

The Catherine Byron Letters

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## The Catherine Byron Letters Archive

Andrew Hunter Wimbish

### ABSTRACT

The Catherine Byron Letters is an edited and annotated collection of letters mostly exchanged between Catherine Byron, the mother of the poet, and her solicitor John Hanson. The importance of this correspondence was first established by Doris Langley-Moore in *Lord Byron: Accounts Rendered* (1974), which documents the poet's finances from the time of his birth. Since then the letters have been used extensively by Megan Boyes in *My Amiable Mamma: A Biography of Mrs. Catherine Gordon Byron* (1991) and by J. V. Beckett and Sheila Aley in *Byron and Newstead: The Aristocrat and the Abbey* (2001). For this project I have transcribed and edited the portion of Catherine Byron's correspondence now in the John Murray Archives at the National Library of Scotland, amounting to 92 letters which are here reproduced in their entirety. While some are familiar letters, most of the correspondence is concerned with the business of providing for the young poet's education at Harrow and at Cambridge, paying off his mounting debts, managing the Newstead Abbey estate, and pursuing the lawsuits which entangled the family finances. I have edited the transcribed letters using the TEI (Textual Encoding Initiative) markup language, adding optional punctuation where necessary to clarify the sense as well as headnotes and additional annotations for personal names, places, and technical terms where they require elucidation. The resulting machine-readable XML documents have been made into a website on which I have collaborated with Professor Radcliffe.

For Peyton, and my Mother and Father

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Catherine Byron Letters project originated when I was a graduate student with far too many interests. As an undergraduate in my final semester I had taken a graduate-level digital humanities course which opened my eyes to the many ways computing and the humanities intersected. When I approached Professor Radcliffe about potential project ideas he originally proposed building a web archive drawing upon the John Murray correspondence. John Murray was Lord Byron's publisher. In the summer of 2015 Professor Radcliffe and another of my committee members, Professor Graham, traveled to the National Library of Scotland looking for collections of correspondence suitable for a graduate-level thesis project.

Upon their return we met and decided to work on the correspondence between Catherine Byron and her solicitor, John Hanson, which David McClay, the archivist and Lord Byron expert at the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in Edinburgh, agreed to make available to us. A digital edition of these letters examining Byron's life through the lens of his mother, Catherine Byron, would be a worthwhile contribution to 19<sup>th</sup>-century literary history and Byron studies. The 92 letters span the years 1788-1811, chronicling the precarious financial situation of Mrs. Byron and her spendthrift son, whose irresponsible behavior reduced his mother to a trying life of debt and lawsuits. The project includes a website where the letters are hosted, along with a preface, an index of persons, and a timeline listing life events and summaries of correspondence written from the day of Lord Byron's birth to the day Catherine Byron died. David McClay, the curator of the John Murray Archive, agreed to photocopy all of the letters in the NLS's possession that contained correspondence between Mrs. Byron, John Hanson, and the Duke of Portland. In October 2015, a three-inch-thick manila envelope postmarked by the Royal Mail awaited me in my Shanks Hall mailbox.

Initially I was quite overwhelmed. As I began sifting through the letters and organizing them chronologically, I saw that most of the letters were concerned with mundane affairs, and I was originally skeptical about what my project could really accomplish. What would scholars find interesting about the letters that had not already been discussed in earlier works of Byron scholarship, notably Doris Langley-Moore's *Lord Byron Accounts Rendered, Byron's Letters and Journals* edited by Leslie Marchand, and *Byron and Newstead* by John Beckett? All contain a wealth of information about the Byron family's financial situation. But these sources quote the Catherine Byron correspondence only in parts. By transcribing the letters in full and presenting them as a digital archive which could be linked to or even integrated into other archives of Byron correspondence and John Murray Archive material, a significant contribution to Byron scholarship might be made.

After transcribing the letters — an arduous task due to the handwriting, idiosyncratic prose, and formatting — I marked up each document with appropriate TEI tags, worked on a timeline, and, with the extensive help of Professor Radcliffe, converted the raw XML data to HTML using an XML-based language, XSLT. In the following section I will discuss my research in the historical context of the correspondence. I then provide a technical summary of the project, including an explanation of XML, TEI, and XSLT. The letters themselves are reproduced as an appendix.

From the outset the project has been in a constant state of evolution. More extensive annotation was required than I had originally expected. The discovery that we had in our possession only a fraction of the original correspondence led us to rethink the presentation of the letters. Since much of the Catherine Byron correspondence is now in the British Library and unavailable for purposes of this project, the committee and I decided that the best way to fill in

the gaps would be to create a timeline that would summarize events and correspondence from both the John Murray Archive and the Catherine Byron Letters.

## **BIOGRAPHY AND CONTEXTS**

Catherine Gordon of Aberdeen, Scotland, was baptized on April 22, 1764, but her exact date of birth is unknown, according to Megan Boyes in *My Amiable Mamma* (1). Her family consisted of wealthy landowners – from her parents she inherited the sprawling property of Gight Castle. After their marriage in May, 1785, Catherine and John Byron, the son of Admiral John Byron (1723-86) and grandson of William the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron, resided in her family estate in Aberdeen, Scotland. It was John Byron's second marriage; his first spouse, Lady Amelia Darcy, had married Byron after their adulterous affair resulted in her divorce from Francis Osborne, marquess of Carmarthen. Part of John Byron's motivation for marrying Catherine was her £23,000 fortune – in fact, it was likely his *sole* motivation. Almost immediately John Byron spent £3,000 of his wife's ready money and took out an £8,000 mortgage on Gight (Marchand 7). The family estate was soon sold, with over £17,000 going to pay off John Byron's debts, leaving only £3,000 on which Catherine could live. John Byron left for Chantilly, France, in 1787, most likely to escape creditors. Mrs. Byron, who was pregnant with the future 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron, followed him shortly thereafter.

Mrs. Byron soon returned to London where she rented a cheaply-furnished apartment on Holles Street where on January 22, 1788, George Gordon Byron, the future poet, was born. She then left London for Aberdeen shortly after the storming of the Bastille in the summer of 1789. The child's father, according to Leslie Marchand, more than likely did not dare "the duns to witness the birth of his son" (9). Shortly after her son's birth Mrs. Byron arranged matters so that



the £3,000 she had managed to secure would be invested at 5%, earning her a small income of £150 a year (10). On February 22, 1788, Mrs. Byron wrote to James Watson, her solicitor in Edinburgh, disclosing her husband's debts; it is here that the Catherine Byron Letters "begin." She also borrowed against the inheritance she would receive upon her grandmother's death (which would not occur until 1801) to supply £300 to her husband, who occasionally visited Aberdeen in want of funds (Boyes 33-34). (She would pay £15 per annum on the loan, which further reduced her slender allowance to £115 a year.) Shortly after receiving this money from his estranged wife John Byron left for Valenciennes, France, in 1790. A few weeks prior to his death on August 2, 1791, he altered his will to make his sister, Frances Leigh, executrix of his estate, leaving his wife only a £400 debt which he could not pay (Langley-Moore 42). Mrs. Byron and her son were left to live on meager terms.

George Gordon Byron, who had been born with a club foot, attended school in Aberdeen until about 1794. His prospects in life changed dramatically when William John Byron, the grandson and heir of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron, unexpectedly died in combat, killed by a cannonball in Corsica. He was now in line to inherit the Byron estate of Newstead when William the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron died, which occurred in 1798. Byron immediately inherited the estate and a Mr. Farquhar recommended that John Hanson, a partner at Birch, Hanson & Birch of Chancery Lane, a London law firm, handle his affairs (Marchand 16).

Hanson would later serve, in some ways, as a surrogate father figure for Byron. While Hanson was sometimes dilatory in carrying out his responsibilities, his correspondence with Byron reflects this paternal as well as custodial role. By contrast, Byron did not get along well with the 5<sup>th</sup> earl of Carlisle, who was appointed as his official guardian. Byron sometimes stayed with the Hanson family and visited them while he was in school at Dulwich. Hanson would

eventually become the executor of Byron's estate upon the poet's death in 1824, and their relationship, in spite of Hanson's disapproval of Byron's conduct toward his mother, was always positive.

As a representative of the Court of Chancery – also known as a court of equity – Hanson was an appropriate choice given the state of affairs surrounding the Byron estate. The Court of Chancery was an institution which sought to protect innocents from the inequities of English Common Law; it oversaw the wills, trusts, estates, and interests of those who could not manage these things on their own, such as minors and invalids (Walker 202). Those who fell under the Court's jurisdiction would be considered “wards.” As a Chancery solicitor, John Hanson would handle all of Byron's affairs during his minority: The period before his coming of age in January 1809. Since Byron was a lord and the sole proprietor of the estates in the middle of resettlement upon the previous owner's death, the courts intervened.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron, like Captain John Byron, had been a spendthrift, but to a lesser degree. He was often in search of new ways to draw income on his properties, which he could not sell due to the terms of a settlement established by his father. His financial affairs were thus in a state of perplexity at the time of his death. The Court of Chancery named Hanson to the position of receiver on the Byron estates. As a part of his duties he was required to submit regular accounts of income to the Court, which stipulated that the profits from Newstead were to be placed in a trust from which £500 was to be paid out annually to George Gordon Byron for general expenses and schooling (Beckett 91). A letter from Catherine Byron to John Hanson dated November 5, 1801, first mentions Hanson's duty of submitting accounts to Sir William Grant, the Court of Chancery's “Master of the Rolls.”

While the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron had managed his property efficiently, even without formal training in running an estate, the 5<sup>th</sup> baron's spending had greatly outpaced the rent the Nottinghamshire property brought in, and he had pursued various ways to earn income against it. By 1760 he sought a resettlement of the property in order to make the land available for sale (Beckett 82); when he wasn't permitted to sell it, he tried to raise money "by disposing of those items which were traditionally excluded from settlement, notably timber and the contents of the house and grounds" (71). When Lord Byron inherited the property, the last Lord's personal debts of £2,250 "counted for nothing" (83). Thanks to the 4th Lord's sound management, John Beckett argues, George Gordon Byron got a fresh start, inheriting a property valued at £90,000 that yielded an annual revenue between £1,200 and £1,500 from tenants and farming (Boyes 57). The house was in physical disarray, however, so John Hanson discouraged Mrs. Byron from taking up residence, since repairs were required which would consume almost a year's income (Marchand 18). Instead he suggested that the property be made a source of income, mainly from renting.

In August of 1798, Mrs. Byron sold her furniture in Aberdeen for around £74 and moved to Nottingham, where she took up residence with the Parkyns family, relations of her former husband. John Hanson hired Owen Mealey to manage the Newstead property. He would see to it that Newstead Abbey was effectively managed and would collect rents from tenants. Mealey was paid an income of £100 a year and had a "position of trust" (Langley-Moore 55), but he was later accused of negligence. He was responsible for paying the laborers on the property from income on the estate. It was Hanson's role as solicitor to see to it that Newstead rents were distributed to their owner.

Later in 1799, Mrs. Byron was beginning to run out of money; her £115 a year was not enough to live on. At Hanson's recommendation, she applied for a civil list pension of £500 a year. To that end, she wrote to the then Tory leader of the House of Lords, William Cavendish-Bentinck, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Portland. The civil list was a fund drawn out of the Treasury to supply pensions to selected persons for service to the King, contributions to arts and letters, etc. Hanson drafted the letter on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1799, with Lord Carlisle's assistance, requesting £500 in total, from which Mrs. Byron would receive £300 a year. In the letter, it was emphasized that she had come from good stock and needed the money due to her circumstances. The letter pointed out that though she was a descendant of King James I she had been reduced to providing for her noble son on an income of only £115 per year. Working in Mrs. Byron's favor was the £1,000 with interest that the Duke of Portland owed Lord Byron due to a complicated mortgage transaction, which Byron would later spend ten years trying to recover. In a letter of August 28, 1799, Portland announced that the pension was granted and would be paid out in quarterly allowances. John Hanson was responsible for receiving the payments and distributing them to Mrs. Byron, which he often neglected to do because the funds were not always disbursed on schedule. This would later become a problem when Byron's bills and school debts came due.

When Byron began school at Harrow in 1801, Mrs. Byron's income from the £500 per annum pension was reduced to £200; the remaining amount went to pay Byron's fees at Harrow and later at Cambridge, where he would take up residence in October 1805. At Harrow Byron quarreled with his tutor, Henry Drury, and the headmaster of the school, Dr. James Drury. In a May 6, 1803, letter to Hanson, Mrs. Byron implied that it was perhaps the duty of Dr. Drury to "make his son [Henry] behave with *propriety* to the Boys"; "the Boys" were Lord Byron and Hanson's son Hargreaves Hanson, also at Harrow. In a letter of January 29, 1803, Hanson

pointed out to Mrs. Byron that hiring a tutor for her son would consume a considerable portion of her annual income. While Mrs. Byron had hitherto managed to live within her means, at Harrow Lord Byron began contracting debts his mother would find increasingly difficult to pay.

Lord Byron was willing to go into debt because of the large expectations he had from properties used for mining coal. The Rochdale property in Lancashire, which had come to him as part of his inheritance, was tied up in a lawsuit which would be protracted for much of Lord Byron's life. When the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord was in search of ways to earn income, he had sold for £2,370 various parcels of land inherited from his wife's family; these included the Brownwardle coal mine at Rochdale, which was sold to James Dearden, a principal in the case, for £630, and which would leave a “problematic legacy for [the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord’s] successor” (Beckett 81). In 1799 John Hanson determined that the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Byron had sold the rights to the coal illegally, and in 1803 a lawsuit began which eventually made its way to the Court of King’s Bench after several years of litigation and soaring court costs. Byron's side argued that despite the sale, the property belonged to the current Lord Byron, since “the fifth Lord Byron could not legally make the sales of rights to mine coal because he needed the assent of his wife and son. Both of whom were dead by 1795, and so could not give the required consent” (109). Rumors about the property’s profitable coal mining business had been swirling, with numerous estimates suggesting that the property was producing about £4,000 from the coal mines alone and would bring in around £8,000 in total (109). As it currently stood, the “depredations on the property were £200 a week” (109). Hanson predicted that Dearden and the defendants in the case would be saddled with the legal fees since they were the ones prolonging the case.

Concerned about these rumors, Mrs. Byron urged John Hanson to pursue the suit as quickly as possible, but it was obviously in the interest of the other litigants to protract the

proceedings as long as they could. In 1806 Hanson won an injunction against mining on the disputed property, which sounded promising. But this ruling was overturned on appeals from James Dearden and his litigants and the lawsuit continued without resolution until Byron eventually agreed to a settlement late in life. From the time he was at Cambridge, however, Byron began accruing debts in the expectation of eventual revenue from the disputed Lancashire estates.

A more reliable source of income was letting out Newstead Abbey; after an initial lease to a Mr. Clay, in 1803 the house was let to Lord Grey de Ruthyn for £50 per annum on a five-year term (Boyes 81). During this period Byron managed to accrue around £500 in debts while at Harrow. He was in constant conflict with his headmaster, Dr. Drury, and refused to wear the brace designed to treat his club foot. This led to another expense: in September of 1801 Mrs. Byron wrote to Dr. Laurie, the physician who treated Byron's foot, contesting outstanding charges of £150 a year. But the major expenses began when Byron went off to Cambridge in 1805. At this point Mrs. Byron made over to her son the bulk of the money Hanson had obtained from the Court of Chancery, reducing her own annual income from £300 to £200, including the money she received from Scotland.

Mrs. Byron anticipated that outfitting Byron for Cambridge would cost around £500 for furniture, clothes, plate, and a horse. The income paid into Chancery from 1802-1806 averaged close to £650 a year, £500 of which was paid out to Byron (Beckett 114). The year of 1805-1806, however, saw a drastic decrease in income; Newstead reportedly brought in only £130.19.11 that year due to a combination of Owen Mealey's lassitude and Hanson's negligence (114). According to Volume I of *Byron's Letters and Journals*, Byron left for Cambridge well provided for and remarked, "I am allowed 500 a year, a Servant and Horse, as I feel as independent as a

German Prince” (“In my hot youth” 79). The money his mother provided did not cover the princely and independent manner of living Lord Byron desired. He was soon entangled with usurers charging absurd interest rates on loans, culminating in a *very* expensive £3,000 loan taken out in 1807. The means he took to acquire money as a minor would come back to haunt him.

During the Christmas vacation of 1805, Lord Byron rented rooms from Elizabeth Massingberd, a family acquaintance with whom Mrs. Byron had previously stayed in London. After he refused Augusta Leigh’s (his sister’s) involvement in lending him money to cover his Cambridge obligations, Byron became involved in financial transactions with Mrs. Massingberd. As Marchand contends, Byron’s borrowing habits were in some ways worse than his spending habits: the Massingberd loan was “the first intimation of Byron’s involvement with the usurers, from whom in the next three or four years he borrowed until his debts ran into the thousands of pounds” (Marchand 37). Byron would draw on Mrs. Massingberd twice. The first time was in 1805 when, seeking financial independence from his mother, he took out a loan for a few hundred pounds. Massingberd served as a go-between for the moneylenders, whom he presumably paid off. The second loan in 1807 proved far more disastrous. The terms of agreement were that he would borrow £3,000 from Mrs. Massingberd and pay back £5,000 once he came of age (42). This was no worse than what the moneylending “tribes” would have charged him as a minor of 17, but the practice by which the loan was produced was dubious, and perhaps even illegal. Mrs. Byron was aware that something inappropriate had occurred: in an undated and unpublished letter in the John Murray Archive, copied in Mrs. Byron’s hand, Byron disputes the amount of the loan. Mrs. Massingberd would eventually be jailed for debt when John Hanson refused to meet her creditors’ obligations in 1811.

Aware that Byron had been accessing funds through moneylenders and Mrs. Massingberd, Mrs. Byron did what she had always avoided: in 1806 she took on a £1,000 loan in order to forestall Byron's future contact with moneylenders. John Hanson refused to become involved in this transaction. The Court of Chancery, which supplied the £500 yearly allowance from incomes at Newstead, was only to be applied to for "legitimate" circumstances – gambling debts, clothing bills, wine, and other frivolities fell outside of that description (Beckett 121). After failing to receive the much-needed money from Hanson, out of desperation Mrs. Byron drew upon local resources for funds, "of which £500 came from [Byron's] great-aunt, Mrs. George Byron of Nottingham, £300 from Misses E[lizabeth] and F[rances] Parkyns, and £200 from Wylde & Company" (121). This would satisfy creditors for the time being, but compounding interest, gambling debts, and reckless spending habits would weigh heavily upon Lord Byron. This was especially true after his departure for the Mediterranean in July of 1809, when he left his mother with a £1,000 loan she could not afford. Her only security was her source of income in Scotland: £190 a year from Lady Gight, her grandmother.

In a January 1808 letter, Lord Byron told Hanson that he "could soon compass the National Debt." Beckett claims that Byron "anticipated that his debts would reach between £9,000 and £10,000 before his twenty-first birthday, but by contrast with his mother he did not consider such a sum unmanageable" (122). Lord Byron's situation was becoming dire: "between 1807 and 1809 he raised £14,520 on annuities, with annual repayments of £2,422 2s 8d plus interest" (123). But Mrs. Byron remained confident that the Lancashire estate would be settled soon; it would, according to Hanson's calculations, amount to a £30,000 a year income under proper management.



Upon coming of age in 1809, with his creditors expecting payment, Byron prepared to embark on his tour abroad. His debts were overwhelming him to the point where he would do anything – even go into deeper debt – to feed the illusion that he was digging himself out. To pay off £3,000 in annuities, Byron applied for a £4,000 loan through a Colonel Wanley Sawbridge. This loan was structured as a series of annuities paid out at £700 a year, which his friend, George Thomas, disbursed (139). The £3,000 he received was used to satisfy creditors and left him with £1,000 in funds so he could travel. Byron had Hanson deposit the funds as a letter of credit in Hammersley's Bank, which had offices in Malta and Constantinople. His mother begged him not to leave her with the £1,000 loan from her relatives and Wylde. Hanson also expressed his disapproval at Byron's decision to leave.

Being far removed from reliable postal service during his travels, at one point Byron would go 15 months without correspondence, leaving his mother to make ends meet at Newstead. In a letter of September 1809 to Hanson, Mrs. Byron proposed raising rents at Newstead to pay for repairs, but she feared that the tenants could not afford it. She discussed how to pay off the £1,000 loan that was coming due. She had one of Byron's properties in Norfolk appraised; it was said to be valued at £4,500. She planned on using the rent and income from the Newstead tenants to pay off the loan, but the £20 interest on the Wylde portion of the loan was coming due. This, along with the £2,100 bill Byron ran up from Benjamin Brothers, an upholsterer, for refurbishing rooms at Newstead Abbey, was becoming a pressing matter. Byron was also in debt to his tailor, James Milne, for £900. While all of this was happening, Mrs. Byron's health was failing. As she wrote in a letter to Hanson in June of 1810, illnesses left her debilitated and weak, often unable to sit up and write.

By 1811, with the upholsterer threatening an execution on Newstead Abbey, Mrs. Byron was frantically securing her possessions so they could not be seized. She had been attempting to raise money on her small remaining property in Scotland. This required enlisting the help of Hugh Watson, her Edinburgh solicitor, who told Mrs. Byron that a new power of attorney would be required from Lord Byron if she wished to use her property to pay her son's debts – a difficult thing to accomplish since Byron was away in Greece. Hanson, meanwhile, had not collected rents at Newstead in several months, leaving Mrs. Byron short on income. While she was struggling to pay the interest on her loan from Wylde, Byron was requesting that Hanson send him a £1,000 letter of credit through Hammersley's bank. Hanson had been able to pay money due on the annuities by the sale of another Byron property, Wymondham, but Byron was still refusing, under any circumstances, to sell Newstead. In the event, Byron would put Newstead Abbey up for sale in 1812.

In January of 1811 Mrs. Byron was only able to secure around £1,600 towards paying the £2,100 bill from Brothers (Boyes 155). When she missed the January 31 deadline, Brothers proceeded with the execution at Newstead Abbey. Bailiffs were installed at Newstead in May. Brothers was desperate for the money since he had a large family and could not afford to go without payment. In a letter of May 28, 1811, Hanson wrote to Mrs. Byron that he was in the process of settling matters with the upholsterer. Byron wrote to his mother in June of 1811 to have his Newstead apartments ready for his arrival in mid-July. While Byron was in London working with Hanson to settle his debts, Mrs. Byron died on August 1. On hearing of her illness Byron hastened to Newstead, only to arrive a day late. He did not attend her funeral but stood at the door and watched the procession from a distance, ending a tragic story on a dark note. It was hard for Byron to show a sense of gratitude, or even affection, for his mother, but he was deeply

moved. He wrote to his friend Scrope Davies that “[m]y mother lies in a corpse in this house; one of my best friends drowned in a ditch. What can I say, or think, or do...My dear Scrope, if you can spare a moment, do come down to me, I want a friend” (Boyes 175).

## **METHODS: TEI-XML MARKUP, EDITING**

The Catherine Byron Letters project seeks to enrich the field of Byron studies and establish a useful addition to the existing scholarly infrastructure. Planning the project required general knowledge of textual studies, digital humanities (in the first-wave sense, at least), and literary history; implementing the project required a not-inconsiderable degree of technical and biographical knowledge. I came to the project with a basic knowledge of XML (Extensible Markup Language) and HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), but the use of descriptive markup required the additional use of XSLT (Extensible Stylesheet Language Transformations) to convert the machine-readable XML data into human-readable web pages. In what follows I will explain first the project's methodologies, then technical matters concerned with textual encoding, and finally practical and theoretical issues connected with the transcription and editing process.

In addition to researching the Byron family's history, I was first encouraged to familiarize myself with the nuts and bolts of textual encoding, which also has a history. XML (Extensible Markup Language) dates back to when markup languages like HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language, HTML's progenitor) were useful for creating static web pages, but not much else. The acronym *HTML* – *hyper text* markup language – implies that the language is primarily useful in the presentation of linked documents. XML, on the other hand, is used for an array of things: as a descriptive as opposed to a presentational language it can do more than present information. XML, developed in 1996 by

the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) was, according to Elizabeth Castro in *XML for the World Wide Web*, a “language designed for creating other languages” (Castro 13) – XML’s *extensibility* leads to nearly limitless possibilities. While the text of the Catherine Byron Letters makes use of a standardized *instantiation* of XML, TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) markup, the chronology uses a project-specific variety of XML created for describing this particular set of data.

Since the Catherine Byron Letters are digital representations of physical, handwritten text, TEI was the obvious choice for “marking up” the letters for the web. TEI elements (“tags”) may be used to specify or describe a letter’s metadata, such as names of authors and recipients; its semantic features, such as personal names, place names, index-able terms; and its component parts, such as <salute>, which represents a “salute” at the beginning of a letter (“Dear Sir/Madam”), <lb>, line break, <p>, paragraph, and <pb>, page break. By means of a style sheet, the TEI elements, while in themselves merely descriptive, can be used for formatting the document, adding links, and various kinds of parsing.

Since XML has no fundamental properties of its own other than requiring the document author to maintain consistency in tag structure and syntax, one must ascribe meaning to it, so to speak. In earlier versions of XML, a DTD (Document Type Definition) was used, which validated each element, attribute, and attribute value, dictated how often each element and attribute could appear, and determined what values each attribute would accept and in what order (Castro 35). Essentially, a DTD constrains the XML for a specific use. With the W3C’s newer standards, however, most XML frameworks used today have their own *schema*, or set of rules, that the corresponding XML document must follow: “A *schema*, like a DTD, defines what a given set of one or more XML documents can look like: what elements they contain and in what

order, what their content might be, and what attributes these might contain” (69). It’s important to note that with a schema, as opposed to a DTD, one can set the standards for one’s own XML framework by hosting one’s schema on a server and linking the schema URL in the XML namespace. DTDs do not have this capability. Rather, one must import or export a DTD to the user’s machine.

An XML document begins with the document declaration:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
```

Following the declaration is the XML namespace, where the document author declares what XML schema is to be used. The schema is necessary to validate syntax and, in turn, the XML document itself:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>  
<TEI xmlns="http://www.tei-c.org/ns/1.0">  
    . . .  
</TEI>
```

In the figure above, the namespace URL is inserted between the quotation marks and tells the XML processor to conform to the standards of a particular schema – in this case, the TEI specification. Any XML syntax *not* conforming to the TEI would produce an error in an XML editor.

The TEI provides many more elements than would be used in any particular project and only a small set has been employed here. We originally considered creating a facsimile of the letters, displaying on the web the original indents, line breaks, and other unique features of the physical documents. I thus transcribed each letter exactly, maintaining the line breaks, indents, and paragraphing, which were preserved in a text file. I then moved the transcriptions from the text file to an XML document via a copy/paste function and completed the transcriptions, being

careful to comply with the XML document structure. We later elected to simplify the physical presentation output in the HTML; I will elaborate on the transcription process at a later point and explain my methodology.

TEI syntax has an interesting set of features worth discussing, especially with respect to how the use of a certain tag structure reflects how the document ought to be interpreted. Most significantly perhaps, the Catherine Byron Letters makes extensive use of the `<floatingText>` element. As the TEI Guidelines specify, the `<floatingText>` tag “floats” other documents within a “root” document, and is often implemented inside a document itself (“Default Text Structure - The TEI Guidelines”). A “floating” text is likened to a component in a mathematical tessellation where the structure contains logical sub-divisions equal to the sum of its parts (“Default Text Structure - The TEI Guidelines”). The authors explain the logic behind the use of a `<floatingText>` tag: “For example, if a text A is contained by text B in such a way that part of B precedes A and part follows it, we cannot tessellate the whole of B. In such a case, we say that text A is a ‘floating’ text” (“Default Text Structure - The TEI Guidelines”). Another explanation of the tag relies on the metaphor of a frame narrative (emphasis added):

For example, texts such as the *Decameron* or the *Arabian Nights* **might be regarded as containing many floating texts embedded within another single text, the framing narrative**, rather than as groups of discrete texts in which the fragments of framing narrative are regarded as front or back matter. (“Default Text Structure - The TEI Guidelines”)

This logic applies to the Catherine Byron Letters.

The document structure of the Catherine Byron Letters, including the use of the `<floatingText>` element, suggests that every letter comprising the whole document is part of an overarching narrative. Though the benefits of this project lie partly in the reader's ability to separate a letter from the sequence in which it appears, an undeniable narrative element is at work. The headnotes situate each letter in the development of the Byron family's financial history, filling in gaps of time that are sometimes as long as a decade. As the `<floatingText>` tag semantically suggests, each letter is literally framed within a larger encompassing structure. One might say that the containing document is the letters in sequence: each stands on its own, but is part of a larger form. A scholar using the Catherine Byron Letters could consult a particular letter for reference, or she could follow the entire sequence in linear fashion, keeping in step with the headnotes. The hypertext medium enables different readings of the text in a manner Jerome McGann calls "radiant." Framing this project within the "decentralized" notions of hypertext suggests the value of a design using floating components: "Hypertext provides the means for establishing an indefinite number of 'centers' and for expanding their number as well as altering their relationships" (McGann 71). Much in the way architectural design influences a structure's use, the Catherine Byron Letters' underlying TEI structure suggests a chronological series while enabling other paths through the letters.

Each `<floatingText>` element contains the data which the XSLT style sheet displays as a letter's number, headnote, date, author, and addressee; the element also contains the text of the letter itself, with its paragraphs, signature, tables, and any postscript information. Any XML document, including the ones for this project, must be written with the XSLT style sheet in mind. Each element, attribute, and attribute value has a specific purpose; the XSLT style sheet parses the XML document and can output a format of one's choosing: HTML, other XML documents,

PDFs, or even other XSLT style sheets. As Michael Kay explains in his book *XSLT Programmer's Reference*, XSLT is cross-compatible between XML formats and can be implemented in such a way that one style sheet with slight variations can work with a variety of unique XML frameworks (Kay 12). In the case of this project, the TEI document that hosts the text of the letters uses a style sheet similar to the one used by the chronology's XML document.

After gaining a basic understanding of how to manipulate an XSLT file, I relied on Professor Radcliffe to transform the project's XML documents for the web. The transformation process works as follows: the XSL style sheet is written to the XML document's specifications using two different processing models, "push" and "pull," which refers to how the style sheet is applied to the XML. The XSL data finds each corresponding XML tag and, as instructed in the style sheet, outputs the desired result in the web browser to create a human-readable HTML file. The different processing models, push and pull, are applied at different points in the main TEI document and in different situations where one model is more advantageous than the other.

In the figure below, I demonstrate how each letter is marked up syntactically and how the style sheet processes the data for the desired output as an HTML web page.



```

<floatingText>
  <body>
    <docAuthor key="CaByron1811">Catherine Byron</docAuthor>
    <docDate when="1806-03-26">26 March 1806</docDate>
    <listPerson type="recipient">
      <person>
        <persName key="JoHanso1841">John Hanson</persName>
      </person>
    </listPerson>
    <div xml:id="cb53_3.26.1806"
      n="Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 26 March 1806" type="letter">
      <pb xml:id="cb53.1"/>
      <opener>
        <dateline> Southwell 26th March 1806 </dateline>
        <salute> D<seg rend="super">r</seg> Sir</salute>
      </opener>

      <p xml:id="cb53-1"> I will no longer submit to insults and abuse from a
        <persName key="LdByron">Boy</persName>. <emph>if it were
        possible to die of grief he would kill me</emph>. </p>

      <p xml:id="cb53-2"> I desire you will not pay his allowance till you see
        me or hear from me again. if he is <emph>not</emph> here in two days
        from this date I come to London. he shall know he is not
        <emph>yet</emph> his own Master </p>

      <closer>
        <salute> Yours sincerely </salute>
        <signed>
          <persName>C G Byron</persName>
        </signed>
      </closer>

      <note type="address">
        ...
      </note>

      <note type="head">
        <p xml:id="cb53.note1"> Furious with her ungrateful and
          inconsiderate son, Mrs. Byron orders Hanson not to give him an
          allowance until he sees his mother again. </p>
      </note>
    </div>
  </body>
</floatingText>

```

This is the basic XML syntax for each of the 92 letters. The TEI document structure in this case relies on the `<floatingText>` element to link each document together, but each is represented as its own document. The content nested inside the opening and closing `<floatingText>` tags comprises the actual contents of the letter. This is a relatively simple design, and the corresponding `<body>` tag assumes that each letter is its own unique document within a document. First, the `<docAuthor>` element, with a `key` attribute included, identifies the author. TEI specifications dictate that only a certain type of attribute value can be used inside the `key` attribute. In this case, it is a truncated abbreviation representing a predefined set of information:

```
<docAuthor key="CaByron1811">Catherine Byron</docAuthor>
```

CaByron1811 is an attribute value stored in the preexisting code for the Lord Byron and His Times project. These attribute values are referred to as LBT IDs; there are thousands of IDs, each representing one person. When an LBT ID is inserted inside the `key` value, the XSL style sheet is instructed to output a formatted document that includes a document header with the information one might find in a letter, as in this example:

## Letter 58. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 26 March 1806

Furious with her son, who is refusing to return to Cambridge or return home, Mrs. Byron orders Hanson not to give him an allowance until he sees his mother again.

This design is an example of using XSLT to separate data from presentation; in *XSLT Programmer's Reference*, Michael Kay emphasizes the “need to separate information...from details of the way it is to be presented on a particular device” (12). In the above code block, the

text nested within the `<floatingText>`, `<body>`, and `<listPerson>` tags produce the “front matter” of the letter, but not without the aid of the XSLT. Consider, also, that while TEI syntax calls for the `<note type="head">` tag to appear at the close of each marked-up letter, this information actually appears in the front matter of letter #58 on the site. Despite the order of information presented in the TEI markup, the XSL style sheet reads the “head” attribute value as a headnote and positions it among the letter’s front matter.

Other features that appear throughout the project are “popups”: clickable features in both the LBT and Catherine Byron Letters that provide additional information for the reader’s direct use. In the code block above, the the XSLT is written so that any text wrapped in a `<persName>` or `<term>` element is clicked, a little box appears containing information that corresponds with the LBT ID or the information about the term in the `key` value. For instance, when using the site and one clicks on John Hanson’s name, the box that appears corresponds to the associated LBT ID information. This is the duty of the JavaScript `onclick;` function, but XSLT contributes as well. Tables are another important feature of the letters, as they replicate the actual tables in which Mrs. Byron and Mr. Hanson recorded expenses:

<b>Mather &amp; Mandall</b>	<b>50. 0. 0</b>
<b>Drury</b>	<b>47. 4. 0</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>27.16. 0</b>
	<b>125. 0. 0</b>

In order to reproduce this – the `<table>` element is part of the postscript `<postscript>` element in the TEI – the XSLT follows a set of instructions for formatting these lines of XML:

```

<postscript>
  <table>
    <row>
      <cell>Mather & Mandall</cell>
      <cell>50.0.0</cell>
    </row>
    <row>
      <cell>Drury</cell>
      <cell>47.4.0</cell>
    </row>
    <row>
      <cell>Balance</cell>
      <cell>27.16.0</cell>
    </row>
    <row>
      <cell/>
      <cell>125.0.0</cell>
    </row>
  </table>
</postscript>

```

Once again XSLT is doing all the work, separating data from presentation.

Originally, the Catherine Byron Letters project was intended to present the letters both in their original or “diplomatic” form and in a “regularized” form that would make the transcriptions more readable by altering paragraphing, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. My role as an *editor* would then have taken precedence over my role as archivist or curator. But when producing both a diplomatic transcription *and* a regularized transcription with full TEI markup proved too time-consuming, we agreed that the diplomatic transcription and the timeline were our chief concerns. However, editorial scholarship remained a necessary component of the process. Even though I transcribed the letters exactly as they appear, it was nevertheless important to understand the rationale behind producing a diplomatic transcription, including how the slightest variations in a transcription can alter the meaning of a specific passage.

Eric Kelemen's *Textual Editing and Criticism: An Introduction* provides a frame of reference for textual scholarship; he writes to an audience likely unfamiliar with textual editing as a discipline. Kelemen writes that "[s]eeing textual criticism as the 'archaeology of the text' means that the two fields, textual criticism and literary criticism, cannot be kept separate, but that they are in fact interlinked aspects of the same activity" (8). Bearing that in mind, Kelemen argues for a robust humanities infrastructure and cites Jerome McGann, who urges that the coming age of humanities scholarship is in need of a massive storehouse of digitized projects for cultural preservation (6). Kelemen makes a solid case for the importance of textual criticism, especially in the context of a literary historical framework. Though deconstructionist literary theory tells us that the author is dead and thus isolates the text, Kelemen contends that textual criticism tells us otherwise:

Many literary critics today insist that a work of literature must be understood as a product of historical conditions, and textual criticism teaches us that the specific manifestations of the work – the documents we hold in our hands – have affected our understanding of the work without our necessarily being aware of it. (9)

The distinction here is telling *vis-à-vis* the act of textual editing. In order to be more aware of the role that the original work has in the way we come to understand it, our relationship with the original text in question informs our relationship with textual studies projects that preserve and enrich the original text and vice versa.

In the previous section I explained that TEI tags often represent a metaphor for how a hypertext document should be read; the `<floatingText>` tag, for instance, points to the inherent structure of the work itself. Building on the work of Roland Barthes and G. Thomas Tanselle, who engage in debates over how "text," "document," and "work" are defined, Kelemen

notes that these terms mean something different to textual editors than they do to literary theorists: “For most textual critics, then, a document is a tangible thing whose text will always remain suspect, and a work is an abstraction whose text will never be perfectly recovered from these textually suspect documents” (13). The floating text metaphor somewhat engages this concept, or perhaps even subverts it: a user of the Catherine Byron Letters might view the entire series of letters as individual texts within a singular document, as a work. Yet the transcription process requires one to think of each letter – arguably a work in and of itself – as a document entirely independent of the others, but without which the work would nevertheless not be whole.

The actual transcription process presented its fair share of challenges. Aside from the writers’ sometimes illegible handwriting, becoming acclimated to Mrs. Byron’s and John Hanson’s 19<sup>th</sup>-century diction was one of the hardest things to manage. Note the distinction between *language* and *diction*. The language I am used to, but not the abbreviations, slang, and other 19<sup>th</sup>-century parlance. At times Mrs. Byron’s letters go off on tangents, and the physical copies, which had been photocopied from the originals, made it difficult to distinguish between ink marks, commas, and periods. Though these issues may seem tangential to the letters’ digital reproduction, creating a diplomatic edition of the letters can be difficult when punctuation marks are not clear. The same is true for paragraphing. Often, in order to be economical (paper was expensive) Mrs. Byron or Mr. Hanson would use a long, stretched-out space between sentences to denote a paragraph. As I made my first transcription pass through the letters, it wasn’t until about two-thirds of the way through that I finally began to recognize each author’s unique prose style and handwriting. While, I am convinced, Hanson’s handwriting was sloppier than it needed to be, Mrs. Byron’s rage sometimes made for even greater difficulty. A few of her letters were nearly impossible to transcribe. Some of the letters from the John Murray Archive appear in *Lord*

*Byron Accounts Rendered* and *My Amiable Mamma* in transcribed and edited form; this came to my aid when some of the text in certain letters seemed truly indecipherable. However, it's important to consider that the transcriber could have been just as misinformed. Fortunately, the TEI tag set features elements like <unclear>, which can alert the reader that regularization was involved in the editing process.

The way a document is physically articulated often influences its interpretation, in line with the distinction between a “work” and a “text” in the Barthesian sense. Kelemen cites an example of a collation in which two different versions of the same document imply different readings entirely. In the case of Robert Frost’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” two versions of a stanza are exactly alike except for the first line. In the first case, the stanza reads, “*The woods are lovely, dark and deep.*” The second case reads, “*The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.*” Kelemen argues that the difference between these two lines is enough to alter the poem’s interpretation, and he explains the editorial justification scholars make to preserve the distinct qualities of the original when producing critical editions. In producing a diplomatic transcription, then, it is important to punctuate the letters accurately. Though the letters are not poetry and should not be treated as such, it is still important not to add material that isn’t there or to connote something not in the originals.

To maintain the integrity of the letters, the Catherine Byron Letters have been “diplomatically” transcribed so as to maintain inconsistencies even when editorial sensibilities would suggest regularizing the syntax and grammar. Kelemen uses the terms “accidental” and “substantive” to refer to degrees of editorial intervention: “A thing’s substance is its essence, its identity, while its *accidence* is its specific physical manifestation, and Realism holds that accidence can change while substance remains the same” (15). I’d like to consider my approach

to the letters as “Realist” in this sense, as my committee members agreed that regularizing the letters, as opposed to maintaining a diplomatic transcription, projects a reading that takes on a life of its own. As Kelemen defines it, a “diplomatic edition aims to report the text of a single, usually unique and usually notable document with as little editorial intrusion as possible” (109). The goal is *not* to produce a critical edition, but rather a diplomatic one, leaving the original spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. as they are. Preserving specific features of the text is important. For example, where an error appears in a letter, even if it interferes with interpretation, it is included in a diplomatic edition. It is not in the interest of a curator to retool a sculpture to his liking, but rather to keep the artifact’s present reality intact. My reading of the letters is congruent with how they were originally written, and preserving the accuracy of transcriptions remains a chief commitment of the project.

Nevertheless, there are instances in this diplomatic transcription where editorial intervention has seemed desirable – if only to alert readers to the role of the editor in producing the text. Diplomatic editions of a text normally work best when the document in question is easily legible. That is not always the case with the Catherine Byron letters. When after several passes through the letters problems remained, we used the TEI elements `<unclear>` and `<reg>`, or regularized, which indicate that the text in question is either a) impossible to read, b) illegible, c) lacking in punctuation, or d) unclear with regard to intended punctuation, as in cases where a stray mark might be construed as punctuation. In such cases, the document is marked up and the questionable characters rendered in a way that appears distinct from the surrounding text. It is important to note, however, that I am not *adding* things that are not there, but making an educated guess as to what could be there. The `<reg>` tag is employed to clarify punctuation, most often in cases of doubtful or missing periods and semicolons.



I told <persName>Anderson</persName> what you desired<reg>.</reg>

Some of the letters have extensive deletions, particularly in cases where the surviving document is a draft. The deleted material, which is usually not legible in any case, is not part of this diplomatic transcription. The TEI does give an editor the option of marking text as deleted.

## **TRANSCRIPTIONS**

In this section, I have inserted screenshots from the transcriptions on the Catherine Byron Letters website. Editorial features of the letters have been preserved, to a degree, and regularized elements appear bracketed and in grey.

## Letter 1. Catherine Byron to James Watson, 22 February 1788

A month after the birth of the future Lord Byron, Mrs Byron writes from London to [James Watson](#), her solicitor in Scotland. requesting funds. John Byron is hiding from creditors and she doesn't trust him with money.

M<sup>r</sup> Watson  
Writer to the Signet  
Georges Street  
Edin<sup>h</sup>

Noble Street February 22, 1788

Sir

I shall make M<sup>r</sup> Becket give you an account of all M<sup>r</sup> Byrons Debts that we know of as soon as possible but I hope the money wont be given to him, but to have some body to pay them for he will only pay what he is obliged to pay and there will be still more debts coming in & more demands for money. I am very sorry he is getting a new carriage. the money M<sup>r</sup> Leslie gave me is not sufficient to clear all my expences but I will let you know exactly what I shall want in a few days and what I shall want to keep me in London for two months longer as I have taken a House for that time at two Guineas and a half a week which is

just twenty guineas for the two months. I would not have taken one till I had known M<sup>r</sup> Byrons plans but the time I must leave this is on Sunday and I could not get any for a shorter time and none so cheap. I will not go to Bath nor will I leave this till M<sup>r</sup> Byron gets a house & is fixed for I am tired of so many journeys and I am sure I can live as cheap here as in Bath as I don't keep a carriage and have got a House so cheap. I hope by the time my little Boy is able to travel M<sup>r</sup> Byron will have got a house in some cheap country whether Wales or the North of England. I want Money to be sent me to keep me while in Town and I must have it as if M<sup>r</sup> Byron gets it it will be thrown away in some foolish way or other and I shall be obliged to apply for more. I don't wish more than is necessary but I will let you know exactly in a few days. I will live as cheap as I can but it was impossible till now as there was a great many expences that could not be avoided[.] direct for me N<sup>o</sup> 2 Baker Street Portmans Square[.] my little Boy is to be named **George**[.] don't show M<sup>r</sup> Byron this[.] I am

with Regard

C B G

Letter 2. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 15 May  
1791

Mrs Byron, apparently in London, writes a note on financial matters to her solicitor John Hanson.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
6 Chancery Lane

Saturday 15th May

Sir

On looking over an account I find all these receipts wanting, which I wish you could *find* & send me. I hope it will not be the *case* but if your Papers were to fall into the other hands it might create me uneasiness & confusion hereafter. I hope M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson continues to do well[.] I am

Sir your obed serv't  
C G Byron

Letter 3. Catherine Byron to Frances Leigh, 31 May  
1791

Mrs. Byron writes to her sister-in-law [Frances Leigh](#) in London asking her to have a special shoe made for her son's deformed foot.

M<sup>rs</sup> Leigh  
N<sup>o</sup> 33 Brompton Row  
near Knights Bridge  
London

Aberdeen May the 31<sup>st</sup>

My Dear Madam

I am much obliged to you for your kind attention about [Georges shoe](#)[.] his foot turns inward and it is the right foot[.] he walks quite on the side of his foot[.] I have sent an old shoe that was made here & it is the size that fits him at present. M<sup>r</sup> Marten will see by the shoe how well it answered with him[.] his foot turns in very much & would need something very stiff to keep it out.

I have never seen any of the Bonnets you mention here yet they are out of fashion in London long before they come and you are very good in offering to send me one[.] I would be much

obliged to you if you would take the trouble of sending me 10 yards of wide printed cotton pretty fine[.] you can send it when you send Georges shoe and if you send it to Hendrie the Perfumer he will send them down to Anderson Lane[.] I have given the old shoe of Georges to Anderson & he is to send it to Hendrie & M<sup>r</sup> Byron ?seals?[.] I beg you will let me know what these things comes to & I will pay the money to Anderson[.] I told Anderson what you desired[.] he tells me he is to get the Dog you want in three weeks & send it to you[.]

I hope you will soon get your business settled. Pray where is your Nephew William what makes you think that he will not live long[?] do you know that when M<sup>r</sup> Byron came to Scotland about two year ago he told me he was dead & ?till? the time he went away persisted in it[?] not that I ever believed him[.] is he in bad health that you don't think he will live long[?] I am sorry to make you pay for so many postages of letters & particularly so as I have nothing to say that can amuse you[.] I would not do it but there is not a great person as a member of Parliament in this place[?] is M<sup>r</sup> Byron still at your house in France. Pray excuse all the trouble I am giving you & believe me to be with you in time.

Your most affectionate sister  
C Byron

## Letter 4. Catherine Byron to Frances Leigh, 23 August 1791

Writing after the death of Mr. Byron in France, Catherine Byron writes to his sister Frances Leigh, with whom he had been living. On June 21, 1791, John Byron had altered his will to make his sister his executrix and sole beneficiary of the £400 he thought would be redeemable from his parents' estate. Mrs Leigh dropped Mrs Byron's acquaintance and stopped answering her letters.

M<sup>rs</sup> Leigh  
N<sup>o</sup> 33 Brompton Row  
near Knights Bridge  
London

Aberdeen August 23<sup>d</sup> 1791

My Dear Madam

You wrong me very much when you suppose I would not lament M<sup>r</sup> Byrons death[.] it has made me very miserable and the more so that I had not the melancholy satisfaction of seeing him before his death[.] if I had known of his illness I would have come to him[.] I do not think I shall every get the better of it[.] necessity not inclination parted us at least on my part and I flatter myself it was the same with him and notwithstanding all his foibles for they deserve no worse name. I ever sincerely loved

him and believe me my Dear Madam, I have the greatest regard and affection for you for the very kind part you have acted to poor M<sup>r</sup> Byron and it is a great comfort to me that he was with so kind a friend at the time of his death[.] you say he was sensible to the last[.] did he ever mention me was he long ill and where was he buryd[.] be so good as write all these particulars and also send me some of his hair.

as to money matters they are perfectly indifferent to me[.] I only wish there may be enough to pay his debts and to pay you the money you have laid out on his account[.] I wish it was in my power to do all this but a hundred & fifty pounds a year will do little which is all I have and am ?due? a good deal of money in this country.

George is well[.] I shall be happy to let him be with you some time[,] but at present he is my only comfort and the only thing that makes me wish to live[.] I hope if anything should happen to me you will take care of him[.] I was not well before and I do not think I shall ever recover[.] the sincere shock I have received[.] it was so unexpected if I had only seen him before he died[.] did he ever mention me[.] I am miserable & very poor[.] believe me



Yours with sincere Affection  
C Byron

Pray write soon[.]

## Letter 5. Catherine Byron to the 3rd Duke of Portland, [July 1799]

This is the draft of a letter composed by John Hanson for Mrs Byron to send to the Duke of Portland, then the Tory leader of the House of Lords, requesting a [Civil List pension](#). The Duke of Portland obtained the pension for Mrs. Byron at a rate of £300 a year; it was to be administered by Hanson. At the time a complicated mortgage transaction left the Duke of Portland owing Lord Byron £1,000.

My Lord

Being a stranger to your Grace I feel much Embarrassment in presuming to address you upon a Subject of so much Delicacy but the knowledge I have of your Graces Candour & Goodness and the Peculiarity of my own Situation prompt me to solicit your Graces attention to what I am about to state.

By the Death of the late [Lord Byron](#) that Title devolved upon my Son now 12 years of Age and with it an Estate not exceeding £[...] a year and that even in a the most dilapidated Condition. My own Sit<sup>n</sup> is simply this. Upon my Marriage with the late M<sup>r</sup>

Byron he possessed my Fortune which was considerably more than £20,000[.] but unfortunately for myself & Son all that is left of it is £4,200 and to y<sup>e</sup> Int[.] whereof I am intitled to during my Life Subject to a Payment thereout of £60 a year to my aged Grand Mother which reduces my Income to £150 a year which is all that I have to live upon and since the Death of M<sup>r</sup> Byron in 17[...] to the Death of the late Lord Byron in May 1798 I have had to maintain my Son out of it[.] I am myself descended from an ancient and noble family namely Sir W<sup>m</sup> Gordon who [....]

It has been mentioned to me that Person's in my Situation have been thought y<sup>e</sup> object of his Majestys Bounty. May I then indulge a Hope that my Situation when represented to the Throne[....]

## Letter 6. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 23 July 1799

After following John Hanson's directions to write to the Duke of Portland, Mrs. Byron confirms that she has done so. She informs Hanson that her taxes have not been paid, which in 1799 amounted to £47.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Dear Sir

I only received your letter yesterday. I have sent the letter to the Duke as you desire. I wrote to Byron a few days ago[.] I have no doubt his being happy with his young friend, but I am sure both you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson have a great deal of trouble with him.

?G. Meath? has been here again about that everlasting taxes he says M<sup>r</sup> Smith sent for him and they are not yet paid. I beg my kind Compl<sup>ts</sup> to M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson and any love to Byron. I am

sincerely your  
C G Byron

Newsted July 23<sup>d</sup>

Letter 7. Duke of Portland to Catherine Byron, 28 July  
1799

The Duke of Portland replies to Mrs. Byron, reporting that he has forwarded the request to the prime minister, William Pitt.

Bulstrode Sunday 28 July 1799

Madam

I have received the honour of your Letter of the 23<sup>d</sup> & will take the earliest opportunity of communicating the substance of it to [Mr Pitt](#) in order that it may be laid before [His Majesty](#) who, I am persuaded, will be disposed to take the Case into his most favourable consideration & shew it all the attention which circumstances will permit.

I must beg you to accept my thanks for the confidence you are pleased to repose in me, which I hope you will not have any reason to think you have misplaced, or that I am wanting in the Respect which I have always professed for both the Illustrious Families to which you have the honor to belong.

I have the honor to be  
Madam

Your most Obddient & most  
Honorable Servant  
Portland

M<sup>rs</sup> Byron

July 5<sup>th</sup> 99

Pension granted to commence from this date.

## Letter 8. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 27 August 1799

Mrs. Byron writes a letter thanking Hanson for helping her obtain the civil list pension and requests his assistance in writing letters of acknowledgement.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Newstead August 27<sup>th</sup> 1799

Dear Sir

As you have been so very friendly to me in the business, which I shall ever remember with gratitude, I lose no time in sending you a copy of the [Dukes](#) letter, as I am sure from the friendship you have shown to me you will rejoice at it. I certainly ought to write to his grace to thank him, and also to [Lord Carlisle](#) for the share he has had in this affair. If you would have the goodness, when you have time to send me a copy of what you think I should say to each of them, as I do hate to write formal letters to these great People.

I hope My [Dear Boy](#) is well, and that your family are so, & that M<sup>rs</sup> H. will accompany you to Newstead I am

D<sup>r</sup> Sir  
yours sincerely  
C G Byron

P.S. I received the letter this day[.] I sent **Ld B** some things  
which I hope you have received[.]



Letter 9. Duke of Portland to Catherine Byron, 28  
August 1799

The Duke of Portland writes to Mrs. Byron that she has been granted a £300 pension, which is to begin immediately.

Bulstrode Saturday 28th August 1799

Madam

I have at length the honor of acquainting you that **The King** has been graciously pleased to take into consideration the circumstances of your situation, which it was your desire should be laid before His Majesty, & to give order to **M<sup>r</sup> Pitt** in consequence of it that a Pension of £300 per annum should be made to you out of the **Civil List** & that it should commence forthwith.

I fear you may have thought me dilatory in the execution of your commands but had not till yesterday an opportunity of communicating with **M<sup>r</sup> Pitt** since His Majestys pleasure was signified to Him on this subject.

I shall esteem myself very happy if the part I have been entrusted with in this business has been fulfilled in such a manner

as to contribute to your satisfaction, & if you have the goodness to consider it as a testimony of the Respect I have professed for the great Families to which you belong & of that with which I have the honor to be[.]

Madam  
your most obedient  
& most faithful Humble Servant  
Portland

Letter 10. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 4 May  
1801

The Chancery Court has been dilatory in disbursing Lord Byron's funds and Mrs Byron requests a meeting with John Hanson to pursue the matter. The court had created a fund out of the rents of the Newstead estate which was to pay out £500 annually to cover Lord Byron's educational expenses; he was to receive the remainder of the fund when he came of age in 1809.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
6 Chancery Lane

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May

Sir

It is *five* months since I came to Town for no other *purpose* then to get my business settled. as the **Master** has granted every sum I desired I am now at a loss to account for the delay. I desire that you will *fix* a day when you will come to my House, or I come to yours, to settle the accounts and to adjust and receive the ballance and also my receipts.

As I was in hopes I would have been enabled to leave Town before this time, I gave up my Lodgings, in consequence they are now taken and I am obliged to leave them the 6<sup>th</sup> of May. I have

taken another for one week at N<sup>o</sup> 23 George Street Portmans  
Square, corner of Baker Street where I shall go on Thursday  
next[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

The servant waits an answer. I also want thirty pounds  
immediately.

## Letter 11. Catherine Byron to John Laurie, 21 September 1801

Writing to [John Laurie](#), the truss-maker who made the implements used to correct Lord Byron's lameness, Mrs Byron expresses her displeasure at his "extremely high" charge of £150 a year for his visits.

M<sup>r</sup> Laurie  
N<sup>o</sup> 2 Bartholomew Close  
near West Smithfield  
London

Brighton Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 1801

Sir,

After looking over your bill I think it comes extremely high at the rate of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and three guineas a visit to Harrow I think a great deal of Money.

I am however sensible that [Lord Byron](#) certainly walks better than he did[;] therefore you may continue your visits to him at Harrow, but do not go there before Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> in case any thing should prevent my Son from being at Harrow before that time[.]

C G Byron

Letter 12. Catherine Byron to John Laurie, 3 October  
1801

In response to John Laurie's reply, Mrs. Byron concedes that Byron has received some benefits from the braces but remains annoyed at the charges.

M<sup>r</sup> Laurie  
N<sup>o</sup> 2 Bartholomew Close  
near West Smithfield  
London

Brighton Oct 3<sup>d</sup> 1801

Sir

I received your letter this day. I have not yet made up my mind about your attending [Lord Byron](#), the expense is so *great* that it requires *consideration* although I allow that he has received benefit[.]

C G Byron

Letter 13. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 25 October  
1801

Mrs. Byron's half-year allowance from Chancery is overdue and John Hanson has not been answering her letters. She asks Hanson to let her know what the countess of Holderness has left to her granddaughter Augusta, Lord Byron's half-sister. Augusta Byron seen nothing of her brother since she had been living with Lady Holderness.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Brighton Oc<sup>tr</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> 1801

Dear Sir

I have wrote several letters to you. I dont know if you have received them. Mich. term soon begins and you surely will get my business settled before it *ends*. I wish it very much that I may fix upon some plan for the winter.

Do you know what *Lady Holderness* has left *Augusta*.

I wish you could find *out* & let me know I shall be quite anxious till I hear. I had a letter from her lately but it is impossible for me to ask herself[.]

I ever am  
with sincere Regard  
C G Byron

Letter 14. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 5  
November 1801

Mrs. Byron has come up to town to get her Chancery Court business settled. As Chancery solicitor, John Hanson's duty was to report expenses to the Court.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane

Sir

I am come to town on purpose to get the accounts payed before the **Master**, and as my stay here will be very short I must desire you will immediately send me the Copies of the accounts as they are to go to the Master that I may see that the sums are rightly charged to the separate accounts. this I repeat again[.] I must have done before tomorrow night and I leave town on Monday which you can easily do as you told me in August they were ready[.]

C G Byron

Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov  
N<sup>o</sup> 51 Parliament Street



Letter 15. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 9  
November 1801

In an impatient note Mrs Byron instructs John Hanson to leave such accounts as he has completed at her London address.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
6 Chancery Lane

Sir

As you cannot get the accounts ready so soon as I before desired, I must request you will within a week at least leave the accounts sealed up for me at 51 Parliament Street. The next half years accounts can be added afterwards[.]

C G Byron

Nov<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1801

Letter 16. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 5  
September 1802

Writing from Cheltenham Spa where she is staying with her son, Mrs. Byron asks John Hanson to provide Byron with a bed on his return to Harrow.

Cheltenham 5<sup>th</sup> Sep<sup>tr</sup> 1802

Sir

I would be obliged to you if you could accommodate **my son** with a bed for one night at your House on his way to Harrow[;] he will be in Town on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup>[.] You will be so good as but let me know if you will be in London then. I remain

Sir

your most obed servt

C G Byron

Turn over

## Letter 17. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 5 September 1802

John Hanson replies on the back of Mrs Hanson's note. The Great House, originally the residence of a Lady Stapleton, housed boarders down to 1838.

Honble M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Great House  
Cheltenham

A Bed in Chancery Lane requested by his Mother on one or 2 occasions. he spent the whole of his Harrow vacations in Chancery Lane

5<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 1802

Letter 18. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 20  
September 1802

Mrs Byron ask John Hanson to confirm that Lord Byron has presented himself on his belated return Harrow. Her half-years' allowance appears to be late, and she will ask the headmaster at Harrow to draw on Hanson directly to pay Byron's tuition.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson

Cheltenham 20<sup>th</sup> Sep<sup>tr</sup> 1802

Sir

I hope **Byron** will arrive safe. You will be so good as write me a line immediately to let me know of his arrival in Town. I have given him money for *every* expense his Coach to Harrow & & & [...] I wish him to go to school soon.

You know the half years Allowance falls due at Michaelmas and I did intend to draw for the balance at that time, but a week or ten days will make no difference to me, so you can let me know when it is convenient for you to pay the money. In future when I have occasion for money I shall draw for a quarter[...] I don't know how I shall pay **Dr Drury** but by giving him a draft on you.

I hear M<sup>r</sup> Clay is to leave Newstead this Month. best  
compliments to M<sup>rs</sup> H[.]

I am yours sincerely  
C G Byron

Pray send the included letter to the Penny Post

Drawn for	£40. 0. 0
Given M <sup>r</sup> Rudd	15.15. 0
Intend giving D <sup>r</sup> Drury a draft for	56.17. 6
Balance which I meant to draw for	137. 7. 6
	250. 0. 0

Letter 19. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 17  
November 1802

Mrs. Byron, still short of funds, asks John Hanson to give her a bill so that she can draw against the amount due to her in January. Her pension is not being paid. The "Scottish income" to which she refers is the £1,200 her grandmother, Lady Gight, left her upon her death.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Bath 17<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1802

Sir

As I have occasion for money I shall draw on you in a few days for a hundred and twenty five pounds payable the 5<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> next, which is one quarter. I believe I shall find it necessary to be paid quarterly, as my income in Scotland is only paid once a year, and my Pension so irregularly. The paper says two quarters are to be paid immediately but I have as yet heard nothing of it. I hope M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson and your family are well. I ever am

Sir  
with sincere Regard  
C G Byron

N<sup>o</sup> 16 Henrietta Street

Letter 20. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 16 January  
1803

Mrs. Byron wants to send her son to stay with the Hansons for a few days upon his return to Harrow. She has heard a rumor that Mrs Chaworth's right to Annesley Park, adjacent to Newstead, is being challenged and informs her solicitor that Byron's claims to the place are stronger than Lord Meath's.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Bath 16<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1803  
N<sup>o</sup> 16 Henrietta Street

Sir

I propose if agreeable to send **my Son** to your House in Town for a night or two in his way to Harrow. I intend that he shall leave this place on Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> and he will arrive in Town the 25<sup>th</sup>.

A report *prevails* in Nottinghamshire that **Lord Meath** is to dispute **M<sup>rs</sup> Chaworths title** to her Estates[.] I don't know what truth is in it, but whatever rights Lord Meath may have Lord Byrons are *equal* as **Lady Meath & Lady Byron** were Sisters and

both Daughters to Lord Chaworth. M<sup>rs</sup> Chaworth is the descendant of a *natural* son of this Lord Chaworth. Byron joins me in wishing you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson many happy return of this season[.] I am

Sir  
your most obed[.] serv<sup>t</sup>  
C G Byron



## Letter 21. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 29 January 1803

In conflict with his headmaster of Harrow, Dr. Drury, Byron is now bent on returning to school. If he does not, John Hanson would prefer finding a tutor for Byron in preference to sending him directly to Cambridge, which would consume nearly the whole of his allowance.

Dear Madam

I did not fail to communicate your Message in the former Letter to L<sup>d</sup> Byron[.] he seems now to think that his not returning to Harrow would after what has been sayd, amount in the opinion of his Friends to an ?Affectation? and as that Idea hurts him very much and he has a great Wish to speak my opinion[.] he seems bent upon his returning and I have no Hesitation in saying I think he is right, but this I am persuaded[—]if he does not return to Harrow he will be for going to College and I think on many accounts that sho<sup>d</sup> be deferred[.] If a proper Tutor was already provided I should think it would be best to place him in such a Situation for a Year or so, but I am sure it will be a Matter of Difficulty and consequently attended with Delay to meet with a Person at all equal to y<sup>e</sup> Sit<sup>n</sup>[—]and unless y<sup>e</sup> Person is fully

equal to instructing L<sup>d</sup> Byron it will not only be lost Time but do him considerable Injury[.] I presume he has written you his Ideas on the Subject[.] I assure you whilst he has been with me he has conducted himself with great Propriety & good Sense and much as I covet his Society I could have wished he had devoted some Part of his Vacation to his Mother but his Time has been taken up in very rational Pursuits and y<sup>e</sup> more I see of him the more I am convinced he is pursuing a Course that will lead him on to Consequence and Fame[—]and at the same time you know well enough that he requires a Stimulation to keep him up to Perfection and unless he sho<sup>d</sup> be fortunate enough to fall into y<sup>e</sup> Hands of a Tutor of active Mind professed Information and superior Talents, I think there is a Danger of his sinking into Indolence and Inaction[.] This is best avoided in Scenes whose flame<sup>?</sup> is Competition & Emulation[.] If he were now to go to College it is y<sup>e</sup> Opinion of many Gent<sup>n</sup>? he is fitt for. you must be aware that it will take nearly the whole of his Allowance to support him there

J Hanson

29<sup>th</sup> January 1803

Letter 22. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 2 February  
1803

Not having received John Hanson's letter, Mrs. Byron writes from Bath to say that she would like Byron, then staying with the Hansons, to return to Harrow. She would like the business about Annesley Park attended to.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
6 Chancery Lane  
London

Bath 2<sup>d</sup> Feb 1803  
N<sup>o</sup> 16 Henrietta Street

Sir,

I am rather surprised I have not heard from you. You may believe I am very anxious to have the business settled I wrote to you about, as I do not wish *my Son* to remain here *idle*.

I am told it is *certainly true* that *Lord Meath* is to dispute *M<sup>rs</sup> Chaworths* title to her Estates, and that Lawyers are employed on *both sides*. if that is the case it is *time* *Lord Byrons interest* should be attended to[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 23. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 10 March  
1803

Byron has returned to Harrow and John Hanson has found a more permanent tenant for Newstead Abbey—Lord Grey de Ruthyn—who would take a five-year lease at £50 per year. As Mrs Byron fears, this would lead to conflict as the temporary tenants, the Miss Launders, were under the impression that they would have the place for the duration of Lord Byron's minority.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Bath 10<sup>th</sup> March 1803  
16 Henrietta Street

Sir,

I am happy to inform you that my son has had the Measles. I hope your **Boy** will do well, but for God sake if there is any fever at Harrow take **Byron** to town. I am told the Paris Fever that has been so *fatal* there, *now* prevails in England.

I am glad Newstead is well lett but what are the **Miss Launders** to do[?] I cannot find **Lord Grey de Ruthyns** title in the

Peerage of England Ireland or Scotland. I suppose he is a *new* Peer.

If you come to Bath when you intend I will be here and shall expect to see you. I hope M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson and your other Children are well[.] I remain

Sir  
your most obed servt  
C G Byron

I am much obliged to you and M<sup>rs</sup> H. for your attention to  
Byron

Letter 24. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 6 May  
1803

Lord Byron is now feuding with Joseph Drury, an assistant master at Harrow and the son of the headmaster. Should Byron quit Harrow, she has no room to receive him as she is living in lodgings.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Nottingham 6<sup>th</sup> May 1803  
Park Row

Sir

I send you a letter from [Byron](#)[.] I would not be surprised if he was to come here. for God sake see to settle this business and if he will leave Harrow he must go to some other School. I will not have his education interrupted and I have at present no home or House to receive him. it is extremely *vexatious* and very odd that the [Doctor](#) cannot make his [son](#) behave with *propriety* to the [Boys](#)[.]

your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 25. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 30 May  
1803

Mrs. Byron draws on the next quarter's allowance. Owen Mealey found her a place to rent near Nottingham: Burgage Manor, in Southwell, where she would remain while Lord Grey de Ruthyn was leasing Newstead Abbey.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Nottingham 30<sup>th</sup> May 1803

Sir,

I intend drawing on you for the balance of the quarters allowance due me the 5<sup>th</sup> July next.

I have taken a House at Southwell called Burgage Manor, with a Garden & ground just as I could wish, but I shall not go to it till July[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Mather & Mandall	50. 0. 0
Drury	47. 4. 0
Balance	27.16. 0
	125. 0. 0

## Letter 26. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 1 July 1803

Mrs Byron asks for assistance in dealing with the London instrument-maker who manufactured the braces for Byron's club foot. The impending arrival of Lord Grey de Ruthyn at Newstead is causing difficulties with the tenant farmers at Newstead and she asks John Hanson to intervene.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Nottingham 1<sup>st</sup> July 1803  
Park Row

Sir

I enclose you two letters[,] one from ?Sus?, the other from **Byron**. I beg you will take the trouble to call or send to **Sheldrake** about his shoes, and instrument. I have wrote repeatedly but to no purpose[.] I came from Newstead yesterday and am sorry to inform you that the new Tenant M<sup>r</sup> **Rushton** will not let Wm. Hibbert into the Rock House. **Lord Grey** is extremely angry that his Keeper cannot get to the Lodge and will probably discharge Hibbert, and the poor man and his family will be deprived of bread which would make me very unhappy. I wish you could settle this business. I hope your family are well[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron



## Letter 27. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 6 July 1803

Mrs. Byron, then furnishing Burgage Manor, has drawn on her solicitor for £125 against the Chancery funds due to her the next quarter.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Nottingham 6<sup>th</sup> July 1803

Sir

I have this day drawn on you for a hundred and twenty five pounds, being the same due me from [Lord Byrons](#) estates at [Michaelmas](#) next[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 28. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 17 July  
1803

Mrs. Byron suggests that John Hanson postpone his journey to Newstead to settle matters with the tenants since she is not yet settled in Burgage Manor and the temporary Newstead tenants, Frances and Ursula Launder, were not yet out—in fact, they were refusing to leave.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Nottingham July 17<sup>th</sup> 1803

Sir,

I have no objection to **Byron** coming down with you in the stage. I intend going to Southwell on Thursday[.] therefore the best way will be for you to come to Newstead in the Mail & take a House there, which is only eight miles from Southwell and leave Byron with me, and proceed yourself to Newstead which is only twelve miles from Southwell.

It would be more convenient for me if you could put of[f] your journey for a few days as I shall hardly be settled, and also better for yourself as I am sure the **Miss Launder**s will not leave

newstead next week, nor for some time I fancy if they can help  
it[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

26th July 1803[.] Lord Byron sett off by y<sup>e</sup> Mail Coach to  
Newark & ?has around? him six Pounds to pay his Expenses[.]

H & B

Letter 29. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 7  
November 1803

Mrs. Byron proposes that Lord Byron remain in Nottinghamshire, given the proximity of the term's end. He had been smitten with *Mary Chaworth* and refused to return to Harrow. She withdraws more money from Hanson, which is itemized at the end of the letter.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 7<sup>th</sup> of Nov<sup>r</sup> 1803

Sir

*Byron* is really *so unhappy* that I have agreed much against my inclination to let him remain in this country till after the next holidays, and it is now so late it is hardly worthwhile for him to return before that time. I have drawn on you for money[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Money M <sup>r</sup> Hanson gave Lord Byron	6. 0. 0
Draft to D <sup>r</sup> Drury	57. 0. 0
Draft to M <sup>r</sup> Gray	36. 0. 0
	99. 0. 0

Balance £26.0.0 which I shall draw for which makes a quarters allowance up to the 25 Dec<sup>r</sup>

Letter 30. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 17  
November 1803

Mrs. Byron would like to repair Newstead but her meager income is insufficient. With the Rochdale estate being tied up in legal disputes, she hopes that Hanson will be successful in winning Byron's rights to the Brownwardle coal mines. He would not anytime soon. The Duke of Portland owes Byron £1,000 plus interest on a mortgage, which he would seek to recover for over a decade. Lord Grey de Ruthyn will be a good tenant, but it "ought to be put out of his power to be a bad one."

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell Nov<sup>r</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 1803

Sir

Not having seen you for some time, and not being likely to see you soon, I wish to know something of **my Sons** affairs. Pray has he recovered his property in Lancashire sold by the **late Lord!** has the **Duke of Portland** paid the thousand pounds and the interest due to my Son. I think you informed me that **Sir C. Morgan** had given up the Estate and paid the arrears.

The House at Newstead it is my opinion will soon be in ruins,

and the Park is in a deplorable state. by the bye when [Augusta Byron](#) and myself agreed that whatever money was judged necessary should be laid out upon it I am rather surprised it is not in a better state, (as we only could be injured by it) but as I have only five hundred a year and so little has been done, the savings of course must be greater and I would be obliged to you to inform me in what manner the money is laid out whether in the funds or not.

I think every Tenant ought to be restricted properly and then it is not in their power to do mischief. had [M<sup>f</sup> Clay](#) been so he could not have sent Lord Byrons Carr[iage] into Yorkshire. I hope [Lord Grey](#) will be a good Tenant but still it ought to be *put out of his power to be a bad one.*

I hope your family are well. Byron joins me in best wishes to you and I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 31. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 19 January  
1804

Mrs. Byron wants a bed for Lord Byron as he returns to Harrow, reports on his expenditures for the last quarter, and draws on John Hanson for the next.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 19<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1804

Sir,

I am extremely obliged to you for the fine Doe you sent me which was extremely good.

Byron will be in town next week I think about Thursday in his way to Harrow, and I hope it will be *convenient* for you to let him have a bed for one night.

I have drawn on you for the money due me the 25<sup>th</sup> of Dec<sup>r</sup> last, and also for what will be due at Lady day Lady day. I hope all your family are well. Byron joins me in best compliments to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson[.] I remain



Sir  
your very obed servt  
C G Byron

State of our account

D <sup>r</sup> Drury	57. 0. 0
M <sup>r</sup> W <sup>m</sup> Grey	36. 0. 0
Brown of Derby	7. 1. 6
Given L <sup>d</sup> Byron July last	8. 0. 0
	106. 1. 6
Balance due me Dec <sup>r</sup> last	18.18. 6
	125. 0. 0
Quarter due the 25 <sup>th</sup> March next	125. 0. 0
	250. 0. 0

## Letter 32. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 12 March 1804

Apparently John Hanson has begun assembling the documentation required for Lord Byron to take his seat in the House of Lords when he comes of age. Mrs. Byron, strikingly, can't remember the day of her wedding date (it was May 13). Byron will stay with Hansons on his return to Nottinghamshire for the Spring vacation.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell March 12<sup>th</sup> 1804

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

M<sup>r</sup> Farquhar of Doctors Commons has a copy of a certificate of my Marriage which he got from Bath at the time the late Lord died. he also sent a copy of it to Aberdeen which copy I gave to you when I first saw you at Newstead. I was married however on the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> of May (I don't know which) 1785 at Saint Michaels Church Bath, (and Saint Michaels Parish I suppose but I dont know for certain) and this is all I can inform you about it. I dont know where the late M<sup>r</sup> Byron was Baptized, nor do I know where the late Lords Son was buried. M<sup>r</sup> Sykes the Navy Agent

who lives in some street in the Strand is a likely Person to know, or old Joe Murray at the Duchess of Leeds I dare say can inform you where the late Lords Son was burried.

Byron will leave Harrow again before the end of this Month, therefore I shall desire him to come to your House, and if he chooses to remain a few days or a week in town I hope it will not be inconvenient for you to receive him. You will also give him money to come here as I wish to see him[.] with best compts. to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 33. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 12 May  
1804

Mrs. Byron encloses a letter from her unruly son who blames Mr. Hanson and Lord Grey de Ruthyn for his being considered "poor" at Harrow. She will draw upon Hanson for the next quarter and includes a brief itemized list of expenses.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 12<sup>th</sup> May 1804

Sir

I hope you arrived safe in Town and found your family well and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson perfectly recovered. I enclose you a letter from Byron[.] what is to be done with him when he leaves Harrow God only knows. he is a turbulent unruly Boy that wants to be emancipated from all restraint. his sentiments are however noble. you see he blames you and Lord Grey for his being supposed to be poor at Harrow. I shall draw on you soon for the quarter due me at midsummer[.] I am

Sir  
your obed servt

your obed servt  
C G Byron

Money given Lord Byron for Journey	5.12. 6
Money given him	0. 7. 0
	5.19. 6
balance due me	119. 0. 6

Letter 34. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 20 July  
1804

Mrs. Byron instructs Hanson not to “take a place in the mail” for her son, as she is now at No. 10 Piccadilly and she wants to take him with her back to Southwell.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Friday July 20<sup>th</sup> 1804

Sir,

I am informed by Byron that he has wrote to you to desire that you will “take a place in the mail” for him on Wednesday next the 25<sup>th</sup>, which I beg you will not do as I am now at N<sup>o</sup> 16 Piccadilly and I shall take him to Southwell with me. he will however be obliged to you for a bed on Wednesday next if convenient[.] Comp<sup>ts</sup> to M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 35. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 13 August  
1804

Mrs. Byron will draw on Hanson for Byron's Fall-term expenses. She notes that her son, then at Burgage Manor for the summer vacation, is "more improved in every respect" after his difficult year at Harrow.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 13<sup>th</sup> August 1804

Sir

I have drawn on you this day for the balance of the quarter due for my son last *Michaelmas*. I cannot help mentioning that never was a Boy more *improved* in every respect. he is now truly amiable and I shall not know how to part with him.

I hope your family are well[.] *Byron* joins me in comp<sup>ts</sup> to you and M<sup>rs</sup> *Hanson*[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Draft Cheatham	50. 0. 0
Draft Foster	16. 0. 0
you pd for Coach	2. 0. 0
draft Cheatham	57. 0. 0
	125. 0. 0



Letter 36. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 26 August  
1804

A Newstead tenant, John Pailethorpe, is in debtor's prison. Mrs Byron is not pleased with something John Hanson has told her about the Rochdale lawsuit.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 26<sup>th</sup> August

Sir,

I send you poor Pailethorpes letter[.] I wish you could get his affairs settled in some way that the man might get *out of Prison*. what you told me in Town gives me much *uneasiness*[.] I hope the Estate will be *recovered*. Byron intends to write to you soon, and joins me in Comp<sup>ts</sup> to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed serv<sup>t</sup>  
C G Byron

Letter 37. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 1 October  
1804

Mrs. Byron draws £110 for furniture and other expenses and assumes Hanson has given Byron the £15 pounds as she told him to.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell Oct<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1804

Sir,

I shall draw on you for one hundred and ten pounds, and I have a few hundred pounds to pay away at this time for furniture. as I suppose you gave **Byron** the fifteen pounds, the one hundred and ten will make the balance due me for the quarter allowance ending the 25<sup>th</sup> of Dec<sup>r</sup>[.] I remain

Sir  
your very obed servt  
C G Byron

## Letter 38. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 10 October 1804

Mrs. Byron writes to Hanson about a rumor that Lord Byron had "regained his cause"—referring to winning the Rochdale case. Mrs Byron has been collecting information for Hanson about the Byron pedigree from her friend and Nottingham neighbour, the elderly widow of the fourth baron.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell Oct 10<sup>th</sup> 1804

Sir

I am just returned from Nottingham, and one day at dinner M<sup>rs</sup> Byron received a letter from her Son, wherein he mentions that he had seen a Lancaster paper where it was said that Lord Byron had *gained his cause there*. however I cannot believe it as I have not heard from you.

I am informed that Lady Byron that was M<sup>rs</sup> Berkeley was either married at Abbey Bruton Somersetshire the Seat of her Father, or in Berkeley Square London.

Byrons father was certainly born at Plymouth, the late Lord Byron his Brother and Sister were some born at Newstead, others in London, and at Bullwell Park and of course baptised there. best comp<sup>ts</sup> to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson[.] I ever am

with sincere Regard

C G Byron

I have drawn on you for a hundred and ten pounds[.]

Letter 39. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 2  
December 1804

A Mr Carrwell has paid off a £3,000 loan to Mrs Byron's trustees in Scotland and she would tell Hanson to send her funds to repay his bond. The money has since been lent out again to Sir James Grant, as Scottish MP and landowner.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 2<sup>d</sup> December 1804

Sir

You will send me immediately M<sup>r</sup> Carrwells **Bond** for the three thousand pounds, as that gentleman has paid up the Money to my Trustees who have lent the Money to **Sir James Grant** on a **mortgage**. the **Security** is such as they and I approve. It is therefore necessary that M<sup>r</sup> Carrwell should have his **Bond** *returned to him*[.] let me have it when you receive this letter that I may send it to Edinbro as soon as possible.

Pray give **Byron** money for his Journey[.] I ever am with sincere regard

C G Byron

Letter 40. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 29  
December 1804

Mrs. Byron writes to Hanson about Byron not returning to Harrow. She has Hanson send Drury a draft of £75.18.0 for Byron's school debts.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell Dec<sup>r</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 1804

Sir

You will be so good as to tell [Byron](#) that he is very unkind not to write. I think he has paid you a sufficiently long visit and I shall expect him here soon.

I can *fix* on no plan for his education till we meet. I am however sure he cannot return again to Harrow. I have forced the truth from [D<sup>r</sup> Drury](#).

I shall this day send [D<sup>r</sup> Drury](#) a draft on you for £75.18.0 payable the 25<sup>th</sup> March next.

Byron has left his books at Harrow[.] the value of the books I

gave him is £25.0.0 besides his school books which cost a deal of money. they must all be removed. make Byron write and *fix* a time for his coming here. with best comp<sup>ts</sup> to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson I remain

Sir  
your very obed serv<sup>t</sup>  
C G Byron

Letter 41. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 23 January  
1805

Mrs. Byron that her son be sent to Southwell when a “tolerable day” returns; she is unhappy without him. Meanwhile, Byron wants to return to Harrow to pay his debts, £23. John Palethorpe, the Newstead tenant in debtor's prison, wants William Hibbert removed from his house.

J Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
[Franked:] Grey de Ruthyn

Southwell 23<sup>d</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup>  
1805

Sir

As soon as there is a tolerable day I beg you will send **Byron** down. I shall be quite unhappy till I see him.

He writes me that he wishes to go to Harrow to pay his debts that there may be no reflections on his character. the amount is twenty three pounds, which you will be so good as give him for that purpose, and also money for his Journey. I have sent **Dr. Drury** a draft on you for £75.18.0 payable the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. when you write send me an account of what money you have



given Byron that I may know what balance there will be to receive in March.

He cannot return to Harrow, and he shall not go to College yet and it will take some time to find a proper situation for him which I shall be very *particular* about.

Paillethorpe wishes much to have Wm. Hibbert removed from his House as he says the expence is very heavy.

with best comp<sup>ts</sup> to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson I remain

Sir  
your very obed servt  
C G Byron

## Letter 42. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 8 February 1805

Mrs Byron contemplates hiring a tutor for Lord Byron as he is leaving Harrow. She calculates his expenses and says that she is willing to give him the whole of his £500 annual allowance part of which she had previously been using for his other expenses. Augustus Parkyns, with whose family Byron had stayed in 1799 upon coming to Nottingham, is in debtor's prison.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 8th Feb<sup>ry</sup> 1805

Sir,

I am well aware of all the the *difficulties* you mention concerning a Private Tutor but still I think they might be overcome, and I am told by all the clergy here that he is much too young to go to College.

When he does go an additional allowance must be granted, as I intend giving up the five hundred a year to him as I believe he cannot live upon less, and before he goes it will take two hundred and fifty pound to fit him for College, a hundred and fifty pounds

for Furniture Plate & linen, fifty for his Wardrobe, and he must have a Horse[.] I suppose which will be fifty more.

I am sorry I cannot make him a present of all these things, but I have never been so fortunate as to procure any addition to my Pension nor any money since the sum I received from you, and I am determined not to run in debt.

I now beg I have to return you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson my best thanks for your Friendship and attention to Byron.

I have drawn on you for the balance of the money which is £14.2.0[.] if Byron has received any since it will be paid in the quarter due the 25<sup>th</sup> June[.]

Yours sincerely  
C G Byron

Draft to D <sup>r</sup> Drury	75.18. 0
Money to Lord Byron	12. 0. 0
L <sup>d</sup> Byron money to take to Harrow	23. 0. 0
balance drawn for	14. 2. 0
	125. 0. 0

I hear Major Parkyns is in the [—]pray is it time[?]

Letter 43. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 20  
February 1805

Mrs. Byron is screening potential tenants to let the rabbit warren at Newstead Abbey. She hopes that the Rochdale affair will be settled before Byron comes of age; in the meanwhile his guardians must pursue the lawsuit.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 20<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>ry</sup> 1805

Sir

As **Mealey** gives himself so *many airs* to People that go to speak to him, I am tormented to death, and am now about the Rabbit Warren that is to let at Newstead. Wm. Hibbert wants it, as does another man that Mealey favors who I understand has nothing. John Kirkby son to Jonathan Kirkby of Bledworth[,] a Man of some Property also wants it and has been here several times about it. You see what W Parkinson says of them[.] Mr P. is a respectable and opulent Attorney here. the young man says he has been used to a R Warren from a ?child?. the Father bought some land of Mr P. Pray send them an immediate answer. I do not see how poor Pailthorpe can go on.

I really wish the dispute in Lancashire was settled and I do not think if it proceeds no faster that it will be settled before Byron comes of age which I should be sorry for as I would not wish him to have the *odium* of recovering it himself, and he surely would not be so foolish as to give it up. His guardians are differently situated[;] they cannot act otherwise.

Lord Grey de Ruthyn complains much that you do not answer his letters. I remain

Sir  
Your obed servt  
C G Byron

It is John Kirkby son to Jonathan Kirkby of Bledworth that was the bearer of the note and it is him that wants the Newstead Warren. His Father has some Property and he can find security for the rent[.]

Letter 44. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 26 June  
1805

Mrs. Byron writes to Hanson in correction of a previous withdrawal. She drew on him for “£80 at three months’ date,” but she wants to change it to “two months date,” payable to Messrs. Parkington at Bankers Newark. She insists that she has the right to receive her civil list pension money quarterly if she so desires.

Southwell 26<sup>th</sup> June  
1805

Sir

I wrote you yesterday that I had drawn on you for eighty pounds at three months date. I have however been obliged to alter the draft to two months date which makes it payable the 28<sup>th</sup> of August next, to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Parklington & Co Bankers Newark.

If this puts you to any inconvenience I am sorry for it but I could not get it discounted at a longer date, and I have a right to receive the money quarterly if I desire it which I have never yet *insisted* on. I send you this letter in case there was any mistake about the draft *which would be extremely inconvenient & unpleasant to me*[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 45. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 23  
September 1805

Since Mrs. Byron plans to devote all the £500 a year drawn from the Newstead trust to pay Byron's college expenses. She has requested an additional £200 a year to help with her housekeeping costs. This would be denied. She has requested Hanson's partner Samuel Birch to pay Byron's expenses to Farleigh Wallop, the estate of the Earl of Portsmouth where John Hanson was staying.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>

Southwell 23<sup>d</sup> September 1805

Sir

I received yours on the 5<sup>th</sup>[.] as to the addition I wish it was settled, but there is also a sum to be allowed for fitting **my Son** out for College, and I have promised him linen & & & which will be expensive and I cannot *afford* to make him a present of it. he also says that his apartments require considerable repairs and new furniture. it is impossible for him to fit them up out of his allowance without beginning with and continuing in debt which he wishes to avoid.

I have drawn on you for the balance due me the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month which is £11.0.0[.] and our accounts close from that date

as I give up the five hundred a year to my Son from that period, and you will supply him with money accordingly. The two hundred a year addition I shall reserve for myself nor can I have less as my House will always be a home for my Son when he chooses to come to it.

I will be obliged to you to advance me fifty pounds. send it as soon as possible as I am in want of money. when the addition is granted I will draw on you for fifty pounds every quarter as I have hitherto done for the five hundred a year. With best compliments to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson I remain

Sir

Your obed servt

C G Byron

draft to Parklington & Bankers Newark	80. 0. 0
draft to Cheatham	25. 0. 0
M <sup>r</sup> Birch advanced Lord Byron when in Town in August	9. 0. 0
draft to Cheatham	11. 0. 0
	£125. 0. 0

I have given Lord Byron money for his Journey to London,



but not having more money I have desired Mr Birch to give him money for his Journey to Farleigh, which you will deduct from his quarter, and I will settle with him about it.

I should imagine it will take two hundred or two hundred and fifty pounds to fit him out for College and buy him furniture.

Enclose a fifty pound Bank of England note to me as soon as possible[.]

Letter 46. Catherine Byron to John Birch, Esq., 23  
September 1805

Mrs. Byron asks John Birch to supply Lord Byron however much money he needs for his journey to Farleigh Wallop. The Earl of Portsmouth was one of John Hanson's clients, and Byron would later be called upon to be a witness to the scandalous marriage between the mentally incompetent earl and Hanson's daughter.

Birch Esq<sup>r</sup>

Sir

You will be so good as supply Lord Byron with what money he will want for his journey to Farleigh and some few things he will want purchased in Town. I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Southwell 23<sup>d</sup> September

Letter 47. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 5 October  
1805

Mrs Byron has not received the £50 Bank of England note, and asks whether she may borrow the sum from Hanson if that would be more convenient.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>

Southwell Oct<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1805

Sir

Pray has [my Son](#) delivered my letter to you[.] if he has I am surprised that you have not answered it and sent me the money. If you have not a Bank of England note for fifty pounds in the Country I will draw on you for fifty pounds at two months date if that is more convenient but not till I hear from you. I suppose before that time all will be settled. best comp<sup>ts</sup> to [Mrs Hanson](#)[.]  
I remain

Sir

your obed servt

C G Byron

answer this immediately[.]

Letter 48. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 7 October  
1805

Mrs Byron has stopped payment on the missing draft for £50 John Hanson had sent.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Farleigh House  
n<sup>r</sup> Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
[Franked:] Grey de Ruthyn

Southwell 7<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1805

Sir,

I never either received your *letter or the draft* enclosed in it. I would have answered your letter yesterday but I thought it better to send to Nottingham first to stop the payment of the draft. Let me know what I am to do for money whether I shall draw on you[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

P.S. Let me know in your answer if the money will be lost as I have stopt the payment[.]

as Lord Grey has just sent [paper torn] I shall give his servant this letter to Fr[paper torn] as no time will be lost by it[.]

Letter 49. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 13 October  
1805

Mrs. Byron is concerned that she has only received John Hanson's latest letter, but not the draft for £50 it was supposed to contain.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Farleigh House  
n<sup>r</sup> Basingstoke  
Hampshire

Southwell Sunday  
13<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1805

Dear Sir

I received your letter this day but *no* draft along with it. you have certainly forgot to put it in the letter, as it has no appearance of being opened. don't send any more as you see it is of *no use*. let me know if I may draw on you for fifty pounds. send an *immediate* answer and let me know if you sent the draft. if you did not forget to do it, the letter must have been opened and the draft taken out[.]

C. G. Byron

Letter 50. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 6  
November 1805

Mrs Byron has reason to think that Francis Boyce, the servant who delivered the letter with the missing draft, is less than honest and is very concerned that he is now employed by Lord Byron at Cambridge. Byron would later catch him in an act of theft and have him transported.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
[Franked:] Grey de Ruthyn

Southwell 6<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1805

Sir

A circumstance has happened that gives me much uneasiness. The Servant that is now with **my Son** lived with me six months and *I believed* him to be perfectly honest. he had a good Character from his last place where he had lived six years[.] the Gentleman had taken him when a Boy. he is only now two & twenty[.] his name is **Francis Boyce**.

He however the very day I sent him to Nottingham to stop the payment of the draft you sent me that never arrived which was the 7<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup>, borrowed two pound from Johnson my Sons Tailor

at Nottingham, as he said to buy cheese, with a promise to send the money the Saturday following.

as he did not send the money Johnson wrote to me concerning it. I immediately sent the letter to my Son at Cambridge who shoed it immediately to the Man. he told him he had sent the two pounds on the 25<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> in a letter to Johnson. I wrote to Johnson to know if this was true and I enclose you his answer. I cannot be happy to have such a fellow about my Son as he may *rob* him in *various* ways.

Byron has however taken a fancy to him and I am afraid will not discharge him. if you think *Francis intended* to act *dishonestly* in this affair I beg you will use your influences to have him discharged.

When do you come here I have much to say that it is impossible to commit to paper[.] I remain

Sir  
your sincere friend  
C G Byron

P.S. You may be sure I know nothing of all this till after he left Southwell. if I had he *never* should have gone into my Sons Service—

Write soon—

Letter 51. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 25  
December 1805

Mrs. Byron draws on Hanson for £50 to pay Dr. Butler, Henry Drury's successor at Harrow. She sends Byron's London address, which is that of Mrs Massingberd.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson

Southwell Dec<sup>r</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> 1805

Sir

I will be obliged to you to allow me to give Dr. Butler a draft on you at three months date from this day for fifty pounds. surely things will be settled before that time. if I hear nothing from you to the *contrary* in the days I shall conclude you have no objection, and send the Doctor the draft[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Byron is now at N<sup>o</sup> 16 Piccadilly near Hyde Park Corner[.]



## Letter 52. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 11 January 1806

Mrs Byron has drawn on John Hanson for £50, but not for the Harrow expenses. Prothero prints a passage possibly missing from this letter, as it is to Hanson and of the same date: "The Bills are coming in thick upon me to double the amount I expected; he went and ordered just what he pleased here, at Nottingham, and in London. However, it is of no use to say anything about it, and I beg you will take no notice. I am determined to have everything clear within the year, if possible" Letters and Journals (1898) 1:95n.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson

Southwell Jan<sup>ry</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 1806

Sir

I have drawn on you for fifty pounds, but not in favor of Dr. Butler as I find it more convenient to give him a draft on M<sup>r</sup> Gernon?.

I wrote you some time ago that I would draw on you for fifty pounds payable on the 26<sup>th</sup> March, if I heard nothing to the contrary. I remain

Sir

your obed servt

C G Byron

Draft to M<sup>r</sup> ?Lathing?

9. 7. 0

Do to M<sup>r</sup> Burrows

7.17. 0

Do to M<sup>r</sup> Cheatham

32.16. 0

£50. 0. 0

## Letter 53. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 29 January 1806

John Hanson reports that he has seen Lord Byron, regrets the dishonesty of his servant, and fears that Byron's £500 yearly allowance is not sufficient for his present style of living. So far was Byron from living within the "prudent Bounds" Hanson speaks of that he was even then contracting ruinous loans with his landlady Elizabeth Massingberd as a way of becoming financially independent of his mother.

Dear Madam

I have for some time past been a very great Invalid which has in a great Measure been y<sup>e</sup> Cause of my Silence but thank God I am now much better[.]As you mentioned I presume you have drawn on me for £50 in favor of Dr. Butler but if you have not you are at perfect Liberty to do so[.]

I have seen Lord Byron several Times and with respect to his Servant my Interference I am sorry to say, will have little ?merit.? It is a Pity a New Market Servant should have been fixed upon for his Lordship and still more so that his Allowance should have been put under such an Arrangement as it has. The Allowance ought to have gone thro y<sup>e</sup> Medium of his Tutor, but I fear it is

now too late to make any Alteration. I could wish you would send the Bill for his Table and Bed Linen as I much wish now to get his Allowance fixed. I dont see how it is possible he can live in his present Stile with any Thing like 500£ a Year but I hope his Lordship's good Sense will be the means of keeping him within prudent Bounds[.] I should hope you would <sup>not</sup> take any Notice of what I say for if any Advice I can give him is to have any Effect I must retain his Confidence & I think I can at times introduce it with some Effect[.]

Letter 54. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 1 March  
1806

Concerned with Byron's current state of affairs, Mrs. Byron fears that Lord Byron has gotten himself into trouble. She asks John Hanson draw out of him why he is contemplating leaving England and where his money has been coming from.

J Hanson Esq  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane London  
[Franked:] Grey de Ruthyn

Sir

I beg you will not mention to **my Son** having heard from me but try to get out of him his reason for wishing to leave England, and where he got the money. I much fear he has got into bad hands, not only with regard to money matters but in other respects. my idea is that he has inveigled himself with some Woman that he wishes to get rid of and finds it difficult.

But whatever it is he must be got out of it, but pray do not mention that you have any suspicion but draw it out of him. If you think my letter will be of any *use* put a Wafer in it and send it to the twopenny Post office[.]

Yours sincerely  
C G Byron

Letter 55. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 4 March  
1806

Mrs. Byron has discovered that her son has indeed been borrowing money and is furious.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

That **Boy** will be the death of me, or drive me mad. I never will consent to his going abroad. where can he get hundreds[.] has he got into the *hands* of money lenders. he has *no feeling* no heart[;] this I have long known[.] he has behaved as ill as possible to me for years back. the bitter truth I can no longer conceal[.] it is wrung from me by *heart rending agony*. I am well rewarded[.] I came to Nottinghamshire to please him and now he hates it. he knows that I am doing every thing in my power to pay his debts and he writes to me about his Servants, and the last time he wrote to me was to desire to send him £25.0.0 to pay his Harrow debts which I would have done if I had had as much, as he has these hundred. I am glad I did not, but it shows what he is.

God knows what is to be done with him. I much fear he is already ruined, at *eighteen!!!* great God I am *distracted*[.]

I can say no more[.]

C G B.

### Letter 56. Catherine Byron to John Hanson

Mrs Byron instructs John Hanson to pay Byron's quarterly allowance of £125.0.0.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson

Southwell 18<sup>th</sup> March  
1806

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

You may pay *my Son* the quarters allowance a £125.0.0 that will be due the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 57. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 18 March  
1806

Writing on the same date, Mrs. Byron complains that she has not received funds from the Court of Chancery to pay the land taxes due advises John Hanson him not to advance Lord Byron money unless for a good purpose.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson

Southwell 18<sup>th</sup> March 1806

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I hope you have arrived safe in Town. I never have received any money to cover the land Tax & & I am sure as your friend is now in the Treasury[.] if you can be of any service to me you will. I certainly would not give the money to Byron if it was not to answer some good purpose[.] I remain

yours sincerely

C G Byron



Letter 58. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 26 March  
1806

Angry with her son who is refusing to return to Cambridge or return home, Mrs. Byron retracts her order of the previous week to pay Lord Byron his quarterly allowance.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 26<sup>th</sup> March 1806

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I will no longer submit to insults and abuse from a **Boy**. if it were possible to die of grief he would kill me.

I desire you will not pay his allowance till you see me or hear from me again. if he is *not* here in two days from this date I come to London. he shall know he is not *yet* his own Master

Yours sincerely  
C G Byron

Letter 59. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 31 March  
1806

Lord Byron may receive his quarterly allowance on the condition that he return to Cambridge after the Easter term. Hanson later informed Byron that the Court of Chancery can deny him his allowance at his mother's discretion.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
[Franked:] Grey de Ruthyn

Southwell 31<sup>st</sup> March 1806

Sir

If my Son Lord Byron wishes to have his quarter allowance, £125.0.0 due the 25<sup>th</sup> of this Month, you may pay it to him on condition only that he will return to Cambridge after the Easter term, which I am determined that he shall do[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed sert  
C G Byron

Letter 60. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 21 April  
1806

Mrs. Byron owes the firm, Mipes, Mather & Mandall £25 and draws upon Hanson for another £25 because she is in want of money for bills. Chancery has still not granted the addition to her income necessitated by giving the whole of his £500 allowance for college expenses, reducing her overall income.

Southwell 21<sup>st</sup> April 1806

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I have been under the necessity of sending Mipes Mather & Mandall a draft on you for twenty pounds payable the 25<sup>th</sup> June next, and as I want money I shall be obliged to draw on you for the balance twenty five pounds more payable the same date. I always reckon on fifty pound a quarter being allowed me by the court of Chancery which I cannot go on without. the sum I have had of you since the the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1805 is one hundred pounds and these drafts will make it one hundred and fifty pounds from the 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 1805 to the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1806 which makes three quarters.

And till the additional allowance is granted I cannot repay you. Pray is it never to be settled.

I also wish you to send me the money to pay the bills I sent you some time ago. Certainly could I have *foreseen* that it would be *so long* before things were settled I would not have got any thing for my Son, or allowed him to go to College till a proper allowance was granted. I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Cheatham's bill	£54. 1. 6
Wright's bill	8.12. 6
Fletcher's bill	19. 5. 9
	£81.19. 9
p <sup>d</sup> by M <sup>rs</sup> Byron for making two dozen & eight shirts at 2/6 each	£4. 0. 0
total	£85.19. 9

## Letter 61. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 24 April 1806

Mrs. Byron received an £80 bill from Grey of Bond Street. for plate and silverware—a sum beyond what his mother had allowed or what the Court of Chancery would cover as "legitimate" expenses. He has also purchased a carriage for his mother which she has refused to accept.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 24<sup>th</sup> April 1806

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

This day had a letter from **Grey** in Bond Street wherein he mentions that **my Son** had got Plate to the value of eighty pounds, and that he informed him that I would pay for it.

The *real state of the case is* this, when it was settled that he was to go to Cambridge I understood from my Son, and *others*, that some plate would be necessary and I did order a few articles which I shall put down on the other side, but merely confined myself to what I thought would be necessary, which you know I wrote to you concerning and I did not doubt nor do I doubt but

that the Court of Chancery will allow it as the sum cannot amount to more than twenty five pounds[.] perhaps not to so much. that I ordered I shall be answerable for[.] The balance Grey must look to himself for, and I have desired him to send you the bill, that you may give it in with the other accounts which I sent you.

Lord Byron has given £31.10.0 to Pitts Stake, he has also bought a Carriage which he says was intended for me which I *refused* to accept of being in hopes it would stop his having one[.]

Yours sincerely  
C G Byron

Plate ordered by M<sup>rs</sup> Byron for Lord Byron at M<sup>r</sup> Greys Bond Street—

6 table spoons  
6 table forks  
6 desert spoons  
6 tea spoons  
a sugartongs

No more was ordered by Mrs Byron which was in writing from Southwell and Lord Byron must himself have ordered the other articles when in London before he went to Cambridge[.]

Letter 62. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 5 May  
1806

Mrs Byron is having difficulties meeting expenses: her already reduced civil list pension is in arrears, she has yet to be granted the additional £200 she had requested from the Chancery Court managing the Newstead funds, and neither has she had from Hanson money to pay the land tax on the estate.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 5<sup>th</sup> May 1806

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I have drawn on you this day for twenty five pounds, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> April for the same sum, in all from the 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 1805 makes one hundred and fifty pounds received from you, fifty by draft on Smith & C<sup>o</sup> Notts, the other hundred I have drawn on you for.

There is two things to settle which can at all make my mind *easy*, or my *circumstances comfortable*. the one is the paying up the **arrears** of the **civil list** which you have nothing to do with. the other is in your power, to get my business settled with the **Court**

of Chancery, the additional allowance granted and also the sums to pay what was got to fit My Son out for Cambridge.

As to the money I was promised to cover the land Tax & & & of the Pension I never expect to be so fortunate as to get it[.] I remain,

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron



## Letter 63. Catherine Byron to John Birch, 20 September 1806

Mrs. Byron writes to [John Birch](#), Hanson's partner, to complain that her solicitor has stopped responding to letters. Mrs. Byron is checking up on Hanson's progress with the Rochdale case: after he had won a technical victory one of the defendants, [James Dearden](#), was making an appeal. She would like to know which Court—either Chancery or King's Bench—the case would be directed under. The case would eventually be taken to the King's Bench court.

M<sup>r</sup> Birch

Southwell Nott 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1806

Sir

I have wrote to [M<sup>r</sup> Hanson](#) *repeatedly*[.] I do not know where he is nor can I get any answer from him.

I send you <sup>a</sup> paragraph out from the Sun. for God sake what are these points of Law reserved. [My Son](#) & I are rather uneasy about it.

In your letter you mentioned something concerning the [Court of Chancery](#). [M<sup>r</sup> Hanson](#) in his mentioned the [Court of Kings](#)

**Bench**[.] Pray what Court does it come before & when. favor me  
with a early answer[.]

I remain  
Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Send the enclosed to the Twopenny Post—

## Letter 64. Catherine Byron to John Birch, 10 December 1806

Mrs. Byron again consults with Mr. Birch about the status of the Rochdale verdict, which was being challenged by James Dearden, a principal agent in the case. The courts have decided against his receiving of it. She asks Mr. Birch what to do if the Court of Chancery issues a similar verdict, as Byron is in need of the income from Rochdale for financial security. At the time Hanson figured that upon a victory, Rochdale would produce £30,000 per year of income.

M<sup>r</sup> Birch

Southwell Dec<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1806

Sir

As M<sup>r</sup> Hanson is rather dilatory in answering letters, I must request an early answer from you to this.

I understand that the Court of Kings Bench has granted the Roachdale People a Rule to show cause why the verdicts obtained in Lord Byrons favor should not be set aside.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson says he hopes they will not ultimately succeed tho' they might have taken stronger grounds.

Now I wish to know when the next term is and if it will be settled then, and if it is decided against them whether they will carry it before the *Court of Chancery*, and in case Lord Byron should loose it what he ought to do. I mean to ask whether he can do any thing or if he must abide by the decision.

and also to know if the granting a rule to show Cause is much against my Son, or if it *is* a matter of *course* in that *Court*, and what you expected. An early answer to all these questions will much oblige

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Lord Byron means to draw very soon for the hundred and twenty five pounds due to him the 25<sup>th</sup> this month[.] and I mean to draw for fifty pounds due me at the same time.

I hope *Lord Byron* will have the opinion and assistance of the *best* Lawyers in London[.] certainly *Garrow* ought to be consulted[.] pray what is the grounds the Rochdale People go on[.]

Letter 65. Catherine Byron to John Birch, 22 December  
1806

Mrs. Byron writes to Samuel Birch again. Lord Byron asks to draw out £125, his quarterly allowance. She herself draws £50.

M<sup>r</sup> Birch

Southwell 22<sup>d</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 1806

Sir

Lord Byron has drawn on you this day for the sum of one hundred & twenty five pound, being the quarter allowance due him the 25<sup>th</sup> of this Month.

I have also drawn this day for the fifty pounds due me at the same time[.] I remain

Sir

C G Byron

Letter 66. Catherine Byron to John Birch, 31 January  
1807

Mrs. Byron has been made aware of the pending transaction between Byron and Mrs. Massingberd. She is acting again as a joint security in order to procure £3,000 through money lenders. He would pay back £5,000 upon his coming of age. She is doing what she can to stop this.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
Private

Jan<sup>y</sup> 31<sup>st</sup> 1807

Dear Sir

Mrs M is now trying to get my Son into another *scrape*[.] that is to borrow more money. she is certainly a *Dupe* herself or wishes to make him one. I *know* her income has been seized for the payment of the annuity, and she wishes Ld B. to allow her to borrow money to pay all off[.] which *is to be procured on worse terms* than the former loan[.] but upon these conditions that he will have to pay nothing till he comes of age[.] that is to say that she will have nothing to pay for him. therefore she will enjoy her income till that period, and then *all will fall heavy* on his

Lordship.

I don't know of whom she is to promise the money, but *nothing is concluded* yet. therefore if you could take any steps to prevent it you would oblige me much. my name must *not* appear as I am *supposed* to *know* nothing of the transaction. do *not* answer this letter but burn it. I hope it will not fall into any Persons hands but your own. if you can do any thing to prevent this transaction it will make me happy[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

P.S. The People the last sum was borrowed on have wrote to her Granddaughter to desire Mrs M. income may only be paid to them. I believe the People are Kings & & &.

M<sup>rs</sup> M. wishes this *new* affair to be concluded by the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Feb<sup>ry</sup>*[.]

I suppose you received some letters from me in Sept<sup>r</sup> last on this subject—

Letter 67. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 7 March  
1807

Mrs. Byron writes to John Hanson in need of money to pay the bill, due since October 1805, for the plate she had ordered for her son's rooms at Cambridge. Byron will likely be of age before the additional allowance is granted to cover her expenses.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 7<sup>th</sup> March

Sir

I desire you will **remit** me the £85.19.6 to pay the bills *so long* due (since Oct<sup>r</sup> 1805)[.] if you do not I shall be under the necessity of drawing on you for that sum, and I am *determined* to be no more *teased & dunned* about it, and it certainly is *not* reasonable to suppose people in trade can remain so long without being paid[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

as to any thing being settled with the **Court of Chancery**[.] I suppose **Byron** will be of age before any additional allowance is granted or the money to pay these bills & & & allowed, a period I really cannot *wait* for[.]



Letter 68. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 17 March  
1807

Frustrated with the direction the Rochdale estate has taken—verdicts were suspended, Mrs. Byron worries for her son's financial security. She will draw on Hanson for £85.19.6 to pay for Byron's plate, and will repay him if the charge is not allowed by the Court of Chancery.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 17<sup>th</sup> March 1807

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I really think <sup>the</sup> Rochdale People give trouble merely for the sake of *tormenting*, and I fancy they are rendered desperate from the idea of being obliged to give up the Property.

It will be very hard on me if the Court doesn't allow the £85.19.6[.] however that may be I shall draw on you for the sum immediately at one months date, and I will engage to repay you if it is not allowed. My Son joins in best regards to you & M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson[.] I remain

D<sup>r</sup> Sir  
your sincere friend  
C G Byron

There is also the Plate to be thought of—

Letter 69. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 19 March  
1807

Mrs Byron writes that she will be ruined if John Hanson does not succeed with her Chancery business. Byron has been with his mother for seven months at Burgage Manor in Southwell and she is not enthusiastic about his returning to Cambridge where he did nothing but drink, gamble, and spend money. His latest attempt to borrow money with Mrs. Massingberd has come to nothing.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
Private

Southwell 19<sup>th</sup> March 1807

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

When I last wrote it was rather in a hurry. I have now to inform you that if the [Court of Chancery](#) do not grant the £85.19.6 and also the two hundred a year I shall be perfectly *ruined*. I certainly *never* would have got the things had I had the least idea that they would not be paid for.

[Lord Byron](#) has now been with me *seven* months with two men servants for which I have never received one farthing as he

requires the five hundred a year for himself. therefore it is impossible I can keep him and them out of my small income[:] four hundred a year, two in Scotland and the Pension is now *reduced* to two hundred a year. but if the Court allows the additional two hundred a year I shall be perfectly satisfied.

I do not know what to say about Byrons returning to Cambridge[.] when he was there I believe he did nothing but drink gamble & spend money. the affair with M<sup>rs</sup> M. is entirely off as he could not have the money on the terms offered[.] I remain

Sir  
your obed servt  
C G Byron

Letter 70. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 11 April  
1807

John Hanson was apparently moved to act; the Chancery Court has agreed to pay the £85.19.6. Mrs Bryon and her son draw on Hanson, and for their quarterly allownaces, due on the 25th of June. Mrs Byron wishes Hanson would pay Lord Byron's outstanding bill from the jewellers Robert and William Gray of New Bond Street.

M<sup>r</sup> Hanson

Southwell 11<sup>th</sup> April 1807

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

I have drawn on you for the £85.19.6 allowed me by **the Master** which is the same I have paid for **Lord Byron**. I have also drawn on you for another quarter due me the 25<sup>th</sup> June next fifty pounds. Lord Byron mentions drawing on you soon for his quarters allowance £125.0.0 due the 25<sup>th</sup> June. I wish **Grays** bill for the **Plate** could be paid[.]

I remain  
yours sincerely  
C G Byron

This Draft paid by Mr. Birch's D<sup>rt</sup> on Dawson's[.] J H[.]

Letter 71. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 29 April  
1807

In an effort to keep her son out of the hands of the money-lenders, Mrs Byron had made herself security to loans to her son from Nottingham acquaintances to the amount of a thousand pounds. The lenders were his old acquaintances Frances Byron and Frances Parkyns, and the Southwell banker William Wylde. Byron has told the Parkyns that he is unable to pay off the loans, which would get his mother into considerable difficulty.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
Private

Southwell 29<sup>th</sup> April 1807

Dear Sir,

The enclosed letter speaks for itself. **My Son** being very anxious to procure money[.] I did offer to be security for him to the amount of a thousand pounds, wishing to keep him out of the hands of money lenders. there is some risk to me if his life is not ensured. knowing that **M<sup>rs</sup> Byron** & the **Miss Parkyn's** had sold their Estates I asked them to lend the money on my **Bond**, and you see their last letter. it is rather placing you in an awkward

situation, as I really do not see what you can do in the business and from that conviction I would not have wrote you on the subject if Lord Byron had not wished it.

I have rather changed my opinion concerning this transaction lately, as Byron from their last letter gave up all hopes of getting the money and behaved very well on the occasion, and proposed selling his Horses and plans of economy that I much fear will be laid aside if the money is procured. my only motive for wishing it was to keep him clear of the Jews, but at present he does not seem at all disposed to have any thing to do with them even if he is disappointed in this resource[.]

I wish to act for the best but God knows what is the best. send an answer & one that I can show him[.] I remain

D<sup>r</sup> Sir  
yours sincerely  
C G Byron

What are you doing with the Rochdale People—

Letter 72. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 23 May  
1807

In what appears to be a draft—the letter is not signed—John Hanson refuses to become involved in Lord Byron's Nottingham loans.

23 May 1807

Dear Madam

I have been in Hampshire and returned only last Night and this is the only Apology I have to offer for your being so long without an Ans<sup>r</sup> to your Letter[.] M<sup>rs</sup> Byron and Miss Parkyns are certainly in an Error in supposing that I am guardian to Lord Byron and what I can have to do in the proposed Negotiation I am wholly at a loss for to know. Byron should exercise his own Discretion. I don't think that I can interfere in it[.] indeed it would be officious in me to do so[.] ~~My miserable Opinion of Lord Byron's good Sense induces me to think that his Lordship will be of Opinion that I ought not to have been referred to upon such an Occasion—~~

Letter 73. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 24 May  
1807

Around Easter of 1807 James Dearden had appealed John Hanson's successful ruling obtained in the Lancashire courts, and the Rochdale case would next proceed to the Exchequer Court.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Southwell 24<sup>th</sup> May 1807

Dear Sir

Much uneasiness and vexation does this *Rochdale* business give me. I am very sorry they have it in *their* power to keep my Son so long out of possession. I had *no* idea of the Court of Exchequer, but always thought of the Court of Chancery. pray will the trial come on soon or will it be protracted, and if they fail there can they bring it into Chancery after all, or if they succeed what must *his Lordship* do in that case. must he abide by the decision is there no redress. Pray have the goodness to answer *all* these questions as soon as possible. Byron joins me in best regards[.]

I remain  
D<sup>r</sup> Sir  
yours sincerely  
C G Byron



Letter 74. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 9 August  
1807

John Hanson reassures Mrs. Byron that Dearden and his co-defendants can protract the Rochedale suit as long as they please, but that they will eventually lose and have to pay the court costs. An equity suit would be pursued in the Court of Chancery where the common law did not necessarily apply. The not-so-young former tenant of Newstead Abbey has married an illegitimate second baron Grantley, apparently then going by the name of Harvey.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Southwell  
Nottinghamshire

Dear Madam

The Drafts which you have apprized me of having drawn upon me for the Quarters Allowance that will become due at Mich<sup>s</sup> next shall be duly honored. I had the Pleasure of seeing Lord Byron about ten Days[.] he was then very well and in very excellent Spirits[.] I was surprized to see him so altered. he has reduced himself in Bulk very much but I hope he has not done it to y<sup>e</sup> Injuring of his Health[.] I was greatly rejoiced to find that his Lordship had been at Cambridge and that it was his Intention

to renew his Studies there[.] I am sure it will redound much to his Credit to continue there another Year[.] I intend being at Newstead very shortly but I cannot fix the Time until the Chancellor has finished his Sittings. I think I told you the Rochdale People had mistated a Suit in Equity agt us which hangs up our Judgments upon y<sup>e</sup> late Trials. they will have Recourse to every Expedient the Law will allow to keep Possession till the latest Time, and it is a Commendable Thing that the Law will allow them to do it, but I trust they will ultimately pay dearly for it. first, I have Persons employed to keep an Account of all the Costs they get that we may be able to charge them ultimately with all the Profits upon them[.] M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson unites with me in best thoughts and believe me Dear Madam

Y<sup>r</sup> most faithful servt  
John Hanson

Chancery Lane 9<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1807

PS

I suppose you have heard of Miss U. Launder's Marriage to Mr Harvey a Protegéé of Ld. Grantleys—

## Letter 75. Lord Byron to Elizabeth Massingberd, Fall 1807?

This unsigned and undated letter, apparently in the handwriting of Catherine Byron, appears to be a copy of a letter which Lord Byron sent to his landlady Elizabeth Massingberd with whom he had been borrowing against annuities. Since a second loan was under consideration in the Spring of 1807 and the letter mentions a half-year payment on a second loan, perhaps the letter dates from the autumn of 1807. It is possible that Mrs Massingberd, a Nottingham woman from whom Mrs Byron rented rooms in London in 1802, would confide in Mrs Byron—she knew from *someone* what was going on—and that Mrs Byron would keep a copy of the document.

On the other side I state your calculation which is certainly a mistake, and I also state the sum I shall really have to pay when I come of age. you know I left a sufficient sum in your hands to pay *both* annuities for *two* years and *all other expences included*.

M<sup>rs</sup> M. state of the account—

first annuity	£600. 0. 0
second	£110. 0. 0
redemption	150. 0. 0
original sum	3300. 0. 0

£4160. 0. 0

yet you calculate these sums at four thousand and seven hundred & sixty pounds, as you make in your letter £860 to be £1450[.]

Lord B state of the account—

original sum	£3300. 0. 0
first annuity for the past year	300. 0. 0
first annuity for the past half year	125. 0. 0
	£3725. 0. 0

Letter 76. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 21  
December 1807

In an unusually amiable letter John Hanson reports that Lord Grey de Ruthyn's tenure at Newstead Abbey is coming to end so that Lord Byron, who has returned to Cambridge, can be in residence when he comes of age. His half-sister Augusta Byron has been married George Leigh, the son of Mrs Byron's sister-in-law and former correspondent Frances Leigh.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Southwell  
Nottinghamshire

Dear Madam

Lord Greys Term at Newstead will expire next Midsummer[.] I purposely limited it to that Period in order that it might be open to Lord Byron when he came of Age the January following[.] It is impossible to say when the Trial of Lancashire Matter will come on in the Court of Exchequer[.] they have it in their Power to procrastinate it very much and I make no doubt they will avail themselves of it to the utmost[.] Some Engagements from Home have prevented my giving you an earlier Ans<sup>r</sup> to your Inquiries on these Subjects.

Was you not rather surprized at M<sup>rs</sup> Byrons marriage[?] I had supposed it to be entirely broken off and indeed I believe she had intended to go to Castle Howard. Lord Byron I am truly rejoiced to find continues at Cambridge. he will soon be in a Situation to become of use to his Country, which stands much in need of such Abilities as he so eminently possesses, and I hope and trust, he will turn them to that Account[.] M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson and all my Family are well. She unites with me in the best [Company] Comp<sup>ts</sup> and wishing you the Compliments of y<sup>e</sup> approaching Season believe me[.] D<sup>r</sup> Madam

Yours very sincerely

John Hanson

Ch<sup>y</sup> Lane 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 1807

P.S. Your Draft will of course be duly attended to.

Letter 77. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 26 May  
1808

John Hanson informs Mrs. Byron of the status the Rochdale lawsuit. She should not trust Mr. Shaw, a solicitor who had formerly worked for their opponents. Hanson is working to overturn a ruling permitting the mining to continue while the suit proceeds. The defendant, John Dearden, has sworn in court that the valuable collieries were not worth more than £100 a year. (The Court of Equity mentioned would be the Chancery Court.) Hanson engages to visit Newstead Abbey in July, though in the event he would not come until October when he would begin preparations for Lord Byron's coming of age.

The Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Southwell  
Nottinghamshire

Dear Madam

I am indebted to Lord Byron's Candour for the Perusal of a Letter which his Lordship has received from you on the Subject of Rochdale Concerns and on which it is necessary for me to reply[.]

I am <sup>not</sup> at all surprised at what M<sup>r</sup> Shaw has represented to

you but I must beg to caution you against his Statements as they cannot be depended upon. I have already been deceived by them and if I had given Credit to his Representations your Son would have been involved in endless Suits which must have involved every farthing of his Fortune and had he died under Age it must have fallen upon you.

Mr Shaw has been y<sup>e</sup> sole and confidential Advisor of the very Persons who are resisting Lord Byrons Claims. they have quarreled with him and thought right to dismiss him and there cannot be a doubt but he is actuated by Revenge against them. he is not more favourable to me because I would not appoint him Steward and because I objected to his Charges for some trifling Business he did[.] in short Madam his Accounts are too chimerical to deserve the smallest of attention and I again caution you against listening to them.

M<sup>r</sup> Dearden & his Patrons had obtained an Injunction to restrain the Verdicts we had obtained[.] Nothing more could be done than to have an Account kept of the Quantities of Coals gotten by them that we might be able to resort to these for the Value of them in case the Court of Equity should confirm the Verdicts[.] This I ordered to be done and if I had gone down



every Month to Rochdale it is I could have done. I am taking all the Measures I can to get rid of the Injunction and I am in hopes I shall be able soon to do it. I intended going to Rochdale this summer and to have devoted a full week there in order to arrange Things and I still [paper torn] M<sup>r</sup> Dearden will have to [paper torn] Profits he has made from the [paper torn] he is very rich and able to answer it. I got into Discredit in acting upon M<sup>r</sup> Shaw's Information the Particulars of which are too long to detail in a Letter but suffice it for y<sup>e</sup> present to say that when M<sup>r</sup> Dearden was examined in Court he swore that y<sup>e</sup> Collieries were not worth 100£ a year and the Court believed him.

I shall go to Rochdale the first Week in July probably sooner and will make a Point of calling upon you in my way thither as I have many [remainder missing]

Letter 78. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 28 May  
1808

Mrs. Byron assures John Hanson that, whatever his character, Mr Shaw is to be believed and that the Rochedale properties are far more valuable than even Hanson thinks. Time would prove her correct; the fifth Lord Byron had squandered a fortune in letting them go so cheaply.

Southwell 28<sup>th</sup> May 1808

Sir

I make *no* doubt M<sup>r</sup> Shaw is a very great Rascal or his information would have been given sooner, but Rogues are often useful, and it is my opinion that he is the Person in the world most likely to know the real value of Lord Byrons Lancashire Property and this I believe for the *same* reason you give for doubting his veracity, namely his having been employed by the People now resisting Lord Byrons claims, and they having quarreled with him (which was very *unwise* in them) the truth will now most probably come out, and he certainly knows the real state of affairs if he will <sup>be</sup> candid.

Nor do I think M<sup>r</sup> Deardens having *perjured* himself in a court of justice (which I firmly believe he did) a sufficient reason for

altogether discrediting Shaws account. pray let me ask you if it is consistent with common sense to believe that Dearden and his Partners would throw away thousands (which they have done) in the deffence of a property *not worth* a hundred a year!!! *impossible* for my part[.] I never will swallow such inconsistent nonsense. (M<sup>r</sup> Dearden I suppose forgot when he swore this) that one hundred Colliers were *daily* employed in getting Coals, and *double* the number in getting stone flags & slate.

I shall not be at all satisfied till you (or if you are not able) M<sup>r</sup> Birch goes down to Lancashire to ascertain the *real* value of this property which ought to have been done long since. M<sup>r</sup> Shaw has had a good opportunity of knowing the value of it, and the *truth* or falsehood of his account may certainly be easily ascertained, and he says the property not sold will be eight thousand a year, and that what is now disputed Dearden & his Partners clear four thousand a year by. I do not altogether depend on this statement nor do I wholly disbelieve it, but I recollect the *old* proverb set a thief to catch a thief[.] who is more capable of giving accurate information concerning the situation of an army than a Deserter and Shaw certainly knows the truths of Dearden & his Partners in ingenuity, and that mans character is so *infamous* that he is not *intitled* to the smallest credit even where

his own interest is *not* concerned[.] you say Dearden will be obliged to account for the Profits he has made from the Coals[.] *no doubt*, if it is possible to come to the knowledge of what these profits are[,] but are his Partners able to refund. I understand from Shaw that the depredations are chiefly committed on the unsold Property.

Your *own* clerk gave much the same account of the value of the property to Mealey when he was at Newstead on his return from Lancashire, and he also told Lord Byron nearly the same thing (I don't know where he had his information) but be this as it may, depend on it the property is of more *value* than you are aware of, indeed a noble Peer from that Country says it is *invaluable* if property managed, which it has never yet been[.] however when you go down, hear Shaws, Deardens, & Mealeys account, but *trust* neither as I am informed they are all Rogues *alike*, but *listen* to *impartial* People (if they are to be found) and *hear, see, & judge* for yourself. M<sup>r</sup> Dearden is the *greatest scoundrel* on Earth and capable of perjury or any other *villany* that suits his purpose. the character given of him is from the report of a Lancashire Lady whos Father he cheated out of property to a large amount. she lives here & will tell you all the

particulars when you arrive if you wish to hear it. Nothing could exceed her *joy* when she heard Lord Byron had obtained a verdict, merely because she hates Dearden and by *all accounts* she has *just cause* so to do.

I remain

Letter 79. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 28 July  
1808

John Hanson, busy in Chancery Court, postpones his visit to Nottinghamshire until August. Lord Grey de Ruthyn will stop paying rent for Newstead as of midsummer.

Chancery Lane 28<sup>th</sup> July 1808

Madam

I shall be at Rochdale early in August but I cannot fix the precise Day as it depends upon the Proceedings in the Chancery Cause which I wish to have decided before I go down. I am doing my utmost to get y<sup>e</sup> main Question decided, during the present Sittings, and I hope I shall be able to accomplish it, when my Business at Rochdale will be more effectually done and I shall devote sufficient Time to go thro' it[.] I shall certainly take Southwell in my way and will let you know a few Days before I set off.

I should have written to you before but was very unwell and obliged to leave Town for a short Time but y<sup>e</sup> Business in Chancery has not stood still on that Account.

Lord Grey has given up Newstead and pays y<sup>e</sup> Rent to Midsummer last[.] I am Madam

Your humble servt  
John Hanson

## Letter 80. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 13 March 1809

On the 22nd of January Lord Byron had come of age and was preparing to go abroad leaving behind debts amounting to something like £12,000—for several years he had been living like a lord on an annual allowance of £500. In this letter John Hanson reports that has completed the genealogical documentation required for Byron to take his seat in the House of Lords. Byron intends to repay the loans for which his mother was the security out of the money due to him upon coming of age. Since this was not sufficient to cover his debts, discussions were under way about mortgages and the sale of properties.

My dear Madam

Altho' Lord Byron has involved himself certainly to a very considerable Extent his Lordship goes too far when he says that he is ruined for he possesses from his Rank and Abilities the Means of redeeming himself whenever he can bring himself to the Resolution to do so and I think he will soon do it and I verily believe he will do it effectually when he turns his Mind to it[.] I do assure you I have not been wanting in giving him all the Advice I am able which I am happy to say he takes in very good Part tho I should like it better if he would follow it more[.]

I have great Pleasure in telling you we have got over our Difficulties with the Lord Chancellor[.] his Lordship required Guidance from Cornwall of the Reputation of Adm Byron's Marriage and I was under the Necessity of sending a Person down on purpose to procure it and we were fortunate to discover an old Man at Carhais who was present at the celebration of the Marriage. This satisfied the Chancellor, and I had yesterday the Satisfaction to present Lord Byron with the Writ to call him to his Seat, and I believe he intends taking it Tomorrow. I am truly glad we got this for I confess I was very much afraid the Chancellor would have returned the Matter to a Committee of Privileges which would have been tedious and cost at least 1500£ [.]

Lord Byron did mention to me his Intention of asking you to consent to his receiving the £4000 or so much of it as would be left after accommodating you with as much as you wanted and if this is done his Lordship ought certainly to make you as secure as possible and that can only be done by changing it by way of Mortgage upon a Part of Newstead Estate and it will be best to pledge two or three of the Farms. let me know if this meets with your Approbation and I think the sooner Notice is given for



paying in the Money the better. I believe it is his Lordships Intention to take upon himself the Payment of the £1000 which was advanced by M<sup>rs</sup> G Byron and I will get his Lordships Intentions to allow me to prepare the necessary Bond which I hope will be thought a sufficient Security[.] There is about £3000 in Court arising from Savings which will be paid his Lordship in the course of a short Time and I make no doubt he will then discharge many of his small Debts and particularly those at Southwell which certainly ought to be paid[.] I can assure you I am very much averse to his paying those rascally Usurers one Farthing more than he received from them and here I cannot help condemning in the severest Terms the Conduct of Mrs Massingberd who so much encouraged him in the incurring of them. I am in hopes we shall be able to come to an Arrangement with the Rochdale People[.] I wish very much that his Lordship would go down with me Newstead this Spring when he should probably be able to put on End to that Business and I am inclined to think he will[.] I wish his Lordship to bring his Mind to Business but I incline to think he means soon to adopt the Course you have recommended.

I am thank God much better in Health and tho' some of our

young ones have been very ill they are now reviving and have discarded the Doctor for the Cook. I sincerely hope you are better[.] M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson unites with me in best Regards and believe me My dear Madam

Y<sup>r</sup> truly faithful servt  
John Hanson

Chancery Lane  
13<sup>th</sup> March 1809

Letter 81. Catherine Byron to John Musters, 22  
September 1809

This is the draft of a furious letter Mrs Byron wrote to John Musters, a Nottinghamshire neighbor who had been illegally hunting on the Newstead estate. Musters was the husband of Byron's early love, the former Mary Anne Chaworth.

Newstead Abbey 22<sup>d</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 1809

Sir

I must *insist* on your confining yourself to your own premises, or at least not coming on Lord Byrons Manor to hunt and commit *trespasses*, which you have been so *long* in the habit of doing that you now I suppose fancy you have a right to do so. but I am fully *determined* to convince you to the contrary. Pray Sir do you suppose that I will here and *tamely submit* to every *insult* from you? if you think so you will find yourself extremely mistaken. I cannot send out my Keeper but he must be *abused* by you on Lord Byrons *own* Manor[.] You presume on his absence to *insult* a *Woman* and assault an old Man, that is you insult his Mother & injure the Property attack the Persons and threaten the lives of his Servants. In short your language is unbecoming and your behavior totally unworthy a Man of Courage. These are hard truths but they are *truths* nevertheless.

I will now take the trouble to inform you that Lord Byrons Tenants shall be no longer annoyed by you with *impunity* but that a prosecution will be immediately instituted against you for divers Trespasses, and one assault[.] You are not surely so ignorant as not to know that breaking down fences and riding through fields of standing corn with your Hounds, are most unlawful unjustifiable arbitrary and oppressive, and will never be submitted to in a free country, even if you was the first Man in it. I will not suffer my Keeper to be abused or interrupted in the execution of his duty, and he has my *positive* orders to use every possible means to destroy the Foxes. Lord Grey de Ruthyns poaching and these abundant noxious Animals has nearly deprived this *once* excellent Manor of game, and the woods on this Estate shall not continue to be a *Depot* for your vermine, and I am determined to *extirpate* the breed here and to suffer so great a nuisance no longer, and if the breed of Fox-hunters could be as easily got rid of, benefit to society in general would be great. no earths shall be stopt at Newstead as I shall encourage neither foxes nor their hunters on these Premises. very *extraordinary* conduct for a Justice of the peace, to *break* the peace!!! The earths I understand have been stopt and whoever can be found at that work shall have *sufficient* cause to repent it and care shall be taken to watch for them[.] I remain

Sir  
& & & C G Byron

Letter 82. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 26  
September 1809

Mrs Byron, who had moved into Newstead Abbey when Lord Byron went abroad, was attempting to retrench by reducing the staff and raising rents. John Hanson approves of her proposals and will have the estate revalued. Byron's Nottinghamshire loans, for which his mother had stood security, had not been paid off when he went abroad, and Hanson broaches the option that they be reimbursed out of Mrs Byron's small personal estate, offering Newstead income as her security. In the meantime, interest on the Southwell bank loan can be paid out of the Newstead rents since Hanson now had the authority to manage Byron's accounts.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

My dear Madam

I have the pleasure to inform you that I have received a Letter from [Lord Byron](#) dated from Gibraltar the 7<sup>th</sup> of last Month and he was then very well and wrote in good Spirits[.] he says he had just ridden between 4 and 500.<sup>d</sup> Miles around the Country from Lisbon to Cadiz and has gone there by Sea to Gibraltar. he mentions his Intention to pursue his Voyage the first Opportunity and he particularly desired that I would inform you he was well

& would write to you from Malta to which place he desired that any Letters might be addressed to him. I regret with you that he had not remained quietly at Home till Affairs abroad were more settled and better adapted to the Tourist and his own Affairs had been first under Arrangement. I am sure that no Person could take more Pains than I did to prevail on his Lordship to remain at Home[.]

I certainly agree with you that if the Farms at Newstead will bear an Advance of Rent that they ought to be raised. I had some Conversation with Lord Byron upon this Subject just before he left England but he then expressed his Dislike to grant Leases without which it will I fear be difficult to get the full Amount of Rent unless some Money is laid out in Repairs, for Tenants will not sink Money unless they have Leases. however that another year may not pass over I have directed Mealey to serve the Tenants with Notices to quit at Lady Day next in order that the advanced Rents may take place from that Period in case it should be thought that they are capable of Advance. I think it will be proper to have all the Farms looked over by a competent Person who should go over all the Farms and not do it by apportioning any estimated Advance amongst the Tenants. M<sup>r</sup> Chambers is a

very skilfull and intelligent Man and I have a very high Opinion of him but we have his former Valuation and can form a pretty near Guess of the proper advance proportionate with the increased Prices of Grain since his Valuation. for this Reason only I confess I should prefer having the Opinion of another Surveryor. I could send a very proper Person down who does a great deal of Business in that Line. I sent him to value Lord Byron's Estate in Norfolk and he valued it at £4500, which was talked of as an enormous Valuation and yet we have sold it for within a few Pounds of that Sum. If you agree with me in this Measure I will send him down and get him to do it at as little Expense as possible.[.]

I would not have you be uneasy on the Subject of Miss Parkyns or M<sup>r</sup> Wyldes Debt for Lord Byron has in case any Thing should happen to him which God forbid, made ample Revision for Payment of all his Debts. nevertheless I cannot help observing that I think if the remaining part of your Fortune could be raised and a Security given to you upon y<sup>e</sup> Newstead Estate to secure you the Income of it, that it would be the best way of paying off Miss Parkyns and M<sup>r</sup> Wylde and what remains would be desirable to go in Discharge of Lord Byron's Debts[.] I

mention this as an Arrangement that would be more beneficial to Lord Byron than to yourself for I cannot conceal from you that the Plan which his Lordship recommended to you of sinking the Rochdale in an Annuity for your Life would be infinitely more beneficial to you, but if you waive that offer it certainly would be offering a considerable accommodation to his Lordship in the Arrangement of his Debts. but I should not do Justice to you if I were to urge your Acquiescence in that Measure. it must therefore rest with you own Inclinations. Whatever Course you may determine upon, there will be no Difficulty in giving proper Releases for the Money as Lord Byron has left ample Powers with use for the purpose[.]

The Interest of Miss Parkyns and Wylde's Debts should be paid out of the Rents of Newstead and as Lord Byron has delegated Powers to me to receive the Rents it will be for me to receive them and when received I will make those Payments in the very first Instance.

Your Wish to reduce L<sup>d</sup> Byron's Expenses at Newstead is highly laudable and I wish some Plan co<sup>d</sup> be hit upon to Reform the Expense of y<sup>e</sup> live Animals there which really is [paper torn] most unnecessary Expence[.] With respect to the [paper torn] Hut



Public House there is no Manner of [paper torn] why Mealey should have [paper torn] particular [paper torn] Indulgence and if any new B[paper torn] are erected which certainly are wanting, he must pay a proper Additional Rent and I think it would answer to his Lordship to lay out a little Money upon that Property if it could be contrived[.] Indeed if we do not do so I fear some other Neighboring Proprietor will be building a House with more Accommodation which would annihilate the Hut Tavern.

I am truly concerned to hear that your Health has been so indifferent, but I hope it is better[.] Mine has not been the best for sometime past[.] M<sup>rs</sup> Hanson and all my Family are well and write with me in kindest Regards and with every good Wish believe me Dear Madam

Your faithful & sincere servt  
John Hanson

Farleigh House  
26<sup>th</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 1809

Letter 83. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 12 March  
1810

Mrs. Byron asks whether John Hanson has had news of her son from Constantinople.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

M<sup>rs</sup> Byron wishes M<sup>r</sup> Hanson would inform her whither he has heard from Lord Byron either by the Entreprenante, or by the Gleaner Schooner both from Constantinople. the Last arrived the sixth of this month[.]

Newstead Abbey  
12<sup>th</sup> March 1810

## Letter 84. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 20 March 1810

Byron's servant Robert Rushton, the son of a Newstead tenant farmer, has returned to Nottinghamshire from Spain with the promise that Byron would pay for his education. John Hanson did not regard himself as bound by that pledge, and attempts to find a living for Rushton at Newstead were being resisted by the steward, Owen Mealey.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London  
P<sup>r</sup> favor of M<sup>r</sup> Neil

Newstead Abbey 20<sup>th</sup> March 1810

Dear Sir

I cannot *conceive* why **Byron** remains so long at Patras. he must have been there *two months* when he wrote to you, and by what you say does not intend to leave it till he *receives* your answer, and what is very *odd* there has been a letter received from M<sup>r</sup> **Hobhouse** about the time you got yours dated Dec<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1809 from Malta. all this I *dont understand*.

**Roushton** has a **Son** whom he wishes much to be allowed to

live in the Castle for a time. it is certainly *falling down* for *want of a Tenant* and I think it would do *good*, but *Mealey* says they will do much mischief[.] but I dare say he *knows nothing* about it, but says so because he *dont like* the Roushtons[.] I remain

Sir

& & &

C G Byron

P.S. *Roushtons Son* has left a farm & cant get another—

## Letter 85. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 22 June 1810

John Hanson discusses the debts Lord Byron left behind when going abroad. Milnes, his tailor (who had once bailed out Byron's father), is threatening an execution over a £900 bill. Byron also left unpaid a large bill from the Nottingham upholsterer Benjamin Brothers for lavishly refurnishing Newstead Abbey in 1809. But most pressing to Mrs Byron were the Nottingham loans for which she was responsible. She had agreed to pay these out of her personal estate in Scotland, but her Edinburgh solicitor, Hugh Watson, had informed her that John Hanson's power of attorney, required to complete the transaction, was not sufficient under Scottish law. The following letters describe this dilemma further.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

I have just received M<sup>r</sup> Watson's Letter which you forwarded to me and I write to him upon the Subject by this Nights Post and if after what I have sayd to him he still thinks that the Power of Atty. which I possess is not sufficient[.] I hope he will immediately send me a proper one to forward to his Lordship as I

am sure that without this Money his Lordship will be placed in a Situation of great Difficulty and Embarrassment[.] Lord Byron was so unguarded as to give M<sup>r</sup> Milnes his Taylor a Judgment for ab<sup>t</sup> 900£ before he left England and this Man is threatening to sue out an Execution[.] with respect to Brothers he can do nothing till Xmas[.] I received a Letter yesterday from L<sup>d</sup> Byron dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of April on Board the Salsette Frigate at Anchor off the Plains of Troy[.] he was perfectly well & still presses for post Remittances which cannot be supplied him. This will be a most Expensive Tour to him[.] I am D<sup>r</sup> Madam

Yours faithfully

John Hanson

Chancery Lane  
22<sup>d</sup> June 1810

## Letter 86. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 8 July 1810

John Hanson is finding it increasingly difficulty to meet Lord Byron's obligations, and apparently Mrs Byron had offered £3,000 from her personal estate to assist with paying her son's debts. This appears to be the money which she had lent to Sir James Grant in December, 1804. Hanson proposes a mortgage on Newstead Abbey in exchange for it, but the complicated transaction was being held up because the power of attorney Byron had granted to Hanson was not accepted in Scotland. Hammersley's Bank, at 76 Pall Mall, did business in Constantinople.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

I have written to M<sup>r</sup> Watson of Edinburgh to inform him the Nature of y<sup>e</sup> Powers which I have from Lord Byron which are general to receive Money from any one and to give all legal & Effectual Discharges[.] And if it is not confirmable to the forms of y<sup>e</sup> Scotch Law I have desired him to transmit me the necessary form to send over to his Lordship[.] and if it cannot be had over by the Time fixed for Payment of y<sup>e</sup> Money his Lordship must pay you Interest as you must not be a Looser[.]

I think when you know of the various & daily Calls that are made by Lord Byrons Cred<sup>rs</sup> for Bills to y<sup>e</sup> amount of upwards of £10,000, and Annuities daily accruing to the Amount of between two and £3,000 a year without any Funds to answer a tenth Part ?from? of them and his Lordships answered Calls for Remittances you will allow that I am placed in a Situation of infinite Perplexity and if your £3000 is not to be forthcoming I dont see what can be done to appease the People. I recommend your £3000 to be a Loan on Mortgage at £5 Per Cent on part of Newstead Estate[.] I have written to his Lordship very fully on the Subject of his Affairs and I have suggested to his Consideration the only Plan which can in my Judgment relieve him from all his Difficulties.

I now enclose you £20. which I will trouble you to pay the ? Sheeper? on Account of his Wages & will be obliged to you to send me his Receipt as a voucher. M<sup>r</sup> Wylde I have written to to desire his Agent to call on me for his Interest which will save you the Trouble of sending to him and M<sup>rs</sup> Geo Byron and Miss Parkyns[.] I will endeavour to pay when the Interest becomes due. I forwarded your Letter to Lord Byron who I am surprized has never [paper torn] I wrote him long ago[.]



I lodged £1000 in Mess<sup>rs</sup> Hammersleys Hands last December for four Letters of Credit making 3000£ since he left England & the other Day I lodged 300£ more which was all that could be spared and in a very few Days there will be near £1000 to pay which I have not Funds to answer[.] I hope you continue well & am D<sup>r</sup> Madam

Dear Madam  
Y<sup>rs</sup> very faithfully  
John Hanson

Letter 87. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, [Late  
summer 1810]

John Hanson has received the document granting him powers of attorney from Mrs Byron's Edinburgh solicitor and has forwarded it to Constantinople for Byron to sign.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mrs Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

My last Letter would set your Mind at Ease about Mr Brothers's Threats as he can do nothing for many Months and I hope by that Time we shall be able to satisfy him. I suspect his Charges for <sup>y</sup>e Goods are very extravagant as I cannot get a Bill from him[.]

M<sup>r</sup> Watson has sent me the proper Power of Atty. for Lord Byron to execute which I have forwarded to his Lordship at Constantinople to which Place he ment<sup>d</sup> in his last Letter, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, he was going to return. M<sup>r</sup> Watson mentions in his Letter that in case the Power should not be sent back in Time he will make the best Bargain he can with Sir James Grant and the Person who advances the Money and he hopes it may be

arranged without Loss of Interest, but if there sho<sup>d</sup> be any, it certainly must not fall on you[.] I am sorely perplexed with the Creditors having no Means of satisfying them[.] I was sorry to hear so indifferent an Account of your Health but I hope now that summer Weather is come you will find an Alteration for y<sup>e</sup> better. With Every good Wish believe me D<sup>r</sup> Madam

your most faithful obed servt

John Hanson

Letter 88. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 31  
December 1810

Months have passed and John Hanson has not received the power of attorney he requires to apply Mrs Byron's Scottish funds to pay Lord Byron's Nottinghamshire debts. While other creditors are being accommodating, the upholsterer Brothers, facing bankruptcy, will proceed with an execution against Lord Byron's effects at Newstead Abbey.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mrs Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

I have written to Lord Byron three letters since he left England, and the last I wrote to him was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June last, and which I entrusted to the Care of Major Carey a friend of mine, who was going to Malta, and who promised me he would forward it from thence the moment he arrived, but as your last dispatches from his Lordship were dated in August, he could then have received it. I transmitted in that letter the necessary power to enable us to give a discharge to Sir James Grant for the Mortgage money. If the power does not soon arrive it will be attended with

very unpleasant consequences, for the time for payment of the remaining part of **Brothers's** Debt amounting to £1572:2:0 stands for the 31<sup>st</sup> of January and no farther time can be obtained, so that he will immediately sue out an **Execution** against Lord Byron's Effects at Newstead, if not then paid, as I have no prospect of receiving funds from any other quarter to pay it, I have written to all **M<sup>r</sup> Watson** to propose the payment of Sir James Grant's Money upon your and my discharge and Indemnity, until the **power of Attorney** is returned when the release can be given according to the Scotch Form, and I hope he will get the Parties to consent to it. there can be no risk in it, as I am persuaded his Lordship will dispatch the Power immediately after it reaches him. A letter from you to **M<sup>r</sup> Watson** making the same request would I am persuaded have a good effect, and I make no doubt, you will readily do it by the first post[.] The other Creditors have behaved <sup>very</sup> well, and there is nothing particularly pressing, but this Business of Brothers: Altho the forestalling some of the Rents due last **Michaelmas** perplexed me very much as they were to be appropriated by Lord Byron's Order to some particular payments, and a part of them must be so applied next half year. **M<sup>r</sup> Rushton** has made a set off for his **Son's** Schooling to a large amount to which I know nothing of

and cannot allow. What a Pity it is that his Lordship is not now at Home signalizing himself in the House at a Time the most important to his Country. I hope you continue well and wishing you many happy return of the Season. Believe me

Dear Madam  
Your most faithful obed<sup>t</sup> Serv  
John Hanson

31 December 1810

## Letter 89. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 8 January 1811

John Hanson is making arrangements to cover Mrs Byron's loss of income on the £3000 by mortgaging farms on the Newstead estate. But without access to this money it will be for nought. Nor has Hanson been able to pay off the Nottingham creditors from the Newstead rents since Lord Byron had tied his hands with prior obligations.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

I am glad you have written to M<sup>r</sup> Watson, for without a part of that money I have no possible means of meeting M<sup>r</sup> Brothers's demand which he will insist upon, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of this month, as I have no funds in hand; I certainly meant that you should have an immediate Mortgage upon a sufficient Part of Newstead Estate, and I will prepare it and as the Interest will amount to £150 a year I should imagine if you sold it upon the Farms of Richard Hardstaff of Wire Mill Francis Truemans and Joseph Coleman it would be sufficient whose rents will be as follows.

Richard Hardstaffs	100
Francis Truemans	34
Joseph Colemans	55
	189

And that you have no trouble or disappointment in receiving your Interest half yearly, I would direct them to pay you half yearly out of their rents. If you approve of this, I will immediately preface the necessary **Mortgage Deed**, that it may be ready when the Money arrives from Scotland which I hope it will do by the 31<sup>st</sup>. I cannot admit that I have deceived you in any Promise I made, to pay the Interest of **M<sup>rs</sup> George Byrons** and **M<sup>r</sup> Wyldes** Debts. it was out of the rents only that these payments could be made, and had I been allowed to receive them they would have been so appropriated, but the last rents were anticipated by Payments made by the Tenants which were never ordered and sanctioned by me: no blame therefore attaches upon me. I have only received £195 of the last rent, and that with £15 more was appropriated to purposes expressly ordered by **Lord Byron**. However, all these claims of Interest of **M<sup>rs</sup> G. Byron** and **M<sup>r</sup> Wild's**, and a considerable part of the Principal may be liquidated out of your £3000. If this money does not come by the



31<sup>st</sup> this month it will not be in my power to prevent unpleasant measures being there taken by [Mr Brothers](#)[.]

I am Dear Madam  
your most faithful and  
obed Serv<sup>t</sup>.  
John Hanson

Chancery Lane  
8<sup>th</sup> January 1811

Letter 90. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 15 January  
1811

The drama continues: Hanson has received a letter from Lord Byron dated October, but without the power of attorney. He reassures Mrs Byron (who had been purchasing jewelry as her own form of personal security) that any execution at Newstead Abbey would only involve her son's property.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

It is now upwards of a Fortnight since I wrote to M<sup>r</sup> Watson and have not received any Answer from him which I wonder very much at but I trust we shall yet hear satisfactorily from him in Time[.]

You need not be under any Apprehension for y<sup>e</sup> Safety of any Property belonging to you at Newstead as nothing but what actually belongs to L<sup>d</sup> Byron can be seized under an Execution. you have not been rightly informed on that Subject. You seem to think it was my Fault that L<sup>d</sup> Byron did not give Security for

M<sup>rs</sup> Byrons & Miss Parkyns's Money before he left England but it was not. I mentioned it to his Lordship more than once but he said he did not think it necessary meaning, no doubt as his Lordship did, to discharge the Debts the first Opportunity[.]

I yesterday received a Letter from his Lordship from Patras in the Morea dated the 2<sup>d</sup> of Oct<sup>r</sup>. he had not then received y<sup>e</sup> Instrument which I sent out from M<sup>r</sup> Watson but he must have received it soon after that Date and I make no doubt it is now on its way way back but I fear there is no Chance of its arriving before this Month is over[.] His Lordship mentions his Intention of returning soon to Athens and was very well. Do you think you can make any Interest with Brothers to wait till the Instrument arrives[?] if you can the sooner it is done the better to prevent his proceeding to an Execution which he will be at Liberty to do on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Feb<sup>y</sup> if the Money is not then paid. I am Dear Madam

your obed servt

John Hanson

Chancery Lane  
15<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1811

Letter 91. Catherine Byron to John Hanson, 17 January  
1811

Efforts to obtain relief from Scotland have failed. Despairing over the coming execution at Newstead, Mrs Byron appeals to John Hanson to take out a loan to pay the Brothers' bill for £1500 with herself as security, or to pay the bill out of his personal funds, offering herself as his security.

John Hanson Esq<sup>r</sup>  
N<sup>o</sup> 6 Chancery Lane  
London

Newstead Abbey 17<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1811

Dear Sir

I send you M<sup>r</sup> Watsons letter to me[.] all that business is now at an end, and the money cannot be procured for the present. it is certainly very hard if Lord Byrons effects here are sold off for the sum of fifteen hundred pounds due to Brothers, and you I suppose know when things are sold under such *circumstances* they go for *about nothing*. I believe what is in the House is *fairly* worth about four thousand pounds[—]books, wines & & &. It would be particularly provoking when perhaps the power of Attorney might arrive a few days or weeks after, and you *know* that I will then have it in my *power* to pay the money. to avert so

great an evil taking place I will join with you in any security if you will procure this money, or give you any security in my *power* if you will advance the money yourself.

But you surely can procure fifteen hundred pounds on this Estate or it is very *odd indeed* and if you can give me security you can do the same to others. I again repeat what steps am I to take to secure my own property in case the worst should happen? if the money from Scotland had arrived, or when it can be procured I have no objection to make to the security on the Farms you mention. I had a letter from Byron a few days ago dated the 2<sup>d</sup> October 1810 from Patras in the Morea, but Athens is his head quarters, and he desires his letter to be sent to Malta. he is very angry that he has *never* received one line from you since he left England[.] indeed he will not believe that you have written. it is odd that yours have missed, mine have reached him. there ought to have been an answer to the one including the *power of Attorney* by this time.

## Letter 92. John Hanson to Catherine Byron, 28 May 1811

On the 23rd of May Mrs Byron had written to John Hanson reporting that the bailiffs had at last arrived at Newstead Abbey. Hanson acted quickly, for in this letter of the 28th he informs her that an accommodation had been reached with Brothers and that the bailiffs would soon be removed. Sometime during the week Byron's valet, John Fletcher, belatedly arrived at Newstead bearing the power of attorney signed by Byron which Hanson had requested in July or August of 1810. While she had concealed the fact from her son, Mrs Byron's health was failing, and she would die on the first of August while Byron, who had returned in mid-July, was still in London negotiating with his creditors.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> Byron  
Newstead Abbey  
Nottingham

Dear Madam

I have this Moment seen M<sup>r</sup> Hodgkinson and have settled with him that the Execution which Brothers has sent in shall be withdrawn as soon as I have given him the proper Security which will shall be done Tomorrow if Brothers declines to accept my Proposal to accept Bills for the Amount of the Debt. In a Post or

two the Men will be directed to withdraw from the House. I heartily wish Lord Byron would come Home that his Affairs may be put under some Arrangement. You will tell Rushton that he must not venture to remove any Thing until he receives M<sup>r</sup> Hodgkinsons or M<sup>r</sup> Barrow's express Directions for it[.] I am D<sup>r</sup> Madam

Y<sup>rs</sup> most faithfully  
John Hanson

Ch<sup>y</sup> Lane  
28<sup>th</sup> May 1811

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