

1 Jan 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 1st January 1834

This being the Quarter day, I inclosed cheques to the several Parties for their Pensions or Salaries. Received various Proposals for planting the ground in Dipton Wood. I think it better to let the making of the pits only, by the thousand, & to have the planting done by our own Woodmen under the immediate direction of Mr Parkin, both that it may be more carefully done, & that greater attention may be paid to the selection of the kinds of trees best suited to the variations of Soil and situation. The competition for work is such, that I fear some of the proposals are too low to afford the men adequate Wages. The small quarry at Whittle Mil, being found very inadequate to supply the large Stones which are wanted to place the rails upon along the Rail-way, & the parties being very urgent to be allowed to try for them elsewhere, having thought of Whittle Dean, as likely to answer their purpose, I went there again today, where Benson was engaged in measuring the new building, & explored all the Wood & Dean for the purpose. The Rock is abundant & from its situation can never be of use to that property. It would therefore be well to turn it to account for the Hospital, as well as to advance a public work, but being in the bottom of a deep glen, the expense & difficulty of getting the Stones conveyed away, will I fear be an insuperable objection, as I could only agree to it on condition of the road which was through the wood for carting out the timber, being first laid with stones, to prevent trespass. There is a piece of rock in the Glen close to the Bridge on the Newcastle turnpike, which I suggested to them to try. Should it be found to answer, the blocks might be raised by a Crane into the Turnpike & taken away without injury to any thing, but I have doubts of its quality. I have heard of a Stone in Newtonhall Estate very near the Newcastle Turnpike, which I intend to examine. If it will work of sufficient size, I have no doubt that they will pay a good consideration for it.

2 Jan 1834 John Grey

Thursday 2nd January

Received the Boards Minutes of the 21st December and made the communications required to Mr Wallis & Mr Grace. Was engaged all the forenoon in the Office with Benson, making up the building accounts, & Parkin arranging for the planting and making out the orders for the young trees wanted for the purpose, some kinds of which are to be had very good at Hexham & others better at Gateshead which I have ordered accordingly.

[Marginal note added here in pencil: 'What is become of the Hospitals Woods at Aldstone & Dilston which were to supply the young trees ready for planting?']

I then rode to Thornbro' Quarry Farm to see a piece of land adjoining the Kiln, which, though not very conveniently situated for tillage, is in such bad condition for pasture, that I advised the tenant upon a new lease to break it up, clean & give it a good liming, & then restore it to grass, which he has undertaken to do. I then went on to examine the state of the tillage & fences at the High Barns, fixing with the present tenant, the land for his away going Crop. Some hedges on this Farm, having according to the custom of these Estates where the present time was the only one cared for, been destroyed by mismanagement, & especially one boundary fence by the edge of the brook, which is quite useless, & cannot easily be renewed but by [underlined: 'a give and take'] to get fresh soil to plant the hedge upon. This Mr Bainbridge the opposite proprietor promised should be done, but as his tenant to whom I applied today, has not heard of it, I shall write to Bainbridge to meet on the subject.

I then proceeded to Newtonhall to examine some draining and the Quarry spoken of, which might have been got at without much damage to the farm, had the Stone been of such good quality as is required for the blocks of the Rail Way, but neither this nor the Stone at Whittle Bridge will answer the purpose. Robertson & Pattison have again applied to me for leave to work the rock in Whittle Dean, showing that by laying the road through the Plantation with Stones for 300 yards, they would get upon the turnpike. I have written them an agreement, binding them, not only to make the road, which they must do for their own sake, but to leave it, in good repair, to pay the value of every tree that may be damaged or cut down, to be answerable for every description of damage or trespass that may arise, to leave the ground in a state, disposing of the heaps of earth so that it may be planted over at the end & to pay one penny for each Stone sold to the Rail-way, which terms, if they subscribe, I have engaged to obtain them the Commissioners authority for the work. I have no doubt that I shall have their signatures in a day or two, & to save time, I shall be obliged by the Boards authority on the subject. There is a great body of stone there, which if the road were once made might be turned to advantage, & can never be required for the use of that small Estate.

3 Jan 1834 John Grey

Friday 3rd January

Engaged with settlement of Accounts in the office & with parties enquiring the particulars of farms. Afterwards went through the Dilston Estate to see the progress of the embankment & to try to teach some men cutting hedges, to adopt a better method than they are accustomed to. Mr Stokoe a Millwright who had formerly been employed by the Hospital, applied for payment of an account of £8.8.0 for valuing Threshing Machines, which he had presented to Mr Hooper, but who had declined paying it. I happened to be present at the time that Stokoe waited on Mr Hooper, the day before he

left the North, & considered that he was rather hardly dealt with. Mr Hooper was greatly, & I think justly dissatisfied with the arrangement by which the Hospital was made to incur the expense of purchasing & maintaining so many machines, but so far as I could see, Stokoe had only been accessory to it, by obeying instructions from the Receivers to put a value upon them. Mr Hooper doubted his authority for doing so, which he did not happen to have brought with him on that occasion; although the fact of the valuations having been paid, seemed to me, sufficient proof of his having been authorized to make them. Mr Hooper also entertained an opinion that Stokoe having done a great deal of work for the Hospital, ought to have done this for nothing. Now I cannot see why a man is not intitled to remuneration for his time, when employed in making a valuation, as well as in any other way. I have in former years paid a great deal of money to Millwrights, but I should not on that account consider myself at Liberty to call a Man from the superintendence of his workmen & employ him in calculations which he only was fitted for, by having spent time & money in learning his trade, without paying him for doing so. I shall not pay Stokoe without orders from the Board, but send herewith his charge, with Mr Hoopers remarks upon the back of it, and letters authorizing him to make the valuations.

4 Jan 1834 John Grey

Saturday 4th January

The morning being promising, to escape the interruptions of the Office, I set out in good time to make an excursion to the west, examining in my way the repair of the barn & building of some conveniences at Highside, now finished, the fences & draining at Woodhall, advising the tenants respecting some draining necessary at the Rattenraw Farms, inspecting the new buildings just now completed & measured off at Haydon Town Farm, which is substantially done.

Returning by Brokenheugh, to see the alteration of a most inconvenient piece of road & water course close to the farm Offices, which Mr Hunt had let to Workmen, then coming down by Allerwash & Fourstones, reached home after a pleasant ride of nine hours without rain, which is remarkable in this extraordinary season. When at Haydon Bridge, I examined the two fields containing 11 Acres, hitherto occupied Mr Coats, for which Hetherington, the landlord of the Inn, agrees to give £24 which I value them at, after May day next. That added to his present rent will make it £114 when he comes into possession of this land, it will be better that he should have an agreement of some sort, drawn up & executed. At present there is not a single line for the bargain made by Mr Hooper & him. I also waited upon Mr Coats Junr, & insisted upon a settlement being made with Peacock & Hetherington his successors in the farm of Esphill & those fields, respecting the proportions of manure which each is intitled to. As they allege, & I believe with reason, that he has used upon his own land, some which should have

been reserved for them. After some discussion & altercation, I got the parties to name two Arbitrators to settle the matter between them. I also examined 4 small fields hitherto occupied by Mr Reed, along with a timber yard and work shop at £22.0.0. These we shall use as a depot for the Hospital Wood, & saw yard for that part of the property. Two of the fields I offered again to Mr Reed at a rent of £14 which he agrees to give. The other two I intend, according to Mr Hoopers promise, to offer to old Mr Coats, in consequence of his being deprived of the land laid to the Inn, but shall defer doing so till I get all matters settled with his Son, who seems inclined to be a little too keen in his dealings. I have no doubt of getting as much for the fields as Mr Reed paid altogether, & having the wood yard & Cow House besides. As yet I have had no application for Mr Routledge's house, although I have had for the land appended to it.

6 Jan 1834 John Grey

Monday 6th January 1834

Had an early visit from Andrew Thorburn threatening the destruction of Gairshield by ploughing out as much Grassland as he is intitled to by his lease, well aware of the injury it would occasion to the letting of the place, and complaining of the restriction I had put upon him as to his Crop at Mirehouse. I told him that I had applied to the Board for instructions, as to whether he should be required to pay more rent for this year than his farms should be let for the next, according to Mr Hoopers recommendation, & that I wished to make him some consideration for not ploughing Gairshield, though it would not be a benefit to him to do so, equal to the injury it would do to the farm, & that in all respects I wished to deal by him fairly & to part on good terms, but that I had a watch upon his movements, & that his putting a Plough in Gairshield would be instantly followed by a seizure of all his effects. He professed great moderation & willingness to do what is right!!

Received from Mr Mitchell the balance of rent due at May day last for High Green Colliery, included in the purchase by the Duke. Had more parties enquiring about the farms that are advertised & especially one from Tweedside, wishing to know the particulars respecting the covenants intended for the management of Chesterhill & the division of a large Grass Field, a part of which, being interspersed with rock, cannot well be cultivated but the remainder of which, being in an unproductive state I propose to fence off and take into tillage. This arrangement Mr Smith much approved of, & said that he would add something to his offer in consequence. I should be much gratified to have Mr Smith for a tenant of so good a farm. I have known him long as one of the very best farmers in the north of England, who held the farm of Grindon for 21 years at a rent of £2200 which I thought it impossible for any man to do. The rent was reduced lately to £1500 but only from year to year. Determined not to hold it longer without a lease he offered 1300 which being refused, he would have nothing

more to do with it & it has been since let by public tender to a very inferior tenant at £1200!! This may seem to be matter irrelevant to my journal, but I mention it for the purpose of showing that the Hospital property does not decline in a greater proportion, or indeed so great a proportion as some others. This indeed is the greatest decline I have known on this side the Tweed, but it is peculiarly a Corn farm, unsound for Sheep & managed at great expense. Mr Smith thinks there is a want of Cottages for labourers at Chesterhill, which I have not heard complained of by any other, altho' Mr Thomson stated that all had not been built that were intended.

Mr Murray the Millwright whom I had desired to examine & report upon the state of Newlands Mill, which was easy to see was not working true, as the saying is, came to me today showing that in changing the power, the motions have not been correctly calculated & that in consequence several cog wheels were shorn away & the whole Machinery in great danger. To remedy & repair it will cost £23 which having arisen from the imperfect finishing of the Machinery & not from the regular wear, or the negligence of the tenant, I could not call upon him to replace. I have therefore thought it necessary to order it to be done forthwith to prevent greater damage - but an estimate of £25 for new blue Stones of the Wheat Mill I declined to undertake, conceiving that that may belong to the Miller to do. I paid Murray £75.5.- for the repair of Alston Mill. He states that he had put in larger Stones than he had reckoned upon, which cost £2 more than the estimated price, and that he was out of pocket. I however paid him by the estimate.

7 Jan 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 7th January

A number of Accounts, belonging to the last year still coming in, delays the making up of the Books. I heard to day from Mr Parker that he & Mr Crawhall had fixed the price of Lead for the bygone quarter at £14.16.0. I had two customers to day for the lot of Wood advertized at Capon's Cleugh, the one offered £320 & the other £222 a most extraordinary difference of opinion as to its value. It is an excellent Lot of Wood, though in a situation which makes it very expensive to get out. I hope to get £400 for it, at least I must try to do so, before coming much down. I rode to the Snokoe & Dipton Plantations to look at some which are in want of being thinned as well as those that have been gone through at the Park. Went to Snokoe quarry to see that the men employed to get Stones for walling in the new piece of the Gateshead Road, were working the Quarry properly & not leaving it in confusion as has been sometimes done, and stopped them from leading the Stones, until I should receive from the Surveyor a written undertaking respecting the repair of the road to the Quarry, concerning which I have had too much trouble already to allow a repetition of the same damage, without knowing to whom I am to look for redress.

I returned through the fields of Dilston Hall Farm to see if I could discover any arrangement to propose to Teasdale as to his crop by which the entry to the farm might be improved to the succeeding tenant; for all who have looked at it complain, as well they may, that grass seeds have not been sown & that every thing is out of course & order. In fact there is little to be seen upon it but couch & every thing indicative of poverty & slovenly management, nor can anything be expected of it till it has been gone through with a thorough fallowing & liming, which any tenant to do good in it, must set himself to in earnest without regard to the immediate outlay. But such proceeding is seldom, I fear, contemplated by the tenants in their quarter.

I then returned by the embankments in Widehaugh, which have sustained no injury, although the constant repetition of floods lately has broken a good deal in to the shores of the river by the Tyneside Plantation. The industry however is but trifling as the foundation which was laid at the waters edge in summer & the weirs made for its protection are safe; the damage being only in parts which were too steep to allow of sufficient slope, but which will now be more easily effected, since the river has removed a load of sand from the top of the Banks.

8 Jan 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 8th January

Teasdale came to me this morning as I had desired. I showed him the state of his farm, & among other things, that he had only 10 Acres sown with grass seeds last half year & 47 for fallow this, which should have been equal in quantity. He stated as his reason that the land was tired of growing grass in proof of which I must see how bad those 10 Acres were, & that there was no use in sowing any - and that all that 47 Acres were not for fallow, as he could not have his quantity of land allowed for away going Crop, without them or breaking up the whinny fields which would not pay. I was forced to admit that his lease allowed him a preposterous quantity of Corn for such a farm, but if the whinny fields which he had allowed to go to a wilderness would not pay for ploughing, neither, I was certain, would those upon which he had had Corn, as the Crop was hardly worth harvesting last season, & that to attempt it, which I would by no means allow, would be only doing a greater injury to the land without benefit to him. Like most men who are very stupid he is excessively obstinate & the only thing to be done now, is to prevent him by force, from doing any more injury to his successor than can be avoided. He gave me £20 & promised to bring me an undertaking from a person whose Sheep are eating his turnips & grass, to pay the money to me, that they might be allowed to remain unmolested. Having examined accounts & written letters in the Office, I set out westward, but had not proceeded farther than to the Men at the

Embankment, when the rain & badness of the day caused me to return. Mr Hunt is looking after some draining & other Works in the Langley district.

9 Jan 1834 John Grey

Thursday 9th January

A Wet day throughout. Had a meeting with Mr Walker, Agent for the Railway Company respecting its course through the Hospital estates to the west of Hexham, & requested him to fix particularly its position at Allerwash Mill, as the end of the Stable, which I examined there some days ago is in danger of falling, but if the rail-way should interfere with it, it would not be right to repair it at present. Received the Plans of the proposed House at Dilston from Mr Kay & wrote on the subject to Mr Jay. There is a Blacksmiths Shop at Haydon Bridge, for which a rent of £3 a year is received. It is not in good condition and the occupier states his willingness to pay £6 (or perhaps he might be inclined to give more) if the Board wo'd expend £40 in raising it, so as to give him a room above to live in, & grant him a lease. The cost of the building according to the calculation which I have got from Benson, will be about £45 besides leading the materials, which the Blacksmith will undertake. The question with the Board is whether they will lay out the £40 for the additional rent of £3 during a lease of 21 years, at the end of which they will be in possession of improved premises.

10 Jan 1834 John Grey

Friday 10 January

Another rainy day & little to be done, save to write the teller & attend to business in the Office. Benson is engaged with Green & Rewcastle in making up the accounts of the buildings which he has been measuring.

11 Jan 1834 John Grey

Saturday 11th January

Rode to Wooley to advise the Tenant as to the arrangement of the farm so as to get it into a course of rotation conformable to the covenants by which it is to be managed in future. Also to fix upon the mode of renewing some old fences. Returned by Dipton Wood to see the land to be planted where some people are employed in clearing away and burning the refuse branches etc from the late falls of wood, & others are making

pits for the planting of this season, which it is of great consequence to the success of the trees to have properly done.

13 Jan 1834 John Grey

Monday 13th January 1834

As soon as I could get away from the Office, rode to Throckley where I had appointed the Workmen to meet me, whose tenders had been accepted for making the Pits & fences for the plantations, that I might fix the dimensions & distances of the former, according to the situation & quality of the Soil. It will be necessary in some parts to carry a little good soil from the low ground to put into such pits, where there is only the refuse of the old Coal heaps, to make the trees strike root. I wished also, not only to set out the line of the fences, but to direct the manner of making them & planting the thorns, which is not generally judiciously done in this part. The young trees & thorns supplied to this place, by Falla of Gateshead, are remarkably healthy & good. I was gratified to see the improved manner in which Mr Stephenson has set about to cut & dress the hedges upon his farm, & to try to restore them to a close & healthy state, in consequence of a lecture I formerly gave him on the subject. In some points he is not quite right yet & I have promised to send down my Tweedside hedger for three days to show him a specimen of good cutting. It is pleasant to teach those who are willing to learn & though some of the old folks are obstinate as to their own method, which is probably the worst in the world, I hope ere long to effect a reform in this particular, which has led to a great & very unnecessary expenditure on the property. There is a Cottage & garden on this Estate for which no rent has hitherto been received & which Messrs Bones wished me to attach to their Colliery. It is worth about £5 a year, but I let it to day to a Labourer recommended by Mr Stephenson as a very steady & respectable man, for £3 on condition of his maintaining the plantation fences and preserving them from damage, as the house commands a view of most of them, which are far from any other Woodman & are not of consequence enough to keep any one to attend to them. I visited the Colliery, to know why the Lessees had not paid the rent at Christmas as promised. The reason assigned was that for the last three weeks they had not been able to leave home to collect money, owing to the quantity of water in the Pit, having drowned the working & kept them day and night at their horse Gin trying to subdue it. The Seam of Coal is so near the surface that the long continued rains have penetrated to it & produced this effect. A small Steam Engine would soon overcome it, but these people have no capital, & perhaps the sale of Coal in that place would not justify much outlay. I have great doubt of their doing any good either with Colliery or farm, the condition of the latter being by no means flourishing. Returned after dark, and as usual in heavy rain.

14 Jan 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 14th January

Being Hexham Market day, had interviews with several of the Tenants on various matters & applications from others who are candidates for the farms now to let, anxious to know the result of their tenders. I was employed the greater part of the day on walking over the Farms on the Dilston Estate directing & instructing the Workmen as to the improvement of the Hedges, in which, I think I see a greater willingness in the tenants to cooperate, as I have constantly declared that I will promote no man's interest in obtaining a new Lease of his Farm, nor, as far as I am concerned, treat with anyone, who destroys the Hospital's property by the neglect or mismanagement of his fences, or depreciates it by the bad cultivation of his land. In treating with Tenants for new leases this year, I did not act with much vigour in this respect, because the vice originated as much from the system as the men - but hereafter, fair warning being given, it is a principle which I think should be acted upon honestly & consistently, as a means first of improving & then maintaining the condition of the Estates, free from that great outlay which now accompanies the commencement of every new Lease. But I would not stop even here - for if it is a legitimate exercise of influence, with every one who has the power of using it, to endeavour to improve & elevate the moral character of the people, it cannot, I conceive be less so, with a public Body, connected with the Government of the country. Degrading habits of drunkenness I regret to say, characterise the Town of Hexham, its Market & neighbourhood- and I should wish it to be understood, that to obtain any preference as a tenant of the Hospital a man should not only be exempt from the imputation of bad management as a farmer, but from every thing disorderly in conduct & disreputable in character. It rarely happens indeed, that good management & attention to business are found distinct from habits of sobriety & industry.

15 Jan 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 15th January

Received the Tender for Farms from Greenwich - made a list of those for each farm, writing letters & instituting other means of inquiry into the Character & circumstances of those who stand foremost on the lists, with whom I am not acquainted, that I may as speedily as possible communicate my opinion to the Board. I went by appointment to meet Mr Grace, Mr Bainbridge's Agent, at Newton to fix upon the new line of boundary fence between his property & the Farm of Thornborough High Barns, which is at present quite useless and in a situation on the edge of a Brook where it is impossible that it should ever be made to stand. We agreed without difficulty upon the proper line, choosing firm & level Ground on one side, & then crossing over to obtain

the lime upon the other, leaving quantities of land to each, & access to the stream for all the fields. Mr Hunt met me on the spot as he returns from looking after some draining etc on Newtonhall, & received directions as to the manner of raising the fence & planting the hedge, that he may let it to Workmen. We then returned through the three farms of Thornbrough seeing each of the Tenants & looking into the state of their fences, tillage etc. Such visits even if there be no definite object in view, are useful in keeping tenants on the alert to have things in good order. On reaching Corbridge finding that we still had time before dark, I took Mr Hunt to some parts of the Dilston Farms to see the manner in which I had directed the hedges to be dressed & cut, that I might be certain of his understanding my Plans & orders respecting them. He is quite as sensible of the abominable treatment which the fences have received as myself, & will do his best to assist in promoting my Plans for their restoration.

17 Jan 1834 John Grey

Thursday 17th January

Received the Boards Minutes & wrote several letters to Parties referred to therein. Also to persons who are offerers for farms, with whom I wished to have explanations. Bargained with Mr Hedley for the Hartburngrange Lot of Wood at £80, which is exactly Mr Parkin's calculation, & I conceive it to be a correct one, as the purchaser showed me his which was £76. He is to pay £40 in a fortnight, & to give a Bill for the remaining £40 payable in March 1835, at which time the Wood is to be all cut and removed. I then accompanied Marshall, a builder for whom I had sent, that he might give me an idea for the cost of the House according to the Plan sent down by Mr Hay, along with Benson to see the Site of the House, situation of the Quarry & other Materials. They are of opinion that such a House would absorb all the allowance & leave nothing, or at least not an adequate Sum for erecting the appurtenances. I have in consequence set Benson to make a new Plan upon a reduced Scale, but which will embrace all the essential convenience and accommodation of the former. Of this Marshall will give me his calculation of the Cost, & if approved by the Board, it may be submitted to three or four builders to contract for. The elaborate Plans of Mr Hay could not have been used as working plans after all, for he has not made the walls substantial enough for our strong materials & rough climate, so that the dressed Stonework of the Doors & windows would be altered, & with strong walls, much less of bond timber or wall plates are wanted. I then went along to the Site of the Saw Mill, to see the proceedings of the party in making their cut for the water course & tail race. The wood to be cut down has been cut down and measured & valued by Parkin at £51:5:6 which price the Party engage to pay in November.

18 Jan 1834 John Grey

Friday 18th January

Had interviews with several of the successful and unsuccessful candidates for farms, which it is unnecessary here to detail. Rode up to Fourstones to look at the situation of a piece of rock for which application has been made for the purpose of quarrying into blocks for the rail way. It is very near the road & the working of it would be attended with little damage, should the Stone prove of a suitable quality of which I shall have to report hereafter. I then proceeded to Heslops Farm to look at the success of the drains I had marked out in the grass field which I wished him to improve & found them very well done - nearly completed & likely to do great good. I saw then too Thos Gray, who is a brother in law to the Heslops & first of the list of tenants for Bagraw. The Heslops are amongst our best farmers & I trust Gray will follow their example. They had been altogether at the valuation of Bagraw & highly approved of the course of management I had prescribed. I then went to Allerwash to see the tenant about the repair of some ruinous stone fences & to get him to lead Stones & lime to build an abutment to the end of the Stable & Cottages at the Mill to preserve them from falling. The premises will only come into his possession at May Day next, but in the meantime there is danger of their falling, & the present tenant will do nothing for them. I next went to West Allerwash to see the new pump, with which the old & respectable tenant Mr Watson is much pleased & examined with his Son some draining & attempts to restore old fences, some of which however I see must be renewed.

Reached home in the evening, drenched with rain, of which the most extraordinary quantity has lately fallen, ever remembered. I obtained a settlement this evening with Green & Rewcastle for the building at Whittle. I found some of their charges so much above the prices usual in the Country & also above those which Mr Howdon had most frankly agreed to accept for the Buildings at Haydon Town, Lipwell Wood, Deanraw etc which he had done during the last year & the previous one, though upon estimates calculate at higher prices, that I determined not to pay them, but to have it settled by reference - but they however held the order from the late Receivers to execute the work according to their estimates and Rewcastle seemed inclined to hold out obstinately I decided to allow the charge for the farmhouse to continue according to their estimate & account. But as I had thought it adviseable to alter the management at first fixed upon for the Offices, that I might obtain better Cattle Sheds, by which the original Plan & estimate had been departed from, I proposed to him to reduce the walling from 2/. to 1/6d & other things in like manner; in which case I should lay the account; but otherwise it should be left to reference. This he agreed to, & Benson has made out the account accordingly, which I have paid, trusting it may be the last in which the prices exacted from the Hospital are greater than those usual in the country. They have also presented an account of £19 for making surveys & estimates for buildings, part of which have not been executed. By the Acct herewith sent, it will

be seen that Mr Hooper required an order from the former Receivers to be produced before he would admit the claim. They have now obtained Messrs Wailes & Brandlings signature to it, & demand payment. Where they had the benefit of erecting buildings, as at Whittle they could not certainly look for being paid for the Estimate, but in other cases they may have a claim. I shall however await the Boards orders respecting it.

19 Jan 1834 John Grey

Saturday 19th January

Settled with Mr Storey his Salary & Gratuity as directed. Rode into Hexhamshire to look over the farms & obtain information respecting some Offers for those lately advertized. Directed the Woodman there to get some assistance in thinning the young Plantations, which are ruinously thick, and ought to be done before the Spring. Set out a new fence to divide a field in two, at Staples, for the purpose of getting the Land into a suitable course of tillage - the tenant undertaking to do it himself, on being allowed the young thorns. Some of his Outhouses have bad roofs of thatch which it was intended to cover with Slates - but as that would alter the pitch & require new wood, I got an estimate for laying on a new thatch at £13:10. I agreed to allow the tenant £12 for completing it, which he consented to do. Such a roof will last for a Lease without repair, if properly done. Blue Slate roofs will hardly do for that climate. The Wind blew so strong today I could sit on horseback at times with difficulty.

20 Jan 1834 John Grey

Monday 20th January 1834

Wrote to Mr Fenwick desiring him to make application to Mr Pringle of Borewell for payment of his rents, and in default to threaten him with distress of his goods, as he has failed to keep his engagements with me repeatedly & disregards his covenants in the management of his farm. Having heard nothing yet from Armstrong, the highest bidder for Whitley Mill, I inclosed another letter for him to Mr Fenwick, asking him to send it out by a messenger, that I might obtain a decisive answer.

I was occupied the whole day in writing letters & reports to Greenwich upon the tenders for the several farms, upon my communication with Mr Fenwick respecting an arrangement for conducting the law business of the northern Estates, and upon the allowances made to Johnson by Mr Hooper for buildings etc.

21 Jan 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 21st January

Bell, whom I had informed, when he previously came to inquire, that his was the highest offer for Aydonshields & Mirehouse & would likely be accepted, came to the office to enquire into the account of Crop to be sown by the present tenant, the quantity of land for fallow etc. He complained with reason of the condition of Mirehouse & the small quantity of manure upon both places, & was very urgent that a part of the allowance for lime, should in this instance be commuted for bone manure to be applied to the growth of turnips, that the dung might be reserved for the wheat fallows. I admitted most readily the wisdom of such an arrangement, but it was question whether the tenant ought not to purchase that description of manure being intended for the production of an immediate crop, for himself, whereas the time allowed by the Hospital was more with a view to the future improvement & permanent amelioration of the Soil. At the same time, if such a commutation should be admitted by the Commissioners in any case the circumstances of the present one, would fully justify it, for one year at least, & I promised to submit it to their consideration. Received an application from Mr Taylor for £150.1.7 on account of Salary as mine Agent & Postage, which I accordingly remitted.

I then rode out to examine the state of a good many fences around the woodlands, which are not in good order, as this is the reason for cutting & dressing Hedges - also examined some pieces of waste land by the lane side towards Slaley, which have been left out at the time of enclosing the ground, & serve no purpose but to grow whins & rubbish & to harbour Gipsies & their Asses. To take out the old hedges & include those pieces of ground in the adjoining fields would cost a good deal, & might be complained of perhaps, but when we are planting in the Dipton Wood, near by, there would be little expense in putting in a few trees & running a railing of the small fir wood which we have going to waste, along the side of the road. The situation would grow wood, & would afford shelter. Having received no directions respecting a list of Arrears which I forwarded to the Board formerly, and which for the reasons annexed, are shown to be hopeless I beg to repeat the question, whether they had not better be removed from the books, as Mr Hooper also recommended.

22 Jan 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 22nd January

Received from Greenwich the Agreement with the Duke of Northumberland for the sale of the manor of Wark & immediately examined all the Plans & documents I could find, to obtain information as to the situation of the allotments of Thorngraston & the

manner in which they are now connected with the farms & occupied by the tenants of the Hospital. This is a subject which I have never before thought it necessary to investigate & in which I have felt no immediate interest, having been led to believe that the Duke was to take possession first in May last & then in November. Having found the situation of the said allotments & their connection with the Hospitals Farms in the West, it will be necessary to examine the Tenants themselves to ascertain how far their interests are likely to be affected by yielding the disputed clause in the Agreement.

Having had yesterday a very heavy flood in the Tyne I went round the banks today to see if any damage was sustained, & to know in case of the embankments standing good, as I doubt not they will in future, to what amount the tenants are likely to be injured by back water from the flood Gates, which are placed as outlets for small streams, which in time of high floods are of course stemmed back upon the land until the fall of the river admits of their escape. When the river subsides rapidly, little injury can ensue, and it rarely happens that the Tyne continues beyond its banks for more than 24 hours at a time. I then met Mr Hunt at Dilston for the purpose of examining, marking out & measuring the present road leading past the site of the present house, & the line of that which I propose to substitute, also the course by which it will be best joined to the piece of road which is now in progress by the Gateshead Trustees who are bound to the expense of extending the said road to their piece of turnpike. If they will go on with my views, it will be seen by the accompanying sketch [not included in surviving journal] that a straight line with a very easy & gradual ascent, will be substituted with a very crooked one, in which many parts are steep, the proposed line from A to B being shorter by 140 yards than the present one; consequently the Hospital would eventually gain by the alteration, the land contained in 140 yards in length by 10 in breadth, and the estate as well as the public, would have a shorter and easier road. The part which would have to be done by the Hospital from (B to C) would cost about £42 of which £12 would consist in leading materials, which might be obtained in part by the tenants, as making the road better & shorter would eventually save them statute labor. Were I the tenant of Dilston Hall Farm, having horses & Carts, I should not scruple to do the whole. I have written to the Surveyor of the Gateshead Turnpikes asking him to acquaint me previously to his coming that I may meet him for the purpose of arranging this matter. The Commissioners have already sanctioned the proposed change from B to C - but without informing me whether the expense was to be allowed as a general improvement, or was to form a part of the £2000..... allowed for the House & Appurtenances. If the latter then the Receiver will be paying at the exorbitant rate of £5 Per Cent interest, for an improvement which he will only enjoy in common with the public but by which the Hospital will in the long run be the principal gainers. But even this I should prefer to not having the Road altered, should the House ever be built there, & I happen to be its occupier.

23 Jan 1834 John Grey

Thursday 23rd January 1834

I prepared to set out at an early hour this morning, to inspect Thorngraston Allotments & ascertain how far the interests of any of the Hospitals Tenants were involved in the working of the mines or Quarries below them, but after waiting for some hours, was obliged to abandon the intention, as riding to such a distance against a storm of wind and rain was not likely to secure the object. I received a letter from Mr Bigge, as Chairman of the Morpeth Dispensary, informing me that the Hospitals Subscription for five years, at three guineas a year, is unpaid. Finding no order for the discontinuance of the subscription, I suppose it might have fallen into arrear through neglect, but since a large portion of the only property which could alone be benefitted by that Dispensary, has been sold to Mr Cookson, I beg to submit to the Commissioners whether they might not with propriety reduce the amount of the Subscription, or withdraw it altogether. Mr Walton, Agent of Mr Beaumont, having examined the lot of Wood in Dipton Plantation, No 3 in the printed list, which is valued by Mr Parkin at £175 came today to treat for it, but I could not induce him to offer a farthing more than £140 for it the whole to be paid for in May next, alleging that he could get wood enough in the Country on quite as good terms. If he would have offered £150 I told him that I should have recommended the Commissioners to accept his offer, as he is a good customer, but he would not move further, & considering the quantity of wood in the market m & coming forward on the Hospitals Estates, I fear it hopeless to stand out for such prices as Parkin has been accustomed to value at; but before submitting to much reduction from his valuation.

Mr Hunt has had a meeting today at Aydonshields between the present Tenant & Bell, whom I had informed of his offer being the highest & that I had no doubt of his being accepted, for the purpose of adjusting the amount of Crop etc from his report. I suspect that Bell is rather inclined to break off the engagement which however I must put to the Test as soon as I hear of his being accepted, for no time is to be lost should the farm to be advertized over again. I am told too that Robinson who offered highest for Dilston Hall Farm has been seized upon & is to be sold off!! My opinion of Todd's Petition which has been referred to me for the purpose, is, that it points out the most equitable mode of ascertaining the fair and just amount of reduction that his farm requires. The other farms upon which a similar reduction is expected to be made according to Mr Hoopers promise to the Tenants that it should have his recommendation are Vauce, Plankey Mill, Middle Deanraw, Lough, Harsondale, Gairshield, Bagraw, Mirehouse & Turfhouse (Spency Croft, Sproats Farm & Hartburngrange South Farm have already received the Boards sanction to that effect). The difference it will make in the Rental will be ascertained after the Conditions of the new lettings are finally settled, by comparing the former with the present rents, & can be extracted either at Greenwich or here.

24 Jan 1834 John Grey

Friday 24th January 1834

I went with Benson to examine the Ground for the site of the intended house at Dilston, with a view to ascertain the expense of Garden Walls etc, but as it would be desirable, in case of the road being altered, to place the House a little farther to the South than was intended, until that is settled, the exact extent of such walls cannot be determined. It may not however be of great consequence to ascertain the cost of all such appurtenances, if it were even possible, at this time, for it appears certain from the calculations which I have obtained from a builder & Mr Benson that the Plan as now reduced, will be undertaken by a Contractor for something less than £1650 and as that Plan includes a Stable at the end of the kitchen wing, with Servants bedroom above, there can be no doubt of a sufficient surplus being left to complete any thing else that will be wanted. The Plan, as now altered, leaves out the Library which Mr Hay added & the bedroom above, & reduces the size of the lobby, but admits of a larger room for the Clerk's Office, that made by Mr Hay having been too little for the size of the Desks and Bookcases. This Plan I shall have Mr Green, an architect in Newcastle to revise & prepare, by Mr Hays specifications, for the guidance of Contractors, hoping soon to see the work in progress.

I then proceeded westward to investigate the subject of the Thorngrifton allotments, but had not gone more than four miles till I was quite wet through & having no Change of clothes nor chance of getting done so as to return at night, I thought it advisable to give it up, in hope of better weather and an early start tomorrow morning

25 Jan 1834 John Grey

Saturday 25th January 1834

Set out early & rode by Fourstones, Allerwash etc to Grindon Hill- looked through the repairs of the Buildings there- proceeded to Grindon & taking the Tenant along with me, rode over the whole of that farm & Beamwham, both in Mr Woodmans occupation. These are in a high situation & very properly almost entirely laid to grass. I was glad to see the excellent effect produced by the cheap mode of sod draining adopted here last summer, & well executed by a man from Dumfriesshire. The quantity of water carried off by means of those drains, is very great & the land which was previously a Bog, is even in this Season, comparatively firm & dry. The House at Grindon was rebuilt last Summer, & is now very comfortable, as well as the Offices, which have been repaired & improved. I looked at the situation proposed for the School House to be built there,

which is very much wanted in that remote district, to which the Board has signified their willingness to contribute the wood & £5 a year, but as yet inhabitants have not obtained an adequate Subscription. I also examined the Lime Kiln which is in a dilapidated state & was to have been repaired last year, but has not yet been set about. Rode over the Thorngrafton Allotments & obtained the Opinions of the Tenants respecting the conveyance of the Minerals etc to the Duke which they do not like, although they can hardly anticipate any annoyance from it during their Leases. I then from looking at Grindon Lake & some Roman antiquities in one of the stations connected with the Wall, close by, descended into the Vale of the Tyne by Thorngrafton, taking in my way Eastward, Whitechapel, the most westerly of the Hospitals property in that direction, where preparation must be made for building this summer, which was deferred the last & will be done now on lower terms. Lipwoodwell where I examined all building lately measured off & paid for, with which the old Tenant, Errington & his Wife too are well satisfied, agreeing that they could end their days happily there if the time would only allow them to pay their rents & live. The improvement of the house & Offices has certainly given great additional comfort both to themselves & their Cattle & the work by Mr Howden has been well done. I then proceeded through other farms on the property, by Haydonbridge, & reached home at 8 o'clock after a ride of 50 Miles, I imagine, rendered agreeable by the unusual occurrence of having little rain. In the evening reported to the Board on the subject of the Conveyance of certain manorial rights to the Duke of Northumberland.

27 Jan 1834 John Grey

Monday 27th January

Settled the Accounts for the repairs of the Mill & the Miller's house & Offices at Newlands & received a payment from Bones of Throckley, hearing from him a long list of grievances and difficulties respecting the quantity of Water which it has cost him so much to overcome in the Pit, & the impossibility of collecting money from the farmers, in both of which, I believe, there is much truth. Received & communicated to the Board Armstrong's reason for withdrawing his proposal for Whitley Mill. Had a long examination of the Railway Plans with Mr Walker, by which it seems likely that Allerwash Mill may be removed, so that it would be unwise to expend money on repairs at present, except of the most temporary kind. Mr Walker would be glad to take an Acre or two of Ground in the west part of the Dilston Park Farm, where there is a thick seam of Clay, to make Bricks & draining tiles. Being near the Turnpike Road, the damage by way leave would not be great, & it might be of advantage to the Estate & neighbourhood. I have promised to look at the situation, with reference to his plan, & to receive a proposal of terms from him, before undertaking to recommend it to the Commissioners. I then rode out to Dipton Fell where we began today to plant a new

ground from which the Wood has been cleared. In the parts of the Wood that have been replanted two or three years ago, I observed that few of the Larch or fir tribes succeed, which I account for by the Ground having produced a Crop of that kind of Wood already, whereas the deciduous kinds take readily, especially the Oak & Ash. This is worthy of observation & I have been pressing it upon the notice of the Woodmen, showing them the waste of planting a great many trees of a kind that will not grow. It is also quite analogous to other productions of the Soil, & hence the axiom in agriculture of observing a rotation by which the repetition of the same kind of Grain is kept as distant as possible; but the most striking instance of the kind is found in America where when a forest of Pine has been burnt down, in a few years the Ground is covered with all the deciduous trees that are common to the Country, but not one of such as formed the original forest.

28 Jan 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 28th January

A dismal day of rain, everybody kept within doors. Engaged in writing letters, & Office business - conferred with Benson on the buildings at Whitechapel, Lees & other places, which must be undertaken this year, as to the most economical arrangement & mode of execution, as well as the probable cost that the Board may be informed upon it. At two, the Tyne having risen higher than I ever saw it before, I walked round the embankments to ascertain their condition & efficiency - the water in a high flood, affording the best test of the correctness of the levels. I found & marked just two places where water made its way through the Bank, by mole holes, which must be attended to. It was within two feet of the top in the part which has not yet been added to, which work has been of late suspended on account of the Season - had it risen higher, it must have done immense damage, but just then it was at its height. As soon as we get settled weather, that work must be proceeded with. In consequence of the repeated overflowing of this most turbulent river, it will be proper to defer filling up the plantations between the Shores & embankments, till as late a period in the season for planting as possible, & also, I think instead of putting in young nursery plants, which would be in danger of being destroyed by floods, to remove plants of some years growth out of other plantations where they are too thick, which I have no doubt will take readily enough, as the Soil is of fine quality & the situation a sheltered one.

I omitted to mention in my journal on Saturday night, that I had looked when at Grindon, at the Fir Plantation which had been partly destroyed by fire near a year ago by accidental communication from the burning Heather in the Allotment adjoining. The Woodman had told Mr Hooper that because the firs had made so little progress hitherto, it was not worth planting again, but I am not of that opinion - the fire has

destroyed all the rough Grass & heath which impeded the trees & left a covering of Ashes on the surface which being put into the Pits along with the Plants would greatly promote their growth. The expense of fencing off the Land has already been incurred & the remaining parts of the Plantation are there to afford shelter to the new. I would therefore recommend filling up the Ground with Oak & Birch, as the most likely to take, in such a situation, which is also Mr Parkins opinion. The Ground is not of great extent.

29 Jan 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 29th January

Went to Thornbrough to see the extent of land that had been covered by the Tyne in yesterdays flood & consider of the practicability & cost of securing it, but as yet there was too much water standing in the low ground to ascertain it. Went forward to Shaw House & informed the tenant that unless he could take means to reduce the Arrear standing against him, I feared some other steps must be taken by the Hospital. He engages to bring me some money ere long, but complains like many others, that whereas in former years, being on the road to Newcastle, he made half his rent by the carriage of Lead from Langley Mills, since the Mills were let, he has had none of the employment. I then proceeded to Whittle Dean & examined with the Quarry-men the rock they mean to cut & the line of road they wish to use, making a farther stipulation with them, that in case of their being able to dispose of any of the refuse stone for building purposes, which would at any rate be better taken away, they should pay one tenth of the price as Quarry leave to the Hospital. They wish to make all into Rail way blocks, that they can, and as they are restricted to size by the Company & we are to be paid according to their account, any further stipulation on our part is unnecessary.

30 Jan 1834 John Grey

Thursday 30th January 1834

The flood having entirely subsided, I spent most of the day in examining along with Harle, who manages the embankments, the effects it had had upon them and the Shores. The former have sustained no damage, but what was occasioned by some runs through Mole holes, which having been marked at the time of the flood, a man today has remedied. In another respect the flood has done us a kindness, for by leaving its mark along the side of the embankment, it has shown the exact level which should be followed, & proves that at the first formation of the Banks, the levels had been erroneously taken by the Ground instead of being struck at intervals from the surface of the River, and without making allowance for the more rapid descent of the bed of

the river in some parts, than of the adjoining lands. It follows that although the top of the embankments preserves a gradual inclination, the water was at some parts three or four feet higher upon them than in others. This makes it unnecessary to make a uniform addition to the height of the banks throughout, and having marked the different places today, a considerable saving of expense will arise from the discovery. To the Shore to the West of the Confluence of the Devils Water, where the Wears were made to protect it, little injury is done, save the washing one or two spots of Sandy soil which had not acquired firmness enough, but on the East side, where no Wears are yet made, a great breach has been made & some trees washed down. The Soil is so fine and soft in quality, that when once broken into the Water makes a great impression upon it. I see now that it is absolutely necessary to defend it also, or the whole wood would be in danger & in time the interior embankments also. I much regret the necessity of such outlay but I see no alternative between that and losing the land, and certainly the Tyne here is the most mischievous & unmanageable river I ever engaged with. I observed Water standing in several fields adjoining the embankments, which by the ordinary course of making water furrows and cuts across hollow parts, when the fields were ploughed & down, might have escaped as soon as the flood subsided. On asking one of the Tenants why it had not been done and accusing him of slovenly management, he told me that such cuts had never been made in Dilston Haughs. I asked if he thought the Wheat would be the better for it, he admitted that it would likely perish some of it, but that they had never been used to cut out their land. The solution must be that they expect to get as many Pounds from the Hospital for the injury of their Corn, as they save Shillings to themselves by their blameable & disorderly practise.

31 Jan 1834 John Grey

Friday 31st January

Met Mr Pearson this morning, Surveyor of the Gateshead Roads, upon the Ground at Dilston Bank to point out to him what I considered the best arrangement for uniting the two branch roads upon that part of the property with the new part of turnpike, so as to be at once convenient for the occupiers of the farms & the public, and a saving of Land to the Hospital. He agreed that the Plan I proposed was the best & most complete if carried on by the Hospital, through a field in the Hall Farm, according to a Plan which I forwarded to the Board last week; & though it might cost rather more to the Trust than the one he had contemplated he would recommend its adoption at the next meeting of Trustees. Having examined all the points with him, as to the line of road, the kind of fences I should require & the Quarries he should use, I went to see how Harle was proceeding upon the directions I gave him yesterday to secure the Tyne Banks against the increased injury which another flood in their present state would occasion. Also to fix with Mr Parkin about the Planting, now ready to begin to at Throckley & the

quantity of trees that would be required for filling up the Plantation burnt down at Grindon.

1 Feb 1834 John Grey

Saturday 1st February 1834

Went to Newcastle to see to some matters there, & put into Mr Fenwick's hands a list of Fee Farm Rents due to the Hospital from parties residing in the Eastern parts of the County, who cannot be expected to come here to pay them, or even to come to Newcastle for the purpose, as the sums are small, were I to fix a day to meet them. I saw therefore no means of obtaining them, but to ask Mr Fenwick to apply for and receive them whenever the parties might call.

I met Mr Pringle from Scremerston who had promised me a payment, but from the state of the weather he has not been able to deliver a Cargo of Grain but engaged to come up in a few days. The Corn market was as bad as possible and the farmers in great depression of spirits.

3 Feb 1834 John Grey

Monday 3rd February 1834

Received the Boards Minutes of the 20th & 29th Ultima and made the several communications required by them, also informed the Parties whose tenders for farms had been accepted. I then passed some time among the Workmen, repairing the damage done by the late floods, to the Banks of the Tyne, contriving the best & cheapest mode of obtaining materials for securing them. Then went to examine the Ground where Walker & Bones propose to burn bricks, on the Park Farm, for which they gave me an offer this morning of ten Pounds a year, advancing gradually by one Pound each year to twenty, taking upon themselves all expense or erecting Sheds, compensating the tenant, making & Maintaining Roads etc. The situation is such as not to occasion much damage of land, but I must ascertain how much they would be likely to take, & try to get a better offer, before recommending it to the Board.

I then examined the House & Offices at Dilston Hall Farm, to see what accommodation might be obtained for Mr Hunt there, without inconvenience to the new Tenant. The House is small, consisting of one small parlour, two bed rooms, a Kitchen & Milk House, but he is satisfied with it, if it can be had at a fair rent, & if something be done to make it clean & comfortable. It will require some painting & repair, whoever may occupy it, as the windows sashes have gone without paint till they are so rotten that

they can hardly be made to hold the Glass. Yet for all that I can see, this is the only place where I shall be able to find Shelter while the new house is building.

4 Feb 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 4th February 1834

Had a meeting with some of the accepted Tenants for the Farms respecting their Covenants etc. Rode to Newtonhall Farm & then through Thornbrough to examine the success of some draining which I had marked out at the former, & at both places to look to the culling & dressing of some old Hedges under my directions, with the hope of restoring them. No particular occurrence today, requiring notice.

5 Feb 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 5th February

Was engaged in the Office making Estimates of the probable outlay for Building, hedging & draining for the present year, & the rental according to the reduction of those farms recently let, of which a statement was forwarded to the Board. Rode afterwards to inspect the work at the Embankments & the planting on Dipton Hill, on my return in the afternoon found Mr Pringle from Scremerston who paid me £300 of the Arrear due by him at May Day last, leaving still a balance of £94. He wishes the Commissioners to refer to letters from the Receivers & Mr Weatherly, which I herewith send, upon which he considers himself entitled to hold his Farm at the annual rent of £500 instead of £575, but prays to have a reduction of £100 a year from the original rent of £575 on account of the great fall in the price of farm produce. This is a petition to the same effect as that which was forwarded by him to the Board some weeks ago, except that the injury he sustained by the Rail way was the Ground upon which he then claimed a reduction. By the accompanying letters it appears that the late Receivers & Mr Weatherly sanctioned the understanding that the Abatement of Rent given at that time, was to be permanent, instead of being restricted as I understand it was, to three years. Mr Pringle also gave me Estimates for renewing a Platform around his Wind Mill of £9.15.0 and for putting in a new Pump in the place of a wooden one which is worn out of £7.18.- both of which I saw, when there, to be necessary, but refused to do on account of the Arrear of Rent. I shall sanction his doing the Work, and make the allowance conditional on his discharging his arrear.

Benson having been directed to inspect the farm house at Whitechapel very minutely, reports to me that it is the oldest existing on the Estate, except that at Lees, which is also ruinous. That by mending the roof, it might stand for a few years in its present

condition, though the walls are much shaken, but that nothing can with safety be done in the way of adding to or improving it. It is, as I know, small & incommodious & stands badly, just in front of & too close to the fold yards. To add to the Offices as intended & merely patch the Roof of the House, Benson estimates at £170. To remove & rebuild the House at £380 or thereabouts, of which I have desired him to prepare a Plan to be submitted for the decision of the Commissioners.

6 Feb 1834 John Grey

Thursday 6th February

After various interruptions & causes of detention in the Office, I set out for Haydon Bridge where I have appointed to be to receive Proposals for the planting at Grindon, which I let at the very low price of 5/. per thousand for making the Pits. The putting in of Trees I prefer to have done by our own Woodmen, hoping that they may be more attentive in selecting the different kinds of Trees for the varieties of Soil most suited to each & also in collecting into the Pits the Ashes left on the surface from the fire.

After looking into some arrangements for additional Stabling at the Inn, & directing the Conduit to be made for directing the water to it, I proceeded to Alston calling by the way at Mr Walton's House which is at a short distance from the road, Hoping to be able to get a few pounds more from him for the Lot of Wood at Dilston. He was not however at home. In the evening I had a long conversation with the Moor Master on various matters connected with the Alston District, arrears of Rent, Repairs & Mining. I regret to find that the celebrated Mine of Hudgill Burn is doing very little & has small prospect of improvement. The others are generally in a fair & hopeful way, & the great stores of Lead being now exhausted, there is a good prospect of a steady demand and improved prices. I had also a meeting with the newly elected Surveyor of the Alston Roads, who is to be introduced to his Office tomorrow & has been making an inspection of the various lines of turnpike, Bridges etc, and advised & consulted with him as to the most effective & economical mode of maintaining them, in my views of which he fully concurred.

7 Feb 1834 John Grey

Friday 7th February

Went out as soon as I could see & traversed Spency Croft Farm, which Mr Dickinson has held for 17 years at the rent of £100 and which is one of those included in the list to be reduced from May day last. Most of those in Alston which were entered to at the same period, have been reduced one third or more. As a mere Farm, I question that it

would now let for £70, the Poor's rate amounting to £22 a year upon it. But Mr Dickinson is willing to take it upon lease at £76 a year, owing to the accommodation it affords him as Moor Master for Horses keep etc. This is a mutual advantage, for the land is well managed & the rent always secure. I then went to examine the Watercourse through Burn's field which he had petitioned the Board to have covered in. The Water comes at times very foul from the Lead Mines & the course has been covered over through an adjoining field at the expense of the Hospital, for which reason he thinks his ought to be done too. I stepped the length of the Drain and estimated the cost at £6 of which I engaged that Mr Dickinson should pay him one half, upon his completing the Work, considering that as his field was more remote from the Mines than those already covered in, and as an end must be put to such claims, he ought to incur half the cost, & that beyond his, no other should be done. I think it doubtful whether he may do it on these terms or not. I next examined the Mill, the smooth working of which I found to be very different from the last time I was there. The Miller stated that he could now grind Six Bolls in the same time that was before taken to grind two, and with less water. The motions of the Machinery being accurately adjusted. I then spent some Hours at the Meeting of the Alston Road Trust, where the Books and Accounts of the Surveyor and Treasurer, being examined, were turned over to their successors in Office & some of the Plans for future management which I had discussed with Mr Rome on the previous evening considered & adopted. I also examined the young Trees in the Alston Nursery & directed Mr Dickinson respecting the small pieces of Plantation to be made & the kinds of Trees to be used in them, besides some of a more ornamental kind for the approach to the Inn, to which the door at the end is a great improvement. I regretted however to find the house in so damp a state, the paper both in the sitting and Bed rooms being much stained and spoiled. This arises partly from the decayed state of the Spouts, but more from that of the roof, which must be carefully examined and repaired so soon as the season will admit of it.

8 Feb 1834 John Grey

Saturday 8th February

Returned from Alston, again calling upon Mr Walton without finding him. Stopped at Stublick Colliery to know how they were succeeding & was glad to find that notwithstanding the unusual quantity of Rain the excellent Engine not only sufficient to drain the Colliery but to diminish gradually the original stand of water, which in the absence of correct Plans of the former Workings, has always been a source of anxiety to me. I trust now that it may be overcome & removed without damage to the Mine. I took the Tyne banks in my way home to see what progress had been made in repairing the damage of the lane flood, which I found going on well. This is a subject of daily care and watchfulness with me.

10 Feb 1834 John Grey

Monday 10th February

Had an interview with Mr Bell late of Stublick and all differences having been arranged & disposed of, paid him his Gratuity, deducting the rent now due and taking his joint security with Mr Nicholson of Hexham for those to come. Mr Bell says that he expected to be included among those who by Mr Hoopers recommendation were to have the reduction for the present year, which I could not promise, as I had not understood it so before, but I engaged to mention it to the Board. Heard from Mr Walton that he would give no more than £140 for the Lot of Wood, No 3 as he considered it a full value. I wrote to him to conclude a bargain. Some other purchasers have looked at other Lots, but will not offer for them, on Account of Mr Parkin's valuation being so much too high, and I am convinced that it is so, as I hear from people conversant with such matters, that they could get foreign wood at a cheaper rate, considering the expense of cutting and removing it. Went to Dilston Hall to set out the line of Road as stated in the Plan sent up & agreed to by the Commissioners.

11 Feb 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 11th February 1834

Saw Mr Walker & agreed with him on the terms for a Brick Work, of which I send his proposal, recommending it to the Board. The chief advantage to the Hospital being that if obtaining their own bricks, should the work succeed, at 25/- on the property instead of paying 33/- at several miles distance. Had it been begun a little sooner, there would have been a saving in building the new House. Made out & obtained signatures to some Agreements for the newly let Farms. Rode over the Estates of Dilston to examine the work at the Banks Plantations etc.

12 Feb 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 12th February 1834

Went to examine the Farms at Hartburngrainge and found the small Stable which I had thought it necessary to make at the West Farm, completed at less expense than I had anticipated. The old Man White, who had hitherto been continued upon an allowance of 6/- Per Week with a House & small Garden for maintaining the fences of the Woodlands, died lately, & having looked upon that Allowance rather as a Pension to

an old Servant, than as a necessary expenditure, the Wood being fully grown & the fences not requiring much repair, I thought it unnecessary to make any other appointment, but prevailed upon the Tenant of the \diamond upon which the greatest part of the Plantation is, to undertake the care of the fences, by giving them the Woodmans Cottage to occupy along with his farm, by which £15.12 a year will be saved. I then proceeded Northward & passed

Tuesday 13th

At Millfield Hill with the part of my family which I had not seen for some months.

14 Feb 1834 John Grey

Friday 14th

Had appointed to meet Mr Borthwick and his father to arrange the particulars of his entry to Chesterhill Farm, finally to determine the Conditions of management, the diversion of certain fields which I have previously noticed & to obtain his signature to an Agreement, all of which was most pleasantly complied with. The Draining of the Bog Field at Outchester is nearly completed, & when finished will be examined again & measured by my Son who will transmit to me the Account.

15 Feb 1834 John Grey

Saturday 15th

Went over the Farms at Scremerston. Saw that Mr Pringle had already renewed the platform around the Tower of his Threshing Machine, which was indeed indispensable & that Mr Hogarth was proceeding with filling up & restoring to land, two Acres which had been rendered waste by old Quarry heaps, for doing which, he has obtained a proposal so low as £24, which I fear, even with the help of Barrow-way rails from the Colliery, will afford the men very small wages. The money however will be well spent, as the perpendicular sides of the Quarries endangered the lives of Cattle & being near the house & road were a great eye-sore. The cleaning out & repairing the roof of the old Water Level from the Colliery is an awkward undertaking, so foul & also dangerous, from the decayed state of the Wood & Props formerly used in it, that Men can hardly be prevailed upon to venture into it, a few of the worst parts, the Lessee has wisely secured by a rough Arching of Stone, which is let down by some old Pits by means of a Horse Gin. In a short time I hope a free passage will be secured for the water, and then the whole may be safely explored, but should much of it be found afterwards to be in a ruinous condition, it may be worthy of consideration whether it had not better be abandoned and the water drawn up by an Engine. It is evident that

the Steam Engines been in use when this Level was made, as they are now, such a mode would not have been resorted to. The Market for Corn at Berwick is remarkably low, & Mr Thomson & indeed all the Tenants there, say it will be impossible for them to make up their Rents.

17 Feb 1834 John Grey

Monday 17th

Returned to Newcastle & on tuesday morning to Corbridge, attended to letters and matters which had occurred in my absence. Directed Mr Parkin to commence planting at Grindon, and to reconsider his valuation of the Whittle lot of Wood, as it is most unlikely that I should be able to obtain the price he sets upon it. Went out to Dilston to see the progress that had been made with the new road preparatory to commencing to build, & learnt with much dissatisfaction that on examining the condition of Teasdale's House, Benson had found it so thoroughly infested with Bugs, that every floor must be taken up and means used to destroy them, before Mr Hunt or anyone can live in it. This is most provoking as I had looked to it as a place to take refuge in during the building of the House, Hunt in the meantime remaining in his lodgings at Corbridge. What to do next I cannot tell.

19 Feb 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 19th February

Sold the Lot of Wood No 4 in Dipton Plantation to Joseph & George Dinning for £140, for which they are to give a joint pro: Note, payable in September & December next, by which time the Wood is to be all removed. This is £10 below Parkin's valuation, but I consider it a good price as wood is selling. Had also an Agent from the Lead Company's Mines to examine the Tyneside Lot, valued by Parkin at £220 last year, but not then sold. Since that time several Trees that stood in the way of the Embankment have been cut & sold or used upon the Estate. On this Account I offered him the lot at £200. He said he could not come to that sum by his valuation, but would consult Mr Stagg, Manager of the Mines, & give me the best offer he could, in the course of a week. Hearing that an additional number of men had been put to work in Throckley Quarry in consequence for the demand for Stones to the Railway, I wrote to the Lessee begging that he would henceforth make a monthly return of the number of blocking men employed that I might know what amount of rent he would be chargeable with, & wrote at the same time to Mr Stephenson, tenant of Throckley South Farm, where the Quarry is situated, requesting him to be so good as to keep a memorandum for me of the number of such men employed from week to week. Wrote by the Moor Master

who called on his way to Newcastle to the Assignees of the Arkendale Mining Company, referring them to him for an explanation of something they were dissatisfied with in the Award for damaged Ground, stating that the Hospital, as Lessors could not in my opinion be called upon to accept a dividend, they being bound to pay the whole amount to the owner of the land, & that I hoped they would see the propriety of paying it before making their final dividend. Wrote by him also to Mr Fenwick, Colliery Receiver, sending him Mr Thomson's Memorial & the accompanying correspondence respecting the price of Lime Coal at Scremerston, begging him to reconsider the matter & communicate with me at his earliest convenience. So much of the day having been occupied in the Office, I had merely time to ride to examine the work at the Tyne banks & to see the planting going on at Dipton hill & some waste spots by the Slaley Lane.

20 Feb 1834 John Grey

Thursday 20th February

I forwarded to the Board this morning, an answer to their enquiries respecting the Inspector of Woods - Mines etc also several Agreements for Leases, executed by the respective Tenants. Among them, it will be seen, that I have thought it best to hold Andw Thorburn as Tenant of Gairshield, at Will, so that his being allowed to continue or not, may be made to depend upon his own conduct. That the Term of Thornbrough Highbarns is to be 14 years, that it may determine at the same time with Thornbro' Town Farm, also held by Mr Scott, for if they should then go again into separate hands, a better line of boundary may be made than at present. In all the farms that have been let this season, I have been able to effect a transfer of the Threshing Machines from the Hospital to the entering tenants, except in that of Coastley, in which the Water Wheel & Axle are excepted. It is not likely that any expense will be incurred on account of that Wheel for a long time, as it is strong & new, but if that even should be the case, it is upon a Scale so far beyond what any tenant would have put up on his own Account & so very costly, that I fear the Hospital must continue to pay the penalty of maintaining it, for the indiscretion of having erected it. Threshing Machines are but a substitute for labor, which it is the Tenants business to supply, & I am glad that the principle has been established & will now be understood as one to be acted upon throughout the Hospitals Estates, that they are to belong to the Tenants. We shall hear no more of a half years rent being expended upon the mere Machine independent of building, & even more than that, for I see that the Machine at Dilston north Farm cost altogether £540.11.0 the rent of which is £750, & that too high. I rode today over the Farms at Fairle - High Field & Greymare Hill, to examine the condition of some Plantations in that part, & to attend to the setting out of some draining which is wanted. I am anxious to do this myself, as much as possible, as it is my great object to procure the greatest benefit at the least expense, & when left entirely to the Tenants, I find that they do not

always go the right way to work. Mr Hunt is engaged for 3 or 4 days at present in attending to the new fences etc, in Langley Barony.

21 Feb 1834 John Grey

Friday 21st Februry

Rode in the morning to Westwood to meet Benson & the Mason whose tender for building the two Cottages there had been accepted, that the Situation might be determined & the Work begun. The most convenient place for them is a piece of waste land at the junction of the Hexham & Chain Bridge roads, & as it is a public and conspicuous situation, some regard must be had to neatness in constructing and Keeping them. Proceeded then to look after some matters at Haydon Bridge & thence by appointment to meet the Lessee at Stublick Colliery. Having put myself into a Miners Dress I descended in a rope, let down by the Engine, 48 fathoms into the Earth, & then with a Candle stuck in a bit of Clay, made my way as best I could, sometimes on hands knees, through the various seams & to the different parts of the workings, being well satisfied, before I reached the Shaft again, that my size was not the most convenient for a Colliery Receiver. I have been in several Mines, but this is by far the most complicated & unintelligible of any I have ever seen, for besides the great Stublick Dike which runs through the Country 90 fathoms deep, & is known to all Miners, as cutting off the Coal seams in its course, the field of Coal here is intersected by innumerable small dikes, which throw the seams into such confusion, that in coming upon one the Miner does not know whether on the other side of it, he may find the seam he is working 20 fathoms above or 20 fathoms below his present Level. One of these Dikes I penetrated to today & found that on the other side they had discovered the Coal Pit 16 fathoms higher than on the side we had left.

My object in going through the Workings, was to endeavour to gain such a knowledge of them as to enable me to understand the Plans as laid down of their proceedings, & to ascertain if I could, whether they were working all the seams fairly away & not taking those which work easily & leaving those that are more difficult. In fact to decide upon the necessity of having the Colliery examined by a regular Receiver, from time to time. This would certainly be satisfactory, although the Seams are all carried fairly on at present, & ought to have taken place at the time of the transfer of the Colliery to the present Lessees. As for one thing it is evident that the Reducing Coal had been wrought farther than appears by the Plan delivered by Mr Bell. This Seam, the workings & sale of which are placed under such restrictions on account of its value in smelting, contains in itself its own protection. It is but a thin Seam, & what is grievous only the top part is of that peculiar quality, the under half being a small drossy Coal used only for the Blacksmiths fires, on Account of its thinness & the expense of separating the two kinds, it is worked at great expense than other seams & as the

Country people would not give more for it than for the others for domestic purposes, the Lessees would not be paid for working it were they so inclined. They have just now discovered Coal by boring, to the west of the present Pit, & very near to where it appears six different attempts have been made without success having always gone down upon Dykes or troubles. They are making a second boring in the supposed line of the Coal Seams, and should that prove successful they will, I hope, be able to make a winning at little expense, which will serve for some years without sinking a new Pit to the Eastward & incurring any risk from the body of Water there is there lodged upon the Colliery. Rode home in the evening 12 Miles in a Blast of Snow, tolerably wearied with the exercise. I ought here to mention what May lead to future unpleasant discussion if not attended to. It may perhaps be in the recollection of the Board that I had difficulty in ascertaining which part of the land now leased with the Colliery, Bell held as Agent, & which as tenant. It was at length decided that he was entitled to an away-going Crop upon a portion of it, & that Crop the present Lessees purchased from him for £27 odds, contending however & justly that as they pay rents each half year as they become due, without what is called the running half year, they ought to have the Crop the first year of the Term and none the last. The shortest way of putting them in this position, would likely be for the hospital to allow them the sum they paid to Bell, & then matters will be straight at the termination of the Lease. Otherwise they will be entitled to an equal portion of the Crop then, which might lead to disputes & perpetuate the confusion. If however the £27 should not be repaid a memorandum of the transaction ought to be attached to the Lease for the information of those into whose hands the settlement of the business at a future time may fall.

22 Feb 1834 John Grey

Saturday 22nd Feb 1834

I met Mr Leadbitter this morning at Dilston Hall Farm to make the arrangements respecting the occupation of it, reserving the House, small Field called Halls Nook, Garden Stable etc as specified in a written Agreement, for the Bailiff, he paying £22 and Mr Leadbitter £150 for the farm and remaining premises, with which he professed himself well satisfied. His Lease of the land should be made to determine along with that of his present farm & chargeable with the rent he will actually pay i.e. £150, leaving Mr Hunt as tenant at will for the remainder & entirely independent of Leadbitter. Mr Teasdale complained loudly of my injustice to him in preventing him sowing for his awaygoing Crop, land that grew a miserable Crop of Wheat last year, without which he could not obtain all that his Lease allowed, but by going into Moorish land. I told him that his Lease had allowed too much throughout, & he had taken more, injuring the farm by execrable management, & that any attempt on his part to repeat a Corn Crop upon the land that had grown Corn last year, would cause me to recommend to the Board to withhold the indulgence that had promised him respecting

his arrears. He still however complains of harsh treatment. I afterwards visited the farms of Westwood, Fourstones & Allerwash, chiefly for the purpose of inspecting some hedges and the manner of culling them. The Colliery at Fourstones has been overpowered with water of late & the men driven into an old working to get out some pieces of left Coal. I imagine little more need be expected from this Mine, without a new winning, & even that will be of doubtful success.

24 Feb 1834 John Grey

[Note: Date as written mistaken for 24th]

Monday 22nd February

Received the Boards Minutes of the 8th & 19th Instant & made the necessary communications to the several parties referred to. Was afterwards was occupied in inspecting the planting in Dipton Woods & examining the state of several plantations on the Property, some of which are now thinning & others that require to be thinned. Nothing occurred of importance to be noted.

25 Feb 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 25th February

Went to inspect some matters respecting the roads at Dilston & also some bye ways into the fields which have been intersected by the Railway. Proceeded to Hexham & attended a meeting of the Alston Roads Trustees, saw Mr Walker respecting the making of Bricks at Dilston Park & his settlement of damages with the Tenant, also several of the Tenants on various matters, examined Robson's Nursery at Hexham, from which I wished to select strong & healthy thorn Quicks for the new fences. I was glad to effect a sale of a considerable quantity of small wood cut in the Plantations of Whittonstall, which it was necessary to remove for the benefit of the growing Wood, whether it could be sold or not. The produce will do somewhat more than pay for the cost of cutting.

26 Feb 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 26th February

Having received three Summonses for Special Jury Trials had to go to NCastle to attend the Assizes, & owing to the late arrival of the Judges from Durham & the

quantity of business at Newcastle was not released from the Court till 6o'clock on Friday evening.

1 Mar 1834 John Grey

Saturday 1st March

Returned to Corbridge early in the morning , attended to letters & business in the Office. Directed Benson to make preparation for the Building at Whitechapel, as sanctioned by the Board, & to obtain estimates for it & the farmhouse at Lees. Received from Mr Hogarth at Scremerston the application to the Board, praying for a reduction of rent, which I herewith forward. It is hardly necessary for me to make any remarks on the subject of this Petition, in addition to those which I have been called upon to make from time to time, upon the ruinously low prices of Grain during the whole of the present season. The Berwick market has been throughout, the lowest in the Country, & Mr Hogarths statement is a confirmation of what I have often repeated to the Board, that a Farmer almost exclusively dependant upon the growth of Corn, is in a most hopeless predicament. But to relieve himself in this respect, why does not Mr Hogarth voluntarily adopt the rotation of alternate grass and corn which I have laid down in the recent Agreement for Chesterhill & Glororum, by which he would have a mixture of Sheep & Wool in his farm produce, & though the extent of his Corn Crop would be diminished, the land would be in better condition for growing it. It is true that such a change cannot be effected all at once, & if it could, that still it might not afford Mr Hogarth an adequate relief. Acting upon the principle hitherto adopted by the Board, I presume they will only offer to Mr Hogarth a reduction through the medium of a new valuation & letting.

After getting through the business of the Office, I rode over the farms on Thornbrough Estate to see the new line for a boundary fence between that property and Newton, as set out by Mr Hunt & the opposite party, & to consider by an inspection of the fields, an application from Mr Scott respecting their management in connexion with the farm he already holds. Mr Scott has signed an Agreement binding himself to manage his former farm as well as his new one, hereafter, in the five instead of the four course rotation.

3 Mar 1834 John Grey

Monday 3rd March

After dispatching a parcel to Alston, containing grants for trials of veins & Letters to Mr Dickinson & Mr Stephens, I took a long ride through the Farms in Hexhamshire

that I might inspect some new fences, reconcile some differences between the away going & entering Tenants, which they seem to make a point of never doing themselves without an Umpire, & examining a large extent of Woodlands, of which the younger plantations are so unreasonable thick that I had engaged five Labourers at 10/- a Week to go along with the Woodman of that district for a few weeks, to assist him in thinning them. The stuff which they cut out, consists chiefly of small Scotch fir, which is of little use but to give the tenants to rail & repair their fences with. But its removal gives room & air to the better kinds of wood, & though in some parts, rather too late in being done, will greatly promote their growth & value. A considerable quantity of Corf Rods has also been obtained in the Woods of that district, which will bring some money, & are cut at the expense of the purchaser.

4 Mar 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 4th March

Mr Green the Architect, having come up with the Plans & Specifications of the House, I accompanied him & some Contractors to Dilston to fix upon the precise spot & see how the Plans as now arranged would fit the peculiar situation, as I was anxious to take every possible advantage of the picturesque character of the place, consistent with convenience & economy, & to save some Chestnut Trees, which after much contrivance, we were able to accomplish. I then left the Contractors to form their Estimates, that they may be submitted along with Mr Greens Plans to the Board, & went to examine into & give directions respecting some repairs at Teasdale's farm, which it is in vain to look to him for, in his impoverished condition. The Garden & Stack yard walls are all in ruins, & the road from the lane to the house almost impassable on foot, everything in fact both inside & outside the house, in the greatest state of disorder. These, must needs be put into some decent condition. I next went along the Tyne Banks to see the work of securing them, at which we have not done anything for some time, rather waiting to see the floods over before finishing it off. I think it may now be completed, as the weather is remarkably fine & I trust we shall not have any heavy falls of Snow on the mountains to cause inundations by their melting. They are going on with the change of road at Dilston which will be a great improvement both in appearance & reality.

5 Mar 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 5th March

Rode to Throckley to see how the unsightly Pit heaps had been planted. I have hopes that the Trees will succeed, which will be a great improvement to the appearance of the

farm & neighbourhood & convert Ground which was before pernicious to the Wool, to a useful purpose. Mr Stephenson has kindly sent Carts to lead good soil to be put into the Pits along with the Trees, on such parts of the heaps as consisted only of Coal refuse. I found it necessary to order some more Trees for planting up parts of the Woodland here, in which those planted some years ago had entirely failed, in consequence I suspect, of their having been negligently done & allowed to be grown over & choked by rubbish. The other plantations are in a thriving condition. I sent the Hedger whom I lately engaged, to stay for a few days with Mr Stephenson & show a specimen on that part of the property, of the proper mode of cutting Hedges, so as to make them strong & efficient fences, instead of destroying them, according to the barbarous custom of this part. I was glad to find Mr Stephenson quite a convert to the Plan & imitating it very successfully, making very laudable exertions to improve & restore the condition of his fences. This is encouraging & if the example should be followed generally, I shall have cause to think the expense of having the Hedger well repaid. But I must admit, that few of our tenantry have the knowledge & liberality of Mr Stephenson. I found the Colliery in a better state than when I last visited it, the Water having been got under & the work proceeding. My attention was called by Bones, who occupies the Public House by the side of the Turnpike road to the state of the toofall at the back of it, and estimate for the repair of which, he says, was made out, & promised to be done by the late Receivers. The roof of this appendage to the House, which contains, the Beer Cellar, Kitchen, Milk House etc is of Pantiles which are very bad, & of too low a pitch for the kind of roof, even if they were good. The rain has continued coming through, till the Wood has been rotted & the place become neither safe nor habitable. I shall get Benson to examine it & give me an Estimate of the cost of repairing it. On asking Bones if he would give us any more rent if it were done, he answered, by showing me a good brew house which he had built solely at his own cost. I imagine the house ought to be put into repair, & then he should be bound to keep & leave it so.

6 Mar 1834 John Grey

Thursday 6th March

Went through the Estates of Newton & Whittle, examining at the latter place the working of the quarries lately opened for getting blocks for the railway & the trespass done by this & the roads. The latter is of little moment, being confined solely to the plantation & not touching upon the farm at all. I met today Mr Armstrong, who is Agent for the Estate of Threepwood. He applied to me for payment, to the Proprietor for two Stacks of Corn, said to have been grown upon that Property, but seized & sold by the Hospital, because they stood among others, in the Stack Yard at East Elrington when a seizure of the effects upon that farm was made, the tenant of which was also tenant of the other. He had applied to Mr Hooper, he said, who undertook that it

should be paid but referred the value to me. I told him that I was extremely glad that Mr Hooper had left the settlement of it to me as I was certain I should have no difficulty in convincing him, that he was not entitled to one farthing. The Corn in question stood up in the Hospital's farm, as part of the tenants stock - we had no reason to suppose that it did not grow there & no need to enquire. The whole of the effects that were sold fall considerably short of the Hospital's demands; & the Tenant continuing in the occupation of the other farm, though as he stated, in arrear of rents, formed a strong presumption that he had acted more favorably by his other Landlord than by the Hospital and that he had paid his rent to him in part from the produce of the Hospital's land. So that in fact, I had a better case, in making a demand of repayment from him than he had against me - but that we had better conclude the matter by agreeing to let it alone.

7 Mar 1834 John Grey

Friday 7th March 1834

I agreed this morning with Mr French on the part of the Governor & Co, for the Lot of Wood No 2, in the Hand Bill, at the price of £180 & £13 for some weedings in the Park Plantation. The money to be paid & the wood removed by December next. Some of this Wood standing by the Embankments, & some also so near the brink of the River to be in the way of sloping & securing the banks, has been cut down & sold since the Lot was valued. And as the whole is within Water Mark, and therefore attended by some risk in case of a flood coming when the Trees are cut & laying on the Ground, I thought it adviseable to close with Mr French, as his is considerably better than any other offer I have had for it. All the Lots of Wood proposed to be offered for Sale this Season are now disposed of, except those in Whittle Dean & Capons Cleugh. The former I should wish to sell, because the Wood will make no more improvement & because there is no local circumstance likely to increase its value. That at Capons Cleugh is likely to be more sought after, especially as it contains a quantity of excellent Oak, likely to be carried to the seaside, when the Railway is extended to the Wood in which it grows. I should therefore be inclined to defer the Sale of that lot for another year, rather than sell it at a low price. I have had other applications since that from Mr Wallis, for a Lease of the Allerwash Lime Stone, in anticipation of the Railway, but am of opinion that as Fourstones Colliery seems to be but little to depend upon for a continued supply, & the Lease of Brokenheugh Colliery which is almost as near to Allerwash as Fourstones, but in a different direction, will shortly have to be renewed, that it would be better not to let the Limestone till it & the Colliery could be united under the same party, which would make them independent of the Lessees of any other Colliery & probably secure to us more respectable Tenants. After being released from the Office, I went up the Tyne Banks to see the effect of a late flood & found all our works uninjured, though a part of it left in an unfinished condition. I then proceeded to

Dilston & spent the day among the Workmen making the road there & those engaged in planting, which I have made a point of examining frequently, & trust that the success of the Trees will prove that the work has been efficiently done. When in the Northern part of the County, I bought a quantity of perennial Ray Grass Seeds from the grower which I had long used & known to be of a kind much superior for pasture to any that I see in this district. I had it shipped found to Newcastle & Mr Hunt had undertaken to distribute it to such of the tenants as chuse to purchase it, at a charge to cover the original cost & carriage. My sole object is to introduce a more valuable description of Grass among the Tenants & my only reason for noticing the matter now, is that I may stand clear of any imputation of making gain by the transaction.

8 Mar 1834 John Grey

Saturday 8th March

Rode to Dilston to meet Mr Shipley respecting several claims, on Account of Fruit Trees & other things supplied by him when he made the Garden, for which he expects payment. His intention of selling manure from the Premises, I flatly resisted, especially as he had always sold the Hay made from his Land without permission & with impunity. But that he should not suffer any loss with respect to such Hay as he might have on hand, I engaged to purchase it by the valuation of an indifferent person. Neither could I admit his claim to have all the trees, gooseberry bushes etc valued according to their present condition, as he could not legally remove them, but only consented to pay him what might be the original cost. I offered him £3, which I considered a fair compensation for every claim he could justly make, & which I believe was his opinion too, & which he consented to take, after some repining over the things which he had taken such pains to nourish. To do him justice, I must say that kept his Garden & place altogether in very neat order. I should think it best that the Hospital should pay for these & any other trees that either the Receiver or Clerks Gardens may require, so that in case of change of Occupiers no dispute may arise upon such claims in future. I then Proceeded to the Park Farm to meet the Parties to fix upon the situation for making Bricks & to prevent future disputes, by settling the terms between the Contractor and Tenant - but the badness of the day prevented their appearing. I then went on to Highwood to examine the cutting & improving of some young hedges by the turnpike which have been ill planted & managed & will require some care to make them substantial fences. These & other young fences by the road sides, have been attended to by a variety of hands casually employed & upon no regular system - which formed one inducement for me engage a regular and experienced Hedger from the North, who is to have 12/- Per Week & an old cottage near Dilston. He will also be employed at the Woodland Hedges & will go occasionally to different parts of the Estate, to set an example of good cutting. I then proceeded by the new Cottages building at Westwood & to inspect some young hedges that are being made at

Allerwash. Then men who are planting them complain of the change of times as they are now doing for 1/6d Per rod, what they used to get 2/6 for. So much for subjecting the work to competition.

10 Mar 1834 John Grey

Monday 10th March 1834

Heard from the Tenant at Outchester that the Drains that I had marked out for improving a boggy field were finished & ready to be examined & measured, which I wrote desiring my Son to go over & do forthwith, that the ploughing of the field might be proceeded with. Directing him at the same time to apprise the Tenants in that quarter, that I should be at Belford to receive the Rents on the 8th April. Went to the Park Farm & met Mr Walker, the Lessee of the Brick Ground, to fix the site & line of road to communicate with the Turnpike. Also to instruct the Arbitrators between him & the tenant, upon the principle they should Assess the damage of ground etc. Went afterwards to the people employed in making & fencing the new road at Dilston Hall & to those making the plantations. Had some Ivy & ever-greens planted around the ruins of the old Castle & Chapel - the latter has a good leaden roof but I discovered in getting to the top of the roofing that the parapet Walls are decayed & in danger of falling, from the want of cement, in the joining of the Stones, & some other repairs. As I presume it is intended to preserve the Chapel as heretofore, I must take the opportunity of a good season for making the necessary Repairs.

11 Mar 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 11th March 1834

This being the day appointed for payment of the Dividend of the Assignees of the Arkendale Mines Company, I attended at Hexham on the part of the Commissioners, having previously examined the accounts, & seen the Boards authority for concurring in the Agreement come to by the Creditors, to accept a Dividend of 12/- in the Pound. The Hospitals claim amounted to £2347.7.0 according to the accompanying statement - and the Dividend and Interest in the Bills to £1461.1.1. of which £704.4.1 was paid in Cash and the remainder in Bills at 12, 18 & 24 Months with Interest, for which, according to the Conditions of the Agreement, I had to sign a discharge and give an undertaking to deliver up the Bills of which I gave them a Copy, I believe the originals to be at Greenwich. I again spoke to Mr Hall on the Subject of the damage assessed by the Alston Jury, for land destroyed by the working of the Mine, belonging to Mr Dickinson of Lovelady Shield, which he undertook to settle. The Corn Market today was as low as ever, & I was assailed by many of the Tenants declaring that it was

impossible for them to make up their Rents, & that they must have an abatement or leave their Farms.

Newcastle

Mr Alfred Hall

To the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital Dr

1831

Sep 28	To 1500 pieces of Refd lead wt 107. 4.2. 7 at £13.7.6	£1434. 0. 7
	To 300 ps Slag do wt 21.13.1.15 at 12.7.6	267.15. 1
Nov 25	To 600 ps Refd do wt 42.19.3.21 at 13.-.-	558. 6. 10
		£2260. 2. 6

1831

May 11	To wood sold and delivered	87. -. -
	Add noting to each of the above Bills at 1/6 each	4. 6
		£2347. 7. -

Cr

1834

Mar 11	By cash at 6% in the Pound	£704.4.1	
	By bill at 12 Mos from 30 Mar 1833		
	For 2% in the pound interest	246.8.8	
	By Do at 18 mo from Do with Do	252.5.8	
	By Do at 24 mo from Do with Do	258.2.8	£1461. 1. 1

12 Mar 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 12th March

Arranged with Benson the several Buildings at Whitechapel & Lees, for which parties are preparing Estimates. Directed him to examine the Offices at Coastley with a view to find a situation in which some Pig Houses may be built at small expense, which in arranging the Buildings, had strangely enough been forgotten. Afterwards accompanied him to examine Teasdales House & see in what way it might be made comfortable at the smallest expense as any thing that is to be done, must be decided upon and executed as quickly as possible, after his getting it. I then went with Mr Parkin to consult him about the Wood that is wanted for the Building upon the Estates, & spent most of the day among the Planters, who are now near a conclusion with their work. We have got a very nice piece of Plantation from the Waste Land by the side of the Slaley Lane, which has hitherto been worse than useless, being the constant resort of vagrant Tribes & their Asses. I have desired Benson to get some refuse wood worked up at a cheap rate into hurdles, or moveable rails, which may often I think, save the expense of permanent railing, in situations where it is only needful to save a

young hedge, or one that has been cut down during the short time that the adjoining field may be occupied by sheep; and for the want of such railing during that short period, the hedges often receive irreparable injury. We can have them made for 6d each, from weedings that cannot be sold.

13 Mar 1834 John Grey

Thursday 13th March

Rode through the Farms of Highside, Bagraw and Longhope & then to Woodhall to examine some new Fences just made there. Proceeded then to the Farm of Lees now let upon a fresh Lease, where we are making a boundary Wall at the extremity of the Hospitals Property in that direction. Having seen the Wall & another fence that is in progress & conferred with Mr Watson about some draining & the site of the new Farm house, I returned to Haydon Bridge to meet by appointment, the Moor Master & some Parties who, stimulated by the advance in the price of Lead, had made applications for the Trial of some Veins that are known to run through a part of Grindon Allotments in the Langley Barony. There being some doubt as to their priority of claim as well as to the particular veins to which their application referred, I thought it best to have a meeting of the whole, that after a full investigation we might come to a proper understanding & avoid future disputes. The result was, that leave was given to make three separate trials of Settling Stones Vein and branches, which exist on the Hill about three Miles to the North of Haydon Bridge & adjoining the Dukes Boundary This matter settled, I set out on foot to go through some Woodlands at Esphill, which though I had often seen, I had never traversed. The Wood is in a thriving condition & coming fast forward to be useful in the low part, but falls off very much as it approaches Langley Mills partly owing to the poorer quality of the Soil & partly to the injury it receives from the Smoke of the Mills, which is destructive of both animal & vegetable life. I returned across the farms of Langley Castle, Lightbirks & Land Ends, reaching the Anchor Inn after dark, which is a most comfortable place & getting into good repute. I found however that the Storms of the Winter had driven through the Western Wall & made the paper in the best Rooms very damp. I have since directed Benson to have it examined. The Walls being of dressed Free Stone, the application of Roman Cement to the joints may probably cure the evil. Mrs Routledge having declined to participate the field annexed to her house with any one, I agreed with a Surgeon in Haydon Bridge, called Barwick, for the part designed for her at 3 Guineas Per Acre, or £4.14.6 Per Annum. Having had no offer for Mrs Routledges house except one from a Saddler at £13.13 rather than allow the snug parlour to be converted into a Shop & pulled to pieces, I agreed to take her offer of £13, for the House & half the Garden. The Chimnies & Spouts of both houses, require repair. I have taken written acceptances of the Premises from the several parties making in all, Mr Hutchinson £21, Mrs Routledge £13, Mr Barwick £4.14.6 = £38.14.6. The present Rent being £35. I have

also Mr Reeds Acceptance of two of the fields now occupied by him at £15.0.0 and Mr Coats for the other two at £9.0.0 being £24 the same as now paid by Mr Reed for the Fields Wood yard & Work shop in Haydon Bridge, leaving us the latter for a depot of Wood & Slates - and as it will be necessary that some one should have the charge of it, I have directed that the end of the Work Shop be fitted up for a dwelling House for the Woodman of that district, which can be done at little Cost, & will save the rent of his Cottage.

14 Mar 1834 John Grey

Friday 14th March

I left Haydon Bridge early, intending to make a long excursion through the farms to the North of the Tyne. Proceeded by Rattenraw, Tofts & to Grindon, examined the planting of the Ground from which the Trees had been burnt last year. Much of it is done, but some parts are still too wet, in which I directed the Woodman to make open drains to carry off the surface Water. Traversed the wide Allotments of Grindon Common to see where the Trials for Ore are intended to be made and to examine some stone fences under repair. Came to Brokenheugh Colliery to ascertain the number of men employed and the state of the Workings. The Seam is growing thinner of good Coal & the refuse increases & from present appearances, will be exhausted by the end of the Term which is at May 1835. Came through the farms of Brokenheugh, Allerwash & Fourstones to the Colliery there, wishing to ascertain the state of their Workings, for having been driven from the whole Coal by press of Water to work in the broken Coal, or pillars left formerly for the support of the Roof, part of which I understand to be below the village & Farm Buildings, there seemed reason to apprehend that if they were removed & a 'Creep' to follow, the buildings might suffer injury. I found that my information was so far correct as to the working out some pillars, but Rewcastle assured me, that they were not in a situation to endanger the Houses. I warned him to be up in his guard, as if damage should ensue, it must be at the risk of the Lessees. I had some thoughts of going down the Pit, but finding that one of the Workmen had been killed only yesterday by the falling in of the roof, I considered it prudent to desist, especially as my exploring it could not have been attended with much good. Under the circumstances of both these Collieries, it will be proper to have the examination of a practical Viewer, to see that the Hospitals interests are not prejudiced. Proceeding by Westwood to see the new Cottages which are nearly built there, I reached Corbridge after a ride of nine Hours.

15 Mar 1834 John Grey

Saturday 15th March

Spent most of the day among the Workmen engaged in Planting, fencing etc upon the Dilston Estate, without any occurrence worthy of note, except an application from a Mr <Crile>, Lessee of a Colliery at Long Witton for leave to work in Coal in Hartburngrainge. Having no knowledge of the situation, the probable success or the damage that might ensue, I could not give him any encouragement, my impression being that unless connected with the Sale of Lime, it would hardly be an object worth pursuing. He stated that Limestone lay in the Same place & that that would also be his ultimate object. After obtaining all the information that I could, I gave him permission to put down a bore rod to ascertain the Seam, promising that if his success in that way should warrant the proceeding, I wd give him an early meeting on the spot to consider of the propriety of making further trials.

17 Mar 1834 John Grey

Monday 17th March 1834

Two men called David Gibson & John Nattrass applied to me some months ago, for leave to work blocking Stones for the Rail Way from a quarry at the village of Fourstones, offering 1d Per Block, which is the price they pay as Rent to Sir Edward Blackett & other proprietors on the line. Thinking that we ought to have a better price here, on account of the proximity to the Rail Way, & consequent saving in carriage, I declined giving them an answer until I had considered the matter & ascertained that more could be had from other Contractors, engaging however, that they should have the first offer. I therefore appointed a meeting with them this morning & stood out for 3d Per Block, & 1/5th of the value of any other Stone that they may be able to dispose of for Quay Walls, culverts or any other purpose, which they consented to. This is the highest price that has been paid on the Railway, but the Quarry is conveniently situated, & being near to the public road will occasion little trespass to the property & little expense to the Lessees for damage. And will pay a considerable rent when it comes into operation, which may not be for a year to come.

I went today over the farms in the Estate of Thornbro' to examine the new boundary fence that is just finished, the state of the Lime Kiln & other matters, & particularly to see Rowells of the Highbarns, who have done nothing as yet to reduce their Arrears. As the price of Corn had this season been ruinously low & they had Granary room, I did not press to sell, and purposely abstained from doing any thing till they sh'd have ploughed the Land & sown the Seed. That will now soon be completed, & my object today was to get them to try among their connections, to obtain security to

some extent to the Commissioners, otherwise I should be forced upon the alternative of attaching their effects, which I should be most reluctant to do, owing to their age & infirmity of the old people & the hardship of their case, having been literally robbed by an Agent of the Hospital. The young man promised to come to the Office in the morning & get an Account of Rent and Arrears against them, up to May Day next, that he might consult his parents as to their prospects & capability.

18 Mar 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 18th March

After attending to business in the Office & settling with Mr Hunt, accounts for Work he had measured off in different parts of the Estate, for which he commonly makes his payments at Hexham on the Market day, I went out to Dilston to see the Work that is going on at the new road & laying out the Garden, which I have thought it best to put into a state of forwardness, although the House is not built, because it forms a place of deposit for any Soil that is to be removed, & may be made useful, even this year, in producing Potatoes & Vegetables.

Old Teasdale found it difficult to get a house for the following year, & being desirous of having one near his present farm that he might look after his Crop, pressed me to let him have that now occupied as a public house, of which the occupier had notice to quit, it being intended to remove or pull it down, after the alteration of the turnpike road, which will shortly be removed to a distance from it. Thinking it would be an accommodation to the poor man, and that if removed, it could not be rebuilt so as to be occupied this year, the present tenant having possession till May Day, I let it & the small Garden to him at £5 rent, subject to the approbation of the Board. This house stands in a part of the Ground hereafter to be occupied with the Receivers House and as that Ground will be cut up & diminished in value for some time, by the line of new road running through it, & in some degree permanently, by piece of plantation, which will much improve the Site of the Ruin, and look of the place generally, perhaps it may not be thought unreasonable that the rent of the old public house should go to the Receiver, as a compensation which another tenant would have required. I merely offer this however as a suggestion, but without making any claim for compensation.

The river being very low, I went round the embankments to examine their condition after the Winter floods. That round Widehaugh & the junction of the Devils Water is in excellent state, the work of heightening it whenever it was required, having been done in a substantial manner & at a cost, according to the account finally settled this morning of £106.9.10. The Estimate received by Mr Hooper was £130. The Embankments both to the West & east sides of Devils Water, are now I think perfectly secure, except perhaps one part on the east side, where Mason Work has been used

instead of an earthen mound, which was evidently the only part in danger, when I went round the whole at the time of the highest flood I have yet seen. The shores of the river must be objects of constant attention, as a single breach made in such sandy soil, if not attended to, may cause incalculable mischief. As they are now coming into a gradual slope with a firm foundation, I trust that by attending to the effect of each flood upon them, much less expense will be incurred in preserving them in future.

19 Mar 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 19th March

Rode to Haydon Bridge and met Mr Hunt who had been looking after draining and fencing in several farms to the North of the Tyne, & then proceeded to examine the state of the buildings & fences on the farms of Deanraw, Vauce, Lough and Harsondale to decide upon what may be necessary to be done to put them in such condition at the commencement of the Leases, as to make it reasonable to require the tenants to maintain & leave them so at the end.

The buildings upon all of those farms are in good order, except the Lough, & here something must be done. A Cow House & Cattle Shed which though bad, I hoped might have stood for another season, have given way in the Storms of the Winter, the timber of the roof having broken under the load of old thatch, & their longer occupation become dangerous. The farm house, Barn and Stable require very little repairs. The fences too, in general require little, except at Harsondale, where there are a great many stone walls that have been built without Lime & much too high to stand in that stormy situation. These are in a state so ruinous, that the only thing that can be done with them, with some few exceptions, is to rebuild them in a better form & of less height. This is a farm which it always provokes me to visit. The land is poor, the situation & climate bad, yet a farm house & Offices have been made upon it, out of all proper to its value, and expensive fences erected, but in so insufficient a manner, as to require almost entire renewal. I found on examining them today a young thorn hedge, planted two years ago, but which had not made the least progress, & from the manner in which it had been set, could never possibly become a Hedge. I therefore sent for a man who is planting a Hedge in another farm, to direct him to take out the quicks and plant them over again, so as to give them a chance of succeeding, giving Mr Hunt charges that the person who could put such work off his Hand should never on any account be employed again. I then came to Stublick to enquire into a dispute between the Colliery Lessees and some party occupying a part of the Land now Leased to them. It turned out that some Workmen at Langley Mills having held land under Mr Mulcaster, were allowed by Mr Hoopers desire to hold it for another year, rather than be turned out so near to the May Day. This the Colliery Lessees agreed to, but in anticipation of leaving at May next, they set up a claim to away going Crop, & actually

borrowed Ploughs & broke up all the tillage land in spite of every remonstrance from the Lessees. If they had even had the right to a Crop, they could have none to it upon the land that should have been fallow, having grown Corn last year. I told them however that they should not sow a foot of it & directed the managing Partner at the Colliery in what way he ought to proceed to get it into a proper rotation. He will thus have the benefit of their ploughing day. Reached Corbridge late in the evening after a very long ride.

20 Mar 1834 John Grey

Thursday 20th March

Sent letters to the Tenants who are in Arrears regarding an early payment. Directed the Bankers to remit £2000 to the Credit of the Commissioners on the 29th Instant. Attended to Letters in the Office & went through the Workmen at Tyneside and Dilston.

21 Mar 1834 John Grey

Friday 21st March

Visited the Farms at Newlands where there is some draining going on, where some applications had been made for repairs & where I had applications to make for Arrears. Found that our old Tenant Soppit whose alacrity & wonderful possession of faculties at the age of 93 I had often admired, had died lately, and his wife nearly as old as himself, within ten days afterwards. They had just been 60 years married! Examined the Mill at Newlands which had lately been under repair & has been put by Murray into excellent order. The Machinery works well & smoothly, & he has managed cleverly to save the expense of a new upright Shaft by using the part which was of sufficient strength & making up the necessary length by fixing in a cast Iron Spindle at the top. From Newlands I rode across the country to Lambton to see Mr Morton, Lord Durhams head Agent, I consult him about the choice of a Colliery Viewer. Mr Fenwick is becoming old and slow and has besides too many large concerns to look after, to make ours an object of attention. I have written to him twice since sending him Mr Thomsons Memorial respecting the Lime Coal at Scremerston, as directed by the Board, & though I have ascertained that he is at home, having obtained no answer. I explained to Mr Morton that we did not want a high & expensive man as a Viewer, but one who would come as occasion required to inspect the Collieries, wch were in hand & but of small extent, charging moderately for his journies. He recommended a Mr Foster of Haswell as a very judicious & respectable man, one who is not in the

employment of any of the very large Collieries and would be likely to give due attention on moderate terms.

22 Mar 1834 John Grey

Saturday 22nd March

Rode from Lambton to Newcastle, expecting to find Mr Foster there & to have some conversation with him, but did not meet with him. I heard of another Viewer there, exceedingly likely for our purpose, but he is employed in a Colliery in which I suspect some connections of Major Johnson are concerned, & should that be the case, however respectable the person may be, as he will be expected to inspect the Workings at Scremerston, it is better to avoid the possibility of any bias from that quarter. At the Market today, the price of Corn & Coals is equally complained of. And among failures & dividends, the fact is talked of, of Lord Londonderry having made an Assignment of the Estates & Collieries in the County of Durham, to Trustees, with the intention of returning to his own Country. I enquired of Mr Fenwick if he knew anything of Alfred Hall's Bills, but he had never heard of them. I then informed Mr Batson, one of the assignees, that Mr Hooper had had them but that they had not yet been found, and that as they held my undertaking for their production when discovered, & my Signature to the Deed they would incur no risk, as they might be well aware that the Bills would not go into other hands. He expressed himself perfectly satisfied with my undertaking, though the Bills should never be produced. I apprehend that Mr Bicknell would get them at the time he issued the Extent. Leaving Newcastle I came to Throckley where the planting as well as fencing the Plantations is now finished. The Miller here complained, as all the Tenants do, of bad times & hard bargains, wanting relief. I compromised with him for the present, by engaging to make a piece of Hedge, which will include a small bit of waste land in his Garden, & substitute a new Hedge for a very bad one. The cost will not exceed two Pounds.

24 Mar 1834 John Grey

Monday 24th March

Had several matters to attend to, & letters to write. Engaged Mr Davison, whom I had formerly selected as Teacher of a School under my direction at Milfield, to come to that at Deanraw at May Day, by the desire of a Committee of the Inhabitants who have obtained a promise of £10 a year towards it, from the Trustees of the Haydon Bridge establishment. I trust the youth upon our Estates in the quarter will be benefited by the appointment. Heard from my Son reporting that he had measured the Drains at Outchester & seen to the cleaning and fencing some hedges on those Estates that are

under Seven Years & therefore in the charge of the Hospital. Had apprised the several tenants there and at Scremerston & the Innkeeper at Belford, that the rent day was fixed for the 8th April etc etc. Was waited upon by an Assistant Surveyor of the Gateshead Roads to inform me the Trustees at their meeting on Friday last considered & adopted the Plan I had recommended for the bye Road as connected with the alteration they are making near Dilston and wished me to direct the fences to be made according to my wish. This will complete the line for straightening & shortening the line which leads past the House & farm at Dilston Hall, as shown up in a Plan I lately sent to the Board, a part of which Road we are now proceeding with. As soon as I could leave the Office, I went to Dilston to see what progress had been made & to let the additional fences as authorised by the Road Trust.

25 Mar 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 25th March 1834

This being a Cattle Fair at Hexham, I attended it to see how things were selling, taking the opportunity to see several of the Tenants on various matters and of delivering to them the Agreements for their farms as returned from Greenwich with the Commissioner's signatures. The Rowells of Thornbrough Highbarns, whose arrears accumulated there and at Newtonhall, together with the rents of the former up to May Day next, will amount to £985-.-. inform me that they have found friends who will join them in giving security to the Commissioners for £800, in case the Board will consent to strike off the remaining sum, & allow them to keep possession & dispose of the away going Crop. I have been to the farm to examine the Stock upon it & the Land sown & to be sown for the Crop, & under the most favourable circumstances. I can only value the whole of their available Property at £940 or 50£, but if brought prematurely to sale by a seizure, I am by no means certain that it wd realize more than the sum they offer, besides the unfavourable effect that such a proceeding would have upon the Credit & future endeavours of the poor people, whose case is a hard one. Under these circumstances the Board will perhaps authorise me to obtain the security for £800 & relinquish the remaining £185 especially as the farm has been recently let at a reduction of £65. The sale of Cattle today was tolerably good & several of the Tenants promised to be with me shortly to pay up their Arrears. After going through the Market praising those of the Tenants whose Cattle deserved it, & criticising those which were the reverse, I took my Horse & rode up to see the Cottages now building by the roadside at Westwood & afterwards proceeded through Fourstones and Allerwash. The Season is favourable & the Seed time prosperous.

26 Mar 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 26th March

Mr Coulson the Tenant of Coastley came to the Office and paid £50, enquiring if the Board had not signified any intention of striking off some part of the Arrears which had been accumulated upon a farm so decidedly over rented. I told him that I had no orders on the subject, but hoped he would find means of reducing the amount before entering upon a new Lease. There is no doubt that he took the farm at a rent which it was not possible to make of it. He spoke of sending a Memorial on the subject to the Board. The Estimates for the House at Dilston upon a reduced Plan were received today & opened by me in the presence of Mr Green who had come up from Newcastle for the purpose. That of Ritson & Green amounting to £1733.16.3 being the lowest, I recommended to the Board, forwarding Mr Green Plan for their inspection and approbation. I accompanied Mr Green to the Site of the House, & had it staked out according to the proposed Plan, that no time might be in future lost, in case of its being adopted by the Board. I afterwards went over the farm of Dilston Hall to see what draining and repair of fences should be done for Mr Leadbitter, the entering Tenant, who is rather an exacting person and not easily satisfied. Old Hind the occupier of the public house which I had consented to allow to stand for another year for the accommodations of poor Teasdale, told me that he would not remove at May day because he entered in November & had held from year to year. He admits that Mr Hunt served him with Notice to quit previous to 11th November, but he cannot be required to obey it. I trust he may be induced to change his opinion & save me the trouble of forcing him out.

27 Mar 1834 John Grey

Thursday 27th March

Having had Notice from the Secretary of the Railway Company that they wished the line through Capons Cleugh to be set out & the Wood which might be in the way of it to be cut down, I sent Mr Parkin along with their Agent yesterday to ascertain what quantity of wood must be cleared for the purpose, & find from him today, that owing to the steepness of the Bank a great deal of ground must be taken up to obtain the necessary slope, and that besides the full grown timber, a good deal of young wood must be removed which is not of sufficient growth to sell it to advantage. I therefore wrote to the Secretary proposing that the Company should purchase the whole of the Wood which it might be necessary to remove, by the valuation of Persons mutually chosen, as I had no authority to cut down so much Wood without knowing where I should find a Market for it. I do not discover that any stipulation has been made with the Railway Company, respecting the value of the Wood, but think it only right that

they should pay the full value of it, sh'd any loss accrue. I accompanied Mr Parker to mark out for Sale, several Ash Trees of full growth upon the Bank near the ruin of Dilston, which will not improve by standing, & if judiciously removed will not injure the appearance of that romantic spot. Also went with Mr Hunt along the Tyne Banks to see what might yet be necessary for the future security of the Shores of the River. I deferred filling up the Plantation on the Tyne Banks this Season, for having sold a fall of Wood in the same Ground, the young trees would have been injured by removing it, & the whole will be cleared for planting together in the Spring of 1835.

28 Mar 1834 John Grey

Good Friday

Filled up Cheques for the salaries & Pensions due on the 31st. wrote several Letters & made arrangements for my absence while on the Northern Estates, providing the Accounts & Stamps necessary for the Rent Day at Belford.

Mr Dickinson went yesterday to the Office at Hexham to get a Stock of Stamps for the approaching Rents, but could not yet obtain payment for the old Stamps that were called in, amounting to £13.5.3 which I hoped would have been allowed. Mr Todd of Rawgreen has applied to know if any answer has been returned from the Board to his Petition to have the rent of his farm reduced for this year to the sum it may let for the next. I have not received any.

29 Mar 1834 John Grey

Saturday 29th March

Went early to Hartburngrainge & found the boring for Coal which I had sanctioned, not so far advanced as I anticipated. The Metal which the Workmen had got into indicated the vicinity of Coal, but as yet they have not touched the Seam. I examined all the Woodland along the Northern boundary of the Estate which consists of a Bank, in many parts very steep, bounded by a Stream. Some parts of the Wood are thriving & good & much improved by having had the undergrowth cut out for Corf Rods. But in other parts, the trees have not got forward, either from the fences having been neglected or from their being choked at first by hazels & brushwood. As the Ground is partially wooded & is of no use for any other purpose, it will be adviseable to have it cleared of all the rubbish in the autumn & filled up with useful kinds of Trees at the same time that that part will have to be planted from which the Lot of Wood I lately sold will be removed. The Tenants here as elsewhere complain of the present prices of Grain being most incompatible with the present Rents.

31 Mar 1834 John Grey

Monday 31st

Heard from the Secretary of the Rail Way Co that they agreed to purchase the Wood in Capons Cleugh by valuation, which will be an accommodation to us & I hope no inconvenience to them, as they have occasion for much for their own use. I had occasion to go today to Alnwick to meet some parties respecting a trust affair which remained unsettled when I left the Country and rode up in the evening 25 Miles to Millfield Hill.

1 Apr 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 1st April

Attended the exhibition of the Border agricultural Society at Kelso, of which I was one of the first promoters & most successful competitors; & where being no longer a Candidate for Premiums, I had been solicited to be a Judge for Awarding them. The exhibition of Stock, Seeds and implements, as well as the respectability and intelligence of Farmers on the Borders, form rather an unfavourable contrast with those on the Tyne. After the Show we dined a Party of 200, Lord John Scott taking the Chair as a substitute for the Marquis of Lothian.

2 Apr 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 2nd

Passed the day at Milfield Hill, with my eldest Son & some of the younger children. Having a Son of Sir Jn Sinclair & some Agriculturalists from the north with us, examining his farming & Stock.

3 Apr 1834 John Grey

Thursday 3rd

Attended the Agricultural Show of Glendale Ward, at Wooler, where I had so often presided, & where I again found myself in the Chair, surrounded by a multitude of old friends. a great quantity of superior Stock was exhibited for Sweepstakes of all kinds &

for sale. The market for fat Cattle & Sheep, is rather on the decline. Heard today from Mr Fenwick of his intention of meeting the Scremerston Tenants at Belford on tuesday next respecting the answer to the claim for Tythe, & wishing to see their Leases or Agreements, I therefore gave notice to such as I met at Wooler, to bring them in their pockets as well as their money.

4 Apr 1834 John Grey

Friday 4th

Heard from Mr Johnson that he had appointed Mr Walton to value Capons Cleugh Wood on the part of the Rail way Co. I wrote to him to suggest that to prevent any delay which might arise from a difference of opinion between Mr Walton & Mr Parkin, they two had better take a third man with them at the first, as Umpire, provided the proceeding should obtain the sanction of the Board. Rode to Scremerston & looked over Mr Thomsons extensive farm. He complains of the great loss he must sustain by it this year, which is indeed unavoidable. And one cannot but regret that such should be the case, with a farm in such a creditable state of cultivation. I then proceeded to Mr Hogarths, & found that the man who had undertaken to fill up the large Quarry & restore the land in a Field near Mr Hogarths House, had discovered what I foresaw from the first that his Offer to do it for £25 was very inadequate, & that having received that amount by instalments from Mr Hogarth, & become liable for £5 more to his men, had determined to relinquish the job, unless he could be paid by days wages. I therefore agreed to remain all night that he might be sent for and meet me in the morning.

5 Apr 1834 John Grey

Saturday 5th April

At six o'clock went to the Quarry and met the undertaker whom I found to be an old acquaintance, that had once had been employed to do some work upon my property in that neighbourhood & of whom I entertain a bad opinion. His apology for having given in to Mr Hogarth so inadequate a tender, was, that he expected, as it was the Hospitals doing, the men would be allowed their weekly wages and it would not signify whether the Job could be completed for the sum or not. I told him that such was not my way of doing business, and though I regretted that the poor man whom he had employed, should lose £5 which he declared, and I believe truly, that he could not pay them, he sh'd not have another farthing. That I knew it was of no use attempting to force him to complete the Job, as he had not the means, but that if the man whom he had hired would send me by Mr Hogarth to Belford on Tuesday, a fair offer for

completing it, under Mr Hogarths inspection, I would let it to them, but that he should have nothing to do with it. I think it ought to be done now for £15.0.0. After looking at Mr Hogarths Farm, I passed on to Mr Pringles & found that he had gone on to some fishing which he has at Tynemouth, an occupation which he seems greatly to prefer to that of attending to his farm, if one may judge from its appearance. I passed along the line of Rail way from the Colliery to the Jetty at Spital, which is all in good order. Then crossed over to Berwick & found the market exceedingly lifeless. Afterwards proceeding up the south side of the Tweed & looked over my Estate of West Ord & reached the Milfield Hill at a late hour & after a long days riding.

7 Apr 1834 John Grey

Monday 7th April

Heard from Mr Parker that he & Mr Crawhall had fixed the price of Lead for the bygone quarter at £16.10.... I hoped from the late advances the average for the quarter would have been rather higher than that, as I know some parties who sell by the average of the whole year, I shall try to discover how our prices agree with theirs. Taking my Son with me, I rode across the Country to the Spindlestone Estates, examining the draining at Outchester now finished, which I had given him charge of, as well as some young hedges upon that farm, which having been planted within seven years, are under our care. These he has had scoured and dressed, with thorns set in front to protect them from Cattle, so that they will not require much more from the Hospital. The Cottages for Farm Servants at Glororum are old & in bad condition, especially that occupied by the bailiff, which is a part of the old Farm House & is barely habitable from sheer decay. This I fear of necessity must be taken down and a comfortable Cottage for the Bailiff built in its stead. But before deciding upon what ought to be recommended respecting the half dozen others, I have directed my son to get them examined by a Mason & send me his report. If the Walls are found sufficient to stand for a Lease, it may be worthwhile to have the roofs, doors, windows etc renewed, but of this I am doubtful. The Lime Kiln at Spindlestone which is for the common benefit of the tenants, is sadly out of repair & hardly capable of being used. I am told that it gave way soon after being built by Bewcastle, & has always been propped & patched since. As it was full of burning Lime, I cld not see it's Condition, but the Tenants say it wants lining with Bricks throughout, & they would like it to be done early, especially Mr Borthwick, who intends going over Chesterhill with a strong Lining at the commencement of his Lease. Mr Nairn undertook as soon as it shd be empty to have it examined by a person engaged in Lime Works upon the Coast near Bambro' who is likely to advise as to what may be needful.

8 Apr 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 8th April

Examined the new flooring, Spouts etc which had been done at Waren Mill, but as the Work is not finished, deferred making the allowance for it till the next rent day. Mr Nairn carries on a great business here with great spirit, & I trust with benefit to himself, as it certainly is to the neighbourhood. These Mills were formerly worked entirely by Water, but from the draining of the County generally & especially of two bogs to the west Three fourths of the work is now done by steam. Rode through Chesterhill Farm & thence to Belford where I met all the Tenants except Major Johnson who had written to say that he was in Newcastle & would wait upon me at Corbridge, & Mr Pringle, who never attends on such occasions. With this exception, I had a better receipt than I could have anticipated in such Markets. We had a very pleasant & respectable party at dinner, including my Son George, the Bank Agent & Mr Fenwick, who had come from Newcastle to meet the tenants upon the Claim for Scremerston Tithes, but the absence of Mr Pringle & the want of the proper Leases, as set forth in Mr Bicknells answer, but which cannot be found, rendered his going negatory. It seems that there has never been a Lease or Agreement for the Colliery Farms, but merely a letter from the Receivers. And for the others, accepted Proposals. In the evening rode up to Fowberry Tower to sleep, where being met by my Gig from Milfield Hill on

Wednesday 9th Drove to Corbridge 52 Miles

10 Apr 1834 John Grey

Thursday 10th

Was engaged with various Letters and accounts, which had accumulated in my absence. Walked out afterwards to see what had been done in cutting the foundations and drains for the new House, to examine the state of the Dam at Dilston Mill, & see the Road Surveyor respecting the Walls he is building along the sides of the new Road, the Coping of which I did not consider to be sufficient without being pointed with Lime, which he agreed to. Received from Messrs Murray an estimate of the repairs necessary at Woodhall & Plankey Mills. The Cylinder at Woodhall is absolutely & immediately necessary, & the Water & Pit Wheels at Plankey so rotten that they are in danger of going to pieces daily & perhaps damaging by their bad condition, other parts of the Machinery. An Oak had been cut down in the Wood long ago for the purpose of repairing this Wheel, but never yet applied. It would probably be well to do what is needful at the beginning of the new Leases, by which the Tenants must be bound to maintain the Machinery in good repair. I have not obtained any other Estimate, & therefore cannot say that a lower than Murrays might not be had, but he has done the

Work at Alston & Newlands Mills so well that I think it would not be wise to employ an inferior hand. The Estimates I shall send for the Boards inspection.

11 Apr 1834 John Grey

Friday 11th

Examined with Benson the Plan he has prepared of a small but compact farm house, & the Estimates received for building it, which will altogether Cost about £230. The old house is found to be so bad as to be incapable of repair. Rode through Highwood & Westwood Farms, & proceeded to Coastley for the purpose of fixing up on the cheapest & mode convenient situation for build a Turnip house & some Pig Styes. Also to look at & advise the Tenant as to the management of a steep Field which I have bound him to fallow & Lime in good style, for the purpose of laying it to permanent grass. I went out to the high Ground also, where draining is wanted, to see if the drains could not be laid in such direction, as to Empty themselves into a course which would bring the Water into the Reservoir for the Machine, which is so scantily supplied, which I found no difficulty in effecting.

12 Apr 1834 John Grey

Saturday 12th April 1834

Rode over the Farms in Hexhamshire to look into some draining & the dressing of some old & ruinous hedges, with the hope of restoring them to the condition of useful fences. And especially to examine the ruinous stone fences at Gairshield, for the purpose of deciding which of them it will be prudent to abandon & which it will be necessary to rebuild. The stormy winds of this season have rendered the farmhouse scarcely habitable, having shaken & opened the West Gable & roof, and driven some large stones from the tops of the Chimnies into their vents so as to fill them up. This house, though not old, is the worst Specimen of Mason work I ever met with - and is quite of a piece with the fences, which are chiefly of Stone. I took a long walk through the extensive Plantations at the extremity of this high laying property, which have been partially thinned this Season, but wants still a good deal more. Except that they have been much too thick, they are wonderfully thriving, & if young wood could be readily sold thereabouts, one would be inclined to plant more, the Land being of so little value otherwise. I was struck at enquiring at Rawgreen for the Tenant, Mr Todd, to be told by his daughter that he had been found dead in his bed that morning. He had been unwell for some time, but no apprehension had entertained of his death. He has left a family some of them grown up. I have also to report the death of old Mr Coats of Haydon Bridge, who was in receipt of a Pension of £20 from the Hospital.

14 Apr 1834 John Grey

Monday 14th April 1834

Heard from the Rail Way Co. that they had agreed to my Proposal that the Wood to be cut in Capons Cleugh should be valued jointly by Mr Walton on their part & Mr Parkin on ours, they two having the power to appoint an umpire if they think fit. I expect that the value of the wood will be £200 or upwards. Heard also from Mr Beaumonts Agent that he had paid to my Credit £94.7.11 for Andw Thorburn & £53.6.9 for Mark Maughan, on account of their carriage of Ore, for which I had obtained their orders. Maughan paid besides £65 of his Arrear last week, so that we shall get clear with him. He & his family are most industrious & desirous of doing well. Thorburn also paid £25, but he will have greater difficulty. However I must work it out as well as I can. I was detained at home most of the day by the arrival of Major Johnson, who entered into fruitless discussions upon the subject of his various claims real or supposed, as contained in a Letter which I herewith send. With no part of which I could have any thing to do, or pass any opinion upon, save the two last items, for money expended in repairing the old water Level, which I was aware would prove an expensive, as it was a dangerous & most disagreeable work, & one which it was difficult to get men to undertake. On this head I examined Johnsons under viewer, at Scremerston, who had himself explored the Level & made his way through the rubbish & fallen Arch, with great difficulty. Some of the charges in the Account delivered seemed to me to be high & I decided upon submitting them to Mr Fenwick's inspection, as he is acquainted with the kind of Work before allowing them. Our discussion terminated by his consenting to pay into the Banks to my Credit £437.10.0 as the half years rent due, for which I shall give them a receipt, when I find the payment has been made, leaving the Balance till he can have some communication with the Board on the subject of his claims. All Sea Sale Collieries are now subject to heavy Losses & labouring under great Depression, and I suspect it is found that in the present state of the Market, the coarse Coal of Scremerston is not a remunerating article.

15 Apr 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 15th April

Settled with Mr Parkin the accounts for fitting and planting at Cowey Sike or Grindon Hill & for thinning the Plantations in Hexhamshire. Mr Green the Architect having come from Newcastle, we met the Contractors at Dilston & in compliance with their fancy, witnessed the depositing a newspaper & some insignificant Coins & laying the first Stone of the house by my boy Charles, which was concluded by three Cheers & my

ordering some Ale for the Workmen in the evening. Mr Green engaged to prepare another Plan to forward to Greenwich in a few days. I afterwards proceeded to see the progress of the building & water course for the new Saw Mill, & the road to it, which the Lessees propose to adopt. Then went to examine the repair of the boundary Fence on Dilston Hall Farm & other fences & draining upon that and New Town South Farm which are at present in hands.

16 Apr 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 16th April

Received a Petition to the Commissioners for Reduction of Rent from Thomas Watson of Lees, & Mr Pickering of Woodhall Mill, which I herewith send. [accompanied in the margin by faint pencil annotations which appear to say 'Watson <former> rent £388 <.....> to 288 Pickering's former 277 <....> 190 Rejected'] Their farms have been let upon reduced terms from May Day next. Also an application from the tenants of Throckley, praying to be allowed the sum of £19.16.2 which is their share of a rate levied in the Parish of Newburn, for enlarging, repairing & painting the Church of Newburn, in addition to the payment of their annual Church rate, which I also refer to the Board. I was surprised to learn some days ago that Mr Hind who occupies the public house near Dilston, & who had regular notice to quit at May Day, refuses to go out, upon the ground that he is entitled to hold it till Martinmas. Having obtained what information I could respecting the terms of his occupancy, I stated a lease & requested Mr Fenwick to give me his opinion upon it, both of which I now lay before the Board & shall act by their directions. Old Teasdale reckons upon getting into Hinds House at May Day, & vacating that which is hereafter to be occupied by Mr Hunt, but which I shall have to take possession of for want of a better, while the new one is being built. Hinds obstinacy therefore may throw us all into confusion. Not having received the Board's direction in the case of Rowell of Highbarns, & the near approach of May Day rendering it necessary to fix & advertise the time for selling their Farm Stock, I sent Mr Hunt to them today, to decide upon a vacant day & send off an advertisement with the understanding that unless the Board should sanction some arrangement of their debt, to be previously entered into, the process of the Sale should be paid to me on Account of the Hospital.

17 Apr 1834 John Grey

Thursday 17th April 1834

Received another Petition to the Board signed by a number of Tenants, complaining of hard times & a reduction of Rent. Finding that a quantity of Bottles & Crucibles, with

some Spirits of Salts, Potass etc are occupying an apartment at Langley Mills which the Lessees wish to have possession of, I proposed to them to buy the whole But they only offered £5, which seems very little for the number of Articles, although the expense of packing & removing takes much from their value. I have asked the Auctioneer to examine them & advise me whether it is likely that we should be repaid for the trouble & cost of packing & conveyancing them to Hexham or Newcastle to sell in Lots by Auction, as few purchasers are likely to be found for the whole.

Went out to inspect the various Works going on at Dilston in building, road making etc for which this weather is remarkably favourable, though the farmers complain of its being too dry.

18 Apr 1834 John Grey

Friday 18th April 1834

Heard from Mr Stephens that he had completed the delivery of Duty Ore for the last Quarter, to Messrs Wilson & Co. The whole Quantity weighed have been 674 Bings, & the duty upon it 105 Bings and 1/2 a Cwt.

Had by appointment an interview with the Lessees of Stublick Colliery & a long discussion arising out of an application which had been made to them on the part of Mr Beaumont's Agent, to supply him with Coals for Smelting, in case of his renting the Low Mill at Langley from the present Lessees, at a lower rate than that which their Lease prescribes, at the fixed price at which the Hospitals Lessees at Langley Mills are to be supplied. Having had no intimation from the Lessees of Langley Mills of their wish or intention to sublet any part of them, the inference is that they consider themselves at liberty to do so without especial permission from the Board. And on examining the Dft Lease in the Office, I find no clause prohibiting it, but until I am apprised of their intentions, it would be premature of me to interfere in the matter. It is a fact I believe that the party now occupying Langley Mills are not very popular & are regarded as Monopolists in the Mining district, from which cause they have less employment in Smelting than anticipated. The Mills therefore not being fully employed, it would doubtless be an advantage to the district if some part of them was let to any one who would keep them at work, & in such case, there could be no objection, I imagine, to furnish such party with Coals at the prescribed prices, but not at lower, as it makes no difference whether the Ore Smelted passes under the name of one party or of another. The Lessees of Stublick Colliery are bound by their Lease to supply Mr Beaumont with 416 Fothers of Reducing Coal at 8s/- Per Fother and 2000 Fothers of Common Coal at 4s/- but this I believe was granted as a set off, for his giving up a Lease of Low Stublick, & could have nothing to do with such a transaction as is now contemplated. And should he become a tenant of any part of Langley Mills, I do

not think that the Colliery Lessees would be entitled to demand a higher price, or authorised in taking a lower one for Coals supplied to the Mills on his account, than that at which they are furnished to the present Lessees, whose representative he would in fact become. I declined giving any opinion on the subject to the Colliery Lessees until I should learn what arrangement about the Mills it was intended to make when I might probably think it necessary to ask Mr Fenwicks opinion, by whom the Leases were drawn, as to the right which the party had to sublet, & other matters connected with this subject, that I might be prepared to lay them before the Board.

19 Apr 1834 John Grey

Saturday 19th April 1834

Sent the Moor Masters Reports along with my Journal and other papers to the Board. The Tyne being remarkably low, I took the opportunity of examining to the foundation all the Wears & Works that have been made & found them quite safe, the only effect of the Winter floods having been to cut into the sandy Soil near the top of the Banks, where the slope was not sufficient & the surface very loose. I trust that this source of expense to the Hospital & anxiety to me, will hereafter be much abated, although it must always continue to be a cause of watchfulness & care. I afterwards inspected the Works going on at Dilston & then looked over the Farms of Thornbrough. In that occupied by Mr Scott, although he is one of our best tenants, I found a strong hedge so barbarously cut as almost to insure its destruction. I shall therefore direct Mr Hunt to send our Hedger to go over it again, & try if they cannot be induced by shame of their own work, to follow a better method.

21 Apr 1834 John Grey

Monday 21st

Having applied to Mr Wailes to know if he could give me any information as to the ground of Hind's refusal to quit the premises at Dilston & having heard from him that no agreement sanctioning his continuance till Martinmas was ever entered into, and that Mr Wailes never knew if such a deviation from the general practice of the Estates, I thought it proper to send Hind a notice in writing that his persisting in holding the premises after May Day would be followed by an action of ejectment. He is a man of remarkable obstinacy and although that would form no apology for my doing anything harsh or unfair, neither does it afford a reason for my submitting to be defied and bullied by a foolish, drunken old man. Went to see the works at Dilston & meeting a coach there, proceeded in the afternoon to Carlisle, where I had been solicited to act as a Judge in the distribution of Premiums, along with two other Gentlemen, from

Yorkshire & Dumfriesshire, at the first meeting of the East Cumberland agricultural Society.

22 Apr 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 22nd

Was engaged till four oclock in examining the various kinds of Stock exhibited - in deciding upon their respective merits & making up the Award of Premiums, afterwards dined in a party of 150 & spent a pleasant evening making acquaintance with several Proprietors as well as farmers in the district.

23 Apr 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 23rd

Rose at 5 and left to Carlisle, looking in my way home, at the commencement to build the farmhouse at Whitechapel. Mr Howden, the builder, had begun to work Stones from a piece of rock so near the turnpike as to occasion inconvenience & perhaps danger. His object was to get to the stones without breaking much ground & its a situation which would occasion little leading to the tenant. I warned him of the blame he might incur & that if any damage should arise, the Hospital could have nothing to do with it, he having taken it upon himself & without my permission to work stone there. He stated however that he had the consent of the Road Surveyor who was quite satisfied with the precaution he used, in closing up the place at night etc. I then proceeded to Haydon Bridge & informed Mr Richmond who has been elected Head Master of the Charity School there, on Mr Birkett having succeeded to the Living of Ovingham so long held by his father, that he might occupy the Grass Land as held hitherto by Mr. Birkett, at the rent which he had paid ie £10 a year, which is I think its value - returned to Corbridge & attended to business in the Office.

24 Apr 1834 John Grey

Thursday 24th

Went to Coupland Castle to attend the funeral of its owner which was rendered the more melancholy that that of his wife had only preceded his own by six days. He was cut off in the prime of life, at least in his 47th Year. We were of the same age & had been friends and neighbours from our youth, acting together in many public capacities. I could not therefore refuse to comply with his dying request, that I would

act as a Trustee & Guardian of his Children, giving my Colleagues however to understand that though I should be willing to advise as to the education of the poor Orphans & the management of the Estates, my personal attendance must not be generally expected.

25 Apr 1834 John Grey

Friday 25th

Passed the day at Milfield Hill. Having received the Boards Minutes of the 2nd Instant, wrote to inform Mr Thomson that they had given the fullest consideration to the case in dispute respecting the price of Coals delivered to him by the Lessees of Scremerston Colliery & could not interfere therein. And to Mr Hogarth, in answer to his petition for a reduction of Rent, that the only relief that can be granted him is, that the farm should be valued & relet. Saw the Mason who had accompanied my Son in an examination of the Cottages at Glorum. They state that three of them which are only one Storey high, may with little repair, be made to last for a Lease, but that five others, the walls of which had been originally built at a distant period of Stone & Clay, & upon which at a later time a building of additional height to obtain a Granary above, had most incautiously been erected, are in a condition dangerous to the occupiers as Mrs Thomson had represented. no use had been made of the Granary for a long time, the Walls having seperated [sic] from the Timber in many places. The Wood of the Roof they report to be foreign & in good state so as to admit of being used again & also a good many of the Pantiles. As there seems no alternative but to build new Cottages I would recommend that they should be placed in a more convenient situation at a little distance from the farm Offices & that they should be made only one Storey high, as there is a fair share of Granary over the Cattle Sheds, & it is neither safe nor desirable to keep Corn over Cottages. The old Materials will go far to build the new houses, but as the farm Servants cannot in the mean time be dispensed with, it will be necessary to build two Cottages first, & then by removing the occupiers, get the materials of the vacant houses to apply to the building of others, & so on progressively. The part of the old farm House too which has been left & is occupied as a back Kitchen & Dairy to the new one, is in a state of such rottenness & decay as to be dangerous, the Wood having broken in & being now standing upon props. To have given the necessary accommodation would have cost little, had it been done when the present house was built, which was only a few years ago but it is such a curious & inconvenient structure, consisting of two rooms on a floor, carried up in the shape of a square tower with windows on all sides, that it is not easy to add to it. I must take an early opportunity of examining these matters particularly upon the spot, which I could not do at present, not having made arrangement for a longer absence, & to try to fall up the cheapest & best plan of arranging these buildings & getting the Lime Kiln put into a condition to be useful to the tenants which is much complained of.

Saturday 26th April 1834

Returned by Newcastle to Corbridge.

28 Apr 1834 John Grey

Monday 28th

A day of constant rain which will please the farmers & give me an opportunity of writing Letters & bringing up my work in doors. The Tenant of Allerwash Mill came to me by appointment as I wished to be assured if he could obtain any security to give me, for the payment of Arrears & rent due at May Day next, as if not, I must take means before allowing him to quit, to get as much as possible from his effects. He did not bring anyone along with him for that purpose, so I gave him till Friday morning next for him to do so, when if he should not succeed, I must be obliged to make a seizure. In the mean time, I shall send Mr Hunt to take an Inventory, to see that nothing is removed. Consulted Mr Parkin about weeding some plantations to get Larch railing and requested it to be peeled, which means it lasts so much longer, although the present price of that kind of bark, barely covers the expense of peeling. I can only be offered £2.15- per ton for it, to be delivered at Newcastle. Advised him as the time of payment that should be stipulated for, in valuing over Capons Cleugh Wood to the Rail way Company, and learnt from him, that all the Woodmen had agreed to the reduction of 3/- per Week from their Wages after 12th May next. Saw a Sketch made by Benson for the back building at the public house at Throckley which I directed him to proceed with. Being requested by the Boards minute of the 2nd April, received last week, to report upon the case of Coulson's Arrears, I am of opinion that considering the extraordinary rent which he engaged to pay & the great fall of prices, it would be by no means unreasonable, that upon his making good the remainder he should be allowed to pay for the last year & the present, at the same rate as he has engaged for hereafter - viz £550. I recommend this reduction the more readily, because he has done more for his farm than many tenants in more favorable [sic] circumstances.

29 Apr 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 29th

Rowell of the High Barnes, came to the Office as I had requested with a relation who has a considerable [sic] Farm in the neighbourhood, to give their joint security for the payment of £800 to be accepted according to the Boards Minute, in full of Rent Arrears due by the Rowells. But as the sale of their Farm stock is to take place on the 7th May, I thought it better to take their engagement to pay over to me all Cash and Bills which

they may receive, & to give me their joint promissory Note, on the following day for the remainder, whatever it may be.

Wrote an advertizement to the Newcastle Papers, fixing the Rent Days to be at Shaw House on the 19th at Haydon Bridge on the 21st and 22nd and at Alston on the 30th May. As a general principle, I think it better that the rents should be collected within the half years, i.e. before May Day and Martinmas - but considering the difficulties which Farmers have now to contend with, I made the arrangement for this time, so as to give them the benefit of Stagshaw Fair on the 17th May & Alston Fair on the 29th & I trust it will have a good effect upon the receipts. I also advertized again the Lot of Wood in Whittle Dean, which is the only one now that that in Capons Cleugh is to be taken at a valuation by the railway Co, which has not been sold. Rode through the newly planted Grounds to see the Trees, which now begin to show signs of Life, of which the continued drought and frost since they were planted caused me to entertain some fears. The present rains will I hope save them. We are getting the fences repaired, where needful, to prevent them from trespass.

30 Apr 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 30th April

Received the Boards Minutes & answered at length to Mr Jay the Queries respecting the appointment of Solicitors- the Memorial of the the Throckley Tenants regarding their Church loss etc. I have received a circular inviting the Proprietors in the Parish of Haltwhistle, to make good a sum expended by a Committee in building a Bridge there, which Circular I send herewith. The Hospital has little property in the Parish, & cannot fairly be expected to contribute much to such an object, especially as it remains to be proved whether or not the funds have been judiciously expended. Received a Notice from Robson, Tenant of the Nursery Ground at Alston, of his intention to quit it at Martinmas next, on account of which I conceive it must be advertized in due time & tenders taken in by the Commissioners.

Had an interview with the Lessees of Langley Mills, who report the condition of the Water Wheel & Case to be very bad & are desirous of having it renewed at present, when the Mills are off work. The necessity of this renewal was contemplated some years ago, & a part of the Materials provided at the time, which still remains in Burnetts Yard at Newcastle - & their Lease guarantees them in the amount of £150 towards the expense of the Work. I therefore agreed with the Lessees that the Work should be done under their direction, as they will have the surplus to pay, That they shall take the Materials formerly provided by the Hospital at the valuation of Millwrights mutually chosen. That an account of the total cost shall be exhibited, when the Work is finished, when it is to be examined by a person appointed by the

Hospital, to report upon its sufficiency and value. Mr Wilson again urged upon my consideration the advantage to the District & to the Estates of Newlands & Whittonstall where there is a great deal of Wood, of the projected Road up the Derwent, for which as yet an adequate subscription has not been obtained. I told him that I was fully aware of the facilities it would afford, having compared the new line with the old, but that my opinion on the subject was already before the Commissioners.

1 May 1834 John Grey

Thursday 1st May 1834

Heard from Mr Nairn that he had got the Limekiln at Spindleston examined by a Mason accustomed to Kilns, who reported it to be in want of lining throughout, and otherwise faulty in construction. His estimate for the necessary repair is £36.10.0. I wrote to Mr Nairn asking him to be good enough to obtain other Estimates for the work alone, as the Tenants who use the Kilns must lead the Materials. Rode to Bagraw to see the tenant who leaves at May day & had not come to settle his rent and Arrears. He promises to pay some Money next week & to bring me an order from Langley Mills for the amount due to him for Lead Carriage, after which, there is the growing Crop, as security for the remainder, which if unpaid at harvest, I may sell by auction. In this way I hope to get clear with him, without the exposure to him & unpleasantness to me of selling him off.

Proceeded to East Elrington to look at some repairs needful at the farm house, but to small extent, thence to Woodhall where Mr Hunt has commenced some draining which produces a great deal of Water & promises to be very effective. The present tenant entered to this farm last May & found the land and fences in miserable order. Some of the latter I found it necessary to renew, & caused Mr Hunt to pay particular attention to the planting & care of the young Thorns - yet on my journey there today, I had the provocation of seeing a thick old hedge cut or rather hacked down, in the barbarous mode of this country, & even worse than that, bad as it is, in spite of all the instruction they have had the example of good cutting, by an experienced Hedger. In consequence of which, I shall take care that no further expense shall be incurred in making new hedges for one who takes such effectual means of spoiling the old.

Examined Woodhall Mill, with a view to ascertain the necessity for all the items contained in Murray's Estimate, & found them to be very bad with the exception of two of inferior consequence, in which a reduction may be made. Proceeded homeward through the farms of Langholm & Coastley, inspecting at the latter, the working in fallow of a steep Field which it is proposed to lay off to permanent pasture, for which the Hospital is to pay for the Lime & Grass seeds; and the draining wch I had formerly marked out, with the double view of drying a tract of cold & wet land which the tenant

is bringing into cultivation by paring & burning, & at the same time adding to the supply of Water for Thrashing at a cheaper rate than carrying it by an aqueduct across the Bogle dean, as projected. The former I am sure will be effected, & the latter too in some measure though the quantity of water produced by draining is too small for such a purpose.

2 May 1834 John Grey

Friday 2nd May

The previous state of Fourstones Colliery & the near termination of the Lease of Brokenheugh, as well as the intricacy of Stublick under it peculiarly desirable that their condition should be viewed by a professional Man. Mr Fenwick the present Viewer, has I believe more to do than is consistent with his Age & the state of his health, and it can be no object with him to give his attendance to concerns apparently so trifling. My enquiries had been directed to discover some younger Viewer, of skill & experience, who would be willing to undertake the occasional examination of the Collieries at a moderate charge for his time and expenses. One who was recommended, I rather objected to, on account of his being employed in a concern which Major Johnson is a Partner. Another, Mr Forster, to whom no such objection exists, has been represented as a most suitable person, by Mr Morton of Lambton, & I wrote to him today desiring him to explain the matter to Mr Forster, & describe the concerns, & to desire him, should he be willing to undertake it, to inform me upon what terms he would do so.

Went out to see the progress of the Brick Yard & the quantity of Land occupied by it, for which the tenant must be compensated by the Lessee; as well as to urge him to get us an early supply of Bricks, which he promises in three weeks hence. Then went with Mr Parkin to arrange for the peeling of Bark & fix the price per ton that should be given for the work, & to examine the Woods on the Western boundary of the Dilston Estate, which have been gone through with thinning, & are in a much improved condition.

3 May 1834 John Grey

Saturday 3d

Took a long ride today through the Farms in Whittonstall, making arrangements with the Tenants for procuring the Lime to be allowed them by the Hospital, with a Check Book to show every Lead brought from the Kiln, which I or Mr Hunt at any time see and compare with the Lime laid in the fields in heaps of 3 Loads each. Also taking a survey of the farm buildings and of their management generally. And justice compels me to state that in spite of the disadvantages in point of climate & soil, which they have

to contend with, they are as a body the best farmers upon the property, whereas those occupying the good Lands of Dilston are the very worst. This may perhaps be accounted for by the experience of the former, teaching them that poor Soils, unless well cultivated, will yield them no produce, while the latter act upon the mistaken principle, that their good soils will produce tolerable crops, though neither well worked nor well cleaned, not considering how well they would be paid by the additional produce, for the application of more labor and the adoption of a better system.

5 May 1834 John Grey

Monday 5th May

The Tenant of Allerwash Mill having failed to produce any security, I sent Mr Hunt off early this morning with a warrant to distrain his goods & put them in the possession of some one, to prevent their being removed, until he shall produce the Money or the time comes for selling them. At six o'clock rode out to Thornbrough & examined the state of the fences upon the farm of Highbarns, which poor Rowell is using greater exertion to leave in repair than is the case with many who have more in their power. Returned to the Office & was engaged with Accts from Alston & with Murray the Millwright going over his Estimates for Woodhall Mill, in repairing which he is to try to make some reduction, I also engaged him to act on the part of the Hospital, in valuing the Materials for the Wheel at Langley Mills, that are to be taken by the Lessees. Past the remainder of the day among the Work people at Dilston. The weather is remarkably fine now & the appearance of the Country promising.

6 May 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 6th May 1834

Attended a Sale of the effects of the late Sir Charles Loraine to make some purchases on my own account. When there I had a meeting with the Party who have been boring for Coal at Hartburngrange, which is near to Kirkharle, & found that they had gone through a seam of good Coal 20 inches thick, but that before making any report upon it to me, they were putting down the bore rods in another situation, which is equally convenient & attended with as little trespass as the other, & where they hoped to find a thicker Seam.

7 May 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 7th May

Andrew Thorburn came early in the morning to give me information that a Person holding his Note for £100 had an execution out against him & was about to attack the Stock upon the premises. I forthwith executed an Order of Distress & sent it to the Woodman in Hexhamshire, Mr Hunt being at a distance in the Langley Barony, to put in force expecting to anticipate the proceedings of the other party, & secure our Rent & Arrears. Wrote to Major Johnson reminding him that he had not returned me the Account of money expended in repairing the Scremerston Water Level, which had been referred to Mr Fenwicks inspection, & that of course it could not be passed to his Credit. Went out to Thornbrough and saw the Sale by Auction of a part of the Rowell's Stock, which sold well being of a superior description to most in the neighbourhood, though on account of their declining circumstances, it has of late years been much reduced in quantity.

8 May 1834 John Grey

Thursday 8th May

Had another early visit from poor old Thorburn, informing me that in his absence yesterday, the Sheriffs Officer had attached his Goods & anticipated my warrant of Distress. Showing me an Inventory & valuation of the Stock, to prove that it was sufficient to defray his Debts & indemnify the Hospital, as well as to leave a surplus for him to continue the Farm of Gairshield with. I could not however act upon this representation so far as so allow of any part of the Stock being sold by the Creditor without first claiming the settlement of our Arrears & Rent up to last Martinmas, on account of which & the regular Notice of demand, were given to the Officer in possession of the Stock. As the Sale was under execution by the Sherriffs Warrant, may be made in three days after the seizure, & if not previously compromised will take place on Saturday, we cannot unfortunately include in our demand the rent for the present half year, which only becomes due on Monday next, & for which we may have no security save the ensuing Crops of Corn, should the Stock turn to bad account, as is likely on such short notice of Sale.

Mr Barwick, Surgeon in Haydon Bridge, who has succeeded Mr Hutchinson in the occupation of his house & part of Mrs Routledges Garden & Field, came to complain that the contumacious Lady will not allow him to put a Spade into the half of the Garden now attached to his house, but had removed some fruit trees out of it. And that she had disposed of the Hay grown upon the Hospitals Field to her brother, Mr Todd who is a Tenant of the Hospital at Tofts, without leaving him a particle of Manure instead. That on his remonstrating with Todd about removing the Hay

contrary to Mr Hunts promise to him unless an equivalent quantity of Manure should be restored, & on fastening the Gate against him, he took a Saw & cut it down in the middle. It is the Hospitals Gate of course.

I did not proceed to act upon this ex parté statement but promised to investigate the matter on the spot, on saturday first. Mrs Routledge has the character of being a quarrelsome & most unaccommodating person, whose removal would be blessing to the neighbours and her brother is somewhat of her disposition, accompanied by extreme greediness. I shall not soon forget the specious pretexts with which he attempted to induce me to grant him permission to plough an old Grass Field on his Farm, but which he gave up the moment I said that I should first examine it, well knowing that I shd at once see, as was the fact, that it would be a very great injury to the Farm, & could only be proposed with a view of obtaining an advantageous Crop or two, & then giving up the Lease. Rode out to see a boundary fence between the Dilston Estate & the Duke of Northumberland's to the West, which is in great need of repair, it is said to belong to the Hospital, as I think be some management or other nearly all the boundary fences & boundary roads do.

9 May 1834 John Grey

Friday 9th May

Rowells from High Barns came to the Office to pay the proceeds of their Sale, amounting in Cash & Bills at Six Months to £325 expecting to be able to give me some more on the rent day, at which time they will enter into security with their relation for the remainder. Mr Teasdale also brought me in like manner, Cash & Bills amounting to £102.3. After which the growing Crop will afford us ample security.

I went to Dilston with Benson to decide upon the repairs to be made in Teasdales house which must be set about immediately, as he leave it on Monday, & on the 1st June I must turn out here & go to it while the new one is building. Mr Hunt taking rooms in a neighbouring farm house during that time. On Monday too, Mr Dickinson must move into Shipleys house, which will have to serve him both for dwelling house & Office for a time, to the no small convenience of both parties. I trust however in the end, we shall all get comfortably settled. The Tenant of Allerwash Mill having found no means of discharging our claims, I was obliged to direct the Auctioneer to proceed tomorrow to sell his effects, in pursuance of a Notice given to the Excise & to the Public & fear from the small inventory that they will fall considerably short of the Hospitals demands.

10 May 1834 John Grey

Saturday 10th May 1834

Went to Haydon Bridge to attend a Meeting for letting the Tolls of the Suspension Bridge over the Tyne and other business. The Tolls of this Bridge have fallen off in consequence of the unproductive state of Fourstones Colliery. The Lessees of that Colliery & Lime Works having been accustomed to pay £120 a year of the £280 for which the Gate was met, but now offer only £60. It seems to me matter of regret that when so large a sum as £2500 was subscribed by the Hospital for the building of this Bridge, the whole cost of which was only £4000 it had not been suggested by the Receivers to claim an exemption for the carriage of Lime, as well as of other Manure, in the Act, which would have grown such an advantage to the Kilns at Fourstones as would have afforded good Interest to the Hospital for their advance, & which must have been at once conceded, as without that advance the Bridge could not have been erected.

Fourstones Lime Works are the only ones affected by this Toll, & are placed in a worse position than those approached by Hexham Bridge, in as much as other Tolls are only payable once a day, whereas this pontage is collected every time this Bridge is passed, so that if not altogether exempted, as I think Lime might have been it ought at least not to have been put upon a worse footing than at other Lime Works. Except in this instance however, the Bridge is unquestionably of immense benefit to all the Hospitals Property on that side of the Tyne. Our Tenant the Blacksmith at Westboat, near the end of the said Bridge, complained to me heavily of the sum he had to pay, in compounding for Horses coming to his Smithy; which I proved to the Trustees that they had exacted illegally ever since the Bridge was Built, their local Act containing no clause to supersede that in the General Act, which exempts from Toll all Horses etc going to or returning from being Shod, that have not traversed more than two Miles upon the turnpike. This they admitted, & the poor man will have redress for the future, though he will obtain no indemnity for the past. These Trustees & their Clerk at Hexham take things very easily.

I had Benson to meet at Haydon Bridge & decided with him, upon the easiest way of getting some more Stable room & a Shed for Gigs etc at the Anchor Inn. Examined the work which is nearly finished for bringing the Spring of Water from Esphill through the Alms Houses with a pipe for their use, to the Inn. This is a good thing, & Mr Hooper who suggested it, would have been gratified could he have seen it executed. I tried without much effect to reconcile the differences between Mrs Routledge & her neighbour, but for the destruction of the Gate & removal of the Hay, I must look to Mr Todd, her brother. Went with Benson to Lees to fix upon the situation of the Farm house which I thought it better to alter a little from that originally intended, but it is likely at some time, that a Water power, which can be easily commanded, may be substituted for a Horse one here & the House ought to be placed so as not to interfere with such an arrangement. I then crossed the Tyne & went to

Whitechapel the farthest point of the Property in that direction, where the new Farm House is in progress, of which Howden is making good Mason Work.

12 May 1834 John Grey

Monday 12th May 1834

Received from Mr Hunt the account & expenses of the Sale of the Millers goods at Allerwash, which left after paying for printed Notices & Auctioneers Charge £15.4.6 leaving a balance of £82.11.7 due to the Hospital at the present term, for which there is only a small patch of growing Corn of very little value. So much for converting an old Huntsman into a Miller. He has some claim, I think to be allowed the rental for two years of a Cottage amounting to five or six Pounds, which was to have been repaired, but has never been made habitable. But there is no likelihood of ever obtaining the residue from him. On this day we had the confusion of packing all our Books & Papers and removing the Office furniture to Dilston. Luckily the day was fine.

13 May 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 13th

Had an unlooked for visit from Mr Thomson of Scremerston who paid up his balance of Rent, £150 & spoke in despair of the condition of Farmers & the hopelessness of redeeming the large Capital he had invested. He was anxious to know if no reduction of Rent could be made to him, but I hold out no prospect of an exception being made in his favor to all those who have already petitioned on the same ground - & only recommended that against next autumn, if his prospects should be in no way improved he might apply to be released from his engagement. Mr Thomson is not only the most extensive, but beyond all question the best farmer upon the Hospital's Property, & this case deserves consideration if any one does. Mr Howden also came bringing me a Memorial in writing which I herewith send, relating to a fact which I was before aware of, that his predecessor in the farm had obtained permission from Mr Hooper to sow 11 or 12 Acres for away going Crop, more than by his Lease, he was intitled to. I never could learn upon what ground Mr Hooper made this grant, & I think it possible, that at the time, he was so little of an agriculturalist as not to consider that what he bestowed upon the one, he took from the other. Because Mr Howden should have had those 12 Acres in Pasture during his first Summer & then have ploughed them out for his Crop in the ensuing Spring, whereas being in Corn the first year, & left for him to fallow the second, he gets no produce from them for more than two years. Mr Howden is unquestionably entitled to compensation, & it would, I think, be better to make it by pecuniary allowance at once, than to allow it to go on & be a constant plea for over

cropping & infringement of covenants. Sent the Cash in hand to the Bank Agent in Hexhamshire, by Mr Hunt, on his way westward, who is much engaged at present in measuring draining & other work, that allowances may be made at the rent day. Went out myself to see after the arrangement of the Office pro tempore, met Benson & went with him over all the works going on there.

14 May 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 14th May 1834

William Hind paid his half years Rent but persisting in retaining the House, I wrote to Mr Fenwick, directing him to proceed by ejectment. Heard from Mr Hogarth of Scremerston, acknowledging my letter informing him that he could have no present abatement, but might surrender his Lease & try to agree for a new one. He proposed to come over and see me respecting it, but I wrote saying that no surrender could now be accepted before May 1835, & no valuation could be made till after the ensuing harvest. That I should attend to the matter, as soon after that as possible, if in the mean time he should write a Letter making a surrender of his present Lease. Rode through the Estates of Thornbrough, Newtonhall & Whittle. Seeing at the latter place that no unnecessary damage is done by working the Quarry for Railway blocks. The Tenant at Whittle has been unfortunate in losing some Cattle as well as a valuable Horse, by death, which he can ill afford, for though an industrious man, the appearance of the farm indicates a want of capital in its occupation.

15 May 1834 John Grey

Thursday 15th

Received from the Clerk of the Hexham Road Trustees £70, being the annual payment which they engaged to make to the Commissioners, due in the 13th instant. Having heard from Mr Morton that he had seen Mr Forster who had expressed his willingness to undertake the inspection of the Hospital Collieries I wrote to him describing the local situation & character of the various Collieries & asking him to inform me as to the terms upon which he would come to examine them. Went to do business at the Office at Dilston, preparing for the ensuing receipt of Rents, and afterwards to Hexham to get my Bank Book filled up etc. We have at length received an order from the Stamp Office, for an equivalent number of Stamps of the new impression to those we returned of the old.

16 May 1834 John Grey

Friday 16th

I enclosed to Mrs Grey of Whickham her half years payment of £25. Wrote to Mr Fenwick regarding the arrears due by Robinson of Needlesshall which should be now paid. Settled several accounts with Mr Parkin & Mr Hunt respecting the Woodlands, & with references to allowances for repairs, draining etc to be repaid to the Tenants at the receipt of their rents. My present distance from the Office is an inconvenience & waste of time, affording proof of the advantage of the new arrangement, when the house & Office will be under the same roof. An establishment in Hexham with a House at the distance of a Mile or two, as Mr Hopper suggested, would have been a great interruption to business & a useless occupation of time.

17 May 1834 John Grey

Saturday 17th May 1834

This being the Great Fair of Stagshaw Bank about a mile from Corbridge, with reference to which I deferred the Rent days in this part till the following Week, a suspension is put to all other business than what takes place there, where all the County is assembled. Prices for Stock were rather upon the decline, yet a great many Sales were effected. I had conversations with several Tenants, respecting matters connected with their Farms and the payment of their Rents, also with the Railway Agent concerning the line through Fourstones, which I wish them to lay nearer the River, as not more injurious to them, & less so to the Hospitals Property, which he seemed individually willing to accede to & promised that the attention of the Committee should be drawn to my suggestions before fixing the line definitively. He also undertook to let me know in a fortnight how Allerwash Mill would be affected by it, as upon that must depend the propriety of repairing it in its present situation. A fine rain came on which will be favorable for the Country, though it rather interrupted the business of the Fair.

19 May 1834 John Grey

Monday 19th May

Went to Dilston in the morning to arrange some matters in the Office & look after the Work people, returned to Corbridge to breakfast & write Letters - afterwards went to Shaw House to receive the Rents for the Estates to the East of Corbridge. We had a good muster of Tenants & a receipt quite equal to my expectations, though of course

there are many deficiencies. Two of the Hartburn Tenants, Thos. Brewis & Wm Davison, gave in written resignations of their farms. Mr Boyd, one of the Partners in the NCastle Bank attended, to whom I paid & £2040.6.3. We dined 18 in number at 1/2 past three & parted at six, an early hour for such an occasion, but these times tend to sobriety of mind & habits.

20 May 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 20th May

Went to the Office at Dilston & was engaged in various accounts respecting Rents, buildings etc and in looking to the repairs going on in Teasdales House, which is in a sad state of filth & disrepair & will hardly be made habitable by the time I shall require it. Returned by the Banks of the Tyne, where I am taking advantage of a great quantity of branches cut from the Lot of Wood that was sold there & with which I am filling up some holes in the plantation that have been made by floods, the surface of the Ground will be again restored.

Wednesday 21st

Drove in the morning to Haydon Bridge & was engaged all the day in receiving Rents & settling accounts with the Tenants.

22 May 1834 John Grey

Thursday 22nd

Began to business in the morning & did not get the Books closed till six in the evening, when I paid over to the Banker in attendance from Newcastle £8141.19.3. There are considerable arrears, as will be seen by the Rental Sheets, but not more than I anticipated. These times render it a distressing duty to have to exact rents. Those Tenants who do pay them, declaring that they do so from other sources than their farms. And those who have no other resource, not being able to pay them at all - a great number expressed their wish & the necessity they would be under to relinquish their Leases. This gives me the prospect of a laborious autumn, & what is of much more consequence, a great diminution of income to the Hospital. We had a large attendance on this day & a numerous company to dinner, which I left early, having been unwell & intending to set out at six in the morning. In this however I was disappointed for the close application & confinement of these rent days has brought the indisposition which I had hitherto striven against, to a crisis and after a night of deadly sickness, I was obliged to call in a Doctor. I was able to leave my Bed next afternoon & reached home in the evening.

Friday 23rd

Passed most of the day in bed, an occurrence which has not happened for years. In the evening, arranged my papers & answered the Letters that had come in my absence.

24 May 1834 John Grey

Saturday 24th

Finding myself considerably better, & being most anxious to give a meeting to my 60 Trustees under the Will of my late friend Mr Cully, respecting matters which threatened to involve us in a Suit in Chancery, I set out at five in the morning & proceeded to join their meeting at Whittingham. Afterwards proceeded to Milfield Hill & rested there till

Monday 26th

Having heard from the Spindleston Tenants that they were very desirous to have the use of the Lime Kiln as soon as possible, & Mr Nairn not having sent me the estimates for its repair, I wrote to him on the subject, desiring my Son to go & get it put forward immediately. Returned to Newcastle.

27 May 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 27th

Reached Corbridge at nine. Went to the Office at Dilston to look over the accounts & numerous papers which Mr Dickinson is engaged with, from the late rent receipts, and to obtain such as are necessary for me to carry to Alston. Went through the different Works going on there & returned by the levelling in the Tyne side Woods, which is nearly completed. Received Messrs Parkin & Waltons valuation of Wood in Capons Cleugh, to be removed on account of the railway, amounting to £240 which considering the difficulty of its removal, & the Offers previously made for the Lot of which this is only a part, I think it a good price. I consequently wrote to the Agent of the Company informing him that they should be at liberty to cut & remove the Wood, upon their giving me an undertaking for the payment of the estimated amount. I have also a Letter from Mr Beaumonts Agent from which I extract the following passage.

‘I have been in treaty with the Lessees of Blagill Mill, to rent it of them for the remainder of their Lease. Would the Commissioners object to extend the Term to Mr Beaumont, or would they be disposed to sell the Blagill Mill? It is considered by the Lessees that the High Mill is capable of Smelting all the Ore that will be at any time

raised in Alstonmoor, that they may safely let the Low Mill for the Term of their Lease, which I think has 13 years unexpired.'

To this I have replied that I should communicate his application to the Commissioners & convey him their answer. To sell one Mill, where the two are so closely connected, is I imagine, out of the question, but to have let them to different parties originally, taking the necessary precaution to secure at all times, the Smelting of their own Ore, would probably have been a preferable arrangement, in as much as it would have produced a greater competition for the purchase of Ore in Alstonmoor, a large consumption of Coal & Lime from the Hospitals Works, would have given more employment in carrying, to the Hospitals tenants & would have occasioned the circulation of a larger Capital in the District. In present circumstances, it might be adviseable to throw no impediment in the way of an arrangement between the Lessees of the Mills & Mr Beaumont during the present Lease, but I cannot think that it would be adviseable to enter into any engagement beyond its termination, as at that time it will probably be found advantageous to divide the Smelting Hearths among different parties. At present a great quantity of Ore raised in the Hospitals Mines is carried into other Districts to be smelted, which could come more conveniently to Langley, by which means the Hospitals Tenants lose the benefit of carrying both the Ore & Lead.

28 May 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 28th May 1834

When engaged in attending to Cash transactions and other matters in the Office at Dilston, was waited upon, not by the Miller of Dilston, who had not appeared at the Rent day, but by his Wife, manifesting great distress & saying that they had no money for me. That they had no trade & could make nothing by the Mill, and the price they had given for the growing Corn on coming to the place last spring was double of what it had produced. All this, I was obliged to confess was unfortunate, but then the Mill was good, & had been erected at great expense. The Corn grown in the neighbourhood was sold & the situation was good for business. How came it that they had no trade? The poor woman could only shed tears and regret that they could make nothing of it & must be quit. As to being quit, I told her they had lost the chance of that for the present, having allowed the May Day to pass, when all people had got themselves fixed in situations & there was little chance of finding a suitable tenant. That I pitied her, for whatever business was done, was of her doing, but that she could not be expected to manage such a concern to advantage. As for her husband he was good for little but drinking and smoking, & never should have engaged in such an undertaking. If they persist in refusing to pay rent, there is no alternative but to seize their property & then unless some friends should come forward to extricate them, it is

likely that loss may be incurred. Of all the Hospitals property, that of Corn Mills is the most unproductive & unsatisfactory.

Having arranged matters in the Office, I took the Coach, passing by to Alston. In the evening had a long interview with the Moor Master & Clerk of Deliveries, looking into the Mining produce etc. The Moormasters informed me that examining one of the Mines which had formerly been wrought to considerable extent, but has been lately very unproductive, he discovered that the party to save themselves the expense of drawing their refuse to bank, had stowed it away in an old drift, filling up the passage between one Shaft & another, and that on his insisting most properly upon its being opened out again they had abandoned the Mine. I have therefore desired Mr Bainbridge to write to the Parties, giving them notice of prosecution in case of their delaying to remove the obstruction, and have cautioned Mr Dickinson against ever again recommending any of them for trials under the Hospital, as to prosecuting them, I fear from all accounts they are not worth powder & Shot, being all poor Workmen, but such conduct must not be passed entirely over. I imagined from a Boards communication some time ago, that arrangements might ere now have been made with Mr Bainbridge, which would have allowed me to apply to him in such matters, without hesitation, but find that as yet he has had no communication on the subject of a Salary.

29 May 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 29th

Viewing the Nursery Ground, The House & fences of which are in bad repair. It would have been an advantage in letting it to have annexed to it a Pasture field for keep of a Cow & Horse, but at present that cannot be had. I shall now advertize it, directing all Tenders to be sent to Greenwich by the 6th day of August. My attention was called to the state of Pound Fold at Alston, which it is the duty of the Hospital to maintain, & I found it necessary to give Mr Dickinson directions to get a new Door & have the Walls repaired. Also to have something done to the Wall dividing the Millers Meadow from the Ground on which the Fairs are held, as in its present condition, he sustains damage from the Stock brought to the Fairs. Four Pounds will, I think cover the cost of both.

Rode up Garrigill looking through the several small Farms there till I reached the most distant one of Tynehead, where the infant Stream may be stepped over. I had never before had an opportunity of visiting this remote place. There is not an Acre of tillage upon the Farm, Grass being its only produce. The Cow houses are excessively bad, but may with a trifling repair, stand out the Lease. The Stone fences are likewise in a sadly dilapidated condition & to rebuild them all would consume the rent of many years to run. At a new letting, here as elsewhere, it will be necessary previously to determine upon what fences it may be prudent to restore & what to abandon & then bind the tenant to maintain them. Many are the claims among the tenants for upstairs

& additional accommodation, all of which I put off for the present, mainly directing that the roofs be put into such condition as to preserve the Houses from greater decay. The buildings upon the small properties in this part purchased some years ago by the Hospital are universally bad. When last in this part, there was hardly a Gate to be seen, but I desired Mr Dickinson to get some made at a season when Joiners have little employment, which he did for 2/- each, of Wood grown on the spot, for which the Tenants express their thankfulness. I had a meeting with Mr Horne the new Surveyor of the Alston Roads, who is making great exertions to put the Roads into a substantial condition before the return of the Winter, but to do which in the most economical manner, he declared will consume the whole produce of the Tolls. The approach to the Inn at Lowbyer is greatly improved by the ragged bank along the roadside being sloped & planted & the new entrance to the low part of the House, adds much to the comfort & convenience of the House.

30 May 1834 John Grey

Friday 30th May 1834

Went across the Tyne in the morning to examine the Buildings at Mark Close of which the Tenant complained & found them like too many others in bad condition. It will be necessary to put in a new Window or two, as the Wood is so thoroughly rotten, that it will not admit of the Glass being removed, which is nearly all gone. And to build a small toofall Shed, which will not cost much. Besides this other things are wanted, but they must remain until a new Lease is had. At nine o'clock the Tenants began to come, having been desired to do so early, & with the exception of two or three who depend upon selling Sheep in the Autumn & have been accustomed to pay a whole years Rent at Mart[inma]s, their payments were quite as good as usual. Having closed with them, I entered upon the examination of the Mining Accounts, comparing the Books of the respective companies with the Account of the Clerk of Deliveries, & found them in all instances to agree & to be kept in a clear & correct manner. This examination & comparison with the Deliveries of Duty Ore to the Receiving Houses & the aggregate delivery to the Smelting Mills, form as complete a system of checks as can be desired.

A little after four o'clock, we closed our labors & sat down to a substantial dinner with a party of 60 or more consisting of the partners or Agents of Companies who had come to exhibit their accounts, the venerable Mr Jackson, Vicar of Alston, Messrs Bainbridge & two or three more of the most respectable & old established inhabitants of the district, all of whom, whether actually engaged in Mining speculations or not are equally alive to their interests. They expressed general thankfulness for the reduction of the Duty Ore, & evinced the cheerfulness of people emerging from a state of adversity & depression to one of the brighter prospects & happier days. Though having no liking for large Companies, & least of all for the responsibility of presiding over

them, I could not but feel much interested in the local information, habits & character elicited by this meeting, as well as a warm sympathy in their prospects & pursuits, & in the kind of filial regard with which they look to the protection & support of the Lords of the Manor. It has been suggested, I believe, that this Meeting might be dispensed with, but it would be a pity, I think, on account of the trifling expense of a Dinner, especially when as in this instance, the Rent day was combined with the other meeting, to break through the Hospitality of an old custom, which forms a rallying point for the speculators in the District, or to withdraw any of the kindness & encouragement which has been hitherto shown to those, by the Application of whose Capital & labor the Hospital is deriving a considerable revenue. I have before had occasion to mention with commendation the good moral conduct & superior intelligence of the lower orders in the Mining Districts & I am happy also to bear testimony to an equal extent in favor of their superiors, for after passing a pleasant & rational evening, the room was entirely vacated by nine o' clock.

31 May 1834 John Grey

Saturday 31st May

Made up my accounts and settled some matters, respecting repairs at the Inn & farm places with the Moor Master. Walked up the Nent to examine a Bridge which is without parapet Walls & in other respects in bad repair, as well as the Path along the River side at both ends of it. On which account it becomes dangerous, especially to the Miners who pass it generally in the dark. It is not exactly upon the Hospitals Property, though connected with it. The persons chiefly interested in its repair, conceive that if the Commissioners would contribute £5 on the part of the Hospital [marginal pencil note: 'we should give this £5'], they might obtain by subscription & contributions in labor, as much as would complete the work, in all, probably about £15 or £16 which I promised to recommend. I then returned by Coach to Dilston, & after depositing my papers etc in the Office & attending to other matters, proceeded to Corbridge at night.

I had sent Mr Hunt over to see the Agent of the Stanhope Railways Lime Works, whose Lime is much more convenient for Newlands & Whittonstall than any other, to try to bargain for the supply of the Tenants there at a reduced price, by engaging for a quantity & guaranteeing the payment, but as yet, their demand seems to be so great that they will not submit to any reduction of price.

2 Jun 1834 John Grey

Monday 2nd June 1834

A day of labor & confusion. Removed our furniture into out Houses at Dilston, dispersed the Children to Lodgings & took up my abode in the Cottage preparing for the Bailiffs amid Workmen, wet Paint & raw plaster. Yet it is refreshing to escape from the atmosphere of Corbridge & look out upon trees & green fields, and in a short time, I trust we shall be all very comfortable. Mr Stott, the late Tenant of Buteland, called upon me to say that Mr Spencer, the purchaser of that property, claimed the Threshing Machine, upon the Ground of its having been conveyed to him as well as the Mill. Both Mill & Machine were erected by Mr Stott, but the Mill having been advertized along with the Estate, Mr Hooper, as appears by his Journal, May 29th 1833, paid Mr Stott the value of it, that it might be transferred to Mr Spencer, but gave him at the same time a Letter which he showed me, stating that the Machine was his own, & that he might remove or dispose of it at pleasure. Stott is willing to sell the Machine to either party by valuation, but if he does not effect that, must remove it. Only before doing so, he thought it right to acquaint me lest it should involve the Hospital in a dispute with Mr Spencer who claims the Machine. As I know nothing of these transactions, it may be proper to apply to Mr Bicknell who I suppose made the conveyance, or go Mr Fenwick, who can see Mr Spencer or his Solicitor any day in Newcastle to ascertain the Grounds of his claim; and this should be done without delay. Stott also presented some accounts for work done at Buteland, which he said ought to have been allowed him, but I see from Mr Hoopers Journal that that he had presented them to him & had been refused payment. One however for work at a Pump done by a poor man who has not been paid and ordered by the Receivers, as he says, was not shown to Mr Hooper, and I told him that upon procuring an Order & proof of the work being sufficiently done, I thought it certain that the Board would allow it. The amount is under £3.

3 Jun 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 3rd June 1834

Had to settle several accounts with Mr Parkin for poor Bates due upon Woodlands. I am of opinion that the Hospital's Woodlands generally bear too high a proportion in the valuation for the Poores Rates, but as the other contributors, with few exceptions, are their own Tenants, it would do little good, & cause much discontent, to shift a part of the burden from the Hospital to them. Mr Storey of Wark sent me an account of £4 for work which I found it necessary to order to maintain the Pound fold there, the wall of which had been washed away by a Flood in the Tyne. I have had several applications for repairs from Tenants in that district, some of whom state that their windows cannot be mended with Glass on acct of the rottenness of the frames, but have not hitherto

attended to them, conceiving that the property would be transferred to the Duke. I shall be glad to have the Boards instructions on this head. I regret to say that a continued drought with frosty nights is affecting the appearance of Corn very much in this Country, much of the Soil being of a gravelly nature & being besides wore out with constant tillage, its moisture is quickly exhausted & the Corn grows sickly for want of nourishment.

4 Jun 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 4th June 1834

Rode through the Estates of Thornbrough & Newtonhall & thence to Whittle, my chief object in going there being to ascertain the success of an attempt to procure Water by boring in an old Grass Pasture the value of which has hitherto been much diminished by the want of it. It has been proposed to cut a road through the Wood to give the Cattle access to the stream in Whittle Dean, but this would have been expensive to make & steep & inconvenient to use. I therefore determined to try the experiment of boring, & having borrowed rods from a neighbouring Colliery set two men to work, & was glad to find today, that after cutting through five yards of Clay & five of rock, they found this morning their borehole full of Water within four feet of the Surface. This operation has cost 25/- I have shut the hole up for the present, to see how the water stands, & if it does not waste, a very little expense will convey it to its level on the hillside, there to terminate in a Watering Trough for the Cattle. I called on the Miller at Dilston in the morning without seeing him, & repeated my call on returning from Whittle, when as usual he was intoxicated. He told me he would pay me rent, but I might seize what he had & pay myself, for he would be quit. I told him he could not now be quit till May next, & that he must be made to pay his rents or go to Jail. He said I might do as I liked, he would be as well in Jail as here, but 'he would be quit.' This conduct leaves me no alternative but to seize immediately, as it is to be feared that they may convey away their Goods clandestinely.

5 Jun 1834 John Grey

Thursday 5th June

Sent Mr Hunt at five this morning with a warrant to seize the Stock upon the Mill & Grounds at Dilston, in occupation of Rochester of which he took an inventory, putting them in charge of our Hedger. He was just in time to detain the Horses & carts setting out with a loading g of flour. No attempt at compromise having been made by Rochester, a more detailed inventory was made in the evening by Mr Dickinson the Auctioneer and notice of Sale prepared. This Man entered to the Mill only in March

1833, & has not paid any rent whatever, I cannot believe that he has not the means of paying at least the Martinmas Rent at this time, or that this conduct is any thing but assumed to get quit in a base way, of a concern which he cannot manage. He is not therefore deserving of any lenity.

I rode in the course of the day over the farms of Wooley, Staples, Aydonshields & Salmon Field in Hexhamshire, to look after the repairs of Houses which I had directed. Heard from the Lessees of Langley Mills that they had taken an estimate for making the new Water Wheel there almost entirely of Metal instead of Wood, which besides its superior strength & durability, would afford greater power than would be given to a Wood Wheel without widening the Wheel case, which would be expensive. The Estimate for the Metal Wheel is £200. I wrote to Wilson saying that I should of course prefer a Metal Wheel if they chose to erect one, but that I could give them no reason to expect that the Board would contribute more towards it than the sum stipulated for by their Lease, i.e. £150.

6 Jun 1834 John Grey

Friday 6th June

Had interviews with Benson & Parkin respecting the several building & thinning of Woods etc, connected with their particular departments. Traversed the young Plantations to see that the fences are secure. This droughty season is very unfavourable for the striking of young Trees, yet I think they are coming sufficiently thick. We are now collecting the Bark into Barns, in convenient situations to sending to Newcastle. The building of the new House here goes on satisfactorily, for which the season is remarkably favourable. The work & situation are much admired.

7 Jun 1834 John Grey

Saturday 7th June

Left home at Six o' clock, & drove to Throckley, taking Benson with me to examine the state of the a public house there & the repairs that are needful. It is surprizing that the back Building should have stood till now, bearing the weight of a tiled roof, as the wall are filled with nothing but Clay. I then proceeded to Newcastle, got my account examined at the Bank and directed £5000 to be paid to the Bank of England on the 16th Instant, of which I have given Mr Paine notice. Saw Mr Forster, the Viewer, & engaged him to go through the Collieries, beginning at Throckley on Thursday next & then coming here that we may proceed to Fourstones etc. Gave Mr Fenwick as directed by Mr Lethbridge, Mr Claytons Correspondence upon the subject of Green & Rewcastle's

demands for buildings at Scremerston. He cannot however obtain any explanation from Major Johnson at present, as he is confined to bed by illness & unable to attend to my business. Mr Robinson of Needleshall having been able to offer no security nor fix any time for the payment of his debt to the Hospital, I was reluctantly compelled to direct Mr Fenwick to proceed for its recovery, lest Mr Clarkson should come in between us & sweep off all his property.

9 Jun 1834 John Grey

Monday 9th June

Mr Green the Architect from Newcastle came up to examine the Work of the new House which we went over together, & found it to be all very well executed. I was then engaged in Office business & looking after the various works going on upon this part of the Estate. The party building the Saw Mill waited upon me to inform me of their wish to rent a small piece of Ground cut off from Dilston North Farm in the shape of a triangle between the new Turnpike & the Railway, which though Inconvenient to cultivate is most convenient as to the site of a Depot for Wood & other commodities, going by the Railway, & also for a Public House instead of that now occupied by Hind, which the change of road will leave quite out of the way. Their proposal is to rent the Land from the Hospital & erect the Buildings at their own cost, except the home grown Wood which may be used, and at the end of 21 Years, to have the option of renewing the Lease, or to be paid a valuation for buildings, the Wood excepted. I desired Mr Dickinson to go with them & Measure the Ground, that they might give me a definitive proposal. As the suitability of the Ground for such a purpose, has often occurred to me before, & it could not possibly be in better hands than those who have the Saw Mill upon the Estate, as they are Men of Property & both occupances could be included in one Lease.

I have had today also, an enquiry respecting the Limestone at Allerwash, to which I replied that as the Lease of Brokenheugh Colliery was near an end, I was of opinion that both the Allerwash & Carrstones Limestone works should be let with it to one party, the Colliery being situated between the two. And that instead of reserving Lime & Coal for the private Working of the Tenants on the Hospitals Estates as at present, it would probably be better to let the whole, & bind the Lessees to supply the Tenants with Lime at a price to be fixed, at the cost price of burning. I have abstained hitherto from expressing a decided opinion upon this subject, wishing to have the viewers report of the state of the Colliery & supply of Coal that may be reckoned upon for the work. This I shall have shortly, when I shall communicate that & my own ideas respecting the letting to the Board.

10 Jun 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 10th June

Received a Petition from the Tenants of Newlands & Whittonstall praying the Commissioners to encourage the proposed new road from thence to join the Newcastle road near Axwell Park, which Petition I herewith send. This is the road referred to in my Journal of the 23rd September last.

Mr Burnett called at the Office to receive payment for his portion of the Duty Ore arising from the Mines of the Hole Liberty which had been delivered at Langley Mills along with that of the Hospital. The amount after deducting 13/6 for Carriage came to £11.4.8. He proposes hereafter to have his portion set aside at the Mine, so that it will not pass through our accounts at all. Mr Burnett wishes to purchase from the Commissioners the Tithes of his Property at Tynehead, & offers to give Twenty years purchase upon the average Rent of the six years that it has been in his possession. That average as appears by the accompanying paper is £3.3.6 & the price he offers £63.10. It is a poor property in a high & unproductive county, & not capable of improvement. Mr Burnett will be glad to know whether the Commissioners are inclined to treat with him or not.

I rode over Dipton Fell to see the Ground which had been cleared of Wood & replanted last Season, I was glad to find that in spite of the drought, the young Trees are doing remarkably well. Returned by Snokoe Wood which we are now thinning & from which we are now leading the bark. The price of Larch bark is so low, that it will, I fear, barely defray the expense, but then the wood is more valuable when peeled than otherwise.

11 Jun 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 11th June 1834

A Post Office having this week been established at Corbridge, I ordered a private Bag for the Office, and the Blacksmith at Dilston who has a young family not able for much work, engages to have it carried back and forward daily for any consideration that I may think right to give. This will cost perhaps 1s/3d Per week, but then we shall be saved the charge of 1d upon each Letter as hitherto paid to the Mail Guards. Was engaged for some time in the Office. Received a Proposal from a person named Wright for a building Lease of the same small pieces of Ground that have been detached by the Railway at Dilston which the Saw Mill Company offer for. He proposes to give only two Pounds rent during the Lease, but then does not claim any remuneration for the Buildings, which they do at its termination. So that if he were to lay out £250 as he says

he contemplates and give up the Buildings at the end, his rent would be greater than theirs. The Saw Mill party are however the best Tenants, as well as more likely than any others to turn the thing to good account, but I think they ought either to give up their claim to the value of the Buildings, the Hospital supplying the Wood, or to offer a higher ground rent, say £20 during the Lease, for though the Land is not worth more than £8.. to a farmer, it would let for more as it is situated. I rode over the farms of Coastley & Hackford, deciding the draining upon them, which is much wanted & certain to be very beneficial. Returned through the Wood in Coastley Dean & examined some damage which has been done & if not put a stop to, likely to go on increasing, by the course of the Brook at its junction with the Tyne. Came to Westboat, where the Blacksmith has completed his Building, upon which I told him to come and get the allowance of £5 promised him & sign an Agreement for 21years at £11 a year. He states that he has laid out £30 instead of £20 in rebuilding the House.

12 Jun 1834 John Grey

Thursday 12th June

Received the Boards Minutes of the 31st May & the Secretaries Letter of the 10th June, informing me of the Admiralties approval of the appointment of Mr Fenwick & Mr Bainbridges as Court Keeper & Solicitors for the Hospital in their respective districts, to whom I communicated the particulars regarding their respective appointments. I instructed Mr Fenwick at the same time, to enquire into the Grounds of Mr Spencer's claim to the Threshing Machine at Buteland, and sent him MSS Draft of the term of Lease, with the request that he would give it an attentive perusal & be prepared to discuss it with me at an early day. The Miller of Dilston having offered no terms of compromise, & manifested a most contumacious disposition refusing to make my payment, although he is said to have money by him, it became necessary today to proceed to a Sale of the effects, pursuant to Notice. After selling enough to satisfy the Hospitals claims up to Mayday last, he proposed to continue selling till every thing he had should be disposed of. I protested against such conduct, and refused to be accessory to it, by allowing the Auctioneer I had employed to proceed. He however found another and persisted. What he intends to do after disposing of all his furniture, I cannot devise. There is Corn as well as Hay growing on the Land, but they may be disposed of before we can claim another half years rent. On which case there will be nothing for it but to attack his person & he is understood to have some property. His conduct I think would induce suspicion that he labors under partial derangement. It is hardly likely that a Tenant could be found for the Mill at this Season, but if there could, he has not relinquished his agreement, but says he means to lock the Doors and leave it so.

13 Jun 1834 John Grey

Friday 13th June 1834

Having written Letters & attended to accounts in the Office I went over the different works going on here, examined the new Road through a part of Dilston Hall Farm, which being now finished, we this day opened to the Public, who take it most willingly being a much shorter line & less steep than the old one, & as regards the situation of the new House an immense improvement. I have not yet got the expense of attending it put into one sum yet, but hope to find that it has not exceeded that allowed for the purpose. I next went with the man who basically had charge of the work, over all the embankments, Wears securing of the shores of the Tyne, filling up holes which had been excavated by floods etc, all of which may now be pronounced to be in safe & good condition, & will I trust encounter any ordinary floods without damage, although they must be at all times a source of anxiety & watchfulness, especially as I hear, that owing to the injury sustained by Mr Beaumont's Tenants on the opposite side, from the additional height & strength of our embankment, he has been induced to undertake to make a similar one, which by contracting the water will throw an additional weight upon the embankments. Ours however will have the advantage of greater solidity than one newly made.

14 Jun 1834 John Grey

Saturday 14th

Having got the Cash accounts, including the numerous receipts & payments of all the Rents, brought up to this date and sent off to Greenwich, I rode to Thornbrough Quarry Farm to see if any remedy could be found for the Tenants complaint of a want of water near the House & Offices. It is certainly ill off in that respect during the summer, & a promise had been made him of sinking for water & fixing a Pump, but the place stands upon a thick bed of Limestone, to sink in which would be expensive & also of doubtful success. It may however be worthwhile to ascertain by boring first, whether there are any seams containing Water - proceeded to Newtonhall, the Tenant of which sent me an application some days ago, for an abatement of Rent or for leave to quit at May Day next. In this respect, he is far from being singular. He says that he is losing all his Capital & cannot longer continue to pay his way, but having laid out money in cleaning & improving the land, would be glad to treat upon [terms] conformable to the times. I told him that the Commissioners would likely accept his surrender of Lease & that he might probably be treated with by private bargain, if on examining the Farm after Harvest, I should find that he had done for it as much as he said. I believe it is true that he has considerably improved its condition. I then went as far as Whittle, to see whether the water got by boring there was likely to answer the

purpose, & on finding that it had not risen higher than at first, determined upon boring a little deeper before proceeding to incur any further expense. After returning in the evening Mr Robson of Allerwash came & gave me £100 his arrear of Rent.

16 Jun 1834 John Grey

Monday 16th June

Was occupied all the day with business in the Office, examining various accounts for work in different parts of the property & preparing agreements etc. By the Moor Masters returns, it appears that the whole quantity of Ore raised in the Manor of Alston between Michaelmas 1832 & 1833, is as follows. Bouse Ore 12702 Bings 4Cwts. Cutting Ore 679 Bings 6 Cwts the Duty on which is 2197 Bings 1 10/21 Cwts of Bouse and 119 Bings 1 13/14 Cwts of Cutting Ore.

17 Jun 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 17th June

Went to Hexham - settled the Nursery mans Acct amounting to £57.8. for young Trees & Thorns used in planting during the last Season. Being Market day, saw several Tenants, who have generally some applications to make, but who are universally complaining of the Drought & bad prospect for a Crop, & stating the impossibility of holding their Farms at the present rents. I regret to learn that Mr Fenwick has found it necessary to resort to a sale of Robinsons Goods at Needleshall, to obtain his Debt due to the Hospital. Mrs Benson Tenant of Grindon Hill, who has Sons working upon the Farm, was one today among the applicants to have a reduction of Rent, or to be quit. I had expected it from her as the farm had been so hastily taken, & being a good deal in Grass & adapted to the keeping of Sheep, ought from the good price of Wool to pay better than the more Corn growing Lands. She admitted that they ought to cultivate no more Corn than would afford winter provision for their Cattle, but that her economy & the industry of her Sons would not at all do to enable them to pay their way.

18 Jun 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 18th June

I rode to Haydon Bridge - saw the building of a Cow House and Coach House in the Inn Yard. Got agreements executed by the Rev George Richmond for the fields called Priests Pasture, & by J. Corbet, Blacksmith for the House & Shop he occupies.

Proceeded to the Works in Langley Barony & was caught in a heavy rain, my only regret about which was, that so little of it came Eastward to Dilston.

19 Jun 1834 John Grey

Thursday 19th June

Wrote to Mr Lethbridge, enclosing Letters from Messrs Fenwick & Bainbridge, accepting their appointments as Court Keepers & Solicitors in their respective districts. Also sending for the Commissioners' Signature, the Agreements for the Blacksmith's premises at West Boat & Haydon Bridge & Mr Richmonds, for Fields at the latter. No Lease or written Agreement of any kind was ever made, I believe for the Inn at Haydon Bridge, entered to in May 1833 by Matthew Hetherington. The Rent of the House & Fields originally attached to it, is £90 for three Years, to which is to be added £24.. the Rent of two Fields laid to it at May Day last formerly occupied by Mr Coals, since dead. At the expiring of three Years, one of which is already gone, Mr Hoopers proposal to Hetherington respecting it is founded upon such peculiar conditions, see his Journal 6th May 1833, as to render it impossible to extend the Agreement at present beyond the 12th May 1836. Until that period then, a mere written acceptance of the Terms by Hetherington will be sufficient security, as he and his family are steady & respectable people. After that, if he should continue in the situation a regular Lease may be executed upon new terms. Examined & settled up in full, balances due upon the Wears & Work at the Tyne, also for various other jobs done by Thomas Harle in draining & fences on different parts of the property. Looked over the young Fences & work going on in this neighbourhood.

20 Jun 1834 John Grey

Friday 20th June 1834

The subscription for building a School House & Dwelling House for the Teacher, in the Township of Lipwood, for which the Board granted a site & Wood for the Building, not having been found sufficient, application was made by a neighbouring Clergyman, to the national School society for aid. Their committee have subscribed £30 which will fully answer the purpose, but one of the conditions which must be completed with before the money can be had, is, that a conveyance of the site be obtained. I am therefore applied to, to know whether the Commissioners will grant such Conveyance to Trustees, that the Subscription may be had. Mr Fenwick would, I believe, draw the conveyance gratis. [Marginal pencil note: 'The Commissrs have no power to alienate without authority from the Admiralty']

Rode to Wooley, where the Tenant at the commencement of this new Lease, is putting up a Threshing Machine at his own cost & wishes to have the Barn put into suitable repair, which it is proper to do, as well as other Offices, as he will be required to maintain them hereafter. This I must have done. The Roofs of grey Slate, universal in that district, are expensive to keep, & always unsatisfactory. Rode on to Staples, to see the like repairs going on and Draining. Told Dodd that he must produce proof of Mr Hoopers having given him the promise to recommend a reduction of his rent last year, before the Board can sanction it. He said he would procure a Letter to that effect from Mr Sample, who was present. Went on to Whittle Mill which being also in the first year of a new Lease, is in want of some trifling repair of the Machinery, Roofs and Fences. Young Todd of Rawgreen in Hexhamshire, whose Father died lately came on behalf of his mother and family to know whether they would have an offer of the Farm again, & when I would go to put a value upon it. I told him I know of no reason why they should not have an opportunity of treating for their farm again, having paid their rents & managed it fairly, but that I could not set about valuing Land till after the Crop should be severed, probably in September or October. In the mean time, although the Board had sanctioned the abandonment of the present Lease by promising them to hold the Farm for this year at the rent it may be Let for the next, I thought it better to take from him a resignation of it in writing.

21 Jun 1834 John Grey

Saturday 21st June

Paid the second Instalment of £200 to the Contractors for the new House, due upon the joists of the second Story being laid. Wrote to the Agent of the Railway Company, requesting a settlement of the claims due to the Dilston Tenants & allowed to them on the last rent day. I find this Company very dilatory in their transactions & troublesome to deal with. Informed Mr Beaumont's Agent of the Boards decision respecting the letting of Blagill Mills. Rode to Whittle to see the effect of boring for Water, & found to my great disappointment, the quantity obtained is not sufficient to make it worthwhile to incur a greater expense in procuring it. A permanent supply would have been of great advantage, but this is not enough to reckon upon in drougthy seasons, & in wet ones, it is not wanted. The Miller of Dilston having disposed by Auction of all his Stock in Trade & furniture, on his own Account, after the Rent due to the Hospital up to May Day, had been satisfied, proceeded to advertize the Public Sale of his Meadow, this evening I sent to him to know what was his object in such strange proceeding. Advising that as he had become answerable for another years occupation, having held over the May Day, he had better try to find a sub tenant for the Mill till May day next, or authorise my doing so, leaving the Crop upon the Land to make up any deficiency

of Rent that might cause. That in either case I felt certain of obtaining the sanction of the Board. His answer to this is equally absurd as his other proceedings. He said he had lost money & would not give up the premises without compensation. That he would sell the growing produce of the Land, lock up the Doors & hold possession till he received it, & I might come by this years Rent as I could. I told him that to ask for compensation where he was injuring the property & contemplating a robbery of the Hospital, was the most extraordinary demand I had ever heard. I could however make no impression upon him. I sent Mr Hunt with a Notice in writing to the Auctioneer, that the Hay would not be allowed to be taken off the premises, with directions for him to make the announcement, if the Auctioneer declined doing so, which was the case. In consequence of this no one would purchase it, although Rochester gave them many assurances of indemnity. What he will next attempt, it is impossible to devise. And as his Rent is now paid up to May day last, if he will not come to terms & relinquish his Agreement, I fear no proceedings can be taken against him till another rent becomes due, & by that time he may have his Crop disposed of & nothing may be left to levy upon. It is generally said that he & his Wife have some property, & if so, he is certainly a fit subject to make an example of. By leaving the House & still holding possession, he will subject himself, according to the terms of his Agreement, to a penalty of £100 for non residence, which he is probably not taking into account. I shall however lay the Agreement & Case before Mr Fenwick in a day or two, & get his opinion to the best course to pursue. [Marginal pencil note: 'right']

23 Jun 1834 John Grey

Monday 23rd June

Having settled some matters in the Office & sent Mr Hunt to look after draining & the state of Tillage in the Coastley district, & having no particular engagement, I took an excursion through the Woods on Snokoe & Dipton Fells & those of Dilston Park, observing such as is sold & being cleared away, such as is in want of thinning, the state of the fences etc. There is always something to be looked after in this department, & commonly a good deal to remark upon & rectify, many parts of the Woods being difficult of access & only to be explored in dry weather. There is in Corbridge Church a toofall & small Gallery, containing two pews which belong exclusively to the Hospital & has always been kept in repair by it. The Pews have been occupied by the Tenants of Thornbrough Town & High Barns Farms. The Church Warden applied to me to have the Roof of the Toofall repaired as it admitted rain and caused dampness in that part of the Church. This it cost but two days works of a Slater to do, but on examination I found the Pews in bad condition, being old & the Wood much decayed. This I have had occasion in part to renew and as the two Farms of Thornbrough are now united, & either of the Pews sufficient by large to accommodate Mr Scott's family, I have thought it advisable to appropriate the other, that it may in future belong to the occupier of the

Receivers House, which could not otherwise be provided for, so conveniently or at so little expense.

24 Jun 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 24th June 1834

Rode to Throckley, where I found for the first time the Lessee of the extensive Quarry there, to whom I had written without effect, demanding payment of the Rent, & also an account of the number of Blocking Men employed by him, that I might know whether or not it agreed with the account which Mr Stephenson, our tenant at Throckley, was so good as to keep for me. He owned that this year he had employed a greater number than formerly, but complained, that he had lost a great deal of money in working the Quarry, on account of a bad seam of Stone intervening, which he was obliged to remove, although he could not make use of it. There is some truth in this, as is apparent, but still, I told him he must fulfill his Agreement & that promptly, or I should take steps to stop his proceedings. Mr Stephenson of Throckley, one of our best Agriculturists & most respectable Tenants asked me to make the following proposition to the Commissioners. The Threshing Machine upon this Farm is of a weight & construction far beyond the ordinary Scale of Machines worked by Horses, added to which his Farm frequently produces heavy Crops of Wheat with very long Straw, a circumstance I regret to say, very unusual on the Hospitals Farms in this part of the County, which makes the Threshing a murderous job for the Horses. There is a Spring close by, affording sufficient Water for Steam Power, & Coals are only at a Miles distance. So situated, I had often expressed surprise that Steam had not been employed, & Mr Stephenson also said he would gladly adopt it, if the Hospital would be at the expense. This I entirely scouted, upon the Ground, that as soon as possible, the Hospital ought to get rid of the Machinery upon their Farms altogether. He is new however, so satisfied of the injury done to the Horses that he is willing to erect an Engine and appurtenances at his own cost, the Hospital building the Chimney & stand for the Boiler, to cost about £20, which would be repaid entirely, or in great part, by the Sale of the present Horse Wheel, which is strong & good; the Hospital undertaking to pay for such Engine by valuation, at the time of Mr Stephenson leaving his farm, all of which seems very reasonable. Or Mr Stephenson would allow eight Per Cent per Annum on the outlay, if the Commissioners would undertake to purchase the Boiler & Engine. Probably the best plan would be to allow Mr Stephenson a Sum say £20 to complete in a satisfactory manner all the necessary building & agree to take the steam Engine etc by valuation, when he quits the Farm. [marginal pencil note: 'I see no objection to this Plan.'] Or to give him the Horse Wheel, which in bargaining with his Millwright, he might perhaps be allowed £18 or £20 for, in consideration of his making the Chimney etc. a Stipulation ought also to be made, that he should insure the Premises against Fire, of which however in a Building rightly constructed, there is little

danger. Mr Stephenson is deserving of encouragement, & one of the few Tenants who manages his Farm as if he wished to hold it to the end of his Lease. There is a great want of two efficient flood Gates at the low end of this farm to prevent the backflow in times of Flood in the Tyne. The Duke has 15 Acres in the same Situation & dependent upon these Sluices for protection, while we have 50. And as His Grace's Agent is willing to allow the half, I could not refuse to undertake for the other. The whole should not cost more than £10. [marginal pencil note: 'This should be done.'] The young Trees on the old Pit heaps that were planted in the Spring, look shy on the tops & bare parts, while those around the base are thriving. I visited the repairs at the public House, saw the Miller about some repairs at his Dam, & proceeded in the evening to Newcastle.

25 Jun 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 25th June

Went over the Draft Lease for Farms, as directed to be adopted, with Mr Fenwick, who has undertaken to have copies printed upon plain paper, attending to the prints himself, to see that sufficient blanks are left in the proper places. These Copies of each Lease will serve as records & for reference in the Office here, & generally will satisfy the Tenants, they holding them for the same purpose. While it will be necessary to have one Copy on Stamp duty executed to deposit at Greenwich. This Copy Mr Fenwick thinks it will be necessary for him to ingross, unless he can make an arrangement with the Stamp Office, to allow of its being Stamped, after being printed & filled up according to the amount of the rent included.

I consulted him likewise on the base of Rochester, the Dilston Miller, showing him his Agreement for a Lease. He is of opinion that no step can be now taken till another Rent becomes due, except to prepare & tender for his execution, a Lease, according to the Terms of his Agreement, & that on his refusing, as he likely would, to execute & pay for it, the bargain would become void & he might be forthwith ejected. I hesitate to adopt this proceeding, on account of the expense of the Stamp, which there was some doubt of being able to recover from Rochester. But should he be mad enough to pursue his present course, some such step will be necessary. [marginal pencil note: 'I think the Cost of this Stamp should be no impediment in getting rid of this man.']

As it appears that Wm Hind has not put in an answer to the ejectment served upon him, we can now turn him out by force. I therefore brought up a Warrant for that purpose this evening & on reaching home, sent my servant to Hexham to apprise the Sheriffs Officer to come down in the morning to put it in force. The stupid Man will now discover that the Hospital will not always to be imposed upon with impunity.

Mr Fenwick gave me his bill for Law Charges up to May Day last including his half years Salary as Court Keeper, which I herewith send for examination, before discharging it. We agreed that, although in future it will not be necessary for him to make out detailed accounts of Law Charges, he should procure a Book for the Hospitals business, in which to keep a Journal of his transactions, which it will be useful to have to refer to.

26 Jun 1834 John Grey

Thursday 26th June 1834

Had a meeting with one of the Rail way Agents respecting the claims of the Dilston Tenants, the amount of which is promised to be remitted in a few days. Went along the line towards Hexham to see the point at which they could be allowed to break into the bank for gravel, with the least injury. The Sheriffs Officer arrived & I sent some people with him to turn old Hind & his effects out of the House and let Teasdales family into it, who have lived since May day in a barn, on account of Hinds obstinacy. He admits now, that he had no just ground for remaining, but says he was persuaded that he could stop six weeks with impunity. The stupid man will have gained some information when he finds himself summoned to pay the Attorney's charge, besides the rent. In the Arrears which were formerly ord.d to be discharged by a Journal Entry, some items were included, the recovery of which seems hopeless. Mr Dickinson will inclose a list of them with a statement of the particular circumstances attending each.

27 Jun 1834 John Grey

Friday 27th

I rode as far as Wark for the first time, saw the work which had been done under Mr Storey's obliging direction, to secure the foundation of the Pound fold wall which had been undermined by the adjoining Brook, & the wall itself rebuilt. Called upon the Rev Mr Baggs to inquire into the nature of a complaint he had made to me by Letter respecting an encroachment he imagined had been made by persons using a part of the field.

30 Jun 1834 John Grey

Monday 30th June 1834

Being Quarter day, inclosed the several claimants Cheques for their Salaries & Pensions. A discovery was made some days ago that about 28 outside Deals which had been sawn from the Trees cut in Whittle Dean for flooring in the Public House at Throckley, had been stolen. There seemed some reason to suspect a Person call Bell at Ovington, & I even heard that they would be found in a certain out House belonging to him. I sent Mr Parkin early on Friday morning, who examined the out House in the Field, but they had been removed, if they were ever there, nor could he find any trace of them. In Woods so widely squandered many of them difficult to access, I fear we are liable to greater depredations in this way than I am not always informed of. And as it was certain in this case that the Articles have been taken away, I determined to take all the means in my power to discover & punish the Offenders. I therefore went to the place today, where however I could get no tangible proof, but proceeded to Throckley where the Workmen are employed who cut the Wood, & from whom the suspicion of Bell originated. I could only make out of one, that another person had accused Bell of having it, & from another, that it was said, he had had it in the out House & removed it on finding that it had been missed from the Wood. Hearing however that a person named Carr had been heard to say that he had seen some deals carried off, I rode around to find him, but did not succeed, as he was working at a distance, I shall however send Mr Hunt in search of him tomorrow, and finding him shall offer a reward of £10 for the discovery. The outside Slabs stolen, are of small value, but I understand that two Trees were carried off from that same Wood a year ago, & no inquiry made. And to pass such things over, is to encourage theft. Being at Throckley, I staid till evening, examining the state of the farms & plantations, while Mr Hunt took down the tillage. Visited the Colliery, where they are producing little Coal, but have got some Iron Stone of good quality, which will be purchased by the Iron Works Company at Lemington. When Mr Forster comes to view the Collieries he must fix the proportion of value which the Hospital should receive as rent upon this Stone. I examined the Mill Dam & proposed to allow £2.10.0 as being about half the expense of repairing and cleaning it out, if the Miller would do the rest. It is a poor Mill & does little business.

Received a Letter from Mr Sample, late Bailiff, which I forward in testimony of Mr Hoopers intention respecting the reduction of Dodds Rent, which I doubt not is quite correct.

Received also an offer from the Saw Mill Lessees of £10 a year for 61 Years, for the two Acres of Land by the Rail way, on a Building Lease. The Land is gravelly & not worth £5 a year to farm, but its value is enhanced by its situation. I consider the offer a fair one, as they leave all buildings at the end without compensation if accepted, there ought to be a Lease regularly drawn of which they should pay the Stamps, binding them to leave as well as maintain the fences, buildings etc in good order.

1 Jul 1834 John Grey

Tuesday 1st July

Received a Memorial from Westgarth Forster, Author of a Treatise on Mining which I have heard is a useful Work, but proved an unprofitable one to him. I was introduced to the author at Alston, whose appearance indicates poverty. I forward the Petition to the Board.

[marginal pencil note:] I think the Hosp.l subscribed for several copies, which were doubtless charged in the Receiver's account so can give no pension and I doubt whether we can give any subscriptions to his need. We certainly can not assist Mr, Forster. G. T.

All my attempts to bring the Miller of Dilston to a settlement on reasonable terms having failed, I sent Mr Hunt on Saturday evening to try if he could make anything of him, being very desirous to get such a compound of stupidity & knavery, off the Premises if possible. He first demanded £100 for what he calls compensation for his loss. That is, for having undertaken a concern to which he was quite inadequate. Considering the time he has held over May day & the disadvantage of letting the Mill now, he should have no consideration whatever for his growing Crop, but estimating it at about £70. I authorized Mr Hunt to offer him £40 in hand, if he would quit possession peaceably and at once. Even this would involve a sacrifice to the Hospital, but probably a less one that may in the end ensue from his continuance & this I took upon me to propose. To offer him more would be to bribe him to quit a concern which he should be thankful to be released from, & to give a premium for rascally conduct for which he deserves punishment. Rochester having declined my offer, I wrote to Mr Fenwick today requesting him to take such measures as he saw fit to bring the matter to issue, which may probably be effected by presenting him with a Lease to execute. I sent Mr Fenwick also a copy of an agreement for a Lease, to get printed, to be used on letting a Farm & before the Lease can be prepared, containing among other conditions one, that upon the party declining to execute & pay for a Lease, conformable to the terms of that Agreement, the Commissioners should be at liberty immediately to enter upon & take possession of the Premises. Had Rochesters agreement contained such a clause, there would have been no need for a legal process of ejectment, upon his refusal to execute a Lease.

I then rode over the Hills to Stublick Colliery & Langley Mills, where I was glad to find that Mr Beaumont's Agent had concluded a bargain for the Low Mill during the term of the present Lease. This will bring some employment to the place, which is at present in a most stagnant state, & will also be a benefit to the Colliery, which in consequence of the falling off of the Smelting has only been worked three days in the

week for some time past. Called at Deanraw School to see if it had been put into decent & habitable Condition, for both dwelling & School House had been left by the old master in such a state of ruin that the new Teacher could hardly think of stopping in it. Everything that could be taken down was carried off, & even the Locks from the Doors, on pretence that he had placed them there, which was likely the case in such a long incumbency, but then it would be in lieu of others that had been worn out. I held back £3 from him, being the balance between his rent & the Subscription to the School, wch I shall retain in part of the Repairs. The School which has last year dwindled away to four children, consists now of nearly 50 & continues to increase. I then went to Harsondale, where I found it necessary to rebuild some of the most needful of the many ruinous Stone Walls by which the fields are divided. To do them all in one year, would strike deep into the rent. I must therefore proceed gradually, & have them made of less height & more substantially than before. I then made my way through the deep woods which clothe the precipitous banks of the Allen, to where it issues to the romantic spot on which stands Plankey Mill. The Millwrights were just finishing their job, having put in a new Axle to the Water Wheel & an inner or spur Wheel, entirely new, which as far as I can judge, looks to be well & firmly made. The parts of the old one that I saw are so entirely decayed that I wonder how they stood so long together. I then clambered up the banks on the top of which is the Vauce, to see the draining of a bog & decide upon some trifling repair of the buildings, before turning them over to the Tenant to maintain in future. Next descended to Lees where the main Farm House is ready for the Roof, & looks well, & proceeded eastward by the course of the Tyne, reached Haydon Bridge at 10 o'clock. Sent for the Woodman to the Inn, to make inquiry respecting the Plantations & the Wood cut for the several Buildings.

2 Jul 1834 John Grey

Wednesday 2nd July

Rode first to Whitechapel, three miles, Westward from Haydon Bridge, where the new farm House is roofed & will be soon fit to occupy. This is a substantial Job, of which all the work is well done, & does Howden credit. He is now going on with the Stables. Then to Lipwood & West Millhills, both occupied by good Tenants, & for this Country, well cultivated - but both, I regret to say, proposing to apply to be released, on account of the high Rents & low prices of Grain. Went to Haydon Town Farm, looked at draining & contrived how Water might be conveyed to the Farm buildings & some pasture Fields, which in this dry season are ill off for want of it. Examined also the Ground upon which by Mr Hoopers permission, the away going Tenant sowed last year 12 Acres of Corn to which he was not intitled. [marginal pencil annotation: 'I doubt Mr Hooper giving authority.'] The Land is bad, & after allowing for Seed & harvest labor, the Crop would probably not be worth more than £18. [marginal pencil annotation: 'Is there any notice of this in Mr Hoopers Journal?'] But when he ploughed

12 Acres, he left 6 of the worst of the Field in Grass, which could not be mown, the Grass being so bad, & which Mr Howden could not have the use of in pasture until after harvest, being intersected by the Corn. On this Account, I think he is entitled to £2 more making together £20 with which he will be fully satisfied.

Came to Westbrokenheugh, where I had altered the Roads leading to the Offices, substituting one for two, & thereby saving Land and turning two very small Fields in to one of convenient size, examined the new fences etc. Proceeded through the Farms of Allerwash, Fourstones and Westwood, looking into their condition & anything requiring attention, & reached home in the evening, pretty much done off by two days of constant riding in a burning sun. I am glad to find that the Railway Directors have adopted my suggestion & altered their line through Fourstones so that instead of cutting through some of our best Fields, it will run up the line of fence by the River, occupying Land of very little value, being chiefly River gravel, & will also form an embankment against floods. I remonstrated against their taking the other line, stating my opinion that this was quite practicable & would be little more expensive than the other, and urged upon them that the liberality of the Hospital in giving up the Land, gave them no right to occupy good Land if that of an inferior kind would serve their purpose. They have made a second Survey of it, & adopted my recommendation.

The Crops of Hay are generally rather light, but got in excellent condition & at little expense. And then of Corn, not promising to be very abundant, but they are better everywhere than at Dilston, where we have less rain & where the once productive Land is in a state of complete exhaustion & bad cultivation.

3 Jul 1834 John Grey

Thursday 3rd July 1834

Received from the Railway Co. £63.6.6 being the amount of compensation for damage done to the Lands in Dilston due abt Mart[inma]s last. Received also the Moormasters Accounts & a Statement from the Clerk of the Deliveries of the Ore weighed over in the Quarter ending on the 31st Ultimo amounting to 294 Bings & 2 Cwts. The Duty received being 473 Bings & 18 Cwts which I am glad to say exceeds the quantity received in the corresponding Quarter of last year.

The Tenant of Wark Manor Farm waited upon me with a valuation of the Lands in the Parish, liable to the making of certain Roads set forth in the Award of the Division of a Common a long time ago, but which have never been done till now, that to avoid an Indictment the Proprietors have consented to pay a rate for the purpose & a good part of the Road has been made. His Farm, rented at £60, is valued at £50 & the rate of 7/- comes to £17.10. I felt reluctant to pay this, but the rate & valuation having been agreed to by the majority of Proprietors & the money actually expended upon the Roads, I did not see that we could throw the payment of it upon the Duke who has not

yet taken possession of the Property & therefore settled it with Thomson who paid up his arrear of Rent.

I received from the Lessees of Langley Mills their Cheque for £2278.12.4 being the amount due for a Quarters Duty Ore, which I forwarded to the Bankers, desiring them to make a payment of £5000 to the Credit of the Commissioners on the 12th Instant.

4 Jul 1834 John Grey

Friday 4th July

I was called upon this morning by the Schoolmaster of Whittonstall for the half years subscription to the School there. The Subscription to this School by the Hospital is £15 a year, whereas to that of Deanraw & others it is £10. I am not acquainted with any particular claim which Whittonstall has to such preference, and having lately given a subscription of £35 to rebuild the School House, I shd think an annual subscription of £10 sufficient for a Teacher of such moderate qualifications as that at Whittonstall possesses. [marginal pencil annotation: '£10 enough, yes']

This being Stagshawbank Fair, I went there among all the rest of the County; had conferences with many tenants on matters connected with their Farms & received some arrears of Rent. Mr Scott of Thornbrough gave me an application to the Commissioners to be released from his Farm on which I shall hereafter report more particularly. The sale of Cattle was very dull, owing to the great falling off of pastures from the extreme drought. The only article of farm produce which sells at a good price is Wool, & that unluckily is one which the vicious system of continual Corn growing prevents the Hospitals tenants from raising.

5 Jul 1834 John Grey

Saturday 5th July

Received some payments for Wood & settled accounts with Mr Parkin. Having made no discovery regarding the Deals stolen from Whittle Dean, I issued hand Bills offering a reward of £10 to any one giving such information as to lead to the conviction of the offenders. Was engaged with Mr Green the Architect who came to examine the progress of the House, which will soon be ready for the Roof. At noon Rochester's wife came to tell me that he was more inclined to come to terms, but thought I should give him a larger sum than I had offered. I was of a different opinion & stated that by this time, it was likely Mr Fenwick had prepared a Lease, by which some expense would have been incurred to which Rochester was liable. He would not come to me to make any terms himself, she said that she would bring the Keys if we could agree upon the Terms. I of course informed her that I must have a relinquishment of his Agreement

signed by himself before a Witness, specifying the Conditions, & that Mr Dickinson should wait upon him with it, which he accordingly did, no one being more anxious than myself to get rid of a worthless & useless mortal, whose conduct has been to me a source of so much vexation. He signed the paper taken by Mr Dickinson, giving up the Agreement for a Lease engaging to quit the Premises immediately & to leave all Corn, Hay & produce growing & being upon them for the consideration of £40 to be paid to him tuesday next; at the same time giving Mr Dickinson possession of the Keys of the Houses & Mills. It is a relief to be done with him, & the next thing is to get a better Tenant. Another so bad it is hardly possible to get. I wrote to Mr Fenwick to stop proceedings. Drew up an advertizement & sent my Servant off to get it printed by hand Bill for circulation in the District, it being too late for Newspapers of this week. As it is of consequence not to lose time & allow the custom & Trade to get into other channels, I have required that intending offerers should come to the Office to learn the particulars of letting, & that I may have an opportunity of enquiring into their character & circumstances. And stated that Proposals would be received by me till Tuesday the 15th Instant. This is a deviation from the usual course, wch however, I trust the Commissioners will deem me justified, in making by the peculiar & pressing circumstances of the case. I must beg their direction previous to the 15th how I am then to proceed. Whether to send the Proposals to Greenwich or to conclude the most advantageous bargain I can with the most respectable Tenant, & to allow him to commence operations at once. [marginal pencil annotation: 'The proposals should be sent to us in the established rule certainly. G.T.'] I propose that the new Tenant should purchase the Corn by valuation in harvest & reap it himself, but if he does not choose that, that I should sell it to the best advantage. And that he shall enter now, as he is intitled to do, to the Hay & fallow lands, paying the expense of making the Hay & sowing the Turnips, which I have given Mr Hunt directions to commence with on Monday & to get it done as speedily as possible.