

# The Pomp of Two Bishops of Winchester when Travelling

by Brian M. Collins

## Introduction

It is common knowledge that English monarchs in the Middle Ages, such as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, went on royal progress around the country with very large retinues<sup>1</sup>. Essentially their household contents and servants, together with the court, travelled with them stopping either at royal country residences or those of unfortunate nobles who had little choice but to accept the honour of a visit by their monarch.

However, it was not just monarchs who rode progress with retinues. It was dangerous for anyone to travel alone because of the threat of highway robbery and anyone of wealth would at minimum take armed guards to protect the money which had to be transported to pay for expenditures on a journey. Thus the Priors of St Swithun would be escorted during their bi-annual progresses when they held manorial courts and received the rents from the tenants of their manors. This also necessitated taking clerks to record the proceedings of each court in progress books together with other servants<sup>2</sup>.

But we have two Bishops of Winchester, Thomas Wolsey and his successor Stephen Gardiner, for whom we have intriguing details of journeys. These will be described using the contemporary documents, several of which have been transcribed, translated and published for the first time. The quotes used are shown in blue and the spelling (except for proper nouns) and capitalisation has been modernised to aid understanding.

## Cardinal Thomas Wolsey

Thomas Wolsey was Bishop of Winchester from 1529 until his death in 1530. His predecessor, Richard Fox, had died in late 1528 but it was not until the following 8 February that Pope Clement VII issued Licenses for the succession. In fact Wolsey was not appointed Bishop of Winchester but was granted the perpetual administration of the Bishopric *in commendam*. This meant that he was appointed to hold the preferment for a time, on the recommendation of the King, until a suitable person could be provided.



**Figure 1** - Wolsey in the robes of a Cardinal riding in procession to Westminster Hall.

George Cavendish was Cardinal Wolsey's gentleman usher and wrote in his biography of Wolsey describing the pomp of a typical journey that the Cardinal undertook from his Chambers to Westminster Hall<sup>3</sup>, see **Figure 1**:

Now will I declare unto you his order in going to Westminster Hall, daily in the term season. First, before his coming out of his privy chamber, he heard most commonly every day two masses in his privy closet ; and there then said his daily service with his

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chaplain : and as I heard his chaplain say, that the Cardinal never went to his bed with any part of his divine service unsaid. And after mass he would return in his privy chamber again, and would issue out, apparelled all in red, in the habit of a Cardinal ; which was either of fine scarlet, or else of crimson satin, taffeta, damask, or caffia : and upon his head a round pillion, with a noble of black velvet set to the same in the inner side ; he had also a tippet of fine sables about his neck ; holding in his hand a very fair orange, whereof the meat or substance within was taken out, and filled up again with the part of a sponge, wherein was vinegar, and other confections against, the pestilent airs ; the which he most commonly smelt unto, passing among the press, or else when he was pestered with many suitors. There was also borne before him first, the great seal of England, and then his Cardinal's hat, by a nobleman or some worthy gentleman, right solemnly, bareheaded. And as soon as he was entered into his chamber of presence, where there was attending his coming to await upon him to Westminster Hall, as well noblemen and other worthy gentlemen, as noblemen and gentlemen of his own family ; thus passing forth with two great crosses of silver borne before him ; with also two great pillars of silver, and his pursuivant at arms with a great mace of silver gilt. Then his gentlemen ushers cried, and said : "On, my lords and masters, on before ; make way for my Lord's Grace !" Thus passed he down from his chamber through the hall and when he came to the hall door, there was attendant for him his mule, trapped all together in crimson velvet and gilt stirrups. When he was mounted, with his cross bearers, and pillar bearers, also upon great horses trapped with fine scarlet. Then marched he forward, with his train and furniture in manner as I have declared, having about him four footmen, with gilt poll axes in their hands ; and thus he went until he came to Westminster Hall door.

This is as a very ostentatious display of the symbols of his power, his importance and his wealth. But of particular interest are his long white beard (all other paintings show him clean shaven) and his use of a mule, albeit **trapped all together in crimson velvet and gilt stirrups**, perhaps to honour the entry of Jesus on a donkey into Jerusalem.

### **Bishop Stephen Gardiner - his Journey to the French Court in 1535**

Stephen Gardiner succeeded Thomas Wolsey and was appointed Bishop of Winchester aged 34 in 1531 and continued in the post until his death in 1555 apart from a two year period when he was held in the Tower of London during the reign of Edward VI. In the summer of 1535 Henry VIII undertook a royal progress and had planned to stay in Winchester and Bishops Waltham for two weeks before returning to London. But events took over and Henry VIII stayed on for an extra week because a letter arrived that had far-reaching implications for the Reformation in England. The letter was delivered by Jean de Dinteville, the Bailly de Troyes and Ambassador of King Francis I of France to Henry VIII; Jean is the left-hand figure in the well-known Hans Holbein's painting, *The Ambassadors*. The letter had originated from the Pope threatening that the French King would intervene militarily if Henry did not recant for the executions of Bishop John Fisher and of Sir Thomas More and relinquish his new powers as Supreme Head of the Church in England; this needed a detailed legal response and who better to write this than Stephen Gardiner who had previously studied law at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Having written the response Gardiner was appointed as Ambassador to France by Henry VIII and in his commission<sup>4</sup>, was asked to deliver the response personally to Francis I, which he did in Dijon by 21 November. Gardiner did not return to England for another three years and with him 'out of the way' Cromwell could proceed unhindered with the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Reformation.

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Gardiner wrote to Cromwell on 26 Sep 1535, before leaving Winchester, to apologise for the quality of his [answer to the brief](#) which he would have [polyted](#) [polished] if he had had more time. The [oration](#) refers to a separate treatise, the *De Vera Obedientia*, which had been edited and was ready for printing. It was a legal justification of Henry's title as Supreme Head of the Church in England. It is interesting that the first patent for the office of King's printer was granted to Thomas Berthelet (or Bartlet) by Henry VIII in 1529, but only such books as were first licensed were to be printed. At that time even the purchase or possession of an unlicensed book was a punishable offense.

To the Right Honourable Master Thomas Crumwel, Principal Secretary to the King's Highness. Master Secretary, after my most hearty commendations: I send unto you by this bearer my answer to the brief, according to your letters; which answer, if I might have had with me this night, I had intended to have polished and cleansed it, as I have already done my oration, which I will at London deliver to Bartlet to be printed. Of this answer I have no other copy but that I now send, which is so rude as in many places you shall rather perceive what I mean than pick out what I say. If you bring it with you, I will, in a day and a night, put it *in mundum* and add a good portion to the end that is not yet written, as I devised with my Lord of Cauntourbury [Thomas Cranmer] to do. Thus, until my meeting with you, most heartily fare ye well. From Winchestre, this Sunday [26 September 1535]. Your loving and assured friend, Stephen Winton, the Bishop of Wynton<sup>8</sup>.

Gardiner's journey to the French Court can be followed starting with accounts for his and the Bishop of Hereford's transportation over the English Channel on 21 October 1535<sup>5</sup>:

[Bills for transporting of the King's Ambassadors. Firstly, for transporting of my Lords of Wynchester and Hereford from Dover to Caleis - 40s. Also paid to John Campes for carriage of their horses and other stuff - 60s.](#)

Edward Foxe, had been enthroned as Bishop of Hereford in Winchester Cathedral, he had previously been the King's Almoner. While Gardiner was being sent to France Foxe was sent to Germany to discuss the basis of a political and theological understanding with the Lutheran princes and divines, and had several interviews with Martin Luther, who could not be persuaded of the justice of Henry VIII's divorce. The principal result of the mission was the Wittenberg articles of 1536, which influenced on the English Ten Articles of the same year.



The detailed bills, for transporting the two Bishops and their servants and separately their horses, detailed below show how small the vessels were, at 14 and 40 tons respectively. Crayers, see **Figure 2**, were commonly used on the cross-channel route; for comparison the Mary Rose was 700 tons.

**Figure 2** - A crayer for cross-channel transport.

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After our right hearty commendations. These shall be to advertise you that being sent by the King's commandment as his Ambassadors in to the parties of beyond the see we have taken up for to transport us and certain of our servants from Dover unto Calais a boat of William Tailours of Sandwiche being of 14 tonne tonnage wherefore we heartily desire and pray you to satisfy and content unto the said William Tailour for his said transporting of us immediately upon the sight hereof such sums of money as the King's Highness is wont to allow for the same accordingly . At Calais the 21<sup>st</sup> day of Octobre in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King Henry the Eight . Rated at 40s. - Stephen Winton, Edward Hereford<sup>6</sup>.

After my right hearty commendations. These shall be to advertise you that being sent in Embassy by the King's Highness over the seas I have taken up to transport certain of my horse a crayer of John Campes of Hyde called the James of Hyde being of 40 tonne tonnage. Wherefore I heartily desire and pray you to satisfy and content unto the said John Campe for his said transporting of my horse immediately upon the sight hereof such sums of money as the King's Highness is wont to allow for the same accordingly. At Calais the 21<sup>st</sup> day of Octobre in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King Henry the Eight. Rated at 60s. - Stephen Winton<sup>7</sup>.

Three days later Gardiner wrote to Cromwell to inform him of a safe crossing but that one of his servants, the constable of Winchester Castle, Thomas Uvedale, had died after their arrival in Calais of the [great sickness](#) contracted in London. He also reported that his speed was slower than he wished because of the [travail on the seas](#) of his horse. Perhaps the fact that the Bailly of Troyes had said that he [should make no haste](#) makes that slow progress acceptable. Nevertheless, he sets off for the French Court in Dijon on the following day.

To the Right Honourable Master Thomas Crumwel, Principal Secretary to the King's Highness. Master Secretary, after my most hearty commendations, with like thanks for your good cheer : These shall be to advertise you that, after a good passage over the seas, thanks be to God, and the loss here at Calays of my servant Wodal, who this day is departed to God of the great sickness, wherewith, as it may be conjectured, he was infected at his late being at London longer than I would he should, I intend, God willing, tomorrow to take my journey towards the French Court. My journeying is slower than I would it were, and yet is, I fear me, more speedy than my horse, by reason of their travail on the seas, will maintain. The Baly of Troys left me word by the way that I should make no hast, but I would go never the slower for that, if my horse would serve. And if you shall think that any greater acceleration shall be requisite, I shall then use the remedy of the post, but I trust it shall not need. Thus much I have thought good to write unto you, to the intent that if the King's Highness should devise upon my arrival in the French Court or the delay in my journey, which in the strange watery weather here and through all Fraunce is much more cumbrous than it was wont, you might advertise his Majesty thereof accordingly, as my trust is you will, and I most heartily desire you so to do. And even so fare ye well. From Calays, the 24<sup>th</sup> day of Octobre. Your loving assured friend, Stephen Winton, the Bishop of Wynchester<sup>9</sup>.

Thomas Cromwell writes in his Remembrances (a medieval "to-do list") a [memorial for the expedition of the Bishop of Winchester](#). Including a letter of credence in the King's own hand and letters to the Great Master, Admiral and Chancellor. Together with the commission for the Bishop, a silver vessel, and money<sup>10</sup>. The Grand Master of France was Anne de Montmorency responsible for supervision of the royal household and the King's private service. Philippe de Chabot was a companion of Francis I as a child, and on the

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King's accession was appointed Admiral of France, one of the Great Officers of the Crown. He had served as ambassador to England in 1533 and 1534.

Dr Simon Heynes (Haynes, Hains) was canon of Windsor and in July 1535 he was sent with Christopher Mont to go unofficially into France, and there to counteract the influence which the French were bringing to bear on Germany; above all to invite Philipp Melancthon to England. He wrote to Thomas Cromwell from Paris that Gardiner arrived there on 3 November.

[Sturmius \[a German\] is very desirous to see the brief sent from the Bishop of Rome to the French king, and the answer which \[his\] Highness hath made to the same, beseeching your Mastership, if it be so seen convenient to you, to send me the copies of both, for considering that he do show me all that he do know out of Germany, he looketh that I should show him again somewhat of such things as be done there."](#)

[My lord of Winchester arrived here yesterday<sup>11</sup>.](#)

Gardiner's progress was carefully monitored by the Bishop of Faenza, Ridolfo Pio da Carpi, who was the Papal Nuncio to the Court of Francis I and wrote regularly from the Court at Dijon to Ambrogio Ricalcato, the Chief Secretary to Pope Paul III in Rome<sup>12, 13</sup>. Using these and other documents the progress of Gardiner was as follows:

26 September - Gardiner leaves Winchester [see above]

5 October - [The Bishop of Winchester is expected here](#)

6 October - [He has not yet come](#)

13 October - [Winchester is not yet come, but has crossed the sea \[however; see above](#)

19 October - [Winchester is not yet come](#)

21 October - Gardiner crossed the Channel from Dover to Calais [see above]

24 October - Gardiner wrote to Thomas Cromwell from Calais [see above]

25 October - Gardiner leaves Calais for the French Court

27 October - [Vincesta \[Gardiner\] delays his coming to Court](#)

3 November - My Lord of Winchester arrived in Paris [see above]

15 November - [Bishop of Winchester expected in three or four days](#)

18 November - [Vincestra \[Gardiner\] is expected every day](#)

19 November - [Winchester has not yet come](#)

19 November - [Winchester has come and been with the Council, he would soon be able to speak with King Francis I](#)

The above can be used to obtain the average speed of travel: thus Calais to Paris is 185 miles by today's roads at 18.5 miles per day; Paris to Dijon is 193 miles at 12.9 miles per day. There are no details as to which day he left Paris, and the daily travel could therefore have been more.

### Bishop Stephen Gardiner - life in the French Court

Thomas Wriothesley was linked by marriage to Gardiner: he appears to have been married to the half-sister of Germaine Gardiner, the Bishop's secretary and nephew. Through the Germaine-Wriothesley link, Cromwell received intimate reports of the behaviour of Winchester's large household in France. In a letter dated 21 February 1538 Germaine gives us an insight into the life in a grand diplomatic household.

[Was grieved to find by Wriothesley's letter that he and his company had been misreported behind their backs and the report believed. "They \(the French\) say that I and all my Lord's young gentlemen rail continually upon them." My Lord's young gentlemen of 19 years and under are these: Edward Hungerford, James Wingfelde, Robert Gage, Robert Parys, and John Brom; and a little above that age, Thomas Thwaytes, Thomas Hungreforde, Oliver Vachel, John Temple, Robert Preston, Richard Hampden, and](#)

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Walter Hals. Beside Wingfelde, Vachel and Preston, none can speak more French than to ask for what they want, and few of them can do that without a "truchman." Does not think Vachel is meant for he is not much here, and the writer never heard of his speaking evil of any Frenchman. Cannot say as much for Wingfield, for at the Court the Conte Roossee and others delight to talk with him, and when they mock us "merrily asking what valiant men we be which were beaten of a woman out of France, they have heard again that neither we were beaten out of France by her, and that all the Frenchmen with their valiantness were not able to defend their witch from the English men's fire." At another time, when they were playing tennis, a Frenchman said in despite that he thought all the Englishmen in England were come thither. Wingfield answered him that there were yet enough in England to beat those and all the Frenchmen in France besides. This answer was peradventure somewhat overhot, but yet such as might be better borne of a young lad than such a despiteful provocation of an old knave. Cannot find that Wingfelde has ever spoken such words except in answering merry mocks or scornful sayings. Preston, who is the "escuyer," has spoken many ill words to those who would poll him of his oats or ask six for what they had agreed to take five for. And when they put his horse out of the stable he has offered to fight them, but no harm has been done. Otherwise cannot find that he has had other than good words with them.

Cannot therefore tell whom they mean unless it be Wingfelde, but those he talks with always seem very glad of his company, and never find fault with him. If Wriothsley thinks good, will suffer Frenchmen to say anything without replying. As for himself, has never been in choler with any Frenchman since he came to France, but has sometimes spoken displeasantly to the greatest personages, though never otherwise than he was commanded. With others never began unpleasant communication, but when they have said what they list, they have been compelled to hear what they would not have heard. For instance, one of the Great Master's secretaries, speaking of the Northern Rebellion, asked what 50,000 Frenchmen would have done at that time in England. Replied, no hurt, but rather good; and when he mused, said such a number of Frenchmen would straight appease the rebellion and none would make more haste to have them by the heads than the rebels. With this answer he seemed not content, and yet at the departing he showed himself not displeased. Had an altercation with Bushtete, one of the King's chief secretaries, who railed at the administration of justice in England in consequence of the arrest of certain ships by Mr. Dudley. Answered him reasonably and appeased Thos. Barnabe, who began to rage like a mad man, so that Bushtete was well content when they parted. Has never railed with anyone. Has sometimes said when they dispraised our Court that in theirs was bad confusion, and in ours continually good order. Has found fault with their treatment of our merchants, and has compared Castillon's princely lodging in England with the bp. of Winchester's being lodged in cabins here. Their entertainment is fit to make foes of friends, while the Emperor takes care of all those that sue to him. Those who go to him come back better Imperialists, but men leave France worse French than they came<sup>14, 15</sup>.

Cromwell had also ordered Archdeacon Bonner to spy on Gardiner, the man he was sent to replace. In copious accounts to his patron, he relayed any piece of information which portrayed the Bishop in an unfavourable light. Henry had instructed Gardiner to supply the new envoy with all the plate, furnishings, etc., that he required, but Gardiner refused every request. He explained that napery was not used in France; he needed the mules himself and their covers depicted his own coat-of-arms. As a final insult, Gardiner told the Archdeacon he could not supply him with vestments, as the raiment of a Bishop would not be appropriate for him.

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### Bishop Stephen Gardiner - his Journey back to England in 1538

In a letter from Thomas Wriothesley to Thomas Cromwell, when the former was on his way into France, he describes the retinue of Stephen Gardiner in flowery terms. This was on 27 September 1538 only six days after Wriothesley, Richard Pollard and John Williams had destroyed the shrine of St Swithun in Winchester Cathedral<sup>16</sup>. It is therefore interesting to note that Wriothesley asks Thomas Thurlby, who was travelling with Gardiner's retinue, what the Bishop thought of the shrine of St Thomas Becket being destroyed at Canterbury. The reply which includes the phrase that Gardiner "... wished that the like were done at Winchester" intimates at face value that the news may not have reached the Bishop, in spite of the fact that some of his "servants and officers that remained a home" had met the retinue after they disembarked at Dover. Perhaps the news had reached Gardiner and it was a diplomatic statement by him to say that he wished it would be done.

Pleaseth your lordship this Fridaye before noon I met with my Lord of Winchester between Sitingburn and Rochester his train is very gallant. He hath 5 mulettes and 2 carts made for the nonde. Al covered with clothes of his colours with his arms in garters embroidered upon the same. A number of lackeys I ween above a dozen, a fresh sort of gentlemen in gay apparel of velvet chains cloaks turned down with capes of velvet large. And thereunto he hath a good number of yeomen with sundry of his servants and officers that remained at home and were not with him beyond the sea.

At our meeting he did off his hat and I in like manner mine I told him I was glad to see him in health he told me he was glad of mine. I showed him the King's Majesty was at Grenwiche, he said he heard so and asked me whither I went. I said in to Flaunders, and demanded of him whither he had not met with Master Browne and whither he had not told him of my coming after. He said he met Master Browne yesterday almost at Dover, but he told him no word of me. I asked whether he thought Master Browne were passed or no, he said he could not tell this is the hole effect of our conversation which was strange and with much courtesy for his hat was ever off as soon as mine or before.

And thus did we depart without further conversation. Then Master Thurlby rode a little back with me and of him I demanded why he had tarried so long to attend upon my Lord of Winchestre. He said their letters were that they should return together and as he could not therefore have departed from him but with a great demonstration of unkindness. So he would fain have had my Lord of Winchester to have made more haste than he did and for his own part hastened so fast that all my Lord's train was angry with him. I asked him what news and how my Lord liked our doings here he told me that he said he misliked not the doing at Canterbury but rather seemed to like it. Saying that if he had been at home he would have given his counsel to the doing thereof and wished that the like were done at Winchestre.

With Germayne I had no more but a beck and a good morrow nor with any other of his men. And meeting by chance this bearer in the company of one of my Lord of Winchestres servants I took him a little back with me that he might convey this letter surely to your Lordship, which to do he was very glad. Thus I beseech our Lord to send your Lordship prosperous health and me shortly to return to you with the King's Majesty's satisfaction in all things committed to the charge of me and my fellow. From Newnton this Fridaye about noon. Your Lordship's most bounden Thomas Wriothesley<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Thomas Thirlby was later Bishop of Westminster. John Hussee, writing from London to Lord Lisle on 28 September 1538, said that [the Bishop of Wychestre came this night](#).<sup>18</sup> On the day of his arrival in London Gardiner submitted his accounts for his time in France

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The account of the Bishop of Winchester for this his last voyage into France ending the 28th of September in the 30th year of the King's most noble Reign.

Accounting his diets to begin the first day of October in the 27th year of the King's Reign and to end the 28th of September in the 30th year of his Graces' said Reign there be days 1094. For which 1094 days, allowing 56s. 4d. by the day, the whole sum of the allowance amounts to £2917 6s. 8d.

Of which sum of £2917 6s. 8d. Peter Larke has received of Master Gostwycke by the hand of Robert Lorde as appears by the said Peter's bills £2141 6s. 8d. Which being deducted out of the other sum above written there remains due unto the said Bishop for his diets £776

Such sums of money as the Bishop of Winchester hath to receive of the King's Highness Due to the Bishop for his diets £776

Also due to the said Bishop for post money laid out from the 23rd of June in the 29th year of the Reign of Henry till the last [day] of August in the 30th year £157

Also for Assher £700

Also to receive of the £2000 lent him by the King's Highness £500

Total £2133<sup>19</sup>

Peter Larke was a servant of Bishop Gardiner; John Gostwick of Willington was Treasurer of Tenths and First Fruits; and Robert Lorde was a clerk of John Gostwick.

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