

[Note: By 1789 Walker and Fishwick were operating a large white and red lead works at Elswick, just upstream from Newcastle on the north bank of the Tyne, and were one of the Blackett company's largest local customers. See D.J.Rowe, *Lead Manufacturing on the Tyne, a History*, (1983), commissioned by Associated Lead to commemorate the 200th anniversary of lead working there in 1978.]

12 Oct 1789 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blackett

Newcastle 12th Oct 1789

Sir,

Your Mr Straker called upon me on Tuesday last to acquaint me you were now come to a Determination to sell 36000 pieces of Lead to the London Houses in three equal Divisions provided they would give you £18 p Fodder. But if not you were resolved to send it to London to sell upon Commission & that you had an Agent ready who was capacitated to give you the Security of one of the first banking Houses in London.

To this rather extraordinary Message I did not think myself fully qualified to give any other Answer at the Time other than that I would consult my Partners & inform you of our Sentiments thereupon.

This I have now done and am in full Possession of their Thoughts & Determinations respecting your Offer, and Intentions in Case of their refusal, and I now communicate the same to you.

In the first place they think the price too high & will not give it, first because they are certain they cannot sell it for the Money as Lead will fall immediately from the present prices it is now selling at in London, so soon as the East India Contract is made, and secondly because they can be amply supplied at a much less price elsewhere.

We are uniformly of the Opinion that you did not fully consider the Matter before you sent the Message the London Lead Merchants have certainly suffered the Loss last Year of several thousand pounds by Lead and 'tis no Matter what was the occasion of it, the Money certainly went out of their Pockets and as certainly into the Pockets of the Lead Proprietors and Sr Thos Blackett was greatly benefitted thereby now it seems a little unkind that when the Lead Trade is put upon an equitable footing and the Gentlemen concerned therein regaining a small part of their heavy Losses should be obstructed from that Quarter only who had been so materially benefitted at their Expende?

You may think Sir that as the Opposition in the Trade which formerly existed contributed greatly to enhance the Price of Lead so now the Unanimity which has taken place is the only reason of the Decline and that there have been concerted plans for that purpose. This is the only Apology that can be thought of for your late rather threatening Application, but Sir I can assure if so your Supposition was not well founded: the great Quantities of Lead known to be stored in various parts of the

Kingdom and the plentiful Supplies poured into the Markett of London from various parts render it totally impossible to keep up the Price if there was even so strong an Inclination to do so, and I can further Sir assure you upon the Honour of the House I am connected with that no Advantage whatever has been premeditated to be taken with regard to Sir Thomas's Lead.

Before your Offer was know [sic] to the London Houses it was their Intention to have offered you £17 per Fodder for a Quantity which was a fair Markett Price, and though the Manner of your Offer was a little unexpected yet I have Authority to say they will still be Purchasers at that Price of you if you incline to sell to them, & that you may be convinced it is an equitable Offer I quote you the prices of the very last Sales of Lead at Stockton, at Chester and at Bristol – the former is £18 per Fodder, the next 17£ and the last £16:10 per Ton.

If you further think Sir that 10s per Fodder Profit upon what Lead they sell (taking into Consideration the great Risk they run and the very great Capital they employ) I can venture to say that they would be content with less even than that could it be insured to them, and in the present Case if you think it more for Sr Thomas's Interest to have this Lead sold in London on Commission I dare almost undertake to say that our House would undertake the sale of the whole for the small Commission of 5s per Fodder – and from our own now very large Consumption of Lead – from the firm Establishment our House in London and from two of the Partners having been conversant in the Business above twenty Years, together with the known Responsibility of the House & their being able to give you almost any Security I hope they would be preferred to any other?

After what I have thus mentioned should you still think proper to refuse this Offer of 17£ for Lead & to send it to Markett through quite a different Channel you cannot blame your Old Friends for the Consequences, for in that Case they must and will both from Necessity & Choice take Care of themselves and of their Old Connexions & Customers.

I wish Sir to have your Answers so soon as you have considered the Contents of these Lines, and if you wish to have a conversation with me I will attend you at any time and place you may appoint.

If my Opinion could have any Weight with you Sr you are perfectly welcome to it, and whether or not I will just hint that if the present price of £17 is not accepted of no more than £16 will ever be bid & that if it is sent to London I shall wonder if it is not sold there for less than 15£ in a very short Time

I am for Co & Self Sr your most obt
Rich Fishwick

[cover:] John E Blckett, Esq.

[annotated in JEB's hand:] Richd Fishwick 12th Oct 1789

9 Dec 1789 Joseph Walker to John Erasmus Blackett

Dear Sir

I am arrived from London too late to profit by the introduction to Count Renne, with which you honour'd me, however, I was happy to find that my brothers had paid him every possible Attention, not only on account of his own personal Merits, but because he came here under the patronage of Mr Blackett, which to our family will ever be deemed a sufficient claim to every token of Respect.

I have also to thank you for giving me an opportunity of subscribing a mite towards the Relief of the Fatherless – the Account is truly affecting, and you may depend upon Mr Fishwick throwing something into the bag in the course of a very few days.

I beg my Compts to Mrs Blackett, and am at all times, Dear Sir,
Your ever obliged, humble Servant
Jo. Walker

Eastwood Dec 9th 1789

[cover:] John Erasmus Blackett, Esq./ Newcastle upon Tyne
[annotated in JEB's hand:] Jo. Walker Rotheram 9 Dec 1789

21 Feb 1798 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blackett

Newcastle Feby 21st 1798

Sir

I could not with Propriety send you the Bills requested by your Favour of last Week until I heard from Mr Maltby as he was displeas'd with my having paid you a Month too soon for the 5000 Pieces Lead sold near that Length of Time after the purchase of 10,000 Pieces was made.

I have a Letter from him this Day and he says the Months previous payment made you for the above must now be allowed and which being reasonable I hope you will accede to and in that Case I shall send you the Bills accordingly.

I am for Co & Self
Sir your most hble Servt
Richd Fishwick

John E Blackett Esq / Ncastle

[cover:] John E Blackett, Esq./ Newcastle
[annotated in JEB's hand:] Robert [sic] Fishwick 21st Feby 1798

7 Jul 1798 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blakett

Newcastle July 7 1798

Sir

We made you an Offer the 16th past to take Lead of you at the same price we were then buying for of others, to which we have received no Reply – We are to Day offered any Qty of refined Lead from 800 to 5000 Pieces at £14:10 but have not yet purchased, nor do we intend to purchase until we have given you time to reply to these Lines.

If you will take the above Price of £14:10 2000 Pieces of Common & 2000 Pieces of refined together and on six Months you may please to send us a tickett for the same? We are Sirs

Your most hble Servt

Walker Fishwick & Co

J E Blakett Esq/ Morpeth

25 Aug 1798 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blakett

Newcastle 25 Aug 1798

Sir

I have called once at your House last Week, & three times there and at the Office since but was not so fortunate as to meet with you, Our London House wrote me last Week to buy of you 200 Barrels of Litharge for them which as you have sold the other Houses at 15£ they expect you will not charge them more please to send us a tickett for them.

We shall soon be in need of a Weekly or monthly supply of Lead and wish to take it from you either at a fixed or unfixed price but in your Answer to our last Application you seemed not inclined to deal with us; we think from our Manner of applying we could hardly be suspected of Intending to take any Advantage of you, perhaps the Quantity might have been thought too much but we can assure you it was less than our Consumption & sale what we have to come from you now is only 3000 pieces & that will not serve us six Weeks, we wish therefore to know whether it will be agreeable to you to let us have from 1000 to 2000 pieces of Lead in the Month of October and a like Monthly Supply in Continuation? We request the Favour of your Intimation hereupon that we may not be at a Loss whether we may depend on you for serving us or not?

We remain Sir

Your most hble Servt

Walker Fishwick & Co

We have nearly received all the 7000 ps Lead sold the 9th July for W[alker] M[altby] & Co. Please send the Tickett for 5000 ps more Col[lected] of you since for them

[annotated in JEB's hand:] Answered that 25th Augt sent a Tickett for the 5000 ps Lead & one for 100 Casks Litharge only & declined selling any more Lead at present

29 Aug 1798 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blackett

Sir

We have a letter to Day from Our London House saying they are quite out of Litharge and have some large Orders and request us to find them 100 barrels more, please therefore to send us a Tickett for the other 100 Barrels and as to the 5s per ton more which you mentioned we must leave that to yourself. We are Sir

Your most hble Servts
Walker Fishwick & Co

Newcastle Aug 29 1798

J E Blackett Esq/ NC

25 Sep 1798 Thomas Jackson to John Erasmus Blackett

Newcastle Septemr 25th 1798

Sir

We accept of the Five Thousand pieces of Lead for our London House Messrs Walkers Maltby & Co on the terms offered by your favor of Yesterdays date, say 2500 pieces refined Lead & 2500 ps Common, the latter including 1/10th Slagg all at Fifteen pounds ten shillings per Fodder on 6 Months Credit, for which you will please send a Tickett for its delivery.

The Fifty Casks of Litharge you offer at 16£ per Ton 6 Mos Cr must decline accepting till we have permission from London but if you will let them have a hundred Casks at 15£ 10s p Ton – 6 Mos may include them in the above Tickett.

We are Sir Your Most Humble etc for Walkers Fishwick & Co
Thos Jackson

Jn E Blackett Esq

25 Sep 1798 Thomas Jackson to John Erasmus Blakett

Sir

Since I wrote you this Morning, I have received a Letter from Mr Fishwick in which he requests me to apply to you for 5000 pieces Lead for the Works at Newcastle on the same Terms you have sold 5000 ps to the London House.

I am Sir Your Most Humble etc for Walkers Fishwick & Co
Thos Jackson

Lead Works 25th Sepr 1798

Jn E Blakett Esq

19 Oct 1798 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blakett

Sir

We have of late had more Orders for Litharge for Exportation than for some Years back & we must request the Favour of you to find us a Tickett for 200 Barrels to be delivered so soon as you conveniently can – the Price we leave to yourself hoping you will fix it so as that we may nor be losers

We are Sir Your most hble Servt
Walkers Fishwick & Co

Newcastle Oct 19th 1798

J E Blakett Esq

[annotated in JEB's hand:] answered 20th & offered 50 casks Litharge at £16.10 /ton

20 Oct 1798 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blakett

Newcastle 20 Octr 1798

Sir

Please to send us the Tickett for the 50 Barrels of Litharge the Price of which you say must be £16:10 – but we hope you will charge us no more than you do the other Lead Merchants.

Please to include in the same Tickett the 200 ps Lead which you sold us the last Week.

We are Sir Your most hble Servs
Walkers Fishwick & Co

John E Blakett Esq

7 May 1799 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blckett

Newcastle May 7 1799

Sir

Inclosed you have our Draft on London for £2133.7.4 being the amount of 2000 pieces Lead bought of you in October last Year but which you could not deliver when we wanted it and on which Account we have drawn the Bill at two Months which would otherwise have been drawn at one Month

We remain Sir Your most hble Serv
Walkers Fishwick & Co

23 May 1799 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blckett

Newcastle May 23 1799

Sir

We have only 3 Barrels of Litharge lefr & have received an Order for Twenty Barrels to be shipped next Week – we this Day sent for a Tickett for 40 Barrels which we were informed could not be given us without writing to you, please therefore to send us Tickett for the said Quantity and we will thank you to mention the Price.

We remain Sir Your most hble Servs
Walkers Fishwick & Co

J E Blckett/ Morpeth

27 May 1799 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blckett

Newcastle May 27 1799

Sir

We have received your Favour of the 26th Inst. With a Tickett for 40 Barrels of Litharge the Price you mention £18.10 we hope you will not charge, as we did not expect you would make it so high and we actually sold 20 Barrels at the same Price delivered on board a Ship for Hull.

The Price we bought 1400 pieces of Lead at lately was £17.10 we therefore hope you will charge the Litharge at no more than 18£ p Ton and which we leave to yourself.

We are, Sir, Your most hble Serv
Walkers Fishwick & Co

J E Blckett Esq

3 Oct 1799 Richard Fishwick to John Erasmus Blckett

Newcastle Octor 3rd 1799

Sir

On Enquiry I find Messrrs Campbell & Gibson have not yet paid you for the Test Bottoms which they had from you long since, they have made no Use of them since they purchased them, never the less they ought to have been paid for before now, however if you will please to indulge them a little longer I will take Care you shall be paid the Amount and some Interest Money for over credit be allowed. I remain Sir

Your most hble Servt

Rich Fishwick

Lead Works