

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 240**

**3/380 General Correspondence, N, O, P (41 items)**

1. Letter. Charles Newling (Westbury) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 10 Aug. 1778.  
*His neighbours Mr. Cooke and Mr. Onions want details of engine for the colliery they are leasing from Mr. Smythe of Andover.*
2. Letter. George Nisbett (Kingston upon Hull) to James Watt (Birmingham). 25 May 1783.  
*On the same sheet:*  
Transcript of a letter of recommendation from Ninian Hill of Glasgow.  
*Seeking employment as a millwright for himself and a "lad".*
3. Letter. George Nisbett (Kingston upon Hull) to James Watt (Birmingham). 9 Aug. 1783.  
*Thanks James Watt for his advice. He would have gone to Sheffield but he had just begun work on some Archimedes pumps. Can James Watt let him know if he has any employment.*
4. Letter. Robert Noyes (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 14 Jul. 1784.  
*Manages John Wilkinson's business in Bristol. Shipped 51 pipes for Wheal Virgin mine. Arrangements for shipping two further consignments for Wheal Virgin. Has not heard of any more pipes from Wilkinson. Offers his services to Boulton & Watt. There is a broken nozzle of Boulton & Watt's that has been on the quay for two or three years.*
5. Memorandum. Queries by Mr. Olde of Hamburg. Oct. 1780.  
*Sent by Frederick August Muller. Docketed "Answer in letter book."  
Requesting details of an engine.*
- 6a. Letter. John Onions (Benthall Furnace) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 12 Mar. 1781.  
*Enclosing (b) below.*  
*His plans to erect an engine with the cylinder within the boiler at Benthall Rails. Encloses a drawing. Will not attempt to build it without Boulton & Watt's consent. Can they send a drawing and the draft agreement.*  
*[The exact nature of the agreement over this engine is not clear.]*
- b. Sketch. Mr. Onions' drawing of engine with the cylinder within the boiler. Mar. 1781.
7. Letter. John Onions (Benthall) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 20 Aug. 1781.  
*Apologises for not replying – has been erecting a boring and turning mill. There are so many methods of rotative motion on trial that he will delay building the corn mill. The engine is therefore not going forward, but Boulton & Watt should charge for the drawing etc.*
8. Letter. William Osbourne Jr. per Anthony Atkinson Jr. (Hull) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 23 May 1784.  
*Mayson Wright is bankrupt. William Osbourne Jr. has purchased the remainder of his lease in the Hull water works. Accident with the engine which cracked the cylinder bottom. They have temporarily repaired it but Mr. Osbourne wants to order a new one. Dimensions and a sketch of the cylinder.*
9. Letter. William Osbourne Jr. per Anthony Atkinson Jr. (Hull) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 6 Jul. 1784.  
*Can they send the new cylinder bottom as soon as possible. They have repaired the old one but it is doubtful whether the engine will work regularly.*

- 10.** Letter. William Osbourne Jr. per Anthony Atkinson Jr. (Hull) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 14 Apr. 1786.  
*They need a new inner cylinder bottom as a spare. Also orders an outer one.*
- 11.** Letter. James Paddey (Street Forge, near Lawton) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 May 1779.  
*His forge is near Lawton Salt Works where Boulton & Watt erected an engine for Mr. Salmon. Needs an engine to pump water. Details of his requirements.*
- 12.** Letter. Thomas Papps (Ember Mills, Thames Litton) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 27 Apr. 1784.  
*The millwright Mr. Greatrex has told him Boulton & Watt need a superintendent for their undertaking at Blackfriars Bridge [Albion Mill]. Offers his services.*
- 13a.** Letter. Francis Parrot [Bedworth] to James Watt [Birmingham]. — Aug. 1780.  
*Docketed "With receipt for making ink."  
Encloses a forty year old recipe for making ink. Thoughts on various possible ingredients for ink. Can James Watt return the recipe.*
- b.** Memorandum. Recipe for ink from Mr. Francis Parrot from Henry Beighton. 40 years old.  
*Transcript made by James Watt of the recipe sent to him by Parrot.  
[On the reverse is a draft of the licence given to copying machine customers.]*
- 14.** Letter. Edward Perrins (—) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 27 Jul. 1779.  
*Mr. Taylor [John Taylor?] has discharged Perrins' sons [one of whom is Isaac Perrins]. Can Boulton & Watt employ them.*
- 15.** Letter. William Philips (13 Macclesfield St., St. Anns, London) to Matthew Boulton (Birmingham). 4 Nov. 1779.  
*A newspaper article on the fire at London Bridge water works mentioned Boulton & Watt's engines. Wishes to know the cost of an engine and pipes for pumping water into London.*
- 16.** Letter. James Phillips (London) to Samuel Galton Jr. (Birmingham). 23 Aug. 1782.  
*Docketed "About selling copying machines."  
Is keen to sell copying machines – can Galton approach Boulton & Watt on his behalf. Galton should tell them they are preventing sales by refusing a fair profit to their retailers.*
- 17.** Letter. John Pinnick (—) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). — May 1781.  
*Postmarked as 17 May.  
Sending another copy of the bill he sent last Christmas, as he fears it may have miscarried.*
- 18.** Letter (draft or transcript). Matthew Boulton [Soho] to Mr. — Potter. Not dated.  
*Docketed "Card to Mr. Potter respecting Fire Engines."  
Surprised to receive Potter's letter as he understands Potter has decried the use of steam engines for grinding corn. He has had another application from someone who is more favourable to the engine, therefore does not want to extend his connection with Potter.  
[Potter may have been opposed to Albion Mill.]*
- 19.** Letter. Peter Price (Falmouth) to James Watt [Soho]. 16 Jan. 1782.  
*Thanks his "three fr[ie]nds" for the offer, but cannot at present join the undertaking.*
- 20.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to James Watt (at Thomas Wilson's, Chacewater). 6 Jan. 1780.  
*Enclosing a bill of lading for castings shipped to Hayle. Have not been able to raise insurance for the 20 blocks of tin coming from Hayle, as they cannot say where the ship is and it is reported that the Black Prince & Princess [a privateer?] is in the Channel.*

- 21.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 8 Jan. 1780.  
*All the castings are now shipped. Cannot get the insurance for the 20 blocks of tin as they cannot say where the ship is and it is reported that the Black Prince & Princess [a privateer?] is in the Channel.*
- 22.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 1 Feb. 1780.  
*On the same sheet:  
List of nozzles shipped.  
Shipping of cast iron nozzles to Hayle.*
- 23.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 8 Feb. 1780.  
*The case marked 'Tremain' is being shipped. The 20 blocks of tin have arrived.*
- 24.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to James Watt (at Thomas Wilson's, Chacewater). 8 Feb. 1780.  
*The nozzles are being shipped for Hayle. Enclosing the bill of lading. The 20 blocks of tin have arrived.*
- 25.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 27 Apr. 1780.  
*Docketed "Poldory upper box."  
Shipping of goods to Hayle.*
- 26.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Fothergill (Birmingham). 12 Oct. 1780.  
*Docketed "About tin."  
The 20 blocks of tin have been seized by Customs officers. Someone in London should talk to the Commissioners of the Customs.*
- 27.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to Logan Henderson (Redruth). 19 Jun. 1781.  
*Shipping of castings to Hayle. Procurement of other goods requested by Henderson. Has had to order some [? – this part of the letter is missing] as he cannot find any of the size Henderson wants.*
- 28.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to James Watt [Cusgarne]. 11 Sep. 1781.  
*Docketed "Concerning freight."  
Shipping of pipes to Portreath. Problems of shipping large pipes. Mr. Noyes almost certainly cannot ship pipes cheaper than them. Cost and shipping of pantiles.*
- 29.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to James Watt (Cusgarne). 17 Oct. 1781.  
*Docketed "Shipping brass barrels."  
Shipping of goods to Portreath.*
- 30.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to James Watt (Cusgarne). 29 Nov. 1781.  
*Shipping of goods to Portreath. Logan Henderson reports that James Watt has had complaints about the quality of the tiles sent by Prichard & Barlow.*
- 31a.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 25 May 1782.  
*Kept with (b) below.  
Transport of various boxes from Cornwall to Soho. Can they pay Logan Henderson for the pantiles.*
- b.** Memorandum. About a bill drawn on James Barlow by Logan Henderson. Not dated.
- 32.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 12 Jun. 1782.  
*Have shipped the panels to Waterford according to A. & P. Colclough's directions. Have not had any remittance from Thomas Wilson. Have shipped Mr. Paull's tiles.*

- 33.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 15 Aug. 1782.  
*Docketed "About James Law."*  
*James Law arrived from Portreath and has gone to Bath. Will travel to Birmingham tomorrow.*
- 34.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow (Bristol) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 3 Sep. 1782.  
*Docketed "Forwarding spare piston rod."*  
*The Dlocath piston rod has been sent to Exeter on Mr. Parsons' wagon.*
- 35.** Letter. Prichard & Barlow per James Barlow (Bristol) to Matthew Boulton (Birmingham). 2 Jun. 1783.  
*Docketed "With charges on tin."*  
*Sending charges for tin. Have received various items from John Wilkinson – whose account are the transport costs to be charged to. With details of the tin charges.*  
*[The tin charges have been noted as "Entd. 198 Z[accheus] W[alker]", and Walker forwarded the letter to James Pearson having added a note of what he had done. Walker's note is dated 4 Jun. 1783.]*
- 36.** Letter. Robert Priestley (Leeds) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). — Sep. 1784.  
*John Smeaton can do nothing without Boulton & Watt being there, and wishes them to come to Leeds.*
- 37.** Letter. Robert Priestley (Leeds) to James Watt [London]. 27 Sep. 1784.  
*Arrangements for John Smeaton and Watt to come to Leeds. Mr. Wood, the proprietor of the works, is in "a disagreeable state of suspense."*
- 38.** Letter. Robert Priestley (Kilnsey, near Skipton Craven) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 16 Dec. 1784.  
*Cannot say what state of forwardness Wood's engine house is in – will visit him at Pateley in the next week.*
- 39.** Letter. Procter & Beilby (Sheffield) to Boulton & Fothergill (Birmingham). 2 Nov. 1776.  
*Asking whether Watt's engine can be applied to rotary motion to drive a gin wheel. Can they get a licence to erect one and an estimate of the cost, and the quantity of water it will need.*
- 40.** Letter. William Pryce (Redruth) to Logan Henderson (Soho). 4 Mar. 1777.  
*Thanks Henderson for recommending his work. Details of his recent illness. Asks for details of the Bedworth engine. Has heard from Matthew Boulton, who has sent him the names of eight subscribers. Wheal Virgin's engines cannot cope with pumping the water – they need to ask Matthew Boulton for help. A Boulton & Watt engine is about to be erected at Chacewater. Is still waiting for Matthew Boulton to send a description of the engine for inclusion in Pryce's book. He has halted printing to wait for it. Details of his subscribers. Mr. Holman the carpenter is designing a horseless carriage.*
- 41.** Letter. William Pulteney (London) to James Watt (Soho). 1 May 1776.  
*Understands the steam engine might be applied to sugar cane mills in the West Indies. This would be an important development – neither Mr. Stewart nor Mr. Clarke's engines have succeeded.*

**3/381 General Correspondence, R**

**(75 items)**

- 1.** Letter. J. Ramsden (London) to ?. 24 Apr. 1784.  
*There is nothing to fear from Mr. Kampilin's patent. It is an old scheme of Mr. Henderson's [Logan Henderson] while he lived with Dr. Irwin. "...it is steam applied to Barker's Hill which is certainly the worst of all the applications of steam hitherto."*
- 2.** Memorandum. Directions for repairing Coalbrookdale Engine. Not dated.  
*For Joseph Rathbone & Co.*  
*In James Watt's hand. Passed to John Buchanan marked "please make fair copy of the above and give to them."*

- 3.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham).  
6 Mar. 1781.  
*Have not yet received the drawings for the boilers for their engine.*
- 4.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Birmingham).  
20 Mar. 1781.  
*Uncertain about the strength of the large oak tree James Watt suggested. They will therefore make their engine beam out of four pieces, which will be more expensive but stronger.*
- 5.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham).  
16 Apr. 1781.  
*Docketed as Coalbrookdale.*  
*Progress with the engine house and beam. Are afraid of their current engine failing, therefore hope they will get the rest of the drawings soon. Jabez Hornblower applied to erect the engine – he has a poor reputation and they refer the decision to Boulton & Watt. Progress with parts for Wheal Virgin. Enclosing the draft agreement.*
- 6.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 5 May 1781.  
*Docketed as Coalbrookdale.*  
*Progress with orders for parts for Wheal Virgin, Pool Adit and United Mines.*
- 7.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham).  
30 May 1781.  
*Progress with their engine. They are happy for Boulton & Watt to order the piston rod and nozzle wherever they see fit.*  
*On the same sheet:*  
Letter. Mark Gilpin, clerk for Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Birmingham). 30 May 1781.  
*Need directions about the brass seats for the Wheal Virgin clackseat pipes. The other pipes have been sent to Prichard & Barlow in Bristol for forwarding to Wheal Virgin.*
- 8.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham).  
1 Jun. 1781.  
*Progress with parts for Pool Adit and Wheal Virgin.*
- 9.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham).  
3 Jul. 1781.  
*Docketed as 4 Jul.*  
*Details of parts for Wheal Virgin forwarded to Prichard & Barlow in Bristol.*
- 10.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Cusgarne). 17 Dec. 1781.  
*Mis-docketed as 1782.*  
*Sending an invoice for parts ordered for Wheal Crenver, and an invoice for Mr. Harris of Rosewarne for the shipping of the parts.*
- 11.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Cusgarne). 28 Dec. 1781.  
*Thanks James Watt for ensuring the monthly sum will be paid. Will not make improper use of the information respecting Pool Adit and Dolcoath mines. James Watt's name will not be used.*
- 12.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 6 Apr. 1782.  
*The bearer Abraham Fletcher is the man who lost or stole the drawing of their engine. He should pay the expense of a new one. The old drawing has not been heard of.*

- 13.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. per Mark Gilpin (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 26 Oct. 1782.  
*Ordering copying ink for Coalbrookdale and Ketley.*  
*[James Watt forwarded this to John Buchanan with notes on the preparation of the ink, and instructions for James Pearson to draw a bill on the Chelsea water works for their 'rent' due.]*
- 14.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Birmingham). 22 Feb. 1783.  
*Docketed "Coalbrookdale Engine" and "Wheal Virgin pipes."*  
*Progress with parts for Wheal Virgin.*
- 15.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 27 Nov. 1784.  
*Docketed "About new rolls for their copying machine."*  
*Ordering a new iron roller for their copying machine.*
- 16.** Letter. Joseph Rathbone & Co. (Coalbrookdale) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 20 Dec. 1784.  
*Thanking them for the new copying machine and replacement roller.*
- 17.** Letter. Thomas Reilly (Dublin) to James Watt [?]. 24 Jul. 1784.  
*Requesting the cost of an engine for blowing a large smelting furnace.*
- 18.** Letter. Cornelius Reynolds (Broseley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 13 Apr. 1781.  
*Requesting details of pipes to be made for a Cornish mine. Presumes John Wilkinson will know the shipping arrangements.*
- 19.** Letter. Cornelius Reynolds (Broseley) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 27 Apr. 1781.  
*Requesting details and shipping arrangements of pipes to be made for a Cornish mine.*
- 20.** Letter. Cornelius Reynolds (Broseley) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 1 Jun. 1781.  
*Shipping of pipes to Cornwall via Bristol.*
- 21.** Letter. Richard Reynolds (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 30 Dec. 1777.  
*They cannot adapt their existing engine to blow the furnaces, therefore they will erect a new one. Can James Watt visit. Oak for the engine beam is scarce – has heard they use fir or deal in Cornwall.*
- 22.** Letter. Richard Reynolds (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 24 Jan. 1778.  
*Will not "trifle" with Boulton & Watt – if James Watt will visit, he will agree to try the Boulton & Watt engine. Need an engine as soon as possible.*
- 23.** Memorandum. Proposals of Agreement between Richard Reynolds of Ketley & Matthew Boulton & James Watt of Soho. 29 Jan. 1778.  
*Signed by Reynolds and James Watt.*
- 24.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 16 Feb. 1778.  
*Query about increasing the diameter of the pipes above the working barrel.*
- 25.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 4 Apr. 1778.  
*Have received the piston stem but no details of its weight. Have ordered the iron work. Doubt their ability to make the piston rod cap. Can Boulton & Watt order it from elsewhere.*
- 26.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 7 Nov. 1778.  
*Enclosing four bills in payment for various engine parts.*  
*[Marked "Recd. And entered to the credit of Manufactory at Soho the 8 Nov. 1778 pr. Z[accheus] Walker" and docketed "Answered the 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1778.]*
- 27.** Letter. Richard Reynolds (Ketley) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 8 Jan. 1779.  
*Mis-dated by Reynolds as 1778.*  
*The engine works reasonably well. There have been a few accidental stoppages. The boiler leaks. Recommends Wasborough as a supplier of brass and copper work.*

- 28.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 21 Jan. 1779.  
*Jabez Hornblower brought Matthew Boulton's letter and they have had James Watt's. They will ask for assistance if they need it but their own workmen's experience is increasing, and the boiler now only leaks a little bit.*
- 29.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Feb. 1779.  
*The brass under the gudgeon is worn. Orders a replacement. Hope to be ready for the trial soon.*
- 30.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 27 Mar. 1779.  
*The engine works well. They only have to fit a new gudgeon to be ready for the trial.*
- 31.** Memorandum. Certificate of Trial of Ketley old engine. 2 Apr. 1779.  
*Signed by James Watt, William Reynolds, Logan Henderson and Benjamin Phillips.*
- 32.** Memorandum. Trials of the two engines. Apr. 1779.  
*Details and calculations of the trials, as follows: "Ketley Old Engine – the little one with the single pump. Exp<sup>t</sup> made the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1779 in the presence of Will<sup>m</sup> Reynolds, Benj<sup>n</sup> Phillips, Logan Henderson & Jas. Watt"; and "Ketley New Engine, cylinder 58 inches diamr. By a trial made by Henry Williams."*
- 33.** Letter. Richard Reynolds (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Dec. 1779.  
*Errors in the account including a counter they have not had. The trial should be held now, as the boiler is in good condition.*
- 34.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 Jan. 1780.  
*Docketed "Answered by promising to advise of the return of Messrs. B. or Watt."  
Logan Henderson told them Boulton & Watt would be in Cornwall for some time. When they return can William Reynolds visit to arrange the trial. The engine and boiler are working well.*
- 35.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 24 Jan. 1780.  
*Docketed "About Ketley cylinder and Coalbrookdale agreement."  
Has been to Coalbrookdale to examine the cylinder. Does the rib on which the bottom of the casing sits need to be turned. Has examined the calculations of the savings which will be made by the Coalbrookdale engine and has found a small error in Boulton & Watt's favour. What size will the boiler be. Are altering the Madely Wood large engine to blow the furnaces until the new engine is ready – asks James Watt's advice.*
- 36.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 31 Jan. 1780.  
*Have received Logan Henderson's letter and the gudgeon pattern. Enclosing a bill of exchange.*
- 37.** Letter. William Reynolds for Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 19 May 1780.  
*Are planning to erect a boring mill at Coalbrookdale similar to John Wilkinson's. Therefore they would want to give orders for cylinder and pumps for their projected new engine to the Coalbrookdale Co.*
- 38.** Letter. Richard Reynolds (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 28 Aug. 1780.  
*Docketed "Respecting the agreement."  
Hopes James Watt will send the drawings for their new engine. Has looked over the agreements. Points out that they did not save any money at first due to the engine's frequent stoppages. Does every partner have to sign the agreement.*
- 39.** Letter. Richard Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 31 Aug. 1780.  
*Returns the agreements. They should be made an allowance if the engine stops for one month, not two. Wants the new engine erected by the end of 1781. Hopes the names of him and his son [William] will suffice on the agreements. Could not name the others.*

- 40.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 25 Sep. 1780.  
*They have not received the drawings of the condenser.*  
*[This letter has been marked "The parcel was directed to Mr. Richd. Reynolds at Ketley Furnace near Shifnal. Contains drawings of considerable value and must be found."]*
- 41.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 9 Oct. 1780.  
*Docketed "Receipt of drawings."*  
*The drawings are safe but are delayed due to the coachman being ill. William Reynolds requests a copying machine.*
- 42.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (—). 17 Oct. 1780.  
*Sending their pattern maker to study Boulton & Watt's patterns. They may want more than one or two more engines – therefore will they let him make a model of an engine.*
- 43.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 31 Oct. 1780.  
*Docketed "With remittance £50, £10 B & W, £6.11 J W & Co."*  
*Have looked over the writings, models and drawings their carpenter brought back. Enclosing two bills for their half-yearly payment. Need to erect an engine at Coalbrookdale. Can Boulton & Watt visit to view the site and discuss the details.*  
*On the same sheet:*  
Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt & Co. (Soho). 31 Oct. 1780.  
*Enclosing a bill for the copying machine. Orders another machine, letter books, ink powder, paper and wafers.*
- 44.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. 28 Dec. 1780.  
*The pattern for the flanch has arrived. Hopes to hear about the proposed Coalbrookdale engine.*
- 45.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 16 Jan. 1781.  
*Enclosing a bill of exchange for the half-yearly payment. Presumes they have heard from Joseph Rathbone about their proposals [for the Coalbrookdale engine].*
- 46.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 Apr. 1781.  
*The Coalbrookdale Co. would like their drawings. Reynolds & Co. have masons they can send to Coalbrookdale. Ordering mercury and copying paper. Are ready to alter their engine. Have received sundry parts from Soho.*
- 47.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 14 Apr. 1781.  
*Docketed "With remittance of £150."*  
*Sending a bill of exchange. Have received all the parts except the blowing and injection pipes.*
- 48.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 2 Jun. 1781.  
*They are progressing well with their engine work. The eduction pipe of the current engine keeps breaking. Can Henry Williams be sent.*
- 49.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 19 Jun. 1781.  
*Are ready to alter their engine, and the new engine needs repairs. Can Henry Williams or Joseph Harrison come over.*
- 50.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 19 Jul. 1781.  
*Enclosing two bills of exchange for their half-yearly payment. Can Henry Williams come as soon as possible.*  
*[Transcripts of the bills have been written on the sheet.]*
- 51.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 19 Jan. 1782.  
*Enclosing two bills of exchange for their half-yearly payment.*



- 52.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 23 Nov. 1782.  
*Has thought of putting up a corn mill powered by a common engine with a crank. However his father Richard has seen James Watt's rotative motion at Soho. Asks for costs. The Coalbrookdale engine works well. Orders counters for Coalbrookdale and Ketley.*
- 53.** Letter. Richard Reynolds & Co. (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Feb. 1783.  
*Enclosing five bills of exchange for their half-yearly saving on their two engines. Marked "Entd. In 248 pr. J[ames] P[earson]".*
- 54.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 30 May 1783.  
*He and his uncle Joseph Rathbone want an engine with a 63 inch cylinder for Donnington Wood. Hope Boulton & Watt will be reasonable with the premium – coal is cheap at Donnington. Glad to hear of the success of their corn mill [Albion Mill]. Hopes to make a trial of a corn mill in his area. The Bradley forge engine works well. Wishes Matthew Boulton success in opposing the Anglesey [copper] bill.*
- 55.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham) or Matthew Boulton (Soho). 5 Jul. 1783.  
*Has sent the drawing of the Coalbrookdale engine. The trees for the beam have not yet come, but they have others equal to the size of the Coalbrookdale beam.*
- 56.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 22 Jul. 1783.  
*Sorry to hear of Mrs. Boulton's accident. Details of the pumps for Donnington Wood. [With a small sketch within the text.] Congratulates James Watt on the success of Albion Mill.*
- 57.** Letter. William Reynolds (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Birmingham). 2 Sep. 1783.  
*Requesting further details of the pipes ordered for Poldory, and the drawings for the Donnington Wood boiler.*
- 58.** Letter. William Reynolds (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 24 Sep. 1783.  
*Docketed as 24 Oct.  
Can Watt employ the young man Reynolds mentioned. Quality of his character.*
- 59.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 7 Oct. 1783.  
*Docketed "Countermanding Donnington Wood engine."  
Sorry Watt cannot employ the young man. Problems with the Donnington Wood Co. – they will not need such a large engine after all.*
- 60.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. 7 Nov. 1783.  
*Docketed "Order for Donnington blowing engine."  
Ordering an engine with a 48 inch cylinder for Donnington Wood. Henry Williams will give him the details of the blowing operations. They plan to erect one or more engine-powered forges in the Spring.*
- 61.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Soho). 2 Feb. 1784.  
*Thanks Watt for the different boiler designs – they will probably use the "hogshead" type, but are planning to erect one at Coalbrookdale to compare it to the oblong type. Is planning two stamping forges, and the Coalbrookdale Co. is planning a rolling and slitting mill.*
- 62.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Soho). 7 Feb. 1784.  
*Docketed "Concerning situation of Donnington boilers."  
Thanks Watt for the warning about the "foreigners". Have taken more land at Donnington Wood so they can place the boilers on either side of the engine house. [With a small sketch of the proposed arrangement in the text.]*
- 63.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 3 May 1784.  
*Thanks Watt for the drawings. They will take care with the placing of the stuffing box. Need the Horsehay Forge engine as the wheel is failing fast. They should proceed at once upon all three engines.*

- 64.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 22 May 1784.  
*Various drawings for Horsehay Forge and Ketley have arrived. Fears they will have trouble fixing the Horsehay gudgeon.*
- 65.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 4 Jun. 1784.  
*The boiler at Coalbrookdale is nearly finished. Can Joseph Harrison come to examine the engine. The nozzles for Donnington Wood have arrived.*
- 66.** Letter. William Reynolds (Coalbrookdale) to James Watt (Birmingham). 22 Jun. 1784.  
*Expected to hear from Watt about the fly wheels and gudgeons. Assumes Joseph Harrison has communicated their sentiments on them. The cylinder is cast and the other parts are well forward.*
- 67.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. 3 Jul. 1784.  
*Will adopt the original proposals for the fly wheel and gudgeon if their alteration is going to increase friction. Hopes to visit Birmingham and hear James Watt's thoughts on the "iron harness".*
- 68.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. 26 Jul. 1784.  
*Shipping of piston rods from Liverpool for Donnington Wood and Ketley. William Fawcett of J. Rathbone & Co. in Liverpool can send one by the fastest route.*
- 69.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt (Birmingham). 20 Sep. 1784.  
*Progress with the Horsehay Forge engine. Hopes the forge will be at work in a month. Wants the information about working the Ketley forge engines without chains.*
- 70.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. 29 Nov. 1784.  
*The young man he mentioned has been working at Coalbrookdale and is now assisting Henry Williams in erecting the forge engines. Had he not been engaged he would have accepted James Watt's offer. Plan to start the Horsehay Forge engine. Most of the castings for the Ketley forge engines are complete.*
- 71.** Letter. William Reynolds (Ketley) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. 11 Dec. 1784.  
*Wants the information about working the Ketley forge engines without chains. The Horsehay Forge engine works well and does have enough power. Orders copying paper.*
- 72.** Letter. John Rothwell (London) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 2 Nov. 1784.  
*Can the parts be sent from Soho as soon as possible as they have the cylinder and want to complete the engine in 5 weeks. Can James Watt give instructions about packing the piston. Can he send cement, a drawing of the working gear, an account of the bolts he is sending, dies for the bolts, steam guage and barometer.  
[The docket notes this was for the Shadwell water works engine.]*
- 73.** Letter. Nicholas Ryder (Marston Forge) to James Watt (Birmingham). 2 Feb. 1779.  
*Details of his charges for "engine" [i.e. boiler] plates.*
- 74.** Letter. Nicholas Ryder (Marston Forge) to James Watt (Birmingham). 30 Mar. 1779.  
*Is very short of water, therefore needs more time to finish the plates.*
- 75.** Letter. Nicholas Ryder (Marston Forge) to James Watt (Birmingham). 29 May 1779.  
*Delays in making the boiler plates that Watt has ordered from him.*

**3/382 General Correspondence, S**

**(41 items)**

- 1.** Letter. Richard Savage (Hull) to James Watt (Birmingham). 11 Dec. 1783.  
*Notes on his plan that Henry Coates sent to James Watt.*
- 2.** Letter. Richard Savage (Hull) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 12 Jan. 1784.  
*He made an error concerning the horses' velocity at Mr. Coates' mill. More details of their requirements.*

- 3.** Letter. Richard Savage (Hull) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 12 Mar. 1784.  
*Details of his experiments to work out the resistance of Coates and Jarrat's mill.*
- 4.** Letter. Richard Savage (Hull) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 16 Apr. 1784.  
*Further details of his experiment to find the resistance of the mill, including a small sketch of the pulley he used.*
- 5a.** Letter. Scots Mines Company per William Hamilton, Secretary (25 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London) to James Watt (at Boulton & Fothergill's). 15 Jan. 1778.  
*Kept with (b) below.*  
*The company want an engine for their works at Leadhills. The present engine is insufficient. Watt had visited Leadhills before with the late James Stirling. Details of the works. Can James Watt call on the treasurer, Mr. Watts, in London. He may also want to correspond with their agent, Mr. Stirling.*
- b.** Diagram and notes. Description of the Works at Leadhills so far as relates to the placing an Engine in the Susanna Vein, transmitted by Mr. Stirling about the year 1770.
- 6.** Letter Scots Mines Company per William Hamilton, Secretary (London) to James Watt (at Boulton & Fothergill's). 29 Jan. 1778.  
*The directors are sending Watt's letter to their agent Mr. Stirling and to the treasurer Mr. Watts. Watts will contact Watt about the proposed engine at Leadhills.*
- 7.** Letter. George Seddons (London) to Boulton & Co. (Birmingham). 30 Jul. 1782.  
*Enquiring about an engine to work three pairs of stones in a friend's mill.*
- 8.** Letter. George Seddons (London) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 10 Aug. 1782.  
*The bearer, Seddons' foreman Mr. Eggleso, is in Birmingham to see his son. Can Boulton recommend a japanner. Will discuss [his friend's mill] when he sees Boulton.*
- 9.** Letter. William Jervas Simcock (—) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 4 Aug. 1777.  
*Docketed "Declaring what his invention is."*  
*Description of the principles of his engine. Matthew Boulton may reject or approve of them. Logan Henderson has no opinion and says Simcock is "bigoted".*
- 10.** Letter. William Jervas Simcock (—) to James Watt [?] [Birmingham]. "Wednesday morning" [— Sep. 1777].  
*Observed the engine and the filling of the boiler. There should be an index to the water cock, and the window in the boiler should be stopped up.*
- 11.** Memorandum. The humble address of William Jervas Simcock. 1777.  
*Logan Henderson suggested he should work for Boulton & Watt. His own developments [using elastic vapour instead of steam]. Mr. Hall told him he was discharged from Boulton & Watt's service – he feels insulted. Is seeking Matthew Boulton's approval of his design. He will not construct engines on any design other than what he has described.*
- 12a.** Letter. William Jervas Simcock (—) to ? Not dated.  
*Enclosing (b) below.*  
*Describing his "saw engine" and offering it for use at Soho.*
- b.** Drawing. Section of Simcock's saw engine.
- 13.** Letter. Archibald Smellie (Glasgow) to James Watt (care of Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham). 3 Feb. 1777.  
*Has contracted Peter and Francis Smith to construct his colliery machinery. Can Watt send them the directions for erecting an engine.*

**14a.** Letter. John Smith (Draper's Hall, London) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 1 Jul. 1783.  
*Docketed "Enclosing queries about a fire engine." Enclosing (b) below.*  
*Wants to alter the pumping engines at his collieries in Glamorgan. Is considering new engines for coal winding. His agent Mr. Kirkhouse can give details.*

**b.** Memorandum. Heads of Matters to confer upon with Messrs. Boulton & Watt.  
*Details of John Smith's collieries at Lansamlet and Landoor – details of existing engines, depth of shafts, queries about winding engines.*  
*[Both Boulton and Watt have added notes and replies.]*

**15.** Letter. John Smith (Draper's Hall) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 9 Aug. 1783.  
*Has not heard from Boulton & Watt about their discussion with his agent Mr. Kirkhouse.*

**16.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 11 Jun. 1776.  
*Received James Watt's order for a piston rod. It is being forged and will be forwarded to Chepstow.*

**17.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 29 Sep. 1776.  
*Examined the piston rod and found the diameter was too small. Is therefore preparing a new one.*

**18.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 5 Nov. 1776.  
*Have finished the piston rod and sent it to John Baldwyn at Chepstow. Sending an invoice. The rod took considerable labour in carrying it to the hammer, and turning it. Another rod is ready for turning – the first rod which was too small.*

**19a.** Invoice. Spedding Hicks & Co. (Seaton Works). 17 Nov. 1777.  
*Sent with (b) below.*  
*Invoice for two piston rods.*

**b.** Letter. Richard Dearman (Worthington) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 27 Nov. 1777.  
*What are their directions about the piston rods being forwarded from Newport. Can get Thomas Richards to forward them. Enclosing an invoice and a letter from J. Walker.*

**20.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker [Seaton Works] to Richard Dearman [?].  
— Mar. 1779.  
*Docketed "United Mines Rod."*  
*Shipping of a piston rod for United Mines. The Wheal Chance rod is nearly ready. Have heard from Lawson & Sons that Gilbert Meason's rod has arrived.*

**21a.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt [Soho].  
12 June 1780.  
*Kept with (b) & (c) below. Docketed "Invoices of piston rods Poldice, Pool, Ketley and Gregory 1779-80."*  
*On the same sheet:*  
*Invoice for a rod for Poldice Mine.*  
*Shipping of a piston rod for Poldice. Richard Dearman has ordered another rod for Boulton & Watt. [Marked "Entd. 366 J[ames] P[earson]" and "charge the above to Dolcoath engine"].*

**b.** Invoice. Spedding Hicks & Co. (Seaton Works). 8 Feb. 1780.  
*For a piston rod for Gregory mine.*  
*[Marked "Entd. 297 J[ames] P[earson]".]*

**c.** Invoice. Spedding Hicks & Co. (Seaton Works). 10 Oct. 1780.  
*For piston rods for Pool mine and Ketley.*  
*[Marked "Entd. 418 J[ames] P[earson]".]*

- 22.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Richard Dearman (—). 2 Nov. 1780.  
*Docketed "About forged iron work."*  
*The company have declined to make the wrought iron work for Boulton & Watt engines. Speddings & Fisher will make the parts mentioned by Dearman in the engravings, but not do the whole of the iron work for an engine. Details of the iron work.*
- 23.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Boulton & Watt [Birmingham]. 7 Dec. 1780.  
*Docketed "Acceptance of the order for Wheal Virgin iron work."*  
*Will begin the order for heavy iron work for Wheal Virgin as forwarded by Richard Dearman.*
- 24.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 27 May 1781.  
*Is concerned by the time Speddings Fisher & Co. are taking with the engine work. The workmen do not understand "executing by a draft". Will complete the Wheal Virgin order soon and begin the Poldice work. The work has been delayed by Mr. Fisher accepting a government contract for large anchors. Hopes further orders will be carried out more quickly. List of the finished parts.*
- 25.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 3 Jun. 1781.  
*Listing iron items finished and outstanding [for Wheal Virgin and Poldice].*
- 26.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Boulton & Watt [Birmingham]. 5 Jun. 1781.  
*Docketed as Spedding & Fisher. "List of iron work."*  
*Listing items shipped to Hugh Jones in Chester by Spedding Fisher & Co. They will be transhipped in Chester together with piston rods and pump rod plates made by Spedding Hicks & Co. into the vessel carrying the cylinders. In consequence of Boulton & Watt's letter, Mr. Fisher has declined further engine iron work. Lists unfinished iron work. Spedding Hicks & Co. will complete it at Seaton Works.*
- 27.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 22 Jun. 1781.  
*Mr. Fisher weighed the Wheal Virgin and Poldice ironwork together but they can easily be separated as the cases are marked. List of the Poldice items sent to Chester. Spedding Hicks & Co. are proceeding with the rest of the Poldice iron work.*
- 28.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 7 Dec. 1781.  
*The Trevaskus mine piston rod is ready – shipping details. They will proceed with the Dolcoath mine rod. They may have to draw on Boulton & Watt for payment for rods made in June.*
- 29.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 10 Dec. 1781.  
*Are sending the Trevaskus rod to Joseph Rathbone & Co., not Thomas Beckett.*
- 30.** Letter. James Spedding (Whitehaven) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 3 Aug. 1781.  
*Spedding Hicks & Co. have finished the engine work for the Cornish engines.*
- 31.** Transcript of letter. James Spedding [Whitehaven] to Richard Dearman [Birmingham]. Circa Jun. 1782.  
*The young man recommended as a colliery agent has had an offer from Wales. The engine carpenter has had an offer from James Bateman which he has accepted as he has to support his family. James Armitage is happy to work for Boulton & Watt – he will have more chance of learning drawing in Birmingham as there are no "Masters" at Seaton.*  
*On the same sheet:*  
Letter. Richard Dearman [Birmingham] to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 2 Jul. 1782.  
*Is sorry that the carpenter is employed, as he would have been useful to Boulton & Watt.*

- 32.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 26 Dec. 1782.  
*Docketed "Poldice spare rod."*  
*The Poldice rod is ready – the best they have made. They have no opportunity to ship it to Bristol or Chepstow, rare opportunities for Chester, so will ship it to Liverpool.*  
*[James Watt has used the sheet for a list of engine parts for Poldice.]*
- 33a.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 17 May 1783.  
*Sent with (b) below.*  
*Have received the order for 3 piston rods through Richard Dearman. The rod for Whitegrit mine is begun. Drawing on Boulton & Watt for the balance of their account.*
- b.** Letter. John Buchanan (Soho) to James Watt (Harper's Hill). 17 May 1783.  
*Spedding Hicks & Co. have drawn on Boulton & Watt for their balance, which does not agree with Boulton & Watt's books. The difference arises from piston rod caps that were sent late or not ordered.*
- 34.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 13 Jan. 1784.  
*Docketed "About Ocker Hill and Donnington rods, and the 25 rod caps to be returned."*  
*Have shipped Dolcoath No. 3 piston rod. Have received the orders for Ocker Hill, Donnington Wood and Poldice No. 4 rods, but have been delayed by their machinery being frozen with ice. Problem of 25 surplus pump rod caps lying at Chester.*
- 35.** Letter. Spedding Hicks & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). — Apr. 1784.  
*Docketed "With invoice Poldice No. 4."*  
*Shipping of Poldice No. 4 piston rod. Have drawn on Boulton & Watt for £100. The Ocker Hill and Donnington Wood rods will be done the week after next. Wish to hear about the 25 surplus rod caps.*  
*[The invoice for the Poldice rod has been cut from the sheet.]*
- 36.** Letter. Spedding Hicks Senhouse & Co. per J. Walker (Seaton Works) to Boulton & Watt (Birmingham). 10 Jul. 1784.  
*Docketed "Ketley, Donnington, Ocker Hill rods and state of account."*  
*Shipping of 5 piston rods. Note of the balance of their account. Have received the 25 rod caps from Chester.*  
*On the same sheet:*  
 Invoice for Donnington Wood, Ocker Hill and 3 Ketley rods.
- 37.** Letter. Martin Stephens (Crane) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 2 May 1783.  
*The poor state of Trevaskus mine. They will find a new lode, but many of the adventurers are too poor to support it. Can Boulton help by setting aside all or part of the premium. Boulton's leniency is likely to help Reskene mine. Offers a 1/30<sup>th</sup> share in Trevaskus to Boulton.*  
*[The letter is marked by Boulton "Q[uer]y at what time did it become poor. I think we should only take their case into consideration from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May".]*
- 38.** Letter. Stonard & Curtis (Lambeth) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 24 Jun. 1784.  
*Want the details of an engine that Boulton promised when he was at Lambeth. This is the time of year when they have least to do.*
- 39.** Letter. Stonard & Curtis (Lambeth) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 19 Nov. 1784.  
*Details of the site and proposed buldings for their engine. Queries about the site of the well, the mill stones and the boiler. Stonard thanks James Watt for the paper on dephlogisticated air. He has had little time to study elastic fluids.*
- 40.** Memorandum. Mr. Uriah Stone, Wharfinger, Bristol. Not dated.  
*Recommendation of Uriah Stone by Mr. Hunt of Bewdley.*

**41.** Letter. John Stuart (London) to Matthew Boulton (Soho). 10 Jun. 1782.  
*Is Boulton still going to Ireland and can he still recommend Stuart's brother to Lord Lifford. His brother is also applying to the Duke of Portland. Monsieur Cavalli is returning to Paris and is keen to have a small Boulton & Watt engine. Can Boulton send him details.*