

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 3147/3/296-299)

DETAILED LISTING

REEL 223

Letters from John Rennie from 1792 to 1795. During this period Rennie worked for Boulton & Watt as a millwright in London, but the arrangements between them were very informal, as Rennie was technically in business on his own. He also acted as their London agent, advising customers about engines and passing on enquiries to Boulton & Watt. He also travelled around the country – this bundle includes letters from Blackburn and Lancaster.

The letters are all addressed to Watt, with the exceptions of one to Boulton & Watt dated 24 March 1792, and one to Matthew Boulton dated 7 June 1792. The bundle also includes a letter from Rennie's assistant Charles Taylor to John Southern dated 16 July 1792. All these letters were docketed by James Watt. Up until 1798, there are two series of Rennie's letters; one to James Watt, and the other of letters that were answered by John Southern.

1792.

1. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 3 Jan. 1792.
2. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 7 Jan. 1792.
3. Letter. John Rennie (Blackburn) to James Watt (6 Green Lettice Lane). 13 Jan. 1792.
Docketed "Arbitration with Woollen Yarn Co."
4. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 17 Feb. 1792.
Docketed "Johnson & Gould."
5. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 5 Mar. 1792.
Docketed "Note of materials for 4 horse engine in his possession."
6. Letter. John Rennie (House of Commons) to James Watt (Soho). 6 Mar. 1792.
Docketed "Notice of Hornblower's bill."
7. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 7 Mar. 1792.
Docketed "Lancaster Canal engines. Hornblower's bill."
8. Letter. John Rennie [London] to Boulton & Watt (6 Green Lettice Lane). "Saturday Morning" [24 Mar. 1792].
9. Letter. John Rennie (New Surrey St., London) to James Watt [Soho]. 14 May 1792.
Docketed "About his nephew."
10. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 17 May 1792.
Docketed "Johnson & Gould's new boiler. Rougemont."
11. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 25 May 1792.
Docketed "Ostervald. Smeaton's books. Nantes goods."
12. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Matthew Boulton [Soho]. 7 Jun. 1792.
Docketed by Watt.
Docketed "Portraits."

13. Letter. Charles Taylor (London) to John Southern (Soho). 16 Jul. 1792.
Docketed by Watt.
Docketed "C. Taylor at Mr. Rennie's."
14. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to James Watt (Soho). 25 Oct. 1792.
15. Letter. John Rennie (New Surrey St., London) to James Watt (Soho). 27 Nov. 1792.
Docketed "Common engine for Mr. Keir."
16. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 4 Dec. 1792.
Docketed "Lingard & Sadler. Baird."
17. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 18 Dec. 1792.

1793.

18. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 3 Feb. 1793.
19. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 16 Mar. 1793.
20. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 21 Mar. 1793.
21. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 22 Apr. 1793.
22. Memorandum. Mr. Rennie's account against Thebaud & Co. Goodwin Platt & Goodwin. 1793.
In James Pearson's hand.
Docketed "Mr. Rennie's account against Thebaud & Co. Goodwin Platt & Goodwin. 1793."
23. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 18 May 1793.
Docketed "Nantes account and copy letter."
24. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt [Soho]. 27 May 1793.
Docketed as 2 May.
25. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 15 Aug. 1793.
Docketed "Lancaster Canal engine. Dayus. Lithgow."
26. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to James Watt (Soho). 5 Oct. 1793.
Docketed "Lithgow and Dayus. Charges."

1794.

27. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt [Soho]. 9 Apr. 1794.
Docketed "Engine for Mr. Severn."

1795.

28. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to James Watt Jr. (Soho). 3 Aug. 1795.
Docketed "About engaging Craith."
29. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to James Watt Jr. (Soho). 8 Aug. 1795.
On the same sheet:
Letter. James Craith (Lancaster) to John Rennie [Lancaster]. 7 Aug. 1795.
Docketed "Craith's engagement."

30. Letter. John Rennie (Bath) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 30 Sep. 1795.
Docketed "Answered 7 Oct. 1795."
31. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 14 Oct. 1795.

1796

1. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt Jr. (Soho). 1 Jan. 1796.
Docketed "A partner for a paper mill."
2. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 21 Jan. 1796.
Docketed "J. Price's expenses to Crinan."
3. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 23 Jan. 1796.
Docketed "Leny Smith's springs."
4. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 20 Feb. 1796.
Docketed "Sir John Eamer's intention of purchasing Johnson & Gould's engine."
- 5a. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 24 Mar. 1796.
Enclosing (b) and (c) below.
- b. Printed advertising card. Simpkins' Improved Patent Fire Engines, made & sold in Oxford St., London.
- c. Printed sheet. Samuel Phillips, Engine Maker to His Majesty's Honourable Board of Ordnance, St. George's Road, Blackfriars Bridge, London.
Sent by Rennie to Boulton & Watt, 24 Mar. 1796.
6. Letter. John Rennie (Newbury) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 28 Mar. 1796.
Docketed "About Kennet & Avon engine."
7. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 8 Apr. 1796.
Docketed "Prices of engines wanted."
8. Letter. John Rennie (Hungerford) to James Watt Jr. (Soho). 15 May 1796.
Docketed "Kennet & Avon."
9. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 31 Jul. 1796.
Docketed "Crinan Canal account."
10. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 12 Oct. 1796.
Docketed "Sir John Eamer wants his engine. Albion Mills to be purchased by City Committee. Sadleir's infringement."
11. Letter. John Rennie (Hungerford) to James Watt Jr. (Soho). 20 Oct. 1796.
Docketed "Albion Mill. Sadleir's piracy. Sir John Eamer. State of the Kennet & Avon Canal engine and complaints of Brown's behaviour."
12. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 10 Nov. 1796.
*The outside of the letter is addressed to James Watt Jr.
Docketed "Brown's receipts from the Kennet & Avon Canal Co. About Shaw's application. Lingard wants a 30 horse engine."*
13. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 11 Nov. 1796.
Docketed "Messrs. Barclay & Perkins' boiler."

14. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 14 Nov. 1796.
On the same sheet:
Sketch. Lingard & Co.'s engine house.
- 15a. Letter. John Rennie [London] to James Watt Jr. (13 London St.). 23 Nov. 1796.
Enclosing (b) below.
Docketed "Enclosing letter from Prof. Robison."
- b. Letter. John Robison (Edinburgh) to John Rennie (Stamford St., Blackfriars Rd., London). 20 Nov. 1796.
16. Letter. John Rennie (Hungerford) to James Watt Jr. (13 London St.). 26 Nov. 1796.
Docketed "Meeting of Professors at Hungerford on the 6 Dec."

1797

1. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 7 Jan. 1797.
Docketed "Kennet & Avon buckets."
2. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 23 Feb. 1797.
Docketed "Wants the drawings of Sir John Eamer's engine. Wishes the engine itself to be immediately forwarded."
3. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 10 Mar. 1797.
Docketed "Wanted a 30 horse engine for Amhurst & Slater. An alteration to be made in the length of Sir John Eamer's shafts."
4. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 27 Mar. 1797.
Docketed "Amhurst & Slater's engine – their provision. Sir John Eamer's rotative shaft."
5. Letter. John Rennie (Hungerford) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 8 Apr. 1797.
Docketed "Sir John Eamer's rotative shaft. Kennet & Avon buckets. Diameter of Sir John Eamer's cylinder. Bishop's engine, Maidstone, set to work."
6. Letter. John Rennie (Tavistock) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 21 Apr. 1797.
On the same sheet:
Letter. John Rennie to John Southern. 21 Apr. 1797.
Docketed "Sir John Eamer's rotative shaft. Kennet & Avon Canal."
7. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 29 Jun. 1797.
Docketed "Eight horse engine for Mr. Mead."
8. Letter. John Rennie (Hungerford) to M. R. Boulton (Soho). 3 Jul. 1797.
Docketed "Mead's engine – particulars of his order. Meux's engine – mill work equally in fault with the engine."
9. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 11 Jul. 1797.
Docketed "Wanting estimates of a 12 and 15 horse engine."
10. Letter. John Rennie (London) to M. R. Boulton (Soho). 29 Jul. 1797.
Docketed "Engine for Messrs. Wilkinson Baker & Co. and their proposals for payment. Mr. Maud's engine. Project of Fire Office."
- 11a. Letter. John Rennie (London) to M. R. Boulton (Soho). 4 Aug. 1797.
Kept with (b) below.
Docketed "Wilkinson Baker & Co. – sketch [within the text]."
- b. Memorandum. Considerations re. well for Wilkinson Baker & Co.

12. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to James Watt (Heathfield). 19 Aug. 1797.
Docketed "Queries on Rowland & Pickering's lock machine."
13. Letter. John Rennie (Edinburgh) to James Watt Jr. (Soho). 10 Sep. 1797.
Re-directed to Watt Jr. at Dr. Beddoes', Mall, Clifton.
Docketed "Wilkinson Fisher & Co.'s engine house. Kennet & Avon debt. Default in account of the Treasurer."
14. Letter. John Rennie (Leeds) to M. R. Boulton (Soho). 19 Oct. 1797.
Docketed "Phoenix Fire Office want an engine. Will want an engine for draining Aberdeen Harbour."
15. Letter. John Rennie (London) to M. R. Boulton (Soho). 8 Nov. 1797.
Docketed "Sunderland engine. Murray's encroachments. Wilkinson & Fisher's engine wanted."
16. Letter. John Rennie (Hungerford) to M. R. Boulton (Soho). 29 Nov. 1797.
Docketed "Wants drawings of a sugar mill and ditto of Kennet & Avon boat engine. Offer of Mr. Murdock to erect it."

1786.

1. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (care of James Watt, Birmingham). 9 Nov. 1786.
2. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (care of James Watt, Birmingham). 13 Nov. 1786.
3. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 20 Nov. 1786.
4. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 2 Dec. 1786.
5. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 12 Dec. 1786.
6. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 21 Dec. 1786.

1787.

7. Letter. John Rennie (Edinburgh) to John Southern (Birmingham). 3 Jan. 1787.
Mis-dated by Rennie as 1786.
8. Letter. John Rennie (Kennet Pans) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 9 Jan. 1787.
Mis-dated by Rennie as 1786.
9. Letter. John Rennie (Phantassie) to John Southern (at the New Hall Warehouse, Birmingham). 26 Jan. 1787.
10. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 12 Mar. 1787.
11. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Birmingham). 9 Apr. 1787.
Docketed by John Southern.

12. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 17 May 1787.
13. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 23 May 1787.
14. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt [Birmingham]. 26 Nov. 1787.
Docketed by John Southern.
15. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (New Hall, Birmingham). 21 Dec. 1787.

1788.

16. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Birmingham). 4 Jun. 1788.
Docketed by John Southern.
17. Letter. John Rennie (New Surrey St., London) to John Southern (Mr. Watt's, Harper's Hill). 15 Jul. 1788.
18. Letter. John Rennie (Bishop Stortford) to James Watt (Birmingham). 15 Oct. 1788.
Docketed by John Southern. On the same sheet:
Sketch. Plan of Cole Morgan Lewin & Co.'s mill.
19. Letter. John Rennie (Bishop Stortford) to John Southern (James Watt's, Birmingham). 22 Oct. 1788.

1789.

20. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Birmingham). 9 Aug. 1789.
Docketed by John Southern.
21. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (James Watt's, Birmingham). 12 Sep. 1789.
Docketed "Dunkin & Stibbs. Mr. Shepherd."
22. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 15 Sep. 1789.
Docketed "Dunkin & Stibbs."
23. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 14 Nov. 1789.
Docketed "Dunkin & Stibbs."
24. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Birmingham). 17 Nov. 1789.
Docketed by John Southern. The sheet has been used for sketches of engine parts.
On the same sheet:
Sketch. Arrangement of Mr. Wilson's engine and shingling hammer.
Docketed "Wilson."
25. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Birmingham). 21 Nov. 1789.
Docketed by John Southern.
Docketed "Wilson."
26. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 24 Nov. 1789.
Docketed "Wilson. Gardner & Co."
27. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 26 Nov. 1789.
Docketed "Wilson Esq."

28. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Birmingham). 18 Dec. 1789.
Docketed by John Southern. On the same sheet:
Sketch. Plan of Mr. Paty's mill and engine house.
Docketed "Paty."

29. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt [Birmingham]. 26 Dec. 1789.
Docketed by John Southern.
Docketed "Paty."

1790.

30. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 16 Jan. 1790.
Docketed "Paty."

31. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt [Soho]. 18 Dec. 1790.
Docketed by John Southern.
Docketed "Gosse & Benwell."

32. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 20 Dec. 1790.
Docketed "BWS."

1791.

33. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 5 Jan. 1796.
Mis-dated by Rennie as 1796.
Docketed "Boulton & Co."

34. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Birmingham]. 8 Mar. 1791.
Docketed "Mr. Paty's account."

35. Letter. John Rennie (London) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 5 May 1791.
Docketed "Order for Goodwin Platt & Goodwin."

36. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 14 May 1791.
Docketed by John Southern.
Docketed "Oil and snuff mills etc."

1792.

37. Letter. Charles Taylor (London) to William Forman (Soho). 17 Aug. 1792.
Docketed by John Southern.
Marked "Replied 20 Aug." Docketed "Rennie. Glenny."

38. Letter. John Rennie (New Surrey St., London) to John Southern [Soho]. 29 Aug. 1792.
Marked "Replied 31 Aug. J. S."

39. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (Soho). 1 Sep. 1792.
Mis-docketed by Southern as 21 Sep.

40. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (Soho). 5 Sep. 1792.

41. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 6 Sep. 1792.
Docketed "Glenny's man."

42. Letter. Meredith Jones for John Rennie (Surrey St., London) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 6 Sep. 1792.
Docketed "Mr. Jones."
43. Letter. Charles Taylor (London) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 27 Sep. 1792.
Docketed "Rennie 27 Sep. '92. Charles Taylor."
44. Letter. Meredith Jones for John Rennie (Surrey St., London) to Boulton & Watt [Soho]. 2 Oct. 1792.
Docketed "Mr. Jones."
45. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to Boulton & Watt (Soho). 15 Oct. 1792.
Marked "Replied 17 Oct. Mr. W."
46. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 23 Nov. 1792.
Docketed by John Southern.
47. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt [Soho]. 24 Nov. 1792.
Docketed by John Southern.
48. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 17 Dec. 1792.
On the same sheet:
Sketch. Shaft of Mr. Goodwyn's chipping mill.
Docketed "Log wood cutting."
49. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 18 Dec. 1792.
On the same sheet:
Sketch. Mr. Glenny's shaft.
Docketed "Glenny shaft."
50. Letter. John Rennie (Lancaster) to John Southern [Soho]. 30 Dec. 1792.
Docketed "Glenny."
- 1793.**
51. Letter. John Rennie (London) to William Forman [Soho]. 17 Jan. 1793.
Docketed by John Southern.
Marked "Replied." Docketed "Wormald Fountain & Gott."
52. Letter. John Rennie (London) to William Forman (Soho). 22 Jan. 1793.
Docketed by John Southern. On the same sheet:
Letter. James Watt [London] to William Forman. 23 Jan. 1793.
Docketed "Brandram. Replied 25 Jan."
53. Letter. John Rennie (New Surrey St., London) to John Southern [Soho]. 25 Jan. 1793.
54. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 28 Jan. 1793.
Marked on the back "Little engine."
55. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern (Soho). 6 Feb. 1793.
Docketed "Replied 8 Feb."
56. Letter. John Rennie (Parliament St., London) to James Watt (Soho). 18 Feb. 1793.
Passed to Southern by Watt, and docketed by Southern.
Docketed "Glenny."
57. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 21 Mar. 1793.

58. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 13 Apr. 1793.
Docketed "Lancaster."
59. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 29 May 1793.
Docketed "Lancaster."
60. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 4 Jun. 1793.
61. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 15 Jul. 1793.
Docketed by John Southern.
Not dated – date taken from the postmark.
62. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 16 Jul. 1793.
Passed to Southern by Watt, and docketed by Southern.
Marked "Replied 18 Jul." Docketed "Gosse & Benwell."
63. Letter. John Rennie (London) to John Southern [Soho]. 20 Jul. 1793.
Docketed "Answered 23 Jul. Lancaster Canal."
64. Letter. John Rennie (London) to James Watt (Soho). 25 Dec. 1793.
Passed to Southern by Watt, and docketed by Southern.
The sheet has been used by Watt for calculations. On the same sheet:
Sketch. Plan of Mr. Tate's premises.
65. Letter. John Rennie (Stamford St., London) to James Watt (Soho). 28 Dec. 1793.
Docketed by John Southern.