

Wigan Archives Service

The Edward Hall Diary Collection

**The Ship's Log of Littleton Powis,
Seafaring Journal, from Jamaica to Liverpool**

July – September 1789

EHC/55



Edward Hall, c.1932

Introduction

The volume is entitled, *Memorandum Book. 1789*, and was written by Littleton Powis, on board the brig, *Favourite*, sailing from Brai Harbour, Jamaica, to Liverpool, Lancashire. The diary is divided into two; half the volume is a nautical log, half the volume an anthology of Powis' original poetry, together with transcribed poetry and verse, dedicated to his lover, Martha.

The front inside cover of the manuscript is inscribed, "Littleton Powis. April the third, 1789. Written at sea. Remember, Farewell".

Editor's Note

The two halves of the manuscript have been transcribed individually, see transcriptions, The Poetry of Littleton Powis and The Ship's Log of Littleton Powis.

All diary transcripts have been produced with the intention of faithfully reproducing the text of the original manuscript exactly as it appears. All spellings and punctuation marks have been transcribed as they appear; where clarification was thought necessary by the transcriber, an explanation, current spellings or punctuation have been added in square brackets.

PAGE 1 (Landscape)

Memorandum Book 1789/

March 31st~ July 20th~/

Littleton Powis

PAGE 2

Friday September the 18th/

For a part a steady Breeze - /

At 3PM discover'd [discovered] the high land of Dunganon in Ireland - - /

Wind NNW. Latt 51 - 45— 98 -/

19 /

A steady North East breeze which is right/
against us. We are not above 200 miles/
from Liverpool where we shou'd [should] arrive in/
two days if the wind was westerly-

67- / 20 /

The wind still against us and /
are oblig'd [obliged] to tack backwards & forwards/

Latt 52 - 17 — 72/
21 /

Wind still against us. Tacking/
backwards & forwards all day &/

night—— Latt 52 - 47 — 75/
22 /

/

/

/

PAGE 3

KEY	
P ⁿ	[Position]
B _n	[Bound?]
L ^e	Latitude]
&c	[etcetera]
Cap ⁿ	[Captain]
W ⁿ	[Western]

On the 18th of Juy I left Martha/
 Brae Harbour at 6AM—in the/
 brig Favourite Capⁿ . Ambrose/
 Wilson with the intent to sail/
 to Liverpool—— very light-Wind./

19

Sunday 19th at 1PM abreast/
 of Montego Bay. At 6. the/
 North West end of Jamaica/
 bore SWBS. distance 7 leagues/

Latt Pⁿ [Position] Obⁿ [bound?]18 ..57 Miles 70 ~ /

20

Light airs & calms with small/
 flying showers ——/

Calms/

Wind EbN/

Latt P^{e n} Obⁿ 18..56

42 ~ /

Miles

112 /

PAGE 4

Tuesday 21st of July ——/

Light breezes & clear weather——/

Wind East/

Latt P^{e n} [Position] Obⁿ [bound?]19..11--/

22

74 ~ / /

All these twenty four hours/
 light breezes with all sail set/
 at 2PM. made the Grand lay -/
 mans. Five spaniards came from/

the laymans to sell Turtle ——/

Wind ENE Latt Pⁿ Obⁿ 19..42

95 ~/

23

/

All this twenty four hours a/

pleasant little breeze with/

clear weather at 6AM./

a breast of the west end of/

the Island of Cuba/

Wind East/

Latt^e Pⁿ Obⁿ 20-- 56---

80 ~/

Miles --

2 49

/

PAGE 5

Friday the 24th of July ——

at 8A.M. saw cape Coriantes/

at Meridian a breast of it/

with cloudy weather/

Wind NE./

No observation ——

70 ~/

25

/

All this twenty four hours/

light breezes with clear weather/

at 6.P.M Cape Antonio bore/

~~STNE~~ . distance 2 leagues/

Wind EBN/

Latt Pⁿ Obⁿ 23.. 9-

72 ~/

26

/

Sunday the 26th of July ——/

Light airs & calm at 8 AM/
 spoke the Susannah from the/
 bay of Honduras to Glasco—/
 saw two other ships/
 Wind East - Almost Calm—/

Latt^e P Obⁿ 23.. 45-

	44	~/
Miles	186	/

PAGE 6

Monday the 27th—/
 Light airs an calm/
 saw seven ships becalm'd [becalmed]/

Latt^e 23.. 45

28

Still calm/

/

Light airs —/

/

Latt^e 23.. 35—/

29

18 ~/

Still calm/
 Saw a many sharks hook'd one/

but broke the hook—/

e

28 ~/

Latt 23... 30—

Miles

84

PAGE 7

Thursday the 30. July ———/

Light breezes with some small/
showers at 7 AM a breast/

of the Havannah in the/

Island of Cuba/

Latt. 23... 33—

54 ~/

NNE/

31

/

A steady breeze with all sails/
set at 8 PM. Pan of Metangees/

in America was four leagues/

distant SW bearing —/

The Current has drove us 40/

Miles to the N of our Course /

69 /

NE

Latt.. 24.. 39

August/

1

/

Our experianc'd [experienced] sailors this morning were/

apprehensive of a storm. About noon/

it began to blow, & afterwards to rain in/

so Terrible a manner; that heaviest showers/

I ever saw in England were but mere dews/

in comparison to this. Orders were given to/

hand all the sails, but the Foresail, put/

up the dead lights, clear the pumps/

strike the Top Gallant mast &c —/

PAGE 8

The main was so violent we cou'd [could] not hear/
 one another speak, nor cou'd [could] I see the Fore-/
 sail when I stood at the Cabin door, which/
 the wind soon after split and it was handed/
 and we left to the wind & waves. It continu-/
 ed till midnight thus, & then began to/
 abate. At day light we were in sight of the/
 Florida shore, eighty miles out of our/
 Course, and very near the reef of/
 Caresford on which we most likely/
 shou'd [should] have split if the storm/
 had not abated when it did ————/
 I assure you my dear Girl that what/
 ever my feelings may be at this/
 awfull [awful] time ———— you were uppermost./

Dreadful Thunder/ } We suppose/
 Lightening & rain 2

160 /

Sunday the Fore past squally/
 the latter pair fair ————/
 Spoke the Brig Farne from/
 Kingston to Philidelphia out/
 14 days Cape Carnwear bore/

west ten leagues/ e

90 /

Latt 28..30

Page 9

Miles 250 /

3 /

Fore part squally winds/
 uncertain latter light winds/
 and clear W^r [weather] much heavy/
 rain to day./

Latt^e 4 29..30

80 / /

All this twenty four hours a/
 steady breeze. Wind SSE/
 /
 /

Latt 30..43./

5

112 ~ / /

A steady breeze at 10AM———/
 saw 5 Sail viz [visible?]. Two line [lines] of/
 Battle ships and three Frigates/
 We suppose them French bound/
 for Chesapuck/

Latt 31.. 54

118 ~ /

Distance 310

Page 10

Thursday Augt [August] 6 —— /

These 24 hours a steady breeze all/
 sail set at 2PM. Spoke a Brig/
 from Surrinam to Charlestown/
 At 9AM spoke the Eloiza from/

Antigua to Virginia ——— /

SSE Latt^e 32..48

130 /

7

The First part a steady breeze/

The latter part more moderate/

attended with much rain ——— /

Wind south/

Latt 33.. 31N/

107 ~ /

8

Moderate weather with some/

flying showers ——— /

Latter part calm ——— /

/

Latt. 33.. 39 /

50 /

Distance

287 /

Page 11

Sunday Aug the ninth/

Variable with much rain/

at 4PM spoke the Jane from/

Antigua to Brunswick/

Latt 34.. 2—

64 /

All these 24 hours clear W 10 [Weather]/

All sails set wind South^r ——— /

/

/

a heavy breeze with squalls/
Employ'd [employed] in repairing the/
Mast and Sails—/

Latt 36.. 47

3 94

~/
/

Distance these three days

Page 13

Saturday 15 At 8PM. The Gale/
abated. Moderate Breezes and/
clear weather— a good observation/
Wind NNE Latt^e 37..07 —/

16

80

~/

Sunday the sixteenth light airs/
with clear weather. A good many/
dolphins about the ship. Our boat/
swain struck one from the Spiritsail/
yard of which we made a hearty dinner/
next day. They are very good Fish./

Latt 37.. 12

54

~/

17

Light breezes and clear weather./
I got up this morning at five oclock/
and struck a dolphin from the cat-head/
which weigh'd [weighed] 21 pounds. They are the/
most beautifull [beautiful] fish in the world parti-/
cularly when dying as their colours/
change in a most beautifull [beautiful] manner -/

e

Latt 37.. 47

68
Miles- 2 02

Page 14

Tuesday the 18th/

This morning our Capⁿ struck a/
dolphin and me another so that/
all the ships crew is living upon/
Dolphins. Light pleasant breezes/

76 ~/

Wind SW Latt 38.. 26 —
19

Light airs & calms with clear W^r [weather]/
Today we saw one of the most curious/
Fish in the world. Call'd [called] a Devil-Fish
with all the servants & attendants I/
have not room to give you any descript-

tion of it/

61 ~/

Wind South Latt 38.. 50
20

Light breezes with calms /
Today I ventur'd [ventured] upon the Spiritsail/
yard arm and struck two Dolphins/
One we lost the other got safely in /
Saw a French Merchantsrian at three/
PM a remarkable fast sailor he was/
the only ship cou'd [could] beat us. We beat all/
the other ships we saw

46 /

Wind ENE Latt. 40..20

Miles 1 83 /

Page 15

Friday the 21st/

Pleasant breeze all sail set. Today/

I went upon the Spiritsail yard and/

struck a Dolphin. We got it and soon/

after I saw a remarkable large one swim/

under me I struck him with all my/

might and was endeavouring to haul/

haul him up, but found I was not/

able, so I call'd [called] for help to the sailors/

but just before they cou'd [could] any of/

them get to me, the Dolphin struggled/

and I fell head foremost into the/

Sea. The ships was going only 3 miles an/

hour, so they threw out some rope & I/

got in with some trouble. They also got/

the Dolphin in he weigh'd 28 pounds ——/

22

88

Light breezes & pleasant weather I find/

myself a little bruz'd [bruised] with a blow/

I had against the side of the ship/

in getting in yesterday but I hope/

it will soon be well——/

Wind STW Latt. 41..3—/

Page 16

84 ~/

Miles 1 72 /

Sunday the 23rd/

A strong breeze from the North East/

which is right against us, so that/

we are oblig'd [obliged] to alter our course/

A ship in sight——/

No observation——/

122 ~/

24

Blowing a strong breeze at 4PM/

split the Foresail and Main/

Topsail &c A dreadful swell/

In the sea are apprehensive of/

a Storm. At 7AM two ships on our/

Larboard bow their rigging a good deal/

shatter'd [shattered] &c—— Latt^e 40..22 101 ~/

Wind still North Easterly so that/25

we are oblig'd to keep steering to the/

southward. A vast quantity of/

Porposses [porpoises] about the ship a strong/

Gale——/

Latt 39.. 28/

87

Miles 320 /

Page 17

Aug [August] 26^t——/

Fore past light breezes latter part/

calm———/

/

/

Latt^e 39... 41 ——/

29 ~/

<p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>All these twenty four hours/ Moderate breezes & clear pleasant/ weather _____/ Wind SW/ Latt^e 40.. 41/</p>		<p style="text-align: right;">/</p> <p style="text-align: right;">/</p> <p style="text-align: right;">67 ~/</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">28</p> <p>Almost all these twenty four/ hours a calm _____/ Latt^e 40.. 52—/</p>		<p style="text-align: right;">/</p> <p style="text-align: right;">18 ~/</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Miles - 114 /</p>
<p>Page 18</p>		
<p>August the 29th (centre) -/ Fore part moderate second part/ rather squally with heavy rains -/ Wind STW./ Latt^e 41.. 36—/</p>		<p style="text-align: right;">55 ~/</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>Fore part squally latter part/ a pleasant breeze and clear W^r / A ship in sight on our Larboard/ Quarter/ Winds NW by W/ e</p>		<p style="text-align: right;">/</p> <p style="text-align: right;">98 ~/</p>

Latt ..42.. 32

31

/

All these twenty four hours/
moderate breezes & clear pleasant/
weather /
Wind NNW/

Latt ^e .. 42.. 40

47

Miles - 200

Page 19

Tuesday September the 1st/
A fresh breeze all the fore part./
Latter part still fresher /
Wind N by E /

Latt ^e 44..07

103 ~ /

2

Fresh gales all these 24 hours /
Wind N by E /

Latt 45. 25

87 ~ /

3

Almight squally with very heavy/
Rains ——at 4 AM split the main/
sheet. Came into the Cabin ts put/
up the dead lights ——. Handed/
all the Sails but the Foresail/
and Main Topsail——. The sea runs/
mountains high which fills my Soul with/
a kind of pleasing horror.

129 ~ /

e

319

Page 20

September the 4th (centre)/
 The weather still seems to threaten/
 us with a storm and the sea con—/ /
 tinues to run dreadfully high—/ /
 the ship rolls very much and ships/
 a many heavy seas—/ /

Wind NE- Latt^e _____

118 ~/ /

5

Very fresh breezes but more/
 moderate than yesterday—/ /
 Saw part of a wreck float by as/
 at a distance which the Sailors/
 suppose to be part of some sloop/
 or small brig that sank in the/
 late heavy Gales— Latt^e 46- 07-

97 ~/ /

Fresh breezes & clear weather/6 /

The sea is got pretty smooth today/
 Saw a vast number of sheer-waters/
 Wind WSW. Latt 47-00—-

84 / /

Miles 2 99 / /

Page 21

September the 7th/

Fore part calm latter part/
 a pleasant breeze from WSW/
 /

8

/
A very fresh breeze all this/
twenty four hours. Wind WSW./

/

/

No observation today/

150 /

9

/

All this twenty four hours/
a pleasant modest Breeze./
Wind NW

89 /

Latt 48.. 07—

Miles -

202 /

Page 22

September the 10th/

All these twenty four hours/
heavy Gales with Cloudy W^r [weather?] ./
Wind NW./

Latt 48. 56—/

127 ~/

11

/

The sea rises very high this morn—/
ing and continues to blow harder/
the ship rolls so I cou'd [could] not/

sleep all night. we are afraid/
of melting with Equinoctical/
Gales before we reach England./

All the dead lights are up-

149 ~/

All this twenty four hours terrible/
blowing W^r [weather?]. The sea runs over the/
ship every minute. We hoisted/
a new Fore Topsail & the wind split/
it in two hours. The sea remains moun-
tains high & exhibits a scene of horror/
which I cannot here describe, & what/
makes it more dangerous we suppose/
we are near land./

Wind NW Latt 51.. 01..

152 /

428 /

Page 23

Sunday the 13th/

We have had some Terrible heavy/
rain which has in a great/
measure still'd the winds and/
fallen the waves.

Wind NWb [Westbound?]N. Latt. 51. 03.

86 /

14

A steady breeze all sail set-/
Latter part a stronger breeze and/
less sail as we are surpris'd [surprised] not/
to see land today. Saw a Gannet/

82 ~/

A fresh breeze with land on our/

Larboard Bow. The Breeze grows/
stronger and we are oblig'd to/
stand off from the Land in/
the Night for fear of Danger./

104 ~/

Wind NNW. Latt 50..29-

Miles - 272

Page 24

Wednesday the 16-/
Blowing a very strong breeze/
all last Night. We find he land/
we saw yesterday was not Irish but/
Welsh land and that the wind and/
Current have sent us into the Bristol/
instead of St. Georges channel. Opposite/
the Island of Lunda. Are happy to find/
ourselves safe as our mistake subjected/
us to great variety of Danger—/

95 ~/

Wind NNW Latt 50. 42
17

At day light this morning/

a sailor run into the Cabin to/
inform the Capⁿ that the dreadfull [dreadful]/
Rocks of Scilly were within a Mile/
of our Larboard bow. It blow'd [blew] very/
hard all Night & Splitt [split] two Sails,/

and in all probability we shou'd have/
shar'd[shared] the Fate of a vast number of/
Ships have upon the Rocks; if Day—/
light had not just given us timely/
Notice to Escape/

Latt 50.. 21

87 /
Miles 182

Wind NE—→