

Archives; Wigan & Leigh
The Edward Hall Diary Collection

Windham's Travel Journal

July 7th 1769 - January 9th 1770

EHC/20



Edward Hall, c.1932

Editor's Note

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.

Mr. Windham appears to be from either the family of the Somersetshire or Wiltshire Windhams. This diary contains comparisons of different countries. Some of the places visited are: Fountainbleu, Paris, Lyon, Savoy, Lombardy, Turin, Verona, Naples, Rome, Mount Vesuvius and 'Pompieo'. Following the diary there is a section devoted to the costs and problems of travelling, which may also be of interest.

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Windham's foreign Travel Journal
July 1769 - Jan 1770
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Travel Journal of _____ Windham (?1789-)

July 7. 1769. Arrived at Calais; Staid one Night there, at the Hotel d'Angleterre (Dessein the Landlord). The Lodging and Accommodation, as good as in any of the best

Inns upon the English Roads; the Wines better. The Country all the way to Paris, afford nothing for a Traveller to admire or even Commend. The Public Houses very dirty. Meat of all kinds very Indifferent, requiring absolutely a little French Cookery to make it go down. The bread being always made with Leaven, has a sour Tast. The Wine Small and Eager. No good Butter. A Melancholy Prospect for an Englishman turned of Fifty !

July 10. Arrived at Paris, at 'Hotel du Parc Royal, Rue du Columbier. Here we come into good living again, and a Man must be very partial to his own Country, not to be Satisfied with the Accomodation he finds in this Town; Fish excepted, not that he must expect to be served with the best that the Market affords, at Four or even at Six Livres a Head from the Traiteurs Shop. Good Poularde

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being as dear as a good Fowl in London and is what the Traiteur cannot afford to Give; his Business being to furnish Two Courses for your Money at as Cheap a Rate as he can by his Art of Cookery. Good living at Paris, is almost as dear as at London, and both equally good. The Article of Wine makes a great Difference in the Expence of a Table; and likewise Fruit is much Cheaper and in great Plenty. It ought to be better here than in England as the Climate is more Favorable, but the little Art that is used in Raising it, as also the little care taken in Procuring the Best Sorts, is the Reason that our Fruit, in a good year, is preferable to theirs; tho' I must Except some of Their Peaches, which are thought to have a much Finer Flavor than ours. London as a city is infinitely Superior to Paris, which however has the Advantage in its Public Buildings, Churches, & Noblemen's Houses. The Entrance into it from Bois de Boulogne affords the most Magnificent View that can possibly be seen. The Thuilleries is a Beautifull Garden. The Walks well preserved, but I could not help being Surprised, after so many Years absence, to find the Same Filth at the Bottom of the Walks. The inside of their Houses, Nasty as Ever,

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no Water coming into them but what is brought in Pails from the River, and that only for the Necessary use of the Family. Water Closets are not to be meet with in any

Houses. And even their Necessary Houses full as bad as in Scotland.

The Manufactory of Porcelaine at Seve, is Carried on at the Kings Expence in a Large Spacious Building, that by it's Grand appearance looks as if it was destined to some more worthy purpose. Their China is Excessive dear, Superior to ours at Chelsea in the Painting, but in no other Respect.

The Diarist proceeds to itemize the principal sights of Paris - Madrid, Meudon, St Cloud, La Meute, Versailles, etc - with brief observations upon their uses and present state, and sometimes affording glimpses not quite of the guide-book Variety.

Trianon. The House Built Entirely of Marble, now Neglected by the King for a New Trianon, a small Elegant Villa , placed at a little distance from the other, fitted up a good deal in the English taste; here was a Water-Closet in the King's Apartment; but the Swiss told me, they were

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not in General approved, as some people thought them apt to occasion the Piles - in short, they do not care to Part with their Close-Stool.

Choisyle Roy. Maison Royal & Lieue de Plaisance. Situated upon the Banks of the Seine three Leagues from Paris, where the Court comes in the Month of September, for the Kings Hunting in the Forest of Seinard, close to which is another Chateau, call Le petit Choisy, lately built, which is Calculated more for Retirement than any of the King's Houses. All the Views from the Garden being entirely Shut up, and when he is at Table, no Servants wait, there being in the Middle of the Eating Parlour what they call a Table Mouvante, which is a Round Table that rises from under the Floor, with all the Dishes upon it, and which upon the ringing a little Bell, descends, and another Course rises in Room of the First, and so on, to the Desert. There are besides, to suply the place of Waiters four Round Pieces let into the Floor called Les Servantes, which are made to let down like a Trap Door; & upon sounding a Bell, descends with an order for any thing the company wants, Marked with a Pencil.

The homes of the noblemen compelled his admiration, even to

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comparison unfavourable to his beloved London:-

Indeed, many of the Hotels in Paris belonging to Men of the first Rank have a great advantage over those in London, not only in the Furniture, but in the Command of Ground about the House, which allows of a handsome Court and Gardens.

On the other hand, their imitation of an essentially English product, gratified his national pride, and set him off into a stream of comparisons.

Their Vaux Hall, lately Erected in Imitation of ours, Consists at present of only a Building more Elegant of Taste, and afforded a more Splendid appearance of well dressed People, to the Number of near 5,000, the Night I was there. Under Such Encouragement as this if the undertakers enjoyed the Whole Profits of their House, they would raise great Fortunes, as in England, but the Government wisely prevent that, by laying a heavy Tax upon them towards the Support of some Hospital or other. Public Charity. French Plays, tho' Excellent in their Kind and well acted, are not so much frequented by the Nobility as with us. The House ill Lighted up, the Scenes very

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Indifferent and but few of them (owing to their observing the Unity of Time and Place), so that for want of these Decorations and Embellishments, so necessary to set off a Play, it is a representation that appears dull to an Englishman, and in effect, is little better than a Rehearsal. The Prices is Six Livres, which is a little more than in England, and much less for the Money. As to the Opera, all I can say upon that is that the House is finely decorated and the Dancing good.

The Men in France, who have not been Cramped in their Youth by hard Labour or for want of proper Food, are for the most part better made, taller, and handsomer than in England, Especially those in the Army and Servants of the Nobility.

The French Women in General are plain, and I believe there is more Beauty walks the Streets in one Day at London, than perhaps can be found in the Half the Kingdom of France.

Whatever Gallantry is practised amongst the Young People in Paris, there is nothing of it appears in that gross Licentious Manner as in London; so that in the Gardens of the Thuilleries you will see Numbers of well Dressed

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young Men at all times of the Day, Sitting upon the Benches, reading instead of running after Women of the Town, who often walk in the Gardens. This decency of behavior We should do well to Imitate, as likewise their Sobriety; a Drunken Man being a great Rarity at Paris. The Reception the English meet with in France, and the High Opinion they entertain of us, in the most essential Things should make us talk of them with a little more Candor than is usually Practised. We tax them with Levity, Want of Sincereity, Vanity & Conceit: I am afraid they may, with as much Justice, impute to us a Reserved, Selfish behavior, insolent, over-bearing and despising other People, for the most paultry of all Reasons, because they are not so rich. If the French do really deserve the hard Names we are pleased to give them, it Seems a little Extraordinary that we should Spend so much Money amongst them, where the Object of Travelling is not the Same as in Italy, but where Travellers Seem to go more for the Sake of the Inhabitants who from a Natural Vivacity and Fund of good Humour, have the Art of pleasing beyond any People in the World.

This Remark may be made with Justice in the Provinces and in

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most of the great Towns in France, where Foreigners of Distinction are Received in the Most agreeable Manner. An Exception however must be made to Paris, where the Nobility in general, give Foreigners but little Encouragement to frequent their Houses, so that MiLord, after having spent a great deal of Money in Cloaths & Equipage, and done all he Can to Make himself a Frenchman, - finds some difficulty of being admitted in to their Fashionable Parties, unless he Should have l'Esprit du Jeu; that indeed removes all objections, and makes his Company agreeable, tho' he Should be Dressed like an English-Man. The abominable Custom of Painting, is as much Practised as ever amongst the Women of Fashion (who are Married), Covering their Cheeks with a daub of Red Paint of the deepest Dye, without Endeavoring

or meaning to Imitate nature. This, with the Common Method of dressing their Hair, with so much Pamatum & Powder, must be Excessively Nasty, Especially as one Dressing lasts a long time, so that upon the opening a fine Lady's Head, the Poor Hairdresser is to be pitied, tho' he is well paid for it. The Ladys of the first Quality lay such a Stress upon haveing their Heads well Dressed, that upon some Extraordinary Occasions they pay a Friseur

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Louis d'or; but commonly the Half of it.

The English Ladys who are so remarkable for their Neatness, have adopted this Filthy Fashion.

On the 31st of July, Windham left Paris, viewing Fontainbleu on his way to Lyons, which he reached on the 4th of August, but about which he has little to say, though he noted that ' the Playhouse is Larger and handsomer than that at Paris. ' This Town is full as big as Norwich.'

He departed for Turin on the 11th. -

The Posts not well regulated, so that I was obliged to deal with a Voiturier for four Horses the whole Way, including all Expencc at the Inns where one is obliged to Stop; this Method is Convenient, but the Way of Travelling very Tedious and Irksome; for their Custom is to go a Foots Pace the whole Way to Turin, about 150 Miles, which they are Six Days in performing.

Travelling through the hilly Savoy country, the prevalence of goitre excited a curious observation as to its cause.

The whole Countrey is a Scene of immense Rocks Calculated by Nature more for the habitation of Wild Beasts than of the human Species; the Inhabitants a poor, diminutive, ugly

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race of People, most of them with swellings upon their Throats, & Sore Eyes occasioned, as it is thought, by Drinking the Snow water that falls from the Mountains. Lanebourg, a Village at the Foot of Mount Cenis where I lay; and the next Morning ascended the Mountain upon a Mule; it is Excessively Steep on this Side. I reached the Summitt in about an Hour and a Quarter. You then come to a plain that Extends for about Five Miles, bound with

high Rocks upon both Sides. There is a handsome Lake in the Middle of it abounding with fine Trout which Travellers generally take the Benefit of, by applying to the Rector of an Hospital which has been Built there for the reception of Poor Passengers. Here you meet with a Kind reception & better Entertainment than could reasonably be Expected in such a Place. About Two Miles from this Place the Plain Ends, and the descent begins on this Side the Mountain, & here you will very Willingly quit your Mule in Order to be Carried down in a Little light Chair, by Two Men accompanied by 4 or 6 others, by way of Relays, according to your Size and Weight. The prospect from this Station is far from being agreeable, for where-as in ascending the Mountain you meet with many

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Places covered with a Thin Coat of Earth, here you See nothing but Naked Stone, the Road you go down Cut in a Zig Zag to humour the descent, part of it the Natural Stone, and part of it paved. Wherever it was practicable down this Crabbed Way your Chairmen Carry you, Steping from Stone to Stone like so many Goats, and I do not remember that they Stumbled once with me, from the Top to the Bottom, which is about Six Miles; at the Foot of the Mountain is a Village called Novalese, where my Carriage met me again after having been taken to Pieces and Carried over the Mountains upon Mules...And now I was glad to turn my Back upon the Mountains, for all tho' Savoy is a Countrey that affords a Variety of romantic Scenes, yet a Repetition of them soon lessens the Pleasure that arises from the novelty, and the Road every now & then running so near the edge of a Precipice made one very willing to give up my fine prospects for the Sake of Travelling upon Level Ground, tho' the Views were more Confin'd. Here beings the Firtile and well Cultivated plain of Lombardy that Extends near 300 Miles as far as Venice.

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Taking Turin and Milan on the way, and doing the Sights pretty thoroughly in each city, he arrived at :

Lago Maggiore, in which lye the Two Islands called the Barromean Island, one of them belonging to one of a Descendant of the famous St. Carolos. These Islands from

their Situation are said to afford the most delightfull Prospect in the World, but as such Views Seldom answer th the pompous description given of them, I had not Courage to go so far out of my Way, merely for the Sake of a prospect; but what weighed most with me was the little probability of Meeting with any Views of a Country more agreeable than what I have seen in Some parts of England. This may look like partiality. However nothing that I saw afterwards in my progress thro' Italy, gave me any reason to alter My opinion. The Views in Wales & Derbyshire are as romantic, and more pleasing, than in Savoy, and the Environs of London are infinitely more pleasing than those about Rome.

'The greatest and only Curiosity worthy of Admiration' in Verona, was the Roman Amphitheatre, now reduced to a common Bull-baiting upon the Arena, & to such a Theater as we have

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'at Bathelomy Fair, where Farces are acted for the Diversion of the Inhabitants. And this was all they were able to do, when the present Emperor of the Romans came to their Town 'in June last.' Passing through Vincenza and Padue - 'a dirty, ugly Town,' he arrived at Venice, which exhibited sufficient to stir up the Englishman abroad in him, once again.

The Four Horses cast in Brass, which were taken at Constantinople, makes a Magnificent Object in the Front of the Building, which in itself, with regard to Taste, is Most ridiculous and Preposterous....In the Church of St. John & St. Paul is a Picture of Titian; the Martyrdom of Peter; very ill preserved; no remains of Coloring either Striking or pleasing, however highly Commended by Connoisseurs, who often see Beauties that Escape a Vulgar Eye...The Arsenal, tho' no Extraordinary Sight to an Englishman, yet has great Merit, from the Magnificence of the Dockyards, Guns, Varrens, Rope Gallerys, & other Gallerys within the Building, where Fire Arms &c are kept, all in Excellent Order, Sufficient to Arm 60,000 Men...The lesser Canals that divide the Town into so many Streets, are apt to be offensive in the Summer from

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the filth of all Sorts that comes from the Houses which

the Tide is not Strong Enough to Carry away, so that to preserve the Health of the Inhabitants, they are obliged to Clean these Canals, from Time to Time; but the only Inconvenience a Traveller meets with is the Gnats in the Summer Season with which I was tormented the Whole Time I staid there...Gallantry is Carried on here without any restraint, a Free intercourse with Women being Allowed to Ecclesiastics as well as Laites, who incur no Censure or Scandal for Such Practises. Thus, a Debauched and Luxurious Life impairs their Fortunes, their Minds are entirely taken up in the pursuit of private Pleasures, so that they have neither inclination or ability to raise any Commotions in the State.

On September 13th, he proceeded from Venice to Ferrara, via Padua, and on the 18th. arrived at Bologna.

There are about 200 Churches here, which with their Expensive Ornaments & Decorations, are enough to Impoverish a much larger Countrey, not to mention the Numbers of Drones that are Maintained, for Serving these Churches; ~~Exclusive of Many Convents &c.~~

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Here, too, he is sarcastic at the expense of his particular bête noir the Connoisseur:

Exclusive of many Convents, &c. here is the great School of the Caracci's, Guercini, Guido, Tiracini, with a Variety of other great Hands, Numbers of which (some from the Obscurity and Dampness of the Place they Happen to put them in) have lost great part of their Merit, which now cannot be easily Discovered but by the penetrating Eye of a Connoisseur.

And, with all the insularity of the average Englishman, coupled with a fair amount of 18th Century prejudice against the Pope and all his works, he has this to say:

In the Church of Corpus Domini lyes or rather Sits, St. Caterina de Bologna, a famous Saint from about 200 Years ago. So many Miracles were performed at this Tomb, that there was no Satisfying the People, untill she was made a Saint; accordingly, she was taken out of her Coffin; when there appeared no Signs of Decay in her Countenance. She was then Canonized and afterwards placed in a Chappel of this Church, where she now appears, richly Clad, in a Sitting Posture, but has never touched the Arm-Chair

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which is placed under her, being suspended in the Air. Nobody is Suffered to enter this Chappel without leave of the Pope. A precaution very Necessary for Maintaining the Credit of this ridiculous Story.

And having left Bologna on Sept 23rd, and arrived at ~~Ancona~~, Loretto, via Ancona, he lets himself go at another, and more famous specimen of superstition:

The Lady herself is Dressed like a Queen in a Gown of Gold Brocade, ornamented with Jewels, standing over the Alter of a Little Chappel, decorated with Gold Lamps &c. Her Face is Black, Carved in Wood by St. Luke. All these Circumstances help to Heighten the Superstition of the People. Numbers of Poor People Walking upon their Knees around the Marble Steps of the Casa Sancta, by the Merits of which Penance, they live in hopes of finding Some Relief from the Virgin, which they cannot have from the Pope.

He duly arrived in Rome on the 29th, and thoroughly did the sights of the city, affording us quaint specimens here and

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of an independence in his reactions, far removed from that of the 'Connoisseurs', and incidentally indicating the parlous state of the relics of the great past of Rome.

Vatican. 2 Rooms Called Raphael's Rooms, Painted by him, in which is the School of Athens, and others too famous to mention; First, to See Such Painting on a Wall; Secondly to see the Injury Time has done it; Thirdly to see how much some of them have been abused, by those who have had leave to take Copies of them, in running the Scaffolding against the Wall.

Catacombs. Nothing can be more absurd than to imagine they were made for the Christians to Conceal themselves from their Persecutors. That they Buried their Dead there, is without dispute and making Use of them Occasionally as Places of Devotion. But without Doubt they were originally made for the Sake of the Stones which was got out of them and Employed in the Buildings all over Rome, Serving as

Quarries for that purpose.

The Popes and Cardinals have not only Stript the Roman Buildings of all their Inside Ornaments, but have even

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made use of the Outside Materials; perhaps they may go a Step further, and Clear the Ground of the Ruins that encumber it, for planting Vineyards, or for some other immediate Demand. The Nobility for want of Money, will part with their Valuable Pictures, and hung up Copies in their Room, as has been frequently practised, while time will Destroy those that Remain, so that a Hundred Years hence Painting, which is at present the Chief Object of the Traveller's Curiosity, will have but little else to Recomend it, but the Name of Great Masters...How Necessary therefore it is that the Popes should endeavor to Recover all they Can of Roman Antiquities that lye Buried under Ground; it is the best Crop their Land produces; it is so much Clear gain to the Country, and occasions a Continual Circulation of Money amongst them, brought in daily by Foreigners. But what can be expected from an old Despotick, Elective, Ecclesiastical Tyrant ! who unlike all other Sovereigns, has no Family Interest in the Crown, his Chief Care being to enrich himself at the Expence of his poor, miserable Subjects, during his Short-lived Reign; and then at the Farce of the next Conclave, God Chuses another Pope, who Acts the same Part over again.

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Outside Rome, as well as inside, he Windham castigates the poor unfortunate 'Aunt Sally' of the average Englishman's imagination of that period.

The fine extensive Plain, in which the City of Rome stands, formerly Covered with a Variety of Magnificent Buildings, Aqueducts, Temples, Monuments, Palaces, Villas, with beautiful Plantations, is now become a mere dreary Wast. The Beauties of the Plain are all Vanished, the great Buildings lying in Ruins; and Some of them so Demolished that Antiquarians are at a loss to ascertain their Origin. This the Barbarians have done; but the greatest Barbarians have been the Italians themselves, who have suffered their own Country to go to Ruin. No Agriculture, no Manufactures encouraged. The Pope buys up all

the Corn that is grown, at a low Price, and Sells it again, at an advanced Rate, without any Remorse, let the Necessities of his Subjects be ever so great, as the Case happened about four Year ago. The Husbandman by this Treatment finds his Labour turn to no Account; is impatient to Quit his Farm and as Soon as ever he has got a little Money, repairs to Rome, buys a Living, and endeavours to get Admittance in to some Nobleman's Family among the

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numerous Train of Domestics. Thus the most Useful Subject in any State is Lost in the Idlest & most unworthy of all Employments.

A visit to Naples affords little of comment, though the Diarist was either not very familiar with Operatic performances in his own country, or had conveniently forgotten the distractions proper thereto, when he penned the following. criticism of contemporary Neapolitans at their pleasures:

The Opera House is the largest and most Magnificent I ever Saw; but the Space being so great, the Voice of the Singer can hardly be heard, altho' there Should be a decent Silence observed, which is seldom the Case; for the Conversation of the Company in the Boxes, joined to the Noise in the Pit, puts the opera quite out of the Question.

~~Returning to Rome, which place~~ He left Rome on Nov. 18th, he ~~returned for~~ England, taking in Florence en route, and by way of Mount Cenis, passed through France, arrived in London on the 9th. Jan, 1770.'better Satisfied than ever with 'my own Country, which from its Extensive Commerce & the

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Improvements in Agriculture & Gardening, is in possession of all the necessaries and Luxuries of Life, to a greater Degree than what any other Nation can Boast of; with a Soil not half so Fertile as that in Italy, we have more Corn, more Grass, more Provisions of all Sorts and better Fruit. Without Vineyards we have most excellent Wines; without olive-Trees, we have Excellent Oil; without Orange-Trees, we have better Oranges & Lemons: and if the Traveller is not entertained with the View of immense

Rocks, Burning Mountains, & Ancient Ruins; He has at least the Comfortable Prospects of Fertile Hills, Farm-Houses, Barns and Cottages.

With which comfortable panegyric we can take our leave of Windham, whilst it is still not too late to ensure to ourselves a demonstration of the truth of at least the incomparable ~~beauties~~ natural beauties of the country of his birth and ours.
