

**From:** John Lethbridge **At:** Sandhill Park

**Date:** 15 February 1799 **To:** Mr Beadon, Taunton

Dear Sir

Sandhill Park  
Feb<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 1799

I did not receive your letter yesterday until eleven o'clock, too late for me as I had some Business on my estate to accept of your kind Invitation to dinner. On some future Day I shall with pleasure partake of your mutton and wine. I wish to avoid if possible any future Interview with Mrs. Vial; in respect of Conduct, I scarcely think there is any man quite perfect & from the experience I have of late years had of the other Sex, I have less reason to expect it from that quarter. Of course no Interview whatever can be of Service. Besides that may be held out as the ostensible reason only; there is no knowing what may be at the Bottom with a person of first Rate Ingenuity. *Experientia docet* – As she has thought fit to decline your offer of 20<sup>£</sup>, I think it should not be offered again – There is art in the refusal. She reasons & says if 20<sup>£</sup> is offered, by standing out I may get 50<sup>£</sup>; and as for taking the Child under my Care & Protection, I will not do it. You are already acquainted with what ought to be done in that case. The Child is a native of Brislington & should be settled & taken care of there, if the Mother does not look after it & if she does & she is to have the 5<sup>s</sup> p<sup>r</sup> week. The Child should be identified & a regular Certificate given, if she carries it out of our Reach & Knowledge, at short periods of the existence of this very child. If some step of this kind is not taken, I shall have a child to maintain for 20 years at least. I quote an expression from one the first letters I received from this Lady, may not be mal a propos, wherein she says, I have the means of concealing my Engagements from the world – I don't recall any thing more to add on this subject, therefore beg leave to subscribe myself d<sup>r</sup> Sir

yours truly  
John Lethbridge