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A Diary of 1803. R.M. Anthony. *History Today*, July 1966.

Review by E.Sutherland.

"Intrepid" was the word I thought of when I read of the exploits of these ladies - travelling unescorted in unfamiliar countryside, climbing mountains, falling down cliffs, knocking down and clambering over old stone walls - and always in long skirts! This is a short, private journal written in 1803, recording a summer holiday by a family party consisting of a middle-aged widow and her three unmarried daughters. They travelled in a landau with two horses and "postboys" or drivers. It was a fairly large vehicle, since it carried the ladies and their necessary impedimenta for a three month tour, probably with at least one maid. At times they couldn't get a change of horses, but were offered a cart, or chose to walk; other times they had a sea passage, always rough and dangerous. It is a fast-paced vivid account of the sort of tour that Jane Austen or her characters could have taken in the early 1800s.

None of the ladies was particularly well educated - in the Diary, punctuation is almost non-existent, spelling erratic and grammar unusual, but the writer, Hannah, the eldest daughter, aged a little over thirty, had a lively pen, a dry wit, and an inquiring mind. They all had abundant physical energy. From time to time, two young male cousins arrived and later departed, travelling on horse-back, but "seldom at hand when minor catastrophes occurred *en route*."

The group left London on June 25th, and made their way north through England, into Scotland, to the Highlands and some of the islands, and then to Glasgow, and turned homeward.

The first day of the diary record is comparatively humdrum - details of when and where they changed horses, the type of countryside they passed through, where they dined and where they intended to stop for the night. The inn was "too poor" and they proceeded for another hour or so, until they arrived at a suitable inn. After a good supper they retired to bed about 11, thoroughly tired, and "slept very sound till the next morning." On other days, the diarist gives enthusiastic descriptions of beautiful scenery along their way - mountains views, awesome waterfalls, the Trossachs, and Loch Lomond.

Accommodations of any kind were difficult to find when they got into Scotland, and most entries are complaints about the rooms and the inns. One inn, at Hull, was "a poor miserable dirty house a decent room was not to be had." Again, "the stench in the house was almost suffocating." At a farm where they



took refuge out of a rainstorm, "The Smoke was finding its way out of the Door, the floor was Mud a bed in one corner a high chest of drawers in another." On one of the islands, "the nest prepared for Rebecca was infinitely more filthy than any of our pig styes. I therefore gave her half my bed, which was bad enough."

Jane Austen chooses to "let other pens dwell on . . . misery", and doesn't tell us if the presence of Mr. Gardiner on their Derbyshire tour was necessary to smooth the way with a recalcitrant innkeeper; or if the Dashwoods, moving from Norland to Barton Cottage, were met at an inn by a "dirty smart trollop" who led them up "filthy" stairs. This all makes Jane Austen's own complaints in letters to Cassandra pretty mild: the Bath Hotel "had been found most uncomfortable quarters - very dirty, very noisy, and very ill-provided." At the Bull, "had about the same bad butter" as on an earlier journey. [Letter # 51]

Not all the Diary comments were complaints: at Oban the tourists "were highly delighted by the sight of a clean papered room. We were never more awake to the charms of cleanliness, having been in so many dirty stinking Holes." At Middleton, they enjoyed "the usual charm of a small country inn, with a feast of Ducks, Chickens, Roast Beef, Pye, Pudding, etc. and most excellent Porter." At Perth, they returned from a day of sightseeing to find "broiled Chickens Ham, Eggs, dried Fish, cold Veal, Pye and Potatoes upon the Table ready for us, and a Carpet laid down to hide the dirty floor." In a storm they stopped at a friendly farm house, where "three females tolerably like Ladies upon their discovering we had not dined . . . instantly produced cold shoulder of Lamb and Cheese."

The diarist constantly mentions the people who took special pains to be kind and helpful to them. At one place the host of the inn gave them flowers, fruit and sandwiches *gratis*; on several occasions the whole party was invited out for a leisurely breakfast, sometimes uncomfortably early; and often had invitations to late suppers. For one supper at half past ten they had "Chickens, Peas, Tarts and Cheesecakes, a dish of strawberries, Currants, Cherries and biscuits and Strawberry Ice." When they found no decent room at one inn, they were taken by a Lady to another inn where they were able to get "tolerable" beds.

When the badness of the weather prevented them from admiring a particularly fine view, Colonel Hope of Stirling, "soldier-like said he would order all the guns to be fired at the castle to try to clear the air." Another gentleman offered Hannah his arm while descending a hill. "Finding I could hardly stand I gladly accepted of it and in a minute or two had reason to repent not holding tighter for I slipped and had he not with great quickness caught me by my shoulder I should inevitably have gone to the bottom of the precipice and in all probability been dashed to pieces."

After a rough passage to the Isle of Mull, they failed to get saddle horses for the next stage. Instead they were offered a "stinking" Peat Cart. They preferred to walk; and after six miles they arrived at what they took to be an inn. It turned out to be the house of a local Laird, where a "dirty drab" let them in. "She was, however, kind-hearted, and offered to lend us a Cart and Horse."

They visited stately old mansions and enjoyed the collections of pictures, as the Gardiners and Elizabeth did on their trip to Derbyshire. Wherever they were stopped on a Sunday, they tried to find a Dissenting Chapel. At Lanark: "dirty looking inn, Good sitting room, very wet evening; Went to Kirk; heard one sermon very patiently and a concluding Psalm, but not much delighted to find that we were to have another long discourse before we were dismissed." At York they purchased some York tan gloves and experienced the "Yorkshire 'Bite'," - the price was quoted at 2/2 but they had been told they were usually sold at 1/10, and when they protested they got them at the lower price. [At Ford's shop in Highbury, Frank Churchill was shown some "Men's Beavers" and "York Tan" gloves to choose from - we don't know which he bought or

what he paid for them - he certainly considered himself too important to haggle about the price, especially in front of Emma. E.S.]

One of the beauty spots the ladies went to see was the falls on the River Eure. "The countrymen were highly amused that gentry who had come in a carriage should walk where no woman of the country had ever ventured." They "took a sketch" and "ate their picnic luncheon," then left. Later on a similar scrambling expedition to High Force, "our Post Boys stopped, saying carriages went no further, on we toiled regaled with the scorching rays of the noontide Sun under the guidance of a country lad to us of little use, as we could scarcely understand his lingo or he ours, we came to a Stone Wall no way of getting on but by knocking it down which we did . . . next a Hedge or rather worse a copse of thick brush wood through which we at last got down to the water's edge."

[Our travellers seem to have been a good deal more venturesome than Jane Austen's young ladies. Marianne and Margaret Dashwood planned to walk two hours on the hills around Barton Cottage, but were forced home by driving rain after about twenty minutes. Emma thinks that walking is important to her, but she had "ventured once alone to Randalls [half a mile away], but it was not pleasant." Poor Fanny Price is not much of a walker: at Sotherton, after half a mile, even supported on Edmund's arm, she feels the need to sit down and rest on the first bench she comes to. Catherine Morland, indeed, climbed Beechen Cliff in Bath with the Tilneys, probably for two or three hours, and no mention is made of difficulty or tiredness, as they were all happily engaged in conversation all the way. Elizabeth Bennet is the most vigorous walker among the heroines. She arrived at Netherfield to visit Jane, "with weary ancles, dirty stockings . . . and her petticoat six inches deep in mud." But although she had walked three miles or so, it was over fields where she knew her way, and with stiles wherever she needed to get over a fence, and puddles small enough to jump over.]

The adventures of our redoubtable ladies were not always on land. They had a very rough sea passage to the Island of Ulva, off the west coast of Scotland, tossed by the waves, "the vessel leaked, sail and mast gave way, rudder broken, ran aground, notwithstanding all we landed safely. I do not think I ever felt more wretched." At this point the ladies decided they had had enough, and the homeward journey began. No doubt they had an uneventful journey back to London, but here the Diary comes to an abrupt end.

At the same time these ladies were enjoying their holiday, the editor notes that "a small, but far more eminent, English party left Keswick to explore the strange hinterlands of Scotland. Dorothy Wordsworth - the same age as the diarist - William Wordsworth, and Coleridge, travelled along much the same route but in the opposite direction. Dorothy wrote about some of the same inns, and in some cases with much the same opinions about the dirt. Dorothy's journal shows that she and her companions regarded themselves as pioneers. Regretfully the two parties never met."

A recent writer on Sir Walter Scott has claimed that, before the publication of *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810, the greater part of Scotland, beyond Edinburgh and Glasgow, was virtually unexplored by English tourists. Our party and that of the Wordsworths may, or may not, have been the only English tourists who visited these regions during the year 1803; but it is clear that strangers were few.

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"A good book is the best of friends, the same to-day and for ever."

Of Reading: Martin Tupper (1810-1889).

Domestic Politics during Jane Austen's Lifetime: Vivianne Brosnan - May Meeting.

Preparing for a provincial election, with the possibility of a federal one to follow, made an appropriate background for a talk on politics in Jane Austen's time. Vivienne Brosnan studied economics and history at UBC, as well as constitutional history and comparative government; she worked for Foreign Affairs; and she travels abroad and reads as much as she can. She is well up on her subject, and made the complicated politics of the period understandable.

The talk began with a reminder of Jane Austen's dates: 1775 - 1817. Vivienne then briefly discussed the monarchs preceding Jane Austen's lifetime, from the ouster and defeat of the last Stuart king, James II. The country wanted no more Catholic monarchs, and the crown was then offered jointly to his daughter Mary, and her husband William of Orange, who became William III. They had no children, and when he died in 1702, her sister Anne became Queen until her death in 1714. None of Anne's children survived her, and the Act of Settlement proclaimed the Elector of Hanover, a descendant of the Stuart King James I, to be King George I of England at Anne's death. Authority based on law not force was wanted. Under the Hanovers, the king could not legislate nor act without Parliament. The powers of the Crown were not curtailed, but the base was changed - there were no 'sacred rights of the King.'

However, the King's powers were still great - he appointed judges and officers of state, and only he could declare peace or war. The separation of the executive and the legislature was much admired abroad: the King controlled administration and policy, Parliament controlled legislation and finance. But these were not democratic institutions as we think of them today. The great noble families wielded the most influence - the Whigs and Tories represented the people in little more than name. Parties on modern lines did not exist. Voters - men only - had to be over 21, of a certain income, and owning a definite amount of land.

During the reign of George IV, under the ministry of Lord North, peace, prosperity and lower taxes continued, and all went well until the American Revolution. The national debt was doubled. The Crown, the aristocracy and the army suffered a disastrous defeat. "Influence" became corruption. The commercial classes had no representation in government, but were highly taxed. Old towns losing population still elected representatives, whereas new wealthy commercial towns had none.

Charles James Fox was the most colourful man of the time. He came of a wealthy family, but had a passion for gambling and amassed massive debts. At age 19 he was elected to Parliament; at 24, he had lost everything. He spent most of his political life in opposition - he had great abilities but abominable judgement, and no commitment to the common good. In 1784, William Pitt became Prime Minister. He was an able administrator. He consolidated all government funds - known as 'consols' - which became the soundest investment of Jane Austen's time. During the years of George III's illness, Parliament gained the advantage, and tried to limit the powers of the Regent, and to reform and reorganize the House of Commons and the Cabinet. Parliament controlled the choice of its own Ministers.

The Tories were mostly local gentry, like Jane Austen's landowners, Darcy, Knightley, Sir Thomas Bertram and Sir Walter Elliot, for example.

We had a good attentive audience. Thanking the speaker at the end, Viviane McClelland summed up our feelings: "Hearing this, in spite of what is going on in Ottawa right now, we don't feel nostalgia for 'the good old days'."

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Oh! to be in England.

An unusual exhibition in London - a "Grace and Favour" apartment in Hampton Court Palace is open to the public. These residences were granted by the 'grace and favour' of the monarch, from the 1730s to the mid-1990s, to lesser royalty, aristocrats, military heroes and others who had performed great service to crown or country, or to their dependants. Successful applicants, mostly single or widowed ladies, were given "warrants" to live at the Palace. The average size of an apartment was twelve to fourteen rooms, many of them vast in scale. However, living conditions were not luxurious - regular complaints mentioned the cold and damp, and the cost to heat the rooms. Alterations and improvements would have to be paid for by the residents.

The Duke of Wellington's mother lived in the Palace for 35 years at the beginning of the 19th century. Other internationally known persons were the scientist Michael Faraday, the god-daughters of Queen Victoria, a sister of Tsar Nicholas II, a lady of the Brunel engineering family, (they built, among other wonders, the famous steamship SS Great Britain), the mother of the explorer Sir Robert Falcon Scott, and Lady Baden-Powell.

After World War II, many residents could no longer afford large households and servants, and numbers began to wane. No new apartments are being granted now, but there are still a few Grace and Favour residents living in the Palace. [*The Quality Poorhouse*, Sarah Parker, *History Today*, April 2005.]

Others among a mind-boggling list of opportunities for study and pleasure:

Danson House, a fine small Georgian Country house of the mid-18th century, has been restored by English Heritage to the days of its glory, and opened to the public.

The Wallace Collection hosts a day of lectures, activities, and entertainments connected to the aristocratic life in the 18th century. "Visitors are invited to gamble, flirt and carouse."

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre had an exhibition looking at the traditional story of the Gunpowder Plot, which asks whether Shakespeare's London was justifiably paranoid about the threat of invasion from the European Catholic powers.

Christ Church, Oxford, is holding its special interest weekend on the English Civil War, and a parallel course, "A Passion for Plants: A Garden Revolution". Delegates from both conferences meet for cultural and social events.

The Richard III Society has organized a study weekend, "Friends and Foes: Richard III and the East Anglian Magnates." Open to non-members.

At the beginning of 1793, Sir Charles Middleton, First Lord of the Admiralty, predicted that the new war with Revolutionary France would be "a war against trade". A talk at the Museum in Docklands considers the effect of the wars on lives, livelihoods and trade.

"Searching for Steam" is the title of the celebration of the 200th anniversary year of Trevithick's successful trial of his steam locomotive, in Bath Museum, exploring railway heritage in Britain and abroad.

And others . . .

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"By 1810, Napoleon I had divorced Josephine, and remarried a new Empress, the nubile Marie-Louise of Austria - whose library would later include a copy of the 1815 translation of *Sense and Sensibility*, entitled *Raison et Sensibilité, Ou les deux manières d'aimer*, published in Paris by A. Bertrand, and stamped with the Crown and gold cypher of the young Empress."

Jane Austen. A Companion, by Josephine Ross (p. 227).

Public Health and Nutrition in the Austen Era. Catherine Morley. June Meeting.
“What happened in the past to people who got ill?” “They died.”

Our member, Catherine Morley, with a background of several degrees [PhD, RD, FDC] in nutrition and public health, gave us an informative and enjoyable talk on food - and the lack of it - in Jane Austen's time. Catherine began with important events in the field of public health. As far back as 1689, a court physician published *A Proposal for the Better Securing of Health*, which suggested that medical treatment should be available to “all sick, poor or rich, . . . for a small yearly sum” and that laws should be enacted or revised to provide that “bread may be well baked; beer well brewed; and houses and streets well cleaned from dirt and filth; all these being common causes of diseases and death.” The foundations had been laid, but medical knowledge was still lacking.

During the 18th century, the word *influenza* was coined and the treatment of scurvy with lime juice was developed, but the biology in both cases was not understood. Diseases were classified as *fevers, neuroses, cachexias* [chronic debility of body or mind]. Late in the century, the publication of the first natural history of human teeth led to massive developments in dentistry, based on the vital but simple need to keep them clean.

The attitude and treatment of those in need changed: “specialty” hospitals were founded for mothers, paupers, and people with mental disorders; the removal of a ban on private dissections led to private schools of medicine; the first general dispensary was opened in London; lying-in hospitals and private mad-houses were regulated; and parishes were encouraged to build larger workhouses with better management. At the end of the 18th century, the publication of the “Act of Preventing Disease and Preserving Health” could be summed up as “Safe water, unadulterated food, and no sewers in the streets.”

Early in the next century, the word *biology* was coined; attempts to revive corpses with electricity resulted in the birth of neurology; the first book on the anatomy/physiology of the nervous system was published; and the stethoscope was developed. Working hours were limited, especially of children, and later of anyone under 18 years of age. After Jane Austen's lifetime, the objects of Boards of Health were “precautionary and preventive”, to inform the public of causes of illnesses, and to remove as much as possible the sources of contagion.

Delightful flute solos filled in the intervals between sections of the talk: Catherine's daughter, Sophie, played selections from music of Jane Austen's period.

What did people eat? Catherine gave us examples of meals and food items, for rich and poor - very different. The poorer people often kept pigs - they took up little space, ate all sorts of discards and refuse, and thus provided cheap meat. Oysters, too, were cheap and common, and lots of fish was eaten. Few fruits or vegetables were in the diet - legumes were common but most often were used as animal food. Farm workers' main diet was cheese and beer. The richer classes added meat and sugar, and had a lot more variety in their meals. Water was usually not fit to drink. The safe beverages were beer and gin, with wines and liquors added for the wealthy.

Adulteration of the food supply caused many illnesses and deaths. Chalk was added to bread flour to make it whiter. When “whole meal” breads became popular, “brown bread” had caramel added, to conceal the scant amount of wheat. Fresh blood was smeared on old meat to make it look good. Copper and other minerals, including arsenic, were added to green vegetables to keep the colour bright green.

Jane Austen's novels and letters give us many examples of medicines and medical treatments of the period. Her last letters, written from Winchester, describe her fatal illness - her symptoms, the doctor's comments, and the loving care given by Cassandra.

Henry Tilney describes to Catherine Morland the last illness of his mother - *not* killed by his father as Catherine suspected. Emma tried to send arrowroot - a common remedy to "build up" a patient - to Jane Fairfax. She had more luck sending a pitcher of broth to a poor family in the village. Mrs. Jennings tried to alleviate Marianne's near-fatal fever with a glass of *Constantia* wine. Louisa's irresponsible jump from the Cobb resulted in injuries that had to be treated by doctors' visits and careful nursing. We can all think of many more examples.

Catherine's talk was a delectable way to end our Spring season, and after the hour's discussion about food, we adjourned with pleasure to our usual lavish and unadulterated luncheon.

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Love's Labour's Lost, Bard on the Beach. Review by Peter Birnie (*Sun*, June 21'05)

"Just as the king of Navarre and his three friends Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine have agreed (Berowne reluctantly) to renounce the pleasures of the flesh for three years, up pop four lovely ladies from France. Mara Gottler's gorgeous Regency-period costumes, pure *Pride and Prejudice* in pretty bonnets, add such beauty to the French princess and her ladies (Rosaline, Maria and Katherine) that they need only strike strong poses on the stairs of Kevin McAllister's gorgeous wood-hued set to play perfect counterpoint to the king and his consorts."

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On a visit to her brother Edward's mansion of Godmersham in late 1813, Jane Austen "may well have been making preliminary notes - in her head or on paper - for *Emma*, on which she began work in earnest in January, 1814. Among her letters from that 1813 visit there are several references which might strike a chord with *Emma's* readers - among them, the mention of a Mrs. and Miss Milles, a local mother and daughter whose combined characteristics of Christian cheerfulness and inconsequential talkativeness would seem to prefigure kindly, chatty Miss Bates. There are hints, too, of Mrs. Elton in the doctor's wife Mrs. Britton, 'an ungentle woman with self-satisfied & would-be elegant manners', who, Jane wrote, 'amuses me very much with her affected refinement and elegance'. Yet, like almost all great novelists, Jane Austen was adamant that none of her fictional characters was based on any real person. (p.174-5)

Jane Austen. A Companion, by Josephine Ross.

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Something Cool and Elegant . . .

A short article - apt for the sunny weather we are having this time of year - appeared in a recent *Sun*, about parasols as the latest fashion. The author, Joannie Blain, began: "If you're looking for an elegant and effective way to protect yourself from the sun, try hoisting a sun umbrella. If that conjures up visions from a Jane Austen novel, it doesn't have to. Sure you can flit around like Emma Woodhouse under a delicate little scrap of lace on a stick, but you can also unfurl an iridescent umbrella that matches this summer's shimmering sandals . . ."



“The Hare and many Friends” - The Poetical Works of John Gay, (1728)

One of the accomplishments of Catherine Morland’s childhood was learning to recite the poetical fable, *The Hare and many Friends*, by John Gay. Here is the story Catherine learned.

“Friendship, like love, is but a name,
The child, whom many fathers share,
‘Tis thus in friendships; who depend
A Hare, who, in a civil way,
Was known by all the bestial train,
Her care was, never to offend,
As forth she went at early dawn
Behind she hears the hunter’s cries,
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath,
She doubles, to miss-lead the hound,
‘Till, fainting in the publick way,
What transport in her bosom grew,
Let me, she said, your back ascend,
You know my feet betray my flight,
The horse reply’d, poor honest puss,
Be comforted, relief is near;
She next the stately bull implor’d;
Since ev’ry beast alive can tell
I may, without offence, pretend
Love calls me hence; a fav’rite cow
And when a lady’s in the case,
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
The goat remark’d her pulse was high,
My back, says he, may do you harm;
The sheep was feeble, and complain’d,
Said he was slow, confest his fears;
She now the trotting calf address,
Shall I, says he, of tender age,
Older and abler past you by;
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Excuse me then. You know my heart.
How shall we all lament! Adieu.

Unless to one you stint the flame.
Hath seldom known a father’s care;
On many, rarely find a friend.
Comply’d with ev’ry thing, like *Gay*,
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain:
And ev’ry creature was her friend
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies;
She hears the near advance of death,
And measures back her mazy round;
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.
When first the horse appear’d in view!
And owe my safety to a friend,
To friendship ev’ry burthen’s light.
It grieves my heart to see thee thus;
For all your friends are in the rear.
And thus reply’d the mighty lord.
That I sincerely wish you well,
To take the freedom of a friend;
Expects me near yon barley mow:
You know, all other things give place.
But see, the goat is just behind.
Her languid head, her heavy eye;
The sheep’s at hand, and wool is warm.
His sides a load of wool sustain’d,
For hounds eat sheep as well as hares.
To save from death a friend distress.
In this important care engage?
How strong are those! How weak am I!
Those friends of mine may take offence.
But dearest friends, alas, must part!
For see the hounds are just in view.”

John Gay (1685 - 1732) was born in Barnstaple, Devon, of a family said to be of “gentle” stock. He was apprenticed to a silk mercer in London, but turned to literature, writing poems, and in 1727, the first of his popular satirical *Fables*. His greatest success was *The Beggar’s Opera*, which had a theatrical run of 62 performances. Gay had a purely lyrical gift, with originality of form and matter in almost all his work. His craftsmanship was careful, neat and sustained; he observed and recorded; he loved the concrete, the visible and tangible. The critic Austin Dobson spoke of the *Fables* as “having given pleasure to several generations of readers, old and young, and they have enriched the language with more than one indispensable quotation.”

Napoleon's Death Still Rousing Speculations.

It was inevitable that Napoleon's death, 184 years ago in May, at the fairly early age of 52, would give rise to a spate of rumours - was it murder? by the British, or Bourbon sympathizers? or accidental, from environmental causes? Eventually, tests throughout the years have determined that almost certainly his death was caused by arsenic poisoning: traces of the mineral were found in high levels in locks of his hair, saved as mementos by servants or friends. Finding the source of the arsenic kept forensic sleuths busy: a hair tonic he used daily? wine casks cleaned with this substance by the winemakers?

Now, a team of Swiss doctors from Basel and Zurich have put forward their view that Napoleon died from a stomach cancer. In an interesting study, based on changes in the prisoner's waist measurements over the six years of his imprisonment, they have determined that his weight fell from 200 lbs. to 165 lbs, within five months. As he grew thinner and lost stomach fat, his old trousers were replaced with new ones, every few months, a total difference in waist size of five inches.

"Comparison with current stomach cancer patients led the Swiss team to conclude that - as his doctors claimed then - Napoleon had a stomach tumor . . . the precise cause of death was a hemorrhage of the upper intestinal tract."

Vancouver Sun: Kate Connelly.

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The Waters of Bath.

"In 1810 the Bath Corporation called in engineer and mineral expert William Smith because of an unparalleled calamity: The hot springs, which had provided the town with a *raison d'être* since before Roman times, suddenly failed, and no one knew why. (No one knew why there were hot springs in Bath anyway, considering the city's location on top of thousands of feet of congenially stable sediments, with not a volcanic fissure in sight.)

Smith rushed from London to the Bath Pump Room, examined the situation, and declared that the only way he could find out the reason for the failure was to dig a bore into the very spring itself. The city fathers were appalled: Never had an excavation been performed in these most hallowed buildings. But in the end, faced with the prospect of a well gone dry, they reluctantly agreed - and William Smith and a gang of navvies hired by the day burrowed down through the familiar limestones and clays of the Middle Jurassic until, after suffering in temperatures of 119 degrees Fahrenheit and melting all the candles they had used to light their way, they found the problem.

It was all the fault of the large bone of a great ox - or, as the official city report of the time put it, 'some large ruminant.' Somehow the bone had fallen into the spring, had become crystallized with pyrite and flint, and had rolled itself into the channel and blocked it. The waters promptly made another channel for themselves, as waters do, and flowed out into the Avon somewhere else.

A few of the more suspicious members of the corporation said it was all really the fault of a new coal mine that was being dug at the time three miles away, at Batheaston; and there was a very angry movement to have this mine stopped up, to protect the integrity of the springs. But Smith went to Batheaston to have a look and decided that the two were not connected in any way. Bath's hot springs had failed because of a pyritized ox bone, and nothing else. He removed it, the hot and healing (and vile tasting) waters began to flow again with greater vigor than before, and Smith became, just as he liked, the hero of the hour. And for good measure, he plugged the hole in the coal mine as well." (p.208)

The Map That Changed the World: Simon Winchester (2001)

The Contending Kingdoms of France and England.

“Franco-British relations are often described as ambivalent - that is, having equally positive and negative aspects in different times and circumstances. Across the whole range of their endeavours, from diplomacy and warfare to trade, language, food and clothing, each side has indeed found the other endlessly irritating and fascinating. . . .

The French King, Louis XIV, made perhaps his greatest, albeit inadvertent, contribution to the development of British technical and artistic expertise with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. In its aftermath, thousands of skilled Huguenot artisans fled to Britain, settling mainly in London and other port cities. They founded new industries, especially silk-making and tapestry, and developed others, notably glass and paper manufacturing. These industries played their part in ensuring that by the later 18th century London’s economy had grown significantly and its role as a European entrepôt and financial centre had eclipsed any on the near Continent. Its population overtook that of Paris in 1700, reaching 900,000 by 1801. By then London, not Paris, was Europe’s leading centre of mechanical and scientific expertise.

The British elite’s curiosity about France seems, on the whole, to have been greater than French interest in Britain but this began to change in the later 17th century. As fashionable areas of London were laid out, first near St. James’ Palace and then north to Cavendish Square, Marylebone and Regent’s Park, French visitors came to shop in the chic and airy new establishments on Bond Street, the Burlington Arcade and in Mayfair. From the 1750s there was a wave of Anglomania in French high society, much of it focused on the fashions available in the British capital. With its gentlemen’s clubs and hundreds of pubs, wine and gin shops and coffee houses, 18th century London had a ‘café society’ in a way that Paris did not until the later 19th century.

Several of the leading lights of the French Enlightenment and some of the intellectuals of the Revolution visited London and other British cities and were impressed with what they saw and the welcome they received in gentry and noble circles. . . . François de la Rochefoucauld was struck by the profusion of clubs and taverns and the ease of interaction among polite society in them. He noted that the British commitment to tea-drinking transcended all social levels, despite its expense. Beer was drunk universally, but was also expensive. Port was cheaper and popular, although La Rochefoucauld thought it so bad that, but for the English, ‘the Portuguese would not be able to get rid of it.’ He considered English cooks ‘not very clever folk’ but household servants were industrious and English homes very clean, at least in their public areas. Above all, and somewhat to his own surprise, he praised the ‘equitable way’ in which he saw the British judicial system operate and the separation of powers under its constitution. He considered that the ‘English form of government is better than any other’.”

Glen Richardson, *History Today*, November 2004.

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