

**15 Aug 1792 John Bell to John Erasmus Blackett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 15th. Augt. 1792

Yesterday I wrote to Mr Johnson of Stamfordham requesting him to let me know when he would be next at Hexham that I might give you Information in order to your acquainting Mr. Watson to meet Mr. Johnson respecting the Pipes to be fixed in the Water Closets at the Abbey and as soon as I receive Mr. Johnson's Answer I will let you know by a Messenger as there is no depending upon your getting a Letter at Matfen from hence otherwise than by a Person sent on Purpose

I must request a Ticket from you to Mr. Hunter for Twenty Pieces of Refined Lead as the Wall Pipes and the Conductor thereto are now making ready for both the North and South Sides of the South Wing of the Abbey and are wanted to be put up with as much Expedition as the Nature of the Business will allow

Sir Edward Blackett, your Brother, and her Ladyship I have had a very good account of and I hope they continue in as good Health as when they arrived back in the North

Mr. Beaumont I understand has given a Clergyman who lives at or near Shields, but whether North or South I know not, Leave for three days shooting on his Moors - The first day he killed 4 1/2 Brace of Moor Game two Pidgeons and a young Hare - yesterday he got only two Brace of Moor Game - owing to the Weather Mr. Thos. Ogle who is a very good shot I understand has made but poorly out - I am

Sir Your most obed. hble Servt.

John Bell

**29 Aug 1792 John Bell to John Erasmus Blackett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 29th. Aug 1792

On Monday morning we had here the greatest Summer Flood there has been for some years past. the River was quite out of its Banks and the Water ran down the Haughs near the Boat - Several of Mr Beaumont's Tenants have suffered - The Water was among Ralfsh Little and Robert Bell's Potatoes and <Midford> the Millers' Family were obliged to be carried from the House upon Men's Shoulders the Water being too deep for them to be carried out on Horseback - The Great Haugh below the Mills was all covered with Water - WHarbottle's Land at Broomhaugh and Anick Grainge was very much flooded the Water run down among his <Roses> and Turnips in various places and he had a Number of Lambs upon Broomhaugh Island but I hope he has lost none tho that cannot yet be ascertained as the the River has not subsided so much that the Water can be forded.

No Damage is done to the Bridge that I hear of but a few Stones from a Pier that was not quite above Water Mark - There must be much Damage done near Wylam Newburn and Ryton and Stella Haughs

Mr. Beaumont I presume holds his Resolution of being in the North about the 31st of the present or 1st of next Month - I am

Sir Your most obed. hble Servt.

John Bell.

**15 Mar 1797 John Bell to John Erasmus Blakett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 15th. March 1797

In the first place I must beg your Pardon for not noticing that part of your Letter yesterday respecting the Masons but it being Market day and Country People coming in I was afraid of losing the Post by Interruptions - which made it escape me/one

The Masons go forward very well at the Abbey and would do better if they had a compleat Plan for then they would know what they have to do and contrive accordingly but that is not the Interest of the Architect - What is to be done is related to them by little and little - very little at a time indeed- I am at present very much out of humour with young Newton

The Carpenters are preparing the Roof according to Newton's Directions when up here last Week to be ready for the Slaters when they come and I believe the Plumber has got some Instructions respecting his Work sent from Newton by the Carpenter - I am

Sir Your most obed. hble Servt.

John Bell

**16 Jul 1797 John Bell to John Erasmus Blakett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 16th. July 1797

With this I send you my Half Years Rental up to Mayday last with the Vouchers a very large parcel indeed- there is of them

I have got a Load of potatoes from the West Wood which my Family have tried and so far they prove very good and if you please as soon as this severe Frost which fell in here on Tuesday Night is over I will send you a Load for there is no venturing to send them while the Frost continues lest they should be spoiled

I think it would not be amiss if it was proposed to Mrs. Forster and her two Sons to give a Security for Mrs. Beaumonts Money and if they refuse then to bring an Action against Mrs. Forster the Executrix in order to bind the Effects in some sort in her Hands

I have seen a Plumber here who will give in a Proposal for doing what Work will be necessary in his way and as I presume you do not mean to cast the old Lead into Piggs it will save the Carriage to Dukesfield and back here again to have it new cast here and it can be weighed to him and from him besides there is not a proper Frame for casting Sheet Lead at Dukesfield that which is there being a very small one

I am Sir Your most obed.hble Servt.

John Bell

**25 Jul 1797 John Bell to John Erasmus Blackett**

Sir Hexham Abbey July 25th. 1797

I have wrote to Mr. Tweddle this morning by a Special Messenger acquainting him that Mr. Beaumont is willing to pay for Allen Mill in the same Proposition that Greenwich Hospital pays but not more at the same time stating to Mr. Tweddle that Blagill Mill that is rated at £100 a Year contains three Ore Hearths one Slag Hearth and Two Refineries and that Allen Mill contains only One Ore one Slag and one Litharge Hearth or Reducing Furnace and one Refinery

Allen Mill was only £3-3-0 a Year on a Lease for 21 Years and not £6 you will therefore please set that Matter right with Mr. Tweddle if you have mentioned it because I have said in my Letter to Mr. Tweddle it was let to Monkhouse and Hopper for £3-3-0 so that if our Accounts contradict each other he will suppose I have imposed upon him and endeavoured to mislead him which I should be sorry for

It is very odd how Peoples Ideas differ with respect to the Value of such Property as Smelt Mills for Dukesfield Mills that are the best and have the most Conveniences of any in the Country are rated in Slaley Parish at no more than £10 a Year

Wishing Mrs. Collingwood and her little ones a good Journey a happy Meeting with their Friends in Scotland a safe return home and yourself a perfect Reestabishment of your Health I remain

Sir Your most obed. Servt.

John Bell

**15 Sep 1797 John Bell to John Erasmus Blackett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 15th Sept. 1797

On Monday Mr. Walton Mr. Mowbray Mr. Emerson Mr. L. Allgood Mr. Dickinson Mr. Dodd and myself with several more met upon the Ground adjoining the Manors of Alston - Moor and Stanhope in order to settle the Line of Boundary between the two Manors.

At first there was like to be some little demur and Altercation owing as I think to Mr. Mowbray's not seeing or understanding the Nature of the Business so well as I dare say it is the first of the sort he has been concerned in but that little dispute being settled we got on with the Business very well afterwards - We got the whole line staked out - between Twelve and one oClock on Tuesday and had no want of Rain and Hail to <slow> the Water-fall

On Wednesday I came over the Fells from Love Lady Shield to Allendale -town in a very coarse morning and in the Afternoon the Weather grew worse so I staid at Allendale Town allnight and got home yesterday being Thursday about Noon.

Upon the whole I think there is a tolerable fair Line of Boundary set out and I think pretty much to the Satisfaction of all concerned which I hope will keep Peace in future

I proposed to Mr. Mowbray that my Lord Bishop of Durham should pay one fourth of the whole Expence attending this Business which he said he would name to the Bishop and said he thought it reasonable so that if agreed to by the Bishop Greenwich Hospital will pay one half and the Bishop and Mr. Beaumont the other half of the Expence between them

By this time I hope you and Mrs. Collingwood with her Daughters are all arrived at Newcastle in Health and Spirits

I am Sir Your most obedt. hble servt.

John Bell

**5 Oct 1797 John Bell to John Erasmus Blackett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 5th October 1797

I am much concerned to hear the Acct. you give of young Newton tho at the same time I have reason not only to hope but to believe the Money he got of one Case could be all or most of it paid away because the very last time he was at Hexham he got no Money of me - On the 8th of Augt he was paid £150 but nothing since

Mr. Hunter did not say any thing to me respecting the Collector's Letter which was sent to Dawson an Officer of Excise here respecting the Smelt Mills but I heard of it and that he very prudently had taken a Copy of it to send you and I also heard Mr Peter Mulcaster had done the like to send to Mr. Walton

If you did not see Mr Walton yesterday you will not be able to see him for some time because he came through Hexham yesterday in the Evening I am told to proceed on his Receipt in the West Country at Keswick and Alston and I know he is to be at Low Byer the Manor House for Alston on Tuesday next the 10th. Instant

I should be very much hurt to hear for Certainly that the Smelt Mills and Lead Trade were to be put under the Excise Laws a Measure that ought to be resisted and as no Law is yet enacted for that Purpose I for my own part would give the Officer no Acct. either of the Situation of the Mills or of the Quantity of Lead smelted nor ought he to be suffered in my opinion to come near the Mills lest he should take an Acct. of the Lead on Hand and perhaps get some Information from the Workmen -- It is time enough to give the Excise Officers Accounts when by Law they have a right to demand them

According to my Ideas Ministry dash too much the very thing that I suppose they wish to avoid, by their Conduct they are accelerating - a Revolution. Some of their late Taxes are not only ungracious but oppressive and Tempers are much soured - They will drive the People to Desperation - A Republic in England I wish and hope never to see.

A Meeting of the Lead - Owners should be had and most certainly putting the Lead Trade under the Excise Laws should be opposed with all their might It will be

necessary to review your Memorial of the 30th. of Novem. 1785 - respecting the Duty on Lead

The Acct. you give of the behaviour of those Soldiers of the Dumfries Light Dragoons is shocking indeed I trust they will be found out and brought to <consign> Punishment I am

Sir Your most obed. hble Servt.

John Bell

**20 Mar 1798 John Bell to John Erasmus Blakett**

Sir Hexham Abbey 20th. March 1798

A Report has been handed about here this last Week that you fixed the Pays some say for the last Week in April and others the 9th. 10th. and 11th. of May

Be pleased if you have fixed the Pays to acquaint me with the Days because I want Mr Williamson to appoint a time for holding the Head-Counts which must be within 28 Days after Easter and I wish to then clear of the Pays for the Convenience of the Suitors

Have you the Book with the Plans for the Alterations here for Mr Johnson is rather at a Loss what sort of Windows are intended for the great Room and for the Stables and Lodging Rooms above the Stables which are to look into the Court Yard - If you have those Plans be pleased either to send them up here or I will desire Mr. Johnson to call upon you to see them as you shall think best

The Accounts for Captn. Collingwood when you heard from him I hope were good and Mrs Collingwood with her little Family and yourself I trust are well tho here is severe Weather for the Season - I am

Sir Your most obed. hble Servt

John Bell

**20 Nov 1799 John Bell to Diana Beaumont**

Mrs. Beaumont

Hexham Abbey 20th. Nov. 1799

Madam

I have sent you inclosed a Drawing with the exact Dimensions of the Marble Hearth that is broke with the Sort of Marble it is.

Corn is exceedingly high here Wheat? the Hexham Roll of four Winchester Bushells £3-3-0 and Rye the same Measure £1.14.0 which must be much higher to your Miners when carried nearly Twenty Miles farther - How those People are to be supported through this Winter is a Matter of great Consideration tho no doubt there are many of them very improvident yet they should not starve in a Christian Country

The Abbey is going on as well as the Weather will permit and no time is lost

There has been another Meeting of the Trustees of the Alemouth Road concerning the Road from the South End of the Bridge to the Town of Hexham which I attended and produced a Copy of my Letter which I wrote to Mr. Soulsby who is a Trustee in the Year 1795 in Consequence of an Application of Mr. Tate then Surveyor of the Road to him wherein I acquainted Mr. Soulsby that Coll. Beaumont has directed me to say that the Gentlemen Trustees had only to please themselves with the Line of Road from the South End of Hexham Bridge to the Town and the Coll. would accomodate them with Land for a Road in either Direction as two were proposed - I then observed that the Trustees had made an Election and brought the Road up the East Mill Lane and had been accomodated with Ground by the Coll. to make the Road more commodious by taking a piece off three of his Fields - This they assented to and that the Coll. had fulfilled his Engagement but wished to know whether he would oppose the Line of Road to lead through his Fields from the South End of the Bridge to the West Mill Lane - To which I replied I had no Instructions and tho I had wrote the Coll. on the Subject yet I understood at their first Meeting it was the Intention of some of the Gentlemen then present to write to the Coll. - they then seemed to decline that and requested I would write and by the Complexion of the Gentlemen it appeared to me if you or the Coll. were to oppose it they would not persist in bringing the Road that way yet none of them said so only from what Mr. Tulip of Fallowfield said that he must acknowledge it would be cutting the Fields in such a way as he would not like his own cut I presumed it

In Coll. Beaumonts Situation it is impossible for me to say what he should do were he in a different one it would be very easy to give proper and sound advice

It seems to me that when at the first Meeting they talked of Writing to the Coll. and at the second decline it they saw the Matter in another Point of View and thought it was asking a Favour - There is to be another Meeting on the 10th. of next Month which I propose to attend and request the Coll. and you will in the mean time let me have your Determination that I may acquaint the Trustees with it

I am sorry this Matter should have been agitated now upon the Eve of an Election as is expected should the Irish Business go forward - I am

Madam Your Faithful and obed. Servt.

John Bell

**11 Dec 1799 John Bell to Thomas Richard Beaumont**

[Note: See also Ruddock to Beaumont 24 Dec 1799]

Hexham Abbey 11th. Decem. 1799

Sir

Yesterday I attended the Meeting of the Trustees of the Alemouth Road and requested to know if they had given up the Idea of bringing the Road from the South End of Hexham through your Fields to the West Mill Lane and they gave for Answer they meant that by the new Act the End of the Alemouth Road should terminate in the

Market place instead of the Glenwhelt Road near the East End of the Town of Hexham I then replied that the Trustees having chosen a Line of Road you had accomodated them with Ground for that Road agreeable to your offer and having done so you thought it rather hard that you should be called upon again to furnish more Ground - they then said you had not given them any thing and called the Road Lordship's Road and added that it was made not only against their Desire but contrary to both their Wish and their Will and that was done was by an Order made by the Trustees Resident in the Neighbourhood of Alnwick near the East End of the Road who knew nothing of the Situation of the Roads about Hexham nor how the Town would be accomodated or inconvenienced by the proposed Alteration which Frank Tweddle and Soulsby got those Trustees to make an order for - I said nothing to them about restoring your Fields to what they were before because what was taken off them was a very narrow Lip at the Sides not worth mentioning and in some places not the Breadth of the new Wall which the Trustees built

Mr Ruddock Clerk to the Trustees has Orders to write you upon this Business and if you have not a Letter from him by the Time you receive this you will get one in a Post or two - He is much for the Road through your Fields and has orders to set forth to you the Names of the several Gentlemen at the sundry Meetings held about the Road as desirous of having it in that Direction but I know some of the Gentlemen Logged it with this Condition that no additional Expencc was to be laid upon the Tolls in that Account

Bainbridge of the Riding who is just returned from the Northumberland Provisional Cavalry was at the Meeting yesterday and said to me Coll. Beaumont in his Situation should not oppose the Road coming through his Fields it was an ungracious thing and bid me give it up to which I replied I could give up nothing nor was I insisting the Road should not come that way I was only so presenting what you had done and taking Notice that it was hard you should be called upon again to have your Fields cut - Bainbridge is a very silly Fellow - what Business had he to mention your Situation in the Company -- I am

Sir Your Faithful and obed. Servt.  
John Bell

**24 Dec 1799 Nicholas Ruddock to Thomas Richard Beaumont**

[Note: This letter appears to be the one John Bell told Col Beaumont to expect in his letter of 11 Dec 1799]

Hexham 24th. Decer. 1799

Sir

Some few Years ago the Property mentioned in the inclosed Notice was lying unoccupied. I applied to your Agent, Mr Bell to take it to farm and was accepted as a Tenant at the Rent it had been formerly let at. I have since carried it on to some Advantage to the Country and myself, during which time every Concern of yours has

been treated with the Preference of Supply, and every possible Respect. Not knowing any particular Reason why I am not permitted to continue Tenant, I take the Liberty of mentioning the Subject to you; but if it is your Pleasure, or Convenience that requires it, I have only to beg that you will excuse this Trouble, and am Sir,

Yr very obedt Servt

Nich Ruddock

Mr Bell has been so obliging as to say to me, it was done by Mr Alderman Blacketts Orders; but I have reason to believe it was so at Mr Isaac Hunters Instance