

Monday June 10th 1833

The bygone week having been occupied in accompanying Mr Hooper to different places & in the settlement & management of various matters all of which will have been detailed by him in his journal. I have not thought it necessary for me to give an account of them.

Before entering upon a detail of my own proceedings, it is only doing justice to Mr Hooper & to my own feelings to express the strong sense that I entertain of his work & gratitude that I owe him for many instances of personal kindness & attention. I shall endeavour to profit by the instructions & advice which he has so kindly bestowed upon me, & while I venture to express the hope that I may be found to be actuated by a zeal similar to that which is so strongly manifested in him for the interests of the important institution in whose service I am now engaged, I dare not entertain the expectation that I shall be able to exceede the Trust committed to me with equal ability.

I must especially beg to entreat the indulgence of the Board, should I seem to be slow affecting any object, or in coming to a conclusion on such matters as may come before me, arising from the caution which I may find it necessary to exercise & the difficulty which continually meets me from the want of acquaintance with past proceedings, & any ignorance of parties as well as of the location of the property – To obviate these difficulties in the speediest manner, I intend as fast as possible, to make a personal inspection of every part of the estates, & in doing so, besides the account of my progress which will appear in my journal, I shall keep for my own immediate use & reference, a more detailed record of my opinion as to the condition & management of each farm, the quality of the land, the state of repair in which the Buildings & Machinery etc may be, any improvements which the Tenants may require, or that may suggest themselves to my own mind, & every thing connected with the farm, so that I may be able to discuss & settle matters with the Tenants whenever or wherever we may meet.

In this view of the property, I shall take Mr Hunt with me, that he also may obtain an acquaintance with the objects which will in future require his particular attention.

I rode to Haydon Bridge this morn & received various documents & papers from Mr Hooper, also £117 for furniture sold by him to the Innkeeper, which, with £22.8.0 due by myself on the same account, will be entered in the books tomorrow, - being in all £139.8.0. – After taking leave of Mr Hooper, I went accompanied by Mr Hunt to West Mill Hill where some repairs, & the building of a small stable are going on. I found the farm in good condition bespeaking the management of an industrial & attentive tenant, although I have reason to fear it is a losing concern to him.

Besides the farm of West Mill Hill, Mr Harle occupies an allotment on Grindon common, about two miles distant. The boundary wall he keeps in tolerably good repair, and the division fences though not good are in a better state than most of those around him. The land upon this common is of very poor quality, producing heath & coarse pasture but in this allotment are about ten acres, part of which Mr Harle has now in cultivation, and which, if fenced from the pasture land would be very useful for growing turnips & winter fodder for his stock. – It would cost I think about £10 to build a stone fence to complete this inclosure for which the tenant would lead the materials. Mr Harle wishes it to be done this summer & I told him that I would recommend it to the Board.

I next visited Haydon town Farm, to which Mr Bowden has newly entered, & after having heard so much of the great expenditure & the complete state of repair of the Hospitals property, was surprised to find almost every thing in ruins. The farm house is now undergoing repairs, by Mr Hoopers directions and of the offices, the only building that can be made available, are a barn & very low Cattle shed.

The Land is in wretched condition, and in the Common, a portion of which, he also occupies, the fences are in a most ruinous state. As to the internal divisions, I should, at present decline giving any opinion as to the propriety of incurring the expense of putting them into repair. So long as the land is continued in future, it is not necessary, and if at any time it should be thought advisable to take a part of it into cultivation, it would then be only necessary to repair such as that part might require. With the boundary fence however, it is different and there is connected with this farm, a part of the boundary wall, which has been left by the late tenant in so dilapidated state as to be of no use, & incapable of amendment except by being entirely rebuilt. As this must of necessity be immediately attended to, I directed Mr Hunt to obtain from men accustomed to such work; the price per rod, at which they would rebuild it. The extent is not great. This allotment is ill supplied with water, but from the situation & appearance of the ground I think it is likely to be found near the surface, which may be easily ascertained by putting down a bore rod, without the expense of sinking or of making a <lane> to a neighbouring brook as recommended by the tenant.

The next farm is East Mil Hill, occupied by Mr Langhorn, who seems to be an intelligent and spirited farmer. The buildings are in good repair, and the land in excellent cultivation. He also has an allotment on the common at an inconvenient distance.

West Brokenhaugh, occupied by Mr Green an old and infirm man, but whose son seems to be active & industrious & very desirous of improving the farm; upon the state of which, so far as he has yet gone, his exertions are very apparent. This is a pleasant little farm & the land of general good quality. Green states that he has never got the gates & posts promised him on entering, & that the roofs have not put into repair,

which is quite evident. A little walling should be allowed, to secure a piece of grass land near the house from trespass, & formed into a field for calves etc., he also begs to have a cart shed built, but which I told him, I could not undertake to promise.

I was much annoyed to find on a part of this farm which had been drained some years ago, that the work had been done so superficially, that Green, wishing to plough the land a little deeper than had been done by his predecessors, turned up many covers of the drains & was actually obliged to cart them off the field. The drains, of course, are filled up with soil, & rendered useless – And yet these drains doubtless cost the Hospital the same money as if they had been done efficiently & of a proper depth. I must endeavour to guard against such gross impositions in future.

East Brokenhaugh, newly entered to by Mr Langhorn, brother of the tenant at East Mill Hill, contains a portion of good land with a considerable quantity of a much inferior description, besides an allotment of very poor land on the common, the roofs are in very bad condition, also the Sashes and flagging in. the dwelling house. The fences may generally be repaired at little cost – One ought to be taken out as occupying a quantity of land to no purpose, which the tenant will do as his own cost, on condition of a stone fence being removed in another situation, which requires intirely rebuilt. The subdivision fences on the allotment are like all the other, in a ruinous state, the boundary wall also is bad, but not so bad as to require to be entirely taken down. As the repair of this is immediately necessary I entrusted the doing of it to Mr Langhorn, who engaged to manage it with a due regards to economy & efficiency, informing him; that when done, it will be his duty to keep that & all other things in repair for the future. The former tenant having escaped, leaving the farm in such disorder, it seems unavoidable that the houses & fences should be put into repair before the present one can be required to maintain & leave them so. The general bad condition of the farm, does little credit to Mr Todd who left it, & who was nevertheless a strenuous applicant for the situation of Bailiff now held by Mr Hunt.

Allerwash West farm occupied by Mr Watson who is in his 80th year & has been a tenant of the Hospital all his life. His Son takes the management & they are now beginning a new Lease at a reduced rent, they lost by the last lease, the old man says, £2000 – The buildings & fences are in a very fair condition, the land is not of very good quality. The place is very ill supplied with water. I was shown a spring at a considerable distance which they would like to have conveyed in pipes. To supply the house and <folds> but leaden pipes would be too expensive on account of the distance, & I fear the spring is not sufficient to force its way in a dry season, so far along a brick conduit, a pump would be the safest & cheapest and that I engaged to propose to the Board. They understand for that Mr Hooper has given permission for enclosing a small piece in front of the house, which at present is open to the field; to substitute for the garden they now have, which is small & inconvenient. This is proper enough & would not cost much but Mr Hooper did not name it to me.

Allerwash Town farm – let for new year to Mr Robson, who is not, I suspect, is not a very choice tenant. Of course no expense will be incurred in improvements at present.

Allerwash Mill occupied by Edw Dodd, the mill is in tolerable repair, but on a small scale, the dwelling house is in bad condition, & a cottage quite uninhabitable, the west gable being in a dangerous condition. The present tenant is I fear hardly in circumstances to make the most of it – but to occupy the mill to advantage there ought to be a little more land attached to it. And as the adjoining farm will be to let in the Autumn, that might easily be arranged. As the railway is to pass very near, that would form a suitable boundary between the farm & any land that might be attached to the Mill. Here daylight began fail & my inspection necessarily closed. I reached Corbridge at eleven o'clock.

Most of the farms which I have this day visited have allotments annexed to them on Grindon Common, It is now too late to consider, whether instead of subdividing so large a tract of very poor land, at an immense expense, it would not have been better to have enclosed the whole in a ring fence, & let it together for a stock farm – the expense has been incurred; the walls have been built, & gates supplied, although they are now in a great measure useless, & the cattle going at large as if they had not been – If any of the tenants should see fit to patch up the interior fences for their own convenience, very well – but I would not, from any prospect of their usefulness, recommend to the Board to incur such an expense. The boundary fences, separating the different occupancies, ought to be kept up by the respective tenants, but where a new tenant comes to take possession of a boundary wall in bad condition, there seems no alternative but to repair it for him.

11 Jun 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 11th June

In the morning I was occupied in the office & Afterwards rode to Hexham to pay money into the Bank, & proceeded to Coastly, where I had engaged to meet Mr Hunt to examine the draining that is going on there, that I might explain to him the manner in which he must insist on having the work done, & also that I might enjoin the tenant to measure the depth of the drains from day to day, when Mr Hunt is absent, & render to him the account, that he may be able to exercise a due control over the workmen, & prevent the imposition which there is reason to fear has been too often practised in this department. Here is a new Machine – built by Stokoe, having a large & excellent Water-Wheel, but which, together with the troughs conveying the water, have been left without pitch to preserve them.

The practice of supplying the tenants with thrashing machines, gives encouragement to their carelessness & to the Millwrights extravagance. Mr Coulson has occupied this farm only three years & seems anxious to improve its condition & to do well – but I fear he has embarked too largely for his capital – his horses are not good – he has hardly any sheep, & to be solely dependent upon corn in such a season, is ruinous. This farm, in common with most in the district, strongly indicates by the appearance of the crop, the want of vigour & state of exhaustion which are produced by too frequent a repetition of corn, without the renovation of intermediate pasture & ought to be managed in the five course rotation instead of the four, i.e. ought when sown off, to remain two years in grass, instead of one. My further progress was impeded by rain & Mr Hunt & I returned six miles to Corbridge in the heaviest fall I ever experienced.

Mr Hooper would inform the Board of the application of the Tenants of Throckley Colliery for permission to work for coal within the Duke of Northumberland's boundary, altho' in the manor of the Hospital. In consequence of that application, I wrote to Mr Taylor & Co as viewer to His Grace, a respectable man, whose report I could rely upon for information on the subject. His answer received today confirms the opinion I had already been led to entertain & holds out little hope of success. The tenants are men of little or no capital, who hold a farm which is ill managed, & which they w[oul]d be better employed in cultivating than in trying experiments upon a bad coal. Should they be allowed to make the a winning in the Duke's property & fail in the attempt, it is almost certain that the Hospital would be saddled with the damages consequent upon their experiment. And should they even succeed, all that is to be gained, is the chance of their being able to pay a rent of 40£ a year, which tho' stipulated for, I believe they have never paid hitherto – I shall have the honour to enclose Mr Taylor's letter & plan, & to await the decision of the Board upon the subject.

12 Jun 1833 John Grey

Wednesday June 12th

I had arranged for setting out early this morn'g for Newlands, but the heavy rain prevented me. The Tyne was much flooded & when the rain ceased, afforded me a good opportunity of examining the embankment on the Dilston estate, which I did from end to end accompanied by Hall the contractor for the work. That commencing at Corbridge & extending along the south bank of the Tyne to the entrance of the Devil's Water & again up the latter to the railway bridge, is in a very satisfactory condition, except in one place where the materials being sandy, the surface is not sufficiently covered with grass to secure the bank from washing, & must be sown with seed, or, which is better, be covered with turf from the plantation. Several trees also formerly

noticed by Mr Hooper, should be cut down. Some growing in the bank injure it by shaking, & others from being too near, & collecting around them branches or any kind of floating wreck in floods, form eddies to the injury of the embankment – The purposed elevation of the Western embankment at the south end should be done forthwith. It stands there so near the river that there is no chance of getting soil for raising it, but from the adjoining fields of w[hic]h there are three growing Hay, Oats & Turnips. Hall thinks it ought to be left till after harvest to save injury to the crops – but Octr & Novr are dangerous months for floods, & a flood coming upon a newly made bank is likely to take it away. Besides, should the water break over in its present condition & flow through the fields, it would do 100 times more damage than any injury that would be done to the tenants by removing the soil at present. Besides the embankment for saving the land from being overflowed, much expense has been incurred in securing the margin of the river, between which & the embankment there is flourishing plantation. This ought to be an object of constant attention, for a few pounds expended in repairing a breach or turning off a current, may eventually save an hundred – Though I could not see it today, being under water, I fear some of it is in a dangerous condition. While standing on the embankment, I saw a tree on the edge of the river, fall over & roll down the stream.

I received a letter today from Mr Hetherington of Haydon Bridge saying that Mr J Walton had been disappointed in his intention of meeting Mr Hooper at Lowbyer on Monday to treat for the Inn there, and wished to know if I could settle the matter with him. I wrote immediately to Mr Walton expressing my regret that he had not seen Mr Hooper, who was anxious to have made the agreement with him, informing him that I had no direction regarding it, but that if chose to accept of Mr Hoopers terms, which I understood to be, a rent of 80£ for three years, with a deduction of 15£ from the first years rent, I thought he need not hesitate to make his arrangements for entering to the premises – requesting him at the same time to send his proposal to me, that I might communicate it to the commissioners. It is likely that Mr Hooper may ere now, have written to him on the subject.

13 Jun 1833 John Grey

Thursday June 13th

I was prevented by the state of the weather from prosecuting my inspection of the farms this morning & passed several hours in the office examining into the accounts & leases & investigating in the journals the details of certain matters which I want to be informed upon.

I had an interview with Lessees of Throckley colliery & told them that from Mr Taylors opinion & all I could learn on the subject, their chance of success was not such

as to justify their attempt. They waged their claim very strenuously, stating that they had already expended nearly £500 upon the trial, & that they thought it very hard to be debarred of the only remaining chance of being remunerated. There did seem to be a hardship in the case, & I consented to their making a trial to ascertain by boring, at the point recommended by Mr Taylor, the state of the coal, but by no means to commence any operation which wd cause damage to the Duke's property until I was acquainted with the result of the boring, & had an opportunity of communicating it to the Board.

The day improved a little & I rode to Thornborough taking Mr Hunt with me, who having his tillage book, ascertained the state of the cropping as he goes along. This property is in the most satisfactory condition of any I have yet seen, except perhaps, Mr Langhorn's farm at East Mill Hill. Mr Scott the largest occupier entered to his farm five years ago, in a exhausted state from over cropping, & has the sagacity to determine upon changing the management from the 4 to the 5 course rotation by which the land remains in grass 2 years in every 5. The appearance of his crop is most promising & the result of this experiment has fully justified his expectations. He obtains he says an equal quantity of corn from the reduced quantity of land, with a consequent saving of seed & labour; & at the same time greatly increases his produce of mutton & wool, at present the only articles of agricultural production wh bear a remunerating price to the farmers. I heartily wish that more of the tenants wd follow this example, which would greatly provide their interests & the improvement of the property. Mr Scott is bound to keep in grass a field of good turnip soil close by the homestead, & has in tillage one extremely inconveniently situated at a great distance; down a steep hill & partly subject to be overflowed. One draught wd do more in carting out manure & bringing home produce in the former than six in the latter. I cannot commend the judgement that bound him to such an arrangement. It would be proper to allow Mr Scott to lay the one off to grass, as a substitute for the other for which he is anxious to do.

The Quarry farm is in very fair order but the sale of lime this season much reduced by the poverty of the farmers.

High Barn farm has too small portion of turnip soil the land in pretty good cultivation, & the buildings in good repair, part of a boundary fence on the edge of a brook wants to be removed, wh can only be done properly by a give & take with the adjoining proprietor.

I find by conversation with the Tenants, & from Mr Hunts book, that a great number of new Gates are wanted by those who have lately entered to their farms, & that the older occupants require wood to make them for themselves. In the former case the Gates must be supplied to them & in the latter, the custom is to give them wood to make up in their own fashion & sometimes they forget to make them at all. The Gates cost the Hospital 4/6 each for work & nails - but I am of opinion that if a quantity of suitable wood were collected to some convenient point, & the making of a number of

gates at a time contracted for, they might be made for 3/6 or 2/6 each. I would then propose that they should be in the custody of the Wood-keeper, to be delivered by him under a written order from Mr Hunt to the new Tenants, gratis & to others by their paying the cost of making. In this way there wd be a saving of expense, the gates would be examined before they were paid for, the wood would cut out to greater advantage & we should be certain that it was applied to the proper purpose.

I have spoken to the Woodkeeper on the subject, who entirely concurs in my opinion & says there is a large unoccupied Barn at Dilston that wd be the most convenient depot possible for the purpose. If the Commissioners approve of this suggestion, I shall direct Mr Hunt to procure proposals from Carpenters for making the gates & give him a plan & dimensions.

14 Jun 1833 John Grey

Friday June 14th

Mr Leadbitter Tenant of Newtown north farm complained that in consequence of a water course; which passes through some adjoining grounds, not being kept clean, the water from the high grounds lodged upon his corn fields. I examined the spot & finding his complaint well founded, caused Mr Hunt to give notice to the parties to clear the watercourse forthwith, or that I should, according to the provision of the act for dividing Corbridge waste, which I found in the office, order it to be done at their cost. I then proceeded to the inspection of the Newtown north farm, Newtown south farm, Dilston park farm, Dilston Demesne Haugh farm, Dilston Hall farm and Dilston Mill & lands annexed. In my progress I had occasion to make several remarks on matters which may come under future considerations. I shall at present make such as are of immediate urgency – At the Park farm occupied by John & Wm Benson, the buildings are all in a good state except the Stable, the slates upon which are so bad, as to have rotted the wood & rendered it incapable of holding the water, & indeed totally unfit to lay fresh slates upon. The walls, as well as the hay loft are sustaining much damage from the same cause, & I am not certain, that when the roof comes to be taken off, some part of the walls may not require to be taken down. Mr Benson has occupied this farm for three years, & states as the reason of this roof being so bad, that it was condemned as being unworthy of repair at his entry, & that he had ever since defended his house from rain as he best could, 'by stopping bundles of straw into the holes'. The other roofs which had been all repaired on Mr Benson's coming to the farm three years ago, are not water tight, nor are any of those I have been met with, though quite new, that are made of the gray slate of the country but of course he has no claim upon the Hospital for any but this one, which had not been put in order for him. I considered it a great misfortune to the Hospital property, that the buildings are almost exclusively covered with gray slate, which being very porous, imbibes so much moisture as to keep

the wood always damp, & when frost succeeds a course of wet weather, is found to scale off & admit the wet to the ruin of the timber & the discomfort of everything beneath. I have seen several houses, & Mr Benson's is one, which have been lately covered but are now dripping with wet inside from the late rain.

Mr Wm Benson of Newtown South farm occupies a portion of hill ground at a distance from his office, the only access to which is by a steep road which probably was not previously good, but which he states to have been much cut up by permissions having been given to the Railway company to lead stone upon it from the hill for building a bridge etc. In addition to this the late rains have run it into holes & such as to render it impassable. Mr Benson states that on entering to his farm, Mr Sample promised that this road should be repaired, which was not done. He would do something towards it, but as he holds an unquestionably a very dear farm, & cannot pay his rent, much cannot be expected from him. I shall, if possible, procure something from the railway company and probably a contribution of 10 or 15 £ from the Hospital, would render the road tolerably safe. I shall of course take care, that cuts be made for carrying off the water, & preventing the runs which have done so much mischief at present.

15 Jun 1833 John Grey

Saturday June 15th

The morning being fine at 6 o'Clock, I set out for Whittonstall & Newlands, where I spent the day in inspecting each farm, with its dwelling house & office, the Mill, the roads now under repair, the ruinous school house etc & reached Corbridge between 9 & 10 at night. I must necessarily pass over here, many remarks which I have noted for future reference, observing generally, that considering the poor quantity of the soil, & the high situation of this district, the tenant, especially the three brothers of the name of Hunter, have greater credit for the condition of their farms, than many of those more favorably circumstanced on the banks of the Tyne. The farm houses occupied by Ed Soppit & Thos Wilkinson; which have been lately built, are preposterously large, & could have spared enough to make two or three of the others respectable. In several of those, the doors, but especially the windows, are going to decay for want of paint, admitting rain to the injury of the ceilings & floors which should be attended to. Several repairs in the Miller's house & others sanctioned, as they say, by Mr Hooper, & certainly needful, have not yet been executed, they are of small amount. But I must pass them by to come to a matter of greater importance & one which will require serious consideration – Newlands Haugh farm is occupied by John & Anthony Fewster at a rent of 233£ per an - & they owe 1 ½ years rent up to Mayday last, Every thing about the place indicates poverty & confusion. The houses are in a most ruinous condition, & in contemplating the necessity of building new offices & a

dwelling, the tenants seem to expect that they would be allowed for leading the materials, which is not usually the case, & by that means they would be enabled to liquidate their arrears & continue in the farm. I feel myself called upon frankly to state the doubts I entertain of such a favorable result. If they were poor before, this year must leave them more so. They have no corn of the last crop & very little stock, they could not, I imagine purchase extra horses for leading to the Buildings which nevertheless they would undertake in the hope of payment the conveyance must be, that the farm would be neglected & that tho' they might hang on for a year or two, I greatly fear that they could not rally in such a way as to be benifitted by the arrangement, & that eventually the Hospital would have to take possession of an impoverished farm under a heavier arrear of rent than at present.

I should be unwilling to aggravate the misfortune & distress of poor & industrious people, but I could not acquit my self of an honest discharge of my duty were I not to suggest to the Commissioners this view of the subject.

Adjoining the farm & close by the dwelling of the Fewsters, is a farm occupied by Robt Hunter, a man advanced in life, who only became a tenant of the Hospital three years ago & His rent is 180£ & he left 55£ unpaid of the rent due in Novr last. So that he now owes 145£. On asking him for the arrears today, he stated his inability to pay & his apprehension that he must give up the farm.

I said that surely he could not be so far beaten by one bad year & that he must have had some capital to begin with – 'Yes, he said, he had 200£' !!! at interest, besides his horses etc but it was now gone.' The stock upon the farm is of very little value & on asking him how he expected to get on with so little capital, he said that the Hospital was to build a machine, & do a good deal for the place, & had corn kept its price; he thought he could have got through thus exemplifying the fact, that a Landlord who does every thing for a tenant but plough & sow the Land, offers a bounty for needy adventurers & men with inadequate capital. This man has the appearance of great industry & may struggle through. But I should think it a fortunate circumstance should both his farm & Fewsters be given up at once, the two together would be likely to attract a respectable tenant. Hunter has got a machine & Barn adequate to the thrashing of both farms. A little addition might be required to the dwelling house, but I think it likely that his Buildings might be made to answer for the whole at one third of the cost of an entire set of new offices, which Fewsters farm if let by itself, would require.

17 Jun 1833 John Grey

Monday 17th June 1833

I went in the morning to inspect the draining at Coastley and a quantity of Work charged for by Gilhespey, whose account Mr Hooper declined paying until inquiry was made inspecting it – the Work as stated in his account has been done, but I am much dissatisfied with the prices charged, and have informed him, that if he does not make a reluction [sic] of the charge, when he comes to receive payment on Friday that he will not again have any employment from the Hospital – this man seems to have been a deputy Bailiff under Mr Sample, as well as undertaker of Work – allowed to set out the drains – to cut them as he pleased, to fix his own prices & to measure off his own Work!!!

I then went to Coastley Highside – a small Farm of poor land on a hilltop – nothing has been done to the Buildings since the present Tenant entered three years ago, Mr Sample never having visited the place; the House is damp – wants Locks, painting and spouts – There is luckily no thrashing Machine, but the Barn-floor is quite unfit to lay Corn upon, for want of boarding.

The next place is Bagraw, a poor Farm and still poorer Tenant, called Thorburn – I fear he will neither be able to pay his Arrears or hold on his Farm – I persuaded him to attempt a little draining to improve a Field he is working for Wheat – The rent of this Farm is £95 and the Farm house alone looks like having cost from 4 to £500 in building – a double Cottage would have suited much better – the housewife said they had no need for the upstairs rooms, and she no time to clean them – It is moreover excessively ill built, and scarcely habitable on account of Smoke, which I ascribe to the bad finishing of the Chimnies and walls, as the smoke is seen issuing from all parts.

I then went to Longhope – a high situation and cold soil – but rather well farmed by Mr Milburn – inspected a good deal of draining and marked out with Mr Hunt the situation of some yet to be done.

I next proceeded to Elrington East Farm, at which, being let for only one year, nothing needs at present to be done – It is not however in bad repair.

I came next to Elrington Hall Farm and found it in good cultivation – The House and Buildings in good repair – some draining wanted on the high ground. – Mr Lambert begged to have a Shed enlarged which is certainly too small and would not cost much. I begged of him to remind me of it next year.

I next examined Woodhall Mill & Lands. The Mill is in good repair, with a powerful Water Wheel – Metal pipes have lately been laid, to convey the Water from

the Reservoir to the Mill, which ought to be covered over with earth – also a part of the Garden Fence should be rebuilt which was taken down in laying the pipes – I calculated the expense and bargained with the Miller to do both for £3.

I then went to Woodhall Farm, newly entered to by Mr Hutchinson – In the dwelling House and adjoining Cottage some repairs are wanted, as left by Mr Hooper to my direction – The Stable is very bad and wants new Stalls – The roof of a small Shed too is intirely rotten.

In repairing old Buildings where the work is not intirely to be made new and can only be done by days work, I find that the Hospital has been charged 3s/4d and 3s/6d per day, which the Workmen receive from the Undertaker only 3s/- in such work, where no peculiar skill or nicety are required, I see no need of the intervention of an undertaker, & have set a Joiner to work at the above mentioned Stable today at 3s/-

18 Jun 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 18th June 1833

I returned to Mr Jay my own Bond for £5000 and those of my two sureties for £2500 each together with a statement of the Accounts.

I then went to Whittle farmed by Mr Spraggen, who seems to be a very industrious man & keeps his land in good condition – having been formerly in two Farms, the Buildings are inconvenient and unconnected, and a part in a very dilapidated condition – The Tenant is by no means desirous of having more done than is absolutely necessary – Stones have been in part provided for building a Stable for four Horses and a small Fold & Shed, but which has not been gone on with – It ought to be done before Winter, as part of his Horses are very ill accommodated, as well as his young Cattle – The Thatch of an out house is in bad condition & some other trifling repairs are wanted, to put the place in such order as to require him to maintain it in future.

I proceeded to Throckley – The South Farm, in the occupation of Mr Stephenson, consists of land of a strong body – in part rather steep & heavy to work, but in good cultivation & the Crops most promising – The most valuable part of the farm is subject to be overflowed by the Tyne. A negociation is at present going on to prevent this, by an embankment to be made by the joint contributions of the Hospital, the Duke of Northumberland. Mr Clayton & Mr Bates, Mr Bewick & Mr Blackett are both in the same predicament, but decline taking any part in the work; in which Account, if proceeded with, it will be necessary to turn the embankment across the Haugh at the West end of Mr Clayton's property, which may have the effect of driving the Water back upon Mr Bewick's land. Before commencing this Work, two things appear to me,

ought to be especially attended to. One that the proposed embankment shall not have the effect of increasing the floods upon the adjoining property, so as to give the owner a claim for damages against the Hospital – The other, that the Parties now joining to raise the embankment and their Heirs & in all time coming be bound by Deed to contribute in the like proportions to its future maintenance.

The House and Offices on this Farm are magnificent, having cost, it is said £3000 a good deal of which might have been saved without any detriment to the Building, by having the Walls built in the ordinary way, & only the coins, windows and doors of dressed Stones, whereas the whole of the Walling both here and at the north Farm is of hewn work – The Thrashing Machines upon this property all belong to the Hospital & are all drawn by Horses. Upon a farm growing so much Corn and so near to Coal, there would have been a great saving to the Tenant in working by Steam.

I found the North Farm occupied by Messrs Bones in better order than previous report had led me to believe. They seem to be making considerable exertions – The Buildings are in good repair – those connected with the Trashing Machine, quite new & extravagant in dimensions & execution – The boarded floors of the Barns both here and at the South Farm, tho' comparatively new, are fast decaying, from being laid so low in the ground, without any Drain to keep them dry, or any means of preventing the wet from flowing in at the Doors in heavy rains.

This Township is heavily burthened with poor, in consequence of the Collieries that had been worked formerly in it. The situation in which Bones is now boring for Coal in the Duke's property, is not one which will create much damage, should he ever succeed so as to induce him to make a winning which is very doubtful.

Here is a small Mill, in tolerably good repair – not capable of doing much work, & during great part of the year, having a very scanty supply of water – The Miller hold 63 acres of land, part of the lately divided Common, which though of poor quality, being fresh, produces good crops – Some of it wants draining, which Mr Stephenson the intelligent Tenant of the South Farm has kindly undertaken to superintend.

19 Jun 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 19th June 1833

Went to Newcastle – transacted business at the Bank. Had an interview with the Solicitor and consulted with Major Johnson, Lessee of Scremerston Colliery, about cleaning out & repairing the Sea Drift, according to Mr Fenwicks recommendation, for which he, Major Johnson is to obtain proposals from Workmen – Returned to Corbridge by Throckley in the evening.

20 Jun 1833 John Grey

Thursday 20th June 1833

Went to Haydon Bridge to look after the alterations that are going on at the Inn there – Then proceeded to Esphill to inspect the Farm and give directions respecting the repairs of the Buildings which were promised to the new Tenant, & to request him to be particular in looking after the draining upon his Farm in Mr Hunt's absence. Examined the Farm of Lightbirks, also held by Mr Peacock, and afterwards inspected the Farm & Buildings of East Land Ends, occupied by Mr Maughan – He also wishes to have some draining, in land which certainly requires it, & I have requested him to take the depth of the drains daily, & to render the account to Mr Hunt, when he goes to measure them off at the end.

I have this day received Messrs Storey & Wilsons valuation of the Stock on Stublick Colliery a Copy of which I herewith send for the information of the Commissioners – I have also instructions from Mr Bicknell to meet Mr Stanton the Attorney of Mr Spencer, the purchaser of Buteland and Whitlees, upon the Premises, for the purpose of giving him legal possession, and have written to Mr Stanton informing him thereof.

When at Whittonstall the Tenant of the Public House, whose rent is £45 complained of the state of his Cellar, which fills with water & is of no use. Also of the great want of a Pump or draw-well, I satisfied myself of the facts, but told him, unless it could be done at a trifling cost I could not undertake to recommend it, and asked him to let me know for what sum he could undertake it – He has now sent me a Proposal to do both for £7.10.0 – probably he might be induced to do them for £5 as he is much inconvenienced by the state of the Cellar and the badness of the Water.

[Note in margin:] Stoboe's estimate for the Pump alone is, I see £13-4-2

21 Jun 1833 John Grey

Friday 21st June 1833

Gilhespey came according to appointment for the settlement of his Account, which I paid him, after deducting 6d per rod from the drains formerly done, and giving him to understand that if he does any draining for the Hospital in future, it must be at a still less price – Received a proposal from Johnson & Turnbull of Haydon Bridge to rebuild the Boundary Wall on Mr Howdon's allotment of Grindon Common at 2s/9d

per rod. – I then went accompanied by Mr Hunt to inspect the Estate of Fourstones, of which I am happy to report, that it is in a very satisfactory condition, both as to cultivation and the state of the Buildings – and that no Arrears of Rent exist upon it. The Tenants upon this Estate are in the habit of resting their Land in Grass, the benefit of which is apparent in the freshness & vigour of their Crops, while they are obtaining an excellent price for their Mutton & Wool. Some draining is at present going on in Heslops Farm, which gave me the opportunity of advising as to their course, and the manner of their execution. – Mr Hunt has been engaged in taking down the tillage of various Farms and in looking after new Fences.

I have found in various places young hedges of from one to four years growth, very much overgrown with Grass and weeds – It is in vain to look to the tenants to take any charge of them, contrary to all precedents, & especially under present circumstances, when unhappily they have little to hope from the future, & are only anxious to get through the struggle of the present depression – Rather than allow them to lose the years growth & get completely choked with weeds, I have directed Mr Hunt to employ some old men who are quite as capable of doing such work as those who expect 2s/6d per day, and who have expressed their willingness to take 1/6 – These Men have also some claim on the Hospital for employment, having spent many years of their lives in its service.

22 Jun 1833 John Grey

Saturday 22nd June 1833

Went to Dilston New Town North Farm to inspect the cutting down a Bank to make an easier entrance to Mr Leadbitters Farm Offices, & at the same time contracted with Thomas Harle for raising the Embankment at the west end of the Haugh, at 5d per yard, his estimate previously having been at 6d. – I did not consider it safe to delay the work any longer.

I then proceeded accompanied by Mr Hunt to the Farm of Wooley in the Parish of Slaley, which I found occupied by a fine family of very young people who have lost both Parents, & who are under the care of an uncle who visits them & looks after their concerns, one a fortnight – the land is generally very poor and exhausted by constant cropping, the Buildings are pretty good and the Dwelling House modern, but so ill built that the rain penetrates at the corners and injures the Ceilings and floors – the Wood work inside is much in want of painting, as well as the outside doors. We then crossed over into Hexhamshire – The first place belonging to the Hospital in that district is called the Staples, a poor farm, the tenant of which, like all the others upon theses estates, being employed in carrying Lead Ore to the Smelting Mills – some part of the buildings, especially the roofs, are in very bad condition. The next place called

Mire-house, is much like the last – occupied by one of the Thorburns, who hold three very bad Farms under the Hospital and who are, for each one of them in great arrears of Rent.

Aydon Shields is a good Farm for the Country it is in, & most respectably cultivated by Mr Dixon, a relation of Mr Smith the Lessee – The thrashing Machine is his own, & therefore he takes care of it.

The Farm buildings are good, but the Dwelling House so bad that it is dangerous to venture upon the floors in the second storey – It is quite unfit for the family to reside in, but as there is a very good & newly built Cottage standing on the spot where the farm House ought to be, I would recommend to convert it into the Kitchen & Pantry, and to add in front of it a small House, consisting of two rooms on the ground floor & three above, which would make a farm House at a small cost, quite adequate to the wants and wishes of the Tenant, and as the walls of the old House are pretty good, by taking out the rotten floors etc, it might easily be made to serve for the Cottage Houses. It is not the wish of the Tenants to have large Houses, & some of those whose houses have been lately built, complain that they are an incumbrance to them.

Salmonfield Farm, occupied by Josh Richardson, also contains a good portion of land of tolerably good quality though in a cold and exposed situation – connected with this farm, is an allotment of Common Land of very poor quality, & also the right, which the tenant, unlike some others, avails himself of, of keeping 140 Sheep upon the undivided Common of Hexhamshire. The Farm House is new, but much too large – a new set of Offices had been begun & half finished – This might do as it is for a time, by repairing the part which remains of the old buildings – the gable of the Cow House is entirely down & the thatch nearly off, but the timber of the roof being Oak is very strong – The house covering the outer wheel of the Thrashing Machine should be rebuilt – These matters were nearly in the same bad condition when the present Tenant entered to the Farm in 1830.

Rowleyhead Farm, occupied by Mr Shield, who came to it three years ago, is nearly in the same situation as the last, the new Buildings incomplete and the old ones exceedingly out of repair. I had here an opportunity of seeing the incomplete way in which draining is too often done, & of giving a warning to both tenant and workmen, that it should be prohibited altogether, if I ever again found it done in so unsatisfactory a manner – The Tenants exculpate themselves by saying, that however dissatisfied they may have often been with the execution of the drains, they could not help themselves, as they had no control over the workmen, who would not follow their directions – I have therefore made it every where known over the estate, that I shall hold the Tenants responsible for the proper execution of the work.

Gairshield, held by the elder Thorburn is the 'Ultima Thule' of Hexhamshire – the perfection of poverty displayed – a large house, useless buildings, and fences in ruins, which had been made for the purpose of cultivating land, the fee simple of which must have been expended in their erection, & which will never produce Corn more than sufficient to feed the Horses that are employed in ploughing it. A ring Fence and Shepherd's house would have answered a better purpose – The arrear of Rent previous to last May, was £90 & the half years Rent then due , £51 more – all the stock I could find on the premises was one horse, half a dozen back faced Sheep, a few pigs and some Geese – The old man it was said had gone over the fell with some ponies carrying Ore – But it is evident that he had no property worth seeking, & that what he has, could be removed in an hour or two at any time.

Eadsbush, a few small Fields of pretty good land with 147 Acres of very poor Common Allotment, is held by Curry, a Cattle Jobber, who makes rent of it.

Turfhouse & Peacock House, two small Farms in the occupation of Mark Maughan, he and two very industrious Sons, do all the work themselves and have the land in good condition, but complain that they cannot make the rent – He is £36 in arrear at present.

Rawgreen – held by Edward Todd, a small farm of cold, heavy land, with scarcely an Acre of turnip soil. The Buildings are good, except the Roofs of grey slate. – Todd could hardly be persuaded that I was in earnest, when I told him that having been 17 years in the Farm, it was his fault that they were bad, and he must see to it.

Whitley Mill – a small concern, the water Wheel very good, but nothing else – unfavorably situated for business of any extent & scantily supplied with water.

Returned to Corbridge at ten o'clock at night; impressed with a feeling of commiseration for the poor tenants of that high and remote districts. They are certainly an industrious, frugal and sober race; but poverty cramps all their exertions & forces them to reckon upon every trifling economy in management, rather than embrace any extensive & efficient system of improvement – This district much resembles that of Whittonstall & Newlands, in respect of climate – the Soil is with the exception of Gairshield and the Common Allotments, of better quality, but having been longer in cultivation, wants the freshness which is still apparent in Whittonstall. I never saw lands where liberal application of lime would produce greater benefit than on both theses properties, but they are equally unfortunately situated in that respect, having none within a distance of from 10 to 12 Miles over rough and mountainous roads – The best Soils in Hexhamshire have a crudeness and want of friability in them, which render them unproductive of any crop, but especially unfits them for the reception & growth of the smaller seeds, so that they rarely succeed with turnips and clover. Lime in good doses, would divide and stimulate the Soil & bring all its powers into action.

The Tenants are required to lay on three Loads per Acre when they have not dung – this is commonly received as a dead letter, & it is as well so, for its effects would not be perceptible – I tried hard to persuade the tenant of Salmon Field to try the experiment of laying from 8 to 10 loads per Acre upon a field he is now fallowing, engaging to be answerable for the benefit he would derive from it in his Wheat, but especially in the grass and succeeding Crops. The poor man admitted the soundness of the advice, but shook his head in despair – The Grain produced in this district is much inferior to that produced on the lower lands on the Tyne, and in this Season of bad prices they have hardly been able to dispose of it at all – How their rents are to be made up in the Autumn I cannot conceive, unless they can obtain a large proportion of them by the carriage of Ore.

24 Jun 1833 John Grey

Monday 24th June 1833

Had an interview with the Lessee of Throckley Colliery informing me of the success of his boring, & wrote in consequence to Mr Jay to obtain the Commissioners sanction for him to proceed to work the Coal. Wrote to Mr Benson of Fallowfield requiring the settlement of his sons Arrears, for which we hold his Bill.

Rode to the Farm of Lightbirks to accompany the new Tenant there, to look at part of his high ground near Langley Mills, respecting the improvement of which he wished to consult me. This farm contains a considerable portion of Land, which both from its bad quality & high situation would not pay for cultivating. The part in question though equally high, is more level and of better quality than the rest, though unfit for tillage, would be much improved in herbage by ploughing, liming and restoring it to grass – This Mr Peacock has undertaken to do, on being allowed the requisite draining, which I have engaged for – It contains however, a large morass, to drain which with Stones, would be very expensive – It is a fit subject for Sod draining, which may be done for 6d or 7d a rod, which I have engaged to do, upon Mr Peacocks promising to pare & burn it, & then to lay on the Lime & sow it off to Grass without ploughing or attempting to grow Corn, as the Sod drains would not carry the Horses for some time. This cheap mode of draining Pasture lands Mr Peacock had never heard of & is little known in this country. A man from Dumfriesshire is at present making such drain, I hear at Grindon, & I have no doubt of effecting it. I then went on to examine the premises at Langley Mills and Stublick Colliery which are undergoing repairs – The Engines at the Colliery are of good construction & do their work very smoothly. I find there is a dispute between Mr Bell, the late manager and the present Lessees about the Crop growing on the Colliery lands: They wishing to have possession of it by paying for the seed and labor. If Mr Bell rented the lands, then the away going crop must be his own – If he managed the land, as an appendage to the

Colliery, then he can have no claim for Seed and labor, as both would be contributed by the establishment there, nor can the Lessees have any title to the crop by paying for Seed etc but it must belong to the Hospital, to be disposed of to the best advantage, leaving the Straw upon the Premises, & in this case I should recommend to transfer it to the Lessees by valuation, when fit for reaping. This I should endeavour to ascertain & arrange.

I then went to Nilstone Rig, much frequented as an Inn, until the new Road rendered it useless in this respect. The House & Buildings are large and in pretty good repair; the land poor & chiefly in grass – Mr Martinson, an acute man & good manager, complaining of high rents & bad times, & begging to be allowed a Shed on the high ground to shelter his Cattle, the cost of which would be exclusive of Wood, about £6.

Went to Harsondale, occupied by Thomas White – a small Farm in a very exposed situation & high rented, but bearing the marks of an industrious occupier – The Buildings are all new & in good repair, except a Cart Shed, which has been left unfinished – Having lost the carriage of the Langley Mills, he says that he has no alternative but to quit the Farm, unless the rent can be lowered.

I then went by a steep path through extensive Woods of thriving Oak, Ash etc to Plankey Mill – The Water Wheel is good, the remaining Machinery not very good – an axle is much decayed and must be renewed, for which a suitable tree is cut, but the Tenant, seemingly a respectable man, whose land and crops are in good order seems indifferent about having it done, as he cannot, he says, continue at the present rent – The extreme steepness of the road from the Mill, requiring two Horses to carry the load of one, with difficulty is a great disadvantage.

I then went to Vauce, a small Farm held by Roger Pigg – The land is of tolerable quality but the situation exceedingly bleak – the crops however are good considering the climate, but very likely to be shaken by winds before reaping – The Buildings in tolerable repair & on a scale suited to the Farm.

The next is the Lough Farm & Limekiln – occupied by Robert Bell, who has great credit by the appearance of his land & crops in so poor a situation – He has no trade for lime now & wishes to be relieved of his Lease. The Barn at this place is in very bad condition.

Sillywray & West Deanraw, held by Josh Bell, late Agent at Stublick. Poor places & in poor condition.

Middle Deanraw – occupied by John Pigg. The Buildings are now in good state, having got a new roof to the Stable & some repairs not yet completed – This little Farm is in excellent condition & I regret that we are likely to loose so good a Tenant – but he

states that after using his best endeavours, he cannot continue to pay the rent, especially since the dependence they had upon the carriage of Langley Mills is gone.

East Deanraw. A farm of cold soil – not very well cultivated, & much injured by the smoke from Langley Mills, which sometimes destroys Cattle that eat the Grass upon which it rests – The Straw even after the Corn is thrashed is poisonous. Last Winter two horses died here from that cause. This Tenant owes an arrears of £52 & complains like the others, of having lost the carriage, by which they use to make up their Rents.

Langley Castle Farm, occupied by Mr Woodman, who is now entering a new Lease, contains a large portion of poor Land; which is also injured by the vicinity of the Smelt Mills – Mr Woodman is an active man Eger [sic] & anxious to improve the condition of the Land by draining and Liming – The Buildings are on a large scale, but though of only 18 years standing, much of the Wood work in the Dwelling House is going to decay, the panels in the rooms & several of the windows being quite rotten – partly, I think, from the want of paint, but chiefly, I suspect, from the use of American Fir, instead of Baltic timber – The House has been built, strangely enough, without a pantry, which Mr Woodman earnestly begs for – I think the dairy might admit of railing one off it, which would save the expence of building outside & I would also recommend, in so good a house, that the Woodwork should be examined, repaired & painted and spouts where necessary, put up for its preservation.

West Land Ends – a compact Farm with good Buildings occupied by Mr Lee – a man of property, who keeps everything in good order.

Here at nine o'clock I left off for the day, and rode to Haydon Bridge to dine and sleep.

25 Jun 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 25th June

I was occupied in the morning in ascertaining the Houses and parcels of Land belonging to the Hospital at Haydon Bridge, & with Messrs Howdon & Rud respecting the repairs of the Inn & the most economical way of making the necessary farm Buildings at the farm newly entered to by Mr Howdon, which he is now anxious to commence – The Inn will in time be made comfortable, but it has been left in a horrible state – It would be a great advantage to the Tenant to have a little more tillage land, both for growing his Corn & giving employment to such horses as he must keep for posting, the demand for which is uncertain & without other occupation must be

unprofitable – There are two Fields held by old Coats, which, if they were no great object to him, might be transferred with benefit to Hetherington.

There are two erections here which strike one as having been needlessly expensive. One is, the large Building & apparatus for forcing water to the Inn which cannot be worked, when it might have been brought by a pipe from the rising ground above – and the other, the expensive aqueduct, by an arch of hewn stones over the turnpike road at Esphill, to convey the water to the Thrashing Machine, whereas a pipe laid across below the road, with one for its descent on the one side, and another for its ascent on the other, upon the simple principle of water rising to its own level, would have answered all the purpose – As so much has already been expended upon the former – it may probably be better to place a common pump upon the top of the building to force the Water into the pipes by, than to begin anew to bring it from the Hill by pipes – I shall however ascertain the respective costs and advantages of both modes, before deciding upon the adoption of either.

I then rode to the Lees, farmed by Mr Watson, who has done a great deal for the improvement of the land but complains that after expending a great capital upon it, he cannot continue to hold it – The Farm House is excessively bad, but excepting a Byer the Offices are in good repair.

Tedcastle a Farm of only 75 Acres, which is in good condition – the Buildings all new & the house of a size suited to the Farm, but left without a Coal house, which with a small shed for Milch vessels etc, should be added behind – Thomas Dickinson, the tenant, is a good manager, but very requiring of assistance which cannot be granted.

I crossed the Tyne at Ridley Hall and proceeded to Whitechapel farmed by J Woodman who has been tenant of the Hospital for 42 years – The low land is good & in good condition. He is doing a good deal to improve the high grounds. The Buildings are old & bad. The House might perhaps stand for a time, by renewing the roof & adding a teefall behind, for necessary accommodation – some Cattle Sheds & Stable ought to be made new.

Lipwoodwell – occupied by Thomas Errington & Son – The low land is very good well managed, with a large proportion of high Ground of inferior quality – The Buildings are very bad & insufficient – Orders had been given for an addition to the house & some new offices to be commenced in the spring, for which some stones have been prepared by Mr Howdon, but the work was suspended – It is however very necessary.

Lipwood, occupied by the same tenant – The Buildings are old, but better & more substantial than those at Lipwoodwell.

Rattenraw West Farm – lately entered to by Mr Potts – the House and Buildings generally are good – the only thing wanted is a wall to divide the fold yards & Cribs for Cattle Feeding – Potts was inclined to discover many wants about the Farm & Offices – but I told him that having left the Town Farm, now occupied by Howdon in such wretched condition, that I did not consider him deserving of any indulgence, & that except for necessary draining as a permanent improvement when well executed, I should not recommend any of his suggested alterations.

Rattenraw East Farm held by Mr Lambert – The land and Buildings in good condition – a Pipe much wanted to bring Water to the place, which Mr Hooper directed to be done. The two farms at Rattenraw would have laid well together, the House, Barn & Machine of either, would have served the whole quite well.

Tofts occupied by Mr Todd, a substantial Tenant, but saving of outlay – The Buildings but indifferent & ill arranged – The land rather cold & wanting Drains.

Grindon Hill – farmed by Mr Benson & Sons – a high situation, the land wet & little adapted for growing Corn. No more of it should be kept in Tillage than is absolutely necessary to produce winter fodder for the Cattle. Some repairs are put in progress, having been ordered by Mr Hooper.

Grindon & Beamwham, occupied by the Woodmans, who seem to be industrious & respectable people. The Land is chiefly in grass of course quality, with very little tillage – Here I found the Scotchman Eskdale, doing the Sod draining in the bogs remarkably well, and spoke to him about the morass on Lightbirks, which I wish to have drained in the same manner, & which I hope he may get done before winter. The repairs ordered by Mr Hooper of the Buildings here are now going on. The new roof of Welsh slates will be finished in a few days & the farm house again restored to a habitable condition. It was now late in the evening, & I returned to Corbridge eleven miles distant, at ten o'clock, having been on horseback twelve hours.

26 Jun 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 26th June 1833

Received a letter from Mr Bainbridge with £60 due by the Trustees of the Alston Roads on the 24th Instt – also one from Mr Dickinson of Spency Croft asking me to send him £40 on account of payments he is authorized to make for the Hospital, and informing me that the Lessees of the Dowke Burn Vein, wish to hush the Mine, which in his opinion they ought to be allowed to do, as no damage can ensue, the whole district of £1699 [sic] acres being let for only £10 a year – I have sent him the money and

written to him to say, that under the circumstances he describes I think he need not hesitate to grant the permission applied for by the Tenant of Dowke Burn Vein.

I have also received a Letter from Mr Ruddock, Clerk to the Trustees of the Hexham road enclosing a Check for £63.6 (the sum required by Mr Hooper to be paid at present) and a copy of the Minutes of their last meeting, in which it is ordered 'that the claims of the Hospital be acceded to' – But on referring to Mr Hoopers Letter, addressed to Mr Ruddock, on the subject, on the 8th June, & finding that he therein stipulated not only for immediate payment of the £63.6 but for an undertaking from the Trustees, that £70 shall be paid on the 12th May next, & £70 on the same day in each succeeding year until the whole debt be liquidated, I have written to Mr Ruddock, acknowledging the receipt of his Cheque, but begged him to state explicitly, whether their compliance with the stipulation respecting the annual payments of £70, is understood to be comprehended in the Minute of the meeting of the Trustees, which he has handed to me, considering it proper to place the matter beyond the chance of future controversy.

Engaged most of the day in the Office writing Letters etc and in the afternoon, walked up the riverside to ascertain the mischief done by the late floods, and consider of the best mode of making a stone breastwork, which is indispensable in some parts to prevent greater inroads upon the land & plantations.

27 Jun 1833 John Grey

Thursday 27th June 1833

Left Corbridge at 6 o'clock in the morning, to meet Mr Spencer and his Attorney, by appointment at Buteland (15 miles off) to put him in possession of his purchase there, & afterwards rode for three hours more over moors, to go through the like ceremony at Whitlees. This done, I went to Elsdon to find an Inn to rest my horse, but the accommodation being very bad, rode nine miles to Cambo, on the Road to Hartburngrange to sleep.

28 Jun 1833 John Grey

Friday 28th June 1833

Rode to Hartburngrange West Farm, occupied by Thomas Brewis, who manages his farm in good stile, though the land is but of a cold & ungrateful description, & has the appearance of being a substantial tenant – He has been in the farm only 3 years & neither at the time of his coming, nor since has any thing been

done to put the Buildings into a proper state of repair – The roofs are of grey slate or Pantyles & universally bad – It had been proposed, Mr Brewis says, to take the roof of the Farmhouse, repair the timber & putt on a cover of blue slate, using the grey ones for the purpose of mending the other roofs – Before putting a good roof upon so insufficient a house, I think the back Kitchen part ought to be raised & two small Bedrooms made over it, of which the house stands much in need – At present the Servants are obliged to sleep in an out house – The Machine belongs to the Hospital and according to custom, the outer Wheel is standing under a Roof of Thatch, entirely unfit to keep the rain off, - preparations have been made for building a small Stable & Cart shed, which have not been proceeded with.

The North Farm, occupied by Samuel Brewis, is also land of cold quality, but better than the last – The House is of sufficient size & comfortable – The Offices ample & the walls generally strong, but the roofs affording the most striking example I ever saw of the infamous manner in which work may be executed, when not examined into – Excepting the Farm house, & new Stable, there is not a Roof in the place which does not require to be entirely taken down – The only one that turns the wet at all, is one, the oldest of all, having stood upwards of 80 Years, and now the wood is giving way under the heavy grey slate – But a range of Barns & Granaries, covered only 20 years ago, with excellent scotch blue slate, is full of holes all over, rotting the floors & machinery below – I know roofs of Easdale Slates, like these that have stood for 40 Years, as good as the first, but it seems that this is the only one of many done at Meldon & on. This farm, within 20 Years that has not been altogether taken off & replaced. The reason is obvious – the Slates are contracted for by the yard, as well as the work of laying them on, & to make both go as far as possible, the Slates are not allowed a sufficient ‘overlap’ to keep them steady – when one moves in the wind & breaks off, at the nail hole, it leaves those next to it more exposed. They continue to go one after another, till like the roof in question, a high wind coming, takes off whole yards together. The Tenant has those hoes filled up with straw, no one having been at the place to say what should be done. It is obvious however that it cannot remain in this condition long without destroying the Granaries etc – the windows and frames of this building, are quite decayed, being made of bad American fir – a part of the Garden Wall, only six feet high, built a few years ago, has fallen completely overall this is truly provoking – The Machine here too, belongs to the Hospital.

The South Farm, held by Thomas & Wm Davison, resembles the last in Soil – The Tenants seem very industrious, three young men doing most of the work themselves – The House small, but they are satisfied with it – There have been lately built two good cottages, a Stable & Cowhouse – the Barn is exceedingly small & inconvenient - & a Cattle Shed is wanting to unite it to a Granary & fill up the range of building – the roofs of both Barn & Granary of gray slate, are very bad – The Machine belongs to the Hospital & was left by the late Tenant in such condition as to do its work very badly – These tenants are not anxious or much being done, as they think they

must give up their Farm – but that is no reason why the buildings now standing, should be allowed to go to ruin from the badness of the roofs.

This Estate is well inclosed with hedges, & has a great extent of fine plantation on the north, capable of affording excellent larch trees for roofing and other useful purposes.

I rode to Corbridge, 20 miles after inspecting these farms – Found a letter from Mr Ruddock in answer to mine, stating that 'the Hexham Road Trustees, fully understand that they are to pay £70 on the 12th May next, & £70 each year after till the Debt be 'discharged' – This is satisfactory & explicit.

29 Jun 1833 John Grey

Saturday 29th June 1833

Received the Boards Minutes of the 15th Instant ordering 'that the Receiver transmit a list of the Subscribers (to the purchase of a residence for the Minister in the Parish of Slaley) with the rental of their respective properties in the Parish', and wrote to the Incumbant of Slaley, begging him to favor me with the desired information.

Received also Mr Jay's Letter of the 27th Instant acquainting me that the Board accept of Mr John Walton's offer for the Inn & Ground at Lowbyer & accede to the application of the Lessee of Throckley Colliery to commence working the seam of Coal in the Duke of Northumberlands property, under certain regulations; I wrote to Mr Walton, informing him of the same & authorizing him to take immediate possession of the premises – Wrote also to Messrs Bones, acquainting them with the Boards answer to their application & requesting an interview on the subject.

Mr Dixon the actual tenant of Aydonshields, altho' that of Joshua Smith appears in the Rent Roll, came to me, as I hoped, to talk about the badness of his House & to have my opinion about building another, but to my disappointment I found him declining to undertake any thing in the way of improvement, & urging only the necessity of obtaining a considerable abatement or of giving up the remainder of his Lease – I did all I could to persuade him to try another year in hopes of amended times, but he was quite immoveable from his purpose, I said I thought I could undertake to double the produce of that district, by giving it ten loads an Acre of Lime – He replied that I was quite right in that opinion, but that would cost £6 per Acre & what tenant could afford it. The distance was so great & the roads so heavy – He complained that his and some other Farms in that part were so ill off for pasture that they were obliged to send their young Cattle to other places during the summer – I asked if he did not think the rough pasturage of Gairshield would be better employed as an appurtenance

to these farms, than in its present state – Yes he said, many hundreds might have been saved in the Buildings there & the land applied to better purpose than at present, in that way – It often did not grow Corn worth 20s/- per Acre, confirming what I have previously stated as my opinion of it – He is a shrewd man, & I should regret losing him for a tenant – I don't know what effect the paying for a quantity of Lime at the kiln, upon condition of their leading it, might have in inducing the tenants in that quarter to hold on – It would benefit them immediately, & the land, for many years to come – The cost of a Cart load of lime is 4s/- and the leading 8s/- so the tenants would have 2/3d of the expence.

After getting released from the business that awaited me in the Office, I rode to Newtonhall – I found it to contain some very good land with a portion of a much inferior description, to the northern extremity, & like most of the Farms lately entered to, in very poor condition – It has however a good proportion of Grass land, & except that it is inconveniently intermixed with some fields of Mr Joblings, that the two extreme points are at great distance from each other, it is rather a good farm – The House is good, & as the Tenant says, larger than is useful – The Offices with the exception of a Barn & Stable, in a most ruinous state – A beginning to build had been made & a new Cart Shed put up, but here it has stopped, & the tenant has not a hovel to shelter his Cattle in for the winter – neither has he any Granary, both of which are indispensable.

The Public House, called Shaw house & farm all in tolerably good order, but the Tenant complains of the want of custom, from the diminished quantity of Lead carried along that road – He is in some Arrear of Rent.

1 Jul 1833 John Grey

Monday 1st July 1833

Sent Mr Hunt off this morning to endeavour to ascertain from old Watson, of Allerwash, who has lived long at the place, the portions of boundary fence belonging to the different farms which have allotments on Grindon Common, about which the ne Tenants are not agreed, & if he can get that point fixed to make an agreement with one of the parties from whom I have had proposals for repairing the walls – He will be engaged for a day or two in examining the draining in that quarter, the repairs going on at Woodhall etc, and in obtaining proposals for making 50 new gates for the Langley Barony at Elrington, and 50 more at Dilston by way of experiment.

This being 'quarter day', sent Cheques to Messrs Wailes, Brandling Newcastle & Martin for their retired allowances, and also settled the existing Salaries, together with Mr Hunt's & my own up to this time, which will in future be paid quarterly – In

looking over the Arrears of Rent, with a view of trying to get some of them at the approaching Fair of Stagshaw Bank, I felt some alarm on finding £201 standing against Joseph Teasdale of Dilston Hall Farm, a place which in the view I had taken of it, gave little hope of paying its way & reducing such Arrear.

Having intended to go & inspect the work at Dilston & take a closer survey of the land than I had done, I took the opportunity of leaving my Horse & walking through all Teasdales Corn fields to inform myself of his prospects – a great proportion of the land of this Farm, extending to the hill on the road to Slaley, is of the poorest description & hardly worth cultivating – several of the Fields have been allowed to go to their native Whins & rushes - & the small portion of tolerably good land adjoining the Farm Offices is in a miserably impoverished condition – I never saw a worse prospect for a Crop either this year or the next – the growing Corn is overrun with Grass & weeds, the fallows yet unwrought – his horses are quite incapable of ploughing such stiff land – I am sure they would not bring £5 a piece in any market – the fences are in most ragged condition, & he & his family living in the house with hardly a pane of Glass in the Windows, which were much broken by a storm of hail several weeks ago – The poor old man is said to have lost a good deal of money upon the farm, but I fear he is as wanting in judgement and energy to manage it to advantage, as he certainly is now of pecuniary means for doing so.

2 Jul 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 2nd July 1833

Rode to Westwood, which is let to Mr Snowball for one year – This is a compact, pleasant little Farm of 147 Acres, of land generally good quality and well situated for Shelter & climate, but too small in size to be managed to advantage – The appearance of the present crops, does not warrant the high rent which has been usually given for this farm, & which leaves strong indications of want of rest – The House is new and neat. The Offices in good repair – The boards of the Cattle cribs in the fold yards have been carried off by the late Tenant (owing) which can only be designated as an act of theft – but I understand, he is not worth following.

William Stokoe. A Blacksmith rents a cottage, forge & Garden from the Hospital at £10 a year, which compared with other similar buildings, does seem to be a high rent – The roofs are in very bad repair, & he says Mr Sample has engaged to have them mended – but having only a ground floor & a large family, he is also desirous of. Raising the walls to get a room above – I told him that unless he was prepared to give considerably more rent, that would not be thought of, but as now holds only from year to year, if he would undertake to make the addition himself, I thought it likely that the board might grant him a lease of the same duration, so that he should have the

certainty of enjoying his improvement; he being bound to keep the house in repair – This he is to consider of – Went to Highwood, occupied by Mr Temperley, this farm is much inferior in. the quality of the land to Westwood & equally so in situation & buildings, some of which are in very bad condition – The house, though small is quite adequate to the size of the Farm – One hovel is nearly without roof, & the horse house wheel of the Thrashing Machine entirely so – As this Machine belongs to the hospital & the Tenant found it in the same condition on his entering to the Farm, there seemed no alternative but to cover it, & as the season for pulling heather for the purpose will soon be past, I engaged to allow him £5 for doing so, which will pay for laying the heather on, leaving him to bring it to the spot.

Being Market day at Hexham I saw several of the Tenants there on my return, who are all very desponding – Reed of Plankey Mill – Curry of Eadsbush – Dodd of Thornbrough & Dixon of Aydon Shields have sent in applications to be released from their farms.

I had an interview with Mr Walker, manager of this part of the Rail-way, & with reference to the damage done to the Road upon Dilston South Farm, by leading Stones to the Railway Bridge, urged upon him the justice & absolute necessity of protecting the Hospital tenants from such injury – He was inclined to reference to the Contractors for building the Bridge, but I told him that I looked solely to the Railway Company & their manager & could have nothing to say to any subordinate party. He undertook to examine the Road & enquire into. Its previous condition, and to meet me upon it, with every wish to do what I should consider right and just.

3 Jul 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 3rd July 1833

Engaged most of this day in writing & attending to business in the Office, also having several confrences with tenants on their way to Stagshaw fair, some urging their claims for certain repairs of their farm buildings respecting which I had no instructions, and others stating the necessity they would be under if they could not obtain abatement, of giving up their farms – I wrote to Mr Mitchell of Otterburn requiring immediate payment of £112.5.10 due by him as arrear of Rent at Highgreen Colliery and desired Mr Dickinson to make a list of several small sums still due on the Manor of Wark, as the parties may be met with at the Fair, close by, tomorrow, where I understand the whole population of the district assembles – In the list of those arrears, I observe Matthew Bell Esq M,P, for two years Shooting, £50 – Should it be applied for by me or will Mr Hooper obtain it in London?

Mr Sample made a demand upon me to day for half a years Rent due at Martinmas last, to Sir Edward Blackett for part of Corbridge Town Farm purchased by him, & for which £75 a year was to be allowed by the Hospital until he took possession which it seems he did at May last – If this transaction is correctly reported to me, Sir Edward will have a claim of £75 from the Hospital – viz £37.10.0 due in November last, & £37.10.0 due on the 12th May – I then went to Green the Tenant, & found that he has given up to Sir Edward Blackett the fields in question at May day last, & that they have been let by him to another person who now occupies them – Whether Green was authorized in doing so or not, I cannot tell, but I much fear that he will not be able to hold the remainder of the farm, paying for it £206, which he ought to do to make up the original rent of £281 – I looked over Greens farm and buildings – the whole of which I found in good order, except his dwelling house, in which the timber of the roof is giving way under the ponderous grey Slates, and the Ceilings & floors rotting & in holes in consequence – Green promises to pay up his Arrear of Rent £60.10.0 in a few weeks.

I took the opportunity of enquiring of Mr Sample, respecting the road injured by the Railway Company in Dilston South Farm, & find that the Bridge Contractor was expected to pay towards its repair, in proportion to the quantity of Stones led, to be ascertained by measurement of the Bridge – nothing has been demanded yet, but I hope it may still be recovered. I also asked him, (as he must know) his opinion of old Teasdale, tenant of the Hall Farm, as it seemed to me, that it was impossible for him, from any visible means, either to carry on the Farm, or discharge his arrears. His answer was that poor Teasdale was done before the last taking, & he never could understand how he came to be allowed to continue.

4 Jul 1833 John Grey

Thursday 4th July 1833

This being the day of the Fair, I had at an early hour, interviews with several of the Tenants from different quarters – Mr Howdon with a plan of the new buildings to be made upon the farm he has entered to, at Haydon town, which he is now desirous to begin – After discussing the Plan etc & ascertaining the prices per yard, at which he would undertake the work, which I consider reasonable, with the understanding that it should be subject to the inspection of any workman that I may appoint; I fixed to go up on Saturday first to decide upon it – I also fixed with the tenant of Lipwood to examine on the same day, some boundary fences, of which he complains. I paid to Mr Hunter of Whittonstall, £50, towards the expence of the new roads in his township, deducting £36 due by him for arrear of Rent. – I had a long conversation with Fewster of Newlands about the new House & Offices which he expects to have built, and his circumstances generally. He clings to the Hope of having his arrears remitted, in consideration of

leading to the Buildings, whereas if he were to give up the farm, he fears he would have them to pay and have nothing left. He, poor man, is in difficult circumstances, & I am at a loss to decide whether it would be better to give him up a part of the Arrear to be quit of him, or to allow him the sum for leading, & venture upon him still as a tenant – If the adjoining Farm held by Robert Hunter should be given up, I am confident that a great saving in buildings might be effected by laying the two together, or by giving the bulk of it to Fewsters Farm & a part to the Mill Farm, to which it is contiguous – I told Fewster that it was now too far advanced in the Season to commence so large a building, with only his strength in loading – that I should look at the place & endeavour to make it habitable for the winter, & by next Spring something should be decided upon. – Fewster again urged upon me the dangerous state of the Wooden Bridge over the Derwent, which I had examined when there – It is as bad as can be, to stand, & such as I would not like to walk along – The inhabitants are too poor and too uncertain of continuing on their farms to rebuild it, but by a grant of a few coarse Trees from the Hospital, would probably secure its standing for a while. This, I think, to avoid their risk of drowning, ought to be granted – It would have been very desirable if a Stone Arch could have been thrown over at this point in connection with the new Road which it is in contemplation to make, leading from the Suspension Bridge over the Tyne, into that part of the Country – If this Road should ever be accomplished, it will prove a great advantage to the district, for following the course of the river, instead of climbing over a high hill, one horse would take with equal ease, the load that now requires two, & if a branch, with a Bridge at this place, crossing over to the Newlands side, could be connected with it, it would be an object well worthy of the assistance of the Hospital. I then rode to the Fair, to try to buy a Hackney, where I was surrounded by the tenants with various applications – I also saw Mr Bainbridge, the owner of an estate adjoining Thornbrough, who most readily met my views for making a suitable boundary fence in the way I proposed.

Appendix to my Journal to this date July 4th 1833

Having now seen all the Hospital estates excepting those at Alston, Scremerston & Spindleston, to which several of the remarks, I shall have to make are not likely to apply. I trust I shall not be considered to be obtruding my opinions offensively to the Commissioners, if I venture to convey to them such observations as have forced themselves upon me in the course of my inspection.

It is no part of my duty, nor have I the slightest wish to attach blame to any one, in respect of the past management of the property, but taking things as I find them, if it should appear that work has been inefficiently done, or money in some instances inadvisably expended, it would be folly to refuse benefit by past experience.

With regard to the cultivation of the farms I have little to add to the remarks already made in my journal. The principal areas in that respect, is the perseverance in a system of hard cropping, without the renovation of intermediate pasture, now that the land is exhausted by it, & the inducement to grow corn in preference to mutton & wool, does not exist - Some of the Tenants seem to hold by the idea that to pay a certain rent, they must have so many acres in corn, not considering that by better management, they might obtain an equal produce from a smaller surface, thus effecting a clear saving in both seed & labor, & having the extra produce of the pasturage besides. But many I fear, continue to adhere to the system from necessity, as the land would not take readily to grass without some additional expense in liming & working it, & a greater capital is required to stock land with sheep & oxen, than to plough, & sow it with corn, the produce of which is available so soon as the crop is <secured>. It forms however an additional objection to the system, that it gives encouragement to tenants of inadequate capital – As the same principles of management, & the same rotation of crops, cannot be applicable to estates so extensive & so varying in soil & situation. I should consider it necessary, that each farm, as it comes to be let, should be minutely examined for the purpose of fixing the terms of its management, deciding upon such fields as it would be proper to continue in permanent grass, or to have laid down for that purpose, & also what rotation would be best adopted to different portions of it, according to their varying quality & circumstances. If any deviation from a general rule should be found advisable in the course of the lease, it might be granted by a permission in writing to that effect. The course which I should consider the best, except upon land of the first rate quality, & where it is very acceptable to manure, would be the five course, i.e. 1st & 2nd years grass, 3rd corn, 4th fallow or turnips & 5th corn, sown again with grass seeds – And upon the thinner & poorer soils, the six course, i.e. with 3 years of grass instead of 2 – And in making this change at the commencement of a lease, I feel confident that a tenant with sufficient capital, would find his advantage as is now apparent in Scotts farm at Thornbrough – But as to enforce such a regulation at once might have the effect of deterring tenants who are prejudiced against all change, or who are not very capable of complying with it, from bidding for the farms, It might be wise to introduce it by degree, allowing some portion of the land to go in the 4 course & some in the 5 or 6, changing alternately, according to the quality of soil till all would derive some measure of benefit. This alternation of the courses, the tenants of Fourstones are now adopting from a conviction of its advantage.

I believe advantages may in some respects attend the present mode of letting farms to the highest bidder, & however agreeable it may be to Agents in relieving them from responsibility & suspicion of partiality, it has its disadvantages too, & those are very apparent & have been, I suspect, very costly to the Hospital – A good & industrious tenant who has a perfect knowledge of the powers of his land, & the management the most suitable for it, happens to be outbid by one possessing none of these qualifications who after deteriorating the property, leaves it, probably in debt. But the very knowledge of the circumstance, prevents one, who is ever so good a tenant at the

beginning, continuing so to the end of his lease & his object being to do as little for the land as possible, and to take out of it all that he can, previous to the time when his interest in it ceases, & if he have any wish to take it again, to make it look as bad as possible, to keep down competition.

But there seems in general a greater disposition to go to a new farm, than to continue in the old one. Except Watson of Allerwash & the Woodmans of Whitechapel, I have not found a man who has spent his life on the same farm. They move about at every letting, like men on a chess board, and the reason is obvious, a tenant entering upon the lease of a farm, the fences & buildings of which have been left by his predecessor in utter disrepair looks naturally to the Landlord to put them in tenantable condition, whereas were he to continue on his own, the dilapidations being chargeable to him, he would not meet with equal indulgence. The custom of allowing the tenants to quit without regard to the state of the fences & buildings, has led to an immense outlay by the Hospital. Nothing is done to them for some years preceding the end of the lease and many, which by timely care, might have been kept in a state of tolerable preservation, are found to have become so bad as to be condemned & replaced by new ones. This remark especially applies to the roofing, very much of which throughout the property is past mending. This evil however is not consequent upon the mode of letting by proposal, and may be remedied by a simple clause introduced into the lease, stating (not in a common way) that the tenant is bound to maintain all things in repair (except walls & main timbers) which is regarded by them as a dead letter, no penalty being attached to the breach of it; but at the end of or sooner termination of a lease, all dilapidations in buildings & fences, shall be examined by persons neutrally appointed by the Commissioners & tenant, who shall make an estimate of the expense necessary to put them into such repair as may fit them to be transferred to the succeeding tenant, & that such sum be charged as rent against the awaygoing tenant & be recoverable in like manner.

The exception of Walls & Main timbers would secure the tenant against being saddled with the repair of old buildings that are falling into decay, but he would find it his interest when a slate was blown off, to have it replaced instead of letting it fall now, continue till one goes after another & half the house is laid bare to the destruction of timber, floors, & every thing. Many Stables upon the estates are more dependent upon the Haylofts & the hay itself for preserving the horses from rain, than upon the roofs. I am of opinion that the existence of such a clause, with the assurance of its being acted upon, would do much to preserve fences & buildings in tolerable repair, & save the Hospital a heavy outlay.

The Hospital had expended capital to a considerable amount in erecting Thrashing Machines upon their estates for the use of the tenants & though it seems kind to afford them such assistance & encouragement, I fear the custom is one of very questionable policy. Upon the smallest farms it is improvident to build machines at all, because at

the present price of labor it is cheaper to thrash a small crop by flail than by a machine, where the cost of erecting one is taken into account, but if the tenant finds one made to his hand, of course he prefers to use it. But on farms where the use of the machines is quite justifiable, if they belong to the tenant, all due care is taken to preserve them from accident & decay, & if repairs are needful, they are done in time, & with economy not so when they are the property of the Landlord, complaints may be made of their want of repair, which are not attended to – they go on as long as they will hang together, & when at length an examination takes place & the millwright gets his hand in, it is not uncommon for him to discover an absolute necessity for an entirely new machine, or something very near it.

In visiting the Farms, except in those where the buildings are quite new, where the machines belong to the Hospital, I have found the most flagrant negligence of them. The horse wheels commonly without any roof & exposed to all the weather. If you ask why it is so, you are told that it is the Hospital's & therefore they ought to protect it. In cases where the tenants have been long in occupation, they may fairly be made to incur the expense of repair, but where a tenant has newly entered & found matters so, it is only reasonable that they should be done for him.

The cost to the Hospital which I have been stating, would perhaps be best obviated by covenanting with every tenant on entering to a farm, to purchase the machine by the valuation of persons mutually chosen with the undertaking that he should be paid for it on leaving the farm by a similar valuation. A tenant would thus have an inducement to keep his machine in good order, & as machinery adapted to one situation is seldom suited to another, he would be secured against the necessity of removing it to one where it might be of little value to him. Such a regulation would soon become a matter of immediate transfer from the awaygoing to the entering tenant, each appointing his own valuation & the Hospital would have no need to interfere at all except perhaps in the case of a delinquent tenant whose machine might be appropriated with his other effects. If it is asserted that to find a tenant to purchase a machine is depriving him of so much capital, I would say, that on the same principle, you might supply him with carts, ploughs & every other implement, & even with labor itself, for which the thrashing machine is only a substitute – And also, that it is dangerous policy to encourage a man of insufficient capital to compete on equal terms with one whose capital is ample. Such men are always willing adventurers, from whom, lots of rent & injury to the property are to be apprehended.

To treat of the Buildings lately erected on the Hospital property is a subject on which it is difficult the most difficult to exercise forbearance. The points which one would naturally consult in buildings are, to accommodate them to the size & value of the farms, & to use such materials and in such a manner as to ensure their being substantial & lasting, which is the true economy in building. Both these points have been I fear little attended to. It not infrequently happens that while the dwelling house

upon one farm is scarcely habitable, that upon the adjoining one is unnecessarily large & could have spared enough to have made the other comfortable. In many instances the tenants complain of the houses being a present incumbrance from their great size, & having been very oppressive to them in leading the materials, when building.

I was particularly struck by the absurdity of two houses upon the farms of Gairshield & Bagraw, both miserable places in respect of land & situation. The rent of the latter is £95, wh[ich] however is not paid, & I should think ought to be about £65 or £70. The building of the house occupied the then tenant with all his small establishment, during the whole summer in leading, his fallows were unwrought & his farm neglected, he failed in the course of the following year & has lived in poverty ever since, partly I believe on parochial relief.

I do not say that the work has in all instances been badly executed, because in some places I find good walls, but too generally the state of the buildings even of recent date, bear strong testimony to the superficial manner of their execution – American wood, has in many cases been used for outside work, the windows both in dwelling houses & granaries, are found quite rotten within 20 years, & the framework in which they stand incapable of holding them – The walls are often found ill filled & so open that I have seen the smoke issuing through the gables & much mischief done to the ceilings & floors by the rain beating in – But the roofing is the thing most to be complained of, & in which the greatest advantage seems to have been taken by the workmen.

I do not speak of those roofs merely which consist of grey slates, especially those from the Slaley quarry, which more resemble flags for flooring than Slates, which no ordinary wood can support, & which are so porous that the laths soon go to decay, but of those cases where good blue slate has been used, & of roofs which ought to have been quite as good as new, that are nevertheless in such a condition as to require to be entirely taken down.

Of this description, I noticed in my journal, some at Hartburn grange that had been done about 20 years ago, but I think I omitted to remark upon one division of that very expensive & fine looking set of offices at Throckley South farm, which was only built about 8 years ago, that the slates are shifting & blowing in all directions & must ere long, I fear, be removed and laid on again. On examining the cause of this, I found it to be, that they had been fixed by one nail at the top, instead of one at each side, & that they had, as is often the case when the contractor provides the slates much too little overlap. The other parts of the building have been done differently & the slates continue firm.

Besides the preceding circumstance of paying money for work so inadequately performed, any deficiency in the roof is sure to cause the decay of the entire building.

Such is the present state of the buildings & the important question connected with it is, how such abuses have originated & what are the best means of preventing their recurrence. There is no mode so easy for an agent, as to receive a plan & estimate & to agree with a contractor & leave the work to his execution. All this he can do without leaving his arm chair, & he gets a building that looks pretty enough at first, but is soon found to be defective in almost every point. The contractor has used inferior timber, he has employed too little of it, as well as of slates for the roof & lime for the walls & in a few years the nice looking building is pervious in all points to wind and rain.

The remedy for this which I would suggest for the consideration of the Board, though its adoption would be attended with great additional labour to the Receiver, may I think be deserving of the experiment. I would propose then, that all building materials should be provided by the Hospital & not by the Contractors, thus depriving them of the inducement to use inferior timber where the best is necessary, & of laying on the Slates too far asunder. I would bargain with Masons, Carpenters, Slaters & Plasterers, to do their respective kinds of work by measurement, at such prices as should be agreed upon, and according to stipulated dimension, but leaving each independent of the other, & only responsible for the execution of his own department. The Hospital estates afford abundance of wood which does not sell to good account, that might do for the crossings in roofs, the Sleepers in floors & for various purposes, even in large buildings, & which might be used almost exclusively in ordinary erection & roofs of a low pitch. In new dwelling houses, it would be proper use Better timber for all the strong work, and American or Home wood only for closet & inside doors & such work as should be kept painted.

Timber Merchants charge great profits, reasonably so, on account of the many bad debts they contract, but are always willing to allow large discounts for ready money. So that the Hospital could go to market on the best terms, & if a large quantity were at any time wanted, it would be easy to freight a Vessel at once & lay it in some safe & convenient yard at Newcastle, to be taken away as required. The same might be done with blue Slates (for I would strongly recommend never to use gray slates upon a new building, but to lay by all that are worth preserving when taken down, for the purpose of patching old roofs). When building some years ago on my own property, I freighted a Vessel with slates of the best kind from Lancashire & found great advantage in doing so.

For the quantity of building which I fear all circumstances & certainly at the present time, will be necessary on the Hospital's estate, I am of the opinion that it would answer a good purpose to employ a man, who ought to be a practical Mason, and independent of any connection with workmen in this part of the country, to go from place to place, wherever Masons, Slaters, Plasterers or builders of stone fences

were employed, to examine their work, to see that it was properly executed, to report to the Receiver of their progress, & any fault he might find with their performances. To see that the articles wanted, such as wood, slates & lime be supplied in due time that they be not wasted in using & that any which might be left over be taken care of. He ought to measure the work, but have nothing to do with payments, & render a weekly account to the Receiver of the places he had visited & the matters he had attended to. Such a man would probably be satisfied to receive regular wages of a guinea per week, & an allowance for expense for being a good deal from home. Say in all 65 or 70 £ a year, & if he did his duty, his service would be cheaply purchased. I am persuaded that had such a system of inspection been established & honestly executed long ago, many buildings of the Hospital that are now in very bad condition, would have been still perfect, & that the stone walls on Grindon common & elsewhere needed not to have been in ruins. I should of course contemplate his having a cottage at no great distance from the Receivers residence, so as to be under his immediate control.

I fear I may have extended these remarks to a tedious length, but in taking the liberty of offering the suggestions I have now made, to the consideration of the Commissioners, whether they may concur in my views or not, I trust that I shall stand acquitted of being actuated by any other motive than an earnest desire to promote the interests of the Property, & in cases where expenditure is unavoidable, to secure the funds of the Hospital against abuse & misapplication.

5 Jul 1833 John Grey

Friday 5th July 1833

I have been engaged for some hours in the Office, & afterwards occupied till evening with Mr Hunt and the Contractor for the work at the Dilston embankments, in narrowly investigating the encroachments of the river, upon the banks and plantations and endeavouring to come to a decision upon the most effectual & economical mode of securing them, which is a very difficult and perplexing subject.

6 Jul 1833 John Grey

Saturday 6th July 1833

After writing some letters & attending to business in the office, I went according to appointment to Haydon town Farm, to decide upon the plan of the Buildings to be erected there this summer. The Farm house has been already repaired by Mr Hoopers directions, & the necessity of the other buildings also agreed upon, but the precise arrangement of them, left to future consideration – after particular examination of the

ground, which is very uneven, & a view of the present buildings, which except the Barn & Strawhouse & a hovel which will be converted into a Cart Shed, are entirely useless, I decided upon. The propriety of adopting the plan previously submitted by Mr Howden, but with a little abridgement.

I then proceeded to West Rattenraw, new occupied by Mr Potts, to examine the Thrashing Machine which being the property of a former tenant had been sold by him to a person now about to remove it – I had been informed that the large beam which crosses above the horse wheel, & in which the top of the upright shaft of that wheel works, was fixed in such a manner into the building that it could not be removed without destroying part of both walls and roof, - Finding this to be the case, I thought it advisable to have a message for the purchaser, who is the Hospitals tenant at Tedcastle, when he should come to remove it, that if he would allow that beam to remain, as it is built into the house & will answer another Machine which the Tenant must erect there, he should either be paid its value in money, or have a beam to answer his purpose instead.

I next went to Lipwood Hall, where some buildings were appointed to have been done, but the Tenant has only now found time for leading the materials – The Farm buildings here stand so closely upon the land of Mr Coats, that to get a passage past them to the high ground, it has been thought necessary, when the square is built up, through which the present road leads to remove a hovel for the purpose of making room for one – since leaving the place, it has occurred to me that that building may be saved, if it is worth it, by making a passage through one of the Cattle sheds & putting on a double door to close it by, which would answer for leading out the manure, & for other passage, that a way may be had round the east side of the buildings. I shall take another look at this & save the hovel if possible. I then accompanied the tenant to his Allotment, three miles Northward, to look at the condition of a wide ditch which forms part of the boundary fence between his & another division of common – It runs through a morass where a fence could not easily be built – but having gone a good deal in, it is neither a sufficient fence, nor safe when Cattle venture into it – I consented to the widening of this, which being Peat earth, will not cost more than 6d per rod, but was obliged to decline several other demands which the old Gentleman Errington urged upon me at which he was greatly displeased, & declared he would never have taken the farm, had he thought the Hospital was to become such hard Landlords. –

I then returned by Grindon, where I found the farm House covered in again, with a good roof of blue Slates, & the repairs going on satisfactorily.

In the course of this round, I had an opportunity of inspecting the draining in several farms, which Mr Hunt had gone to examine, & found it all very efficiently executed.

8 Jul 1833 John Grey

Monday 8th July 1833

Having answered some Letters which I shall forward by tomorrows Post, as they relate to transactions with which Mr Hooper is acquainted I rode to Allerwash & Eastbrokenhaugh – at the latter place, some internal repairs are making at the farm house – I then proceeded to Lipwoodwell, where the Workmen were beginning to the intended building – I found after much consideration & contrivance, that the old hovel could not be saved without a greater sacrifice of convenience than it is worth, but made an alteration of the plan prepared by Mr reed, by abridging the new Granary, of which there is no great need, there being already a tolerably good one at high Lipwood on the same farm, & adding the space to the adjoining barn, which is very limited & inconvenient – This old Mr Errington thought a great improvement and we parted better friends than on Saturday – I then returned to Haydon Bridge, & was pleased to see the Inn assuming the appearance of respectability & comfort – Here my attention was called to the state of the Cellar, which I had formerly examined and decided upon the necessity of repairing the floor – On removing the broken flags, a Drain was discovered having a communication by a conduit, with the river, but quite stopped up, & about 14 Inches deep of filth, which must be removed. This will be no easy matter, as the conduit is of a considerable length and about 10 feet deep & too small to get any instrument into. I recommended to Hetherington to try to remove the mud, by repeated hushing a term which he is well acquainted with – if that should not succeed, there is no alternative but to take it up – I then rode to Woodhall Mill to ask the Tenant for some arrears of Rent, but without success, & to see the rebuilding of his Garden wall, which he has had done & paid for – Thence to Woodhall where a Cottage has been made habitable, the old flags from the farm house having been taken to make the floor, & better ones laid down instead – The Stable which was to be refitted is not begun to – And on a close examination of roof and lofting, I found it so generally bad, that taking into consideration the most inconvenient situation in which it stands & the very eligible one that offers for it adjoining the other buildings, I advised the tenant to be satisfied with a little repair of the roof to keep out the rain for winter, in the hope that next summer, it might be removed altogether, which will only cost a little more walling than the present repair, and exchange the worst situation possible, for a very good one – He gladly accepted the proposal, but declared against being bound to keep the Buildings in repair, even after being made good – If there is no stipulation, as he says, in his agreement, to that effect, I must try to obtain it as a set off against the new Stable – for the practice of allowing the rain to destroy the roof & floor, because the tenant will not put in a good slate for a broken one, is preposterous – I was disappointed to find on the high part of this farm, which I had not seen till now, that for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile by the side of the old Road to Hexham, there is no fence, but the remains of one formerly made of Stones & sods which may now be stepped over at any

part – This Tenant being a new comer, expects to have it made a fence, which is certainly very necessary – and the best plan of doing so, in my opinion, is to plant a hedge so far as the Soil is good, & to lead the stones from that part to make up the wall on the remainder – this must not be undertaken until the spring.

9 Jul 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 9th July 1833

After being engaged for sometime in the Office I rode to Hexham market where I received from Mr Errington Ridley £77.19.1 being the balance due for Bark, and paid £80 to Mr Benson on account of buildings at Grindon – also saw many of the tenants on other matters, but failed to obtain the payment of any arrears, which I wished, rather than expected – The prices of Corn continues very low, & in this part of the country it is generally spoiled & of inferior quality owing to the wetness of the harvest.

Mr Hunt has been engaged in examining and measuring Drains & taking the state of the tillage in Langley Barony for some days.

10 Jul 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 10th July 1833

Received from Mr Thomas Dickinson applications from three parties for permission to make trial of certain veins in the Manor of Alstonmoor upon the usual terms, which I have authorized upon his recommendation & which are recorded in the customary manner in the Office Book – Had an interview with Mr Green respecting the repair of buildings at Whittle which were ordered according to estimate of 1832 - & for which he had prepared Timber and made the Doors etc – I afterwards rode to Whittle, to compare the present Buildings & his plan, which I think on the whole as commodious & likely to be done at as little expense as any other that would afford equal accommodation – I also examined all the farm & looked at two good fields of permanent Grass, which the tenant complains that he is now compelled to make hay from instead of grasing Cattle, which would be more advantageous to him, but certainly so to the land, in consequence of their having been cut from access to water, by the planting of the bank between them and the Brook – This planting however, is of many years standing – but I entirely agree with the tenant, that the exclusion from water, very much detracts from the value of the Fields – I wd however rather endeavour to obtain it by boxing or sinking than by making a lane through the wood & down a vert steep bank, as he proposes; and I shall make a trial against winter –

I also examined the Mill which is in very fair condition, & has annexed to it about 30 Acres of land of good quality – The Miller expected to have had a Stable built, in coming to the place three years ago, to hold three horses – As it is to join another building, only one gable would be required, which would reduce the expense – The poor fellow had two out of his three horses drowned a few days ago in the flood of the Tyne, & his brother narrowly escaped with his life. He seems to keep his place in good order.

Thursday 11th July 1833

I accompanied my Wife and family to Milfield Hill where I remained over the Friday.

13 Jul 1833 John Grey

Saturday 13th July 1833

I rode to Scremerston, having previously written to apprise Mr Hogarth of my intention of calling upon him, hoping to find him prepared to settle the arrear of Rent, which however he said it was not yet in his power to do – I also received a Note from Mrs Thomson of Glororum, asking for a longer time to pay the sum £100 left by her at the last rent day – I then went to Mr Pringle's but found that he had gone to Tinmouth to look after a fishing concern which he has lately engaged in there. I then called upon Major Johnson, who stated that he finds the greatest difficulty in persuading any workmen to go into the Drift which wants repair – It is so foul, that any man working in it, must absolutely be laying among mud, & wet to the skin – He has however some man in view who will be at liberty very soon, and who he thinks, may be induced to undertake it – With reference to the long pending arbitration between him and Pringle, I found that in the first day of meeting, Mr Pringle had gone from home, & that the Arbitrators would not proceed in his absence, they having no document from him, nor any one to set forth his claims – In consequence of which, Major Johnson had agreed, by endorsement of the Deed, to a prolongation of time – I then went to Berwick & saw Mr Pattison upon the business of the railway, & found that he had a few days before written to Mr Hooper on the subject. I left a Letter for Mr Pringle, saying that I had called hoping to find him inclined to reduce the amount of arrear standing against him for Rents – reminding him, that although he had withheld the payment on account of his unsettled claim for damage done by the Colliery, that it seemed now at least, to be his blame that those claims were not settled, & that at all events the fishing had nothing to do with such settlements & begged that he would shortly make me a remittance. If he is to hold back the rents until his claims against the Colliery are settled to his satisfaction, I fear they will not soon be paid. His prospects of a good crop this season

are by no means flattering, & the new connection of a Salmon fishing at the mouth of the Tyne, is not likely to be very advantageous to his agricultural pursuits and operations at a distance of 60 miles.

15 Jul 1833 John Grey

Monday 15th July 1833

I rode over to Learmouth to see the manner in which the encroachments of the Tweed upon Lord Grey's property there had been guarded against. In one part, it has been done by laying large flat Stones of equal size in rows, beginning at the river's edge, & receding as they advance in height like steps of stairs. A good deal of this has given way, owing to the gravel upon which it is founded, having been washed out, which loosens the stones at the Bottom – and in other places, a stone of a soft sandy quality has perished under action of the water, & left a hole by which other Stones have been displaced & in time a considerable breach made in the work – In another part of the same ground, a different plan has been adopted which has proved to be in this, as in every situation where Stones can be had in plenty, the cheapest & by far the most effective of all – The Bank being first formed into a gradual slope, Stones are tumbled promiscuously over it – The next rest upon those, & so on successively till the whole bank is covered – The foundation never washes away in this case, because there is no unbroken line for the water to act upon – and if any stones are moved from their place, those next above, immediately occupy it, & so they continue to adjust themselves throughout. My own experience in such matters, led me to the invariable conclusion, that a steep or precipitous bank, of whatever materials formed, is unsafe, & that the thinner the edge presented to the water, & the more easy the slope the better, & imitating as nearly as may be, the natural bank thrown up by the waves at the extreme tide mark.

From Learmouth I proceeded westward for some miles through the village of Carham, to look at the Wears which had been lately erected there – Those however are not applicable to the situation of Dilston, some being placed at the head of a stream, to turn it off a field upon which the bend of the river at the place gave it a great advantage & a great part of which it had swept away, & others being placed at the lower end of the same field, pointing up the river, so as to form eddies & dead water, for the collection of gravel, mud etc., to cause the river to restore the ground it had been in the habit of taking away – and they are producing this effect very visibly – These Wears are of great size, constructed of planks covered with pitch, & resembling a ship with the bottom up, & filled with stones and gravel.

I returned to Milfield Hill, after a long ride in a hot Sun, having traversed some of the best farms in the Borders, upon which I could not but remark that in spite of

their excellent cultivation the crops are much less luxuriant than I have often witnessed.

16 Jul 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 16th July 1833

I left Milfield Hill, having written to Lord Tankerville's Bailiff, & the tenant of Chillingham Newtown, to meet me at the river's side that I might see the work lately done & ascertain the expense etc. – This Mr Jobson kindly did, & in the absence of the Bailiff who was otherwise engaged, furnished me with the cost – Except that the body of water here is much less than in the Tyne, the Banks pretty much resemble those at Dilston, & the manner adopted for securing them, much the same as I had thought of – namely by placing low weirs occasionally to turn the current from certain parts of the bank against which it is pressed the most heavily – then by laying stones most promiscuously into the river, & for a few feet above its edge, which stones are strengthened & made firmer, by a range of piles driven deeply into the Bank, leaving their heads on a level with the stones & in the midst of them, then by giving the Bank a very easy slope above the stones & covering it with turf to grow into a thick mat of grass – This work has been well executed & seems likely to answer a good purpose. I rode from Chillingham 20 miles further to Rothberry to sleep.

17 Jul 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 17th July 1833

Rode in the morning 12 miles to Hartburngrainge where I visited the three farms belonging to the Hospital, giving the respective tenants charge of directing & superintending such repairs of their buildings, chiefly the roofs, as are absolutely necessary to be done before winter, to secure the timber & floors from further decay, leaving all new & more expensive erections that they either wished for, or expected, to future consideration – One Barn & Granary which I formerly mentioned as having been so badly covered with slates, must I fear be entirely unroofed and covered a new, but the Tenant is first to have it examined by a Slater who is well reported of by the Agent of Sir John Trevelian, & who is to report to me of its condition. I rode to Corbridge 20 miles in the evening. Before leaving Milfield hill, I gave my Son the measurement of the Farms at Scremerston & Spindleston, desiring him to take a minute account of the state of the tillage in each farm, & to report of that & of their general appearance & condition to me, which will save a long journey to Mr Hunt, who is at present fully occupied in managing the draining, looking after young Fences & various repairs of Stables & outbuildings which can only be done by days works and require constant and vigilant

superintendence – He is at present measuring off the sod draining on the high lands in Grindon, which are now I trust complete & likely to answer extremely well – He has engaged a Carpenter to make 50 Gates, upon trial at 2/- each.

18 Jul 1833 John Grey

Thursday 18th July 1833

I received from Mr Bell some Plans of the late workings of Stublick Colliery, which I shall hand to the present Lessee. Remitted the Rent (£95) of Tarretburn allotment up to the 12th May last, to Sir M W Ridley's Agent, which had been received at this Office by mistake – Wrote to Mr Gibson fixing a meeting with the Hexham Road Trustees at Riding Mill, as they propose, on the 8th August to consider their intended change of road near Dilston. Also wrote to Mr. Hooper on various matters, enclosing Mr Storey's account for valuations at Stublick & Langley Mill, with his report, and a copy of the resolutions of the Alston Trustees – I then went to Newtonhall & after a close inspection of the present buildings & a little contrivance, convinced the Tenant, that many of the outhouses, though not good, might with some repairs be made to last his Lease, & that by dividing his Fold yards with Sheds to shelter his Cattle, they might be very comfortable, though the whole would not look so compact & uniform as the entire new set of Offices that had been designed for him. He is perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, as he will be saved much leading of materials, there being old walls sufficient to supply all the Stones required in this case. This will cost very little compared with the other plan – and I propose merely to build the walls of the Sheds at present laying some Wood across, so that he may build corn upon them, to cover his Cattle through the winter, & by next summer, I hope to have our own Wood seasoned for roofing.

19 Jul 1833 John Grey

Friday 19th July 1833

I was called upon this morning by the tenant of Woodhall Mill, asking permission to sell some hay – He produced an account of a quantity of manure bought by him at Haydon Bridge & laid upon his land, also of the straw of certain Tithe Corn which had been consumed on the premises – In consideration of which, & his promise to continue to bring dung from Haydon Bridge, I thought it right to grant his request.

I had a call from the Representative of the late Tenant of Wooley, stating his inability to manage the farm for Margaret Cooks family at the present rent, & praying for an abatement, or to be released from it.

I then rode to Whittonstall to see what progress the Tenants are making in the repairs of the roads to which such large advances are to be made. I found a great deal of Work done & many men engaged upon the roads which will certainly be put into much better condition although the only material attainable there is not of a desirable kind. After this repair however, they will be laid upon the respective Townships – I then went into a minute examination of such repairs, (which belong chiefly to the roofing) as are absolutely necessary to render the buildings habitable, & preserve the Wood from decay, upon the several farms in Whittonstall & Newlands – Giving directions to the Tenants respecting them – Fixing with the Lessee of the Mill & land annexed, about the work to be done to his dwelling house & Byer – and with Mr Soppitt about the building of a certain Stone fence which forms part of the boundary between his farm & Mr Wilson's of Shotley, & which by the Award of division belongs to the Hospital to make and maintain – I also made memoranda of all the windows and other wood work in the farm houses, which have been allowed to go to decay for want of paint. In some instances, new Sashes must be put in – but in general, they may be made to last for a while & hold the Glass, by applying fresh putty and paint, which I shall endeavour to have done in the most economical manner.

20 Jul 1833 John Grey

Saturday 20th July 1833

Having remained in the neighbourhood all night, I passed some hours in looking over the farms & making myself better acquainted with the quality of the soil & the management and characters of the respective Tenants. I went through a good deal of the Woodland too, seeing the bark which had been peeled & laid up & the wood that had been cut and sold, & consulting with the Woodman as to that which was best suited & the most conveniently situated for the purposes required at the farms – I also agree with a Carpenter to make 20 Gates at the Woodmans house, to be left in his charge for the farms in that part, on the same terms as those at Dilston. The large sized Wood on this property is in good state, but the younger plantations generally are in want of thinning – I am aware of the difficulty of disposing of small Wood to advantage in such situations, but that difficulty is not likely to be lessened, as great quantities of young Wood are coming into use in parts nearer and more accessible to the mining Districts than this, & that consideration ought not, I think to operate to the disadvantage of the future Timber -

22 Jul 1833 John Grey

Monday 22nd July 1833

Ridley Bank

Wrote to Sir M W Ridley & C: respecting the disagreement between their statement of the Bank Account, as noted by the Clerk of the Checks, & ours requesting them in future, to send to this Office a copy of the weekly statement, as forwarded to Greenwich Hospital, that I may have the means of comparing the account & detecting any omissions.

Railway

Wrote to Mr Johnson calling his attention to the sum of £151.3.6 due by the Railway Company to the Hospital for money advanced to the Dilston tenants on account of damage.

Stublick Colliery

Also to Mr Bell acknowledging the receipt of certain Plans of the workings of Stublick Colliery, which are of little use, telling him that that which I particularly wanted, related to the Working at the west point in the main Coal, at 'the covered in Shaft', which he must certainly have; and requesting him to search for & send it to me without delay, as he must be well aware of the danger to the men & the Colliery of working in that quarter, where so much water is lodged, without a plan to ascertain its situation.

Rode afterwards over the Farms at Newtonhall and Thornbrough - examining some draining now in progress at Thornbrough High Barns, and advising the Tenant as to the direction in which they should be laid, to render them effective. Mr Hunt has been looking to the clearing away of the brushwood from the embankment in Widehaugh, where repairs are wanted, & to the providing of piles & other materials for the purpose. He must now go for a couple of days into Hexhamshire, to attend to some young hedges & drains in that quarter.

23 Jul 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 23rd July 1833

Engaged in the Office in the forenoon. Rode to Hexham being Market day to see some of the Tenants & to direct the Plumber about the Water pipes at East Rattenraw & consult him respecting these at Haydon Bridge. Afterwards rode to Highside, a small Farm that is out of the way & seems to have been much neglected - nothing having been done to put the Buildings in any kind of order for the present Tenant. He is satisfied with moderate things, & I engaged to lay the Barn floor with home wood,

which at present is quite unfit for pulling corn upon, to build him a shed for Coals etc & a Pig Sty - neither of which he has - to put some railing before the windows to keep off the Cattle, & give him some Gates.

Thence to Langhope, the Tenant having complained of the state of his Barn, but did not fix upon any thing, as he was not at home. It does not want much.

Rode to Woodhall to see what had been done to the Houses - the Farm House has been repaired in some measure - the Kitchen floor new laid with flags and the old ones applied to a bad cottage in the Farm I directed the Stable to be made habitable for the winter at the least possible expence - being anxious to obtain leave to remove that & Pig houses etc, to the square of the other Buildings, which would be a great improvement to the homestead & convenience to the occupier, and as the materials would serve again in great measure, the additional expence would not be great. This farm has been left by Mr Pigg in sad condition - hardly a Gate, or Gate post standing. Some thatched roofs most insufficient, nor can I have them mended until' the Tenant gets straw of his own - all at present on the premises belonging to his predecessor I wanted for covering his stacks. I went to the Inn at Haydon Bridge to sleep.

24 Jul 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 24th July 1833

Haydon Bridge

I found that the conduit from the Cellar could not be cleansed in its present situation, being so small and choked completely up - but that a much shorter conveyance might be had by carrying it into the passage leading by the Brewhouse to the River, & avoiding the Garden Walls altogether. I propose laying a piece of metal pipe, into the Cellar with a Plug to stop the Influx of the river in high floods & from the end of the pipe, to continue the conduit across the yard, so wide as that a boy may creep up. There are stones suitable for the purpose close by at Esphill. It will not cost much & will not be likely to cost much in future. I had then a long examination, in which I was much assisted by the kindness of Mr Birkett, of the different modes by which the Inn may be supplied with water. That for which the Plumber had given me an estimate is liable to two objections - One, that it must be laid all the way under the road and street - at once expensive and inconvenient at the time - the other, that the water where he proposes to have the reservoir in the low corner of Landends Field, can hardly be preserved in rainy weather, from the washing of the Roads, & would be unfit for many purposes.

After much measuring and calculating, I came to the conclusion that if leave can be obtained from the Trustees of the Charity, to lay a pipe for a short way through a part of their Grounds, which would be attended with no damage to them, the way to secure an ample supply of clean Water at the cheapest rate, is to carry it from the source of the spring in the road leading to Esphill, by a tiled Conduit across the fields south of Mr

Birketts House, till it comes in a line with the Inn yard, then to lay a pipe across the Alms House Garden - through their arch way, into the Garden of the Inn, & so to join the pipe at present intended to convey the water from the useless Machinery in the yard, into the house, by which too, the latter pipe, if in good order, would not be disturbed.

Before taking any other steps, I have written to Mr Bell, the Secretary to the Trustees, to know if leave will be granted, referring him to Mr Birkett for explanation.

After looking through the different premises at Haydon Bridge rode to Lipwood to see the progress of the Building going on there, by Mr Howdon. Thence to Whitechapel, where the farm offices are so old & inadequate, that a good deal wd be requisite to make them suitable for the farm. The Tenant, Woodman, who has been there 42 years, is by no means anxious for much outlay & bad as the condition of the house is, would put up with it, if it can be made to turn off the rain, provided he could have a straw house at the end of the barn, a two stalled stable & shed for young Cattle; all of which he certainly requires & would just fill up an interval between the Barn & a granary & hovel, at a little distance. I am not of opinion that the roof of the farm house will last long, being of grey slate, & very bad indeed - a new house was offered to him 21 years ago, but he declined having it, when he saw the great size intended - at present however it may be made to pass- Mr Hooper having spoken to Mr Benson about this place, I desired the Tenant to obtain for me from him a calculation of the probable expence of the Buildings I have enumerated.

Tofts [added in pencil: 'See Journal June 8th']

I then came to Tofts, where the Tenant is desirous of having a cart shed built, which he understands or says that Mr Hooper promised him, as well as some repairs in the house. I told him there was so much to do in the estate at present, that he must really rub on without for another year at least. Thence to Haydon Town farm to look at the building going on there.

Brokenheugh

Thence by Brockenheugh Colliery to Mr Greens at Westbrokenheugh - there to be provoked by the sight of a field now preparing for wheat, which had been filled with drains some years ago, but so near the surface, that they are all ploughed up the land becoming a bog a second time. I advised Mr Green to make a deep drain in a line which we marked out, which I hope will have the effect of cutting off the Springs at the source, & preventing the necessity of renewing many of those below, which are totally useless. I shall see this field again shortly, as I am most anxious to have the draining understood by the Tenants, & effectually done. There is no improvement so beneficial, when properly executed, especially on the sides of hills, where a spring allowed to take its own way, flows over & injures the soil for a great distance. Green is an active and spirited manager, & is making a sensible improvement of his farm. His farm buildings, though good as far as they go, are rather scanty. he has one fold yard with a Cattle Shed & another without any, which is a great injury to the Cattle in bad weather. This

deficiency could be supplied at very little cost, by converting the present Cow house into a Shed, by merely substituting a wider archway for the present door - but then he must have a new Cow house outside the Fold. This I think he ought to have, though the Cart Shed he begs for, should be refused. I then went to East Brokenheugh, where the new Tenant is getting his house floors mended & a stock yard wall built. At both these Farms the Granary windows are entirely rotten.

West Allerwash

I next went to West Allerwash to see what could be done with old Watson, a Tenant of 52 years, about the water, which they keep sending to me about. When the small spring they have fails in dry seasons, they have water to carry from a deep glen in the Capons Cleugh Wood. I asked him how he had done for so many years - he says the Women are not so willing to carry now as formerly. I told him that I believed the Commissioners would be inclined to give all reasonable attention to the claims of one who had stood by them for so long a time & through at least one very hard lease & that I should endeavour to ascertain the relative costs of laying a pipe from a spring in the field and the sinking for a pump, & try to gain him the accommodation of Water, near at hand. Returning by Allerwash Mill & Fourstones reached Corbridge at nine o' clock.

25 Jul 1833 John Grey

Thursday 25th July 1833

Received the Leases of Langley Mills and Stublick Colliery, which I shall deliver to the parties on my way to Alston on tuesday. Also the Boards minutes & instructions to discharge Mr Fenwick's account for Law Charges together with one to Mr Bicknell of £176:13:2 and a payment of £300 to himself. Having no intimation of such demands & being anxious to keep my balance in the Bank as low as might be I paid £1,500 to the Bank of England, I suspect I shall not be able to make these payments to Mr Bicknell & Mr Hooper at present. I then rode to Whittle, being anxious of seeing the effect of some drains I had marked out, & to give the Tenant advice in proceeding with others, he is not much experienced in draining & his land is rather difficult. I also wished to have some awkward places by the farm Offices, levelled before setting out the new Fold Yard and Stable.

26 Jul 1833 John Grey

Friday 26th July 1833 Hexhamshire

Gairshield Planation

After writing letters & in the Office I rode over to Wooley & thence forward into Hexhamshire, to join Mr Hunt, who had been there a day before, looking into the Condition of the farms, fencing & draining, and where I had appointed to meet Mr Parkin, Woodkeeper, to examine the condition of a slip in the steep bank of Gairshield Plantation caused by the undermining of the stream. On the top of the bank, the plantation is divided from the public Road by a stone wall, & another slip of the bank would inevitably precipitate both wall and road into the channel of the Stream. It has gone on too long, and from its dangerous appearance & to prevent greater damage, I thought it necessary to give directions to Angas, Woodman in Hexhamshire to take immediate steps, by some cradles to be made of the Scotch Firs of the plantations & filled with brushwood & stones, to prevent a repetition of the mischief.

Gairshield

I then took a general view of the farms in that district, & a minute & particular one of those which the tenants have applied to be quit of. Of Gairshield, held by Andrew Thoburn, I formerly expressed a pretty decided opinion, & from all I yet see, & all I can learn of its produce in tillage, from the inhabitants of the district, I am more confirmed in the opinion that it should be occupied as a Sheep farm, confining the growth of Corn to a very few acres near the place, merely for home use, & to supply some straw for the farmers, or Shepherds, cows in the winter - for in this case, the penal clause against non residence should be dispensed with - the coarse grass which it produces & the shelter afforded by the plantations rendering this land much more valuable as an appendage to a mountain farm, and as a resort for Sheep in winter, when the food in the high ground fails, or the storms force them into a lower country, than under any other occupation. I asked old Andrew Thoburn, who migrated as a mountain Shepherd from Scotland upwards of 30 years ago, if such was not his opinion. 'Aye, said he, had that been done at first it wd have saved the tenant who took it £1300 which he lost by ploughing it, & the Hospital all the expense of those useless dykes & buildings - as for the house, it is twice too big - but its built like a dry stone dyke, the wind blows in the reek (smoke) comes out on all sides, & we can hardly get a spot to sit in'. Andrew has left off growing corn, but as he is now going to give up the farm, he talks of ploughing out and sowing all that his lease allows him. I much question his ability to do this, but as it would be very injurious to the farm, now that it has come to a cover of grass, I think that it might be well to compromise with Andrew & give up a part of his Arrear, which it is very doubtful that we may ever get, & secure it against being ploughed.

Stinted Common

The Hospital's Estate in this district possess the right of depasturing a number of Sheep upon 'a Stinted Common' & those Stints are apportioned among the different farms in the Shire. This arrangement proves itself to be bad, by the fact that the occupiers of the farms in the low part of the vale, sublet their Stints to the tenants of Gairshield & Eadsbush, whose lands adjoin the Common, for a very small consideration, (about 4d per head per annum) rather than incur the expense of looking after them at such a distance. As I have above mentioned, Gairshield is well adapted to keep those Sheep in Winter, which the high & barren Common will maintain in some months in summer. And as the whole together would be more valuable than when let in parts, it would be well to attach all the Stints to Gairshield & Eadsbush. At present however that can only be done with those farms that are given up.

Mirehouse

Mirehouse is a farm of only 80 acres, in the lowest part of the vale, occupied also by the family of Andw Thoburn & contiguous to Aydon Shields, now held by Mr Dixon, both of which they have applied to be quit of. Many reasons exist to make it advisable to let these farms together, which at the risk of being thought tedious, I must enumerate (for when I felt myself called upon to state an opinion, it is only just that I should also state the reason on wch that opinion is founded.) Mirehouse like other small farms in similar circumstances, has been let hitherto, less with reference to its actual value, than as a situation for keeping ponies for carrying Ore. That is now much diminished & as the new roads to communicate with the line of railway to the South, come into use, the conveyance of Beaumont's Ore through the vale will likely cease altogether. The land must then be let according to its value to farm only. This place is too small to be occupied to advantage, or to command a respectable tenant. It consists mainly of turnip Soil wch Aydon Shields much wants. The same Machine would serve both - the same household establishment and fewer horses would work them together than separately & from the variety of land, to greater advantage - and strange though it may appear, the dwelling house upon the small farm, would with very little improvement, suffice for both, while that on the larger is scarcely habitable & was intended to be replaced with a new one. We should thus save in building. We ought I think to obtain as good a rent & to secure a substantial tenant in the room of old Andw Thoburn! Andrew says, Mr Hooper promised him, that whatever rent his farms might let for next year, should be the rent he would have to pay for this, of this he is quite certain.

Staples

is a small farm of 60 acres, also given up. Like others, taken for the Carriage of Ore it is now too high rented at £135:0:0. The Hospital having nothing near it, it can only be let by itself. Here and at Thoburns Farms I thought it necessary to order a few days works to repair the roofs & prevent injury to the Timber, till a new letting shall decide their future management.

27 Jul 1833 John Grey

Saturday 27th July 1833

The Board.

Received Mr Hoopers instructions for the payment of Mr Weatherley's Salary & Mr Storeys charge for valuations, which shall be attended to, also directions respecting the returns from Alston of the quantities Lead Ore delivered to the Lessees of the Mills, & the average price of lead in each quarter, in the manner prescribed by the Covenants. On this subject I have hitherto had no information, but have written to Mr Fenwick asking him to send me the Draft Leases, which I shall consult & then act according to the Board's directions. I have also desired Mr Fenwick to give Mr Ruddock notice of the intention of surrendering the Lease of the Water course through his property. Rode to Newtonhall to meet a Mason by appointment to whom I let the building of the proposed walls of the fold yard & Levels. Also engaged Armstrong, the tenant of the Shaw House, who is a Carpenter, to do some work that is necessary at the said Buildings.

29 Jul 1833 John Grey

Monday 29th July 1833

Received the Boards Minutes to the 20th Instant. The various subjects on which it contains directions, shall receive my immediate attention. The Thrashing Machine at West Rattenraw has been disposed of by its owner and removed by the purchaser, the present tenant may therefore erect a new one if he chooses, under the guarantee, of its being taken off his hand by valuation at the end of his lease. Prepared certain papers and accounts to take to Alston in the morning. Rode over the Dilston Estate and examined the new Gates made at Dilston Barn. Also conferred with the Woodkeeper respecting the best wood for the buildings that may be erected next year, the best situation for keeping it under cover through the winter.

30 Jul 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 30th July 1833

Haydon Bridge Inn

Set off early to Haydon Bridge. Found that the plan adopted for cleansing the Cellar of the Inn, by means of taking a different course for the conduit, had been effected at very little cost, & that the flags can be now laid down in the Cellar floor with safety. Mr Hetherington showed me an estimate for repairing the brewing utensils belonging to

the Hospital, which have been long out of use, amounting to nearly £10. he is desirous to have the brew house put in order, that he may make his own Ale. In this I think he is right, & I told him that something should be done to the roof of the house, which indeed is necessary to preserve it - but that I should prefer selling him the utensils by valuation, leaving him to put them in such repair as he chose and giving him an undertaking that the Hospital would take them from him in like manner on his leaving the premises. This will ensure their being taken good care of.

Langley & Stublick

I then proceeded to Langley Mills & Stublick Colliery, where I delivered the leases to the respective managers, & engaged to meet Mr George Lee at Langley on Friday. I afterwards went to Alston & in the evening had a long conversation with Mr Bainbridge on the subject of the Roads. He furnished me with a copy of the minutes of the Committee to be submitted to the general meeting to be held at Hexham on Tuesday next, when it is my purpose to attend and qualify as a Trustee. That copy I shall forward to the Board, which will sufficiently explain the state of their finances. Having examined the Road particularly on my way to Alston, I could not but remark to Mr Bainbridge upon the thinness of the Metal & the danger of its melting through altogether in some parts, if we should have a bad winter. From this circumstance & from the prices which are paid per yard for leading & breaking stones, which are low, I cannot anticipate any saving of expenditure in that branch of outlay, consistent with the maintenance of the roads in a tolerable state of repair. I did however tell Mr Bainbridge that I was certain a Surveyor might be had to do the work as satisfactorily as at present for one half of the Salary, & that one Clerk could do as well as two. It appears that the Surveyor cannot be removed for nine months to come, in compliance with the Act. Some resolutions on the subject will likely be come to on Tuesday, which I shall report to the Board.

31 Jul 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 31st July 1833

Examined all Mr Stephen's accounts comparing the deliveries with the entries in his Ledger throughout. All his transactions seem very accurate and regular. The account of Ore weighed over by him up to the 1st July was 3229 Bings 2Cwts from which he received for duty, and delivered to the Smelting Mill 558 Bings & 2Cwts. After examining his premises and the Receiving house there, I accompanied him & Mr Dickinson to those at Hudgill Butn & Nenthead. At this place I passed some hours in the Rampgill Mines & examining the various processes of washing & smelting - Called upon Mr Wilson of Nenthall to speak to him about fixing the average price of Lead in the past quarter, upon which he said he had recently written to Mr Hooper. I then

went round with Mr Dickinson by Blagill to Spency Croft, examining the small farms & their buildings in that side of Alston.

1 Aug 1833 John Grey

Thursday 1st August 1833

Alston Mill

Went to examine the Corn Mill in Alston, a part of which is in such a state as hardly to be kept going. The end of the water axle, has been so often repaired & is in such a rate of decay that it will no longer hold the Wedges - and the woden cogs of the second or spur wheel, are worn so short as hardly to take any hold of those in which they work. I apprehend it will be necessary to have this examined by a Millwright to have his report upon its condition, before taking any steps towards its repair. Mr Hooper was I believe informed of the state of this Mill when at Alston. Of the Thrashing Machines upon these Estates I think those made by Stokoe are decidedly the best, but I shall await the instructions of the Board respecting Alston Mill.

Garrigill

I then proceeded to inspect all the Farms extending southward in Garrigill. They are generally so small as to afford of little outlay and I regret to have to add that most of the houses are in wretched condition - some of them I fear will hardly continue to be habitable to the end of the present Leases, but to endeavour to make them so, at the cheapest rate, for they are not worth much outlay, I arranged with Mr Dickinson that the walls in some parts should be strengthened & pointed. that the roofs should if possible made waterproof, and the floors above, which are generally full of holes & broken boards, mended. And for this purpose, that certain Cottages that have been abandoned from their bad condition, & are not likely in the decreasing population ever to be worth replacing, should be dismantled of any materials, such as boards, Slates etc as could be made available for patching up the others.

The only exception to this state of things in that quarter, is on the farm of Lowhouses, let for £52 a year. The house here is modern & good, but the Byer, which in such a climate & where so much depends upon cows, is so bad that it is hardly safe to go into, from the badness of the walls although the timber in the roof is very good & quite fit to put into a new building. The Tenant, of whom Mr Dickinson speaks well, gave in a proposal for eleven years altho' it has only been let to him for five, of which two expired at May last. I could not persuade him to say that he would make any advance of rent on condition of having the building improved, nor perhaps would it have been advisable for him to do so, but he would lead Materials if his lease was extended to his proposal. I fear something must be done at that place next summer. In the field where his Cows go, near the river, are the remains of lead workings, which are injurious to them & that he might have the free use of the land, he begged to have that

part fenced off, which could be done by a short piece of Wall & on condition of his procuring materials, I directed Mr Dickinson to have it done.

Alston District

At Randalholme Farm, the largest in the district, & where 20 Cows are reared each year, there is no Calf house, it would not cost much to fit it up with home wood, & if I find the Tenant pay up his rent, would recommend its being done in the Spring. There is a small triangular piece of Ground, between the two roads that lead to Hexham & Kirkhaugh, in a hillside to the north of Alston, consisting of an Acre or an Acre & half, which is of no use as it is & should be planted. Also a small piece of ragged looking bank, caused by making the new road, leading from Lowbyer towards Alston, might be sloped a little & planted at small expense, which would be at once ornamental and useful. I am glad to report of Walton, the present tenant, that both he & his wife are well spoken of, as most civil & respectable people. They have everything clean & comfortable, though I rather suspect their finances are not abundant. They solicited me strongly, to have another outside door to the house, with a passage to it from the Kitchen, which would certainly be an improvement - at present there is only one door besides that opening from the large room into the Garden, & company coming to the house may be met by Slops etc from the Kitchen. I desired to have an estimate of the probable expense of placing the new door & making the partition and promised to mention his application to the Board.

The Street leading out of the high part of Alston is the most dangerous from its steepness and bad paving of anything I ever saw. I strongly advised Mr Dickinson & Mr Bainbridge to employ the men in a time of scarcity, in breaking it up and making a smooth road. In closing these remarks upon my visit to Alston, it is but just to observe that I found Mr Dickinson most accurately informed upon all matters connected with his department, and much alive to the depressed condition of the inhabitants of the district, whose quiet demeanor, regular habits and subdued and even contented appearance, under their difficulties, cannot fail to interest everyone in their favor.

2 Aug 1833 John Grey

Friday 2nd August 1833

Langley Mill

Returned to Langley Mill and met Mr Lee, who is to have a meeting with his partners in a few days, when he will call here and discharge the amount of the valuation of Stock at the Mill & their share of the Lease. Examined all the works, and saw a fine Cake of Silver made. Came to Lightbirks to look at the Stable etc fitting up there, and proceeded to Corbridge.

3 Aug 1833 John Grey

Saturday 3rd August 1833

Received an order from the Railway Company for £151:3:6 due to the Hospital on Account of the allowances for damage, made to the Dilston Tenants, also information from the Board that £1000 had been ordered to be repaid to my Credit, through Sir R Carr Glynn & Co to Sir M W Ridley & Co.

Wrote to Ridley Bigge & Co desiring that they would order £300 to be paid to the Bank of England to Mr Hooper and £176:13:2 to Mr Bicknell.

Wrote to Mr Todd informing him of the Board's decision respecting his Arrear; and to Mr Weatherly respecting his Salary and a small debt due to the Hospital by a person in Berwick, which he was to try to obtain. Was engaged in the Office from 9 till 2 o' clock. Rode to Dilston Park Farm to arrange with the tenant about bringing Slates from NCastle to cover the Stable, & some other matter connected with his farm. Afterwards travelled all the Woods on that side of the Estate, where some bark is collected & a good deal of Larch cut down.

Mr Hunt was for two days in the beginning of the week in Langley Barony, looking after draining railing young Fences etc and has been since at Whittle, Newtonhall, Fourstones, Woodhall & wherever any Work is going on.

Mr Gipps, the Vicar of Corbridge is anxious to establish a School in this hitherto neglected parish, and in soliciting a subscription from the Commissions begs me to hand to them a List of the Present subscribers, together with the value of their respective properties, as rated in the Church of Assessment, which I herewith forward.

5 Aug 1833 John Grey

Monday 5th August 1833

Whittle

Rode to Whittle to concert with the Tenant and Builder, a change in the purposed arrangement of the Cattle Sheds & Stable to be erected there, which will add greatly to their accommodation & convenience and will not I hope increase the expense.

Throckley

Proceeded to Throckley to see the new working of Coal there, & come to an agreement with the Lessees respecting it. Messrs Bones having both gone to Newcastle, I did not see them but went to the Colliery, and saw the Coal, which is good, & had a conversation with the Overman. The Sale is limited, but the good quality of the Coal is attracting Custom, and as I think there is good cause now to hope that they have got a piece of whole Coal, & have not merely sunk down upon a pillar of the old workings, as I apprehended, I trust the Lessees have a fair prospect of recovering the money they

have already sunk in unsuccessful attempts, and that the Hospital will receive an adequate Rent. I looked over the Farms generally and examined some draining on Mr Stephensons farm particularly, also went to the Quarry which is let upon his farm, to request that the workmen would take the necessary means of preventing danger to Mr Stephensons Stock.

6 Aug 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 6th August 1833

Alston Road Trust

Attended at Hexham a Meeting of the Trustees of the Alston Road, to which the report of their Committee upon the state of their funds (a copy of which I already have the honor to forward to the Board) was submitted. An opinion was universally expressed, that it would be impossible for them to make good the monthly payments to the Commissrs of the Hospital and the annual one to the Lead Company, without abandoning the maintenance of the Roads, several of the men who should have been employed upon them, having been discontinued, in order to raise £60 P month to the Hospital, many Gates being unlet, and the toll collected & paid weekly, by persons employed for the purpose, upon which a great falling off in winter is anticipated, & lastly no reduction being possible in the expense of management, for six months to come. In consequence of this, their prevailing opinion, I thought it right to submit to the meeting an extract from the Boards Minutes shewing the determination of the Commissioners not to depart from the previous arrangement by which the whole sum of £1700 with interest at 3PCent, together with £112:18:0 as compensation to the tenants was to be liquidated in the course of seven years from the commencement, urging upon them the absolute necessity of having it understood that if the Commissioners should be prevailed upon so far to yield to the urgency of the case, as to suspend their claims, for the ensuing six months, the saving to be effected by a more economical establishment at the end of that period, should be applied to the speedier liquidation of the debt. For the final resolutions of the meeting, I beg to refer to a Copy of them, which I am to be furnished with for the information of the Board. I ought further to mention that I urged upon them the immediate settlement of Mr Coats claim for land at Lightbirks, for which he holds the Hospital liable, & to this they assented.

I obtained today, after repeated applications, the payment of £104 from Mr Benson of Fallowfield, as part of the arrear of Rent due by his Son, for which he had become answerable, this promissory Note for the £100 which remains at two months.

7 Aug 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 7th August 1833

Tyne Banks

Having set some men to work to repair the damage done to the Stone breast work along the Shore of the Tyne from the Nursery Ground downwards, along the west side of Widehaugh, where on account of the depth of the Water, it can only be well done in the present low state of the River, I got into the float or raft made for conveying Stones join the river, & paddled along the whole length of the works, which can be best seen, & the breaches best ascertained from the surface of the water, pointing out to the overman and to Mr Hunt, what it was needful to give immediate attention to, & the easiest and most effectual manner of accomplishing it. Mr Hunt has occasion to go for two days into the Langley district, to look after draining and other matters. After that I wish him to spend as much of his time as can be spared from other objects, in attending to the workmen on the embankment as it is of great consequence that these operations should be effected before the autumnal floods, if possible.

Grindon

I then rode as far as Grindon. The farmhouse is again habitable, but the parlour floor, a part of which only looked bad, has proved so rotten, when taken up, as to require entirely new Wood. The work at the offices is proceeding satisfactorily.

Whitechapel

The tenant at Whitechapel consents to suspend all Building there 'till next Spring, though he will be ill off during winter. By that time I hope to have a good assortment of our own wood seasoned, to suit all purposes.

Brokenheugh

Came to Haydon Town Farm to see the building in progress there. Thence to Brokenheugh to see the effect of a Drain I had set out there ten days ago, which is likely to be very effective, and to fix on building a Cattle Shed, to be merely covered over with branches and straw for the Winter, to wait the seasoning of our own wood, before laying on the Slate roof. Returned home by Allerwash & Fourstones.

8 Aug 1833 John Grey

Thursday 8th August 1833

Dilston Road

Went by appointment to attend a meeting of the Gateshead and Hexham Road Trustees at Riding Mill, to discuss the proposed change of Road at Dilston hill a proposition

respecting which from the said meeting, I shall have the honor to forward for the consideration of the Board. Some of the Trustees spoke of a former correspondence on this subject with Mr Brandling, & entertained the idea that a grant of land to form the new Road had already been promised to the Road gratuitously. On referring to me, I said, with all the willingness with which I felt assured the Commissioners would at all times meet their views in effecting such an obvious and great improvement. I conceived that any grant of land for the line of new Road could only be made in consideration of their undertaking, as soon as the new Road should be fit for use, to remove the fences from the sides of the old road, take up the Stones and put the land into such condition as to be taken possession of, by the Tenant or Tenants, such Tenants being remunerated for any loss they might sustain in the interval. And that besides, as the removal of the Road would render useless in point of situation a public house & Smithy now standing by it, it would be expected that the Trustees should either remove those to a suitable situation, or purchase them by valuation from the Commissioners having then to rebuild them elsewhere, or not, as they might see fit. These terms were in substance acceded to & will form the grounds of the proposition to be made. The public house is an old bad building, & had better be dispensed with altogether, the rent paid for both it & the Smithy, being only £20 a year, including a field worth from £8 to £10. If it should be rebuilt, the best situation for custom would be at the junction of the two roads at Dilston Desmesne Haugh Farm, but that being so near the farm offices & close to the back of the farm house, would be an insufferable annoyance to the inhabitants. And having Hexham on the one hand & Corbridge & Riding Mill in the other directions, it could hardly be much used as a house of call, & if not for the purposes of public accommodation, the rent which it would yield would never be sufficient inducement to infringe up the quiet and moral conduct of the neighbourhood. A Smith's house & forge might be placed very conveniently at the west end of Dilston bridge.

I took the opportunity of being at Riding Mill to see the manager of the Railway & request his immediate attention to the discharge of our claims for damage done to the road to Snokoe Quarry and also to request, that in the course of the autumn, the line of way through Allerwash should be staked out, that when the Farm comes to be advertised the exact quantity of land to be taken from it, may be ascertained, both of which he promised to attend to.

9 Aug 1833 John Grey

Friday 9th August 1833

In consequence of a message I left at Throckley Colliery a few days ago, when I did not find the Lessees at home, they waited upon me this morning, and after some conversation and explanations, signified the willingness to agree to the proposal I

made to them, viz to pay the rent of £40 a year for the Colliery from the commencement of their term (the three past years of which have been spent in unsuccessful attempts without any rent being paid) on condition of their being allowed three years from last May, to make up their short workings, and if by the end of that time, they should have sold more than 2000 Fothers for each year, then to pay the tentale Rent as stipulated in their agreement. Should the present winning enable them to do this, which I hope there is a good prospect of, the Hospital will recover the rents of the three bygone years, which otherwise must have been abandoned. I have not been able to find any agreement this Colliery in the Office, or any thing to guide me except Mr Fenwicks Report & recommendation which I understand was acted upon. Should any Lease be in the hands of the Commissioners it might be well to have an endorsement put upon it to the above effect.

Dipton Plantation

I then went and passed some time among the labourers at the embankment in Widehaugh & afterwards proceeded over Dipton Fell to examine the road in the plantation by which the Wood & Bark are brought out, complaint having been made to me by Carr & Co, purchasers of a large lot of Wood there in May last, that they could not get it out, & that a promise had been made to them at the time of purchase that the road should be improved. I found some parts of the road exceedingly deep, & four horses with great difficulty bringing out the load of two, & in danger of sticking fast & overturning. I therefore thought it necessary to direct the Woodman to cover the worst places over with branches and turf, the only materials to be had, to serve the present purpose. The purchaser complains much of the dear Bargain he has got, chiefly from the expense of conveying the wood from so high a plantation over such bad roads. I traversed this extensive plantation of 560 Acres, in different directions & found it to contain a large quantity of Larch & Scotch Fir that has attained its full growth, and should be disposed of as fast as a market can be had for it. But from the great quantities of wood to be sold on all hands & the large tracts of young Wood coming up in districts nearer to the Mines than this, I am fully convinced, that to dispose of its Wood in due time, the Hospital must submit to a reduction of price, especially in situations so difficult of access as this. Had it been possible to erect a small Saw Mill, to be worked from the water wheel of the Corn Mill at Dilston, it would have been much in favor of selling the larger Wood on this part of the property, but in the present arrangement of the Building that is impracticable.

10 Aug 1833 John Grey

Saturday 10th August 1833

I this morning sent Mr Hunt to look after some draining at Shawhouse and the building at Newtonhall & Whittle, wishing myself to attend to the operations on the

Tyne, when I spent most of the day among the Workmen. Besides the work of repairing the Stone breast against the west end of Widehaugh, I am anxious to take advantage of the present low state of the river, to secure from further encroachment, the shores above & below the mouth of the Devils Water, where the Soil is of so soft & sandy a quality, being the deposit of former floods, that wherever a breach is made, it yields to the action of the water and wastes away, to the destruction of the Trees as well as the Soil. The Shore for a considerable distance is now presenting a broken and steep front of this soft soil to the water & therefore in a most dangerous condition. Instead of attempting to secure it with a breast work of stone, as was proposed, which is found, notwithstanding the immense expense, not long to answer the purpose, I began with some Workmen this morning to make some Wears, to turn the pressure of the river more off this bank, into which it has worked a deep channel - which wears are made simply by laying down the Scotch Firs from the thinning of the plantation close by, & which are of no value to carry to a distance, with their tops & branches projecting into the river & their trunks secured by a heavy coat of Stones taken from the gravel in the stream, now laid bare. Among these are placed small willows & I reckon upon their soon collecting a deposit of sand & mud so as to become firm & substantial & to allow of the willows taking root, & by degrees, filling up, by collections from the floods, the intervals between, so that a part of the land that has been taken away may be restored. This done, the next operation will be to slope the banks as gradually as possible, covering them with green turf, so as to present a thin edge to the river, & defending them from the action of the water by laying in some Scotch Firs, as in the case of the Wears collecting mud etc & to promote the growth of Grass & small willows to hold the soil together. I have great hopes that this plan may prove successful, & at all events, it will be attended with so little cost, compared with the other, that I consider it worth a fair trial.

12 Aug 1833 John Grey

Monday 12th August 1833

Dilston Road to Snokoe Quarry

Had various letters to write & several matters to attend to in the Office. Also a long conference with Mr Walker of the Railway Company, who stated that he had seen the contractors for the Bridges, in leading the Stones to which, the injury had been done to the roads in Dilston South Farm. That they denied ever having complied with the terms, respecting the repair of the road, proposed by Mr Sample, that they had also left a quantity of Stones in the Quarry which stones the Hospital had got the benefit of & which had been led to make the Buildings at Dilston North Farm, after they had ceased to lead altogether, thereby doing equal injury to the road as they had done, and lastly, that having received payment from the railway Company, he had not the means of recovering it, the claim having been allowed to stand so long over. I told him that I

was aware Mr Sample had not made them sign an agreement as had been intended but I had witnesses to prove it, if necessary. That the Contractors for the building were most likely to avail themselves of any stones they found won to their hands in the quarry, & which they were allowed to take with impunity, but as to the Hospital deriving the benefit of them, it was absolutely false. That the claim had been long unmade, was not my fault, as I had applied to him as soon as I was acquainted with the circumstances. That it had been so much the worse for the tenant in the interval, for whose occupation of the Farm, this road was necessary. That I must look to the Railway Company & not to their sub-contractors, for indemnity to the Tenants of the Hospital, which it was my duty to secure for them, and that as the Railway was likely to require similar accommodation in other parts of the Property, I much questioned the policy of his allowing this road to remain in such condition that the Tenant would not be able to lead his Corn from the high part of the Farm. Our discussion ended by his undertaking to set to work immediately & have the road as far as the Quarry put into such condition as that I should be satisfied with it. I afterwards rode over Snokoe hill to examine the road, which is exceedingly bad beyond the quarry, & as it is wanted for the conveyance of our Wood, as well as for the use of the farm, I think it would be advisable to spend a few pounds in repairing it. I then proceeded to Dipton Plantation, to see if the passage out of it had been mended according to my directions and to examine some parts of it which I had not got through the other day, which are all equally full of Larch and Scots fir that ought to be cut. I then returned by the Tyne Banks and spent the remainder of the day at the Wears. Mr Hunt had gone to see the progress of the new roads at Whittonstall, the repairs of the Millers House at Newlands etc.

13 Aug 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 13th August 1833

Stublick Colliery Crops

Had an interview this morning with Mr Shield of Stublick Colliery respecting the dilemma he is in with regard to the Corn upon the lands attached to the Colliery, which matter I have fully stated to the Board in my Letter of this evening to Mr Hooper.

Fewster

Also saw Fewster tenant of Newlands Haugh Farm, wishing to talk to me about the Wood for the Bridge, but evidently to discover my opinion respecting their prospect of continuing in the farm & being allowed for leading to new Buildings. I told him the Hospital had enough to do, in making the Buildings without paying for leading to them, & that I could give him no reason to hope for such an allowance, nor could I honestly recommend them to engage in such an undertaking for it would cause them to

neglect the working of their land & involve in speedier ruin, leaving the new Buildings to be enjoyed by their successor. He admitted the truth of the remark, but feared, if they should give up the farm & the Board should exact the old Arrears, they could not engage in another & thought they had better try to hold on. I told him that I could say nothing as to the Board's intentions respecting the Arrears, but thought it probable that as to the part wch had not been contracted by him & his brother, the Board might, in consideration of the efforts they have made & the bad terms they have had to contend with, be inclined to show them some lenity. I told him too having seen their persevering industry, I should feel myself much more at liberty to recommend them as tenants upon a Farm when only the tillage of the land was to be attended to, than when any thing was to be done that required an extra capital. I am not very anxious that this farm should be given up, unless I were certain of the adjoining one being set at liberty at the same time. No new tenant would take Fewsters with the present ruinous Offices, & it would be a pity to make new ones here, when by laying the two together, a saving a saving of 8 or £900 might be effected, which would afford a reduction of rent, beyond that which the times will force upon it. I visited the Works on the Tyne both in my way to & from Hexham.

14 Aug 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 14th August 1832

Ore in 1822 and 1832

Received three Copies of the Agreement for Lands attached to Langley Smelt Mills, & forwarded them to Mr George Lee, requesting to have two of them returned to me, with the signature of the parties. Forwarded to Mr Hooper a comparative view of the produce of Ore from the Hospitals Mines in the years 1822 and 1832, as furnished by Mr Thomas Dickinson.

Simpson, Painter

Rode to Thornbrough & thence to Newtonhall & Whittle, to inspect the Buildings going on there, and give directions respecting them. Agreed with Mr Simpson, a painter, to go to the farms of Wooley, Greymare Hill, Fairle & Sproats Farms, to give a coat of Paint to the doors and window frames which I found in a decaying condition. Some of the Windows, may, hang together for a while by help of putty and paint, the others, I fear, may have to be renewed.

15 Aug 1833 John Grey

Thursday 15th August 1833

Attended to some matters in the Office and with Mr Parkin, regarding the Woods. Passed some hours with the Workmen at the Tyne Banks and afterwards engaged in drawing up conditions to submit to the Board, for the future management of such farms as may come to be let upon fresh Agreements.

16 Aug 1833 John Grey

Friday 16th August 1833

After receiving and answering Letters, rode to the Works on the Tyne Banks, which it is most desirable to get forward with while the river continues low. Thence proceeded to examine the Woods of Dilston Park and the Devils Water in both of which there is much Larch and Scots Fir at its full growth. In the latter is, toward the high part of the river, a fine growth of Oaks, but many of them seemed to be sustaining injury from the Ivy which is clinging around them and which I must speak to Mr Parkin to have cut off. Having missed him this morning, I did not see so much of this wood as I wished, finding it no easy task to force a passage through the deep glens and thick underwood. I shall however, while the season is good, present as speedily as possible, a survey of all the Woods in the property amounting to upwards of 3000 Acres.

17 Aug 1833 John Grey

Saturday 17th August 1833

Met Mr Parkin this morning by appointment and went with him through all the Woods on the Tyne Banks, deciding on such as it seemed necessary to remove, both from the embankments themselves & from the brink of the River, to admit if getting the Banks sufficiently sloped and secured, of the latter there are many so, much undermined, as to make it likely the next flood would carry them off. We then proceeded to examine particularly the Woods on both sides of the Devils Water from Dilston Mill upwards. I had previously had three or four of the large Larches in this Wood cut down to ascertain their quantity. Those I went to see & was delighted to find them an excellent specimen of full grown Timber, red wood to the very outside; and if I am not much mistaken, perfectly fit for all purposes of farm buildings. From their great size & awkward situation, beneath precipitous banks, it will be necessary to cut them up where they lay. And this ought to be done in the Autumn and the Wood put under cover for the Winter. With such Wood, I hope there will be little necessity for buying

foreign timber, except in the case of building dwelling Houses of considerable size. In these Woods a great quantity of Oak, Ash & other trees might be set out for Sale, if a Market could be had, with much advantage to the using trees of smaller growth. In a general way the Woods upon this property are much too crowded, & great injury has been sustained in so many of them, by having gone too long without thinning - by which trees have been forced to a height quite out of proportion to their thickness & seldom ever attain a proper shape and strength. Returned after a walk of eight hours.

19 Aug 1833 John Grey

Monday 19th August 1833

Bell Stublick

Received the Boards instructions to inform Mr Bell, late Agent of Stublick Colliery that unless he shall satisfy me immediately both regarding the Colliery Plans and his claim to away going Crop on the land he held as Agent, the Board will consider that he has forfeited all talk to the gratuity ordered him. Enclosed a copy of the Minute to Mr Bell & forwarded by Coach, informing him that I should be at Haydon Bridge tomorrow, where, if he chose, he might see me on the subject. Received a letter from Mr J Gibson, Clerk to the Gateshead & Hexham Trust, containing an application to the Commissioners from the Trustees respecting the proposed alteration of road at Dilston, accompanied by a Plan of the same, both of which I enclosed to Mr Hooper, writing to him at length on the subject. Afterwards rode to examine the Wood on the Tyne Banks at Thornbrough, which is in a good state, the old Wood being chiefly Oak & having sufficient room, & the younger parts of the plantation not so much crowded as in many of the Hospitals Woods - proceeded to Newtonhall examined the state of the plantations there, and at Shaw House, which are very thriving, but unluckily too much occupied with Beech & Dutch Elm, which are of very little value- attended to the building at Newtonhall and returned by Thornbrough High barns and Lime Kilns, where I am glad to see much more trade is going on than in the earlier part of the Season. Mr Hunt was engaged on Friday and Saturday, with the Drains in Langley Barony and is now chiefly occupied at the Banks at Dilston Haugh.

20 Aug 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 20th August 1833

Newlands Lot of Wood No 1 Sold to I Johnson

Mr Dickinson having informed Mr Isaac Johnson that I was to leave home at nine o' clock, he came to the office in the morning accompanied by Mr Burnett of Ovington, as his surety, who is a person of some Property, & we finally concluded a bargain for the

Lot of Wood, No 1 at Newlands Park for the Sum of £330 of which £165:0:0 is to be paid for the 25th July 1834 and the remaining £165 on the 21st March following, by which time all the Wood is to be removed. I was very anxious to have earlier payments, but find 12 months is the usual time allowed for standing Wood, and this Lot includes so much bad beech and inferior elm, for which it is doubtful that he may ever find a market, that I found it was in vain to insist upon better terms from Mr Johnson, & fearing that another purchaser might not be found, I considered it best to conclude a bargain with him, for which two Copies of an Agreement were written out, specifying the terms, and his and Mr James Burnett's joint and several promissory Note obtained for the amount.

Alston Road Committee

I then went to Haydon Bridge to attend the Committee of the Alston road Trustees, of which, Mr Ord was Chairman. As a Report from this meeting is not to be laid before the general meeting till the 5th November, I may just state generally, that I made several proposals for the future management of the trust, which were all agreed to, Viz, that instead of £500 a year being laid to Mr McConnel for himself who never sees the roads, and his deputy, They should advertise for a Surveyor to reside on the line of Road and give his time to it, at a Salary of £150. That instead of two Clerks at a Salary of £40 a year each, they should have one at a Salary of £50. That some system of Checks upon the Surveyor's payments to the Workmen should be adopted and that instead of having the Stones broken by Cart Loads separately, they should be laid into depots & then broken by square yard subjected to competition by tender, in each district, by which I am confident a great saving would be effected. And that the Trustees should be divided into local Committees to meet quarterly to inspect the roads in their respective districts, and any works in progress at the time to be attended by the Surveyor, whose accounts they should also examine and have explained. If the Trustees would take this trouble, I know from experience, it is a most salutary arrangement. As to the liquidation of the debts, no specific plan could be laid down by the Committee, these proposals being only recommended for the adoption of a General Meeting, and no saving to arise from their adoption, being available for six months to come; and unluckily a Bridge having fallen down which must be rebuilt by the Trust, (none of the McAdams bridges having been finished in such a manner as to be taken charge of by the Counties) and the approaches to the new bridge at Alston being of necessity to be made, there will not be one farthing of surplus revenue to devote in the mean time to any other object. Mr Ord stated as his Opinion that the interest upon the debt to the Hospital should be paid annually, and all possible means used to discharge the principal, by applying the whole saving to be effected by a change of management to that purpose and to the repayment of £400 due to the Lead Company. I mentioned the circumstance of £20:14:0 as a charge for ten years for land at Westwood having been omitted to be made, but no books or accounts being there, must arrange at a future time with Mr Bainbridge. If a saving of £5 a mile could be effected without detriment to the roads, by a better application of labor, as I hope it may be found

possible & another saving of £380 in Salaries, some hope of a liquidation of debt may be entertained even at the present rate of revenue from the tolls.

Stublick Bell & Shield

I next had a meeting with Mr Bell & Mr Shield of Stublick for whom I had sent. Mr Bell on this occasion and by virtue of the forcible argument used in the Boards minute respecting his gratuity did produce three plans of the Colliery workings for which he said he has had 'a long seek', two of them being as he says, copies of those he was ordered to burn - and one of later workings. Those I transferred to Shield, but as they do not still show by any means accurately, the situation of the impending Water, I strongly urged upon him the necessity of proving it by boring, to avoid the chance of consequences that might prove highly injurious & distressing, we then entered a tedious & rather perplexing discussion as to the Crop at Stublick. After all the enquiry I have been able to make and the evidence I have obtained, I came to the conclusion that Mr Bell is not intitled to any away going Crop upon the lands held by him from the first of his engagement at the Colliery, but that he is intitled to such Crop upon the land occupied until three years ago by John Turnbull, who had a Crop from a part of it at that time, by which, Bell has only had one Crop hitherto, and if deprived of the present, would have only that one for the three years occupation. This would not be just or reasonable. I therefore gave him up that part which is only very few Acres & it will be necessary either to give the present Lessee an equivalent now, or a note attached to their Leases, authorising them to take a Crop from an equal extend of land, at the time of their leaving the premises. This wearisome discussion was closed by my writing an agreement which both parties signed, undertaking to abide by the valuation to be put, by persons mutually chosen, upon the seed and later of the said crop of Corn (with that exception) upon the clover Seeds now enjoyed by the Lessees, all expenses incurred by Bell by working the fallow of this year - also in putting the seeds into the garden etc etc. So that I trust no ground of future dispute is left unprovided for. I told Bell, that in these matters being settled, I should be ready to pay him the gratuity ordered, but he still seemed to entertain a hope, that from his long Services & having always done his duty, he would obtain a pension. I told him, I should send him a Copy of the Boards Minute on the subject. The day has been very wet and Hetherington very opportunley drew my attention to his own Chaise and several of our Gigs etc standing exposed to it in the open ground. I think it will be necessary to build a Shed at the farther end of the yard, which need not however be a close Coach house. Every body is greatly pleased with the improved appearance of the Inn here and indeed, now that it is cleaned, painted and extremely well furnished it is the best house & most respectable looking Inn in this part of the County. I fear however there is little chance of its succeeding as a posting house, being so near to Hexham, as not to make a sufficiently long stage for changing and the occasional posting at such a place is very little indeed. The length of Stages on this road is much complained of & I have sometimes thought that it might pay to make a new division of them, including the Hospital Inn at Shaw House, to which there is sufficient land attached, to give

profitable employment to post Horses which that at Haydon Bridge very much wants. The division would be very good from Newcastle to Shawhouse, Haydon Bridge, Haltwhistle etc but whether the posting on the road, exclusive of that to Hexham, would afford sufficient encouragement for such an undertaking, I am not yet well informed upon.

21 Aug 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 21st August 1833

Received the Boards Minutes of the 10th Instant, which shall be severally attended to and acted upon. With regard to Crozier's petition referred to me to report upon, I know only of the fact that two very good Horses were drowned in the flood of the Tyne, when leading gravel from a bed in the river, & that the younger Crozier narrowly escaped with his life. The people are well spoke of, as being industrious and respectable. They have not the appearance of poverty, but I believe wish to raise a subscription on this occasion & would like to see the Commissioners at the head of it; and as to a Lease of Throckley Colliery, I think that until the experiment of the present working, is more fully proved, nothing need be applied for more than the agreement to which I obtained the signature of the two brothers lately. Should future circumstances seem to render a stronger instrument necessary, I shall attend to it. My journal of yesterday will show that I have already acted upon the authority of Mr Hoopers previous letter, respecting the Stublick Crop & the sale of Newlands Park Wood, in the latter of which it was as well not to lose time, as Mr Johnson began to waver in his offer, and seemed inclined to recede.

Dilston North Farm

Water machine

Mr Leadbitter of Dilston North Farm came to me with two complaints, of which he is very fertile; one that, he had a very insufficient supply of water for his threshing Machine, only one of the two Springs having ever been brought to the reservoir, which were intended, & that if no additional quantity were obtained the machine after having cost so much to the Hospital & £200 to him in carting for the building, dam etc would be very insufficient. This I promised to lose no time in examining into. The other was a complaint that only rails had been put up at the end of the bridge on his land, where the fence had been removed on repairing the Bridge, & that pigs got through and destroyed his Corn. The greater part of this, I told him, belonged to the County to replace & only a small piece to the Hospital, and that I had sought and obtained an interview with the Surveyor of the County Bridges to call his attention to putting up a more substantial fence, in which the Hospital would join at their end, but that in the mean time, some tenants would have contrived to draw a few thorns through the rails to prevent injury to their crops. It is a provoking fact, that the Tenants

here are all so much accustomed to reckon on being paid for damages, that they will stand with their hand in their pockets looking on, rather than make any exertion to prevent them. This day as well as yesterday is very wet & gives but bad promise for the harvest, which is only yet begun in the low lands.

State of Crops

I wish I could report more favorably if the Crops generally. Those on the Hospital Estates, but especially on the high rented Farms of Dilston, are very poor indeed, bearing strong testimony to the impoverished condition of the soil. There are exceptions to this remark, creditable to the occupiers, such as Stephensons' of Throckley - Scots of Thornbrough- who is restoring his by two years grazing with Sheep - Greens of Brokenheugh- Watson's Allerwash - Langhorns' and Harles' of Millhills - and the farms of Landends - Lipwood & Whitechapel - as for Woodhall Haydon Town Farm & others newly entered to, they have been left in such wretchedness, that I do not hope to see good crops upon them for years to come, of the appearance of crops in the northern part of the County I hear much better accounts. The return of the account from the Bankers this week shows the omission of two Sums of £36.14.6 and £104 for which they ought to have given credit. This inaccuracy in such an establishment seems very extraordinary, & I have written to them strongly on the subject.

22 Aug 1833 John Grey

Thursday 22nd August 1833

Tyne Banks

The rains of the last two days having raised the Tyne so as to cover the Wear which we were in hand with, all the men were employed in sloping the banks in the manner I formerly described. I passed great part of this day among the workmen, and was glad to find, that of the three wears which are finished, they are likely to effect the purpose intended by them - as yet, the water has done them no injury, and in the intervals between them, where the cement used to be strong, & to press heavily upon the Dilston side, they have caused it to take a direction more into the middle of the channel of the river, creating dead water pools behind them, in which I trust a deposit of Land etc will take place, by which the banks will be strengthened & the land restored, & thus the river made to repair in some degree the mischief which itself had created. It may appear that much of my time and attention have of late been given to these works: but considering the expense which the encroachments of this river have already occasioned, & the value of the property to be secured, I trust it will not be considered superfluous, that I should both give particular attention to the execution of the works, & the efforts produced by them, so as to be able hereafter to decide as to the cheapest & most effectual mode of obtaining the desired object.

The Weather continues boisterous and showery & unfavourable for the harvest.

23 Aug 1833 John Grey

Friday 23rd August 1833

The river having risen a good deal in the night, I went with some anxiety to see its effects on the unfinished works on its banks, but found all safe and uninjured as far as I could discover, and the men employed in providing materials to resume their operations as soon as the retiring of the water should allow.

I then proceeded to examine Mr Leadbitters reservoir into which my little water seems at present to come, and that even not very well secured, on Account of some fault in the Sluice which allows a part of it to escape. From the situation of the reservoir an abundant supply may always be collected from the higher grounds in a wet season, but at times when there is no water on the surface and the springs are low, I fear there must be a scarcity, and of the two springs which he mentioned to me, and which I examined, that in the field attached to the old public house, is both in too low a situation and too scanty to be of any use - and that rising near Snokoe quarry would I fear be in danger of sinking in the gravel, during so long a run. If the present showers should not afford him a supply, I must try some expedient to procure one. Too much money has already been expended upon this machine, to have it allowed to stand for want of water, if it can be prevented.

24 Aug 1833 John Grey

Saturday 24th August 1833

Mr Hunt went yesterday morning to inspect the draining in Langley Barony and measure off such as was finished, and this being his first year for valuing the Tithes belonging to the Hospital in that quarter, I set out in good time this morning to meet him at Lipwood and accompany him to Whinnetly and the other places to assist him in the valuation and establish the principles upon which it should be made, and I must do him the justice to add that I found his estimate of their quantities per acre, in the different fields, in my opinion, very correct - a Copy of the agreements made with the several occupiers shall be forwarded to the Board. In my way I visited the works going on at Westbrokenheugh, Haydon Town and Lipwoodwell, returning in the evening by Grindon. Turnips in all that district are very promising, and I was glad to observe the Corn on the Estate of Fourstones, cutting up a very good Crop.

26 Aug 1833 John Grey

Monday 26th August 1833

I was surprized by a visit from Mr Shield of Stublick this morning, informing me that Mr Bell had advanced several new claims, such as leading to drains, working the turnip land of next year, as a preparation for this years corn crop, although he had last year, the benefit of the turnips produced, changing some roads etc, in consequence of which the arbitrator on the part of the Colliery Lessees, had declined to enter into the valuation at all. After the trouble I had taken to investigate Mr Bells claims, and the pains I had been at, to do justice go both parties, & the conclusion to which, as I hoped, I had finally brought all matters in dispute by obtaining their signatures to a written agreement, I did feel that in the raising of claims so unheard of and inadmissible by Mr Bell, was taking a step beyond the ordinary scope of human patience to submit to. I immediately addressed a letter to the Arbitrators enumerating each distinct item upon which, according to the Agreement, they were required to put a value, and stating that if either party should neglect or object to have that acted upon forthwith, I should sent Mr Hunt to take possession of the Corn and have it reaped on account of the Hospital, leaving the objecting party to find his remedy. This Mr Shield willing acceded to. Mr Shield had previously bargained to pay Mr Bell £27 for the Corn growing upon that portion of the land occupied by Turnbull.

I am informed by a Letter from the Surveyor of County Bridges that the Fences at the south end of the Bridge here, belong to the Trustees of the Hexham Roads and not to the County, they having been altered by the change of Road. I don't know how this happens to have been omitted in former settlements with the Trustees or that no permanent fence has ever been put up; but have written to Mr Ruddock, Clerk to the Trustees, respecting it. A Stone wall is the only fence in such a situation. After being released from the Office, I spent some hours among the workmen on the Tyne Banks - the flood in the river having entirely subsided, they had returned to the Wears which they had been driven from, & which, I was glad to find had not sustained the slightest injury in the interval and gave me great hope that they will not affect the purpose which I anticipated.

27 Aug 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 27th August 1833

Robert Bell, tenant of Lough Farm and Lime Kiln came to inform me this morning that the Lessees of Langley Mills had left off taking their Lime from him & began to burn it for themselves at the Kiln kept for the use of certain of the Farms there, but to which he expected the Smelt Mills had no right, as he had explained to Mr Hooper that

they were his best customers & that he could not pay his rent if their trade should be removed. I consequently looked over the draft of the Lease of the Smelt Mills without finding any permission for the use of the private Kiln - and in Mr Hoopers Journal of the 6th of March, I find it noticed, that the Lessees had applied for such permission, & that he had given them reason to expect it only, in case it should be found not to interfere with the convenience of the tenants for whose use it had been made, or with the interest of any Lessee of a Limekiln on the Hospital Estates.

This reservation is equally judicious as regards the Lessee of the sale lime kilns & the tenants who make use of the private kiln. Having found nothing to lead me to believe that the Lessees of the Smelt Mills had any such title, I wrote to Mr George Lee, informing him of the complaint made by Bell, understanding as he did, that the private kiln was not open to the use of the Mills, and expressing a hope, that unless he and the company held an especial sanction for doing so, they would see the propriety of immediately desisting.

Newtonhall Building

Having heard from the Mason who was employed to make a Cow House, turnip house and fold yard walls at Newtonhall, that the work was nearly finished as far as it could be proceeded with at present, I rode there to examine it. The walling is very good. The old Cowhouses have been converted at little cost into Cattle sheds, for which their situation at the north side of the fold yard, was exactly suited, & the new Cowhouses stand most conveniently. It may be in the recollection of the Board, that I purpose laying some coarse Wood and straw over these for the winter, or getting the Tenant to build Corn upon them, until our own Wood shall be seasoned for roofing. In this way the expense of building the gables & putting on the slate roof, will not take place till next summer.

Whittle

I then proceeded to Whittle. The Farm house has been raised and the new blue slate roof is nearly finished. The other buildings are in progress - returned by Whittle Mill and Ovingham. The harvest is going briskly on today, but I regret to learn that the high winds have shaken a good deal of Corn in exposed situations, and that the Vance, Lough & Deanraw have suffered. I walked in the evening up the Banks as far as Widehaugh, to see what progress had been made at the Wears.

28 Aug 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 28th August

I have received an account for £16:16:0 for certain Plans for Lands at Keswick, made three years ago, but not paid for - a copy of which I herewith enclose, not thinking it right to pay it without an order from the Board. Rode to Whittonstall and inspected

the new Roads, which are now nearly finished, all the materials being led and nearly all broken & laid on. Examined the building of the new School house at Whittonstall & bridge at Ebchester, both pretty far advanced.

Newlands Mill housing Newlands Haugh and Town Farms

Also the repairs at the House & Farm Offices occupied by the Miller at Newlands, the roofs of which required a good deal of work, being of gray slate & much broken. This place will now be in very good order, except a small Cow house, the walls of which consisting of Stones cemented with Clay, are so old and bad so as not to be capable of repair. There is no alternative but to make it intirely new & the only matter that could be used in it, is the small quantity of Stones it contains. I have therefore induced the Tenant to use it for another year, if it will stand, with the idea, that if any management can be made so as to unite Newlands Haugh Farm and Town Farm in one and save the building of an onstead at the former, Stones & gray slates would be had from the old buildings there, to make this up at a cheap rate.

Fairle Farm

In consequence of an application from the Tenant of Fairle Farm, I examined minutely the windows and doors, which I had given orders to have gone over with putty and paint, to make them last for a time if possible, and found it necessary to give orders for two new doors and at least two new window frames and sashes. The house is very old and everything about it bad, but with such repairs, it may be made to last out the present lease, & these old doors and windows may be made up perhaps for some of the old Cottages in that quarter. Besides these matters of particular Inspection, I wish at this time, to see all the farms; that I may judge by the appearance of the crops, of their general productiveness and of the management of their respective occupiers. Of Newlands & Whittonstall I must remark that the present Crop is superior to that of the Lands on the Tyne, in proportion to their respective quality & rents, especially to those of Dilston, Westwood & Coastley, (which however is not attributable to the management of the present tenants, of those farms, but to the severe system of cropping, to which they have for a long time been subjected) and that with trifling exceptions, the state of their crops & fallows does the tenant credit, those of the Whittonstall Hall and Morrow Field particularly. The lateness of the climate however is much against this district, as much of the Corn will not be ripe for three weeks to come and may suffer in the winds to which it is so much exposed.

29 Aug 1833 John Grey

Thursday 29th August 1833

Engaged for some hours in writing Letters & with business in the Office. I then proceeded to the Workmen on the Tyne banks when a heavy rain coming on, I thought

it advisable to return home having been very unwell in the night & unfit for exposure or exertion. Having some time on my hands, I may as well avail myself of the present opportunity to draw the attention of the Commissioners to a subject which I approach with the greater diffidence, as it is in some measure one of a personal nature, at the same time that the interests of the Hospital as far as regards the convenience and respectability of the Receiver's situation are connected with it. I refer to the Receiver's permanent residence. The impossibility of finding a house suitable for purpose, within any convenient distance of Hexham, is too well known to Mr Hooper, (whose most anxious endeavours to find one proved fruitless) to require observation. And now that I have passed three months here, looking in every direction & reckoning upon every chance of a vacancy I am not a whit nearer the mark than at first; nor do I see a single house of any description likely to be had, save the one in which I now live. I have no fault to find with the situation of Corbridge. It is centric all for the Estate, convenient for the Post and for Coaches - & the Offices are good - but the dwelling house stands in the midst of old buildings, with the threshing Machine of an adjoining occupier almost touching one end of it, annoying by its noise and filthy from the dust it creates without any land attached to it, and so small & incommodious that while I am living here, my family are left at the other end of the County. To remain here for any length of time is out of the question, nor can I see any mode of carrying the Boards intention of having a permanent residence for their Receiver in the heart of the Hospital's Estates, into effect, in a way convenient & creditable for him & respectable for the establishment, but by building a House for the purpose to comprise the necessary Offices under the same Roof, I am aware that the adoption of this plan may subject me to a higher rent than an adequate rent might cost, could such an [sic] one be found in a convenient situation, but considering that there seems hitherto no alternative, and that it would fix the Receiver's residence in all time coming, upon a much more respectable & independent footing, than the uncertain reputation of a hired house, taking into account also that I being bound to all repairs, the house could not be deteriorated in the few years that I should be likely to occupy it, while the Garden and appurtenances would be more perfect at the end than the beginning, I would hope it should not be deemed necessary to impose a heavy per Centage upon the outlay. This however is a matter for the Commissioners to decide, altho' it is also of importance that I should consider it, in proposing such a Plan. On the supposition that this scheme should be approved and adopted, the next thing to be taken into consideration is the most eligible situation. And here it cannot be too much regretted, that so many fine materials had been removed from Dilston to build houses in Corbridge and elsewhere, that might, if left have been turned to such good account. But notwithstanding this, there is no situation where building can be more cheaply done than at Dilston, from the nearness to stone, and none that offers so many attractions and conveniences. It is most central all for the Estates - the most easy of access by the passing of the Mail & all the Coaches along Dilston Bridge, & there are three grass fields, not under Lease or attached to any farm, now occupied by old Shipley and the Landlord of the Public house which is likely to be unmoved, that would form a most convenient appendage to

the House, & would in fact be necessary for its occupation. If in addition to this, Shipley's house could be had for the Clerk's residence, I cannot conceive a more complete and commodious arrangement of the whole establishment. It is not for me to say, if any, & what impediments stand in the way of such a plan - nor shall I farther obtrude my views and wishes upon the Commissioners, than to beg to refer them to Mr Hooper who knows the difficulty we incountered in obtaining a house of any kind (I say we because he took as great an interest in it as I could do) and the privations & inconvenience to which I am in the mean time subjected. I may just mention, as my apology for troubling the Commissioners on the subject at this time, that should the proposed plan be carried into effect it will be necessary to give notice to the parties to quit the occupation of the land, & also to prepare a plan and materials for making as early a beginning to build, as the season will admit of. In the meantime, I should be obliged to remain in this miserable habitation.

30 Aug 1833 John Grey

Friday 30th August 1833

Wrote to Mr Mitchell the Lessee of Highgreen Colliery, now transferred to the Duke of Northumberland calling his attention to a balance of Rent Arrears still due by him to the Hospital and also an account for railway plates got from Stublick & requesting an early settlement.

Dilston Park Stable

Wrote also to several tenants reminding them of arrears left over at the late receipt, which they have since taken no notice of. Rode out by the men engaged on the Tyne banks & proceeded to Dilston Park Farm to examine the timber upon the Stable from which the bad grey slabs have been removed and ascertain whether it would suffice to carry the new roof or not. The principal timber will do, but the laths are entirely gone and the spars so rotten as not to be likely to stand for any length of time which won't make it advisable to lay new Slates upon them. As this is the case I think it will be right to raise the walls of the Stable, which is too low, about two feet, so as to make it equal with the rest of the square, that the roofs may range together without any projecting gable.

The weather is boisterous, which causes the harvest to proceed rapidly; the Corn on the low Grounds will be all cut in a few days, hardly getting leave to stand 'till it is ripe, for apprehension of loss by the wind.

31 Aug 1833 John Grey

Saturday 31st August 1833

Went to Newcastle wishing to see Mr Fenwick & Mr B Johnson, the former, respecting the recovery of some debts to the Hospital, which he has in hand, and the latter, regarding the line of the Railway through the Hospital's Property to the West of Hexham, where whether they form the way or not, next year, it is advisable that the line should be marked out, & if the land to be occupied, ascertained before entering into any new agreements for the Farms, so that there may be no ground of future contention with the tenants. In both cases however I was disappointed. Mr Fenwick having gone to Sheffield & Mr Johnson being also from home.

2 Sep 1833 John Grey

Monday 2nd September 1833

Engaged with various matters in the Office. Received from the occupier of the Smith's House and Shop at West Boat two proposals which he had got for making the alteration he contemplated for enlarging and roofing a new his dwelling house, showing that the cost would be within a few Shillings of £20. It may in the end cost him a little more. For this he proposes that the Commissioners should grant him a lease of 21 years at a rent of £8 instead of £10. This would be a bad bargain on their part, unless the present rent is actually too high to stand - and I own it does appear pretty high for such premises. I find in the estimates of last year, the repair of this house stated at £5 and as the roof which I examined is actually not in a habitable condition, perhaps it may be advisable to offer him £5, in part of the contemplated outlay upon the work being finished in a satisfactory manner, giving him a lease of 21 years at the present rent of £10.

I visited the works on the Tyne Banks and proceeded to examine some hedges connected with the Woodlands on the Dilston Estates that are not in very good condition & will require attention. I then passed through the Woods of Dilston Park to those on Dipton Hill, some parts of which are so soft, that it is difficult to keep the road in such a state as to allow the purchasers of Wood to remove it - and if they should not succeed in doing so before winter, I fear it will then be found impossible. Returned by Snokoe, where to my surprize, I found that no steps had yet been taken to repair the road by the rail way company. This is not very good policy in them, who may have to apply to the Board for similar accommodation in future. Mr Hunt visited in the course of last week all the places in Whittonstall, Hexhamshire & Langley where draining or any kind of work is going on - and I sent him over this morning to the farms of Hartburn grainge, to look after the repairs which I directed to be done when last

there. It will be found I apprehend that the expenditure for draining this summer, has rather exceeded the usual amount. This has arisen in some measure, from the frequent breaking out of old drains which had been insufficiently made, the runs from which are injurious to the land - and in other situations where draining was obviously wanted, I considered that with conferring a present benefit on the tenants, of which at this time they stand so much in need, it was always conferring a permanent improvement to the estates. In this view of the case, I trust I shall stand justified, as regards the expenditure, & as great attention has been paid to the execution of the work, both by myself & Mr Hunt, I feel satisfied that the same ground will not be to go over again.

3 Sep 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 3rd September 1833

Received a letter from Major Johnson containing a copy of his correspondence with Mr Horne the Solicitor at Berwick, respecting the arbitration between himself & Mr Pringle, also information of a claim made for tythes upon the Scremerston estates by Mr Gibson on the part of Sir Thomas Hagerstown, which I forwarded to Mr Hooper for the information of the Board. Rode to Westwood to examine the plantations there and on Coastley but a heavy fall of rain obliged to take shelter & at length to return home. The weather for some days has been very unfavourable for the harvest. Much of the Corn that remained standing was shaken by the winds of Saturday and Sunday, and now all carting is put a stop to by the heavy fall of rain.

4 Sep 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 4th September 1833

Another wet morning and as cold as November. When the rain ceased I rode to Wooley- the crop there is generally bad and far from being ripe. I then proceeded to look over the farms in Hexhamshire, terminating at Gairshield & inspecting the Wears which I had formerly marked out, to preserve the Bank in the plantation & eventually the Wall and public road from being carried away by the violence of the little mountain torrent. The three Wears are completed which are certain I think to produce the intended effect. At Salmon Field, I examined & directed the draining of a fallow field which I wished to be completed before the time for sowing the wheat, also look at what had been done at Rowleyheads. The fallows on both those farms are in very creditable condition- only wanting a good cover of Lime to make them productive. The Crops in this district generally, have a fair appearance, as to bulk, but much of the grain will not be fit for cutting before the end of the month, some of it still later, in which case, it

cannot be expected to be fine in quality, to escape the many risks it must encounter at so late a season.

I particularly examined the few acres of corn growing at Gairshield; at this time as green as grass. If it were ripe now it would be worth from 30/. to 35/[s] an Acre, hardly enough for Seed & expenses of ploughing & harvesting - but on asking when they expected to reap it, I was told 'about Martinmas (11 November) or when frosty nights came to ripen it' which makes it doubtful whether it will pay for reaping at all. This is poor remuneration for the building of barns and Offices, & the expense of enclosing and cultivating. The land on this farm which grew Corn last year & should have been fallowed this, lies untouched. Old Thorburn wisely thinking the Crop would not repay him. It ought to be worked up & sown with grass if not with corn, but that will be left for his successor. Returned in the evening by Dilston Park and Widehaugh, to see the progress at the Banks of Tyne.

5 Sep 1833 John Grey

Thursday 5th September 1833

Received a message by Mr Hunt from the tenant of Hartburngrainge west Farm respecting the Thrashing Machine which belongs to the Hospital, it has been in a bad state & never repaired since he came to the farm, & now will not do any work till put in order. I have sent my Son to him to endeavour to induce him to purchase the machine, promising that he shall have it at a moderate valuation & then he can have it made up in his own way & that it should be repurchased at the end of his term. If he will not agree to this, it will be necessary to have it inspected & repaired & to bind him to keep & leave it so. I hear also that some ladders for reaching to the roofs of the housing, & tools for quarrying & boring etc belonging to the Hospital, have been kept possession of by the Tenants of Meldon, as a transfer with the property. I have sent directions to the Woodman on the estate, to claim & recover them in spite of any pretext to the contrary.

I have received a Letter from the Clerk of the Trustees of Haydon Bridge Charity, stating that my letter, applying for leave to lay a Lead pipe through their gardens, to convey water to the Inn, had been laid before the Trustees at their meeting on the 2nd Instant 'who signed an order consenting thereto, upon the condition that the Corn is at their own expense, fix a trough & a pipe in the Grounds of the Trustees behind the Almshouses for the convenience of the Almspeople'. This is imposing a tax as payment for wayleave. It will not cost much, as a short branch of pipe to fill the trough from the main pipe is all that can be wanted, and as they stipulate nothing for future repairs, it will be left for them to keep in order, I shall however await the Board's

directions respecting it. This will still be much the cheapest way of effecting the purpose. Engaged in the Office & at the river embankments.

6 Sep 1833 John Grey

Friday 6th September 1833

Tyne Banks

Mr Morton from Lambton, to whom I applied some time ago, for his opinion respecting the best manner for securing the banks of the Tyne, he having had great experience in such matters, kindly came here last evening. We have today examined together all the banks of the Tyne and Devils Water on the Dilston Estate, & I was glad to find that he entirely concurred on the plan which I had adopted, but suggested the idea of planting all the newly made slopes by the river shore, with the dwarf or waterside willow, besides the covering of grass, which I am giving them, the better to bind the surface & protect the sandy soil from the action of the water. He thinks the wears will be of great use in throwing the current into the middle of the channel & relieving the banks. Mr Morton has also given me a copy of the Leases & covenants used by him on Lord Durhams Estates, which are printed, without Stamp, & similar to the copy sent by me to My Hooper, but not so comprehensive.

Greenside Machine

I have received an estimate for the repair of another of the Machines on the Hartburn Estate amounting to £15:17:11 to put it into repair in its present force, with an addition of £10 for a second rake, every machine ought to have two rakes, to prevent the waste of Corn - but I would not recommend to the Board to incur any expense in this department, beyond what is absolutely necessary to put such of the machines into a working condition, as it is found impossible to get the tenants to purchase. And in this instance, I fear there is no chance of effecting a transfer of it to the tenant, which I proposed to him when I examined the machine & desired him to obtain the estimate; for he is already in some arrear of Rent, & seemed to contemplate the necessity of giving up the farm. As he has not done so, I suppose he intends to make farther trial of it. He seems to be an industrious & respectable man & I hope may get better on this year than he did the last.

7 Sep 1833 John Grey

Saturday 7th September 1833

Alston Mill

Heard from Mr Taylor of his intention of buying at Alston on the 13th Instant & have written to say that I shall meet him there. Wrote also to tell Mr Murray a millwright at Chesterleystreet [sic], asking him to meet me at Alston to examine the Mill along with me, that we may decide upon what is needful & try to make an agreement for it.

Dilston No[rth] Farm Machine

Went to the men engaged at the Tyne Banks & took Thomas Harle with me, who seems to be the only man here who has any judgement in such matters, and can give any information respecting them, to try to discover some spring of water that might be conveyed to the reservoir at Dilston North Farm, which is at present quite empty. The only one of any magnitude is at the farther end of Snokoe Hill, which would be to bring from a great distance, & in fact over rocky ground which in fact it could be difficult to secure it from disappearing among the crevices, making the attempt at once expensive & of doubtful success. There is another which may be brought at little cost, but so small at present, as to render very little service, so that I fear this very expensive Machine, must be left dependant in great measure, upon the casual supply of the clouds, for its operations. By keeping the courses clean, the supply in winter will generally be abundant, but in summer it must be scanty and frequently will altogether fail. Mr Hunt is gone to Whittonstall today to look to the repairing and painting of some Windows & in the Farm houses and to measure drains.

9 Sep 1833 John Grey

Monday 9th September 1833

Highside

Rode up the Tyne Banks & then to Highside, where I bargained with a Mason & Joiner, for building a Pig Stye, Hen House & Coal Shed, & to relay the barn floor.

Haydon Bridge Stables

Thence proceeded to Haydon Bridge to try if by any means I could contrive some more stabling for the Inn at little expense. The Inn is becoming much more frequented under Hetheringtons better management than formerly, & he has sometimes of late been obliged to send his Coach Horses to stables in the neighbourhood, to make room for those of strangers. As there seems now a good prospect of this becoming a well established Inn it is necessary that it should have adequate accommodation for horses. The range of buildings within the yard contains at the farther end, a house hitherto

used as a Dog Kennel, and another adjoining it, which is let to Mrs Routledge as a Cowhouse, though at the time of letting the Inn, I believe Mr Hooper considered, as was natural, that the whole belonged to it, if these two were laid together, they would make a stable for five horses, & by putting a roof over the yard of the Dog Kennel, it would give a Shed for Gigs etc. But then Mrs Routledge would have no Cowhouse, & in the way that her house is situated, it is impossible to make one in the back of the premises, there being no passage from the front backward, but through the dwelling house. Yet it is obviously a bad arrangement to have her Cowhouse in the Stableyard of the Inn, & occupying room which ought unquestionably to be a stable. I called upon Mrs Routledge & told her that it was far from my wish to incommode her in any way, but that she must see how we were situated for want of stables, & acknowledge the inconvenience of having her premises connected with the Inn yard, & begged of her to endeavour to provide some other place for her Cow, & put us in possession of the present one. I proceeded to inspect the building at Lipwoodwell & returned by that at Haydon Town - both in charge of Mr Howden - & I must do him the justice to say that he is making very good work. Called also at Brokenheugh to look after draining & repairs there. The Harvest is getting on now satisfactorily but not many Stacks are seen yet in that part.

Aggriculture [sic] of the District

On this subject I am tempted to remark, that the slovenly mode of harvesting the grain in this particular district, exceeds any thing I have elsewhere met with, although the absence of adventitious manures & the extreme cheapness of harvest labor would, one might think, offer the strongest inducement to the farmer to cut his corn as low as possible, instead of leaving one third of the Straw to wither on the ground, which if taken home would make such a valuable addition to his fold yard manure. A farmer on the Tweed or in East Lothian would be scandalised in every company and looked on as an incorrigible sloven, who should leave his fields in the ordinary condition of those in this part of the County after harvest. Of the Tenantry here, it may be with fairness remarked, that tho' they profess in a high degree the praise worthy qualities of industry & frugality, they are very deficient of knowledge as to the customs and management of other parts of the kingdom, & like ignorant people in general, much wedded to their own. There are some implements in common use in many parts which have never been seen here, & the introduction of which would be a great improvement, & those even of a simple & cheap description. One would be almost tempted to rent a small Farm & put it under the management of a Tweedside Steward, for the sake of showing an example, though I fear they would be slow to follow it. It cannot be supposed that Farmers daily occupied in the same fields, should know much beyond the bounds of their own parish, & on this account, agricultural societies formed of spirited & intelligent men, have been the means of leading to many improvements in different parts of the Country, and I should be much inclined to promote one here, could I find support and cooperation among the proprietors & higher class of farmers. A Tenant or two from the Borders would be the best stimulus but most of the Farms

here are beneath the notice of a man of Capital, and the larger ones have been held at too high rents & are generally in too impoverished a condition to afford sufficient attraction to induce a man to emigrate in quest of them.

10 Sep 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 10th September 1833

Mr Walker of the Railway Company waited upon me this morning, in consequence of a letter I had sent him, which seemed to have stimulated him a little, & came under all submission respecting the repair of the road from Snokoe quarry, undertaking to pay the men whom I should employ to do the work in such manner as I should direct. Of course, I immediately closed with him & have made arrangements to begin the work tomorrow, and after getting on as far as the quarry, I must take upon myself to do a little farther on the part of the Hospital for the benefit of the Tenants and the Woodlands. Went to Hexham Market to pay accounts to some Masons et and endeavour to get some arrears from Tenants; in the latter however, I did not succeed. In returning visited the Workmen at the Tynebanks.

11 Sep 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 11th September 1833

The Heat of yesterday has been succeeded by a heavy and constant rain this morning, putting a stop to all harvest operations.

I had appointed to meet a Mason and Carpenter at Dilston Park Farm at seven o'clock to examine the buildings and decide upon the best mode of giving the tenant the necessary recommendation - did not set out so early on account of the excessive rain. The walls of the Stable now uncovered, prove unfit to carry a new roof. But I found on examining the Onstead particularly, a Cow house which may be dispensed with, & Pig Styes adjoining it, occupying a building of unnecessary height for them, which may at little cost be made into a Stable in a situation more convenient than the old one. This done, instead of building the Stable anew, it will only be necessary to build Pig Styes, with a hen house above, which may be covered with the best of the old materials, & save the new roof of blue Slate, altogether I fixed upon this arrangement & let the work accordingly as it will make the Offices more commodious & at less expense. I am concerned to have to notice the unhappy condition of Mr Parkin, the Wood inspector and manager. He is a young man of sober habits & good conduct, but has lately fallen into a state of mental depression, amounting at times to insanity. The Doctor ascribes it to organic disease of the heart, which he has for some time been afflicted with, though

not to such a degree, as to prevent him attending to his business, increased by some over exertion or excitement. He is anxious at times to be removed to his family near Leeds, but his removal at present, the Doctor says, would be highly improper. He is using means to reduce the fever that accompanies his present symptoms & hopes he may be restored. It is only a few days ago that he became incapable of looking after his business, & I must endeavour with Mr Hunts help to keep matters going in his department, for a time, until it is proved what turn the disorder takes.

12 Sep 1833 John Grey

Thursday 12th September 1833

Price of Lead

No definite arrangement having yet been made for determining the average price of Lead for the quarter ending the 1st of July last, I wrote to Mr Parker, the only person conversant in such matters with whom I am acquainted asking him to have the goodness to meet Mr Crawhall upon the subject. Went out to give directions as to the repair of the Snokoe road, and see if the rains of yesterday had produced any supply of Water to Mr Leadbitters reservoir, which I found still nearly empty. Similar complaints of a deficiency of Water are made respecting the Machine at Coastley which has been recently erected.

Letting Farms etc

My attention having been called by Lord Auckland in a Letter I had the honour to receive from his Lordship a few days ago, to the most advisable mode of letting the farms which have been given up, and of dealing with the present circumstances of the Tenants generally, and his Lordship having requested to know my opinion on the subject, I shall venture to make a few remarks upon it, altho' I must confess that I find it so beset with difficulties, that any opinion which I may hazard, is given with diffidence. That the Agricultural interest is in a very depressed condition, is undoubted; and it is equally true, that the Hospital's farms are too high rented, for the present prices but some, more so than others, & those entered to last May, the least so in general. To give an uniform rate of abatement can neither be just in principle nor politic in effect, because it gives equal relief to the cheapest farm as to the dearest, and affords the same encouragement to the bad tenant as to the good. It precludes also the introduction of any improvement in covenants, which resorting to a new bargain would admit of. On these accounts, I should advise, before relief is given, to require an actual surrender. In this case, it would only be fair, where the tenant is a desirable one to afford him who has had a losing bargain, the chance of repairing his loss, by letting him the farm, upon proper covenants, without subjecting it to competition, and on such farms as those in Bambroshire, where the Tenants are men of Capital, there could be little difficulty in making such an arrangement. But in the districts where the

farms are small and the competition for them great, on account of the little capital they require, to treat with one tenant privately and reject another, would I foresee raise a world of clamour against the Receiver, and give rise to endless appeals to the Board, against his decisions, on the score of partiality in one case and of harshness in another. For however good his reasons might be, for preferring one tenant to another, at even a less rent offered, that ground of preference would not be acknowledged by the rejected party, whose feelings of disappointment and hard treatment would be keen, in proportion to his inability to go elsewhere for a farm, & the want of qualities to recommend him to another Landlord.

[faint and illegible paragraph inserted in pencil in the margin here, the LH edge of which is lost in the binding.]

I presume too, that in case of adopting a system of private letting, it would be necessary to give the Receiver power to do so at once, for if he were to report the particulars of every negotiation respecting a number of small Farms to the Board, & await their decision, the parties would often be found to have changed their minds, in the interval and so the matter would have to be begun 'de novo' which would lead to frequent disappointment & much delay. Such a mode too would invest the Receiver with a power & subject him to a responsibility neither proper nor desirable. And if no other objection existed against it, my acquaintance with the people in the country, their connections & circumstances, is as yet too limited, to render me competent to make the best selection at the present time. Perhaps the mode the most calculated to obviate difficulties on the one hand, & to do some measure of justice to a deserving Tenant on the other, might be to accept of his proposal among others, but in consideration of his having paid too high a rent previously, or by leading to buildings or any other improvement, having put it in the power of others to offer more money than if such improvement had not taken place, to give him a preference over the highest bidder, by such an allowance from the rent for so many years from the commencement of the term, as might be considered adequate to his previous loss, or outlay in improvements. This would be subject of agreement with him. And if he declined the terms offered, then the most eligible tenant could be accepted, and in cases where it was more desirable to get rid of a tenant than to retain him, an opportunity would be afforded of doing so. How far it may be in the power of the Board to act upon such a plan, is not for me to determine but in the choice of difficulties this seems to follow something of a middle course.

13 Sep 1833 John Grey

Friday 13th September 1833

Alston

Drove to Alston to meet Mr Taylor on his return from Nent Head, and examined with him the accounts of some parties applying for a reduction of duty, of which he will give his own report. He seems of opinion that to encourage a spirit which is now reviving in some measure in the mining district, it would be advisable to make that reduction for a time general.

Lowbyer Inn

I examined with Mr Dickinson the change proposed by Walton at the Inn by making an additional entrance which would unquestionably be an improvement, & of which I here send an estimate amounting to £15.6.0. Should the Board accede to Waltons request, perhaps it might be as well to promise him an allowance of £15 from his first payment of Rent after the work shall be satisfactorily completed which will be a security against any extra expenditure.

14 Sep 1833 John Grey

Saturday 14th September 1833

Alston Mill

Had a minute examination of the Mill at Alston, with Mr Murray the Millwright, who had been engaged to meet me there. The Water Wheel is not in a very bad state, except that the Axle is loose & in such danger of doing mischief to other parts of the machinery that I have desired him to send a man up for a few days to wedge the Gudgeons & put the wheels into a proper set, so that the Mill may continue to work with safety till the new parts are ready to be put in. Instead of running in brasses the Axles are set in lignum vitae, which absorbs the Oil and has worn irregularly, so that all the Cog Wheels are destroyed by not working fairly into one another, and the Cogs cut off angularity. The motions are not correctly calculated nor the wheels so proportioned as to work very smoothly. One of the grinding Stones is quite worn out & the Kiln plate also, which are additions to the expense that I did not reckon upon - to make up the Mill upon a modern principle, putting in new Metal Shafts etc would cost by Murray's calculation £149 but I see no necessity for this, as it is quite possible, by fixing Cast Iron Segments round the Spur and pit wheels, instead of renewing the wooden cogs as at present, to adjust the motions to the proper pitch and make the Machinery to work better than it has ever done & to last for many years. The Estimate for this will be seen to be £75.5.0 according, Murray says to the lowest possible calculation- subject to inspection & subsequent valuation, if I should think fit. From the

character which the man universally bears and the minute examination upon which his calculation is formed, I should be inclined to recommend the adoption of this latter estimate by the Board, & the sooner the work is examined the better.

Stock at Langley Mills

I had an interview with Mr Thomas Wilson and received from him a Check for the value of Stock at Langley Mills, also informed him of some small wood which is cut in the Plantation on Rodderup Fell - asking him to have it examined and to make me an offer for it. He seemed indifferent about the purchase; but if it cannot be sold to the mines with which he is concerned, I fear we shall not find a purchaser at all.

Finding that an inclination exists among the Road Trustees in the west, to continue the present system and Salaries till May instead of terminating them in February as was proposed, because of the badness of the Season, at the latter period, I called upon Mr Ord in my way home to talk the matter over with him. I cannot see any reason for continuing Mr McConnel's sinecure, one day longer than can be avoided, or for thinking that the roads will be benefitted by the management of his deputy for three months after he knows that he is to be dismissed, rather than by that of one entering upon a new term. Besides the Work to be done for maintaining the Roads through the winter, should be done now, & not left for short days and bad weather. Mr Ord seemed inclined to take this view of the subject & hope it may be acted upon. Returned to Corbridge in the evening

16 Sep 1833 John Grey

Monday 16th September 1833

Shaw House

Engaged during the morning in answering letters and attending to Business in the Office. Afterwards rode to Shaw House to examine the interior, of which the Cellar is in bad condition, the flags being much broken up, and one of the apartments upstairs having the floor rotten & in holes. As the occupier is a Carpenter I think he might perhaps be induced to relay the Floor by the Hospital furnishing the Wood. The Stables & appurtenances at this place are much better than the Inn itself, & are equal to a larger establishment. It has been suggested by some Gentlemen in the neighbourhood that this place, being 13 miles from Newcastle on one hand and 13 from Haydon Bridge on the other, would make a much better division of the road as a Posting House, than the present one where the stages are all 20 miles long, taking Haydon Bridge for the second stage, either on the way to Carlisle or Penrith, but I fear our present tenant at Shawhouse, has neither capital nor connection to enable him to try the experiment with any good chance of success. It appears to me however, that this is the central and convenient situation for holding the rent day for those estates

lying to the eastward, which are too distant from Haydon Bridge, and whose rents used to be paid at Newcastle, viz Throckley, Whittle, Newtonhall, Thornbrough and Hartburn - about 14 Tenants in all - that by doing so, we should be giving a little assistance to our own Tenant who holds rather a dear farm, consulting the convenience of the Receiver & that part of the Tenantry, and doing something to bring the house into notice. I then proceeded to Whittle to examine the buildings going on there. The farm House is covered in & the interior nearly finished. The Cattle Sheds & Stable are in progress.

17 Sep 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 17th September 1833

Corbridge Road

Mr Ruddock, Clerk to the Hexham Road Trust, having informed me, contrary to the information I had received, that the railing at the end of Corbridge Bridge which I complained of as being an insufficient fence, & have wished the trust to replace by a Wall, had been included in the 400 Rods of fence between Dilston and Corbridge, for which the Road Trustees has accounted to the Hospital. I sent Mr Hunt to measure the whole, & finding Mr Ruddocks statement to be correct, it follows that the wall must be put up by the Hospital & not by the Trust. Having some Stones which had been taken out of old works on the Tyne Banks, that are not now wanted, & that may be easily had for this purpose, if led before the Tenant sows the intervening field with Wheat, I think it advisable to have it done immediately, & have directed Mr Hunt to take offers for the work.

Courts

Heard from Mr Fenwick respecting the most suitable time for holding the Courts at Wark and Haydon Bridge. With the former I conclude we now have nothing to do. I wrote to Mr Fenwick advising as to the latter. I must however beg to have information from the Board, whether any and what portion of the rents due at May Day last, from the Property conveyed by them to the Duke of Northumberland [inserted here in the margin in pencil: 'ask Bicknell this'], is to be received by the Hospital. And if any is due, whether it is to be collected from the tenants individually, or received in one sum from the Dukes Agents. Also with regard to the Fee Farm Rents in Wark Barony. After fixing the days for receiving the Rents at the different places, I would propose, with the Boards approbation to put an advertizement into two of the Newcastle Papers that are in general circulation, stating the times and places when and where the Rents of the respective districts would be received, as it is difficult to get Letters conveyed to all the tenants, except by an especial messenger & great inconvenience has sometimes arisen to the Receivers, from the want of such an arrangement by very few tenants appearing

at Haydon Bridge on the first day, & so many on the second, as to create confusion & render it difficult to get through.

18 Sep 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 18th September 1833

Heard from Mr Parker, in answer to my application expressing his willingness to act on behalf of the Hospital in fixing the average quarterly price of Lead, but informing me of the Death of Mr Crawhall, in consequence of which nothing can be done in the matter until Messrs Wilsons appoint another Agent.

Fewster the tenant of Newlands Haugh Farm, came to me today to enquire if I thought if there was any likelihood of the Commissioners cancelling the Arrears still standing against Him and his brother. Those Arrear, he states, were not contracted by the , but in their fathers time, & they would willingly have paid them off, had not the adverse times & high rents with which they have had to contend, put it wholly out of their power. The existence of those arrears, he states, stands in the way of their obtaining the assistance of certain friends who would advance them Capital sufficient to undertake the occupation of the Town Farm, along with their own, could it be had at such a rent as they think it worth, so that the Hospital would save a good deal in Building & they are leading, but who will not come forward to help them so long as the arrears stand against them. These circumstances certainly do seem to give them some claim to be considered with lenity - and I told him that I should report his application & the grounds of it to the Board. Should it be found practicable however to effect the saving of new buildings on the Haugh Farm, by uniting and the Town farm in one, the part of the latter which lays on the west side of the brook, should be annexed to the Mill Farm, to which it would be a more valuable appendage than to the other.

Rode to Westwood & Highwood to examine the Thrashing Machines, the condition of which is a matter of complaint with the Tenants. As Westwood Farm is to be let this year, I trust an arrangement may be obtained, for getting quit of the Machine and finding an examination that a few days of a Millwright, to wedge the loose Axles & fix the Wheels in their proper sets, would prevent further injury & fit it to thrash the Crop, I directed the Tenant to get that done, for which he should be allowed, on condition of his keeping and leaving it in repair. At Highwood I had previously engaged to allow £5 for covering anew the horse wheel which is not yet finished- as for the Machine itself, it is hardly worth repairing, & must thrash on as long as it will. I am sorry to see the Crop upon this farm so very shabby.

West Boat

The Blacksmith at West Boat applied again about the addition which he proposed to make to his house, but as yet I have not received the Boards answer to his application. In wet weather the house is scarcely habitable, & of course, the timber of the roof is sustaining injury. An application was made to me for leave to take gravel from the bed of the Devils water, for the railway to which I assented on condition of having a written undertaking, that the tenant should be indemnified for damages should any occur in removing it, & that the bank of the river over which it must be carted, should be sufficiently secured against further injury by floods.

19 Sep 1833 John Grey

Thursday 19th September 1833

Teasdale

I sent Mr Hunt today with a letter to Teasdale, the tenant of Dilston Hall Farm, saying that as he had done nothing to reduce the Arrear due by him to the Hospital, amounting to nearly a years rent previous to last May, if he did not do so very soon, or bring very satisfactory security for the payment, I should feel myself bound to take measures to secure the Hospitals interests. The poor man evidently has neither capital, knowledge nor method for the management of a Farm - his Horses are unable to work the land, which is in a state of extreme poverty & the Crop he is now cutting is as bad as possible. I fear there must eventually be loss by him & probably the last loss to the Hospital & the least injury to him would be to take possession of the Corn as soon as secured & before he has the opportunity of disposing of it. [annotated in pencil in margin: 'certainly']

Planting

Went to inspect the works on the Tyne banks which are proceeding very satisfactorily. Saw Parkin the Woodkeeper, who is recovering, & desired him, as soon as he should be able to attend to it, to make a list of such ground as ought to be planted in the ensuing season. Besides the Pieces at Alston for which I have the Boards order, there is a spot on the Tyne in Dilston Estate, unoccupied with trees that is of no other use. But the chief thing is the part of Dipton wood which has been sold and cleared. The rubbish ought all to be burnt off & the whole newly planted.

Leadbitters Water

I next went after repeated applications from Mr Leadbitter to examine a plan which he proposes for getting water to his empty reservoir, which is to make a small dam in the plantation near the source of the Spring, so that the water might be set off in such a quantity at a time as would force its way to the other dam. At present the run is so small that it entirely disappears during its course homewards. This I think is likely to

be of considerable use and is a much more feasible plan than his former one, of attempting to bring a small spring from a great distance over a rocky bottom. I examined all the situations in which such a dam could be made, & upon a rough guess I shd say it might be done for £20. It is provoking to think of laying out more money upon a machine, which has already cost £540 besides all the leading done by the tenant, as much probably as would have obtained him a sufficient machine for his purpose, without the Hospitals outlay at all - the question however now is, what is best to be done as matters stand. This is a high rented Farm, & it is so in part from the only situation producing the first Corn in the market, but that advantage is lost to the tenant if he must delay his thrashing till the rains of winter have filled all the springs & land with water. If we should not have such falls of rain shortly as to give him a supply which on other accounts is not desirable, I fear it will be necessary to try this experiment.

Railway

I afterwards had a meeting by appointment with Mr Blackmoore of the Rail-way Company, respecting my application to them to set out the line through Westwood and Allerwash, before letting the Farms. I find however, that there is no intention of proceeding beyond Hexham for some time to come so that the farms must be let, subject to the formation of the Railway, and a valuation of the land which it will occupy. This will defeat the Plan of making the Railway the division line between Allerwash Farm & Mill Grounds.

20 Sep 1833 John Grey

Friday 20th September 1833

Received Mr Jays Letter respecting Sir Thos Haggerstons Claim of Tythes on Scremerston Estates, & wrote to Mr Fenwick accordingly.

Small fields

Rode to Haydon Bridge & examined minutely the small fields adjoining, to see how they could be best arranged for the accommodation of the several tenants of the hospital- the two held by Mr Coutts ought unquestionably to be attached to the Inn, for the reasons I have before mentioned. But I found Mr Coutts as tenacious of them as if he had the prospect of living for twenty years to come. As his only object is to keep a couple of Cows, he might have that accommodation by transferring to him one of the fields occupied by Mr Reed, which fields perhaps might be offered to publick letting, that other tenants of the Hospital might have the chance of their accommodation as well as Mr Reed, who lives upon his own property. In this case it will be necessary to give Mr Reed notice to quit them as well as the yard and workshop, which Mr Hooper had decided upon using as a depot for the wood wanted

for building in that district. These matters should be determined upon, so as to give the requisite notices by the 11th November.

Mr Routledges Tenement

I cannot find any Cowhouse for Mrs Routledge, in lieu of that which she now has in the Inn Yard, and which ought to be made in to a Stable, but believe that she might find one in the Village, nor can I see any good reason for the unequal accommodation given to her house and the adjoining one occupied by Dr Hutchinson: they are equal in size & value, yet she has both Gardens & the whole of the field which I think might be divided between them, the rents of both tenements being made alike. Should Mrs R decline such an arrangement, I have no doubt of finding a suitable tenant.

Farms to be let this year

I here met Mr Hunt by appointment and we set out together to examine particularly the farms to the West of Haydon Bridge that are to be let, with the double object of ascertaining by their course of tillage, the land intended for the away going Crops, so as to correspond with their respective covenants & prevent injury to, or disputes with the succeeding tenants; and also to consider of the Covenants and management which ought to be prescribed in future. To examine minutely so many small inclosures & get conveniently over the fences we decided to walk & proceeded by the Deanraw, Harsondale, the Vauce, Lough & Sillywray. In some instances, I found fields that have been improved and are now in cultivation, which are not shown to be so in the tillage Books, up to this year. But of all these places, I must state that they are in very credible condition, and with one exception, in strict accordance with their covenants. The situations are high and exposed and have suffered much loss of grain by the stormy weather but it is due to the occupiers, who all seem to be industrious & respectable men, to say, that their manner of Harvesting their Corn might put to shame the farmers on the richer lands on the Tyne, whose slovenly habits are quite inexcusable.

Mr Bell Sillywray

The exception I refer to, is the case of Mr Bell, late Agent of the Colliery & tenant of West Deanraw and Sillywray. On the latter small Farm he is intitled to a Crop of Corn upon 40 acres. He has this year 50 Acres and part of it is the second Crop in succession upon the same land. In consequence of the excess of his year, he is put to it, to make up his quantity of 40 Acres for the next, & to do so, contemplates sowing the best of the land now under Corn, over again, to the injury of course to the land & the entry of the succeeding tenant. When fields are unequal, a trifling excess ought not to be noticed if the Fields are taken in their usual course, but in this case, where the farms & fields are alike small, the design is evident; for an intire field has been cropped a second time, out of course. In all my intercourse with Mr Bell he has repeated with constant and most suspicious earnestness, the assurance that he would do everything honestly, & had always done so by the Hospital, and that he could see no reason why he should not have a pension. I hitherto have not yielded to any impression made upon my mind

respecting a character of which I had no previous knowledge but am now constrained to say that in every transaction which I have had with Mr Bell there has been manifest, a design & obliquity of conduct, by no means compatible with the spirit of integrity which he claims credit for, on account of which I trust the Board will hold me warranted in retaining the gratuity promised to him, until all matters between him & the Hospital shall be brought to a fair settlement. [added in pencil in margin: 'by all mean retain it']

We reached Haydon Bridge at eight o'clock after a constant walk of nine hours. Met Mr Benson whom I had sent for, to ascertain the kind & quantity of Wood wanted for the Stables at Grindon and certain repairs at Brokenheugh etc. Gave directions to the Woodman at Haydon Bridge as to their employment, Mr Parker not being able to go so far from home and returned to Corbridge at eleven at night.

21 Sep 1833 John Grey

Saturday 21st September 1833

Received the Boards Minutes of the 5th Instant only this day. Communicated to Mr Gibson for the information of the Trustees of the Gateshead Road, the purport of the Minute signifying the Boards acquiescence in the proposed change of road at Dilston and the terms upon which they consent to the exchange of Land etc. With regard to the Boards instructions to me to engage Wm Benson by the week, for the purpose, looking after the buildings now in hand, & preparing the Wood which may be wanted for others in the Spring, I must beg to remark that he is as yet engaged with work at the Farm buildings at Grindon & Grindon Hill, on his own Account, which I think forms a decided objection to his becoming a stipendary of the Hospital at present. I should therefore prefer to pay him by the day, for any occasional service that may be required, which will not be much for the remainder of this year, and should he prove qualified for the duties of such a situation, a permanent engagement may be made with him in the Spring.

I wrote Letters to the Tenants who are in Arrears of Rent, requesting a settlement-made certain arrangements for my absence next week, & then went to the Workmen on the Tyne Banks & Snokoe road, having sent Mr Hunt to those at Dilston Park Farm & to arrange for building the fences at the end of the Bridge here.

23 Sep 1833 John Grey

Monday 23rd September 1833

Road up the Derwent

Received a Letter from Mr Hodgson, MP, who had been requested as Chairman of a Meeting for promoting the new line of Road up the Derwent to Shotley Bridge, to communicate with me on the subject & request that I would state my opinion of the measure to the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital, with a view to obtaining their support. The subject was mentioned he says, to Mr Hooper, but no positive answer has been received. The Sum required is £10,000.- that already subscribed £6,000 - and they intend to commence operations so soon as the subscriptions amount to £8,000. In replying to Mr Hodgson's Letter, I asked him to favor me with a list of the present Subscribers, and suggested as a matter deserving of consideration, the addition of a short branch road from Ebchester to Newlands, substituting a Stone Bridge over the Derwent for the wooden one now undergoing repair by a subscription of the Hospitals tenants. The road would cost little, but I fear the Bridge might draw heavily upon their funds. This would make the improvement complete as regards the Estates of Newlands and Whittonstall, but even without this, it would be an immense advantage to have a road with the gentle descent of the river all the way to the Tyne, instead of the rough and steep ascent and descent of the present one, by which one Horse would take the load of two, & with much greater ease than at present.

[annotated in pencil in margin, apparently by a Board member: '<...> Mr Hooper's letter Jan'y 2 183<.> I have referred Mr Grey to this letter & the Board's Minute declining to contribute to the Road, that he may give the reasons for differing with Mr. Hooper']

Hartburn Grange Roofs

Drove to Hartburngrange and inspected the repairs of the roofs of three farms which I had given directions for, when last there. They were in very bad condition, the farms having all changed tenants three years ago, and having had nothing done to them then, or since. They are now in as good a state as grey slate roofs ever are, for the best of them are constantly going wrong, with the exception of one granary, of which the timber is so bad as not to admit to fixing of any new slates in lieu of those that are broken, being too rotten to hold nails. I have directed that it should be patched up with plaster at little expense - it may last a year or two, and when it will do no longer, must have both new timber and slates. One blue slate roof of recent erection, which should have been as good as new, had it been properly executed, has required a good deal of work & some hundreds of new slates- it is now in good condition. I also examined two of the Thrashing machines for the repair of which I had obtained estimates, & agreed with Mr Davison to allow him £15.18 - and Thomas Brewis £10 upon their respective machines being put into complete repair, taking from each of them an undertaking that

in consideration of such allowance they would be bound to maintain and leave them in equal condition. Proceeded to Rothbury to Sleep.

24 Sep 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 24th September 1833

Proceeded northwards and called upon Mr Jobson in my way, who is one of the Arbitrators in the matters between Johnson and Pringle at Scremerston, and was glad to find that they had made their calculations & brought matters within such a compass that they may now be finally closed in a short time. I urged strongly upon Mr Jobson, the propriety of having it concluded without delay, that the parties might not be able to make that unsettled dispute any ground for holding back their payments at the ensuing rent day. On my arrival at Millfield Hill in the evening, I found a Letter from Major Johnson containing two requests respecting the said arbitration, one, that six months may be allowed him to pay the money, & the other that a debt due to him by Pringle, may be included in the set off in the Award, otherwise, as it is of more than six years standing, he will not be likely to recover it at all. To both of these, there is one answer which I shall give to Johnson, whom I shall endeavour to see while in this part of the Country, which is, that as the Submission Bond recognises no third party, I can not in any way interfere with the decision of the Arbitrators, who must exercise their own judgement in accordance with the powers vested in them by the Deed.

25 Sep 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 25th & Thursday 26th

Major Johnson's Arbitration

Passed at Millfield Hill with my family, most of whom I had not even seen for nearly three months. Saw Major Johnson respecting the Arbitration. He seemed inclined still to adhere to his opinion that certain charges included in the Arbitration come under the head of damages always born by Lessors, & were not occasioned by his immediate occupation and operations. I urged upon him the folly & impolicy of protracting the settlement of such a tedious affair by introducing into it points which the Arbitrators could not possibly take upon them to decide, and showed him an extract from a letter I had received from Mr Hooper upon the subject, containing remarks which I thought must satisfy him of the prudence of bringing the Affair to the earliest possible conclusion. Mr Hoopers statement was to the effect, that if Mr Johnson expected more than strict justice from the Hospital, he would be disappointed, but that if on the Account it should be proved that he was called upon to pay the least sum that was not customarily paid by Lessees of Collieries on the Tyne & Wear, it would be found that

the Hospital was equally ready to do justice, as to require it. With this he expressed himself satisfied, & promised to endeavour to get the Arbitration closed on Saturday when I should meet him at Berwick.

Coals delivered to Tenants

He complained also that Mr Fenwick, the Viewer, had not furnished him at the price at which me was to charge the Coals used for burning Lime by the Scremerston Tenants. When at Berwick in the Spring, Mr Fenwick had made the necessary memoranda for calculating the cost of working the Coals, at which cost they are to be delivered to the Tenants, but he has never sent his decision respecting it to Mr Johnson, on which account he states that he is kept out of a considerable payment due to him by Mr Thomson. I undertook to write to Mr Fenwick, which I did accordingly.

27 Sep 1833 John Grey

Friday 27th September

Saint Ninians Fair

Attended at St Ninians Fair, at which great numbers of Sheep were offered & bought to be taken into the midland Counties at good prices. The Farmers on the Borders are in good spirits for though Corn has sold low, they have been well paid by their live Stock and Wool. I wish the Hospitals Tenants on the Tyne had the same cause of rejoicing. I saw there several of the Tenants of the Northern Estates & fixed with them on Tuesday the 22nd of October as being a suitable and convenient time for receiving their Rents at Belford, engaging to come down a few days previously, to go over the Estates & look into some matters which the Tenants require. Received a Letter from Mr Benjamin Johnson, asking for particular information respecting the Estates of Newtonhall & Whittle, understanding that they are likely to be sold. Forwarded his letter to the Commissioners.

28 Sep 1833 John Grey

Saturday 28th September

Rode down the Tweed to Berwick. The clean fallows, the neatly harvested fields & full crops of Turnips free from weeds in this well cultivated district, form a contrast very unfavourable to the exhausted condition & inexpert management of the southern parts of the County. I met the Gentlemen engaged in the Scremerston Arbitration & urged them to come to a decision without farther delay or admitting of any interference of the interested parties. This they engaged to do & gave me hopes that they might bring it to a conclusion in the course of the day. I enquired of Major Johnson if nothing had yet

been done to the Water Level, which he had undertaken to have examined and repaired according to Mr Fenwicks recommendation. He stated that the Shafts to be used in putting down the necessary materials, were surrounded by Mr Pringles Corn to which he had been anxious to avoid doing damage, but that now it should be proceeded with. He complained of the falling off of the demand for lime in consequence of the extensive introduction of bone manure, in the districts of both sides of the Tweed, which I believe is the case. Passed Sunday & Monday 30th September with my family. The little ones distressingly ill with hooping cough.

1 Oct 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 1st October

Received a letter from Mr Hodgson on the subject of the proposed road up the Derwent, containing a list of subscriptions, which letter is herewith forwarded to the Commissioners. Set out early in the morning & drove to Corbridge. This being quarter day, wrote to Mr Brandling & Mr Wailes & inclosing Checks for their pensions.

2 Oct 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 2nd October

Lead Ore

Received Mr Stephens statement of the Quarter produce of the mines. The quantity weighed over being 5509 Bings of which the Duty Ore to the Hospital is 973 Bings. I have not yet heard from the Lessees of Langley Mills, of their having appointed anyone in the place of the late Mr Crawhall, to meet Mr Parker for the purpose of determining the average price of Lead.

Dean and Chapter Rents

Received a Letter from Mr Hudson of the Dean Chapter Office, Carlisle, stating that the Rents due to the Dean & Chapter by the Hospital, have not been paid since 1830. That at Lammas last, there were three years Rents due at £9.15.10 which with the Acquittances of 1s/6d each year, amounts to £29.12.0. On reference to the Accounts I find this to be a correct statement & must of course remit him the amount. Received Mr Joseph Dickinsons letter in explanation of his account against the Hospital for Plans of Keswick, which I herewith send. I find also in the Office two letters from Mr Bicknell and one from Mr Jay, dated October & November 1831 requiring the Receivers to furnish those Plans.

Was engaged in the Office till the afternoon in various business & in answering Letters which had accumulated in my absence. Wrote to Mr Jay in reply to his letter and Inclosed plans of a proposed House at Dilston. Went in the evening to dine & sleep at Mr Silvertops in my way to Newlands.

3 Oct 1833 John Grey

Thursday 3rd October

Newlands & Whittonstall

In the morning met Mr Hunt at Greymare Hill & spent the whole of the day in traversing the farms and woodlands in the district, especially examining Sproats Farm, with a view to the away going Crop of the present tenant, & the conditions of its future management. And Newlands Town farm for the same purpose, as well as with a view to its annexation to the Haugh Farm. Returned to Corbridge in the evening leaving Mr Hunt to look after some draining & the railing of young Fences. Found Mr Benson waiting for me, who has come to see about the wood that should now be provided for the farm buildings to be erected next year. Had a long discussion with him upon the prices & manner of executing the different kinds of work connected with the buildings & the duties of the situation to which the Commissioners contemplated to appoint him, should he be found capable & deserving. Appointed to meet him & Mr Parkin in the Dilston Woods in the morning to examine the timber.

4 Oct 1833 John Grey

Friday 4th October

Wark Rents

Wrote to Mr Johnson informing him that the Estates of Whittle & Newton are not to be disposed off [sic]. Finding by a letter from Mr Jay accompanying the Boards minutes today that the Duke of Northumb. has accepted the conveyance of Wark upon the conditions stipulated for in Mr Hoopers letter, one of which conditions is that his Grace is to receive all rents from & after the 12th of May last, it follows that the rents due at May Day last, but not yet collected must be received by the Commissioners - but I have no instructions respecting the Fee Farm Rents payable yearly at (Michs/29th September) and now due. They amount to £37.17.10 and as Mr Fenwick the Solicitor is going there to hold the Court, in the latter part of this month, I beg to submit to the Board, whether it would not be as well that have the assistance of Mr Dickinson to collect them at that time, as usual, leaving him to pay over to the Dukes Agent the proportion which may be his due.

Dilston Woods

I accompanied Mr Parkin and William Benson to examine the Dilston Woods, & decide upon such as is advisable to cut, both as its state of maturity & suitability for the purposes for which it is required, & arranged for having it stored for the Winter. Went with Benson to examine the repairs at the Park Farm and returned by the Workmen on the Tyne Banks.

Gateshead Road Trust

I have a letter from Mr Gibson, Clerk to the Gateshead and Hexham Road Trust stating that before the Commissioners undertake the change of Road, they would like to be apprised of the expense, & wish me to state what sum would be accepted by the Commissioners for the removal of the houses which are to be taken down. In consequence of which, I made today a calculation with Mr Benson's assistance, of the cost of removing the Materials & rebuilding with them a Blacksmiths dwelling house and forge, which will be about £60. For this sum the Hospital would have a new building in lieu of an old one, & would receive a rent of £6.0.0 probably. Under these circumstances it is for the Commissioners to decide whether they will exact the whole or what portion of that amount from the Road Trustees. The mere leading of the Materials would not cost more than £15.0.0. They are to hold a Meeting on the 28th and would be glad to have an answer by that day.

Dilston House

In addition to the plans for the House proposed at Dilston, I now forward calculations of the plan by Wm Benson, together with the amount of his calculations under the different heads of expenditure. The weather continues mild & the harvest in the high districts of Whittonstall and Hexhamshire is near a conclusion.

5 Oct 1833 John Grey

Saturday 5th October 1833

Heard from Mr Fenwick, Colliery Viewer, that he had written to Major Johnson & Mr Thomson informing them of the price at which he considered the Coals for burning Lime, should be charged to the Tenants. Wrote to Mattw Bell Esq MP soliciting his attention to two years Arrear of rent due by him to the Hospital for Moors in the Barony of Wark. Rode to Shawhouse to fix with Armstrong the prices at which he is to do the Roofing at Newtonhall, to obtain his signature to an Agreement for it & direct him to get the Wood cut out at Dilston & laid up to season. Proceeded to Whittle. The farmhouse is new roofed with blue slate & the additional Dairy & Kitchen finished, which make it a commodious and comfortable house. I hoped that the old Gray Slate from it would have sufficed to cover the Cattle Shed & Stable but on examination I

found them so bad, broken and unequal, that most of them that are fit for use will be required for the former, & that it will be more prudent to cover the new Stable with blue at once, reserving the gray, should any be left for future repairs which such roofs require every year. Returned to Corbridge & afterwards went to Snokoe Fell to examine the road which is now repaired as far as the quarry to determine what proportion of the expense ought to be borne by the Railway Company and what by the Hospital.

7 Oct 1833 John Grey

Monday 7th October

Rail Road

Wrote to Mr Walker Agent of the Railway Company inclosing a Copy of the Account for the repair of Snokoe road, informing him that I considered £13.0.0 as the proportion of the expense which ought to be borne by the Company & requesting him to pay that sum.

Mr Bicknell / Wark

Received a letter from Mr Bicknell together with an Agreement respecting a purchase of Wark by the Duke of Northumberland containing Blanks to be filled up according to such arrangement as might become to with Mr Leadbitter, the Duke's Solicitor, previous to its being signed. Being much occupied otherwise & concerning that the matter was likely to be more satisfactorily & conclusively settled by Mr Fenwick's waiting upon Mr Leadbitter, on the part of the Hospital than myself, I forwarded Mr Bicknell's Letter and the Agreement to him desiring him to seek an early interview, & at the same time to arrange with Mr Leadbitter about the receipt of the Fee Farm Rents.

Westwood, Bagraw, Coastley Machine

I was afterwards occupied till dark, in examining with Mr Hunt, and comparing by the plans & tillage books the several farms of Westwood, Bagraw, Coastley and Heckford, with a view to their present state of cultivation & future covenants. The expensive Thrashing Machine at Coastley is at present nearly useless for want of water, to the great inconvenience of the tenant, who can hardly get straw wherewith to cover his Stacks, or corn for seed, independent of getting any to market. The only very effectual supply must come from the brook which runs through the Farm. but to obtain sufficient level to bring it into the reservoir, it must be covered at a great distance in a conduit & carried across the Glen of Bogle Wood, in troughs or pipes, which would be attended with great expense. To make an addition at reservoir, so as to retain a considerable quantity in times when water was going, would be a cheaper though not so certain an expedient.

[Annotated in margin in pencil: 'Rather than waste all this expence why not abandon this Machine and thrash by hand?']

8 Oct 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 8th October

Stublick Colliery Stock

Wrote to Mr Shield of Stublick respecting his payment for the moveable Stock at the Colliery according to valuation.

Rode out on the Tyne Banks to the Workmen & proceeded to Hexham expecting to have an answer from Teasdale, Tenant of Dilston Hall Farm, respecting his ability to obtain security for his Arrear of Rent, which I did not receive, & met Mr Hunt with the view of proceeding to examine Allerwash & other farms, but the day turning out too wet to do any thing of that kind satisfactorily, returned without effecting the object.

9 Oct 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 9th October

Heard from Mr Fenwick informing me that he had seen Mr Leadbitter, but that he could not prevail upon him, on account of the delay that had occurred, to allow the transfer of Wark to the Duke, to take place on the 12th of May last as intended and as I urged him if possible to effect, because the Hospital would derive greater benefit from the interest of the purchase money than from the rentals during the interval. Mr Leadbitter proposes the 23rd Nov as the time of transfer & I have forwarded Mr Fenwick's Letter to Mr Bicknell for his instructions on the subject. Had the matter been committed to the management of a Solicitor on the spot, it is not improbable that it might have been brought to an earlier conclusion.

Alston Roads

Went to Hexham to attend a meeting of the Committee of the Alston Road Trustees, for the purpose of examining the Accounts of the Clerk, Surveyor & Treasurer, to be submitted to the general meeting on the 11th.

Allerwash

This done & the day being favorable, I proceeded some miles farther to examine the farm of Allerwash of which I have formed a very favourable opinion & should much like to see it in the hands of a respectable man & skilful manager. Having been taken

great advantage of towards the end of the lease & then let again for only one year from last May, the present condition of the land is unsatisfactory and discouraging to an entering tenant, yet the Soil being of good quality & the situation and climate favorable, an improved mode of management would soon restore its fertility.

[Annotated in margin in pencil: 'Town farm at <...> £510 instead of £639']

The Occupier has exceed[ed] his quantity of Corn by 20 Acres in his present Crop, and has made arrangements for a still greater excess in the next, of which however, he will be disappointed and on all the land that it is pretended to have sown with Clover and grass seeds for the hay and pasture of the following year, scarcely a particle is visible; which must be an immense disadvantage to the ensuing tenant, leading him to the necessity of cropping the land again out of its proper course & to a derangement of the system for years. The introduction of a better and stricter covenant as to the sowing of Grasses in the last year of the term would be very beneficial. I again examined the state of the Mill & housing at Allerwash which is generally in a very crazy condition - one house indeed having been abandoned by its occupier as dangerous. The supply of Water is so scanty that the mill stands and goes alternately for about an hour at a time, & altogether the situation is so little calculated for doing business, that were it not that a considerable expenditure has taken place on the machinery & reservoir, I should have been inclined to recommend its abandonment altogether, upon the principle that like other Milks on the property it will not defray the cost of its support & leave any fair interest for the original outlay. The Machinery & reservoir each want a little repair - the houses a great deal - and seeing it impossible for the Tenant, who has little capital, to go on with any prospect of success, I have advised him to quit at May Day. If let separately from the Farm, a few more acres of land should be annexed to the Mill, but surrounded as the Mill is by the farm, there is bad agreement between the Miller & the Farmer on account of trespass, for which reason, if a respectable tenant would offer for both, he might use the Mill himself or sublet it to a Miller who would be under his control, as he saw best. At any rate in the advertizement for letting there could be no harm in offering them together or separately and then the Comm[issioners] could exercise their choice.

Weirs at Fourstones

Mr Hunt met me at Allerwash & we hastened to inspect before dark some Weirs on the Tyne in the Estate of Fourstones, which being injudiciously placed, have created a current against the bank so as to undermine a Wall & threaten considerable damage. Instead of restoring them, I consider that they should be reduced in height & one of them altered in its direction, which Mr Hunt must see to have done. The cost will not exceed two or three Pounds, as I expect the tenant will supply Carts.

10 Oct 1833 John Grey

Thursday 10th October

In consequence of a fall from my horse when returning home after dark last night, & my present suffering from bruises, headache & sickness, I am unable to proceed on the inspection of the farms today, as I had fixed with Mr Hunt.

Teasdale

Old Teasdale having wearied out his connections with helping him, & finding no security for the payment of his Arrears has brought a resignation of his farm at May Day next, imploring the forbearance of the Commissioners till that time, & promising a payment on the rent day. Some loss by him must I fear be anticipated. His small effects would undoubtedly turn to better account at May Day than now, & we should avoid the pain of turning a family adrift in the winter. My greatest fear in the matter is that from the backward state of his work & the miserable condition of his Horses he should not get his Seed put in so as to ensure even such a Crop as the impoverished state of the land might produce. I advised him to solicit the assistance of his neighbours to get his Wheat land ridged up and sown telling him that upon his exertions in that subject and the payment he should make must depend the extent of forbearance that might be exercised towards him.

Donkin Elstob & Co

I have been requested to call the attention of the Board to an application made when Mr Hooper was here, and subsequently forwarded to Greenwich at his request by Donkin Elstob & Co, Lessees of certain mines for a surface or General grant in the same district. This application was discussed when I met Mr Taylor at Alston on his late visit, and both he and the Moor Master seemed to concur in the reasonableness of the Grant, in consideration of the spirited efforts of the party under discouraging circumstances.

11 Oct 1833 John Grey

Friday 11th October

Tools etc at Meldon

Heard from the Woodman at Hartburngrainge that he had applied to Mr Cairns of Meldon, pursuant to my direction for the ladder, bore rods & other articles belonging to the Hospital, but that he had refused to give them up. Wrote to Mr Cairns to ask the Ground of his refusal - saying that if he chose to pay for them by valuation, he might keep them, but not otherwise. He has the reputation of being a respectable man but I find that many respectable men who may deal fairly enough by each other, have little

scruple of taking advantage of the Hospital, a system which it will require both vigilance & determination to break through.

Repairs at Stublick

Heard from Mr Birkett that the repairs of housing etc at the Colliery & small farms at Stublick had been executed according to estimate. Wrote to William Benson to inspect the work and report to me before making the payment.

Sent Mr Hunt to get forward with the Weirs at Fourstones, the River being low, went to inspect the raising of the embankments in Widehaugh, having finished the sloping of the Shore of the Tyne, & to examine a small slip of ground in the Nursery Farm between the plantation & railway, which is of little use to the occupier, being often overflowed by the brook, & ought I think to be taken into the plantation. Proceeded to Hexham to attend, though stiff and sore from bruises, the Meeting of the Alston Road Trustees, when a conclusion was come to between them & Mr McConnell, that his connexion with the trust should cease in February next, though by his construction of the appointment, he might have held it on till May.

[annotated in pencil in margin: 'Our Receiver must be vigilant to get an honest & competent Surveyor appointed [or] there will be a job.']

His Accounts being passed, a good deal of discussion took place as to the future management of the Roads, a plan for which is to be submitted by the Committee to the general meeting at Alston on the 8th November, which I engaged to attend.

I was glad to find that Mr Coats claim for Land taken from the farm he lately occupied at Lightbirks to £67.4.7 has been paid to him with £60 with which he was satisfied. Wrote to Newcastle for a supply of Stamps for the Rents, and to the Bankers acquainting them with the times & places of their receipt.

12 Oct 1833 John Grey

Saturday 12th October

Elrington

Rode to Highside to see the Repairs ordered there, which are done now, except the Slates laying on. Proceeded by Bagraw & Langhope to Elrington which I examined minutely. This Farm contains a good deal of rough pasture, which is capable of considerable improvement, with a good portion of turnip & barley Soil. The present tenant occupies along with it, a small farm adjoining belonging to Mr Tweddell, the Corn from which he thrashes at Elrington, which gives him the power of dividing the manure between the two, as he pleases, so that he can give one, an advantage over the

other, as his will or interest may direct. I found the tillage Land in poor condition, but in a rotation conformable to the covenants, which however in a new Lease should be altered. It surprises me to find how little even the most intelligent of the tenants seem to be aware of the possibility & advantage of keeping their land in a fresh & productive condition by a suitable interchange of corn & pasture in their rotation, instead of pursuing a course of cropping that leads to perfect exhaustion & how ignorant they are of the best kinds of grasses for Sheep pasture, the very names of which they seem never to have heard. So that when their land is too poor to grow red Clover, which is frequently the case, instead of sowing such grasses as it would produce, they treat it with a crop of Pease, the better half weeds, & not infrequently as I discover to a second crop of white Corn, by way either of restorative, punishment [underlined]. There is great truth in the remark made by Mr Hunt to day in reference to this farm, that the Tyne is 50 years behind the Tweed in point of agriculture. Yet they are very positive & I question if even Mr Sinclair of New Cross, Black Heath with all his Woburn experiments could induce them to alter their course. In cases where the Leases prescribe that certain fields should be laid to permanent grass by the tenants. I find that the Grasses have invariably failed, & that the land has been consequently continued in tillage, or if in grass, in a most unpredictable state. Seeing that it is hopeless to get it done effectually by the tenants, & indeed that it is rather hard to require it, I would recommend in cases where it is of absolute importance to obtain a permanent pasture as in two steep fields at Coastley, unfit for tillage, but adapted to grass, that the tenant should be bound to a good fallowing of the land & to bring to it such quantity of lime & to lay it on, as may be at the time required of him by the Receiver, & to sow in good order, such grass seeds as may be provided for the purpose by the Receiver - both seeds and lime being paid for by the Commissioners. This plan would give the best chance of insuring success.

From Elrington Mr Hunt went on to examine some draining at Lipwood but not being in condition for a very long ride I returned home, examining in passing through Hexham the house which Mr Leadbitter had informed Mr Hooper would be vacant at May Day. In point of situation it is as unexceptional as any in Hexham, & has a very good small Garden, with a two Stalled Stable. But the house is exceedingly old & in such bad condition that the present occupier, who only came last May, quits it as being uninhabitable. The lodging rooms do little more than allow me to stand upright under the Ceilings, & to get through the doors, I was obliged to stoop. The floors are rotting into holes & altogether the condition so bad that the whole inside must be taken out, to make it a habitable house. It might no doubt be had very cheap, because few would occupy it. In the Plan of Dilston Ground herewith sent, the site of the ruin & Shipleys house are marked, as well as the proposed situation for a new house. The Ground is in some measure occupied by the ruin & partly by Trees. The principal part of the Dilston Hall had been removed and the materials used in many buildings both in Hexham & Corbridge. The fragment that still remains has no beauty though it might possess a sufficient degree of interest to protect it against being altogether removed. The

outward walls being gone, it now exhibits brick partitions and broken Chimnies & fire places & if it should stand and we should build there I would propose to cover it as quickly as possible with giant ivy & surround it with Shrubs. The spot called an Orchard on the plan is used by Shipley to grow potatoes etc and is very poor with a very bad old fence about it. By giving it some additional Soil, it might be made a Garden. Shipleys present house & Garden should be included in the premises to be rented by the Receiver, that he might turn them over to his Clerk, with a Cows keep for which they would be particularly convenient.

14 Oct 1833 John Grey

Monday 14th October 1833

Engaged in the Office writing several letters and arranging accounts and plans wanted to carry with me to the northern Estates. Afterwards went to Thornton Quarry Farm to inspect its condition with reference to the away going Crop & covenants. Found some part of it in foul condition and some not of course, but that is not to be altogether imputed to the present tenant, who has only been in it three years, & found it in a very deranged state. Nothing can be more injurious to farms than the habit of frequent changing, for every contemplated change is preceded by a scheme for taking advantage of the land, which it requires greater vigilance than has been hitherto exercised to counteract & defeat. I find the tillage books of former years to be very unsafe guides by which to discover the actual state of the crops. They seem to have been fitted up, rather by report than examination & to state the crops as they should have been, but not always as they were. Mr Hunt has detected some attempted to impose upon him in that way, which will teach him to see with his own eyes, before he puts upon paper, the state of cropping. This subject reminds me that I wrote to Bell of Sillywrae & West Deanraw this morning, warning him against the course he seemed to be pursuing respecting his away going crop, as both by that & his neglect in not having sown grass seeds, he was injuring the entry for another tenant & prejudicing the Hospitals interest. I have found an agreement for his farm in the Office, but Mr Dickinson has not been able to find a Lease, though there ought to be one. If penalties can be exacted, he is deserving, should he proceed, of being made an example of. [annotated in pencil in the margin: 'I quite agree to strong measures against this man']. I also wrote to Mr Benson of Dilston who seems to be preparing to sow Wheat after a Crop of Oats, reminding him that such practise was contrary to his covenants & injurious to the land, already too much worn out by Corn, & that however such management might have been ever looked formerly, it could not be done now; & that any attempt at it, would put it out of my power to recommend him at any time to the consideration of the Board or to my preference as a tenant in future.

I was engaged in the evening in writing out with Mr Hunt from Notes I had made during my inspection of the farms that are able to be let, the covenants which I conceive might to be prescribed for each, endeavouring to meet any peculiarity of circumstances that may attend them. And as the farms ought very shortly to be advertized, I request the information of the Board at their earliest convenience as to the mode of letting & form of covenants & agreements which they may have determined to adopt.

[marginal pencil annotation: 'This is a very <.re> question and to enable the Board to decide they must <know> the plan in detail which we look for from the Receiver <.ing> the relief to be <given> to each farm as reductions of Rent <...> the Covenants <for> future lettings. No time must be lost in doing this & it would <...> will if Mr Gray were immediately apprized that the Board are looking for this from him. <GHB>' - possibly Bicknell in view of entry dated 28 October]

15 Oct 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 15th October 1833

Howick

Left Corbridge in the morning & drove to Howick 50 miles to dinner. Some Fields of Corn are still unhoused in the high parts of the Country, although the fall of last night has given the venerable Cheviot a cap of Snow - an indication I fear of an early Winter.

16 Oct 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 16th October

Spindleston Estate

Drove by the Coast Road from Howick to Glororum, passing through that farm & then inspecting those of Spindleston, Warren, Outchester & Chesterhill, upon which I found that my Son has been engaged all the forenoon in looking over the grounds & taking down the state of the tillage, having previously given him directions to meet me there for the purpose. In this district generally, the harvest has been good, the quality of the grain being superior to that of last year, turnips also are promising. Still the prices of grain are considerably below a remunerating standard at the present Rents. At Chesterhill I examined the pump which had been put up. The Boiler of the Machine engine which had been repaired at a Cost of £35.19.8 for which Mr Thompson entreats repayment & the draining which he had been been allowed for in the Summer, all of which has been done effectually. Mr Thomson states that he has been annually a loser by the farm, & that unless he can obtain an abatement, he must relinquish the residence

of his Lease, a written application for which, he will give me. In the prospect of having the farm perhaps to let anew, I thought it advisable to take a close view of it, and suggested to Mr Thomson a change in the rotation of cropping which would give the land the relief of growing grass between a course of corn crops & increase its productiveness. Also a different division of two large fields, including soil of different qualities & not calculated for the same kind of management. Mr Thomson admitted that the change would be an improvement, & that in case of his continuing in the farm for a prolonged term, he would gladly adopt it. At Outchester, which in my opinion is the highest rented farm for the quality of the land, upon all this property, & of which the tenant grievously complains, although there is an extensive set of Offices, the folds are too large, requiring a great number of Cattle to be fed together, so that the weaker ones are driven back & do not thrive. Davison wishes to have one at least, divided and a small shed erected to hold the smallest of the Cattle, which would doubtless be useful, & which considering the extent of the farm & the high rent paid for it, I think it right to grant him. Left Outchester in the evening & drove to Mr Culleys of Fowberry to sleep.

17 Oct 1833 John Grey

Thursday 17th October

Went by Wooler, there being a large Sheep Fair there, where a great deal of business was done, though the sales were not so brisk as previously, & proceeded to Millfield Hill, this being the last great fair in this district for the autumn, I purposely fixed the Belford rent for the Tuesday following, & probably it had better be understood that that is to be the day for receiving the Autumn Rents in future.

18 Oct 1833 John Grey

Friday 18th October

Scremerston Town Farm

Drove in the morning 15 miles to Scremerston & walked over the extensive & well cultivated farm of Mr Thomson which is at once the largest and the best managed of any belonging to the Hospital. Mr Thomson unluckily was not at home but my Son found the Steward and obtained from him the state of the tillage.

Inland Pasture Farm

We then went over to Mr Hogarths farm, though not quite so highly farmed as the other is yet in a regular course of husbandry & in very credible condition. Mr Hogarth directed my attention to a Quarry formerly wrought in one of his fields, which being

perpendicular and having no fence around it, is the cause of accidents to the Cattle. He wished the Wall which had once been ordered but never built, to be made. The Quarry seems to occupy about an acre, & the rubbish that had been taken out nearly as much more, I therefore suggested the possibility of this being replaced & the brink of the Quarry sloped so as to restore the Land, & if this would be effected at even double the expense of the Wall, it would be well worth while. On speaking of it to Major Johnson he seemed to think it likely to be done at no great expense, by laying down some Tram plates to wheel upon & letting it at the vacant season to the Salmon Fishers, & promised to let me know what they would undertake it for. I next waited upon Mr Pringle & remarked that in taking the state of his tillage my Son had informed me that he had been growing two corn crops in succession, contrary to his covenant. He admitted the fact but said it had not in former times been found fault with, & that it was all little enough in such times. I told him it would not mend the times or his prospects to take advantage of the Land & that I at least could not overlook such breach of covenants. His Farm however, generally speaking, is not in bad condition. On saying that I should hope to see him at Belford on Tuesday to settle his Rent & Arrears, he professed his ignorance of that being the Rent day. I told him that fearing he might not see the Advertizement in the Newspaper, I had myself written to apprize him of it, & being only two miles from the Post Town it was improbable that he should not have got the letter. He then said he could pay no Rent till he received the amount of the Award from Major Johnson in the month of November and that he could not be at Belford. [marginal note: 'This man deserves no further favours. He is one of the most unfair dealing <sort of> our tenant, especially considering <what has> been done for him']. I reminded him that he had paid no rent at all in the Spring, not even for the Fishing which had no connexion with the award, & advised him not to practise too much upon the lenity that had been shown him. He would not undertake however to pay any money on tuesday, but talked of Wood he had long wanted for Gates, and for the repair of the Scaffolding round the Tower of his wind Machine, without which the sails cannot be come at when wanting repair. I examined this & found it to be in a dangerous state, but said I must decline doing anything of the sort while he allowed his arrear to stand against him.

19 Oct 1833 John Grey

Saturday 19th October

Continued the examination of Scremerston. The Colliery lands are in a productive state, having a large supply of dung & small lime from the Kilns. I observed a deviation from the Covenants, by growing tares upon a field in lieu of grass, for feeding the underground Horses, but being cut as a green Crop & the land well wrought and manured after it, I do not consider it any injury. The clearing out of the old sea Level is likely to be very troublesome. Two Men had been induced to make

their way among mud & water to try to discover the obstructions, but they had no light & such bad air that their Candles would not burn. There seems no alternative but to open the old Shaft in Pringles field, now that his Corn is off, which is partially closed, & which by ventilating the Drift will at least enable the men to proceed with some degree of safety. The Sea has made some encroachment upon a piece of Grassland, owing to the rock in front having been blasted & carried away for metal to the turnpike Roads. Mr Johnson tried to prevent this & has got them driven off, though the Act authorises the removal of Stones within high tide mark. A few large Stones placed in a sloping direction against the bank, will likely secure it from further injury, which I have directed to have done. Johnson supplying Carts gratis - near this is a piece of land which would be much improved by being well limed & laid to pasture. This Johnson undertakes to do on condition of the Hospital making a fence on the side towards to Sea, where at present there is none. A Wall is the only fence that would stand in such a situation, & thinking it advisable, I have requested Johnson to give me the length & the probable cost, on Tuesday. He has been making the place very neat, by railing & gravel walks in front of the house, & erecting a Garden Wall at his own expense, but complained much of the house, which I examined in every part, & found to be indeed very uncomfortable & inadequate. A new house, he says, was offered to him some years since, but being then a single Man, he declined it. The roof is of Pantiles, but so bad that though he has had them twice painted over and pointed, the rain is streaming down the Walls and every Closet so damp that little use can be had of them. No wonder that a person of Mrs Johnson's delicate health should suffer from it. The original house consists of only a Kitchen & Parlour down stairs and two bed rooms above, a toofall behind being built by Johnson, contains a Milkhouse, small Pantry and servants room. The easiest mode of obtaining accommodation would be to raise the Toofall to the height of the other walls & cover the whole with a Slate Roof as the Pantiles are quite last repairing. It would still be but a small house, but it might be dry & comfortable, & since the shipping of Coals causes Johnson to reside constantly there now, some additional to the house seems indispensable, either by himself or the Hospital. I shall not however undertake any change or make any proposal on the subject to him without the Boards directions. [marginal note: 'Mr Gray seems to believe it equitable <but> does not recommend it?'] Returned to Milfield Hill in the evening where I remained with my family Sunday and Monday 21st October.

Heard from the Langley Mill Company that they had appointed Mr Joseph Crawhall to fix the price of Lead in the stead of the late Mr Thos Crawhall, & I wrote to inform Mr Parker accordingly, requesting him to obtain a meeting & to report the result.

22 Oct 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 22nd October

Left home early & reached Belford between 10 & 11 o'clock. The accompanying Sheet, being a copy of that upon which I recorded the transactions of the day, will show the sums received & the remains remaining. Pringle did not appear at all. He is to receive, as the award for damages, against the Colliery £319 which sum I suppose he intends to pay over for Rent, but the Arrear after that, including a half years Rent becoming due in November, will amount to a considerable sum, & he is so strange a man, that I should be inclined to hold him a little closer to his payments, especially as he shows a disposition to take advantage of his Land. Mrs Thomson of Glororum, whose Husband was killed by his Horse falling, is in great distress about her farm. She is falling into Arrear, & finds that without an abatement she must relinquish the remaining years of the term, much as she would like to hold on, on account of keeping her family together for three years more. There is a peculiarity in the case favourable to any lenity which could be shown her, which is that hers is I believe the only farm upon that estate which is still held at the rent originally bargained for at the commencement of the present term. [marginal note: 'On this ground I think she may have favour shown.'] Mr Thompson's application to be released from Chesterhill Farm is already before the Commissioners with my letter.

Mr Nairn has several applications to make respecting the flooring of some part of the Mill & Lofts which I saw to be in a decayed state, as well as other matters, which I have desired him to enumerate upon paper that I may report upon them from my own observation. I gave directions respecting a small shed to be made in a Fold Yard at Outchester & some draining there, which my Son will occasionally ride over to examine, he having been with me in all my visits to that part of the Property & the Scremerstons, where too I have instructed him to have a Poultry House built for Mr Thomson which had been singularly enough omitted in the building, & also the filling up of an old stable for a Cottage, the accommodation for work people being rather small. I consider a person who manages his land so well and pays his rents so punctually deserving of every reasonable consideration. I adjusted between him and Mr Hogarth a matter, though trifling, yet admitting of frequent disputes, about a way to the Sea beach, & by a small exchange of bad land on the beach, & my undertaking to build a few rods of Wall to secure them against trespass. At any future letting this should be fixed beyond any dispute. Major Johnson it will be seen paid £300 short of his rents, because he said, he expected that sum to have been paid by Mr Thomson to him on account of Coals delivered to Mr Thomson for burning Lime. This had been a subject of long standing dispute, & was fully discussed by the parties in presence of Mr Hooper, Mr Fenwick, the Colliery viewer & myself at Berwick in April last. It then appeared that in the price Mr Fenwick had fixed upon a part of the Coals, he had included rent, whereas they should have been given to the Tenants at the working cost

exclusive of rent. In consequence of which it was then decided that Mr Fenwick should revise his calculations, & that he should fix the prices definitively for both parties, for which purpose, he examined the Colliery Pay Bills and got all the prices paid for the different kinds of work. I lately applied to Mr Fenwick to send in to Mr Thomson & Major Johnson his ultimate decision, hoping to have the matter settled, but Mr Thomson objects to it on the ground that Mr Fenwick has made a gradation of price, he being of the Opinion that he ought to have the best Coals as cheap as the worst because it costs as much to bring 1 Cwt of rubbish to bank as 1 Cwt of best Coal. The terms of Agreement with the Tenants are vague & leave the matter open to such disputes- but it is well known that the operations of winning a Colliery & the outlay for which remuneration is expected, rest upon the sale of good Coal and not of the inferior, and if the Tenants could have the best Coal, which Mr Fenwick charges at 5d at the same price as the worst which is charged at 3d, they would of course take only the best, which is sold for exportation, & leave the worst which is only fit for Lime burning, on the hands of the Lessee.

[marginal note: 'If the Commissrs are bound to decide let the case be feebly stated, but it has never contemplated that the Hospital Lessees had a right to transfer their differences to the Board for arbitration decisions.']

This is now the subject of dispute & the ground of Major Johnson withholding his payment, because as he is bound to supply the Hospital tenants on certain conditions, he conceives the Hospital ought to secure him against loss or resistance of his claims. The matter having been by general consent in April last, left to Mr Fenwick's decision, either party must show very strong grounds now for setting that aside. But thinking it likely that both parties may appeal to the Commissioners, I consider it right to put them in previous possession of the case, as far as I know & understand it. A firm expression of their opinion would, I doubt not, set the affair at rest. In spite of such differences, we had a very social party at dinner, of 14 including Mr Weatherly, whom I had invited, that he might give me some explanations, the Bank Agent from Alnwick & my Son whose assistance I had taken. Having made up my Account, paid over the Cash & discharged the Bill of £7.12.0, I set off at Six o' clock, availing myself of the fine moon light to keep my promise of going to Howick if possible, rather than remaining at the Inn.

23 Oct 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 23rd October

Wrote to Mr Atkinson, who had not sent the rent of Lorbottle Tithes, begging him to pay it to my account with Ridley & Co - and other Letters. Spent some time in going

over his grounds with Lord Grey, but left before dinner & drove to Rothbury 18 miles to sleep.

24 Oct 1833 John Grey

Thursday 24th October

Drove to Corbridge in the forenoon & was engaged during the day in answering Letters & with the accounts. I have an application from a public body who have £100,000 to invest & are desirous to know if the Commissioners are inclined to sell property to such amount.

[marginal note: 'I hope sincerely we shall sell no more.']

25 Oct 1833 John Grey

Friday 25th October

This being the day appointed by Mr Fenwick to hold the Court at Haydon Bridge, I went in the morning to meet him there, & found a large concourse of people assembled. Many suits were tried for the recovery of small debts and some for encroachment and trespass. Where so respectable a jury can be obtained, one cannot but regret that so cheap & efficient a mode of procuring justice should be limited to the small sum of 40s. I returned to Corbridge in the evening, leaving Mr Dickinson, who had attended at Wark, as well as there, endeavouring to collect the small quit Rents, but with very partial success.

26 Oct 1833 John Grey

Saturday 26th October

Went in the morning to see what progress had been made at the embankment in Widehaugh during my absence & the success of the attempt to bring some additional springs into Mr Leadbitter's reservoir, which I had begun before going to the North. Although not yet completed, it is evident that it will greatly increase the supply, & at a cost not much exceeding £10. Engaged the remainder of the day in office business, various Letter & other matters having accumulated in my absence. I have at last received Messrs Parker & Crawhalls decision upon the average price of Lead, which is for the quarter ending 1st July £13.12.6 and for that ending the 1st October £14.2.6. which is charged to the Smelting Cos Account accordingly.

I omitted to mention yesterday that at Haydon Bridge a Deputation of the inhabitants of the South part of Langley Barony waited up me to represent the loss and inconvenience they sustain from the want of an efficient Teacher in the School at Deanraw. The Hospitals subscription of £10 has been lately ordered to be withdrawn on that account, but that is doing nothing towards getting a better Teacher, so long as the old man is allowed to occupy the premises to the exclusion of another. The House & Ground belong to the Hospital and must have notice at the 11th of November to quit at May Day, [marginal note: 'certainly'] or he will still continue. He is very old & incapable & the School has entirely dwindled away, although surrounded by many hamlets & all the work people at Langley Mills & Stublick. It is said that the old man has saved money & is not ill off but the deputation suggested, that if he were removed at May Day next, & they were at Liberty to elect a Successor (whose character & qualifications I should endeavour to ascertain) the half of the subscription by the Hospital might be continued to him as a pension for Life, if the Commissioners preferred doing so, to giving it to his successor. As the 11th November is near at hand, I ought to have authority to give him the necessary notice to quit, if the Commissioners approve of the arrangement.

28 Oct 1833 John Grey

Monday 28th October

I received this morning a proposal from Stokoe & Rewcastle for leave to erect a Saw Mill, by their paying a ground rent of £8 a year upon the Hospitals property on the Devils Water. The sum offered is too small to form any inducement to allow of such an erection. The only one would be in the advantage which might attend it, in the disposal of the surrounding Wood, of which there is a great quantity. I shall take an early opportunity of examining the situation with reference to roads that might be necessary & the damage or inconvenience likely to attend it, & report upon it to the Board. The day being exceedingly wet I could not go abroad but was employed during the whole of it in the office, communicated to the road Trustees & to Mr Shipley, the directions to each contained in the Boards minutes received this morning; wrote to Mr Jay upon the subject of Mr Pringles Letter, which I returned & examined the form of a Lease sent by Mr Bicknell & his remarks upon the agreement & covenants which I had submitted to the Boards inspection. In submitting that form of Agreement to the Board (by which however many Estates in this part of the Country are held on lease) I did not pretend to vindicate its absolute legallity or its conformity with Acts of Parliament that respects the Hospital, which I never saw, but merely to convey by it the particular covenants which I should recommend to be inserted & acted upon, in letting the farms, & to avoid as far as possible any demands upon the tenants which conduced nothing to the benefit to the Hospital. And I was the more induced to recommend

some form which would be at once cheap, specific & intelligible, that I saw many of the farms & some of the most extensive, held upon no agreement but the printed catalogue of the fields they contain & a note of the portions allowed in tillage - and on the other hand, that when expensive Stamps had been used, I know that even Mr Hoopers assiduity had failed in obtaining payment of them. Mr Bicknell has by reference to Acts of Parliament proved the necessity in law of having even the Counterparts of leases upon Stamp, which is to be regretted as an unnecessary burden upon the tenant. The form of Lease handed to me by Mr Bicknell, which is the same as many executed leases in the Office, is objectionable in my opinion, because it does not specify many important covenants which are included in most leases, & are to be found in the printed articles submitted by me to the Board, but covers them by the general clause to 'use & farm the said lands according to the custom of the country, & the most usual mode of farming lands held of the said Commissioners etc' which I regret to say, is a mode exhausting to the land, & open in defiance of all the rules of good & improved husbandry. (From this remark, I must in a great measure except the Bambroshire Estates.) Another objection which I take to is, [underlined: 'that it enforces no specific penalties for the breach of Covenants']. It is true that on account of such breach the Commissioners may 'determine and make void' the lease. But that is a consummation which unhappily conveys little punishment nowadays. And it is often in the contemplation of giving up that the greatest advantage of the land is taken. Still it may be said that the delinquent may be prosecuted upon the covenants. True he may, but ere that is closed, he may be in the County Gaol or across the Atlantic. Whereas the execution of a penalty of 5 or £10 Per Acre, as the case may require, to be reckoned as contingent Rent and receivable as such, [underlined: 'is immediate in its operation & east of execution.'] The most illiterate tenant can understand that if he infringes a certain covenant, he can be made to pay £5 Per Acre addition of Rent, & that such sum may be levied by distress of his goods. This would present a barrier which few would be so hardy as to overstep. On this subject there is a case in point at this moment. The Boards Minutes received today, direct that penalties shall be enforced in the case of Bell of Sillywray, for breach of Covenants. I have examined his Lease & found that no penalties attach to, but that of determining the demise. This he has done for himself, by relinquishing the farms & removing to another neighbourhood. In this case there may be no need of legal process, as the Commissioners hold funds for their own indemnity from a different source - but that is accidental.

Having expressed these opinions frankly, yet I trust respectfully, & begging to add, that if a Receiver becomes answerable for the good management of a Property & for the due execution of the covenants upon which that management is founded, he ought to be supported by instruments in which these covenants are distinctly set forth, & which so afford him an easy remedy, in case of their infringement. I have only to remark, that as Mr Bicknell is so good as to say that he will endeavour to compress & incorporate the suggested additions, into such a form as will obviate the objections which exist to that which I had recommended, that I will return them to him, that he may, should the

Commissioners so direct, embody such covenants as from the foregoing remarks they may deem advisable, & in such manner as his legal knowledge may direct.

I must again beg leave, respectfully, to call the attention of the Commissioners to the necessity of an early announcement of the farms to be let, if they are first to be offered to the public. And in doing so, I take the Liberty again to refer them to my Journal of the 12th September for my Sentiments on the subject. But notwithstanding what I have there stated, should the Commissioners deem it advisable to resort to a valuation and new letting without having recourse to the Public, in the case of tenants who are considered worthy of encouragement, I shall be ready to undertake the task to the best of my power, in defiance of any obloquy, that rejected or unsuccessful candidates may cast upon me. It seems however necessary in every case, before relief is given, that present Leases should be abandoned, & better conditions adopted.

29 Oct 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 29th October 1833

This being the great Fair at Newcastle which is of considerable importance to the Tenantry in this district, I mounted my Horse at 6 o'clock and rode down to the Hill near the Town 17 miles, to see how things were going on, & was glad to find that Cattle went off briskly at good prices. I tried to persuade some of the Farmers from the northern parts of the County who have large flocks of Sheep to feed upon turnips, to come & buy the turnips of our tenants on the Tyne, who have rarely any Sheep of their own, & who cultivate fewer turnips than they ought, because they make little of them, whereas consuming turnips upon the ground by Sheep is the best of all manuring for dry lands. I think I should get some of them over into this part, in the meantime I have written to ask my Son, who has between 2 and 3000, to send 3 or 400 over in the charge of a careful man to try the experiment & set the example. They will be so far on their way to the southern market, & I am above all things desirous of Sheep feeding, which I am convinced is the most efficient step toward restoring the fertility of exhausted soils & enabling them to pay rent for it.

From the Fair: I went to Newcastle, discharged our debts to the Infirmary & Eye Infirmary & had my Bank Book compared, and the Account adjusted.

30 Oct 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 30th October 1833

Returned from Newcastle by Throckley, examining the state of the Colliery there. The piece of Coal cut into, continues good & though the demand is limited I hope it may repay the Lessees in time for their unsuccessful attempts. Came to Whittle to see the building in hand, which in another week will be covered in & finished. Proceeded to Corbridge.

Just before leaving Belford in the evening of the 22nd the Tenant of Outchester applied to me respecting the draining & ploughing a marshy grass Field which he would have done before, had he not been undetermined about holding on the Farm. I regretted that he had not mentioned before that I might have examined it with reference to that, although I knew its general character. I wrote from Howick desiring my Son to go over and report to me concerning it. He states that it contains 12 Acres, of which about nine are in a very unproductive state, being wet & covered with rushes & coarse grass. That the soil if made dry is not of bad quality & that the Farm having 80 Acres of old pasture besides can spare this, but at any rate, it would be much improved by draining, limeing etc even though it were thought fit to restore it to pasture. I have in consequence written to desire him to go again & proceed with the draining. It may assist the tenant in a dear bargain, & will be a permanent improvement to the farm. I prefer employing my Son there who is only 15 miles from that as well as Scremerston Estates, to sending Mr Hunt as it would take him a week from home, at considerable expense, when he could be ill spared for his time, is fully occupied with the embankments draining & repairs on this part of the property.

31 Oct 1833 John Grey

Thursday 31st October 1833

After dispatching certain matters in the Office and consulting with Mr Parkin as to the Trees necessary for planting the Ground left vacant by the falls of Wood in Dipton Plantation & other places this season, I took a long ride over the Estates of Whittonstall & Newlands, examining all the works finished or in progress, which may be brought to account at the ensuing Rent day. The Tenants in that District, who as a body, are in my opinion, of the most respectable & deserving of any upon the Hospitals Estates, beg me to present a request to the Commissioners, that owing to the high situation of their farms, the expense of obtaining manure & the hard times they have to contend with, the Commissioners would be pleased to make them an allowance for the purchase of lime, which they would lead at their own Cost. This would certainly be a judicious & beneficial mode of making an abatement, because it would be expended in improving

the land, & no tenant would benefit by it who was not inclined to give his farm the advantage of it.

1 Nov 1833 John Grey

Friday 1st November.

Took a round to see the Drain for bringing an additional supply of Water into the Reservoir at Dilston North Farm, & the repairing of the road over Snokoe hill, upon which I have employed some old men at low wages, who otherwise would at this season come upon the Parish. The alteration of buildings at the Park Farm, which has nearly concluded and which has made a great improvement to the Farm Offices at a small expense - and the raising of the embankments in Widehaugh, which will certainly now present an insuperable barrier to the floods of the Tyne, although the soil being to wheel in barrows from the adjoining fields to the very top of the embankment, causes it to proceed slowly and at considerable expense. I then went to meet Mr Rewcastle at the point where Stokoe proposed to erect the Saw Mill, when after examining the ground and discussing the subject, he gave me in an amended proposal of £20 a year ground rent instead of £8 without which I would not undertake to forward his offer to the Board. The Plan accompanying the proposal will best show the intended site. The ground to the extent of half an Acre which the premises will occupy is covered at present with full grown Larch, which the Party will buy, for the purpose of roofing, also the few trees which will be removed in making the course to and from the Mill Wheel. There is already a road through the Wood as described, which they must improve & maintain, & they must make one across the field, East Birk side, to join the lane, at their own cost & indemnify the tenant for the land it may occupy, as well as for any casual trespass, I examined it particularly with reference to the probability of damage being done to the opposite ground, by the call to be raised across the water, to drive it down the course to the Wheel, but the call will be so low and the descent is so great, that I can hardly anticipate such result. Should it be found by experience in case of the Agreement being entered into, that it had such an effect, I would stipulate that the Lessees be bound to raise an embankment adequate to the defence of the Land from Floods. The Ground Rent of £20 a year offers no great inducement to allow of such an erection, but surrounded as the situation is, by the woods of Dilston Park, the Devils Water, Dipton & Snokoe, most of which is of great size & fit for Sale. I should hope that the facility afforded by a Saw Mill for cutting it up into portable & suitable sizes, might prove very beneficial to the Hospital in disposing of it. The proposing party, calculate upon an outlay of £500 and are desirous of an early answer to their application, for if proceeded with, the wood ought immediately to be cut down, that it may get seasoned for use, & that they may commence with the Water course. I send herewith Mr Parkin's calculation of the young trees wanted for the ensuing season. I shall obtain from different Nursery men & compare their respective prices, & if

possible examine their Stocks. While upon this Subject, I must beg leave to remark that most of the young plantations on the property, especially some at Elrington, the very extensive ones at Gairshield & in Hexhamshire & some in Newlands have been planted much too thick at the first, & have been allowed to go on without thinning, because I am told, there is no market for so much small fir Wood till the hard wood trees are choked among the firs & sustaining irreparable injury. That the weedings cannot be sold to advantage is to be regretted, but they had better be cut & left to rot, than have such fine plantations ruined, after all the expense of fencing and planting has been incurred. It is too common an occurrence that nurserymen & planters like to swell their Bills for trees & labor, by using an inordinate number of plants, but having been rather an attentive planter in a small way on my own property, I would recommend that in future they be placed at much greater distances. Although they do not make such a show for a few years at first, they become eventually much hardier & finer trees, & at an immense saving of expense. I am of opinion too that sales of the large Timber at Hartburngrange, Whittle Dean, Tyne Banks, Dipton & the Devils Water should be attempted. Much of it is at maturity and some of it going back. Mr Parkin is much better, but still in a delicate state, & I much doubt his power to undergo the fatigue which an active discharge of his duties, over such an extent of woodlands would require.

An estimate of young trees wanted in Dipton Plantation

For replanting 12 acres

10000 oaks	from 1 1/2 to 2 feet
10000 larches	2 do
5500 ashes	2 do
4000 Scotch Elms	2 do
2000 Birches & Alders	1 1/2 do
1500 poplars	2 do
500 Spanish & Horse chesnuts	2 do
35000	

For filling up young Plantations in Dipton Wood

2000 Larches	2 feet
1000 Oaks	2 do

For planting 1 acre 1 rood adjoining Newshield Bank Plantation at Alston Moor

1000 oaks	1 1/2 to 2 feet
800 larches	2 do
600 ashes	2 do
500 elms	2 do
200 poplars	2 do
200 spruce	1 1/2 do

3300

2 Nov 1833 John Grey

Saturday 2nd November 1833

Rode in the morning to Haydon Bridge and met Mr Howden to consider of the best and cheapest mode of constructing the conduit to carry water across the field previous to its entering the pipes at the Alms Houses, by which it is to be conveyed to the Inn. Mr Howden is to ascertain the price at which circular tyles can be brought from Newcastle, which are better than a stone conduit, if they can be had at the same cost. Proceeded to the farm of Lees to inspect it, with a view to its future management, this being the only farm of those now to let, which I had not hitherto examined. The land is in fair condition, but many of the fences are old and bad, & the housing is very much so. Returned by Esphill & Lightbirks, to which the present Tenant entered only at May Day last. He complained at that time to Mr Hooper of the manner in which the new Turnpike had cut small angular pieces of the fields making then inconvenient to cultivate, & wished to have some fences removed that the detached pieces might be annexed to adjoining fields. Mr Hooper left it to me to examine and decide upon the propriety of doing so, which I necessarily deferred till after the harvest was over. I fully concur in the necessity of removing some of the fences though not to the extent desired by Mr Peacock & of making one new fence. I shall desire Mr Hunt to measure the Hedges to be taken up and to let it by the lump, to some of the labourers in the neighbourhood during the winter while work is slack. The expense will not be great. Reached home after dark having been drenched in rain for eight hours.

4 Nov 1833 John Grey

Monday 4th November

Went to Newcastle to attend meeting to consider the propriety of erecting a monument, by public subscription, in commemoration of my late much valued friend, Mr Losh. Lord Durham was called to the Chair and the proposition unanimously adopted, upwards of £400 being immediately subscribed. Having received Mr Jay's Letter of the 2nd Instant by the way, I wrote from Newcastle to inform Mr Thomson that the Commissioners accepted his resignation of the Lease of Chesterhill, but declined for the present making him the allowance on account of the repair of the Boiler. Also wrote to my Son directing him to go there & find some suitable person to show the farm when advertised, giving him instructions as to the plan of management which I had left with him, the fields to be kept in permanent grass, & the division of the two fields, which I had fixed upon, in which the soil is in very dissimilar quality therefore not suited to

the same kind of management. Returned home in the evening. With regard to the case of Mrs Thomson of Glororum, referred for my opinion in Mr Jay's Letter, I certainly think that an abatement is necessary m probably to the amount of from £80 to £100 a year - and to prevent that being drawn in as a president [sic] by the other Tenants, & exciting discontent among them, it might be either allowed to Mrs Thomson, in promise of secrecy, or she might be permitted to pay so much short for the two ensuing years of the Lease, on the understanding that if the farm was left in good condition it should be struck off in the shape of Arrears at the end. In either case it must be a strictly private arrangement on the ground of the peculiarity of her situation and the Boards regulation not to grant abatement without a previous surrender of the term.

Dodd of Allerwash Mill stands in Arrear £69 and has given notice of his resignation at May day next. He had no chance to go on under so many disadvantages - the Machinery in part out of repair - water in Summer very scarce & too little land to keep Horses & a Cow. His claim is for work done by his Horses etc to repair the Reservoir, during which time the Mill was standing, & therefore unproductive of Rent & any thing else - & this he assigns with seeming reason as the cause of his Arrears. I fear there will be a difficulty getting clear with him even after allowing the £27:3:11 as I suspect the little capital he had is already lost. Were it advisable to put the Mill in to complete repair, it would be needful to lay more land to it, that it might be occupied to advantage & that land I have examined and fixed upon, to be recommended to the Board in case of a separate occupation from the farm; but the Mill Property of the Hospital is generally a source of so much expense & such inadequate profit, that I must question if it would not be better to let it go with the farm at a moderate rent, in the state in which it is, than to lay out money in repairing the machinery, & should the railway go on, perhaps have it removed altogether, for by the present plan, the line of the railway seems to run directly through the premises.

5 Nov 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 5th November

I have a letter from Mr Pringle promising to pay up his rents during the present month - and shall write to inform Johnson of the Boards determination not to allow quarrels existing between tenants to be any ground for their withholding their rents. In this instance Johnson seems to be placed in rather an anomalous situation. He is bound as Colliery Lessee to supply certain tenants Coals for burning Lime at such prices as shall be fixed by the Hospital's Receiver as the cost price of raising them. He cannot therefore secure himself by demanding payment upon delivery of the article, as in other cases. The Account runs on to the amount of £300 & then Mr Thomson objects to the prices fixed by Mr Fenwick. Johnson seems to have no remedy at law as Mr Fenwicks decision is not made in virtue of a submission deed, or at any rate his remedy

in that way would be by a difficult and protracted course. Supposing that in the meantime the tenant has become insolvent. The Lessee would then have incurred the loss of his debt in consequence of the nature of his agreement & not by any neglect or mismanagement on his part. It would perhaps have been a safer arrangement that the prices should have been fixed from the beginning, so as to preclude all disputes or that the tenants should have been left to buy their Lime at Johnson's sale Kilns, or to bargain with him for small Coals as they found it best. There is another Colliery equally near to Mr Thomson as Johnsons & either of these can supply abundance of small Coal for such a purpose on very low terms, & it could hardly be contemplated that Johnson was to give his best fire Coals for burning Lime at the same price as the worst. The interference of the Commissioners seems necessary in the present instance, to put an end to the unpleasant contention, and I see no means of doing it so fairly & effectually as by their informing Mr Thomson that the matter having been referred to Mr Fenwick, with the documents necessary for his calculations, they cannot allow his decision to be called in question. While on the subject of Collieries I must take the liberty to observe that it will be necessary that some one conversant in such matters, should act as a Check Viewer & visit the different Coal Mines on the Hospitals Estates once a year at least regularly & oftener, in case of emergency. I think Mr Hooper was of opinion that Mr Fenwick was becoming too old & was otherwise too much occupied to hold the situation & that some one might be found adequate to the task who not being employed in the very extensive concerns on the Tyne would be satisfied with a moderate Salary or an allowance per day, when his services should be required. I have hitherto received no instructions on this head, but as it will be necessary soon, to put down a new pit at Stublick & to arrange the general management of the mine, I beg leave to submit to the Board that if Mr Fenwicks services are to be dispensed with, he had better be settled with, and a suitable person selected to view the mines. Having acquaintance of many persons connected with Collieries on the Tyne & Wear, I could easily obtain information of some one to recommend to the Commissioners.

The morning being very wet, was engaged in arrangements for the rent days in Alston and elsewhere, also in preparing various notices to parties to quit at May day, which must be served this week. When the rain ceased went to the embankments. Mr Hunt is busily occupied in measuring off draining & fencing previous to the rent days.

6 Nov 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 6th November

Wrote to Major Johnson informing him of the Board's directions respecting the payment of his Rents. Also to Mr Gibson, appointing a meeting with the Gateshead Board Trustees upon the proposed alteration at Dilston, and to Mr Cookson, who now

engages to take by valuation the articles detained by his Tenant at Meldon which I claimed as the property of the Hospital - to which proposition I of course accede.

Rode to Thornbrough Farm to examine the state of some fences which are not in good repair & which the Tenant considers superfluous & wishes to be allowed to remove, also to advise him as to the adoption of a different rotation of Crops from that prescribed by his Lease, which he expresses himself willing to do. Afterwards went to Shaw House & Newtonhall to look after the buildings there. Wrote at length to Mr Jay in the evening on the subject of letting the farms now out of lease, or relinquished by the tenants.

7 Nov 1833 John Grey

Thursday 7th November

Having prepared in the Office every thing necessary for my business at Alston, I drove to Haydon Bridge, there to meet the Lessee of Stublick, to confer on some matters respecting the Colliery. I gave Mr Hutchinson an offer of his house with half the Garden and field at a rent of £21 from May day next (his present rent is £15) which he accepted - making a similar offer to Mrs Routledge who however declined any participation of her accommodation, desiring to have the whole or none. I then proceeded to dine and sleep at Whitfield.

8 Nov 1833 John Grey

Friday 8th November

Left Mr Ords early, that I might reach Alston in time to arrange with Mr Dickinson about receiving the rents before the hour for the road meeting. It will be seen from the list, that most of the small tenants in that district paid their rents with tolerable punctuality - as many of them walk from a distance of several miles, it seemed hard that they should have no refreshment, when a dinner is given on such occasions all over the Country. I therefore ordered for them a little Ale & bread & cheese, which did not detain them half an hour, & with which they were vastly satisfied. It will be seen that the twenty penny Fines left by Mr Hooper for Mr Bainbridge to collect, have all been obtained, except in the case of some old and deserted tenements whose inhabitants have emigrated to America, leaving them in the hands of a Mortgagee. I imagine the trifling sums will not make it worth while for the Hospital to take possession.

The Road Meeting was numerously attended and of long continuance. After much discussion & less unanimously than might have been wished, resolutions were adopted which it is not necessary that I should here detail, as a Copy of them will be furnished me in a few days by the Clerk for the Road. In the evening Mr Bainbridge & a few of the more respectable tenants who have been usually invited to dinner on the occasion, made a quiet party, from whom I endeavoured to gain all the information I could respecting the district & its mining operations. I must not omit to mention the Boards decision to reduce the Duty Ore, was received with many expressions of satisfaction & gratitude.

9 Nov 1833 John Grey

Saturday 9th November

There has been a fall of Snow in the night which lay all the day & gave the country a very wintry appearance. Mr Dickinson joined me early to settle our accounts & receive directions respecting the thinning of plantations which Mr Parkin will not have leisure to attend to. We heard parties too who had disputes about their Veins of Ore, but which we managed to reconcile. I walked with him to Randle Holme to see the new Cow House & other repairs that had been done under his superintendence, & very well done. Also to look at some draining wanted in the small portion of tillage land upon that farm, which is reckoned large in that Country. The repair of Alston Mill is in progress. I then drove, or rather walked over the mountain to Whitfield, for the road had become so slippery that my horse could not keep his feet. Stopped about an hour with Mr Ord, & reached Corbridge in the evening, when I sent to Mr Jay the plans of the proposed house with Mrs Greys and my own remarks upon Mr Hays alterations, also several papers and statements from the parties concerned in the dispute & arbitration at Scremerston writing to him on both subjects.

11 Nov 1833 John Grey

Monday 11th November

Occupied in the morning in preparing & arranging papers etc and afterwards at Shaw House in receiving Rents, machines etc for particulars of which I must refer the Board to the Rental Sheet to be sent.

The Tenants universally complain of great loss by their farms. Those of Hartburngrainge South Farm & Thornbrough Highbarns, wished to be released from theirs at May day next, but owing to the late period at which the applications are made, I did not encourage them to expect that the Commissioners would accept their

resignations. Although as regards the latter, unless they fall upon some means speedily to reduce the amount of Arrears standing against them, I fear it may be necessary to take measures to secure the Hospital & take possession of the Farm.

12 Nov 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 12th November 1833

Engaged all day with Letters & accounts. Agreed with Michael Lathaen, Mason in Horsley to allow him, subject to the approbation of the Board, to work Giles Crag Quarry in Whittle Dene for four months to come for the supply of the railway, on condition of his paying one penny for each blocked stone, to be paid monthly according to the account by which he is to be paid by the rail-way company. He being bound to repair any damage or trespass, & to leave the road and quarry in such condition as I shall be satisfied with, also to leave with the refuse Stones for the use of the Hospital. From the situation of the Quarry in the brook in the low extremity of Whittle Dene Wood, no trespass attends the working of it. The sale of the Stones will produce something & we shall have walling Stones left, to build a Stables at Whittle Mill ready for leading away.

13 Nov 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 13th November

Went to Haydon Bridge to receive the Rents, beginning in the morning with the Tenants from the distant district of Newlands, Whittonstall, some of whom were not well prepared & to whom the allowance of £750 promised to be made last Spring provided the extended Roads through the Estates should be constructed in such manner as to cause them to be adopted in future as public roads, occasioned a considerable diminution in the receipt. £300 of that sum has been expended in labor, for levelling the roads and breaking the Stones, making conduits, watercourses etc & the remainder in the hire of Carts for leading the materials, which having been done by the tenants in different proportions, must have been an advantage to them - care must now be taken to have a portion of statute work annually applied to these roads, to endeavour to maintain them in some tolerable sort of repair.

It will be seen by the returns, that several of the tenants have left a part of their Rents unpaid, a good part of which however, they promise to pay by the close of the year, and on the whole I succeeded rather better than I had anticipated. From some of the occupiers of poor farms which they have now relinquished, such as Teasdale, Thorburn and Maughan, I fear some loss must be looked for, & I must just watch the opportunity

when the least loss is likely to be incurred, to get rid of them. The former has got his Wheat sown, in a fashion, by the assistance of his neighbours, as I advised, and probably he may struggle on till May Day. The two latter have given me orders upon Mr Beaumont's Agent, to receive money due to them, as they say, for carriage of Ore, which if accepted, will bring them up a little. Mr Coulson, an industrious tenant of a dear farm at Coastley, instead of reducing, has increased his Arrear, owing he says to the want of water for his most expensive Machine, on which account he has hardly been able to thrash any Corn since harvest, & now the market is so over-stocked that it is not saleable. Mr Bell of Sillywray & West Deanraw, paid no Rent, but was very submissive on the score of his breach of Covenants, saying that it was not done with any view of quitting the Farm. However it was done & I told him that he need expect no payment of his gratuity until the farm being let, the entering tenant & he should settle by arbitration the damage sustained by his delinquency, so that the Hospital should not lose by the condition of the land in a new letting. To this he acceded. I expected to find Mr Snowball the Tenant of Fourstones very obstreperous on the long unsettled dispute about trespass with the Lessees of the Colliery, as he was reported to have behaved with great rudeness and coarseness to poor Mr Hooper in the Spring but I spoke to him smoothly & found him quite willing to listen to reason & justice, & obtained from him & the Colliery Lessees the appointment of two most respectable men to whom they agreed to refer all differences.

14 Nov 1833 John Grey

Thursday 14th November

Was engaged from morning till five in the evening in receiving rents & settling accounts &c with the tenants & transferring the account of Cash to the Banker in attendance. The record Sheets will show the particular transactions which I need not now detail. On this day there was a large attendance, & being chiefly near their homes, they remained to dine to the number of 52. They passed a few hours in the evening in great harmony, all very evidently desirous to show me every respect & civility on my first meeting them on such an occasion, as they had been, I believe, in the morning anxious to give me all the money they could raise. Had I been in better spirits, I should have been more able to enjoy their society and return their expressions of good will. Everything about the Inn was most comfortable. & as far as I can ascertain it, the charge was £10, at least less than it would have been under the former Landlord, when nothing was at all comfortable.

15 Nov 1833 John Grey

Friday 15th November

Returned in the morning to Corbridge with Mr Dickinson, having sent Mr Hunt to look after some repairs & water courses to the Westward & passed the day in arranging the numerous papers & accounts connected to the two previous days proceedings, to put which through the books will occupy Mr Dickinson for some time.

16 Nov 1833 John Grey

Saturday 16th November

Received the Boards Minutes. Wrote a variety of Letters to Mr Jay the returns of Ores from Alston & other documents. Went to organise the progress of the Embankment in Widehaugh - the building at the Park Farm just finished & the conveyance of Water to the Leadbitters Dam, which has succeeded in giving him a fair supply at the inconsiderable cost of £10.0.0. In the evening examined the draft of the Boards letter to the Admiralty on the subject of letting the farms, making remarks thereon & writing with it to Mr Jay. I was deeply concerned today to hear of the death of Mr Hooper. He was a faithful, energetic and devoted servant of the Hospital, & I have little doubt that the constant state of excitement which he was kept in, during his residence in the north, by the difficulties he had to encounter & the perplexities he constantly found himself in, working upon his feeble frame, greatly accelerated the progress of his disease. He was an excellent man to unravel an account, detect fraud and rectify abuse, but his inexperience in country affairs & ignorance of the management & value of land & its produce together with a certain eagerness to press every point to an immediate settlement, led him at times to very erroneous conclusions & would have made his interference to any extent in the farming department, any thing but beneficial. I wish the leases which he let last year had been upon a different footing. But he was an excellent Man!

17 Nov 1833 John Grey

Monday 18th November 1833

Wrote to Mr Storey, Bailiff at Wark, enclosing an account of Rents still due in that district, requesting him to obtain as speedily as possible & to bring them here, that I may return the receipts & settle with him, his Salary yet unpaid.

Went to Thornbrough Highbarns to see the quantity of Corn & other effects upon the farm & ascertain what prospect the Tenant has of continuing in it. He has a good deal of Corn in Stock & also a fair prospect for next year, and, but for the Arrears hanging over him from the farm at Newtonhall, which he left on coming there, he might I think get on. To make a payment at the Spring Rent he borrowed money from the Bank, which having been obliged lately to repay, he cannot now, nor till Christmas, pay his half years Rent, so that the Hospital benefits little by the transaction. He is an industrious man and desirous of doing well, but besides the depression of the times, states to me a case of great hardship, having been defrauded of some hundred pounds by a person whose situation gave him the power of exercising an influence over the Tenantry of the Hospital, & whose only plea for refusing payment, is that his pro note is rendered invalid, by the statute of limitation - conduct which if generally known, would subject the individual to the reprobation of every honest man. Returned through Thornbrough Town Farm to examine minutely the ruinous fences which the tenant thinks it better to get rid of than renew, in which he is partly right - also to look particularly into the quantity of tillage land with a view to try to get it managed in such a course as I should like, were I the tenant. Mr Scott refused to sign his Lease upon the covenants prescribed to him, & proposed alterations which proved him to have better judgment than those who made the arrangement, & is now deriving the benefit of the change he insisted upon. It is a fine farm and he is a good tenant, & I am anxious that he should go to the full extent of acting upon the five course husbandry which I think would be very useful as an example, especially as coming from a keen man. But even he spoils his hedges, by an abominable mode of cutting which eventually destroys them. I have got my son to send some suitable hedge knives, but I believe that I must also get a man to teach them the use of them. In the evening prepared a form of agreement for the Lessees of the proposed Saw Mill.

19 Nov 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 19th November

Received from Mr Pringle of Borewell a Bill at 21 days for £286 in part of Rent, & a promise that the remainder should be paid very soon. He had engaged to pay me at this time the whole of the £319 which he would receive on Saturday last, on account of the award, from Johnson.

Traversed all the Dilston Park Woods which we have been engaged in thinning & clearing of the brushwood, so as to give liberty to a fine Spring of Oak & Larch; by which it is much improved & likely to become a flourishing plantation. A quantity of Corf Rods are obtained in this operation, & though they do not bring much at this distance from the Collieries, they will produce something to pay the expense. I have consequently written to some parties that are likely to buy them. Returned by the

workmen at the embankment in Wide Haugh, with which they are proceeding rapidly, & for which the weather is favourable. I have directed that their wages should be reduced 2/- per week for the three months, on account of the shortness of the days. Examined the Wears, which are all unmoved, though we have had some heavy waters. With regard to an allowance of lime, to the tenants of Newlands & Whittonstall, if it is made to them, it ought to be made to those in Hexhamshire also, which is to the full as poor a district & as unfavourably situated in respect of lime as the other. In both districts the leading from the Kilns to the farms will cost something more than double the price of the lime & though it would take thirty shillings worth of lime at the Kiln to cover an Acre as I should like it done, I fear very few of the tenants could manage to lead in one season to the extent of 20/- an Acre to their fallow quarter. To this extent however, they ought to be allowed, if at all, and though they could not go over their whole fallow in one season they ought to do it well, as far as they could, leaving the other for another occasion. To prevent fraud, they should leave a pass book to the Kilns, which could be called for at any time, & also produce the receipt of payment for the whole, previous to obtaining the allowance at the rent days. They ought to be required besides, to lay it down in heaps of four fathoms each, which Mr Hunt could easily see before laid on the land, & compare with the account. A per centage upon the rental might at first sight seem to be the simplest mode of regulating the allowance, but that would not be equal because the proportions of grass & tillage land in all farms are not alike. The amount of land in fallow each year in Newlands & Whittonstall is 502 Acres, & that in Hexhamshire 253 making in all 755 Acres, and that ought to be reduced by one fifth, in the new arrangements, by changing the rotation from a four to a five course.

20 Nov 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 20th November

Met by appointment, Mr Silvertop and the Surveyor of the Gateshead roads, to consider of the best line for the proposed improvement, & to decide upon the mode of compensate to the Tenants. The first point was easily settled, as we were agreed upon the best line. The second admitted of more discussion as tenants are generally found to look to the present years more than to future improvement, & to be very much opposed to any interference with their arrangements, Mr Leadbitter declaring that he would not hold his farm, if they entered upon the intended alteration. Mr Armstrong was named by the Trustees, & Mr Sample on the part of the Tenants, to assess the damage done to the Crops during the progress of the work, & also to fix the difference of value, if any, between the land to be restored after the old road is broken up, & that which will be occupied by the new, the Trustees engaging to make the new fences and branch road; and to remove the old ones, to my entire satisfaction. Small as the change is, it happens unluckily to interfere with three different farms, and the most difficult

part of the arrangement will be, as the fences must in some measure, be altered to reconnect the respective tenants to the exchanges which will be necessary - as each invariably believes that he gets the worse. I had an interview with Mr Johnson, who gave me an undertaking to receive in April £80 on account of carriage of Ore by our tenant of Gairshield, which I am glad to have got. He also mentioned to me Mr Crawhalls wish to purchase the small farm of Eadsbush, if it were to be disposed of & requested that I would obtain for him the information. It consists of only of 26 3/4 Acres - is completely detached from any other property of the Hospital & being joined to Mr Crawhalls, makes it likely that he would give more for it, than its value to the Hospital. The Common Allotment at present let along with it, though at a considerable distance, would go better with Gairshield to which it is nearer. A similar application was some time ago made to me by the Dean & Chapter of Durham, who have £100,000 to invest. Should the Commissioners entertain an idea of dispersing of property to any great extent, the Estate which is contiguous to property already possessed by the Dean & Chapter, & one which they would likely give a good price for, is Newlands & Whittonstall. It is also unconnected with any other of the Hospitals Estates & let at a rental likely to suffer considerable diminution from its unfavourable situation. I attended afterwards a meeting to let the Tolls &c of the Trustees of the road leading from Elsdon to West Auckland, in which I had previously qualified to act.

21 Nov 1833 John Grey

Thursday 21st November

Mr Dickinson having gone through the accounts and proved their agreement with the receipts & payments at the different rent days, I sent the balance in Cheques & Cash to the Bank, & directed them to pay £5000 to the Bank of England on the 21st Instant. There is one arrear of rent, which stands in peculiar circumstances, as we can neither attack the person of the tenant, nor seize the stock on the premises & that is the £50 due, previous to the present season, by Mr Bell MP for the shooting on Henshaw Common, which including this season, as the Duke of Northumberland does not take the transfer till the 22nd Instant, makes the Debt £75. A letter was sent to me in August in Mr Hoopers writing to forward to Mr Bell, which I did - but no notice was taken of it. I have twice since made a similar application. No attention was paid to the first. On receiving the second Mr Bell referred me to the Revd Mr Brandling. To him I then applied, three weeks ago, but he has not favoured me with a reply. I think it right to state this proceeding to the Board, that they may adopt such measures as they may see fit.

I went over the extensive plantation of Dipton examining the Grounds (about 12 Acres) cleared for planting anew, & the plots marked out by Parkin for Sale, crossing on my way the farms of Dilston Hall & Dilston South Farm. I am every day excessively

provoked by the sight of hedges which might have been good and flourishing fences, totally ruined by egregious carelessness or mismanagement. They are cut in the most injudicious manner, when cut at all, but commonly let to grow open at the bottom & full of holes to stop which they stuff in dead thorns till the living ones are suffocated, & the hedge spoilt past recovery. This has been done to a great extent on the two farms just mentioned, if they had had a premium for destroying young hedges, it would hardly have been done more effectually. This must have arisen, partly from extreme ignorance of the proper management of fences, partly from great inattention on the part of the Bailiff of the Districts, but in a great measure from the idea which seems to prevail in the Hospitals Estates, that on Account of the high rents which the mode of letting induces the tenants to give, they ought to be absolved from the care of every thing but the working of their lands & securing & disposing of their crops, a system at once most injurious to the property & expensive to the Hospital. To set an example in the mode of cutting hedges, I have got a man who had formerly the charge of hedges upon a property to the North of Tweed, whom I intend to send from farm to farm, for a day or two at a time, that those who will follow it, may see how - after which I intend to employ him more particularly on the plantation fences. But probably the most forcible argument will be found in refusing to treat again with any tenant who has so notoriously neglected & spoiled his fences. It is mortifying to think that on account of such mismanagement the Hospitals outlay, in a new letting of Farms, will not, for a few years, be commensurate with the reduction which I apprehend the rents must sustain.

22 Nov 1833 John Grey

Friday 22nd November

Had an interview with the Lessee of Fourstones Colliery who produced a sketch of the Workings, explained that the Seam was cutting off and becoming very thin & bad to the east & mentioned the intention of the party to begin working by another Shaft farther to the West. This I conceive they are intitled to do, but I reminded him that they must work out the Coal in such manner as to be satisfactory to the Hospitals Viewer upon his inspection of it, & that it would be at their risk if they did otherwise. I cautioned him also against carrying their workings below the farm offices at Fourstones, to which they are now near, for the Seam not being very deep 'a break' of the Ground might injure the Buildings. I examined his books by which it appears that they are still considerably within the quantities fixed, both in the Coal & Lime. The low price of Grain & the introduction of bone manure have a tendency every where to reduce the sale of Lime. This subject causes me again to take the Liberty of reminding the Board of the necessity of having the different Collieries examined and reported upon by a practical viewer. The badness of the day rendering it impossible to do any thing out of doors, I was employed in writing a variety of Letters & attending to Office

business, also arranging with Mr Hunt the plan of management & covenants for each of the Farms to be let.

23 Nov 1833 John Grey

Saturday 23rd November

After dispatching business in the Office & writing to Mr Johnson on the claims for allowances from the Rail Way, made to the Dilston Tenants, which ought now to be repaid to the Hospital, I rode to see the work at the Embankment in Widehaugh and then proceeded through the Farms of Highwood and Westwood, to those of Fourstones to examine some Wears which Mr Hunt had been directed to improve, to prevent the inroads made by the Tyne upon the Haugh there & to preserve a Wall which it was likely to undermine, which I found done in a satisfactory manner. I then went to the Colliery & examined the Lease in the Tenants possession, of which there is no copy in this Office, & having acquainted myself with the covenants, proceeded to look at the Shaft to which they propose to remove their workings & to make myself acquainted with the points from which the Coal has been wrought & those in which it still remains. No regular plans exist of the working of this Seam, which is to be regretted, & if a professional man were employed to examine it, I think it would be well to have the workings laid down in an intelligible form, & to cause the Lessees to continue adding to it as they advance. I could not go down to see the Mine today, for the Men had left their work, being Saturday, rather early, but shall take some opportunity of doing so. It is an objection to the Shaft they are moving to, that it is very near to Mr Snowballs Stockyard, so that Carters coming at night, might may [sic] make free with his Oat Sheaves and Hay, or may be suspected of doing so, & that there is without care danger of fire. This the Lessee promises to guard against, by allowing no Smithy at the place and he also engages to insure the Stockyard. I have before remarked that the three farms at Fourstones are in as creditable a state of cultivation as any on the Hospitals property in this part of the County, but still the abominable treatment of the hedges common to the country prevails, of which many of them are entirely destroyed.

25 Nov 1833 John Grey

Monday 25th. November

Heard from Mr Thomson that he had taken another farm & must leave Chesterhill at May day next & wished to have an arrangement made for his away going Crop, which includes rather more than he is intitled to, though not laid out so intentionally by him. I replied that I regretted losing him for a tenant, but that I could not admit of any infringement of his covenants, or any thing that would prejudice the Hospitals interest

by making the entry worse for a succeeding Tenant. That I should probably have occasion to look over the farm more minutely than I had yet done, before finally concluding the future covenants with his successor, when I doubted not we should settle the account of his Crop satisfactorily, & asking him in the meantime to allow his farm Steward to show the place to anyone viewing it with an intention of becoming an offerer.

Rode to Whittle & thence to Throckley to examine some Acres of Waste in those farms occasioned by the Pit heaps left from the ancient Colliery workings, which Mr Stephenson expected to have had fenced around, but which has not yet been done. The injury they cause to the farmer, is in spoiling his Wool by the Sheep continually resorting to them to lie upon, & leaving their manure there instead of on the land. But besides this they are extremely ugly & as the turnpike road passes through the Estate, which is within six miles of Newcastle, I think it would be well, when inclosing them to plant trees round the outsides of the heaps, just within the fences, & also upon them; wherever by the deposit of rubbish or by the accumulation of soil & weeds from time to time, they have occasion to grow. This would improve the appearance of the farms & afford shelter for Stock, & on several of them Trees would grow to a considerable size. The land is not included in the measurement of the South farm so that no allowance can be claimed for these heaps by the Tenant, & Mr Stephenson would rather give a little more for planting round their base, than not have it done. I called upon Mr Bones urging him to an early payment of his rent, which he promised to make in the course of the week. Examined the state of the School which belongs to the Hospital & a cottage & garden for which no rent has of late been paid, having been occupied by a man who formerly had charge of the plantations, but as that is now unnecessary I told him that he must pay Rent for it in future. Returned home after dark, & was occupied till a late hour in preparing a detailed list of the farms of which the Leases have expired or been resigned to forward to Greenwich by the mornings Mail.

26 Nov 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 26th November

Was engaged for some time in settling accounts with several parties for draining & buildings. Wrote to Mr Fairless Lee who applied for further time to pay the Rent due at May day last, that having left the Farm and Sold the Crop to several parties he had no ground for such a request. That my granting it or even applying to the Board for the purpose was altogether out of the question, & that I should expect it to be paid forthwith. Compared the prices of Trees for planting, received from different Nurserymen, which I find to be very much alike, remitted to Mrs Grey of Whickham

her annuity due from Elrington & wrote other letters, but being unwell & the ground covered with Snow did not go from home.

27 Nov 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 27th November

After attending to some matters in the Office, the Snow having disappeared, I took Mr Hunt to see the fences on Dilston New Town South Farm, which I had observed to be treated in such a manner as to ensure their speedy destruction, advised him as to the best means of endeavouring to recover them, & instructed him to take the Tenant to examine them & enjoin him to adopt a different treatment of his hedges in future. We then proceeded to examine the Farm of Wooley for the purpose of deciding what land should be reserved as permanent pasture at the ensuing letting, & to ascertain the quantities to be allowed in tillage & most suitable rotation of cropping. This farm, though generally consisting of poor soil & rather unfavourably situated is upon the whole in rather creditable condition, no advantage having been taken of it with a view to a surrender of the Lease; & I found the occupier very ready to admit that the alteration which I proposed in the mode of management by insisting upon two years grass between each course of Corn crops, would increase the productiveness of the land. I had understood that this farm was managed by Mr Blackburn on account of Cook's children, but now I find that Cook's widow having been unable to carry it on, the Stock etc was purchased by her brother Mr Blackburn, who became the tenant on his own account by permission, & that the loss of the Farm for the last years having been his individually, he considers himself intitled to be treated with as the old tenant, should any preference be given, and from his treatment of the farm, as well as his possession of property, it is not likely that we should obtain a better tenant.

28 Nov 1833 John Grey

Thursday 28th November

Received from Mr Nairn, Lessee of Waren & Spindlestone Mills an account of the renewing the Kiln & Wheat Screen at Waren which repairs being urgent, Mr. Brandling advised him to have done, not doubting that they would be allowed. The charge for the Kiln amounts to £20.12.9 and that for the Cylinder for dressing Wheat to £17.9.3. He has also forwarded, as I desired, Estimates for the new flooring of a part of the Granaries & the Mill at Waren, both of which I found to be very bad, when I examined them on the 16th October. They amount together to £63.9.7 but I see he has omitted to include the expense of new Spouts round the building to keep the rain from the roof from blowing in by the lattice windows, upon the Corn or floor, & also the

repair of Stairs, both of which he & Mr Hooper decided upon as being necessary in my presence in April last. The whole would probably amount to £70 but perhaps Mr Nairn might be induced to undertake them at a less sum to be allowed him at the next rent day. I shall await the Boards instructions upon these points, requesting to have the accounts & estimates retained.

Also received a Letter from Mrs Thomson of Glororum, to whom I had communicated the Board's decision to treat with her for the Farm upon a revaluation stating that she had consulted her Co-Trustees & that they decline to engage in a new Lease, having lost much of their Capital by continuing in the Farm, but returning their thanks to the Commissioners for the offer made to them, & hoping that under all the circumstances, they will not press for the Arrears. This extensive Farm then will be to let as well as Chesterhill in that District, & I am exceedingly anxious to lost no time in making it public, having had several applications by Letter for the latter Farm, and fearing that as most of the farms are to be settled for in December & some in the end of their month, we shall lose the choicest tenants. It will be necessary that I should go and examine those Farms, never having done so by Glororum, with a view to letting it, so soon as I am in the mode of proceeding.

I received from Messrs Bones of Throckley the half years rent for the public House & £180 towards that of the farm. They continue to speak favourably of the Coal which they have got & expect that it will prove beneficial. I visited the Embankment, with which the Workmen are proceeding satisfactorily & examined all the Wears & sloping of the Shores of the Tyne above & below the junction of the Devils Water. The Wears are doing remarkably well, strengthening themselves & the bank, by a deposit of gravel at each flood as I anticipated. The shores where the slope had been recently made & the materials sandy are out a little in some places by the lash of the Water when high & will require to be attended to & kept smooth, till they get a sufficient cover of grass, or dwarf willow, to protect them, the injury however is trifling.

29 Nov 1833 John Grey

Friday 29th November

Rode to Hexham and paid the money I had received since the Rent Day to the Bank Agent, then proceeded to Westwood & Coastley to make a valuation of those farms in case of my being authorised by the Board to treat by private bargain with the present tenants.

With Mr Snowball of Westwood there can be no doubt of the propriety of negotiating if his Father who is possessed of good property will join him in the Lease and with regard to Coulson of Coastley although he has fallen into considerable arrears, I

entertain a good opinion of him as an industrious man and good farmer. He had not certainly displayed much judgement in taking his farm, which I am satisfied, though the day became so stormy that I could not examine it so minutely as I wished, has been too high rented by £200 a year ever since he entered to it, the price of Grain having been declining each year since that time. From want of water till now he has been able to thrash very little Corn, having had his seed Wheat to buy at a considerably higher price than he can now obtain for his own, so that he has his Crop in hand, which in some measure accounts for his short payment last rent day. The farm is fully stocked too & his horses are powerful which is requisite at Coastley, the land being steep & hard to work. He knows the quality of the land and its management, & but for the arrears accumulated by the causes I have stated, which it may be difficult for him to overcome, if exacted to the full amount, I don't know that the Commissioners would be likely to find a better tenant. He fully concurs in my plan in cultivating more of Grass & less of Corn in future. Returned home in a tempest of wind and rain, & was engaged with Mr Benson in the evening, comparing the prices of different kinds of work connected with building which he had obtained in various quarters & giving him directions for measuring off several buildings, painting etc which have been completed upon the Estates. Most of them had been begun by estimate previous to my coming here.

2 Dec 1833 John Grey

Monday 2nd December

Wrote at length to Mr Dickinson at Alston, directing him respecting the fence for inclosing the Plantation along the road near the Inn at Lowbyer, & covering the rock at the end of the house with the earth from the foundations, that it may produce some shrubs & trees. Had a long discussion with Mrs Thomson of Glororum, respecting a new term of her farm, which I promised to see in the course of the week, & with Mr Lownds, respecting a payment now due by him for Lead, which he engaged should be paid to the credit of the Commissioners at the Bank of England on Saturday next. I then walked over the small inclosures which constitute Corbridge Town Farm, to ascertain its condition & value, the day being too far spent to go to a distance.

3 Dec 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 3rd December

Went to Hexham, Fourstones & Allerwash, having some matters to look after there, previous to letting the Farm and Mill. Returned to dinner and proceeded in the evening to Newcastle on my way to Belford, having an advertisement of Mrs Routledges House at Haydon Bridge which she declines to take, & which I must try to

find a tenant for. Waited upon Mr Batson, Assignee of Mr Alfred Hall to know why he had not attended to my application for payment of £32 on account of damage sustained by Mr Dickinson of Love Lady Shield from the working of Fletcheras Mine, for which Mr Dickinson looks to the Hospital. Mr Batson seemed to have the impression that Mr Hall has himself found means of paying it, which however is not the case, & I of course declined being referred to Mr Hall, a bankrupt, & required him to make the settlement.

4 Dec 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 4th December

Left Newcastle at six o'clock and was met at Belford at eleven by a servant and horses from Milfield Hill. Proceeded quickly to Outchester where I examined the Cattle Shed & draining the boggy Field which I had directed my son to get executed. The former is nearly finished & will be good accommodation. The latter is in progress in a very satisfactory manner & will greatly increase the value of the field. Went directly on to Glororum & proceeded to a minute inspection of every field, getting the Farm Steward to accompany me, in which I was engaged till dark. Seeing a light in the Mill at Waren as I passed on my way to Belford, I went in & examined the state of the floors, which are certainly much in want of relaying, being full of holes & very thin. During the evening I made a practical valuation, from Notes taken on the spot, of Glororum Farm, first by the a acre, according to the quality of each field or of parts of fields, & then by the more certain but very lengthened process of computing the annual average amount of each distinct kind of produce according to the rotation laid down for the management of the farm, by the average prices of the last three years, & then making the necessary deduction for every kind of expense. One mode produced a rental of £725 and the other of £716.10. I therefore fixed us the rental of £720.

5 Dec 1833 John Grey

Thursday 5th December

Was engaged nearly all the day in examining the farm of Chesterhill, arranging with Mr Thomson his away going Crop, in which I had no difficulty as he wished for no advantage, & preparing the terms for the new letting to leave with his Farm Stewart [sic], as he is kind enough to allow him to show the farm to those who may come to propose for it. I consider this farm worth about £100 a year more than Glororum & in justice to Mr Thomson, must say that I never saw a farm left in better condition, which circumstance, will I doubt not, have a great effect on the offers that will be made for it. Had Mr Thomson known soon enough of the change in the mode of letting, we should likely have retained him as a tenant, but apprehending public opposition &

having been invited by Sir Thos Brisbane to take an excellent farm in Roxburghshire, he cannot be blamed for providing for himself. I rode over to Wooler in the evening, having appointed a meeting there with Mr Johnson who was authorised to treat for Glororum by the other Trustees. I found his ultimatum to be £700. I stated that I had made my calculations with great care & without the slightest wish to stretch the point beyond a fair living rent. That I should stake my judgement upon the farm letting for that sum, or even more, but that if the Commissioners chose, in consideration of the losses which must have been incurred to a great extent, to fix the rent at £700, I could have no objections, but for that I had no authority. There are several acres which will be found in the Plan, in a field called Long Barracks where the soil is mixed with rock, & only useful when the field is in pasture. It occurred to me that those Acres would be best employed in planting, upon an estate where we have not a tree or any kind of materials for Gates or railing, but foreign wood. And I suggested that if the Comms. should think of planting this & some other spots, they should be given up, without further deduction upon the rent being fixed at £700, but if there should be no intention of planting, then the rent should be £720. Mr Johnson requested a copy of the terms of management, which I had drawn up, which I gave him, along with my valuation, & requested time to consult the other Trustees. I fixed to meet him on Monday on my return to Corbridge. Rode to Milfield Hill at ten o'clock at night.

6 Dec 1833 John Grey

Friday 6th December

Drew up an Advertizement for Chesterhill for the Berwick Paper, fixing the 6th January for the proposals to reach Greenwich Hospital, addressed to the Commissioners, according to Mr Jays directions in a letter received that day. Also wrote out the system of management & all necessary particulars to leave with my Son, as he is more in the way of being applied to for that part of the property than myself.

7 Dec 1833 John Grey

Saturday 7th December

Rode to Berwick & had an interview with Mr Hogarth and Major Johnson respecting the quarry proposed to be filled up in Mr Hogarths Farm, but found from Mr Johnson that that is the best stone & most easily come at for arching some needful parts in the Sea drift level, which must therefore be provided for, before levelling the quarry, which however, in other respects, is not likely to be again resorted to. Engaged Johnson to forward to Mr Fenwick, Solicitor, a copy of the summons served upon the Scremerston Tenants, for the payment of Tithes by Sir Ts Haggerston. The Corn Market here is

extremely depressed. Wheat was sold at 5s and 5s/6d Per Bushell and Barley at 3/-. There is no speculation & great want of confidence, a tremendous [sic] crash is daily looked for among the great corn speculators in Newcastle.

9 Dec 1833 John Grey

Monday 9th December

Left Milfield Hill & met Mr Johnson at Wooler, who consented on the part of Mrs Thomson & Trustees to take Glororum at a rental of £700, giving up any land which it may be wished to plant, without charge, or of £720, without such deduction, as the Commissioners may approve. Mr Johnson signed an Agreement to this effect, which I herewith forward to the Board. In consideration of the high rent which has been long paid for this farm & the loss which must have attended it, I hope the Commiss. will hold me excused if I take the Liberty to suggest to them the justice of either allowing Mrs Thomson to hold it for this year, at the reduced rent, or to date the commencement of the new Lease from the 12th May 1833 instead of 1834. Met the Edinburgh Coach & reached Newcastle at 9 at night. Found Mr Fenwick & settled an Acct with him for monies he had obtained from parties in arrear of Rent.

[marginal annotation: 'Glolorum let 12 May 1816 21 years, rent £860 expires 12 May 1837']

10 Dec 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 10th December

Proceeded by Mail at seven o'clock to Corbridge & was engaged all the day in the Office with Letters etc which had been received while I was from home & in anticipation of an absence in valuing the farms & treating with the Tenants on the western part of the Estates.

A Petition from Robert Burn of Alston is sent herewith, respecting the water course through his fields, which he considers to be injurious to his Cattle. It is here that the water has been covered at the expense of the Hospital through the adjoining fields & not through his, whether through not having urged his complaint, or from an idea that being farther from the mines, it might become more pure and less pernicious in its course, I cannot say. Could he prove actual destruction to his Cattle, by the use of the Water, then of course he could claim damage. As it is, he told me at Alston that they did not die, but did not thrive. The presumption [sic] is, on account of the deleterious

quality of the water, should the Commissioners see fit to refer the matter to me, I shall examine the situation & circumstances when I next go to Alston & act accordingly.

11 Dec 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 11th December 1833

Being most anxious to proceed to let the farms now at liberty, I proceeded to make a round of those to the west ward, most of which I had taken opportunities to examine & value, since the time they were given up, taking Mr Hunt with me, that he might be acquainted with the covenants & ready to advise with or instruct respecting any new fences etc, to be hereafter made, which I find very useful. I may be here proper for me to explain to the Board, why I have not yet in any instance, availed myself of the permission they kindly gave me, to call in the assistance of a land valuer to fix the rents. In the first place, I know of no one in this immediate neighbourhood, whose opportunities of judging of the value of land, have been greater than my own, and in the second place, I have always considered it, & often see it proved, to be a dangerous & absurd thing to bring a land valuer, however celebrated, from a distance, to estimate the value of land in a district, upon a cursory survey, of whose produce & localities he had no previous experience. I can hardly conceive of any Man being a good judge of the quality of land, the various management & rotation of Crops which it should be subjected to, & the expense attending its management, who has not considerable experience on the practice as well as knowledge of the theory of agriculture. With both I may claim some acquaintance. Having theorised with Book makers on the subject & revised in the proof Sheets, & made many additions etc to Sir John Sinclair's Code of Agriculture, / 3rd edition / as well as having seen the practice of most of the Counties in Great Britain, but by far the best apprenticeship, I found to be in a close attention for many years in my life, to the management of 2000 Acres of land, a part of it rented and a part my own. Although I have never been what is technically called a land valuer, I have very often been the Arbitrator, in a matter of dispute or reference, where the value of land was the subject. And in an exchange of property lately projected, though never effected between the Duke of Northumbd & Earl Grey, his Lordship who has known me all my life, intrusted solely to me the valuation & management of the matter, as the arbitrator on his side. It is always disagreeable to have to speak of oneself, but not having had the honor of being previously known to the Commissioners, I hope I may be excused for having said so much, on the presumption that it might be satisfactory to them to know upon what grounds I have taken upon myself the responsibility of valuing & letting their Farms.

The first place I came to was Westwood, which I had previously valued at £320, but owing to its very favourable situation & the request to have two Cottages built, which are certainly wanted, there being only one at present, I fixed the rent at £330. Mr

Snowball said he intended to give £300 only but eventually acceded to my offer and took it at £330. This is £50 above the rent of last year as let by Mr Hooper.

I then went as quickly as possible ten miles further to Vauce, Lough, Sillywrae, Deanraw, Harsondale & Lees, all of which I had previously examined, indeed I never pass through a farm from long habit of observing, without taking particular note of its soil, produce & cultivation, but at each of which I had something to look into more minutely, but without stopping to discuss matters with the Tenants, that I might have all the use of daylight, appointing some to come to me at Haydon Bridge at 8 in the evening, & others in the morning, when I should have made my calculations. The Vauce is a farm much too small to be advantageously occupied, & like others in that district depended for its rent upon the carriage of Ore and lead, when the Hospitals Tenants had all the carriage of Langley Mills among them. This is now at an end, & the land must be farmed at its intrinsic value. Unluckily this place, from the arrangement of fences & buildings, cannot be united to any other farm with convenience. My valuation of it was £85. The Tenant who is a decent & industrious man, began at £75, but came by degrees up to my price.

The Lough Farm & Limestone Quarry, occupied by an industrious & good tenant together with the small farm adjoining, of Sillywray, held by the late Agent of Stublick Colliery at an enormous rent, I valued at £155. Bell could hardly be persuaded to advance beyond £140 chiefly on the ground that the quarry was now becoming of hardly any value, the stone growing yearly deeper under the surface, leaving no chance of burning Lime to a profit, the price in the County being generally reduced. This is indeed the case & I suspect in two years more the Quarry must be abandoned .

We agreed at £150. The union of these two small Farms will save building & cause them to be more cheaply managed, four horses being adequate to the work when joined, which would require five or six if separate. West & Middle Deanraw, the former occupied also by Bell of Stublick Colliery and left in shocking condition, I also recommended to be united for the same reasons. The two, let to John Pigg a very respectable man possessed of some land, for £145. Harsondale is in an exposed situation, much like Vauce, but consisting of worse land, which is injured besides by the Smoke from Langley Mills. Here, as well as at Vauce & the Lough, I saw in the summer good crops of barley, but on returning in harvest found two thirds of the Grain had been knocked out by the storms of wind. My valuation of it was £120. The Tenant offered £100 and left me but has since returned and agreed to the Terms, on my engaging to drain a field of coarse Grass, which is very unproductive, & which he is to plough out & Lime.

The Lees is the farm which I found it most difficult to value and to let. It has been greatly over rented and the young man who has held it for six years, has by his own

Account, which is believed by his neighbours, lost £1000 by it, having had to Mortgage a small Estate in Cumberland to pay the rents. It had been in wretched plight & produced scarcely any Crops during the first three years, & the low price of grain since, has contributed to his loss. I regret to say that it will be attended with considerable outlay still to both Landlord & Tenant many of the fences being useless, & the dwelling House is in great want of a new roof & other repairs. Watson is an active young man, & I think would farm well in more encouraging circumstances. My valuation was £293, from which I found it necessary to take £5 for four Acres of waste & gravel by the Tyne, which I had omitted to deduct, leaving £288. Watson offered £260 & after much discussion & a detail of losses etc, we parted. He returned however next morning and advanced to £280. I told him I must abide by the valuation which I had made with care. He said he felt assured that the Commissrs would not charge the £8, if they knew how much he had lost. As however I could not act upon that principle however just it might be, he consented to sign an agreement at £288 on condition that I should report to the Commissioners his hope that they would accept of £280 as the rent, which is probably quite enough, considering how much is to be done to the land.

[marginal annotation: 'The £8 to be returned at the end of the year']

Plankey Mill with 60 Acres of poor land had to be let for £120. I thought this too high by £20 considering the reduction in the value of the land & also in the profit of grinding, most of which, in such situations, arising from moulter or a portion of Corn taken for grinding the rest is diminished in proportion to the fall in the price of grain. The Tenant agreed to give £100 a year, but not till he had gone away and returned declaring that £85 was the full value. A new Axle for the Water Wheel has been talked of as necessary for this Mill for some time, but as the old one still keeps going, it is only necessary to have one in readiness when it may be wanted. And a tree in the Wood, close by, will answer the purpose, which I shall have prepared.

12 Dec 1833 John Grey

Thursday 12 December

After settling matters with the foregoing Tenants, & writing out their Agreements, I went with Mr Hunt to Esphill, to point out to him some fences to be removed, occasioned by the new Road cutting the fields at angles. Then went to Elrington which was let for the present year at £300, to Mr Lambert the tenant of Elrington Hall, a man of property although his brother, the late tenant of East Elrington could not continue in his lease. On their agreeing to becoming joint tenants, I offered them the farm at my valuation of £320. They would give no more than £300 but afterwards followed me to Woodhall Mill proposing to divide the difference, and eventually agreed to my offer wishing to have the Black Smiths House & Shop included. To this I consented on their

paying the rent of £4 for them which he now pays, making the rent in all £324. [Later marginal note inserted here: 'The Blacksmith pays besides £4 for 1 1/2 acre of land, which will be a great convenience to let to the Woodkeeper for his <cow>. JL'] I think it better in all practical cases that the Blacksmiths premises should be included in the rent of the largest adjoining farm & that the Farmer should have the choice of his own Blacksmith. When the Blacksmith takes the premises independent of the Tenants, they may be bad workmen or troublesome & unaccommodating people, and the Farmers must either submit to employ them or go to a distance with their ploughs & horses, as it is the case at present with me at Whittonstall, rather than employ some of the Tenants some two miles off to their great inconvenience.

I next came to Woodhall Mill, of the value of which I have no means of judging. The present rent is £277 and the Tenant who is a respectable man with a fine spirited lad for a Son, who manages the land well, only offered £180. [Later marginal note inserted here: 'He has just sent to offer £190, as his ultimatum- 110 for land & 80 for the Mill. JL'] I valued the land at £110 which I am sure they would give, though they only spoke of £100 and considering the reduced prices of grain & profits of Millers I thought it quite safe to make them an offer at £230 for the whole. This however they declined, & unless they come down with an improved offer, I suppose it must be put up to public tender.

I next came to Coastley, with which I find more difficulty than any other. The present rent is £802, & the Tenant, though an industrious man, has fallen into Arrear to the amount of £582.6.2 as is set forth in the report I lately made. I had an idea that a man with adequate capital might farm it at £580 or £590. Mr Coulson offers £550, and declines to purchase the expensive machine, but would agree to have it valued now & again at the end of the term, he paying the diminution of value. He has sustained loss & inconvenience from want of a sufficient supply of water which something must be done to remedy. Having had no instructions from the Board respecting this case, I declined entering into terms with Coulson, fearing that if the Arrears are to be exacted, it will be impossible for him to occupy a farm of such extent, but if otherwise, as he has good horses & Stock, he might perhaps get through. I shall not include this farm in the advertizement, till I have the Boards directions respecting it. In all the farms which are let, I have bound the Tenants to purchase the thrashing machines, which will be a happy riddance for the Hospital. I feel assured too that the interests which this mode of letting will give, in the good management of the farms, & the confidence with which it will inspire such Tenants, as do justice to the land, will have a most beneficial effect on the condition of the property.

13 Dec 1833 John Grey

Friday 13th December

Received a Letter from Mr Grace respecting a claim which he has against the Hospital on Account of a Survey which he was ordered to make of a line of Road, in no way beneficial to the property of the Hospital that I can see, but to which Mr Brandling was a Subscriber, in his capacity as stated of Receiver. I shall forward the Letter to the Board. Had also a long conference with Mr Wallis, who has examined all the Limestone on the Allerwash Estate, of which there is a great quantity, with a view of forming a Company to burn it & carry it down the railway to Newcastle. He proposes not to interfere with any of the Hospitals Lime Kilns for supplying the neighbourhood, & that the Commissioners should not grant leases to any other party on the line of Rail Way. After ascertaining at what price he could be supplied with small loads from the Hospitals Collieries of Fourstones & Brokenheugh, which would be an advantage to them, & making his calculations, he offers to pay the Hospital 6d Per Fother of 8 Bolls, which is 2d Per Fother more than the rent paid by the Lessees of Fourstones lime kilns. This appears to me to be a good offer, & should not be lost sight of, one which will turn the rocks at Allerwash & the rail way, which has been a troublesome concern to us, to good account. Mr Wallis is anxious for an early answer that he may proceed to form his Company, & also to apply for other Quarrys, which if falling into other hands, might interfere with this. Should the Board wish for further time & information, before deciding, perhaps it might serve Mr Wallis' present purpose, to have their promise that they would not deal with any other person for the same object, until he has declined such offer as they shall see fit to make. [Annotated: 'Approved'] His proposal shall accompany this. Went to meet the Surveyor of the Gateshead road, setting out the alteration at Dilston and contriving with him the best arrangement for the private roads connected with it. Proceeded afterwards to the work at the embankments, on my return found the tenant of Allerwash for whom I had sent. The rent they give this year for the farm is £510. My valuation of all the land of farm and Mill is £530, for the Mill in its present condition & after the loss the tenant has sustained I did not expect much. But on getting them to promise £585 for the whole I did not think it safe to delay concluding a bargain. I had some wish to induce a tenant from the northern part of the County to take this farm & give us the benefit of his example, but feared that I would not succeed in bringing one over at that rent, nor indeed could I have advised it, and as one of the Robsons has some property where he lives, & the other professes an anxious wish to farm to my liking & in compliance with all the covenants that I may recommend, I must try, with Mr Hunts assistance to put them and keep them in a right method, so that it may pay them; but I am afraid they will find it a high rent.

14 Dec 1833 John Grey

Saturday 14th December

I had this morning a meeting with Dodd the tenant of Thornbrough Limestone Quarry & Farm. His present rent is £233. He offers only £170. I valued the land at £110. He reckons it only worth £100 & the Kiln worth £70. Finding that the offers when he took it excepting his own, ranged from £182 to £150. I conclude that his present offer is not very deficient, & if he will give £180, think he ought to have it.

Rode to Hexhamshire to value the farms there, which occupied me till dark, without having any time to make up my calculations, or treat with the tenants, who have each engaged to give me a meeting on Tuesday. Returned in the dark through the gloomiest country & the most bottomless roads I ever encountered, pretty much worn out with a week of great fatigue by days, & of nights chiefly passed in writing & calculation. Hexhamshire is a difficult district to value in. The land is wet, cold and unproductive, and the climate most unfavourable. In some seasons, the Corn does not ripen at all. I shall try to come as near the value as possible, to be prepared to meet the tenants on Tuesday. I shall be anxious if possible to let Aydonshields & Mirehouse together to Mr Dixon of the former place, both for the sake of uniting them under a respectable tenant, & because old Thorburn, besides his great arrear, has conferred on us the benefit of leaving Mirehouse in such condition that no man could occupy it alone, though he had it for four years rent free, without losing by it, every acre is under the plough that can be ploughed, it is all overrun with couch grass & every description of weed that indicates poverty & bad management, & not a particle of grass seeds of any kind has been sown upon it. Very unlike to this in condition is the small farm of Turfhouse, occupied by Maugham & three Sons, as industrious people as I ever knew. The state of their tillage land, though of very poor quality, would do credit to a better situation. They have been sadly mistaken in its value, for the hardest work & poorest living, will not make land pay 20s an Acre which is only worth 12/-s. It is not timely that they should extricate themselves from the debt to the Hospital, but it is not a place likely to attract a tenant of capital sufficient to take a better farm, & they do such justice to the land & are so very laborious, that I think it hard that they should not have a trial of it for a time at a lower rent. Any agreement that I may come to with them, however, must be dependent upon the consent of the Commissrs. The small farm of Staples has the best soil of any in that district, but it is too small (only 59 Acres) to be occupied to advantage, & there is no other property of the Hospital adjoining it. It has been taken too with great want of judgement, the rent being £135 whereas it should be £85.

I am informed by the owner of my present house, that I cannot be allowed to occupy it after next May, as he has a chance of selling it. So that I shall have another lodging to seek from that time till the proposed House may be fit to occupy, another proof, in my opinion, of having a fixed and independent residence in the estates, as well as a cause

of regret, that nothing should yet be done in putting forward and making preparations for the new one, of which Mr Hay has not returned the Plans.

16 Dec 1833 John Grey

Monday 16th December 1833

Had a meeting with Green, tenant of Corbridge Town Farm, part of which has been sold to Sir Edward Blackett. The remainder I valued at £160 which he agrees to give, which is at the rate of three Pounds an Acre, exclusive of waste, land etc, a high rent in these times considering that it is subject to Tithes, and yet I am not sure that had it been offered to the public, a still higher rent might not have been promised by someone owning a small tenement in Corbridge. But in that case there is always a risk of having the produce of the Hospital land taken to enrich the property of the occupier and then perhaps given up in an impoverished condition. Green is an active man & good farmer, likely to pay his rent, on which account I thought it right to close with him. He wants no building, if the roof of his house will last, which is doubtful. I then had Hutchinson of Woodhall Farm, who finds that he signed an agreement this Spring, containing covenants which it is impossible to fulfil, as the quantity of land allowed in tillage will not enable to do so. Esphill & Lightbirks are in the like condition, which must have arisen from negligence on the part of the Tenants & ignorance of the rotation of cropping on the part of Mr Hooper. Hutchinson insists upon leave to plough out some fields which he has been foolishly I think in pursuance of old customs, bound off, for they are not good grazing fields by any means but this I refused to grant though I think it right to do so, that it may be made the means of obtaining his agreement to better covenants than were imposed upon him. I engaged to see his place on wednesday & try to make the arrangement.

Next came Andrew Thorburn, very furious, wishing to know why I had not made him an offer of his farms as well as others. My answer was that my instructions to do so only extended to such tenants as paid their rents and fulfilled their covenants. That he had done neither & had left Mirehouse in such condition that I feared that we should not get a tenant for it. He said that he would leave £100 in the hands of Beaumonts Agents, & that Mr Hooper promised that he should pay no more for his farms this year than they should let for the next. So he expected he would not be much in arrear, and that he must be paid for not ploughing the Gairshield for away going Crop as he was entitled to. He could unquestionably injure Gairshield by ploughing it, though he would not likely benefit himself, as it will hardly pay expenses, so that it may be as well to make a virtue of necessity & compromise the matter with him. As to recovering anything for the injury done to Mirehouse, I fear it has gone too far for that. The Lease prescribes the determination of the demise. That is to him a relief & matter of necessity, and he has nothing to prosecute for. There is nothing upon the farm to seize,

except the sowing of the Crop & I think it will be better to let that be sown by himself, before taking possession of it. But I shall obey the Boards instructions respecting him.

[marginal annotation: 'The Receiver has been desired to adopt measures to secure the arrears if possible.']

After him came Maughan & his Son from Turfhouse. They offer £106 for their Farm (without the Stints) for which they now pay £167. This is a fair rent for such a place, for which see my journal of last Saturday. And they undertake to pay off their Arrears, before entering on the new term. I shall await the Boards directions, before advertising this farm. After so many causes of delay I rode as fast as possible to Whittonstall, looked over Sproats Farm desiring the Tenant to come to me tomorrow. Then to Newlands Town Farm, which I think, considering the allowance for lime, should be worth £140. This the present Tenant is willing to give, & also promises to make up his arrear now due, but cannot purchase the Machine. The present rent is £160. This is the farm which I recommended to be laid to Newlands Haugh Farm which would save building a dwelling House, Barn & many other things at the latter, but there is this difficulty in the way, that the Haugh Farm is not given up, & the tenant (Fewster) I much fear has not capital to do justice to both. The estimate I find in the office for building at the Haugh Farm is nearly £1300. It could, I know be done for much less, but say 5 or £600 could be saved, it is a great consideration in these times of reduction, upon small Farms. I am quite at a loss to know what to advise in this case. If Hunter was rejected as inadequate, Fewster and the Miller would take his farm in the way I think it should be divided, by which means the union of the farms would be affected & the building in great measure saved. (There would still require some additional stabling and Cattle Sheds, but no house or barns) and if Fewster cd not hold on, then we must find a more substantial man so the Town Farm might be let to Hunter for one year, as the other is almost certain to be given up the next, and then they would be united. To let the Town Farm on Lease, would involve the necessity of building entirely anew, at the Haugh Farm. In this case too, I must wait the decision of the Board.

[marginal annotation: 'Mr Grey has been directed to let this farm for one year accordingly']

I examined, though by candlelight, the Machinery in Newlands Mill, a part of which does not work smoothly since the change was made to a Steam power & it is in danger of doing mischief. I must write to Murray to examine & report upon it.

Returned, having missed my way in the rain & dark, on a dismal Moor, found Mr Benson, who, with Mr Hunt has been engaged for some days in measuring off the buildings at Haydon Town, Lipwood and other places, which were ordered or in progress before my coming here. Benson has let the sawing into deals of some good

Larch Trees at Dilston, that they may be properly seasoned for laying the Floors. He says, it is excellent wood & will answer that purpose as well as any thing that could be obtained. It ought however to stand for some months cut, to prevent its shrinking. Should the house not be built, or put into the hands of an Architect who, either from connection with an importer of timber, or a prejudice against this, would not use this, it will be ready for other purposes in the Hospitals Buildings. In the latter case, however, it may be proper for me to remark that my undertaking to pay the excess above £2000 from my own pocket, must be revoked. The calculations for building which I made with Benson went to get the utmost accommodation that the blinds would allow, of plain, but substantial work, letting the Sawing & quarrying to be done in the winter season when work is slack. But a contractor who will reckon on pocketing £100 for himself & expending another or two in sharing his skill in fine work, may easily expend the amount on the house alone, leaving me nothing for Stables etc, so that I shall be required to advance some hundred pounds for a residence, besides the rent, which I only continue to occupy for a short time, if at all. At the same time, if the building could be let by Contract, & substantially done, which does not often happen, for the specified amount, it would be a great relief to me to have no charge of it, for certainly I require no additional occupation of my time; my general hours for some time past having been from eight in the morning till midnight & occasionally till 2 in the morning, before I have quitted my [struck out: 'post'] pen, with barely time for a hasty meal. This amounted with hard riding, & exposure to all kinds of weather is more than most men, even with the strength which I possess can think to continue long at. The personal labour which the Receiver must undergo, if he intends doing his duty faithfully, the load of incidental correspondence which never appears to the Board, and the many claims upon his time by persons connected with the business of the Office, under the new arrangement, with only one Bailiff for such an Estate, is I suspect to an amount which the Commissioners have no idea of.

Mr Dixon of Aydonshields came to me to treat for that farm and Mirehouse. The joint rent is at present £317, only his is too much too dear, & Thorburns, nominally, for he has not paid it. I valued them at £230 thinking that an allowance of £20 or £25 should be made from that, for five years on account of the bad state of Mirehouse. Mr Dixon only offers £206. I am loth to lose such a tenant, but think his offer too low. I parted with him reluctantly at ten o' clock without effecting a bargain & finished my letters & this journal at one o' clock in the morning.

17 Dec 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 17th December

Mr Brandling, I am informed by the Bank has paid in £50 to my Credit. I suppose for the right of Shooting for the two years previous to this. Mr Reay to whom I had offered

the Corf Rods has examined all the woodlands on this part of the property. Some of the rods are good & some of little value, he has however agreed to clear them all off at 6d per bundle of 60 rods, he incurring every expense of cutting and carriage - our Woodmen counting the bundles from time to time. This is to be done in the following summer & payment to be made in November next. This will not produce very much money, but it will clear the woods of a great deal of stuff, that is otherwise injurious and going to waste.

Mr Lownds when here informs me of the drawback on account of the deficiency in the weight Lead sold to Bristol, showing me the correspondence on the subject. This set him to examine the Beam which he had purchased from the Hospital, by which the Lead had been weighed & accepted by him. It was found to have got a twist, & cost 21/s in adjusting. There is no doubt of the accuracy of his claim, the money having been kept off him by the Bristol Merchants, but as he had got a good bargain of the Lead, I advised him to say nothing about it. It is fair enough that he should be paid however, & I have sent him a Cheque at the rate of £13 as he purchased the Lead from the Hospital and not at £14:6:0 according to the account from Bristol. I am very glad to be able to report an improvement in the price of Lead, which will increase our average in the current quarter, Beaumont's Agents having made a large sale at £15:0:0. Would it move on to £18 we should see comfort & something like returning prosperity to the mining district. On the other hand, corn in this County is nearly unsaleable at any price.

Had another meeting with Dodd, the tenant of Thornbrough Limekilns and Farm, for which see my Journal of Saturday last. His offer was £170. I pressed him to give £180 but could only make £175 which is probably enough, there having been only one proposal above that, besides his own at the last letting. He thinks it necessary to be at liberty at the end of three years which I consider reasonable, upon his giving notice of his intention in the October preceding, because it is not unlikely, when the rail Way comes into full operation, that the burning of lime will be very much transformed from many of the present Kilns, to others, that will be built upon the line of the Way, as at Allerwash. Dodd entered into an agreement to this effect, subject to the approbation of the Commissioners.

Had also an appointment with Dodd, tenant of Staples, who agrees to take a lease of it at the rent of £88:0:0 being three pounds more than he would offer on Saturday & to give up the Stints on the Common. Prepared Advertizement for the Newspapers for such farms as are decidedly open to the public, & wrote to Mr Nairn informing him of the Boards Order respecting the repairs of Warren Mills etc. In the evening, Curry, who occupies the small place called Eadsbush & the Allotments of miserable land on the hill came to make an offer of £40 for them. I proposed to lay 60 of the Stints to this place reserving the remainder for Gairshield & wanted £50. But as he is a man likely to pay the rent without trouble & to put us to no expense after the first year, being willing

to keep it all in grass, I concluded a bargain at £47. He paid for it £55:10 but previous to his taking four years ago the Rent was £47:10. I may here remark that the tenants one and all, protest against the expense of the Leases, declaring their willingness to trust every thing that regards their covenants & terms to the Commissioners but thinking it most oppressive to have to pay such a tax for Stamps, some of them having been charged about £20 for Leases three years ago, which now they are compelled to abandon. If Agreements for Leases containing all the necessary covenants & penalties which might be stamped if necessity required, cannot be substituted, at any rate one would think that all the purposes of security would be answered by having one part on Stamp, to be deposited at Greenwich, & the two others on plain paper for the guidance of the Receiver & Tenant. The Solicitor I know holds a different doctrine, but it grieves me to force money from the Tenants, contending with so many difficulties, which neither goes to improve the land nor enrich the Hospital. The blanks could be filled up here, & the signatures attached, as well as in an Attorney's Office, the trouble of which I would willingly take & with due vigilance to the observation of the covenants, as now arranged, I cannot see that the Hospital would incur any risk of their infringement. I trust the Board will excuse my anxiety on this point, in which my only interest is to save any unnecessary expense to the Tenantry.

18 Dec 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 18th December

I had sent Mr Hunt yesterday to attend a Sale of Mr Pearson's effects at a place 20 miles westward, that he might obtain payment of the Fee Farm Rent due to the Hospital from that property, which he effected, engaging that I should meet him at Haydon Bridge this morning, where also he had to collect the rents of certain cottages due in November last. But was detained, first by Mr Blackburn, who came to signify his acceptance of the farm of Wooley, which he had previously declined, at my valuation of £150 on condition of that farm being included in those to which the allowance of lime is to be made in Hexhamshire, which I had always intended, for though it is not actually in what is called the Shire, it is in the adjoining parish of Slaley, & in as miserable a country as any man need to farm in.

Next came Mr Harrison from Whittonstall. I had valued his farm at £254 from which on more particular enquiry, I found it necessary to deduct £12 more than I had allowed for Tithes, leaving £242 as rent. He was unwilling to give more than £230, but finding me determined at length acceded to my terms both as to rent & covenants. He is to purchase the Machine also. Poor old Teasdale next came to ask if I did not mean to give him an offer of his farm. This request was too ridiculous to help laughing at. The poor man looked astonished & asked if I had not got the power to make offers of the farms by valuation. Yes, I told him, to deserving Tenants, but that he was one of the

worst in the world, as the state of his farm indicated, that I was sure he could not live upon & put it into condition, though he had it for nothing & that the Hospital would suffer sadly in the next letting by their connexion with him. That he could not be too thankful for the lenity already shown him, & must now look out for himself. I have now gone through all the farms which it is in my power to let (of which a list shall accompany this, showing the present & future Rents) except those of Coastley, Woodhall Mill, and Newlands Town, respecting which I shall hope for the direction of the Board. The reduction of Rents will appear great, but it is not greater, I feel satisfied, than is commensurate with the reduction in the price of produce, nor greater than might have been anticipated even by public tender, as may be seen by reference to the letting of West Allerwash & East Deanraw, last year, one having come from £170 to £100 and the other from £403 to £260. The covenants upon which they are now let, will have the effect of improving their condition instead of increasing their poverty & exhaustion, and of saving, besides the capital & cost of maintaining Machinery, much outlay to the Hospital, at all events I have exercised my utmost judgement & discretion, in endeavouring to act for the best, under all the circumstances, & it will be a matter of deep regret if my conduct should not meet with the approbation of the Commissioners. The reductions that are taking place in the high rented lands of Lothian are still greater than these. And one farm in the north part of this County has fallen from £2200 to £1500 and another from £900 to £650.

Having dispatched matters with these tenants I proceeded to Haydon Bridge & along with Mr Hunt insisted the farms of Lightbirks & Esphill, now united, and Woodhall, both entered to last year upon Agreements for covenants, so contradictory that they cannot be acted upon. In the former, many fields are prohibited from tillage, for no good reason, that I can see & then permission is given to have in cultivation a larger quantity than remains. In the latter too, some incongruities exist, but I anticipate little difficulty in arranging matters with the Tenants, so as to put them on a proper footing. The fields at Esphill have been so much cut up & altered by the Alston road, that one can make nothing of it by the Plan, which may have contributed to the confusion in the covenants & it wd be well to have a Surveyor to measure the fields as they now are & lay them down correctly. At Woodhall the old Stone fences by the side of the road now nearly discontinued are in ruins & Mr Hunt put up a Notice at Haydon Bridge, that on Saturday he would meet workmen there to show them the manner of their being renewed, & take in their proposals. It will be better & cheaper to replace a great part of them with quick hedges.

19 Dec 1833 John Grey

Thursday 19th December 1833

Robert Hunter of Newlands Town Farm came to give me a Pro[missary] Note at three months for his Arrears of £35 in which he is to be joined by his Brothers. Andw Thorburn also came and tried every manoeuvre to obtain the ploughing of land to which he considers himself intitled, but I do not, on the ground that having exceeded his quantity of Corn in former years with impunity, he must hold with less this year, as I will not allow him to sew the same land a second time in succession. He engaged at length to be very reasonable and submissive, promising to give a good offer for Gairshield, as he cd not think of parting from the Hospital, having been so long time a Tenant!! His Son who occupies Bagraw, a miserable place on the top of a cold hill, came also on the like errand. He is more civilized than the Father, & has his land in much better condition and might have done as well as anyone could be expected to do in such a place, had the rent been moderate. Being in arrear of rent, I did not treat with him, as with others, thinking it adviseable to take the chance of getting a better tenant, but should we not succeed in doing so, we shall still have him to resort to, for he has little chance of being selected by any Landlord for a better farm. Was engaged most of the day in arranging & filling up the Agreements for farms to send off to Greenwich and with Mr Parkin who has now completed the marking & valuation of the several lots of Wood, which must now be advertized for sale, a copy of which advertizement shall be sent to the Board. The river being very high I went with Mr Hunt before dark, with some anxiety to see the state of our embankments, as yet no harm is done, but it is rather threatening.

20 Dec 1833 John Grey

Friday 20th December 1833

Heard from Mr Thomson of Scremerston stating that in these times, he could not hold on his farm and wishing to have a meeting with me respecting it. Wrote in reply, that his taking a journey to see me wd avail him nothing. That the Commissioners had uniformly, since my coming here, declined reducing rents when applied for, except upon a relinquishment of the Lease. That it was too late of taking the resignation of such an extensive farm as his for this season, and advised him to hold on to see what another year might produce, when if he determined upon it, he must make his application in due time. Went to Hexham to attend the meeting of the Alston road Trust, to which I communicated the answer of the Board to their late application. This being the day appointed for the election of the new Surveyor & Treasurer, the meeting proceeded to examine the testimonials in favor of the respective candidates. There were no fewer that 40 applicants for the former office, most of whom were dismissed at

once, as ineligible, and after much investigation & discussion, a young man from Scotland called Rome was unanimously elected. Besides excellent public testimonials, he brought to me a strong private recommendation from a most respectable man & eminent Engineer in Edinburgh with whom I have been long acquainted. Mr Stephenson who executed the difficult work of the Bell Rock Light House & many other distinguished public works. Mr Rome had been employed by him in erecting the new Bridge at Annan & had executed under him a new line of road through the difficult County of Argyle, both of which must be favorable to his management of roads in a mountainous district like that of Alston, connected as that road is with so many bridges over mountain torrents. A Mr Walton of Alston was elected Treasurer, upon which election there was considerable difference of opinion. I thought him too advanced in life to continue long to take much trouble, & wished rather to have obtained the appointment of a Son of Mr Dickinson the Moor Master, who lives on the spot. An active canvass however among the Trustees previously, had secured a small majority for Mr Walton, who is, I believe a most respectable man. I hope now, to see the affairs of the Trust conducted with regularity & an attention to economy in every department. I have had some conversation with Mr Rome, who concurs readily in some suggestions I made respecting the mode of providing & applying the Materials & with whom I shall have further conferences before he engages in his office in February. The business of this meeting occupied nearly the whole day.

21 Dec 1833 John Grey

Saturday 21st December

Rode in the morning to the west farm at Fourstones to inspect a wet grass field which I thought would be improved & increased in value by being drained, ploughed out & limed & then restored to grass,, conferred with the tenant who undertook to do so, marked out the line of drains & advised him respecting its management. Proceeded to Allerwash to assist the tenant in managing the rotation etc conformable to the new covenants of the ensuing lease, but found he was from home. Proceeded to examine on the farms of West and East Brokenheugh, some fences & draining on each and returned to dinner at seven o' clock. There crosses the road near Allerwash Mill, a brook which after heavy falls of rain is extremely rapid & dangerous, frequently impassible, stopping the communication between one part of the farm of Allerwash & the other & being very inconvenient to the Tenants to the West who came that way to Fourstones & Hexham. People have at different times been drowned in it. It would be a good accommodation to the farm & neighbourhood, were an Arch thrown over it & the steep bank on each side a little lowered. But as all the surrounding property belongs to the Hospital, I fear no other party would be found to contribute to the work & in these times of reduction, I dare hardly recommend the outlay.

23 Dec 1833 John Grey

Monday 23rd December

Arranged the covenants of Farms that are advertized to let, giving a written statement of them & plan of each farm to the persons appointed to show them to the Public. Fixed with Mr Parkin the kinds of trees suitable to plant at Throckley, which as well as the Thorn Quicks for fencing, I wrote for to Fallas of Gateshead desiring them to be sent to Mr Stephenson's care the very respectable tenant there. I also wrote to him, desiring that they might be preserved from frost, & that he would take means to obtain offers for planting from Workmen by the piece & forward them to me. Sent to Hexham also, for some handbills, giving notice to Workmen of the planting at Dipton. As soon as I was at liberty went to see the effects of a high flood, now that the river has fallen, upon the embankments. No damage at all has been done to them or the Wears, but in some parts the shores of the river, where they are composed of a mere deposit of sand, which has been lately sloped & not yet secured by a covering of grass, have been broken into holes, & this may be expected from very high flood so long as the ground is unprotected by rough grass or dwarf willow, & must be attended to be repaired. In some places where there was a great load of sand to remove before a proper sloping bank could be formed, I had left it exposed to the action of the floods, on purpose that they might save us the labor of doing so, which in this instance has been effected to a considerable extent. It is however a mischievous river & difficult to manage. Gathering its contributions from a great extent of mountainous country, it comes down so suddenly & so rapidly as to be a constant source of apprehension & watchfulness.

24 Dec 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 24th December

Mr S Brewis of Hartburngrange paid his Arrear of Rent. Paid accounts to several Workmen, altered the advertizement of the farms including Coastley & Woodhall Mill & changing the day for the proposals from the 6th to the 10th January on account of the latter. Sent an advertizement to the Berwick Papers, as well as the Newcastle, thinking the extent of Coastley might perhaps bring up a Tweedside tenant, though it is not a farm to my liking. Drew up an Advertizement of the lots of Wood for sale, also for the Newcastle & Durham Papers, of which I shall hereafter forward a Copy, with Mr Parkins valuation of each Lot, to the Commissioners. The day was exceedingly wet & I did not leave home. I ought to mention that I have not had any Wood marked for sale in the Devils Water Plantation this season, because there is already more offered than I

fear we are likely to sell, & because if the Saw Mill should be at work by next year, I hope it may be the means of obtaining I proper price in that situation.

I have given Mr Hunt leave to go to see his Parents for a few days at present as there is a short suspension of work & he has been most assiduous & attentive to his duties on all occasions.

25 Dec 1833 John Grey

Wednesday 25th Christmas Day

Mr Mulcaster came asking for the Pension which he formerly refused, which I paid him, from the 12th May last to the end of the year £50.

26 Dec 1833 John Grey

Thursday 26th

Received from my Son the account of the outlay for building the Cattle Shed at Outchester, fold yard walls, Cribs etc, the roof being done with foreign timber & blue slates, the whole cost of which is £33.3.4 also received Davisons Arrears of Rent for Outchester which he paid to my son at the same time - received & answered letters inquiring about Chesterhill & other farms, but nothing occurred of particular importance. The inhabitants of the South part of Langley Barony, are anxious to know if the subscription formerly given by the Commissioners to the Deanraw School, is likely to be renewed as they must proceed to the choice of a new Master & such an addition to his income would form an inducement to a man of superior attainments & character. [annotated in margin: '£10'] I engaged to make the inquiry.

27 Dec 1833 John Grey

Friday 27th December

Went to inspect the Buildings now finished & covered in at Newtonhall & Whittle & likewise the Quarry at the latter, from which Stone was got for the rail-way, to be assured that no damage was done to the Woods & property of the Hospital, which is very trifling if any. The Buildings at Newtonhall are done very satisfactorily & a great improvement in the offices has been effected at a very moderate cost. In raising the back part of the farm house at Whittle, I find that the very thing has taken place which I particularly warned Mr Rewcastle of, vizt that the house is scarcely habitable on

account of smoke, a thing that is invariably complained of in all the houses which he has built upon the property. Having discovered this before his account is settled, I shall insist upon his making some attempt to cure it before receiving payment. In other respects the building looks pretty well.

28 Dec 1833 John Grey

Saturday 28th December

Wrote to Mr Dickinson of Spency Croft, directing him as to the number & kinds of trees to be got at the nursery at Alston, for planting the piece of ground as ordered by the Board - and also as to the price he should give for pitting and planting the same. I have obtained the prices of young trees & thorns from several nurseries & find them very much alike. The only thing necessary is to see that they are good and suitable.

Rode to the Quarries worked for the purposes of the rail-way and Saw Mill, to see that they are conducted so as to secure the Hospital against present damage or future expense, in case of having to go to them again. Saw the wood which is being sawn into flooring deals in the plantation on the Devils Water, which is remarkably good. Visited the Workmen at the Embankment in Widehaugh, the highest & most expensive part of which is now past, and the remainder will get on more expeditiously- afterwards went to look into Mr Leadbitters cause of complaint for want of stable room, for which there is some reason. He has one good Stable for four horses, the others are pieces in parts of the building taken off the Hovels which the Cattle ought to have, making it inconvenient for the Cattle as well as the Horses. Adjoining the good Stable is a Cow House which could be dispensed with and by taking down the Gable & extending the Stable, all the horses might be had in one range & under the same roof at little cost. This I must do, if the days were longer. At present, I do as little by day labor as possible. In making up the Rental Book of this year, I am at a loss respecting several farms in Langley and elsewhere, the rents of which, for the present year, Mr Hooper gave the Tenants to expect, should be at the same rate as they might let for in the next. But on this head I have received no instructions from the Board. I shall send a list of such Farms herewith. Mr Storey, Bailiff at Wark, has not yet been paid his gratuity because I intended to settle with him, when he should have got in certain Arrears due there at May Day last. He has done so in some instances, but his account is not yet closed. In the printed regulations respecting the pensions & gratuities as laid before Parliament, it is stated that he is to receive nine months Salary as a gratuity from the 1st April. But Mr Weatherly & others got 12 months, & Mr Storey's services, though Mr Hunt came sooner, were continued till the 12th May, in the expectation of the Estate being transferred at that time, but from the delay that has occurred about the Title, Mr Storey has never been settled with. What I wish to be informed of is, whether

Mr Storeys Salary should not be paid till May day last, & then what gratuity is to be granted to him.

I have now a Letter from Mr Stephens informing me that the Ore weighed in the last Quarter is 4667 Bings & 6 Cwts and the Duty Ore 789 Bings 1 1/4 Cwt.

Mr Bell late Bailiff on the Meldon District, has not been paid either, because I believe of disputes as to breach of Covenants, by which the Hospital sustained a Loss, between the entering & way-going tenants. I wish to have the Boards direction on this also, whether the amount of such loss is to be kept off Mr Bell's pension in the first place & the payments to him to commence after that is satisfied.

30 Dec 1833 John Grey

Monday 30th December 1833

Robert Hunter of Newlands Town Farm came to the Office in consequence of my having written to him to come to some decision respecting his Farm, & according to the directions of the Board, I agreed with him for one year at the rent of £136, which will give an opportunity of making a better arrangement of those Farms than the present. Was engaged some time with Benson in examining his measurement & accounts of the several Buildings at Lipwood, Haydon Town, Deanraw etc which had been let to Howden & Reed before my coming. They have generally been completed at something less than the estimates, although the prices except Howdens at Haydon Town, which has been lately done, are higher than will be paid in future. This will I fancy include our transactions with Ralph Reed, who is retiring, it is said with a good fortune. I then set out to go to the west, & reached Allerwash, when I was caught in a tempest of rain, which after taking shelter in a Cattle Shed for an hour, prevented my proceeding further.

31 Dec 1833 John Grey

Tuesday 31st December 1833

Was detained from eight o' clock till twelve by a succession of applications for farms, inquiring for information & giving me in return information respecting themselves, their connections & qualifications.

Received several same from Tenants which they had left unpaid in November. Had a deputation from Newlands & Whittonstall expressing their thankfulness to the Board for the grant of lime to the district, but stating their inability to make use of it unless

they could have some certainty of a reduction of rent, and giving me a Memorial to the Board which I herewith forward praying to be released from their contracts. The price of Grain is declining weekly in the County & the failure at this time of some extensive Corn Merchants in Newcastle adds to the depression. Under these circumstances & at this late period it might be doubtful whether good tenants could be had for the farms or not, it will appear to the Commissioners unwise to set them at liberty just now. The only encouragement which in my opinion can reasonably be given to them to continue to manage their lands well is for the Board if they see fit, to engage that they shall hold for this year at the rents that they may be let for in the next. They giving timely notice of their wish to surrender their Leases in May 1835. I then rode to Hexham to pay money into the Bank & get the Account fitted up. Where also I met with several tenants & Workmen seeking various directions & information. Received from the Lessees of Langley Mills, a Cheque for £1486.6.9 being the amount due for Ore the Quarter ending July 1st. In the evening settled all after that is the building accounts with Howden & Reed, which Mr Dickinson & Benson had been engaged for the two last days in computing and comparing.

A list of Persons claiming abatements of Rents since May last

Cuthbert Harrison	Whittonstall Sproats Farm
John & Francis Thorburn	Mire House
Mark Maughan	Turfhouse
John & Francis Thorburn	Bagraw
Thomas White	Harsondale
Robert Reed	Plankey Mill & Ground
Robert Bell	Lough Farm & Lime Kilns
Roger Pigg	Vauce
John Pigg	Middle Deanraw
Thomas Dickinson	Spency Croft South Farm