Portsmouth

Saturday, September 3

The town and neighbourhood have been very unexpectedly honoured with a visit from the Prince of Wales. On Tuesday all the troops in garrison and camp received orders from General Whitelocke to parade the following morning on Southsea Common, and the Volunteers on the Glacis, the former to be reviewed, and the latter to be inspected by His Royal Highness. A little after 10 o’clock on Wednesday morning, General Whitelocke, with his Staff received the Prince at the Barrier Gate, at Portsbridge. His Royal Highness spoke a few moments to General Whitelocke, and then inspected Mr Lindegren’s company of Volunteers, drawn up immediately within the bridge, to whose fine appearance he paid a very handsome compliment. His Royal Highness then successively inspected Hilsea Barracks, and Cumberland Fort, with their several troops, receiving at his approach and departure, a salute of cannon of each place. About 12 o’clock the Prince arrived on Southsea Common, the cannon saluting as he advanced. His Royal Highness then reviewed the following troops: The Royal Artillery in garrison; The Royal Artificers; the 23rd Foot (Royal Welch Fuzileers,) the North Gloucester, Worcester, Flint, Carmarthen, and Merioneth Militias, and the Portsdown Cavalry. His Royal Highness expressed, thro’ General Whitelocke, his warm approbation both of the appearance and discipline of the respective corps. His Royal Highness then proceeded to the Glacis (again being saluted by the cannon, on his quitting the ground of the Review,) where 22 companies of Volunteers, (amounting to 1764 men) were drawn up to receive him. His Royal Highness rode down the line, General Whitelocke announcing each Captain to him. The Prince then went to General Whitelocke’s house, where the Mayor and Corporation waited on his Highness, and presented him with the Freedom of the Borough, the Mayor addressing his Highness in the following speech:-

*“May it please your Royal Highness*

“Truly sensible of the high honour conferred on the Town by your Royal Presence, the Mayor and Alderman beg permission to approach your Royal Highness with their sincere congratulations on your arrival. Actions more than words will convey the truest sentiments of loyalty and attachment; As Magistrates therefore, entrusted with the preservation of the public peace, we not only consider it our duty, but highly gratifying to our feelings, at this important crisis, to represent to your Royal Highness, that the greatest unanimity, and the most cheerful alacrity pervade every rank within this jurisdiction. And we most humbly presume to solicit you Royal Highness to convey to the King, your Royal Father, the determined resolution of every individual, to sacrifice his life in defence of His Majesty’s Person, Crown, and Dignity, and in the preservation of those blessings we enjoy under the mildness of his government, and the protection of our glorious constitution. If any things can add to the present alacrity, it will be your Highness’s great condescension in being a witness to the general zeal. Sanctioned thereby by the honour conferred on us by your illustrious Brothers, we presume to request permission of your Royal Highness to enrol your name among the Burgesses of this ancient Borough.”

His Royal Highness received the Mayor and Corporation in that gracious manner which so eminently distinguishes his character. He said-

“He should most happily, at any time, have been inclined to accept the honour intended him; and after the scene he had that day witnessed, (alluding to the Volunteers) he was peculiarly happy to accept it. He wanted words to express his grateful feelings, and the high sense he entertained of the sentiments of loyalty and zeal evinced by the Mayor and Corporations, and also by the Inhabitants of the Island; that he should not fail to take the earliest opportunity of communicating to the King, his Royal Father, the wishes of the Mayor and Corporation.”

After this ceremony, the Prince went in Admiral Montagu’s barge, (which had the standard hoisted) followed by Admiral Holloway’s and many Captains’ barge to Fort Monckton, a royal salute being fired from the Platform, and repeated by the ships at Spithead. Off Fort Monckton, his Highness inspected the gun-boats, which, after saluting, and the crews cheering, performed a few evolutions with surprising celerity and exactness. The Prince then landed, Fort Monckton firing a royal salute; and having inspected the Fort, proceeded to Stoke’s Bay camp (receiving the same honours as at the first camp) and reviewed the regiments there, under the command of Lord Charles Somerset, thro’ whom he expressed his entire satisfactions with those troops. His Highness then inspected Gosport works, and the Volunteers companies of that quarter, the Captains of which were respectively announced to him. His Highness afterwards returned to General Whitelocke’s, where he dined. The following were among the distinguished persons who had the honor to be of the company, by invitation of his Royal highness: Admirals Montagu and Holloway, Commissioner Sir Charles Saxton, Lord C. Somerset, and the Hon. Colonel Hood. The Duke of Kent’s band attended, and played until his Highness retired. At ten o’clock his Royal Highness set off for Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh’s where he slept. We never witnessed a finer sight, nor a scene more interesting that the whole of that day exhibited; and sure are we, that the feelings of his Royal Highness must have been extremely gratified, with the affectionate reception he met with from every voice, and every eye. Most grateful is the following to the persons to whom it is addressed:

Extract of a Letter from Major Bloomfield to Major General Whitelocke, written by order of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and dated Portsmouth, the 31st of August 1803:

“The Prince of Wales directs me to impress on your mind his Royal Highness’s admiration of the zeal manifested by the Yeomanry and Volunteers, from whose Loyal exertions the country derives a most important strength, and whose appearance, this day, excited in his Royal Highness’s breast feelings, as an Englishman, that can never be effaced from his memory. These his Royal Highness’ sentiments apply equally to the Gosport Volunteers.

I have the honor to be, etc.

(Signed) B. Bloomfield”

The report, which is current here, that his Highness will again honor this place on Thursday next with his presence, to inspect the Dock-yard, and visit the Fleet, we believe to be unfounded.