

[Note: These are extracts from the general visitation of the Greenwich Hospital's northern estate in 1774, undertaken by James Stuart and Thomas Hicks, directors of the Hospital. Further entries may be added in due course]

4 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Thursday 4th Aug.t

Having settled every thing at Alston we set out this morning for Hexham and passing by several places where lead mines are working, & Trials making at a considerable expence, by different adventurers, we came to Long Cross Pool the boundary of the manor on this side & were shewn the part which was in dispute with Mr.Ord; Here we parted with Mr. Joseph Hilton Junr who attended us every day during our stay in Alston Moor. He is Clk of the Deliveries of Ore & was appointed to that office in consequence of the Hospital's undertaking to smelt its own dues; his duty is to see that the Hospital's ore is properly weighed to the Carriers & to keep an account of the quantity delivered to each of them & from what mine. He is also Assistant to his Father who is Moormaster, for both which duties he is allowed £40 p. ann vizt £30 from the Hospital £10 from his Father, whose salary as Moormaster was increased a few years ago (upon that condition) from £40 to £50 p. Ann. We cannot help expressing the satisfaction we received from this young man, having found him a very intelligent, well behaved person and, as far as we could judge, extremely well qualified for the employments he is in.

The Moor Master's Duty is to survey the Mines, to see that 1/5 part of all the clean wash'd Ore is delivered for the use of the Lords of the Manor & safely kept apart by the tenants til otherwise disposed of; this the tenants are by their leases, obliged for 12 months nit no longer.

The time we spent in Alston Moor, which is supposed to contain not less than 40000 acres & to be near 70 miles round the Boundary which was rode by the Receivers about 12 years ago, afforded us great satisfaction when we considered it not only as producing great Riches to the Hospital & private adventurers, but giving bread to near 3000 people, men women & children employed in various occupations in & about the mines & to numbers of others one way or other depending upon them. The Hospital's dues have for some years past amounted to upwards of 3000 Bings of ore one year with another, and produced clear of all charges, between 8 & 9000 p ann. After quitting this source of industry & Wealth we continued our journey to Hexham, and in our way visited

Gregshield Colliery at High Stublick (part of Langley South Common) which is at present under Lease to Christopher Bell, the Hospital's Bailiff for Langley Barony, for 21 yrs expiring in 1781 at £18 p ann. This colliery which is now working in an indisputed part of the above Common is at a very small distance from the Hospital's new erected smelting Mill & Refinery at Langley & consequently very conveniently

situated for supplying it with coals & Cinders, but it is much to be feared that the Seam will be exhausted in a few years, the ore carriers horses, after delivering their Loads of ore at the Mill, carrying back great quantities of Coals with them into Alston Moor. However should this happen the Mill will not be essentially hurt by it, as, in consequence of Trials made about 12 months ago, other Seams have been found in the neighbourhood.

[Added in the margin in a different ink:] Since 1775 this Colliery has been new won or laid dry by a level & <that> Coals are used for the consumption of Langley & Blagill Mills for many years to come, also a considerable increase of water obtained for the working of those mills. [The 'Blagill' mill adjacent to Langley was commenced in about 1785, suggesting that this comments was added no earlier than that date.]

The Ore Carriers' Horses abovementioned bring back each of them $\frac{1}{4}$ of a Bing of 2 Pokes of 1 cwt each, for which their owners are paid from 5s to 6s p Bing according to the distance. One man generally attends 15 of them.

From the above Colliery we went down to the Lead Mill & took a cursory view thereof intending to take a more particular one the first convenient opportunity. The buildings appeared to be in good order & the smelters at work in their different Branches. We then went on to Hexham where we lay, tho very uncomfortably this night, the town being in great uproar & confusion owing to a Canvas carrying on by the different Candidates for the County of Northumberland.

15 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Monday 15th Aug[us]t

Set off this morning early to view the Hexhamshire Estates, accompanied by Mr Jobling the Bailiff, in whose district they are, and proceeded in the place, to

Aydon Shields & Salmon Field both under lease to Joseph Bell for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £75 pAnn. being about 5s/2d pAcre. These farms consist of 287A. 0R. 36P About 150 of which are in meadow, pasture & woodland, the rest arable of which a very small part is in fallow. There are a great many good Oaks upon these farms & a great many from old Stools which are in a retrograde State, & ought to be cut down & sold; particularly in Cow'd Oak Field, the Shore Woods & Hall hill. One $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Former Viz Cow'd Oak Field should be drained & planted. The Low Show, which is something more than 11 Acres, is full of Bushes & underwood; and, as the soil is good and the place well shelter'd it should either be stubbed & planted with Acorns (which we recommend) or converted into meadow; either of which would be an improvement; the reason why we prefer the former is that the soil & situation is proper for the growth of Timber which will always find a good market in this Country both for the Collieries & Lead Mines. We therefore think it will be proper to give orders for it's being dug,

planted with Acorns & properly fenced. About 6 Acres of the Hagg which adjoins the Housing at Ayden Shields, being over-run with Bushes & underwood, should, in our Opinion be treated in the same manner –

Salmon Field, which is One of the above farms, is in the Occupation of William Bell, Joseph's Brother.

The Housing at Ayden Shields is in good Condition; that at Salmon Field indifferent except a helm built about 60 Y[ea]rs ago. Hedges are much wanting in both and should be forthwith planted.

From these Farms, we entered upon the <ad-in> called Heckely House which contains 108A. 0R. 16P & is under Lease to Joseph Green for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £31.10s.0d pAnn. being about 5s/10d pAcre It consists of between 70 & 80 Acres of meadow & pasture, the rest arable of which a small part is in fallow.

The Dwelling House is very indifferent; the other Buildings pretty good.

Hall New, a part of the above farm containing upwards of 70 Acres, should be divided into smaller parcels & then fenced with quick hedges – The Hot bog is very moist & wants draining – From this Farm we entered upon that called

Rowleyhead which contains 136A.2R.10P and is under Lease to Christopher Nevin for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £10 pAnn. being about 5s/10d pAcre [It consists of about 80 Acres, pasture & meadow the rest Arable of which about 12 Acres are in fallow. Black pasture, Lowhouse pasture & Low Close want draining and the 2 latter clearing of Bushes.

The Housing, which is very neatly thatchd with Heath or Heather is in pretty good condition. The Helm which has a Granary over it, was built about 10 Y[ea]rs ago. There is another Set of housing occupied by the Tenant's Brother, which, tho[ugh] small, is tight & in good repair.

From hence we proceeded upon, Gairshields, a Farm at about 250 Y[ar]ds distance surrounded by the Common, which contains 57A.3R.2P & is under Lease to John Curry for 21 y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £16 pAnn being about 5/6 ½ pAcre. This farm, which has scarce a hedge upon it, consists of the greatest part pasture, & meadow. One parcel, containing near 11 Acres, laid down without Seeds & in bad Condition; which is a piece of bad husbandry too common amongst the farmers in this part of the Country, who pretend (tho[ugh] their only motive is an illjudged parsimony) that Seeds impoverish the Land; not considering, at the same time, that the weeds which supply their place, & are a disgrace to every good Husbandman, require an equal if not a greater degree of nourishment.

The Housing on the above Farm is very indifferent.

From hence we proceeded over the Common to a small detached farm, about 2 Miles distant, called the Bush which contains only 18A.1R.25P & is under lease to Thomas Ridley, in consequence of a permitted Assignment from William Bell, for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779, at £8 pAnn. being about 8/7 ¾ pAcre. It consists of about ½ meadow & pasture (part of which was pared & preparing to be broke up) And the remainder Arable. The Housing is small & but in indifferent condition.

From hence, returning over the Common, we went to Peacock House which Farm contains 69A.3R.13P & is under Lease to James Carr for 21 y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £31 pAnn. being about 8s/10 1/4d pAcre. It consists of between 20 & 30 acres of meadow & pasture, the rest arable, none of which is in fallow. In White Field, which contains upwards of 35 Acres, are a great many shabby Oaks from Old Stools which should be cut down & the Ground cleared & converted into Tillage; being very good & proper for the purpose.

Haggberry Hole, which is Rough pasture, we think should be planted part with Acorns & the rest with willows.

The Devils Water which is very rapid & sudden in its motions frequently takes away a great part of the waste Land of this farm adjoining to it. And there is a small piece, which has been separated from Whitefield by the above river's having made itself a new channel, now claimed by Job Ward who owns the Lands in the opposite side. It is not possible, without going into a very considerable expence, to secure the Land against the Attacks of this outrageous River, nor is it worth while to be at that expence as the Ground, which it takes away upon these Occasions, is of very little value.

The Course of the Lead Mine belonging to the Trustees of the late Lord Crew's Charity is supposed to run under the above Farm. The Housing is small & but in indifferent condition.

From here we went into the Lands of Turf House, which consists of 30A. 1R. 37P is under Lease to Thomas Green for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £13 pAnn. being about 8/6 ½ pAcre. It consists of about 24 Acres Arable of which a very small part is Fallow, & the rest meadow & pasture. In the Bank pasture is a small Wood in which are some strait thriving Oaks. Hedges are much wanted here, and also some plantations as a screen to the Buildings.

The Lands of this Farm are awkward ly intermixed with others belonging to one Mr Dixon. It were therefore much to be wished that the latter could be purchased; but, as they are Copyhold it becomes a Matter of doubt how far the Hospital can make such a purchase was the Proprietor inclined to sell upon equitable Terms. The Housing on this Farm is very indifferent.

We next entered upon the adjoining Lands of Rawgreen & having viewed some part returned to Hexham.

16 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Tuesday 16th Aug[us]t

Proceeded this morning to view the remainder of Raw Green, & the other Farms in Hexhamshire, taking, in our way,

Whitley Mill & Ground, under Lease to Isaac Burnhope for 21 Y[ea]rs ending in 1779 at £26 pAnn. The Land consists of 7A. 0R. 35P (exclusive of two incroachments made about 20 y[ea]rs ago containing something more an Acre) and is valued at £7 pAnn. being about 20s/pAcre. It is chiefly meadow & adjoins to Rowley Water which has carried away about 2 Roods of Abbey Holme. There are a few Oaks & Ash upon it. The Mill which was built about 2 Y[ea]rs ago, is valued at £19 pAnn. & is in very good condition.

From hence we proceeded to Raw Green which contains 138A. 0R. 24P is under Lease to Robert Lowes Esq. of Hexham, for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £45 pAnn. Being about 6s/6 ¼ d pAcre. We found it in the occupation of Thomas Askew & Thomas Bell Sub Tenants. It consists of between 50 & 60 Acres of meadow & pasture, some Woodland & the rest arable of which a very small portion is in fallow. There are some good Oaks upon this farm particularly upon Far Banks (3) and Will's Field, the latter of which wants weeding & thinning. In Broomy pasture is a wood with some shrubby Oaks which are past their growth & should therefore be cut down & sold as should some of the same sort in Jenny's Darg, and the ground properly prepared, planted again with Acorns & firmed in; for without the latter it is in vain, as we have already observed, to attempt the growth of Timber with any success, and, with it, in many places planting would be unnecessary, as the young Oaks would spring in sufficient quantities from the Acorn & come to maturity if protected from the Bite of Cattle.

We cannot quit this Farm without mentioning with concern, that the Ax appears but too plainly to have been made an improper use of in the woods, several of the Oaks having been robbed of their Branches in a very shameful manner & other mischief done. The Tenant Bell, who is suspected to have been an old Offender, was charged with being concerned, but positively denied it's having been done by him or by any body else with his privity. However there was too much reason to doubt his veracity, and we therefore recommend that Mr Lowes be immediately called upon to turn him out of the Farm.

We next proceeded to Uppermyre House which Farm contains 50A. 0R. 3P and is under Lease to William Henderson & Wm Noble for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £22 pAnn. being about 8s/9 ½ d pAcre It consists of about 15 or 16 Acres of meadow and pasture, the remainder arable, nine of which is in fallow. There are a great many Oaks on this farm, some in a thriving state, & others (which ought to be cut down & sold) past their growth.

NB there are 2 Sets of Housing on the above Farm, which (except the Barns & Stables) are very indifferent. There are 2 Sets of housing which are small & ordinary, except a Stable which is pretty good. We went next to

Netherholmes which Farm contains only 8A. 2R. 37P & is under lease to Alice Winter for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring 1779 at £8 pann. Being about 18s/3 ¼ d pAcre. It consists but of 2 fields, one of which (5 Acres) is chiefly meadow & pasture, the rest Arable. The Dwelling House is old & small the Stable pretty good. From hence we proceeded to the

Stapples which Farm contains together 63A. 2R. 31P, but is now divided & lett to the undermentioned persons for 21 Y[ea]rs ending in 1779 as follows, viz.

To George Dixon 34A. 1R. 20P at £15 pAnn. being about 8s/8 ¼ d pAcre. About ½ of this farm is meadow & pasture the latter very rough & swampy, the remainder Arable. There are a great many Oaks past their growth in the Field called the Dales, which should be cut down & sold & the Ground stubbed. there are some of the same sort in the Wood pasture & some which are in a thriving state. We recommend the Bank of the last mentioned Field which adjoins the Devil's Water to be planted & fenced, being a very proper place for growing wood upon & scarce fit for any other purpose.

To William Angus 29A. 1R. 11P. at £15.10s.0d PAnn. being about 10s/8 ¼ d pAcre. this Farm consists of about ½ meadow & rough rushy pasture some of which wants draining, the rest arable. There are 2 sets of housing in the above Farms, which (excepting a Barn & Stable built a few Y[ea]rs ago) are but in very indifferent condition.

There we finished the Hexhamshire Estates, the wood upon which has been lately valued at £1575.2s.0d And, having so done, rode over to Wooley which is at a few miles distance & began upon the survey of that Farm but were obliged, on account of the weather, to leave off, before we had made any considerable progress, And return, thoroughly wet to Hexham.

17 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Wednesday 17th August.

This being a wet day and unfit for the prosecution of our Business in the Fields, we made up the opportunity to revisit

Langley Lead Mill & c and accordingly went over that place. This mill with the several conveniences and machinery belonging to it was finished about seven years ago, under the directions of the present receivers upon an excellent plan, as it appears to us, and in a handsome substantial manner. The smelting house contains four hearths, three for ore and one for slags. The refinery which is a building detached at a small distance, contains a refining and reducing furnace. Besides which there is an office for the Mill Agent, a smith's shop, and ample provisions of peat houses, Bing steads for holding the various ores etc.

The principal supply of water for the use of this Mill is from the level of Gregshield colliery, about 1/4 of a mile off - which has as we have been informed this advantage that it has not yet been known to freeze (even in the hardest of frosts) before it gets to the mill or even for, some space afterwards; whereas the contrary happens at other lead mills in this part of the country which are frequently stopped working in the winter for a considerable time on that account.

We saw the different operations of smelting both the ore and the slag, refining and reducing the litharge into lead again, and making what they call the test, which is an oblong shallow vessel, composed of a certain proportion of bone and fern ashes in

which the lead is run in order to its being refined. Ashes are used on account of their unvitricifiable quality resisting in a wonderful manner the extreme heat of the reverberatory furnace.

A cake of pure silver was taken off whilst we were present, weighing more than 1,300 ounces, being the largest by upwards of one sixth part of any that had been produced at this mill before. It was the produce of 2,667 pigs of lead, whose weight was 2,671 cwt. 2 grs. 15 lbs.

These pigs had by a previous operation of the same kind been so far refined as to be brought down to 22 pigs only. The produce of silver upon this occasion was about 11 ozs. for every fodder of lead, the loss of which latter by refining and reducing is reckoned upon an average about one fifth part.

The workmen who are employed in smelting etc. are paid by weight as under: -

	£.	s.	d.
Smelters of refinable ore	6.	0	per fodder
Smelters of slags	12.	0	per fodder
Smelters of litharge, black slags, and test bottom lead	1.	8.	0 per fodder
Persons for stamping and washing black slags	7.	0.	0 per fodder
Persons smelting lead from black slags	3.	0	per fodder
Refiners	2.	10	
Reducers	1.	6	
Reducers for weighing	2		

Two smelters at the one hearth will smelt about 17 pigs of 1 cwt. each and sometimes more if the ore is free, in; about 12 hours. Three refiners can refine about three fodders, which is as much as one test can conveniently hold, in about 22 hours; but then nearly one third part of that time is taken up to prepare for working by heating the furnace and gently drying the test. Three reducers can reduce about two and one third fodders in twelve hours. As to what may be earned at the slag hearth, by stamping and washing the black slags, smelting litharge slags, etc., we were not able to learn with any precision, 'but as the prices allowed per fodder are so much more than the others it must necessarily follow that the operations of producing the same quantity of lead must be proportionably more tedious.

The Mill Agents' house & the four others for the workmen which adjoin to it are in very good condition being all built of stone & covered with heath. Some land, containing 60a 3r 17p has been taken off from that part of Langley Castle farm, which is in the occupation of Thomas Brown, for the use of the above agent & workmen besides 21a 2r 31p more spoiled by the smoke from the Mil & Refinery & taken up with the

buildings & necessary works. Brown is allowed £26 p. Ann for the whole – which is made up in the following manner

	£ s d
Paid by the Hospital p. ann	7. 0. 0
Agent	6. 2. 6
Workmen	13. 7. 0
	26. 9. 6

The surplus of 9s6d is applied towards paying 5 p cent upon the money expended in making fences &c

The above mentioned 60a 3r 17p are divided into small Farms which are improving and the young quick fences are in a thriving condition.

18 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Thursday 18th Aug[us]t

We returned this morning to Wooley and resumed the survey of that farm, an Account of which is as follows

Wooley contains 303A. 1R. 26P including 168A. 0R. 23P being the Hospital's Allotment upon a late Division of Bulbeck Common & is under lease to Martin Swinburn, for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779, at £58 pAnn. being about 3s/9 ³/₄ d pAcre altogether. This farm consists of nearly ½ meadow, pasture & woodland; the rest Arable, about 12 Acres of which is in fallow –the pasture in general is rough & some part of it wants draining. About ½ an Acre of the Haugh, in which is a Cottage & the ruins of a mill has been damaged & rendered almost useless by the inundations of the Devil's Water whose attacks are so sudden & violent as scarce to be resisted. The greatest part of Calf Close which is upwards of 31 Acres, is a wood consisting of some fine thriving Oaks & Ash, we found about 2 Acres of it under the plough, preparing for Tillage, but we recommend the whole to be planted where there are vacant spaces with acorns; the soil & situation being particularly well adapted for the Growth of Timber. In a piece of ground called the Spring and also in the West Field & Low Field are several ordinary Oaks from old Stools; which, being past their growth, we recommend to be taken down & sold.

The Timber up on this Farm has been lately valued at £791.

The greatest part of the above Allotment is in Tillage & the remainder rough pasture, but by the appearance of the Crops the soil is very far from good. A new Wall upwards of 100 Roods long has been built this spring on the West Side of the Hexham road which runs thru the above Allotment, the expence of which, including Gates etc has amounted to £40; it is well executed & appears to be a very necessary improvement. The Hospital's Tenant, before the Division took place occupied the

whole of this allotment (except about 47 Acres) as an Incroachment & paid £3 pAnn. Acrage Money for it to Mr Baker Lord of the Manor.

There is a deep Gill or Hollow between part of the above Allotment & Corbridge Fell of which the D[uke] of Northumberland is Lord; in the bottom of which is a small run of water which forms the Boundary. It seems to us that a stone Wall or some other fence should be put up (giving & taking according to the winding of the Gill) to prevent interpasturage which must otherwise unavoidably happen & that then some plantations may probably be made to advantage on the Bank on the Hospitals side, & we therefore desired the Receivers to give it a further consideration & to endeavour to learn if the Duke will consent to be at ½ the expence.

The housing on this farm is pretty good & the Farm itself, from the diversity of the Ground & the disposition of the Wood upon it one of the prettiest we have seen since we left Keswick.

From hence we went over to Dilston & having visited some parts of the Lands there & at Corbridge which will be spoken of more particularly hereafter, we returned, late in the Evening to Hexham.

19 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Friday 19th Aug

Dilston which Estate, formerly the residence of the Derwentwater Family, is now divided into the following Farms viz.

Demesne Farm which contains 490A. 0R. 32P is under Lease to Eliz. Nicholson & William Todd fo[r] 21 Y[ea]rs, expiring in 1779 at £256 pAnn. being about 10s/5 ¼ d pAcre. It consists of about 3/5ths meadow, pasture & waste Land, & the remainder arable of which a small part is fallow, about 2 Acres of the West field & 1 Acre of the Middle field were spoilt by th[e] inundation in 1771. The Dove Cote Close, in which are some very fine Ash Trees, we recommend to be cleared & planted where there are vacancies, and we think it would be better if Widehaugh Wastes were cleared of the Alders Broom & rough Bushes.

Widehaugh which alone contains 195 acres of fine pasture is much injured by the burroughing of Rabbits; the Tenants of Dilston having time immemorial kept a Warren there. It was supposed that all the Rabbits were destroyed by the great flood in 1771 but we found them in great numbers & the Land overrun with them. The Tenants have very improperly ploughed up a piece of this Haugh which the Receivers informed us they had ordered them to lay down again immediately.

The Defences in the above Haugh to keep off the attacks of the Tyne which bends its main force against great part of one side of it are in exceeding good condition, the wearing which is very extensive being built in a solid & substantial manner.

Near to Widehaugh is, Sam's Island lately divided with Sir Walter Blackett who used to rent the Hospital's share for £40 pAnn; which share consisting of 6A. 0R. 10P is

now under Lease to William Labourne for 5 Y[ea]rs ending in 1779 at 3s pAnn. & consists entirely of rough pasture.

The Housing upon the Demesne Farm abovementioned, of which there is a Set for each Tenant, is in very good condition. A new dairy having been built & 2 very good rooms added to Mrs Nicholson's Dwelling House about 5 Y[ea]rs ago. And the other Tenant's Dwelling House having had a considerable repair at the same time.

Newtown Farm which contains 852A. 1R. 7P is under Lease to John Snowball, Michael Brown & Thomas Brown for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £400 pAnn. being about 9s/4 ½ d pAcre. It consists of upwards of 300 Acres of meadow, clover, rough pasture & some wood, and the remainder arable, of which a good deal is in fallow or Turnips. The Broom Close should be cleared of rubbish near the woodside and planted. The Town Field now in Tillage being low land (near the River) should most part of it be laid down to meadow again. Birkside which contains upwards of 100 Acres is rough pasture except about 7 Acres which is in Oats. There are a great many young Oaks upon it, and we recommend the Banks towards the Devil's Water as well as both sides the Cleugh to be fenced in and the vacant spaces planted with Acorns. The Park which contains 327A. 3R. 39P is more than half of it in Tillage, the rest very rough pasture which wants clearing & draining. there are a great many roots or stumps of the old Oaks remaining still in the ground, the grubbing up of which, as they are of a very large size would be a great improvement. On the Bank towards the Devil's Water are a great many very fine young Oaks which receive injury from the Cattle, we therefore recommend the Bank to be fenced top & bottom, the trees now growing thereupon pruned & weeded and Acorns planted in the vacant spaces; the soil & situation being particularly well adapted to the growth of that kind of timber, the park having formerly produced some of the largest in the Country. The Wall on the West side of this park, being an ancient Boundary, has been lately rebuilt in a substantial manner, and that which adjoins the Turnpike road leading to Hexham having been rebuilt about 10 Y[ea]rs ago is in very good condition.

The Housing in general, except a Helm which wants some repair by the Tenant is in good condition being stone slated, Besides there are in the Park 2 large Cottages with a Granary over them, 2 Barns, a Helm etc which have been since the commencement of the present lease & are at present growing fast out of repair.

On another part of the farm too is a pretty new Cottage of stone slated, built about 5 Y[ea]rs ago, and necessarily, as appears to us, for the accomodation of one of the Tenants.

Radcliffe Closes with a House & Smith's Shop under Lease to Carnaby Hoggarth for 21 Y[ea]rs expiring in 1779 at £13.0s pAnn. The Closes contain 7A.0R.15P and are valued at £7 pAnn. being about 20s pAcre, they consist of about ½ meadow & the remainder arable. In the Close called the Chesnuts are some Trees of that name which ought to be taken down. The House & Shop are in good repair.

Ground & Gardens, contain 7A.0R.35P and are under Lease to William Todd for 13 Y[ea]rs ending in 1779 at £12.10s.0d pAnn. being about £1.14s.7 ½ d pAnn. They consist of about ½ meadow & orchard, the rest arable. In the Garth joining the Hall Garden are

some plain and also some aspen Trees which ought to be taken down. The whole of the above Ground & Gardens is walled round.

Mill & Ground under Lease to Joseph Fidler for 21 Y[ea]rs ending in 1783 at £43 pAnn. The Ground which is all in Tillage contains 14A.0R.26P & being valued at £12 pAnn. is about 16s/11 ¼ d pAcre. The Mill which is valued at £30 pAnn. is in good order, having lately had a new Water Wheel 16 feet high, and the Miller's house is indifferent.

Whilst we were viewing the Land we discovered in the Mill Dam, the Stool of an Oak Tree & in the road adjoining a piece of the outside of the Stem which had been sawed off, this led us to make an enquiry into the cause of it, And, after some time, Fidler the Miller, who had strenuously denied it at first, confessed that he had sawed up the tree, carried the plank home; assigning, in his Excuse, that he did not think there was any harm in it as the Tree had been brought down the Devil's Water in a Flood, and that he did not know from whence it came or to whom it belonged. Upon this we went to his house where he produced the plank which was immediately given into the custody of [blank space] Nicholson a Son of one of the Tenants of the Demesne Farm who was desired to take care of it, which he promised to do. We at the same time reprimanded the Miller very severely, for what he had done & threatened him with a prosecution which we think highly necessary & therefore recommend in order to put a stop to such iniquitous practices in future. Bell the Bailiff seems to have been guilty of great Neglect in not taking proper care of the above Tree for he acknowledged he knew of it's being brought down the River, tho[ugh] it does not appear that he gave himself any trouble to prevent it's being embezzled; for which we think him highly reprehensible.

Town Green etc including the Hall, Lanes etc containing 12A.1R.32P. The Green is enjoyed in Common, but the other part is lett to Nicholson for £3 pAnn. the whole is waste pasture.

The Receivers pointed out to us an Improvement which they thought might be made by an Alteration of the road which goes over the above Green, taking down some old ruinous Cottages adjoining & laying the Ground on which they stand with their Garths etc to a part of the said Green, which together would make a good sized Field, the Land being of a good Quality.

We entirely agree with them that it will be an Improvement, the Ground in it's present state being of little or no value & therefore recommend that orders be given for the proposed Alteration to be made.

Having finished our Observations for the present we returned to Hexham, where we were attended by Thomas Kairns a Servant to Mr Bates the Tenant of Coastley, who, as we had been informed by Edward Coats of Haydon Bridge could give information of abuses committed by the Todd's Tenants of Land's End Farm he having lived there 7 Y[ea]rs. Upon questioning him upon the matter, he seemed averse to making any discovery, declaring in the first place that he could not, and in the next place that if he could, he should not chuse to do it as it would ruin his Character with

his Neighbours & be the means of depriving him of Bread. Not being able to bring him to any Confession, tho[ugh] it was clear from his manner, that he was not so ignorant as he pretended to be, we dismissed him; being more & more convinced of the Truth of every part Of Coats' information.

26 Aug 1774 James Stuart

[Note: This follows immediately after the entry for 19th August in the manuscript, presumably set here out of date sequence because it follows up with the survey of Dilston.]

We returned to Dilston this morning & had the rest or stool of the Oak Tree taken out of the Mill Dam and upon comparing it with the size of the Plank, there did not seem to be any doubt of their being parts of the same Tree, which we judge must have squared about 7 or 8 inches.

We then took our last view of the small remains of Dilston Hall now in ruins, the greatest part having been taken down by the Director's orders, within these few Y[ea]rs past & the Materials sold from time to time, having produced a clear profit of upwards of £800.

The Ground & Gardens which have been mentioned before letting at present, within £3.10s.0d pAnn. for as much as the whole did when the Hall was included. We could not behold these Ruins, the beautiful situation of the place & the circumjacent Demesne but a few Y[ea]rs ago laid out in parks & adorned with most noble plantations now no more to be seen, without reflecting upon the uncertainty of all human affairs, and upon the Folly & Misconduct of the Man who in the prime of his Life and in possession of one of the finest Estates in this Country, could so wantonly sacrifice both to the importunate, misguided zeal of a bigoted, ambitious woman.

As the Materials of what is left standing of the Hall are of very little value and the Ruin makes a pretty Object to the neighbouring Country, we recommend that no more of it be taken down, but that it remain an Example to others and a monument of Public Justice to future Ages. We also recommend that the rubbish be entirely removed and the ground filled up, ploughed <close> to the Walls & laid down with seeds.

There is a small Chapel adjoining, which formerly belonged to the Derwentwater Family, and under it is a Vault in which are 4 or 5 Coffins containing the Remains of the late unfortunate Earl & some of his Predecessors. The Windows of this Chapel are broken & it is otherwise going to decay; we therefore recommend that it may be repaired, the windows secured by wire, and that a room in it, now occupied by a pauper, may be taken away. We also recommend that the entrance to the Vault may be closed up, or otherwise secured, so as to prevent the Bodies of the dead from being made a public show of, in so scandalous way & indecent a manner as they are present. We would also propose that a few Trees may be planted close around the Chapel & that it may be kept up in decent condition; out of respect, at least, to the memory of

such of the Family now deposited under it, as were never convicted of having offended against the Laws of their Country.

Having viewed all that appeared necessary at Dilston we returned in the Evening to Hexham. And having now finished our view of every part of the Derwentwater Estate in its neighbourhood we prepared to take our Leave of that place, & set out to Newcastle, and accordingly, on

27 Aug 1774 James Stuart

Saturday 27th Augt

We left Hexham and proceeded upon our journey accompanied by Bell the Bailiff til we got out of Corbridge Parish which was the Extent of his District the way we were going; with whom agreeable to our resolution, we left strict orders to discharge Pearson immediately & never to employ him again in any thing which concerned the Hospital. We were then joined by Mr Jobling the Bailiff whose district we were now coming into, and, in our way to Newcastle, visited the Hospital's Estate at

Newton Hall, now in 3 farms vizt.

[Extract to be continued]