

History of the smith's house since 1577 and of disputes between the Mint and the Ordnance Office as to which of them owns it.

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To their Excellencies the Lords Iustices the Memorial of Sir Is Newton

Most humbly sheweth

In the Indenture made between his Majesty & the Master & Worker of his Mint there is a clause in these words. 'And his said Majesty doth grant & confirm by these presents that the Officers of the Mint shall at all times have hold & peaceably enjoy all places houses & grounds as well builded as unbuilded within the said Mint which heretofore have been called reputed or taken for the Mint without the meddling let or disturbance by the chief Governour Constable Lieutenant or any other Officer or Minister of the Tower. This grant is of above 160 years standing as I find by copies of old Indentures And no mention being made therein of any Officer of the Ordnance, it seems to have been made before that Office was erected.

About the year 1577 a Smith shop in the Mint was put into repair by the Office of Ordnance & may have been since frequently repaired by them. And the same smith has usually (if not always, till of late) been Smith of the Mint, & had a fourge at the end of the Mill-rooms for making Dyes & Puncheons for the Mint

When the coinage was set on foot by the Mill & Press (which was in the year 1665,) there was an Order of Council for removing all strangers out of the Mint; but this Smith was not removed: whether because he was Smith to both Offices or for any other reason I do not know.

M^r Slingsby about 80 years ago endeavoured to remove this Smith of the Ordnance out of the Mint & for that end a Committee of Council came to the Tower to view whether another place in the Tower might not be found for him to work in & the further end of the Mint was put into the hands of the Office of Ordnance & a new gate built for bounding the Mint at that end. And there is a tradition in the Mint that th^e Office of Ordnance was thereupon to have quitted the Smiths shop. But M^r Slingsby soon after falling into trouble & in the beginning of the reign of King James the Mint being turned into a garrison, the shop continued in the hands of the Office of Ordnance, & about 21 years ago they rebuilt it, & are now building more houses in the Mint.

Wherefore your Memorialist most humbly prays your Excellencies, that the Surveyor of the Ordnance may desist from building untill the case be examined & the bounds of the Mint be so settled as may prevent these

disputes for the future, & render the coinage safe for encouraging Merchants to import their gold & silver, & leave sufficient room for building more Mills & Furnaces when ever it shall be necessary & also for building a house for our Porter, & that the Gates of the Mint may still remain in his custody for the safety of the coinage.

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Answer

The bounds of the Mint are settled by a covenant under the bread seal above 160 years old, & the smiths shop is within those bounds, the late greatcoinage was not carried on without what one now want . Our Smith dwell in the Smiths house during the late great coinage did our busines in & fourge now taken from us & we then used the Irish now not in our custody The Officers houses in the Mint were built for them to live in & attend the buisiness of the Mint, & if any of those houses stand empty or are let to strangers it is not because we have too much room but because our Officers have beenn discouraged from living in theMint as well by the noise & smoke of the Smiths four {ges} & the neighbourhood of soldiers &c. And our Engineer which they ca{n} {gun} Master Smith is very different from our Smith, & ought not to be confounded with him.

{As} the {gratits} made to Hopkins, Piasso, Tayte, Hodgskins to be Master Smithe of all the Iron works within the Tower of London to hold the same during life a Mansion, {donnbus} proficuis emolumentis &c do not extend to the buisiness of the Mint, so it is not necessary that they should extend to the houses in the Mint. M^r Hodgskins & his successor M^r Silverster & the sons of M^r Silverster were Smiths of the Mint as well as of the Ordnace & their predecessors might be so, For there is no memory of any other Smiths ship for the Smith of the Mint then this in dispute. This house was repaired in the year 1577 & might be built many before by the Mint for their Smith. For the Mint had a Smith ever since it was a Mint & by consequence before the Office of Ordnance was erected. And its more probable that that Office at its first erection, for want of a smiths shop of their own, should make use of the Smith of the Mint for doing their coarse work, then that the Mint should leave their own smith with his shop to make use of the Smith & shop of the Ordnance for making & mending their coining tools.

To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majestys Treasury

May it please your Lordships

In answer to the Memorialists
