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Appendix 2


1r.

[The document begins with a copy of the commission’s writ. This took the form of a dedimus potestatem – a commission that delegated royal authority to private individuals and allowed them to take and record deponents’ evidence. This was a right that normally belonged exclusively to the Exchequer barons in their capacity as judges. The writ is in Latin. It is dated 12th February 1583. It names Sir William Winter, Sir Thomas Throckmorton, Richard Pate, Thomas Hannam, Robert Smyth and Richard Byrde as the six appointed commissioners for this task, makes reference to the attached interrogatories and orders them to return their findings under their seals into the Exchequer. The writ also states that the commission was due to be returned to the Exchequer three weeks after Easter which fell on the 10th April 1583, meaning that the commission was due to be returned by 30th April 1583.]

1v.

[A second brief Latin phrase on the reverse of the commission’s writ notes the completion of the commission and the fact that the interrogatories and depositions are to be returned to the Exchequer. The three commissioners that were present at this commission then signed after this statement]
Rycharde Pates
Robert Smythes
Richard Byrde

2r.

1 The National Archives: Public Record Office, UK [TNA:PRO], E134/25Eliz/East14. The following conventions were employed when transcribing this document: the line spacing, spelling, capitalization, erasures, insertions, underlining and punctuation follow the manuscript; ‘u’ and ‘v’ have been rendered according to the document rather than to modern usage. Square brackets indicate editorial additions. Reconstructions of suspensions are in italics and all suspensions have been extended – for example ‘city of Glouc’ has been extended to ‘city of Gloucester’. The only exception to this is when the name of a county has been contracted – so ‘county of Glouc’ remains as ‘county of Glouc’.

2 I would like to thank Margaret Condon for her help and advice regarding this Latin writ.
Interrogatories to be ministred on the parte and bahalfe of the mayor and [commonality]\(^3\) of the Cytie of Bristoll Complaynat\(e\)s against the mayor and [burgesses of the] Cytie of Glocester defendeth.

1. **Inprinis** doe you knowe the Citie of Bristowe, yf yea, then by and uppon what trade hath the said Citie & Citizens allways byn ____\(^4\) contynue & mainteyned

2. **Item** doe you knowe the River of Severne & the Creekes and Pilles betwene kingrode & the bridge of Glouc\(e\)ster /

3. **Item** doe you knowe that circuyte of water called the Welshe roade yea or noe /

4. **Item** whether doe you knowe the Creekes and Pilles called Barckley\(^5\) Newman\(^6\) Gatcombe and Gloucester yea or noe /yf yea then whether have they tyme out of mynde\(^7\) untill of late belonged to the porte & Custome house of Bristowe\(^8\) yea or noe And howe knowe ye the same and what writinges or recordes have you seene proving the same soo to belonge to the said Custome house port of Bristow

5. **Item** Whether may a Shippe of convenient Burden fleete, come to, and safely ride & abide, in the said Creekes called Barckley Newman Gatcombe & Glocester as in a place of places meete & sufficient to be portes of ladinge & Dischardginge & for the mayntenaunce & contynuall keepinge of Shippes yea or noe / yf yea then of what burden must the Shippes be that soo can contynue & be there & Whether may they come & goe, passe & repasse at all tydes & tymes yf w\(i\)nde & weather serve yea or noe yf not then at what tydes & tymes may they safely fleete, to and froe with sufficient for all tempestes & weather \(^{9}\)

6. **Item** what serviceable shippes & of what burden may at all tymes in safety fleete & come, toe, and from the said Creeke called Gatcombe & Whether may Shippes of all man\(n\)er of convenient burden safely come & goe unto that Creeke & there ride

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\(^3\) The manuscript has deteriorated and obscured the remaining words of these two lines – thus the transcriber’s own suggestions have been indicated in square brackets.

\(^4\) The manuscript has deteriorated and obscured this word.

\(^5\) ‘Barckley’: Berkeley.

\(^6\) ‘Newman’: Newnham.

\(^7\) ‘tyme out of mynde’: time out of mind, ie. always.

\(^8\) This interrogatory essentially asks the deponents’ opinion as to whether the named creeks of the River Severn already belonged to Bristol before Gloucester was turned into a separate authority.

\(^9\) This interrogatory asks the deponents to determine the specific capabilities of the River Severn’s creeks including Gloucester’s main outport – Gatcombe, to hold large ships in all weathers, at all tides and at all times of the year.
& abide as in a safe sufficient porte to receyve & maynteyne shippes of convenient burden for service or Defensible for the
trade of merchandize yf not at all tymes, then at what tydes or tymes may shippes of convenient burden come & goe
in saftey to the said Creeke & ride & abide there & howe many Shippes may ride and abide there at one tyme & of what burden
must the Shippes be that shall come & goe at a quarter Spring tyde, and of what burden at halfe a spring tyde & in your
judgment or opinion whether is that or the other three Creekes or all they meete to be a porte or portes of ladinge & discharging
of shippes to & froe the sea yea or noe /

7. **Item** what towne or populus village is there nere vnto that Creeke called Gatcombe that reasonably may haue intelligence or make
restraynte yf her majestie should be deseyved\(^{10}\) in Discharging hidinge or transparssinge of victuales & prohibited wares\(^{11}\) /

8. **Item** what be the Comodities of merchandize that the Citizens of Gloucester & the people of the countrye thereaboutes do vent
& transporte from thence & wherewith or with what trade be their smale Barkes or boates maynteyned or sent to sea ~~~

9. **Item** Whether doe you thinck or are perswaded (all things considered) that it will stand with or be agaynst the common
wealth of that countrye that the said Creekes should be a porte or portes or a place of ladinge & discharginge yea or noe /

10. **Item** Whether Doe you thinck or by reason vnderstande that yf there be a Custome howse allowed & kept at Gloucester & the said
Creekes contynued to be portes or places of ladinge & discharginge will the same be a spoyle of grayne & victuelles & prohibited wares
and so rayse a derth of the same aswell in the countries vppon Severne ass in the Citie of Bristowe yea or noe \(^{12}\)

11. **Item** whether doe you understande or thinck that yf the said Custome howse at Gloucester & the said Creekes shall contynue
to be portes of ladinge & discharginge will the same be a hinderance unto the trade of the Citie of Bristowe And a Decaye
& Dyminishinge of the serviceable shippinge and skilfull mariners of the same Citie yea or noe /

12. **Item** What distannce of place is there by water betwene kingrode & the said Creeke called Gatcombe & what distannce

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\(^{10}\) This interrogatory refers to the Crown’s attempts to curtail smuggling through encouraging members of the public to inform the authorities of the offending merchants’ actions. To incentivise informers, the Crown offered half of the proceeds to any informer who successfully seized illicit goods and oversaw a successful prosecution. If the Bristol corporation could provide evidence (in the form of depositions) that Gatcombe was very scarcely populated, the potential for informations being lade against any smuggling activities that occurred in Gatcombe, would logically be smaller. For more detail regarding this crown policy, see Jones, *Inside the Illicit Economy*, 59-60.

\(^{11}\) ‘prohibited wares’ – commodities that were routinely subject to export prohibitions – for example beer, leather and butter.

\(^{12}\) This interrogatory asked deponents to state whether they believed that the creation of the port of Gloucester facilitated the smuggling of illicit goods and whether this illicit activity took place on such a large scale that there might be a shortage of such goods if Gloucester’s head-port status was not revoked.
betwene Gatcombe & Gloucester \\n
13. **Item** what doe you thinck or what is your opinion will her majestie be better served yf the said Creekes uppon Severne now under the Serech survey & controllment of the officers of the porte of Bristowe as heretofore they haue byn dwelling & lyenge betwene that parte Severne & the sea or all by the officers of the Custome howse of Gloucester being and Dwellinge so farre behinde them inward toward yt land.\(^13\)

14. **Item** whether hath the said Citie of Bristowe byn allwayes chyefly or greatly served & victualled with corne grayne butter chese & other necessary provision by and from the said Creekes uppon Severne of old tyme belonging to the said Citie yea or noe yf yea then whether hath the said Citie of Bristowe byn aswell served with corne & grayne & other victualles since the erecting of the custome howse at Gloucester as before yea or noe yf not then what alteracion doe you finde or knowe therein And whether is there more Dearth or scarsitie of corne & grayne then there was before yea or noe yf yea then what knowe ye or thinck you to be the cause or reason thereof.

15. **Item** what quantitie of corne & grayne have you knowne or hard to be transported from Gloucester & Gatcombe over & beyond the seas of late yeres more then here to fore hath byn & What is the reason or cause of such transporting to your knowledge or as you thinck.

16. **Item** yf corne grayne & other victualles come to Bristowe in Trowes as plentifully as it was wonte May her majestie be as good cheape as redely and well served for the provision of Ireland at Bristowe key as at Gloucester & will there be lost or saved to her majestie therein.\(^14\)

17. **Item** wheather were it better or more convenient that the trade to Ireland with corne and grayne were used by the smallest sorte of shippes of Bristowe or by the Barkes of Gloucester & of other Creekes vppon Severne & what matter of knowledge or reason yeelde you therein.

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\(^{13}\) The wording of this interrogatory is quite confusing. The corresponding depositions suggest that it is simply asking deponents to express their opinions as to whether the creeks such as Gatcombe and Newnham that were transferred to the port of Gloucester’s jurisdiction when it became a head port in 1580, should have been returned to the jurisdiction of the head port at Bristol in order to benefit the Crown’s collection of customs duties. The wording of the interrogatory is strongly suggestive in terms of how the Bristol corporation expected deponents to answer, in that the interrogatory identifies Gloucester’s location to be inconveniently inland compared to Bristol which is allegedly ideally placed ‘betwene that parte [of the River] Severne & the sea’.

\(^{14}\) The interrogatory asks the deponent whether it is more cost efficient for the crown to ship grain to troops in Ireland from Gloucester or from Bristol.
Interrogatories to be ministred unto Bargemen & Trowmen uppon the 3r.

depositions taken at Barkeley in the countie of Glocester the xijth & xijth Dayes of Aprill in the xxvth yere of her majesty’s raigne before Richard Pate esquire Roberte Smythes and Richarde Byrde sent by vertue of her majesty’s Commission beringe date the xijth daye of Februarie in the yere aforesaid to them and others out of her heignes honorable Courte of Exchequer directed for thexamininge of wytnesses aswell on the part and behalfe of the mayor and Comunaltie of the Cytie of Brystoll complainantes as allso on the part and bahalfe of the mayor and burgesses of the Cyttie of Glocester defendantes.

Ex parte quer.

[14] John Kydwelleter alias keyison of the Cytie of Brystoll bere brewer of the aige of fortie yeres and upwarde sworen and examined to the fowertenth Interrogatory he sayeth that the Cytie of Brystoll hath bin allwayes for his tyme beinge xx xth yeres of his knowledge and as he hath harde before tyme all so greatlie or cheifelie provided and victualed with Corne grayne butter Chese by and from the Creekes up severne And farther sayeth that they have not of late viz these iiiij or fyve yeres ben

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15 This seems to be the start of a new set of interrogatories. The clean cut mark under this line and the fact that this piece of parchment is significantly smaller than all the other pieces in this collection suggests that this extra set of interrogatories was deliberately removed. This was presumably done before the commission took place because there are no depositions that relate to this missing set of interrogatories.

16 ‘xijth & xijth Dayes of Aprill in the xxvth yere of her majesty’s raigne’ – the 12th and 13th April, 1583.

17 It would appear that only these three named commissioners sat on the commission. William Winter, Thomas Throckmorton and Thomas Hannam were also named as commissioners although remained absent from the proceedings.

18 This second commission was issued on the 12th February 1583 – within a week of the evidence gathered by the first commission being delivered to the Exchequer by Robert Smythe.

19 ‘ex parte quer’: on one side only.

20 ‘alias’: otherwise known as.

21 ‘bere brewer’: beer brewer.
soe well victualled and served with the lyke victualls as they have bin before especiall
e speciallie of Corne and grayne. For he sayeth that nowe of late tyme they of
Bristoll can provyde them selves of Corne as good cheape in the barraine soyles
aboute Bristoll as in Glocester. And other cause or reason how of he cannot yealde but that
Corne is more transported from Glocester then before but into what place or cuntries
or by what persons the same is transported this examinant doth not knowe.
otherwise he thinketh that there woulde come as great store of corne to bristoll as
before tyme there hath.

[16] To the xvi Interrogatory he sayeth that yf Corne and grayne came to Brystoll
keye as it was wonted to doe her majestie might be better and more redelie and
necessarilie served of Corne for her provision of Irelande there then to travaile
for the same to glocester or Tewexburie and that it woulde be lesse hurte to the
markett and that there woulde be therein a great deale of Charges saved to
her majestie.

[14] John Rothelles of the Cytie of Brystoll brewer of the aige of fortie yeres or
thereabouts sworn and examined to the xiii Interrogatory he sayeth that the said Cyttie
of Brystoll hath bin allwayes duringe his knowledge which hath bin these xvjtene yeres and hath harde that it hath bin before tyme allso Cheifelie victualled with
Corne and grayne from Glocester and other Creekes upp Seaverne And farther
sayeth that sythens the Custome howse was erected at Gloucester the cyttie of Bristoll
hath not bin soe well served with grayne as before it was he farther sayeth that
they finde an alteracion, for that the Cockettes made at Brystoll which they woulde have
sente by the trowe men for mault as they have vsed before tyme to doe woulde
not be allowed at Glocester as the trowe men have sayed.

22 'viz': namely (in this context).
23 'barraine': barren.
24 The implication here is that so much grain had been exported from Gloucester that the price of grain in Gloucester has risen to be as high as it was in Bristol.
25 'wonted': accustomed.
26 'xvjtene': sixteen.
27 'Cockettes': cockets. In this context, a cocket was a customs certificate to allow grain (a prohibited ware) to be sent along the coast from one location to another.
To the xvijth Interrogatory he sayeth that yf corne and maulte did come to
Brystoll as plentefullie as it hath vsed before tyme to do her majestie might be
better Cheape and more necessarilie served of Corne for her provision of Irelande
at Bristoll then to travaile for the same to Glocesteror Tewexbury and
lesse woulde it hurt the markettes in both places.

John Wylkes of the Cytie of Bristoll Baker of the aige of fyftie yeres or
theraboutes sworen and examined to the xiiijth Interrogatory he sayeth that the Cytie
of Brystoll hath bin Cheifelie and greatlie these xxxtie yeres of his knowledge
and before tyme as he hath harde saye victualled and stored with Corne and
grayne from Gloucester and Tewexburie and other places thereaboutes and sayeth
that sythens the erectinge of the Custome howse at Glocester the Cytie
of Bristoll hath not bin soe well served with Corne from thence as before it
hath bin and sayeth that the bakers of Bristoll have not had in the space of
twoe yeres last past before the purchasinge of this Comission aboue twoe
quarters of wheat from Glocester or aboue glocester which he thincketh to be trew
by that he beinge master of the Companie of Bakers in Bristoll hath enquired thereof
of his whole Companie and they have answered him in such seae and he thincketh
the reason of the not comminge of Corne to Bristoll nowe as he it hath donne
to be that they of Glocester doe tranceport it and vent it of elsewhere beyonde
the seaes more nowe then before.

To the xvijth Interrogatory he saieth as John Rothell hath sayed.

Henrie Paynter of Bristoll Baker of the aige of lxxiij yeres or thereaboutes
sworen and examined to the xiiijth Interrogatory he sayeth that he hath knowen the
Cytie of Bristoll to have bin these Ctie yeres and more, greatlie and

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28 The deponent is claiming that cockets issued to Bristol trowmen by the Bristol customs officials were not being accepted by the customs officials at Gloucester. This echoes claims previously made by the Bristol Corporation – see Bristol replication in Jones (ed.), ‘Bristol’s petition, 1582’, fol. 86v.
29 ‘Tewexburie’: Tewkesbury.
30 ‘twoe quarters of wheat’ – a quarter of wheat weighed approximately 480lbs, so two quarters of wheat equated to 960lbs.
cheifelie maynteyned with Corne and grayne for their provision from Glocester and Tewexburie and other Creekes upp Seaverne for their provision and that of late yeres it hath not bin soe well served with Corne as it vsed to be before, for they have not had soe much corne from thence to Bristoll these three yeres last past as they have had before in one springe\(^\text{31}\), and one reason thereof is for that they have not their Cockettes at some at Bristoll as they have had and another is that he thincketh it to be carried awaye in smalle botes beyonde the seae.

[16] To the xvj\(^\text{th}\) Interrogatory he sayeth as John Rothell hath sayed.

[1] John Harrice of the Cyttie of Bristoll marchante of the aige of xlvij yeres or thereaboutes sworen and examined. To the first Interrogatory he sayeth that he knoweth well the cyttie of bristoll and that the same doth Cheifelie depende vppon the trade of Marchandize

[2,3,4] To the seconde thirde and fowerth he sayeth he knoweth the ryver of Seaverne and the ciquite of water called the Welshe roade and the pills and Creekes betwene kingerode and Glocester bridge and the Creekes called Barkeley Newnemah Gatcombe and Glocester and sayeth that he hath of his owne knowledge known the said Creekes to belonge to the porte of Brystoll by the use thereof and by reason of Conference before this tyme thereof had betwene dyvers substanciall olde men of the Cyttie of Bristoll he hath harde that they have allwayes soe belonged and hath seen dyvers Co Cockettes of anncient date provinge the same and he hath also seen a decree out of thexcheaquer provinge the same and said creekes of ancient tyme to belonge to the port of Bristoll for the certeynetie whereof he refereth him selfe to the decree.\(^\text{32}\)

\(^{31}\) ‘spring’ – it is not entirely clear whether the deponent is reffering to one spring season or one spring tide.

\(^{32}\) John Harrice is not the only deponent to refer to an Exchequer decree that apparently proved the Bristol’s ownership of the creeks in question – for example Thomas Warren, a Bristol merchant, also referred to this decree. It seems likely that the Bristol Corporation would have needed to provide a licence of mortmain in order to prove that the creeks belonged to Bristol – a licence of mortmain being a document that proved the ownership of real estate by a corporation or legal institution and the right to sell or transfer this real estate in perpetuity. The Bristol Mayor’s Audit Books of the period show that the Bristol mayor searched for these documents in vain in May 1584, presumably in an attempt to prove that the establishment of the head-port of Gloucester and the resultant loss of Bristol’s creeks was illegal. BRO, ‘The Bristol Mayor’s Audit Books’, F/Au/1/12, 246.
To the fvyeth Interrogatory he sayeth that as he hath harde saye shippes of Conveniente burthen and fytt for Seaverne service and fytt for the trade of Marchandize cannot come to any of the said Creekes without greate danger neither be kept and maynteyned there without the lyke danger, and farther sayeth that of late there was made prooфе thereof for one Roberte Townesende of Barkeley woulde have had a barke of lyvĕ ironnes laden with salt to bin brought and discharged at Barkeley and offered large monie to the pylottes of Seaverne beinge his neight bores for pilottage to bringe the said shipp with her ladinge from kingerode to Barkeley but coulde gett none which woulde undertake the same not withstanding his extraordinarie offer And farther sayeth that the Cheife cause of the greate dangers of Seaverne is that the sande in Seaverne and the Channell there doe soo alter and change with raginge tydes tempestes that a man cannot bringe a barke through the same twyse one waye yf a raginge tyde of tempest fall out betwene. and farther sayeth that him selfe hath bin in barkies and botes on Seaverne when and where the same alteracion hath fallen out and bin found twyse in one quarter of a yere and therefore thincketh that the places mentioned in the said Interrogatory are not meet to be appoynted and used as portes or a port of ladinge and discharginge of shipps.

To the ixth and xth Interrogatory he sayeth that he thincketh that yf the said creekes be contynewed portes of ladinge and disacharginge belonginge to the custome howse of Glocester the same wilbe preuidiall to the common wealthe and onlie beneficiall to a fewe pryvate persons that have corne and trade therein And sayeth that he hath harde great mislykinge and Complayntes of the Burgesses and Inhabitantes of Glocester of the erectinge and Contynewing of the Custome howse and port there and that the voyce of the whole Cuntrie about Glocester especiallie of the Common people is that yf the Custome howse and port of Glocester be contynewed it wilbe the vter spoyle of the whole cuntrie concerninge corne and grayne. And that they of bristoll doe alreadie feele the smarte of

33 It is difficult to verify this anecdote using the customs accounts because the deponent does not state the name of the ship or the date that Townesende is purported to have attempted to unlade at Berkeley.
lacke of Corne in bristoll by the alreracion thereof sythens therectinge of the said Custome howse and farther sayeth that he hath knowne before the erefctinge of the said custome howse at Glocester Corne and grayne to have come to Bristoll soe plentifullie by troes from upp Seaverne that the same wass commonlie soule by the Bellman through out the Cyttie whereas nowe they are enforced to provyde them selves of Corne on horse backes fortie miles into the lande warde and oppresse and rayse the price of Corne in the markettes farr about them.

[11] To the xi\(^{th}\) Interrogatory he sayeth that yf the said Custome howse at Glocester and the said Creekes shall contynewe portes of ladinge and discharginge the same wilbe a hinderance vnto the trade of Marchandize in Bristoll and a decaye and deminishinge of the serviceable shippinge and skyllfull marrners of the same cyttie And the reason whie he soe thincketh is that the little barkes of Glocester buyinge their forreyne marchandise with the sale of their come and grayne maye afforde the same better cheape then the marchantes of Bristoll with theire ordinarie commodities can doe and soe doth hinder them in trade and by consequence decaye and demynishe there shippinge.

[13] To the xii\(^{th}\) Interrogatory he sayeth that he thincketh her majestie shoulde be better served yf the Creekes of Seaverne were vnder the searche surveye and controlement of the officers of Bristoll as heretofore they have bin then nowe she is because the officers of Brystoll dwell and lye in awaye betwene them and the sea and the officers of Glocester dwell uppwarde towards the lande behinde the trade, And farther yealdeth for reason that the

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34 The deponent claims that the ‘Common people’ of Gloucester were disadvantaged by and subsequently resented the establishment of a customs house at Gloucester. There is no surviving evidence to prove this statement and it seems unlikely that John Harrice – a merchant ‘of the Cyttie of Bristoll’ had conducted extensive research into the public opinion of Gloucester inhabitants at the time. However, Harrice’s basic argument is that the port of Gloucester only benefitted a privileged minority and could potentially cause grain shortages and price increases that would disadvantage the majority of Gloucester citizens.

35 ‘smarte’: smart, sharp physical pain.

36 ‘Bellman’: another word for the town crier.

37 This deponent stipulates that the lack of grain being sent down the Severn was an inconvenience to Bristol rather than the cause of dearth and scarcity within the city as claimed by other deponents and the Bristol Corporation’s 1582 petition. This deposition also suggests that Bristol had already successfully sought grain from alternative sources and was not as reliant on Gloucester and its hinterland for grain supplies as was often claimed during this dispute.

38 The claim here is that Gloucester merchants who illicitly exported grain could gain an unfair competitive advantage over Bristol merchants that exported legal wares because grain prices were higher abroad and foreign merchants were likely to offer favourable prices to merchants that wished to illicitly export grain.
Communaltie of Bristol doe vrge forewardes the officers of Bristol to make restraynt of corne because it is a barryne soyle for corne thereaboutes and the Corne marchantes of Bristol Glocester with their indeavors doe as much sett forewarde of their partes the trancsportinge of Corne.

16) To the xvi\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatory he sayeth that yf Corne and grayne came to Bristol in troes as it was woonte to doe her majestie might be served for her provision of Corne for Irelande more readelie and better Cheape at Bristol then at Glocester and there by save the charges of gatheringe the same togetheer in the counties of gloc and Worcester and see her majestie maye save the more and yet give the better price for the Corne and the better wages to the troe men and carriers of the same.

1) Thomas Warren of the Cyttey of Bristol marchant of the aige of liiiij\textsuperscript{or} yeres or theraboutes sworen and examined to the first Interrogatory he sayeth that the Cyttie of Bristol doth Cheifelie depende upon the trade of marchandize, the makinge of Cullored clothes meet for Spayne portiugall and Frannce\textsuperscript{39} by the which there are and have bin mayneteyned thowsandes of people in Bristol and in the cuntrie there vnto adioyninge. and allso by the ventinge and utterringe of leadd whereby allso are mayneteyned great numbers of people in countie of Somerset by the mininge & makinge of ye same.\textsuperscript{40}

2,3,4) To the seconde thyrde & fowerth Interrogatories he sayeth that he hath knowen by all ye tyme of his remembrance that ye Creekes mentioned in the seconde Interrogatory have bin belonginge unto the port of Bristol and that he hath seen a decree out of thexchequer provinge thantyquitie\textsuperscript{41} of the usance thereof and hath harde that the said Creekes be no sufficient for serviceable shippes and shippes of conveniente burthen.

5,6) To the v\textsuperscript{th} and vj\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatories he sayeth that he doth not perfectelie knowe the sufficiencie and deapeth of the Ryver upp Severne but he sayeth he this deponent bought of one Richarde North of Westburie\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} ‘Cullored clothes meet for Spayne portiugall and Frannce’ – coloured woollen broadcloth exported overseas. In comparison, London focused on the export of undyed cloth to the Netherlands.

\textsuperscript{40} ‘ventinge and utterringe of leadd’ – a reference to the Mendips’ lead mines. Thomas Warren would have been particularly familiar with this industry, as the Bristol customs accounts show that he was one of the main exporters of lead during the 1570s, exporting 3042 stone of lead during just one year in 1575-6: Flavin and Jones (eds.), ‘Bristol Port Book, Overseas Outwards, 1575/6’.

\textsuperscript{41} ‘thantyquitie’: the antiquity.
neer Seaverne a barke of burthen betweene xx\textsuperscript{tie} & xxx\textsuperscript{tie} tonnes buylde at Westburie and after the sale thereof the said North much commended the goodnes of the said barke to this deponent where upon this deponent asked him yf the same barke were soe excellent good what was the reason whie he woulde sell her where unto he answerd that she drewe to much water to be used upon that Ryver of Seaverne.

[8] To the viij\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatory he sayeth that he knoweth noe other wistnesse marchandizes that they of Glocester have in and about their cuntrie to transeporte but onlie corne grayne fruite and syder\textsuperscript{43}.

[9,10] To the ix\textsuperscript{th} & x\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatory he sayeth that he doth thincke that yf the said custome howse at glocester shall contynewe and the said Creekes to be portes the same wilbe a private commoditie to some persons, that is to saye to them which have corne to sell and to such as are corne marchantes & doe transeport corne but a hinderance to the common sort of people thereaboutes.

[11] To the xi\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatory he sayeth that yf the said Custome howse at glocester and the other said Creekes doe contynewe to be portes it wilbe a hinderance to the trade of the Cyttye of Brystoll and soe consequentlie a decaye of the shippinge and marreners belonginge to the same cttie of Bristoll, & for reason thereof he sayeth as Iohn harrice hath sayed.

[13] To the xiiij\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatory he sayeth as Iohn harrice hath sayed and farther sayeth that it is now easie to meet a man then to ontake him.\textsuperscript{44}

[14] To the xiiiij\textsuperscript{th} Interrogatory he saith that before threctinge of the said custome howse at Glocester the cttie of Bristoll was cheifeley and greatelie mayneteyned with corne from glocester and the counties up Seaverne and for butter and chease from Wales but sythens threctinge of the said custome howse they have had little store of wheate of harde corne from thence to Bristoll whereas before such was the plentie thereof brought downe by the troe men that commonlie they did crie the price thereof by the bellman for their more spedie dispatchinge thereof\textsuperscript{45} and the cause whie it is not soe nowe allso he iudgeth to be the transeportinge of Corne from the said creekes now then before.

\textsuperscript{42}‘Westburie’: Westbury on Severn (in this context).
\textsuperscript{43}‘syder’: cider.
\textsuperscript{44}The deponent stipulates that it would be easier for the Bristol customs officials to intercept ships carrying illicit cargoes down the River Severn than it would be for the Gloucester customs officials to pursue such ships.
\textsuperscript{45}The deponent claims that much more grain used to be sent to Bristol from Gloucester and that this helped to keep the price of grain low in Bristol. The bellman would publicly announce these low prices in order to encourage Bristol citizens to purchase grain.
To the xvijth he sayeth as Iohn Harrice hath sayed and farther sayeth that he hath harde master Abingeton sometyme Cofferer to her majestie to saye aboute October was ij yeres at which tyme he came downe to bristoll to surveye the Purveyors accompte of Irelande, that the incident charges of gatheringe such provysion togeather from aboute that cuntie for the said service did amount to xxli of the hundred of neere there aboutes.

To the xvijth Interrogatory he sayeth that he thincketh it more conveniente that the smaler sort of shipps of Bristoll should rather have the trade of servinge of Irelande with corne and grayne at necessarie tymes, then the barkes of Glocester aswell becayse it maye be the more safelie and strongelie by them thither carried as allso becayse they doe attende at all other tymes on the great shipps of Bristoll when they are used in her majestie’s service.

Rychard pate ~ Roberte Smythes Richard Byrde

5r.

Interrogatoryes to be mynistréd unto witnes ses to be examined on the parte and behawllf of the mayor and burgesses of the ~ ~ Citty of Gloucester againste the maior and commynalty of the / Citty of Bristoll /

1 Inprimis of what adge be yowe / and are ye or have yowe bynne owner or master of any shipp barck, boate / or trowe uppon the Ryver of severne or a searcher Deputy or servannte to any suche and how longe tyme, or a ~ marryner / or officer in any shippes, barckes, or trowe / or haue ye used any trade of carryadge ventringe ladinge or passinge or comodyties wares or

46 ‘Cofferer to her majestie’ – the cofferer was the highest position obtainable through promotion in the royal household. The cofferer’s basic role was to receive, budget and distribute the funds of the royal household. However, cofferers were frequently expected to perform important state services beyond the scope of the royal household, such as victualling the navy and provisioning the army. The deponent’s reference to ‘master Abingeton’ and his visit to Bristol is one such example of this. John Abington was Elizabeth’s cofferer between September 1580 and March 1582 and visited Bristol in order to help prepare for an expedition to Ireland: A. Woodworth, ‘Purveyance for the Royal Household in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth’, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 35, Part I (1945), 9-11.

47 In other words, the deponent claims that gathering and transporting the grain from around Gloucestershire to one transhipment point accounted for 20% of the operational costs of supplying troops in Ireland with grain supplies from Gloucestershire.
marchandizes by the Ryver of seuerne to Bristol Deuonshire Cornewall wales Irelande or any partes beyonnde the seaes And howe longe tyme /

2 Item howe many villadges are betweene the City of Bristoll and the Roades and portes for shippes and barckes called Hungroade and kingroade And wheather any searcher or Deputy of suche be there remayninge or hath there Remayned and what be their names /

3 Item Doe yowe knowe and howe longe haue yowe knowne the portes townes and creekes of Bristol Hungroade kingroade Gatcombe Berckley newenham and Gloucester and the townes of Twexbury wigorn Bewdley Brydgnorth and ~ Shrewisbury and the distance betweene the creekes of Barckley Gatcombe ~ ~ newenham kingroade Hungroade and Bristoll one from other both by water & lande And doe yowe knowe that the bay of Gloucester and the creekes of Berckley Gatcombe and Newenham be apte and meete places for ladinge landinge & unladinge and dischardginge of wares commodties and marchandizes and ~ haue benne soe used owte of mane memory and Declare youre reasone therfore /

4 Item wheather there be any more or greate nomber of ladinge and unladinge places used upon the ryver of severne synce therrectinge of the custome howse in Gloucester then there weeere used before that tyme and wheather shippes and barckes of Bristoll or those that come to Bristoll with any merchanndizes Doe lade and unlade at Hungroade and kingroade And wheather there is not good pe harborouge for passinge upp the Ryver of severne upon the Forreste of Deane syde thoughghe they come not to kingroade /

5 Item what depth is the ryver of severne at Berckley and of what depth at gatcombe at the higheste of the springe tydes and of what depth at hawlf springe and haue

48 ‘Brydgnorth’: Bridgnorth, a town in Shropshire, approximately fifty miles north of Gloucester. It lies on the west bank of the River Severn.
49 ‘Forreste of Deane syde’ – the Forest of Dean is a geographic, historical and cultural region that lies to the west of the River Severn, approximately fifteen miles southwest-west of Gloucester. In the context of this interrogatory, the ‘Forest of Dean side’ refers to the west bank of the River Severn between the mouth of the River Wye and Gloucester.
yowe tryed the same / and howe highe the said water doth flowe at those springes &
what shippes and Barkes and of what burden may then and at other tymes
fleeete to, lye and reste at Berckley Gatcombe, and other places theraboutes and may be presearued50
there aswell as at Hungroade and show your resones for the same / and what boates barckes or trowes of burden may come to Berckley gatcombe
newenham and Gloucester from kingroade / and with what expedicion / And what barke
Barkes and shippes / and of what burden haue ye harde or knowen to come
or be browghte from any partes beyonnde the seaes to gatcombe Berckley
Newenham or Gloucester or to any of them laden with wares or merchanndizes /

6 Item wheather are the said creekes of Gatcombe and newnham good sufficient
places to stay and searche all shippes barckes boates and trowes passinge the
saide ryver of seuerne upwarde and Downwardes / and haue sufficient numbers
of Dwellinge howses / and people there / and searchers / or searchers Deputies to
serve her majesty in theire offices / and Declare your knowledge therein /

7 Item wheather the Cittie and porte of Gloucester / and creekes therunto belonginge
be frequented with trafique and merchanntes and merchanndizes / and into what places
beyonnde the seaes / haue yowe travelled / or knowen any barck of severne to haue gone
and with what burden and commodity / And wheather there haue benne any ~
greater number of boates trowes or barckes within vj yeeres laste paste then were in
other yeeres before uppon the said ryver of seuernce51 betweene kingroade and Gloucester /
And wheather there hath benne any greater trafique from Irelande to Gloucester &
the creekes therunto adjoyninge within that tyme then was used before / And ~
wheather the custome howse late erected in Gloucester uppon severne banck there
be commodious / & apte for her majestie's officers and seruice to be done there and hathe
storehowses of sufficient Roames52 / and places to buylde or make storehowses /

8 Item doe yowe knowe or haue harde wheather the merchanntes of Bristoll haue
not nowe as free and greate trade for all kyndes of marchandizes wares and

50 'presearued': preserved.
51 'seuernce': Severn.
52 'of sufficient Roames': with adequate storage space.
commodityes to all townes and places aboue and beneath Gloucester bridge as there hathe ben before the said grannte made of the custome howse in Gloucester / And doe yowe knowe or haue harde wheather nowe there be any lesse carryenge of mawlte and other grayne commodityes and wares from Twexbury and Gloucester for the relief of ~ Bristoll then in tymes paste / And wheather the said inhabitantes in Gloucester & Twexbury and other places nere adioyninge Doe not sufficiently searve them of Bristoll as they haue in tymes paste / or were used to Doe upon requeaste made to the officers and owner in that behawllf / And what quantityes of comodityes doe yowe knowe to haue ben transported from the Countye of Glouc and wigorn to Bristoll euery yeere since therrectinge of the ~ custome howse in Gloucester. /

9 Item what quantety of corne or grayne Doe yowe iudge to haue benne yeerly transported and landed in Cornwell, Devonshire and walles from Gloucester porte / And wheather the Cittie of Bristoll can furnishe and serue the countries of Cornwell, wales and Irelande with corne and graine / as good cheape as the townes of Gloucester and Twexbury and other places adioyning Doe searue them. /

10 Item Doe yowe knowe wheather the queenes majestie’s prouision of mawlte & wheate for Irelande may be prouided and furnished from the Citty of Gloucester & county of Glouc and wigorn as good cheepe and better cheape then it is, was or mighte be from Bristoll / if thre was noe ~ custome howse in Gloucester /

11 Item Doe yowe knowe howe many Cittizens of Gloucester Doe use, or late did used & exercise husbandry and grasinge53 / and Declare the names of those persone / and were they freehowlders of inheritannce or indenture howlders thereof / And wheather the trade of rooppers and Cloth are be not mouche Decayed in Gloucester within those twenty or thirty yeeres laste paste. /

12 Item Doe yowe knowe or can iudge that the small boates trowes and barckes uppon severne haue bredd or doe or can breede or increasse able and sufficient marryneres apte for soundry

53 This interrogatory related to claims made in Bristol’s 1582 petition that stated Gloucester ‘standeth upon grasinge and husbandrye’: Jones (ed.), ‘Bristol’s petition, 1582’, fol. 68r.
searuice by sea and lande / and fitt for greate shippes / And wheather her majesty in tymes of seruice by sea hath not ben prouided of good marryneres from the townes or places nere to & adioynge to the Ryver of Seuern and bredd in those small boates barckes or towres and howe often to your remembrannce / And Doe you knowe wheather the small boates or barckes uppon severne be or have ben ymployed to ber majestie’s seruice into Irelande.

Rychard pate ~ Robert Smythes

5v.

yea or noe And wheather syxe small boates of one hundred tonnes doe not breede as many or more fitt marryners for her majestie’s seruice then one shippe of one hundred tonnes doth.

13 Item Doe yowe knowe what stoare of syder and fruite by reasonable accompte / commonly every yeere transported in those barckes and boates for X Xj X X th County of Glouc into Cornewall Devonshire walles and Irelande-Bristoll And wheather greate quantities of herringe and fishe be not Retorned from all those places excepte Bristoll back agayne to serve the Countyes of Glouc wigoyn Shropshire warwicke and other places and countyes adioyninge / And Declare youre knowledge and Remembranc thereofe.

14 Item Doe yowe iudge that a greate parte of corne and grayne used to be transported to Bristoll Devonshire Cornewall and wales hath ben laden at the key of Gloucester and at Twexbury / And wheather that there hath ben any more carried of late yeeres from those townes or creekes belonginge to Gloucester porte then in tymes paste / excepte such Corne and other victuall as haue ben sente for her majestie’s seruice into Irelande from those places /

54 The lack of Richard Byrde’s signature at the bottom of this page was probably an oversight.
Item whether there be not mouche money and chardge save in all the Countryes and townes aboue Gloucester by having their cockettes at Gloucester / for the which they did before travell to their greate chardge to Bristoll / And wheather three partes of all cokettes the whole nomber beinge devided into fower partes entred in the custome howse of Gloucester be not grannted to suche persones as Dwell in Gloucester or neare aboue Gloucester bridge / And doe yowe knowe of what depthe is the Ryuer of seuerne at full springe tyde at hungroade / And what other thinges can yowe declare for proof that barckes and shippes of aboue threeskoare tonnes may be as saffelye browghte and Fleate from kingroade unto the pilles and creekes lyenge betweene the shutte and gatcombe / As from kingroade to Bristoll and may reste lye and be presearued in those places aswell as at ~ Hungroade. /

Rychard pate ~ Robert Smythes ~ Richard Byrde

6r.

deposicion of witneses sworenn and examyned taken at Barckley within the Countye of Glouc the xijth and xiiith Dayes of Aprill in the five and twentieth yeere of the Queenes majestie’s Raigne thatt nowe ys before Richarde Pate Esquire Richarde Birde and Roberte Smithes gentlemen / By vertue of her graces commission beringe Date the xiiith day of February in these yere afore saide to them & others owte of the highnes honorable Cowrte of Exchequer Dyrected for theexaminacion of witneses towchinge matter in ~ Controuersye in the same Courte Dependeinge betweene the maior and burgesses of the Cittie of Gloucester Defendannts againste the mayor & comunalty of the Citty of Bristoll Compt /

1

Edwarde Barston of Twexbury in the County of Glouc gentleman of thadge of thirty sixe yeeres or thereaboutes sworne and examyned to the
firste Interrogatory saieth that he hath benne owner of Parte of twoe boates in severne thone called the Flye boate\(^{55}\) / and thother the Fawlcon\(^{56}\) uppon the ryuer of severne / And is parte owner of a boate called the Peter in Bristoll.\(^{57}\) / And hath used the trade of merchandizes Duringe sixteene yeeres laste paste to all the places mentionned in that Interrogatory. / and allsoe into Frannce Spayne and Portiugale. /

2 To the seconde he saieth that there hath not benne any searcher in or Dwellinge or Remayninge in any place or villadge betweene Bristoll and kingroade duringe the tyme of his traveill by the said Ryver of severne to his knowledge. /

3,4, 5 To the thirde fowerth and fiveth Interrogatory he cannot Depose. /

6 To the sixte Interrogatory he saieth that he doth knowe that searchers Deputyes by the tyme of all his Remembrannce haue ben Reasident at Newenham / and haue attended there / and at Gatcombe at the commynge of all boates that way for the searche of the same / and doth vearily beleave or that there have ben noe boates passed bye that way unsearched to his knowledge /
And further saith that there are sufficient Dwellinge howses and people in ~ Gatcombe and Newenham for the stayenge and searchinge of all boates barckes and trowes or shippes that shall or may come upp and Downe that Ryver /

7 To the seventh he saieth that he knoweth noe merchanntes in Gloucester / But doth Remember that he himseallf and master Bawghan of Derehurst\(^{58}\) aboute twoe

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\(^{55}\) ‘the Flye boate’ – there is no record of a ship with this name in either the coastal or overseas customs accounts of Gloucester at this time. In more general terms, a fly boat was a small vessel used for transporting goods quickly around the coast. It is possible that Barston meant that he owned a fly boat rather than a vessel named ‘the Flye boate’.

\(^{56}\) ‘the Fawlcon’ – this is a reference to ‘The Falcon of Tewkesbury’, a thirty ton vessel that Barston is recorded to have frequently used for both coastal and overseas trade in the early 1580s. TNA:PRO, E190/1241/3: E190/1241/16.

\(^{57}\) ‘the Peter in Bristoll’ – this is a reference to ‘The Peter of Bristol’, a sixteen ton vessel that Barston is recorded to have used to import lemons, oranges and ‘train’ – otherwise known as cod-liver oil – from San Sebastian in Spain in 1583. ‘The account of imports from Spain, Portugal and the Islands’, in Vanes, Documents, 147-8.
yeeres paste did make entry at Gloucester of a barcke of thirty tonnes Called the Trinitie Bawghan
laden with wynes and Iron And further saith that he doth well knowe that the custome howse latly errected in Gloucester is veary commodyous & aptt for her majestie’s officers and searvice there to be done. / and hath boath howses and roames to make howses there /

8 To the eighte he saieth he doth not knowe / but he thinketh there is and hath ben asmouche Corne and grayne transported from Twexbury and Gloucester to Bristoll of late yeeres as there hath ben in tymes paste. / 80

9 To the nynth he saieth that he thincketh that Bristoll cannot furnishe the / Countryes of Cornewall wales and Irelande with corne and grayne soe well as the Countryes of Glouc and wigorn can and Doe /

10 To the tenth he saieth that as he thincketh the Queenes prouision for mawlt and Corne into Irelande can be better provided for in the Countye of Glouc and ~ wigorn then in Bristoll if officers Doe deale trewly in their searuice. /

11,12 To the eleauenth and twellth he saieth that the small boates and barckes uppon seuerne Doe, and can breede able and sufficient maryneres for greate shippes and that

58 ‘Derehurse’: Deerhurst, a small village near Tewkesbury.
59 Although this exact entry cannot be found in the port books, Barston is recorded to have frequently traded on a thirty ton vessel named ‘le Trinitie of Tewkisburie’ alongside both Richard and Andrew Bawgham – who are said to have been from ‘durhurste’ and ‘Tewkisbury’ respectively. It is probable that this was the same vessel although the absence of the exact entry referred to be Barston makes confirmation of this difficult. TNA:PRO, E190/1241/3,5,8.
60 Duncan Taylor examines Gloucester’s outbound coastal shipments of grain and highlights the fact that no Gloucester merchants shipped any grain to Bristol in 1581-2. Taylor implies that this temporary cesation of Gloucester’s grain shipments to Bristol was a result of the Bristol Corporation’s objections to the establishment of a head-port at Gloucester. Tewkesbury had a different trading profile to that of Gloucester, and its merchants proved far more willing to continue to ship grain to Bristol. As a Tewkesbury merchant, it is possible that Barston was not aware of how Gloucester’s trading relations with Bristol had changed and thus based his deposition on the fact that Tewkesbury merchants had continued to ship the majority of their grain to Bristol. Barston’s claim that he ‘doth not knowe’ the answer to the interrogatory could alternatively have been a deliberate and false claim to ignorance. Barston was later shown to be a prolific smuggler of prohibited goods and admitted to a number of charges including illicitly exporting vast amounts of grain. If Barston showed the commissioners that he had an extensive knowledge of the River Severn’s grain shipments, more probing questions may have been asked in the future about the whereabouts of the grain that was no longer being shipped to Bristol – an issue that risked uncovering Barston’s illicit trading activities. In these circumstances, it seems feasible that Barston may have understated his knowledge of the grain trade and not deposed as completely as he could have done: Taylor, ‘Maritime Trade’, 99-115.
that the queene majesty hath ben commonly provided of marryners bredde upp in the ryver of seuerne to searue in x x greate shippes / And saith that he knoweth that the barckes and boates uppon seuerne are ordynerylye employed in the Queenes majesties searuice into Irlande /

13, 14 To the thirtenth and fowerteenth he cannot Depose. /

15 To the fiftenth he saieth that sure he is that mucche money and chardges are saued by hавinge of cockettes at Gloucester which before tyme wass spente in ~ gettinge the same at Bristoll for this Deponent himself hath ben soundry tymes enforced to traveill to Bristoll to his greate chardge for obteyninge his cockettes at Bristoll / which were before Denyed unto other men in his name /
And saith that he was thus enforced to Doe twise within sixe weekes which wasDone when master Cawghton was Deputy to the Customer in Bristoll
And doth likewise judge that three partes, or better of all Cockettes entred in the custome howse of Gloucester the whole beinge Deuided into fower partes are grannted unto persons Dwelinge in Gloucester / and aboue Gloucester bridge / And more he cannot Depose /

1 William Combley of mynsterworth61 in the county of Glou sayler of thadge of fieftie sixe yeeres or thereaboutes sworen and examyned to the firste Interrogatory saieth that he hath trauelled the Ryver of severne and into the coastes of Irlande and Franchise for forty yeeres paste and saieth that he hath byn boath owner and master of boates and barckes uppon the saide ryver and hath traded himself the ryver in the same boatte

2 To the seconde he saieth that duringe his tyme he doth not remember that any searcher or Deputie of searcher did Dwell Remayne or contynewe beetweene Bristol and kingroade /

61 ‘mynsterworth’: Minsterworth, a village on the west banks of the River Severn, approximately four miles downstream from Gloucester.
To the thirde he saieth that from gatcombe to Gloucester is tenne myles by lande and twelve myles by water / and from kingroade to gatcombe is twelve or more by water and from kingroade to Bristoll are sixe myles by water and saith that the creekes of Berckley gatcombe and Newenham mencioned in the said Interrogatory are apte meete places for ladinge unladinge and Dischardginge of wares & commodityes & hath ben soe used Durance his Remembrancce

To the fouwerth he saieth that there are noe more or grea ter nomber of ladinge and unladinge places upon the Ryver of seurne nowe then there hath benne heretofore to his knowledge and saieth that there is good harbouroigne in the side of the Forreste of Dean for all suche barckes as can come thither namely barckes of fieftie tonnes up Sylmroade Inwarde pill62 Pyrtone pill63 and Gatcombe in which places any barckes may Lye that draweth not aboue tenne feate of water /

Rychard pate ~ Robert Smythes Richard Byrde

6v.

Item to the fiveth he saieth that he doth knowe that the ryuer of seuerne at gatcombe doth flowe upon a greate springe betwixte64 xvijtie & xxtie feate of water at which tyne he saieth that a barck of fieftie tonnes may lye there / And saieth that a barck of one Thomas Smith of Pyrton65 / and the Fawlcon mallyarde66 beinge barckes thone of them

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62 ‘Sylmroade Inwarde pill’: Slime Road was an area of the west bank of the River Severn, just north of Beachley.
63 ‘Pyrtone pill’: Purton pill. A creek near Purton, a small village on the west bank of the River Severn, approximately three miles north of Berkeley.
64 ‘betwixte’: betwixt, ie. between.
65 ‘Thomas Smith of Pyrton’ – This is a reference to the same Thomas Smythe of Purton that deposed in this commission. The reference to Smythe’s bark could relate to any of three vessels that Smythe claims to own when making his own deposition – the Trinity of fifty tons burden, the Ellyy of eighteen tons burden or the Clement of twenty-two tons burden.
66 ‘the Fawlcon mallyarde’ – there is no record of a ship bearing this name in either the coastal or overseas customs accounts of Gloucester. However, there are entries in the Gloucester customer’s 1581-2 overseas account that record a Tewkesbury merchant by the name of Thomas Mallard trading using the ‘Falcon of Tewkesbury’ – a vessel
forty thother fiftie tonnes hath discharged at Gatcombe & newnh
And saith that those barckes with one tyde if convenyent wynd doe
searve them may come from kingroade / and that he hath come in one
tyde from kingroade to Gloucester in a barck of xij tonnes / and saieth that
these barckes and dyvers others haue come laden from beyonnde the seaeas to
Gatcombe and Berckley / but moste comonly to gatcombe /

[6] To the sixte he saieth that in gatcombe there are aboute viij Dwellinge
howses in Eckley beinge about a quarter of a myle distante from gatcombe
aboute xvj Dwellinge howses, and in Blackney beinge about a myle
from gatcombe be aboute xxie dwellinge houeses havinge good prouision &
lodginge / and therefore able to stay and search all boates and barckes
passinge by that Ryver if they be requyred / And further saieth
that searchers and searchers Deputyes Doe and have used to attende
veary dilligently at gatcombe & newnham for her majestie’s prouffitte and
searuices. /

[7] To the seuente he saith that he himseallf hath trauelled in the ~ ~
margaret veysie of Seuerne beinge xvj tonnes from the ryuer of
seuerne to Roachell in Frannce and broughhte thither with them
Cole and brought back with them wyne and sawlte / and further
saieth that he doth knowe that for the space of vj yeeres laste paste there
hath not ben soe many boates and barckes uppon the Ryuer of seuerne as
haue ben in the life tyme before / but saieth that there are fewer
and saieth that the custome house standinge uppon the kay of Gloucester is
veary apte and commoduous for her majestie’s searuice /

described to be of thirty tons burden that was also frequently used by another deponent in this commission, Edward Barston. It seems likely that this was the vessel being referred to by the deponent. The discrepancy with regards to the exact burden of the vessel serves as a reminder that the values given in both the customs accounts and by deponents were estimations. Further demonstrating this point, the Falcon of Tewkesbury is listed to have had both a thirty and forty ton burden in different entries contained within the 1581-2 port book – and thus it is difficult to establish the exact burden of such vessels. TNA:PRO, E190/1241/5.

67 ‘margaret veysie’ refers to the Margaret, a vessel of approximately twenty tons burden that was frequently used and presumably owned by John Veysie, who is listed as a merchant of Minsterwood in the 1581 Gloucester coastal accounts. TNA:PRO, E190/1241/16.
[8] To theighte he cannot depose / 

[9] To the nynth he saith that because in his iudgmente the County of Glouc is more fertill for corne then the places nere Bristoll are therfore Gloucester cannot\textsuperscript{68} furnishe Ireland with corne and grayne soe good cheape as Bristoll can / 

[10, 11] To the tenth and eleventh he cannot depose 

[12] To the twelveth he saith that the small boates / and barckes uppon Seuerne haue bredd and Doe breede able and sufficient marryneres fit her majestie’s seruice / and that at some one tyme he himselfe & aboute xx\textsuperscript{th} marryners more haue ben pressed and forced from the ryver of seuerne to searue her majestie in Irelande and other places / somtymes more / somtymes lesse / and saith that the barckes and boates of dyuers of his neighboures aboute seuerne haue ben employed for her majestie’s seruice into Irelande / and further saith that a boate of xx\textsuperscript{th} tonnes doth allwayses requyre v or vj men and a boy to serue them / and therefore one shipp of C tonnes doth not breede soe many sailers and seruitours\textsuperscript{69} as dyuers small boates of the like burden doe breede / 

[13] To the thirteenth he saith that he doth vearly iudge that in some yeeres there are xx\textsuperscript{th} boates laden with fruites from the ryuer of severne to the places mencioned in thesaid Interrogatory and some yeeres more and some yeeres lesse in which boates they doe Retorne againe good stoare of fishe / 

\textsuperscript{68} The scribe has written ‘cannot’ although ‘can’ would make more sense in this context. The deponent states that Gloucester had a grain-rich hinterland compared to Bristol – and thus it is more logical that the deponent would deduce that Gloucester was in a better position to provision Ireland with grain than Bristol was. It seems probable that this was a copying error made by the scribe. 

\textsuperscript{69} ‘seruitours’: servitors, ie. servants or assistants.
To the xiiijth he saith that in his judgment the greater parte and in effecte the holle of Corne and grayne used to be transported to Bristoll Cornewall Devonshire Irelande and wales haue benne laden at the kayes of Gloucester & Twexbury /

To the xvth he saith that it is more for thease of the persons dwellinge in Shrewsbury Bridgnorth Bewdley and other places aboue and in Gloucester to haue their cockettes gotten at Gloucester then at Bristoll and more he cannot depose /

Richarde hyette of mynsterworth afore saide in thesaide County of Glouc sayler of thadge of fortie and sixe yeeres or theraboutes sworn and examined saith that he was parte owner of a barck of xxvjy tonnes called the Julyan of mynsterworth and trauelled theron to Irelonde Cornewall and wales. /

To the seconde and thirde he agreeth with the former deponent William Combley.

To the iiijth he sieth as the said william Combley hath deposed / and further saith that a shipp of threeskoare tonne may lye in lydneys pill / and that horse pill and Albertons pill are good places for ~ harboure for smaler barckes /

To the fiefth & vjth he agreath with thesaid former deponent / saving that

70 ‘Julyan of mynsterworth’ – Richard Hyette is recorded to have traded in a twenty ton vessel called the Gillian in the 1577 coastal accounts. This is likely to be an alternative spelling of the same vessel. TNA:PRO, E190/1129/20.
71 ‘horse pill’: Horse Pill. A creek on the west bank of the River Severn, approximately two miles downstream of Aylburton Pill (see below).
72 ‘Albertons pill’: Aylburton Pill. The coastline of this part of the River Severn has changed considerably, but Aylburton Pill discharged on the west bank of the River Severn, approximately five miles west of Berkeley. For more detailed information about the exact locations of these pills, see Jones (ed.), ‘Survey of the Port of Bristol, 1565’.
he saith he himself came not in any boate of xij tonnes with
the saide deponente from Gloucester to kingroade. /

[8, 9] To the eighte and nth he cannot depose /

[10, 11] To the tenth and xjth he saith that in his iudgment the Citty of
Bristoll cannot furnishe the queenes majestie’s prouision into Irelande
soe good cheape as the Cittie of Gloucester and Twexbury can by
reason of the plentie of the Countie of Glouc and the countyes
theraboutes.

[12] To the twelveth he cannot depose. /

7r.

[13] To the thirteenth he saith that he thincketh there haue come yeerely
betweene twenty and thirtie boates laden with fishe into the Ryuer of seuerne
from Cornewall Devonshire Irelande and wales. /

To the xvth he saith that of necessitie there muste be greate chardge
saued by haveinge their Cockettes at Gloucester which otherwise they shoulde
spende in travellinge for them to Bristoll / and that he himself hath
paied tenne shillinges for a Cockett at Bristoll aboute twoe yeeres before
therrecion of the custome howse in Gloucester / and more he cannot depose /

[1] John Whoope of Eallmore73 in the County of Glouc of
thadge of fower scoare yeeres or thereaboutes sworn & examined saieth that he
hath traded by the ryuer of seuerne by the space of those threskore yeeres /

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73 ‘Eallmore’: Elmore, a small village situated approximately three miles south-west of Gloucester.
[2] To the seconde and thirde he saith as the former deponent william Combley hath deposed. /  

[4, 5] To the fowerth and vth he agreeath with the former deponentes Richard hyett and William Combley / and further saith that a barck drawinge xijne footes of water may come and lye at gatcombe /  

[6] To the vjth he saith that he knewe one walter Steynor beinge a searcher Dwellinge within the parishe of Newenham within hawlf a myle of the Ryuer of seuerne whoe used the same office of a searcher xij yeeres and upwards as he thincketh / and that there nowe remayneth a searcher in Newnham whoe attendeth likewise at gatcombe for her majestie's searduice there /  

[7,8] To the vijth and viijth he cannot depose  

[9,10] To the ixth and xth he saith that when he did bringe corne and grayne from Gloucester Twexbury and other places therunto adioyninge to Bristoll that then the same was dearer at Bristoll then it was as Gloucester which was about twelue yeeres paste /  

[11] To the eleaventh he cannot depose  

[12] To the twelveth he  agreath with the twoe former deponentes / savinge that he saith that he doth not knowe howe many men are Requiste74 to guide a shipp of C tonnes. /  

[13, 14] To the xiiith and xiiiith he cannot depose  

[15] To the xvth he saith as the former deponent Richard Hyett hath deposed /  

74 ‘Requiste’: requisite.
John Lewes\textsuperscript{75} of Longney\textsuperscript{76} in the County of Glouc aforesaide ~ sayler of thadge of thirtie & eighte yeeres or thereaboutes sworne and ~ examined to the firste interrogatory saith that he hath benne owner of eight boates or barckes uppon seuerne some of them conteyninge xxvj tonnes / & some other leasse and hath used to trade by the water aboute xxij yeeres to the places mentioned in the said Interrogatory. /

To the seconde he cannot depose /

To the thirde he saith that there are betweene Gloucester and Gatcombe aboute thirteene myles by water at reste / and nyne myles by lande at reste / and from kinroade to hungroade are a myle and a half from hungroade to Bristoll aboute three myles by water / and saith that the kay of Gloucester and the creekes of Barckley and gatcombe be very apte & meate places for ladinge and Dischardginge of wares, and hath ben soe used Duringe his tyme /

To the fourthe he saith that betweene the shutte and Gatcombe are Dyuers good places of harboroughe for shippes of all burdens under CCC tonnes vz at Slymeroade and thirde weare / and all soe in lydneys pill & horst pill may any shipp under C tonnes fleete to reste and lye. /

To the fiveth he saieth that at this present springe there flowed aboue xx footes of water at gatcombe / and soe from thence the nearer into the sea the more water floweth and that shippes and barckes drawinge xx\textsuperscript{tie} foot of water may at such tides lye at gatcombe / and south that barckes & shippes comynge to gatcombe and thother place betweene that and the shutte may be presevued and maynteyned there aswell or at hungroade because that the shippes there Doe lye uppon the soafe oose\textsuperscript{77} which oose is

\textsuperscript{75} This is the same John Lewes that deposed for Gloucester in the first commission that took place in January 1583.

\textsuperscript{76} ‘Longney’ – a small village on the east bank of the River Severn, five miles south-west of Gloucester.
mouch harder at hungroade / and saith that shippes of the burden
aboue said may with the like water come from kingroade to gatcombe
as from kingroade to Bristoll and further saith that he himselff
Dyuers and soundry tymes broughte to Gloucester his owne boates of aboute xxvj
 tonnes apeece / and there laded and Discharaged the same / and that
such barckes may in fower tydes come from kingroade to Gloucester when the
wynde is contrary / and havinge winde and springe tide may come at
one tyde /

[6] To the sixth he saith that newenham is replenished with good and
sufficient stoare of people viz aboute C dwellinge howses / and that in
Gatcombe there are dyuers stoare howses besides the Dwellinge howses
newly builded. /

[9] To the ixth and tenth he saith that in his iudgment the queenes prouision
for corne and mawlte for Irelande may be had better cheape at Gloucester
then at Bristoll by reason of the plentie of the conntrey about
Gloucester /

[12] To the xijth he saith that a barcke of xx tonnes apeece doe breede
more apte and conveyent marryners then a shipp of C tonnes because a shipp
of C tonnes will be guyded with xx men and euery barck of xx tonnes will
require at leste vj men to leade that and saith that her majesty hath ben
prouided at one tyme for servuice in the queenes shippes at London xv
men of the parishe of mynsterworth neere seuerne / and of dyuers other may
owte of dyvers other villadges at other tymes for servuice into Irelande
and that he this deponent and aboute xv more of the county of Glouc
have servued in the gowlden Lyon under Sir william wynter to harborough
& that dyuers other have servued in dyuers other shippes.

77 ‘soafte oose’ – soft, wet mud or slime. The deponent states that it was possible to run a ship aground on the river bed at Gatcombe without causing any damage to the vessel, just as it was at Hungroade.
7v.

[13] To the xii\textsuperscript{th} he saith that he doth veary well knowe that the laste yeare
paste there were laden aboue CC boates with fruite from the Ryver of Severne
into the places mentioned in the said Interrogatory moste of which boates there was
retorned fishe and in thother butter cheese and other other thinges which haue
searued the Counties mentioned in that Interrogatory. /

[15] To the xv\textsuperscript{th} he saith that there is more chardge saued and greate
cost to the countreyes adjoyninge to Gloucester for haveinge any co their
cockettes at Gloucester then if they showlde travell for the same unto
Bristoll / and saith that at hungroade at springe tydes the
water floweth about vj fothenames / and the same place at lowe
waters is maynteyned by the Roade of shippes there which otherwise
woulde be quarred\textsuperscript{78} upp / and that the shippes at lowe water lye
on grounde there in worse case then they woulde doe at gatcombe
And more he cannot depose /

[1] Thomas Smythe thelder of Pirton\textsuperscript{79} in the Countie
of Glou of aforesaide sailer of thadge of three scoare yeeres or theraboute
sworen and examin\textsuperscript{ed} to the firste Interrogatory saith that he hath used the trade
of the water for fortie yeeres paste and hath ben owner of three boates
vz of the Trynitie beinge a barcke of fiestie tonnes and annother called
the Ellyy of the burden of xvij tonnes and the thirde called the clement\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{78} 'quarred up': in the context of a river, this means choked or blocked up.
\textsuperscript{79} 'Pirton' – Purton. The village of Purton lies of the east bank of the River Severn, approximately three miles north of Berkeley. The hamlet of Purton lies on the west bank of the River Severn, directly opposite the village. It is not clear which location this deponent claims to originate from.
\textsuperscript{80} 'Trynitie', 'Elly' and 'clement' – vessels with these names were exceptionally common. There are a number of examples of vessels named the Clement and the Trinity with eight to eighteen ton burdens being recorded in the Gloucester coastal accounts. The common nature of these ship names and the fact that there are no entries where
of aboute xxij tonnes /

[5] To the fiewth he saith his is sure that the water floweth at Barckley haven this day xxiiij foates and at gatcombe xx footes and that he himselff and one John Fisher haue tryed the depth of the water there this presente weeke / and saith that he himselff is able and dareth to undertake to bringe a shippe of lxxx tonnes laden with merchanndizes to Barckleyes haven and gatcombe haveinge a ladinge gale of winde / and may more and reste there as saffely as at Hungroade or any place where he hath trauelled / and that he hath knowne many boates betweene xx an xxvj tonnes laden / and did lye and was preserued there / unlade at Gloucester and Twexbury / and that there was a shipp of aboute CCCC tonnes broughte to Sylmroade within the shutte

[6] To the sixte he saith as the former depnent John Lewes hath deposed /

[9, 10] To the ixth & xth he saith that the queenes provision for mawlte & Corne for Irelande cannot be soe well prouided for at Bristoll as in Gloucester and the countrie thereaboutes.

[12] To the xijth he saith that he is able to bringe forth C able & sufficient marryners trayned upp in the boates of seuerne able to Doe good service in greate shippes and thirtie of them able to harboureghe a shipp and that he himself hath sailed soundry tymes to Andolosia Portugall Frannce and Irelande as an hyred\textsuperscript{81} marryner / and to the reste of thinterrogatory he agreeith with the former deponent John Lewes /

\textsuperscript{81} ‘hyred’: hired.

Thomas Smythe himself is recorded to have traded using these vessels makes it very difficult to verify the details given by Thomas Smythe against entries made in Gloucester’s coastal accounts. ‘Thomas Smythe’ was also a very popular name so this adds to the problems of identification. Although vessels named the ‘Trinity Smythe’ have been identified, none are listed to be from Thomas Smythe’s place of residence – Purton – and therefore it has proved impossible to gather any more information regarding these claims made by Thomas Smythe.
[15] To the xv\textsuperscript{th} he saith that there is chardge saued in takinge owt their Cockettes at Gloucester which they shoulde spende by fetchinge the same at Bristoll / And further saith that shippes and barckes comynge betweene the shutte and gatcombe may lye and be preserued as saffely theere as at Hungroade havinge betweene those places veary soafe woase to lye uppon /

[1] John Wyntle of mynsterworth in the said Countie of Glouc sayler of thadge of xxvij\textsuperscript{th} yeeres or thereabout es sworn and examin
d to the firste Interrogatory he saith that he hath ben and is nowe owner of the half of a boate called of xvj tonnes and that he hath used the trade of the Ryuer of seuerne aboute those tenne yeeres into Irelande Cornewall Devonshire & wales. /

[5] To the fiefte towchinge the flowinge of the water at gatcombe and Barckley he agreth with the former deponent Thomas Smith. and further saith that he hath knowen the Flye boate\textsuperscript{82} beinge a barck of aboue fieftie tonnes to come to Barckley & Gatcombe and that she did moste commonly lye at Gatcombe / and that a barck of fowerscoare tonnes may fleete to reste and lye there

[11] To the xij\textsuperscript{th} he agreath with the former deponent John Lewes /

[12] To the xij\textsuperscript{th} he saith that there are marryners bredd upp in the small boates uppon seuerne many of which are able to take chardge of guydinge a shipp into Irelande and Spayne /

[15] To the xv\textsuperscript{th} he saith that shippes and barckes carriyng betwene the shutte and gatcombe may lye and be preserued there uppon the

\textsuperscript{82} ‘the Flye boate’ – this unidentified vessel was also referred to by a previous deponent, Edward Barston.
soafe woase aswell as at Hungroade / and that a shipp of lxxx
tonne may lye and fleete in Chaston poole or beinge betweneth
shuttles and Gatcombe / And further doth not Depose /

8r.

[1] Rychard skhopez / of Blakney in the Countie of Glouc Sayler of
thage of fyftie and foure yeres or therabowtes sworne and examined to the
first Interrogatorie saith that he hath been parte owner of fyve barkes upon ~
Severne and that he and his brother have been owners of three barkes some
of them being of burden aboute xxvj tonnes and hath travelled in the said
barkes by the space of xxvj yeres past to the places menciond in the said Interrogatory
and that he himself hath travelled into Rochell into Frannce in the margarett
Veysie of mynsterworthe /

[2] To the second he saith that there are no villagges betwene Bristoll and
kingrode saving on the Easte syde there is Sherehampton which is aboute
half a myle from the water syde / and saith that he doth not remember
that ever anie sercher or deputy sercher haue dwelt betwene Bristoll & kingrode /

[3] To the thirde he saith that from Gloucester to Gatcombe are xij myles by water /
and from Gatcombe to kingerode are xv myles by water / and from kingerode
to Bristoll iiij myles and upwarkes by water / And that he doth knowe that
the Creekes of Gatcombe Barkley and Newneham during all his tyme of ~
knowledge have been allwaies used as meeete places for lading & unlading /

[4] To the fourthe he saith that there be not anie more places of lading and ~
unlading upon the ryver of Severne used synce the ereccion of the Custome house
in Gloucester then there were before / And saith that he himself aboute xxvj yeres
past hath laden corne aborde a shipp at kingerode / and that a shipp drawing

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83 ‘Blakney’: Blakeney, the nearest settlement to Gatcombe. It lay approximately one mile northwest of Gatcombe.
xvj feete of water may reste and fleeete at low waters at a place called the
blacke poole, within Chaston being xx myles beneth Gloucester, and that at ~ ~
Slymerode Horsepill and Lydvenes pill a shipp of an hundred tonne ~
may safelie rest and lye.

[5] To the fyfte he saith that he himself did sound and try the Ryver of Severne
at Gatcombe twice this weeke / and when the water was at iiij: or tydes
spring, it did beare xv. foote of flowinge water besyde the Chanell, and at
the highest of the spring, it will bere xxij foot of flowing water there
& so at Barkley it floweth higher / And that a shipp of one hundred tonnes
laden will come to / and by at Gatcombe and Barkley, and retorne thence /
safelie againe / and that he himself dare undertake to be one within that shipp
to perfourme the same / and is well assured that boates and barks coming to ~
those places may be there preserved and kepeth aswell as at Hungerode ~
Both for the wynde and wether and softnes of the woase / and saith that a
boate drawing vij. foote of water can come from kingrode to Gloucester in ~
three tydes /

[7] To the xij: he saith that there are bredd very sufficient maryners in the
Ryver of Severne and fitt to do good service in greate shippes and that her
majestie may be provided of an hundred sufficient maryners at one tyme in
tymes of service out of the boates upon the Ryver of Severne, and with the
rest of the Interrogatory he agreeth with the former deponent John Lewes /

[15] To the xv: he saith that there is much money saved to the contries aboue Glouc
ester and aboutes Gloucester by having the Cockettes at Gloucester, which wold be spent by fetching the same
at Bristoll / And saith that he thinketh there are as many Cockettes taken out at
Gloucester by those that dwell aboue Gloucester Bridge as by them that dwell beneth the bridge
And more he cannot depose /

Rychard pate ~ Robert Smythe ~ Richard Byrde
[On the last page of depositions, there is a Latin phrase called the ‘liberatur’. This ‘liberatur’ recorded the receipt of the document into the Exchequer. It notes that the documents were received on the 26th April 1583 and were delivered by one of the commissioners – Robert Smyth.]