



Jones, E. T., & Condon, M. M. (2022, Mar 31). Bristol c. 1465/6: Petition of John Senecle, former customer of Bristol, for re-appointment as customer.

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**Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), 'Bristol c. 1465/6: Petition of John Senecle, former customer of Bristol, for re-appointment as customer' (University of Bristol, PURE, 2022)**

The petition that John Senecle, a customer of Bristol in the 1460s, addressed to King Edward IV c.1465/6, has been in print for over five centuries. It has not, as far as we are aware, ever been noticed or explored. The reason is likely to be that it is preserved in an unexpected source, a commonplace book of Richard Arnold, haberdasher of London, who was active in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The book is today variously known as 'Arnold's Chronicle' or 'The customs of London'. The text of Arnold's book was printed in Antwerp in 1503, probably by Adriaen van Berghen; a second edition was published in England in 1525 by Peter de Treveris.<sup>2</sup> The work was re-edited in 1811 for a new audience by the antiquary Francis Douce (1757-1834). He added both a short preface and the additional material from the 1525 edition to a transcript of the printed text of 1503.<sup>3</sup> A manuscript original has not been identified, either of the commonplace book, or of Senecle's petition.<sup>4</sup>

'Arnold's Chronicle', to cite the work under its best-known name, is a heterogeneous collection of both known and unique texts. It includes an annal of London arranged, as was usual for a city chronicle, under the mayors and sheriffs of London.<sup>5</sup> To this are added copies of London's charters and a number of civic ordinances. The volume also served as a general handbook of things useful for a merchant to know, such as conversion rates between sterling and Low Countries currency and between measures of goods. Related to this, the book included a formulary, incorporating examples of documents to be used for certain purposes. Some of these are anonymised, others not.<sup>6</sup> A number of the formulary documents were Arnold's own commercial contracts and lawsuits, whilst others have no clear connection to him. Finally, the volume contains a rag-bag of other material, interspersed throughout, including recipes, a treatise on tree grafting, the text of the ballad 'The Nut-brown Maid' and a long record of the quarrel between Humphrey Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort. With the published

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Herman, 'Arnold, Richard (d. c.1521)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [ODNB] (2004). It seems likely that Herman has post-dated Arnold's death by almost twenty years: Kathleen E. Kennedy, 'A London Legal Miscellany, Popular Law, and Medieval Print Culture' in Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson (eds), *Truth and Tales: Cultural Mobility and Medieval Media* (Ohio State University Press, 2015), p. 225. While Kennedy suggested that Arnold might have died in the 1490s, he was still alive in February 1500 when Richard Arnold was the plaintiff in a chancery petition: The National Archives [TNA], C1/183/9-11.

<sup>2</sup> 'In this booke is conteyned the names of ye baylifs custos mairs and sherefs of the cite of London from the tyme of king Richard the first... [Arnold's Chronicle], printed A. van Berghen, 1503 [STC (2nd edn.) 782]; new edn. with additions, P. Treveris, Southwark, 1525 [STC, (2nd edn) 783]. The 1503 edition lacks a title page. Francis Douce (see n. 3 below) suggested the printer was Jan van Doesborch. That claim was dismissed by R. Proctor, *Jan van Doesborgh, printer at Antwerp* (London, 1894), p. 15; the topic has been more recently explored by Peter Franssen. See also Kennedy, 'A London Legal Miscellany', pp. 232-4 on the dates and possible motives for printing and reprinting the work.

<sup>3</sup> [Francis Douce \(ed.\), \*The Customs of London, otherwise called Arnold's Chronicle\* \(London, 1811\)](#). Senecle's petition is at pp. 129-30. A new edition of Arnold's book, edited by Justin Colson, Kathleen Kennedy, and others, is in course of preparation.

<sup>4</sup> The petition is not in the most likely source, the class of Ancient Petitions (SC8) in the National Archives.

<sup>5</sup> List of city officers from 1189 with intermittent chronicle entries. The chronicle entries become regular after c. 1448 and full from c. 1470. For Arnold, and for comparable compilations, Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, ii: c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982) pp. 232-3; Kennedy, 'A London Legal Miscellany', pp. 227-31.

<sup>6</sup> The use of initials rather than names was a common feature of formulary exemplars. Other than 'A.B.', which was almost invariably a fiction, Arnold was sufficiently inconsistent for many of the names to be identifiable through internal references in the text. The formulary entries are briefly discussed Kennedy, 'A London Legal Miscellany', pp. 231-32.

volume lacking in consistency or order, it seems probable that it represented something close to a direct transcription of the manuscript commonplace book on which it was based.<sup>7</sup>

Senecle's petition is one of Arnold's 'formularly' documents. It was included as an example of 'The forme of making of complayntes to the Kyng and other lordis'. In other words, the document was meant to serve as a model for how a commoner might petition the King and/or other great lords.<sup>8</sup> Apart from a petition concerning piracy, the remainder of this subgroup within the larger body of formularly documents comprises law-suits involving Arnold himself. Just why a text of Senecle's petition was seen by, or came into the possession of, Richard Arnold, is unknown. The most likely explanation is that it was through their shared membership of the London Haberdashers' Company, albeit Arnold may only have been a young man at the time of Senecle's death prior to mid-November 1471.<sup>9</sup>

Although Senecle's petition is incomplete, it is not without interest. Political considerations were clearly prominent in the appointments to Bristol's customs offices in the 1460s.<sup>10</sup> This is another example, the particular value of the petition being that it provides the perspective of a client appealing for a position. In this instance the customership of Bristol had been offered as a reward for service to King Edward IV and to the king's father, Richard, duke of York. As was typical, the language of the petition is overwrought, overstating the petitioner's case in the hope of receiving remedy. Despite the distortions, some of its core statements can be documented, and there seems no reason to suppose that Senecle lied about his service. This was, after all, something the King could have readily checked. Moreover, Senecle offered, in effect, a witness to his claims, the king's servant, Thomas Colte.<sup>11</sup>

John Senecle was first appointed as one of the two customers of Bristol on 1 August 1460, by letters patent of Henry VI. A new colleague, Thomas Gibbes, was appointed just six

<sup>7</sup> Without the manuscript original, it is impossible be sure how many of the headings, and editorial matter such as the list of contents, were added by the publisher, or whether the chronicle continuation after first publication in 1503 was the work of Richard Arnold, or of another hand. For the chronicle, at least, the latter seems likely.

<sup>8</sup> This was probably a way of saying king and council. Other items in the same section were addressed to the mayor and other authorities in London.

<sup>9</sup> Admission lists for the livery do not survive for the fifteenth century. For Senecle, TNA, E13/158 Mich. 12 Edw. IV, rot. 13r (rot. 50); for Arnold, *Customs of London*, pp. 110-35 passim, 245-6; several other formularly documents not mentioning Arnold also relate to haberdashers. Administration was granted to Richard Senecle 16 November 1471 in the commissary court of London, John having died intestate, TNA, E13/158, Mich. 12 Edw. IV, rot. 13r (rot. 50). The exact date of John Senecle's death is not known. Arnold was already a haberdasher by 1473, when he was appointed executor to one John Arnell ['Amell'], a cutler: *Customs of London*, pp. 245-6. He exported cloth, probably to the Low Countries, through London in 1477-8, but despite other evidence that he continued to trade, there is no further reference to him in the surviving London customs accounts to 1521: Stuart Jenks, *The London Customs Accounts Vol. 74, Part III, no. 4* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.S. 74, Hansischer Geschichtsverein, 2016), pp. 67, 112 [<https://www.hansischergeschichtsverein.de/>].

<sup>10</sup> This was a situation that reflected in part the competition for influence between Richard Neville, earl of Warwick and William Herbert, Lord Herbert, afterwards earl of Pembroke, as well as the strength or otherwise of the Crown itself: see, for example, Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), '[Bristol 1461: Particulars of Account of Thomas Gibbes and Robert Strangways, customers, 26 March to 29 September 1461](#): Introduction' (University of Bristol, PURE, 2016), p. 2; Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), '[Bristol 1470: Particulars of Account of Richard Walwyn and Richard Drewes, customers, 18 August to 4 November 1470](#): Introduction' (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019), p. 1; Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), '[Bristol 1470-1: Particulars of Account of Daniel Sheldon controller, 4 November 1470 to 29 March 1471](#): Introduction' (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019), pp. 4-5; Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), '[Bristol 1471: Particulars of Account of Richard Walwyn and Nicholas Warynges, customers, 29 March 1471-29 September 1471](#): Introduction' (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019), pp. 1-3; see also the introduction to the 1469 Bristol account (forthcoming).

<sup>11</sup> For Colte see below, pp. 3, 7.

days later.<sup>12</sup> Following Edward IV's seizure of the throne in March 1461, Senecle was replaced in this critically important port by the hugely experienced Robert Strangways.<sup>13</sup> Gibbes was re-appointed. Nevertheless, Senecle in turn replaced Gibbes as customer by letters patent of 3 August 1463. He was then rejoined by Gibbes in May 1464, in place of Strangways.<sup>14</sup> Finally, on 20 November 1465, Strangways once more replaced Senecle.<sup>15</sup>

Senecle's petition to the King relates to his second removal from office in 1465.<sup>16</sup> He wanted his customership back. The petition begins with a narrative of unspecified service to the king and his father, for which Senecle had, allegedly, suffered loss and imprisonment. It implies that Thomas Colte, keeper of the hanaper 1461-7 (and who had undoubtedly suffered for his loyalty to the house of York) had been his intermediary to the king.<sup>17</sup> Senecle claimed that, in recompense for the losses and damage he had incurred for his service to the house of York, he had earlier been granted the revenues of Wangford, close to Brandon in Suffolk.<sup>18</sup> Wangford was one of the manors of Sir Thomas Tuddenham, who had been executed for treason in 1462.<sup>19</sup> As was normal, Tuddenham's lands were forfeited to the Crown, leaving the King free to grant those lands, or any revenues arising from them, as rewards. Senecle went on to claim that 'within short tyme' the monies arising from Wangford had been taken away from him. The grant of the customership of Bristol, he said, was given to him as compensation for that more recent loss – and thus, by implication, for the losses he had earlier suffered in the king's cause.

Based on the official record, it is not clear that Senecle *had* been granted the revenues of Wangford. It is true that he had been ordered to seize the lands and to collect the receipts.<sup>20</sup> Yet he was required to account for the revenues at the Exchequer. That would be slightly odd if Senecle had received an outright grant or had been guaranteed retention of the receipts or an annuity on the lands.<sup>21</sup> Be that as it may, it is certain that the grant of the customership of Bristol was not, as Senecle claimed, for life. Appointments to the office of customer were 'during pleasure', which meant they could be terminated by the King at any time. This gave the Crown flexibility and, ultimately, control. In practice, there was a high rate of changeover for positions in Bristol's port in the 1460s, with the offices of customer, controller and searcher all changing hands frequently. So, there was nothing exceptional about Senecle's loss of office in 1465. It was also the case that customers were required to be resident and, although they legitimately employed clerks, they were expected to exercise their office in person.<sup>22</sup> Failure to do so might

<sup>12</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls 1452-61*, pp. 253-7. They replaced John Haysand and Robert Strangways, whose patents dated from November and December 1459.

<sup>13</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-71*, pp. 4, 5, 7; Condon and Jones, '[Bristol 1461](#)', p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-71*, pp. 95-7, 129-30. Gibbes appears to have been a London mercer: TNA, E13/150, Hil. 4 Edw. IV, m. 1d.

<sup>15</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-71*, pp. 146, 148.

<sup>16</sup> Senecle's reference to the lands of Thomas Tuddenham strongly suggests that his petition arose from this second removal from office, and not from that of 1461.

<sup>17</sup> For Colte, appointed as keeper of the hanaper for life 'for his good service to the king and the king's father, Richard duke of York', *Cal. Patent Rolls 1461-1467*, pp. 85, 137; his final account was made by his executor, TNA, E101/540/10; C. L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV*, (2 vols, London, 1923), vol. 1., pp. 38, 54.

<sup>18</sup> The petition terms the lands 'Wantford in Norfolk'. The will of Thomas Tuddenham (the previous owner) states that both this manor, and that of Elveden, were in Norfolk. They were, in fact, both in Suffolk, albeit close to the county border, TNA, PROB11/5, fo. 88r. Senecle's name may suggest family origin in Norfolk, and John himself owned some land in the county: TNA, CP40/826, rot. 408d.

<sup>19</sup> James Ross, *The Foremost man of the Kingdom: John de Vere, earl of Oxford* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 39-42; Helen Castor, 'Tuddenham, Sir Thomas (1401-1462)', *ODNB* (2004, 2008); W. A. Copinger, *The Manors of Suffolk*, vol. 4 (Manchester, 1909), pp. 206-7.

<sup>20</sup> Letters patent for Senecle 28 February 1462, *Cal. Patent Rolls 1461-1467*, p. 142.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. accounts of Isabella/Elizabeth) Galeon, widow, 1462-65 for Elveden, the other 'Norfolk' manor mentioned in Tuddenham's will, which were enrolled on the Foreign Account Roll, TNA, E364/102, rot. H dorset.

<sup>22</sup> Statute 4 Hen. IV c.20.

itself be reason enough for loss of office, unless the King had granted special permission to an individual to employ a deputy. These considerations mean that Senecle's final demands, that he be appointed for the 'term of his life' and be permitted to exercise the office through a deputy, were unrealistic.

Senecle was not re-appointed to the customership. On the other hand, within a month of his loss of the customership of Bristol on 20 November 1465, he was appointed as controller of the customs on wool and hides in the port of London. A patent was issued 13 December 1465 to appoint him to that office during the King's pleasure.<sup>23</sup> The letters patent included an absolute requirement: Senecle was to exercise his office *in person*. He was also required, by statute, to be resident in the port.<sup>24</sup> Senecle did not, however, appear to account in the Exchequer for the audit of the account of the two London customers, Humphrey Starkey and Thomas Ripplingham, for the accounting period that ran from Michaelmas 1465 to 10 March 1466. A cross-check against the controller's account was usually an important part of the audit process and the controller's presence in court was a requirement unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Exchequer made other provision. Whatever the reason for Senecle's absence, on 9 March 1466 the office of controller for London's wool customs was reallocated.<sup>25</sup>

The customs were an important source of Crown revenue, either paid over to the Exchequer or directly disbursed at the Crown's order. As an example of the latter, in the 1460s the customers of Bristol were responsible for paying a part of the annual fees and rewards of royal justices from revenues accrued in the port. Authorisation of the customers' own fees had to await formal audit of their accounts, although it seems likely that they would have retained sufficient cash in hand to make that payment. In each of the four accounts for which Senecle had shared responsibility (1463-1465), the fee was divided equally between him and the other customer having authority in the port.<sup>26</sup> The customers' wages were, however, dwarfed by the discretionary reward usually allowed them by the Exchequer. In 1465/6, Thomas Gibbes, who continued in office, was able to secure payment of his reward of £46 13s 4d from incoming revenues.<sup>27</sup> Senecle, who had been displaced, was not. Senecle *was* granted his reward; it was just that that the tally of assignment authorised by the Exchequer and drawn on the customers of Bristol was not honoured. In an all too common process at this date, the tally was returned to the Exchequer and reissued as a '*mutuum per talliam*'. This was a fictitious loan, in which the Crown's outstanding debt was figured as a loan from Senecle to the King, repayable in 1467 from the receipts of the Bristol customs.<sup>28</sup>

Lawsuits brought by Senecle's executor, Richard Senecle, show that the reward of £46 13s 4d was still unpaid at the time of the former customer's death some time before November 1471. The debt was a victim of politics. Edward IV owed substantial sums to John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester. In October 1467 the King agreed that his debt to Tiptoft should be repaid from

<sup>23</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls 1461-1467*, pp. 448. By this date London had three sets of customers: for the customs on wool and hides, for petty customs, and for tonnage and poundage. Separate controllers were also assigned to each.

<sup>24</sup> These were standard provisions enshrined in 17 Ric. II c. 5: but the requirement to exercise the office in person was repeated in every controller's patent. See also Mabel H. Mills, 'The Collectors of Customs', in William A. Morris and Joseph R. Strayer, *The English Government at Work, 1327-1336*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), pp. 176-7; H. S. Cobb (ed.), *The Overseas Trade of London: Exchequer Customs Accounts 1480-1* (London Record Society, 1990), pp. xxviii-ix.

<sup>25</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls 1461-1467*, p. 515 (year date omitted in error); Stuart Jenks (ed.), *The Enrolled Customs Accounts (E356, E364, E372)*, part 9 (List and Index Society, no. 341), p. 2228. New controllers were also appointed for London's petty customs and tonnage and poundage.

<sup>26</sup> At audit the Exchequer authorised payment of the Bristol customers' fees, calculated *pro rata* on an annual sum of ten marks (£6 13s 4d).

<sup>27</sup> TNA, E401/889, 12 February.

<sup>28</sup> Margaret M. Condon, Evan T. Jones, and Glenys Phillips (eds.), 'Bristol 1465-6: Particulars of Account of Thomas Gibbes and Robert Strangways, customers, 28 November 1465 to 14 May 1466: Introduction' (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019), p. 4.

the customs revenues of Bristol, with the earl taking priority. Moreover, the earl was allowed to appoint a customer to secure that repayment.<sup>29</sup> With Tiptoft's man, Richard Walwyn, holding this office from 1468, the repayment of the debt to the earl would clearly take precedence over the money owed to Senecle.<sup>30</sup>

It might be assumed that the execution of Tiptoft on 18 October 1470 by the incoming regime of the restored Henry VI, combined with the death of John Senecle by November 1471, would have ended the story.<sup>31</sup> This was not the case. In 1472-3 Richard Senecle, as John's executor, brought a suit against Richard Walwyn in the Exchequer of Pleas. Richard Senecle sued Walwyn for payment of £46 13s 4d on a re-issued tally raised 6 May 1467.<sup>32</sup> After nearly six months of litigation, including careful examination of written evidence by the barons of the Exchequer, and jury trial in London, Richard Senecle won. His right to the payment of the long-owed reward was recognised, the barons upholding his claim against Walwyn. Walwyn initially appealed against the judgement, obtaining several writs of error for the case to be heard in the higher court of the Exchequer Chamber. He seems though to have then given up the fight. On 12 November 1473 Richard Senecle once more appeared by attorney before the barons. He acknowledged himself to have been satisfied both of the capital sum of the reward, and of the costs and damages adjudged to him the previous Easter term: a total of £50 6s 8d.<sup>33</sup>

One element of John Senecle's petition remains obscure. He asserted that the grant of the customership of Bristol had 'caused him to bynd him self for your dettis in ... gret Sommes'.<sup>34</sup> It is not entirely clear what he meant by this. If he had borrowed money in order to obtain the office, and had sealed obligations to ensure repayment to his creditors, that was hardly the king's concern. It is true that the exercise of the office would have incurred costs, including fees paid to Exchequer clerks during audit, and wages to his own clerks. It is also true that the Crown had not fully honoured its financial obligations to Senecle, nor had he been in office sufficiently long to benefit substantially from local fees and perquisites, legitimate or illegitimate. If, as customer, he had made an incomplete payment on a Crown warrant, and was being pursued for the rest, that was a known hazard of office.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, two law-suits to which he was a defendant in 1465-6 give some credence to his claims in this respect. Both cited him as a customer of Bristol. John Donne, esquire, won his case for Senecle's default on an

<sup>29</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-1477*, p. 43. Tiptoft, in return, remitted to the king half (£800) of the sums due. The repayment of the earl's loans to Edward IV absorbed most of the Bristol customs revenues from 22 April 1468 to August 1470. Discussed in more detail in the introduction to the Bristol customs account for 1469 (forthcoming).

<sup>30</sup> TNA, C81/1633 no 67; *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-71*, pp. 198-200. Walwyn, a lawyer, would also be the earl's executor: John Baker, *The Men of Court 1440 to 1550* (2 vols, Selden Soc. 2012), vol. 2, p. 1622.

<sup>31</sup> For Tiptoft, C.D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), p. 155; Benjamin G. Kohl, 'Tiptoft [Tibetot], John, first earl of Worcester (1427-1470)', *ODNB* (2004, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> According to Richard Senecle, on 6 November 1468 John had tried to obtain payment from Walwyn, at that time paired with Thomas Herbert, since deceased, as customers of Bristol, TNA, E13/157, Mich. 11 Edw. IV, m.19r. The Exchequer of Pleas was a court of privilege for Crown accountants, which was why the case could be brought there.

<sup>33</sup> *Senecle v Walwyn*, TNA, E13/157, Mich. 11 Edw. IV, mm. 19r, 27d, 34d, 35d, 28r. Another suit brought against Walwyn, by the Lucchese merchant Humphrey Gentili (for a debt arising from Walwyn's customership of Bristol when occupied with John Wode, 1469-70) found in favour of the plaintiff after arbitration; although Gentili had to accept, and received, £50 rather than the £77 11s 8d originally claimed: TNA, E13/157, Mich 11 Edw. IV, m. 4d et seq. It is possible, but unknown, that Richard Senecle too had to accept an amount below the headline sum: if this were the case, it would still have been a good result.

<sup>34</sup> This section of the petition is, in Arnold's published text, incomplete. However, given the way in which Senecle's argument was developed, there is nothing to suggest that it would have contained more detail than is currently preserved.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. the letter of Christopher Hales to Thomas Cromwell in 1539 which, albeit some eighty years on, was essentially an advice *against* the purchase of an office of customer by Hales's cousin, emphasising also the statutory regulations incumbent on the office: *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic...Henry VIII*, vol. 14, no. 231.



obligation for £20 given 12 November 1465.<sup>36</sup> In a suit that seems to have remained still unresolved in February 1466, John Wood, as a former victualler of Calais, pursued both Senecle and his fellow customer, Thomas Gibbes, on an unpaid tally for £60. Wood alleged that the two customers had known about the tally since June 1465, but that when presented for payment in October 1465, the customers having sufficient money in hand, Senecle and Gibbes would neither accept the tally, nor pay out on it. The scenario was one that the Exchequer itself could partially have validated.<sup>37</sup> However, whatever grains of truth lay behind Senecle's large and undoubtedly embroidered claims of debt, they are unlikely to have carried weight with a king whose first reign, at least, was characterised by debt and heavy government borrowing.

Disentangling the petition suggests that it contained a mix of fact and fiction, wrapped up with words of art. Richard Arnold seems to have found the petition sufficiently interesting, and perhaps sufficiently persuasive, to copy into his commonplace book. Without Arnold, all record of the petition would have been lost. The petition reveals the complex processes and networks of clientage and obligation that could lie behind the appointment of a position in the customs service at this date. It is also a reminder of the personal connections and networks between London and Bristol in the later middle ages.

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<sup>36</sup> TNA, E13/151, Hil. 5 Edw. IV, m.1. Donne was awarded both the £20 and costs. Given the people involved, was this a part payment of a reward to Donne as controller? Cf. the introduction to the 1469 Bristol account (forthcoming).

<sup>37</sup> TNA, E13/151, Mich. 5 Edw IV, rot. 59d. It is less clear whether the claim for £100 brought by Edmund Grey, Lord Grey Ruthin, against Thomas Gibbes in Hilary term 1465 arose directly out of Gibbes's customership, or was an unrelated debt brought in the Exchequer of Pleas by reason of privilege: TNA, E13/150, Hil. 4 Edw. IV, m. 1d. Grey had, however, been Treasurer of the Exchequer 1463-4. A suit for payment of a debt of £12 to William Walter, pouchmaker, entered in Common Pleas in Michaelmas term 1470, *may* also have arisen from Senecle's customership, since his fellow defendant was named as one Robert Strangwyssh: TNA, CP40/837, rot. 136r. This was presumably Robert Strangways, who had served alongside Senecle as a customer of Bristol from August 1463 to May 1464: see above, p. 3. In tracing this action, we are indebted to the index to the roll prepared by Rosemary Simons, and hosted on [AALT](#).

*The Petition*<sup>38</sup>

To the Kyng our Souerayn Lord<sup>39</sup>

Pytyously complaynt shewith<sup>40</sup> vnto your most noble grace your pour and trewe liege man, J. S.<sup>41</sup> of London, marchant,<sup>42</sup> that where as your gracyous highnes. was ones enformed bi Thomas Colte<sup>43</sup> of the most greuous sorous losses Imprisonment and troubles And gret and importable charges and expences that he hath suffred for the trew and hertili loue that he had alway vnto your most noble excellent grace and also in lyke wise to your noble pregenitor. and fadir the duke of Yorke<sup>44</sup> hit plesed your gracious highnes in consideracion and recompence of the same to assigne him certayn liuelod of sir Thomas Tudnam<sup>45</sup> which is called Wantford in Norfolke<sup>46</sup> which lyuelod cost *the* said John Senecle more than euer he had therof for within short tyme that he had it hit was taken ageyn from him and in recompence therof than was yeuen to him the custumshipp of Brystow. which too his vndirstonding was for terme of lyf and that caused him to bynd him self for your dettis in so gret Sommes which is now his vtterest confucion and vndoing withoute aide and socor of your most gracyous highnes for at this day *the* said John is vnpaid of hys wages and fees of the said office and also put from the same customership and stonidith so charged and bounde in so gret somes for your said dettes that he ferith dayly to be imprisoned and dare not passe his house for the [blank]<sup>47</sup>

Plese it therefore your most haboundaunt and benygne grace the primisses tendirly considerd. and thourght your noble reame<sup>48</sup> to restore ageyne the same John vnto *the* said customership and thereupon your gracious lettres patentis in dew forme to be made that he may haue and occupye the said office by him self or by his sufficient depute for terme of his lyf with all maner wages fees profytis and Comoditys therto due and acustomed in the way of charyte and he shall prey God for your most noble and ryall estat.

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<sup>38</sup> Text from Douce, *Customs of London*, pp. 129-30, further checked against the 1503 edition on EEBO, where the petition is at fo. xvliij/I iij. The 1525 edition, also on EEBO, has some variant spellings. It is unfoliated, but the gathering is identically numbered. Proper names have here been capitalised.

<sup>39</sup> Edward IV (1461-83).

<sup>40</sup> Probably a misreading of 'complayneth and shewith'.

<sup>41</sup> J[ohn] S[enecle] The use of initials is typical of a document entered in a formulary, where it had been preserved for its interest as a precedent.

<sup>42</sup> 1503 edition in error has 'marchar'.

<sup>43</sup> Keeper of the Hanaper 1461-7, and a Yorkist loyalist.

<sup>44</sup> Richard, duke of York, killed at the battle of Wakefield, 30 December 1460, and subsequently beheaded. John Watts, 'Richard of York, third duke of York (1411-1460)', *ODNB* (2004, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> Sir Thomas Tuddenham. See Introduction.

<sup>46</sup> Although close to the county border, Wangford by Brandon was in Suffolk.

<sup>47</sup> Rest of sentence not extant.

<sup>48</sup> This reads awkwardly and may be corrupt.