firing.”*

24. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 5 Aug. 1779. *Docketed “Wheal Union monthly accounts.” Summarised “Wheal Union and Ting Tang consumption. Remarks on tin required. Joseph Harrison cured Hallamanin air leaks in eduction pipes, will now work as slow as 1 stroke in 5 minutes with beam at par. Mr. Hornblower had the drawing of Ale & Cakes given him. Afraid the vessel Peter is taken. (The vessel did arrive.)”*

25. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 12 Aug. 1779. *Summarised “The vessel Peter arrived safely at Appledore, a port in Devon, under distress. Would like to see Watt. Sends £16 Ting Tang savings.”*

26. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 28 Aug. 1779. *Summarised “The vessel Peter at Hale. Chacewater engine out of order, Joseph Harrison will examine it. Have paid various sums to Jethro and Jabez Hornblower.”*

27. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 4 Sep. 1779. *On the same sheet: Letter. Joseph Harrison (Chacewater) to James Watt. 2 Sep. 1779. Summarised “Materials much rusted in the voyage of the Peter. Gives consumption of engines. Joseph Harrison’s report on Whelcans (Wheal Cans) and Hallamanin engines.”*

**3/340 Thomas Wilson, 1780**

**(25 items)**

1. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). — Feb. 1780. *On the same sheet:*

Invoice of tin shipped by Blewett & Co. for Boulton & Watt.

*Docketed “Answered 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. BW. Account of tin – 14 blocks and dimensions Wheal Treasury piston rod.”*

*Summarised “Account of tin. Invoice for 14 blocks of tin. Gives dimensions of Wheal Treasury piston rod cone. Hornblower says Ting Tang 30 bushels per day.”*

2. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 24 Feb. 1780. *Summarised “Vessel arrived at Hayle with materials. Unwilling for Murdock to be removed to another mine as yet. Murdock at Chacewater and Poldice. Have sunk to clack door at Chacewater. Hallamanin’s consumption.”*

- 3.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 2 Mar. 1780.  
*Docketed "Ting Tang and Hallamanin monthly account."*  
*Summarised "Troubles with Wheal Chance engine, goes 11 1/3 strokes with 3 inches of steam. Wishes Mr. Henderson was in Cornwall. Murdock mentioned. Gives Ting Tang and Hallamanin consumption."*
- 4.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 9 Mar. 1780.  
*Summarised "Murdock's account of Wheal Chance engine, water rose when standing 19 fathoms, goes 15 strokes per minute and sinks the water 10 feet in 24 hours. They lifted all the tiers of pump with the air pump. New engine required for Poldice. About employing engineers, also about Hornblowers."*
- 5.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 16 Mar. 1780.  
*Docketed "Account of value of 1/10 of Wheal Chance mine."*  
*Summarised "Eduction pipes not delivered, is searching for them. Murdock at Wheal Union, engine goes 12 strokes per minute, is 18 fathoms down the 5<sup>th</sup> lift, pump is troublesome. Received £30, can pay Murdock's wages etc. Account of old materials and 1/40 share. Also about taking shares. Poldice engine gives trouble especially in starting. Our engine (Chacewater) works well with one inch of steam, but boilers very troublesome."*
- 6.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 23 Mar. 1780.  
*Summarised "Suppose Murdock is in the West. Poldice the same. Dick Mitchell is at Poldice. Hornblower is better of his disorder."*
- 7.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 27 Mar. 1780.  
*Docketed "Chacewater working barrel."*  
*Summarised "Complains about pump work. Breakages. Remarks on various engines."*
- 8.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 Apr. 1780.  
*Docketed "Ting Tang and Hallamanin monthly accounts."*  
*Summarised "Consumption of Hallamanin and Ting Tang engine. Poldice in good order. Gives expenses incurred in Wheal Chance and Higher Rosewarne."*
- 9.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 12 Apr. 1780.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Cash account, 16 Mar. 1780, and account of William Murdock's expenses.  
*With a postscript by Logan Henderson.*  
*Docketed "Account of cash and disbursements."*  
*Summarised "Concerning payments of various sums and copy of Day Book."*
- 10.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 15 Apr. 1780.  
*Docketed "Concerning Ale & Cakes boiler."*  
*Summarised "About copper plates for Ale & Cakes boiler pipes. Mr. Murdock and Henderson will examine exhaustion valve."*
- 11.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 17 Apr. 1780.  
*Docketed "Re. sale of tin."*  
*Summarised "Concerning sale of tin. Mistake about bevil plates."*
- 12.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 27 Apr. 1780.  
*Summarised "Mrs. Watt [returned to Soho]. Poldice consumption, also Wheal Chance. Murdock has made low valve good."*
- 13.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 1 May 1780.  
*Docketed "Monthly account of engines."*  
*Summarised "Wheal Chance, Hallamanin and Ting Tang consumption. Poldice counters on, have broken gudgeon of balance beam. Surprised at savings being so great. Concerning the sale of Wheal Union engine to Dolcoath."*

**14.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane). 8 May 1780.

*Summarised "Concerning money matters. At Wheal Chance they compute the savings in a way of their own, also pressed to buy the 1/40 share. Glad to hear of success in copying matters, but hopes the engines will be the best horse. Mr. Daniell recommended to Boulton's friend at Leghorn."*

**15.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane). 11 May 1780.

*On the same sheet:*

Letter. Logan Henderson [Chacewater] to Matthew Boulton. 11 May 1780.

*Docketed "Poldice new engine to be fixed on the new shaft. Hornblower to erect this engine and to be paid the same as Bouge was for Wheal Chance, and Dick Mitchell to keep it in order afterwards. Remarks about Hornblower and his enemies. P.S. by Henderson concerning the progress of engine erections."*

**16.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 1 Jun. 1780.

*On the same sheet:*

Table. Account of Engines in May 1780.

*Docketed "Monthly account of engines."*

*Summarised "Consumption of Wheal Chance, Hallamanin, Ting Tang, Poldice. Payments promised. Scorrier turns out well."*

**17.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 8 Jun. 1780.

*Docketed "With draft of £20.9.4 on account of Wheal Chance."*

*Summarised "Sends drafts for £20 and £79. Other money matters. Poldice will stop very soon, but will not sell."*

**18.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 8 Jul. 1780.

*Summarised "Will forward tin. Met with Mr. Wilkinson at Bersham. New load at Wheal Chance turns out very well. Wheal Fat very rich, Black Dog much better. Ting Tang rich."*

**19.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 10 Jul. 1780.

*Summarised "Concerning alterations to Poldice new boiler. About the sale of T. Dudley's estate at Scorrier. All engines doing well. Plates for Poldice new boiler are shipped."*

**20.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 Aug. 1780.

*On the same sheet:*

Table. Account of Engines in July 1780.

*Docketed "Monthly account of engines."*

*Summarised "Wheal Chance, Hallamanin, Wheal Union, Ting Tang, Poldice and Tresavean consumption. Concerning reductions in savings charged. Wheal Virgin adventurers wish for a yearly sum. Ale & Cakes house stands well. Chacewater makes £1500."*

**21.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 2 Sep. 1780.

*On the same sheet:*

Table. Account of Engines in August 1780.

*Docketed "Monthly account of engines."*

*Summarised "Wheal Union, Wheal Chance, Hallamanin, Tresavean and Ting Tang consumption. Price of coals altered. Boulton is in Cornwall."*

**22a.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 5 Oct. 1780.

*Enclosing (b) below.*

*Docketed "Mr. Wilson's account of engines in Sep. 1780."*

*Summarised "Will send Mr. Pearson accounts. Pleased at the prospect of having so many engines as the setting to work of Wheal Virgin and Poldice will employ."*

**b.** Table. Account of Engines in September 1780.

*Figures for Wheal Chance, Hallamanin, Ting Tang, Tresavean, Poldory.*

*Docketed "Mr. Wilson's account of engines in Sep. 1780."*

**23.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Pearson (Soho). 9 Oct. 1780.  
*Summarised "Having lost accounts desires Mr. Pearson to send him copies. Boulton still in Cornwall."*

**24a.** Letter. Martin Magor (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 9 Nov. 1792.  
*Kept with (b) below. On the same sheet:*  
Transcript of invoice. 28 blocks of tin shipped for Boulton & Watt.  
*[Magor was shipping the tin on Wilson's orders.]*  
*Docketed "Thomas Wilson 6 Novem<sup>r</sup>. 1780. Invoice of tin."*

**b.** Letter. Zaccheus Walker (Birmingham) to James Pearson (Soho). 30 Nov. 1780.

**25a.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 2 Dec. 1780.  
*Enclosing (b) below.*  
*Summarised "Has been with Mr. Boulton at Cusgarne. Boulton hurts his hand. New boilers to work at Chacewater. Will get money for letter copying machines sent into the neighbourhood."*

**b.** Table. Account of Engines October & November Months 1780.  
*Figures for Hallamanin, Wheal Chance, Tresavean, Ting Tang, Poldory, Ale & Cakes.*  
*Docketed "Mr. Wilson's monthly account of engines Oct. & Nov. 1780."*

### **3/341 Thomas Wilson, 1781**

**(20 items)**

Thomas Wilson was Boulton & Watt's Cornish agent. He also had considerable other business interests in Cornwall.

Wilson's letters were kept in yearly bundles. The letters in this bundle were addressed to James Watt and Matthew Boulton, and the Chief Cashier and Bookkeeper James Pearson.

**1.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 6 Jan. 1781.  
*Summarised "Concerning accounts."*

**2.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 15 Jan. 1781.  
*Summarised "Are 8 pieces of oak to be used instead of 6 for the sake of 1 inch overall. Price of smiths' work, also bad work. Concerning the making of spelter and brass in Wales."*

**3.** Letter. Thomas Wilson [Chacewater] to James Watt (Soho). 18 Jan. 1781.  
*Not dated – date taken from the docket. Summarised "£39.6.0 for six copying machines. The materials for Pool engine had to be defended against a French privateer, Murdock defends them and fires upon the enemy. Murdock to superintend the workmen at Wheal Virgin."*

**4.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 25 Jan. 1781.  
*Docketed "Covering £500 on account of Wheal Chance."*

**5.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 1 Feb. 1781.  
*Docketed "Sketch of monthly account and remittance of £40 Hallamanin and £40.18.2 Wheal Treasury." Summarised "Concerning tin – the Lamb mark is of a Western house. About workmen. Kestall adit house half-built. Gives various savings. Wheal Treasury only burns 20 bushels per day. Had no snow."*

**6.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Pearson (Soho). 15 Feb. 1781.  
*Docketed "With state of Wheal Chance account."*



- 7.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 15 Feb. 1781.  
*The letter begins "Dear Sir." On the same sheet.*  
Invoice of tin shipped for Boulton & Fothergill.  
*Docketed by James Pearson. Docketed "With invoice of 10 blocks of tin and state of sundry accounts." Summarised "Will have order for Wheal Crenver 48 inch and Tregashis 40 inch soon. Glad one tube is to be tried in the Wheal Virgin boilers "as it has been an opinion held by us Chacewater engineers that it will be superior to two"."*
- 8a.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Soho]. 3 Mar. 1781.  
*Enclosing (b) below. Summarised "Coals are becoming scarce. Fleet of colliers arrived. Kestall adit house ready for roof. The various mines are showing signs of improvement.*
- b.** Table. Account of Engines in February 1781.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Account. Copy of Day Book in February 1781.  
*Docketed by James Pearson. Docketed "Account of Cornwall engines for February 1781." Summarised "Copy of Day Book. Account of consumption at Chacewater, Poldory, Ale & Cakes, Wheal Chance, Wheal Treasury, Hallamanin, Ting Tang and Tresavean engines."*
- 9.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (London) to James Watt (Soho). 20 Mar. 1781.  
*Mis-dated as 1780 by Wilson. Summarised "Journeying to Yorkshire."*
- 10.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 12 Apr. 1781.  
*Summarised "Sorry he has failed to obtain the necessary lodgings. Will see Watt later on about engines for Wales."*
- 11.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 3 May 1781.  
*Summarised "Sends monthly accounts. Impatient for Pool engine materials from Bersham."*
- 12.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 30 May 1781.  
*Summarised "Old brass 6<sup>d</sup> per cwt. Materials for 3 engines at Wheal Virgin arrived. Will soon expect to see Mr. Watt, and workmen, as all at present are engaged in the West. 5 education pipes arrived."*
- 13.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 21 Jun. 1781. 2 sheets.  
*With a separate wrapper. Summarised "£1500 can be advanced, security United Mines or Dolcoath deeds. Mr. Watt and family arrives in Cornwall."*
- 14.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 28 Jun. 1781.  
*Summarised "Drafts for £2000. Mr. Daniell sells tin at Birmingham."*
- 15.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 5 Jul. 1781.  
*Summarised "Concerning the advancing of £2000."*
- 16.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 2 Aug. 1781.  
*Summarised "Concerning the loan of £2000. Remarks on Hornblower."*
- 17.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 4 Aug. 1781.  
*Summarised "Concerning amounts received from the various mines."*
- 18.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Nineveh) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 22 Sep. 1781.  
*Summarised "Sent drawings. Has been hurt by a horse."*
- 19.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane, London). 22 Dec. 1781.  
*Summarised "Concerning the advance of £2000."*

**20.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane, London). 29 Dec. 1781.  
*Re-directed to Boulton at Soho. Summarised "Remarks concerning tin. Troubles with workmen. Trevithick and Vivian to value Ting Tang engine."*

**3/342 Thomas Wilson, 1782**

**(29 items)**

- 1.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 12 Jan. 1782.  
*Mis-dated as 1781 by Wilson.*  
*Summarised "Concerning money matters."*
- 2.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane, London). 23 Feb. 1782.  
*Summarised "Concerning money matters and abatement of savings. Cautions Boulton about going too deep in Polgooth shares."*
- 3.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 9 May 1782.  
*Summarised "Shipped casks of clay. Stone etc. Other small matters."*
- 4.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 30 May 1782.  
*Summarised "Seems to be a general gloom presiding over the whole family of Hornblowers. About altering the stroke of Trevascus."*
- 5.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 6 Jun. 1782.  
*Docketed "Account of consumption of Dolcoath old engine, 63 inch cylinder."*  
*Summarised "Captain Trevithick gives trouble concerning savings. Wedgwood in the county. Have been relieved by a large fleet of colliers."*
- 6.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 13 Jun. 1782.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Transcript of letter. William Harris (Rosewarne) to Thomas Wilson. 11 Jun. 1782.  
*Summarised "Comments on the trouble caused by Captain Trevithick's remarks on savings, and the system of calculating the same. House for Hallamanin finished and cylinder in."*
- 7.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 20 Jun. 1782.  
*Summarised "The influenza plague. Concerning money matters. About the grass etc. at Cusgarne House."*
- 8.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 27 Jun. 1782.  
*Summarised "Muir (an erector)'s debts. Bull desires an advance of wages. Remarks on the method of computing the (table of) savings."*
- 9.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 6 Jul. 1782.  
*Summarised "Concerning money matters. James Law received orders to go to Ireland. Glad Mr. Fothergill's death will occasion no bad effect in business. Lawson desires an advance of 2/- in wages."*
- 10.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 11 Jul. 1782.  
*Summarised "Concerning money matters. Trevascus articles sent to be engrossed and remarks thereon. An account of the various mines at work."*
- 11.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 18 Jul. 1782.  
*Summarised "James Law's illness the cause of his not going to Ireland, will consult with Murdock about a substitute. Jethro Hornblower reports their engine went to work the 6<sup>th</sup> inst."*
- 12.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 20 Jul. 1782.  
*Summarised "James Law will set out for Ireland as his health is now restored."*

- 13.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 25 Jul. 1782.  
*Summarised "Murdock will attend the cleansing of Wheal Chance engine. The ropes of hot water bucket wear rapidly, better order a new condenser etc. No account yet of the performance of Hornblower's engine, hears that all of them in this county set out for Bristol tomorrow."*
- 14.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 1 Aug. 1782.  
*Summarised "Wheal Chance hot water clack loose in its seat. Murdock uneasy and seems determined to leave the county, he hears so much discontent against Boulton & Watt. United Mines poor. Hornblower's engine ready for trial. Hears Boulton & Watt twice applied for an injunction and failed."*
- 15.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Truro) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 Aug. 1782.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Memorandum. Resolutions made at a meeting of the Adventurers of Consolidated Mines. 3 Aug. 1782.  
*Docketed "Order for setting Wheal Virgin to work."  
Summarised "Large fleet of colliers arrived. The probability of United Mines stopping caused a meeting to be held, gives copy of resolution."*
- 16.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 8 Aug. 1782.  
*Summarised "Poldice adventurers afraid of being disappointed of the piston rod. Have had bad weather."*
- 17.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 15 Aug. 1782.  
*Summarised "Heavy rains. Pool mine poor. Will put in flat rods to try Penhillick. Have got them to work at Wheal Fat, the engine works well since Murdock attended it. Will get him to make a drawing of injection pipe."*
- 18.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 22 Aug. 1782.  
*Summarised "James Law (an erector) left Cornwall, supposes he had arrived at Soho. Remarks on the Hornblowers – they fear not Boulton & Watt. 20 or 30 lbs. per inch. Watt's headaches."*
- 19.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 24 Aug. 1782.  
*Summarised "Law (an erector) sailed for Bristol. Wheal Fat sump deeper than Wheal Chance, have all the water there, had the stroke lengthened to suit."*
- 20.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 29 Aug. 1782.  
*Docketed "Length and number of strokes in Wheal Fat." Summarised "Distribution of erectors. Will be pleased to see Boulton in Cornwall. Have lengthened the stroke at Wheal Fat. Remarkably wet season. High price of corn."*
- 21.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Soho). 12 Sep. 1782.  
*Summarised "Meets Mr. Edwards and converses about the Hornblower engine and the difficulty they have in getting rid of air. Wheal Fat rich. Will not extend the power at Chacewater."*
- 22.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 19 Sep. 1782.  
*Docketed "About purchasing of shares in Poldice."  
Summarised "Hopes Boulton has not been prevented from coming to Cornwall to counteract the Hornblowers' boast of their engine's performance at Radstock. Works 14 lbs. on the inch, 14 strokes per minute, loaded to 17 lbs. Hornblowers have left propositions to alter engines to their principles. Will send Wedgwood's clay. About purchasing of shares in Poldice."*
- 23.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 28 Sep. 1782.  
*Summarised "Hornblower makes a proposal at a meeting, concerning the Consolidated [?] engine. Comments on the proposal."*

24. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 17 Oct. 1782.  
*Summarised "Concerning the abuse Mr. Boulton met with at a meeting of adventurers. Have not heard of the Hornblowers – no doubt Watt will triumph. Remembers information for trial."*

25. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 4 Nov. 1782.  
*Summarised "Glad to hear news of the Hornblowers. Concerning the necessity of a new engine for Chacewater, and remarks on the cost of sinking a new shaft."*

26. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Morrison) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 13 Nov. 1782.  
*Summarised "Concerning Boulton & Watt assisting in the cost of a new shaft at Chacewater."*

27. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 5 Dec. 1782.  
*Summarised "On the state of profits and savings at the various mines."*

28. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 21 Dec. 1782.  
*Summarised "The obstacles of lowering pumps etc. overcome. Water moderate everywhere. New pump for Poldice. (Poldice) new engine pump to be 17 inches diameter. New shaft to be sunk for Chacewater, Mr. Boulton having agreed to give up one year's savings."*

29. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Birmingham). 28 Dec. 1782.  
*Summarised "To forward letters to Boulton and Miss Mynd. Lawson left to report on the engine's forking. Mrs. Wilson ill."*

**3/343 Thomas Wilson, 1783 (44 items)**

1. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 4 Jan. 1783.  
*Mis-dated by Wilson as 1782. Summarised "Concerning the payments from the various mines."*

2. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 11 Jan. 1783.  
*Summarised "Remarks on the Wheal Virgin and Poldice meetings, and the decreased consumption of coal. Gives an account of the forkings. Fleet of colliers relieved their wants. Radstock engine at work, no boastings. Jethro Hornblower leather cutter at Wheal Virgin."*

3. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 30 Jan. 1783.  
*Summarised "Consolidated Mines forked. Jethro Hornblower humbled. Will move at next meeting that Murdock to have the entire management in his hands."*

4. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 6 Feb. 1783.  
*Docketed "Order for Wheal Virgin pumps and about Scorrier's abatement."  
Summarised "Trouble with the supply of coal. Burdened with water at Scorrier."*

5. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 15 Feb. 1783.  
*Summarised "Wheal Chance and Geary adventurers unable to pay the engine charges. Capt. M. Ferris objected to as a purser. Suggests Murdock to have the entire government of engines and engine men. Richard Michell invents a cock to supply the cylinder with grease, so that the piston requires examining only weekly. Murdock accused of removing it, because it hurt the expansion of steam when engine lightly loaded – this causes unpleasantness."*

6. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 20 Feb. 1783.  
*Summarised "Jethro Hornblower dismissed and replaced by Richard Michell. About the sale of property."*

7. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane, London). 24 Feb. 1783.  
*Summarised "Advises Boulton & Watt which way to vote for giving the position of Pursership at Wheal Virgin."*

8. Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 27 Feb. 1783.  
*Summarised "Advises Mr. Watt which way to vote for giving the position of Pursership at Wheal Virgin."*

- 9.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Matthew Boulton (6 Green Lettice Lane, London). 27 Feb. 1783. 2 sheets.  
*Re-directed to Boulton at Soho.*  
*Summarised "Advises which way to vote for giving the position of Pursership at Wheal Virgin."*
- 10.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 3 Mar. 1783.  
*Summarised "Wheal Virgin (Elvan engine) boilers neglected causing damage to them. Concerning table of comparisons of consumptions."*
- 11.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 13 Mar. 1783.
- 12.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 3 Apr. 1783.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Ground Plot of Mr. Bennallack's House at Chevela.  
*Docketed "With plan of Chevela."*
- 13.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 12 Apr. 1783.
- 14.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 17 Apr. 1783.
- 15.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 24 Apr. 1783.  
*Docketed "About winding Dolcoath ores."*
- 16.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 3 May 1783.  
*Docketed "About valuing Wheal Virgin engines."*
- 17.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (nr. Birmingham). 15 May 1783.
- 18.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 29 May 1783.
- 19.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 5 Jun. 1783.
- 20.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 9 Jun. 1783.
- 21.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 14 Jun. 1783.  
*Docketed "Account of profits on Wheal Virgin."*
- 22.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 26 Jun. 1783.
- 23.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 12 Jul. 1783.
- 24.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 17 Jul. 1783.  
*Docketed "Account of remittances."*
- 25.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 24 Jul. 1783.  
*Docketed "With remittance £1340."*
- 26.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 31 Jul. 1783.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Letter. James Lawson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 31 Jul. 1783.
- 27.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 7 Aug. 1783.  
*Docketed "With monthly accounts."*
- 28.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho).  
Not dated [14 Aug. 1783?].  
*Docketed "Aug. 1783."*

- 29.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 16 Aug. 1783.  
*Docketed "Order for Poldice new engine."*
- 30.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 28 Aug. 1783.  
*Docketed "About small engines."*
- 31.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Sep. 1783.  
*Docketed "With monthly accounts."*
- 32.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 8 Sep. 1783.  
*Docketed "Mention of Chacewater order to John Wilkinson."*
- 33.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 13 Sep. 1783.  
*Docketed "About fixing monthly premium for Poldice."*
- 34.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 20 Sep. 1783.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Account. Balance due to & from Boulton & Watt in Cornwall.  
*Docketed "With account of bargains for Wheal Towan engine."*
- 35.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 25 Sep. 1783.  
*Docketed "Estimate of Chacewater new engine."*
- 36.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Oct. 1783.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Transcript of entry from Wilson's Day Book, 2 Oct. 1783.  
Account. Balances due to & from Boulton & Watt. 1 Oct. 1783. *Docketed "With accounts."*
- 37.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 11 Oct. 1783.  
*Docketed "Concerning buying share of Poldice, and the state of Poldice, Chacewater and Wheal Virgin."*
- 38.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 16 Oct. 1783.  
*Docketed "With remittance and concerning Poldice mine."*
- 39.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 23 Oct. 1783.  
*Docketed "About Poldice No. 3 altered to a 63 inch."*
- 40.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt [Soho]. 30 Oct. 1783.  
*Docketed "Time of his setting out for Wales."*
- 41.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Morrison) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 3 Nov. 1783.
- 42.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Morrison) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 10 Nov. 1783.
- 43.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Nineveh) to James Watt [Harper's Hill]. 22 Nov. 1783.
- 44.** Letter. Thomas Wilson (Chacewater) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 15 Dec. 1783.