Portsmouth

Saturday, July 20

The Right Honorable Lord Bolton (Lord Lieutenant for the County of Southampton) having signified his wish to meet the inhabitant of the Island of Portsea, to concert means for the further defence of the country, a meeting was held on Wednesday, at the Guildhall. The chair being taken by S Gaselee, Esq., the Mayor, his Lordship, in a very perspicuous manner, unfolded his idea of the principles that ought to govern the arming of the inhabitants – a speedy and general enrolment, subsequent division into companies, and the choice of an experienced officer of the line as commander of this general force, composed the leading parts of his Lordship’s advice. On the last topic, we felt his Lordship’s language to be delicate towards the Inhabitants, yet marked with that firmness which difficult circumstances always call forth from exalted minds. He spoke, with peculiar emphasis and zeal, of the high military character of General Whitelocke, and of that officer’s anxious desire (made know to him on all occasions of intercourse relative to the General’s command) to consult the opinions and feelings of the Inhabitants. In a word, his Lordship plainly expressed his expectation, that as long as the necessities of the public service did not call General Whitelocke from this Town, the command of all the volunteer force would be vested in him. His Lordship did not move any particular propositions; but his speech was received with enthusiasm, and the principles of his advice adopted with acclamation. The Mayor, Sir J. Carter, W. Deacon, W. Goldson, T. Fitzherbert, and George Poore, Esqrs. severally addressed the assembly. W. Goldson observed that, in the 14th century, the French flag was flying where they then were; the Inhabitants of that time did not despair; and they regained possession of the place. We had only to act with the same persevering courage, and we should have nothing eventually to fear. The thanks of the meeting (on the motion of Lord Bolton) were voted to the Mayor; and (on the motion of Sir J. Carter) to his Lordship. The Hall was as crowded as it was possible to be. Besides those we have already named, the following distinguished persons were present: Lord Charles Somerset, Sir Roger Curtis, Bart., General Whitelocke, General Avarne, Alderman Godwin, J. Carter, and the Rev. G. Cuthbert; J. Deacon and M. Greetham, Esqrs. Colonel Teroit of the Royal Artillery; Captains Berne and O’Brien of the Navy; and most of the principle Inhabitants of the Island of Portsea. General Whitelocke has since invited the Inhabitants to enrol with the utmost expedition, that they may proceed to such arrangements as alone are wanting to employ with effect the enthusiasm which pervades all classes in the Defence of the Country; and we are happy to day, that the enrolment proceeds with the greatest vigour. Those who have enrolled for the great guns, commenced their exercise yesterday; and we were happy to see how numerously and punctually they mustered. It is impossible that more attention can be paid to the defence of this quarter, than those great objects receive from General Whitelocke. The guns on all the works have been carefully examined and scaled. The mud forts on Southsea Common are repaired and mounted. The troops, in garrison and camp, are drilled and exercised, according to their proficiency, at different times, from morning till night. Preparation is indeed busy in the strongest sense of the word.