

*'The Art of Travelling Requires an Apprenticeship':
Anne Lister's Diaries and Travel*

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Travel is key to Anne Lister's story: it shaped her experience of the world and her sense of self. It has also played an important part in shaping her posthumous reputation: famously, she was the first amateur to climb the Vignemale in the French Pyrenees in 1838, and she died on one of her most ambitious journeys, to Russia, in 1840. Yet her travels, and her approach to undertaking and writing about her journeys at home and abroad, deserve more scholarly attention than they have hitherto attracted. This chapter highlights the potential of the large amount of unpublished material in her diaries relating to travel (now becoming more accessible through transcription and digital resources). Citing examples from Lister's home tours in the 1820s, I argue that a distinctive female voice such as Lister's is an important, but until now neglected, element in the recovery of female travel writing, which has been a recent focus for scholars. While her importance to LGBTQ+ history cannot be underestimated, changing social attitudes which made possible the publication of decoded passages of Lister's diaries since the 1980s have shifted focus away from other interesting aspects of her life. To understand her life fully we need, I suggest, to investigate more closely how her diaries can be read as life writing and travel writing. Whilst in many ways extraordinary texts, Lister's writing about travel can be understood in the context of other contemporary travelogues where the boundaries of class and gender are revealed through the writer's interaction with place. Anne Lister's travels through Britain helped her explore her own character as well as gain practical experience; as she noted in July 1822: 'The art of travelling requires an apprenticeship.'¹

Travel Writing Studies

Travel writing studies are a vibrant area of scholarly research which has attracted increased interest in recent years. Often dismissed in the past as unworthy of academic study and used primarily by local and social

historians, travel writing has been rehabilitated over the past few decades. The subject's potential was brought into focus by postcolonial theory and feminism, and today it is usually recognised as a source for exploring self-identity, rather than being treated as a reliable description of places and people.² That travel writing not only records 'temporal and spatial progress' but also 'throws light on how we define ourselves and on how we identify others' is implicit throughout much contemporary study of the genre.³ The recovery of marginalised voices, including women's travel writing, has been ongoing since the 1970s. Projects like the British Women's Travel Writing bibliographical database have sought to quantify and identify publications by women in the period 1780–1840. The under-representation of women's travel writing in print is largely due to the limited opportunities for women to publish in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this has shaped subsequent research.⁴ For example, it has required scholars to look increasingly to manuscript material, because publishing could be a socially transgressive act for a woman, and to approach female-authored works in a way which is sensitive to the context of their creation. Series like the Chawton House Library editions are important contributions to making women's travel writing available.⁵ While travel writing scholarship has explored twentieth-century gay travel writing, as Carl Thompson points out, travel writing has 'traditionally had a strong heteronormative aspect' and historically gay writers, as in other areas of literature, have had to hide their sexuality.⁶ Lister's diaries are therefore a rare and valuable account which records her experience of travel in the nineteenth century alongside her life as a lesbian.

Described memorably by Amanda Gilroy as a 'capacious cultural hold-all', travel writing is a complex mix of literary genres such as natural history, archaeology, topography, autobiography, aesthetics and anthropology.⁷ Travel writing in its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century form may share common features with travel literature today, but it is not equivalent to the genre of 'voyages and travels'. 'Voyages and travels', Charles L. Batten has suggested, was second in popularity only to the novel in the eighteenth century, and Shef Rogers asserts it was 'probably the most self-consciously print-informed genre of the period'. Travel was traditionally regarded as part of elite young men's education, and books of 'travels and voyages' were seen as particularly suited to young people.⁸ Many accounts of travel undertaken for leisure, education and health survive in print and manuscript in libraries and archives and offer important evidence about the demographics of those engaged in travel. The rise

of picturesque tourism and the popularity of 'home tours' of beauty spots such as North Wales, the Scottish Highlands and the English Lakes from the latter part of the eighteenth century made tourism increasingly accessible to men and women from the middle ranks of society. In the classic work on picturesque tourism, Malcolm Andrews described domestic tours as a form of 'cultural self-definition' and demonstrated how picturesque tourism was part of a wider rejection of the classical and an embracing of native British traditions. By the late eighteenth century socially sanctioned itineraries and conventions for writing about tourist sites had been established, and the ability to talk and write about the places, people and landscapes of these regions was an important social skill.⁹ Travel writing conventions were often gendered, with women expected to leave topics like politics and economics to male writers.

Nineteenth-century travel is often characterised by increased range and mobility, with improved transport and communication, industrialisation and imperial expansion revolutionising travel patterns. An important change in terms of tourist behaviour, from 1815 onwards, was an influx of British tourists to the continent. The end of the Napoleonic wars, James Buzard has asserted, saw Britons taking part in European tourism 'in greater numbers than ever before'.¹⁰ These tourists were often drawn from the middle ranks of British society, which included the professional and new industrialist class. In literary studies, the Romantic period (covering roughly 1789–1832) is often associated with what Margaret Drabble has described as a 'shift in sensibility': a move towards valuing self-expression and individual experience that can be seen, in part, as a reaction against eighteenth-century Enlightenment rationality.¹¹ These developments might be identified with an 'inward turn', which emerged in travelogues from the late eighteenth century, although travel writing primarily remained a 'knowledge genre' until perhaps the mid-nineteenth century.¹²

Anne Lister's Travels and her Diaries

In her early life Lister travelled locally: perhaps her first significant experience of domestic tourism was her visit to Bath in 1813, which she described in a letter to her brother and in a fragmentary early diary entry.¹³ Her first overseas visit, to Paris, took place in 1819 when she was aged twenty-eight, and the city would continue to be important to her throughout her life.¹⁴ Her diary entries and the seventy-one-page letter that she sent to the Duffins might be considered Lister's first substantial piece of

travel writing.¹⁵ From the 1820s to her death in 1840, she travelled extensively at home (including the Yorkshire Dales, Oxford, Buxton, Bath, London, Wales, Scotland, the English Lakes, Hastings, Dublin) and in Europe (including France, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan). Travel appealed to an inquisitive, intelligent and active woman such as Lister, and the genre seems particularly suited to someone who was interested in many branches of literature and science. Spending time abroad also appears to have fulfilled a need to escape the limits of local Halifax society and to socialise in (what she saw as) more elevated, cosmopolitan and cultured circles.

Lister's ability to travel, however, was constrained by funds and her role in managing the Shibden Hall estate. The responsibilities usually associated with male heirs to an estate were compounded by the financial precarity of her gender. In the period up to 1826 (when her uncle James Lister died), she spent time in Paris, but many of her travels were domestic tours undertaken for her aunt's health. Lister was reliant on her father, aunt and uncle to pay for her living expenses, but in 1822 her financial independence increased with a twice-yearly payment of £25 and her appointment as her uncle's heir. In December 1821 Lister had purchased a gig for Shibden Hall for £65, and after James Lister's death a large travelling carriage was acquired at a cost of £220.¹⁶ As Lister's opportunities for travel increased, she commented in her diary on her approach to recording her journeys. For example, she noted in 1822, before travelling to Paris, that she intended to record her impressions straight away: 'I shall always be sure as I travel along that my observations, when made at the instant, are correct, at least as far as they can be so.'¹⁷ In 1827, before setting out on a tour of Switzerland and northern Italy, she wrote of keeping separate notebooks for her travels, so that 'all that is more strictly private' might be kept back for her 'private journal'.¹⁸ Lister's first travel journal covering France, Italy and Switzerland was commenced in the summer of 1827; however, some travel, including her 1828 Scottish tour, continued to be recorded within her daily diaries, using code, as she regularly did, as a mechanism for concealing personal content. She also kept notes of her travelling expenses in separate notebooks.¹⁹ Throughout her diaries Lister expressed literary aspirations, and in 1832 contemplated writing an account of her travels in the Pyrenees ('a sort of sensible, popular travels') under the pen name 'Viator', but no evidence has yet come to light to suggest she produced anything for publication.²⁰

Scholarly and Popular Interest in Anne Lister's Travels

Anne Lister's enthusiasm for travel is well known, but it has received little detailed study owing to the limited sections of her diaries available in print and (until recently) lack of remote access to her original diaries and travel journals. Vivien Ingham, who studied Lister's mountaineering in the Pyrenees in the 1960s, recognised her writing as valuable for its detailed and scholarly descriptions of the places she visited. She praised Lister for being 'never content to keep solely to the routes and sights recommended by the guide-books'.²¹ A good overview of Lister's travels at home and abroad is given in Muriel Green's *Miss Lister of Shibden Hall* (1992). But this edition of her letters is limited to what Lister chose to share with her correspondents and, because Green's research was undertaken in the 1930s, it does not discuss Lister's sexuality. In the past couple of years many transcriptions of Lister's tours have been made by 'codebreakers', volunteers contributing to West Yorkshire Archive Services' diary transcription project, from the digital images of Lister's diaries available on their website. At the time of writing, journal transcriptions up to May 1822 are available on their online catalogue, but other extracts have been published elsewhere online, and transcribers have discussed their transcriptions of Lister's travel accounts in the Anne Lister Research Summit conferences.²²

Renewed interest in Lister's travels has emerged since 2018, in part prompted by the BBC/HBO drama *Gentleman Jack*. Lister, for example, was one of four female travellers featured in Bankfield Museum's 2018/19 exhibition.²³ Recent publications that contain information on Lister's travels include Angela Steidele's *Gentleman Jack: a Biography of Anne Lister, Regency Landowner, Seducer and Secret Diarist* (2018), which draws on the work of previous scholars such as Helena Whitbread, Muriel M. Green, Jill Liddington, Vivien Ingham and Phyllis Ramsden to offer a survey of her life.²⁴ Building on Whitbread's edited extracts covering 1816–26, Anne Choma's *Gentleman Jack: the Real Anne Lister* (2019) makes available passages from Lister's diaries and travel journals from 1831 to 1834. Lister's tour of France, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark in the summer of 1833 is also the focus of Adeline Lim's *In the Footsteps of Anne Lister* (2021). Lim suggests Lister's travels were 'extensive and intensive', and Choma characterises Lister as 'an adrenaline-fuelled thrill seeker' whose 'powers of observation meant that she went beyond the predictable descriptions of rolling hills or a pretty church'.²⁵

Much previous writing on Lister's travels has therefore emphasised its extraordinary aspects, but her travel accounts are equally fascinating because they engage with contemporary discourses. Her writing reflects changes in tourist patterns in the first half of the nineteenth century and is valuable evidence for studying manuscript travelogues. In this chapter, through Lister's home tour travels in the 1820s, I demonstrate why her diaries are a rich resource for the history of tourism, and also highlight how an understanding of nineteenth-century travel can enrich the study of Lister's life.²⁶

Anne Lister's Diaries as Evidence for Travel Planning

In a letter of 24 June 1822 Anne explained to her sister, Marian, that their aunt 'wants a little change of air and scene' and 'we talk of taking a little tour in Wales'.²⁷ She had already planned a Welsh itinerary the previous month as a result of seven hours poring over Cary's *New Itinerary* and Burlington's *The Modern Universal British Traveller* (and possibly one of Daniel Paterson's roadbooks). Between May and July 1822 the Listers changed their initial plans: 'Before breakfast, writing out a rather altered & shorter Welsh tour, finding my aunt & I cannot be absent more than 14 or 15 days,' Lister recorded on 5 July.²⁸ In gathering information about Wales to inform their tour, she also looked for Mariana Lawton's '2 letters descriptive' about her tour of Wales in 1817, intending to 'take these with us when we go'. She also wrote to Lawton and Isabel Dalton about visiting the Ladies of Llangollen and received information from her Halifax neighbours the Rawsons about Welsh roads and inns. The Rawsons' advice, preserved in the Shibden Hall Archive, includes recommendations such as: 'Bangor to Bettws – one of the finest rides in Wales – see the slate quarries of Lord Penrhyn'; 'Caernarvon, ascend the hill behind the hotel for a beautiful view. Don't ascend Snowdon from Llanberis lakes at Llanberis not worth seeing'; and 'At Corwen, Blind Edward the Harper, if alive and sober, said to be the most classical harper in Wales.'²⁹

Lister's records of her reading offer an important historical source for understanding the consumption of travel texts and their use in tour planning, and what is particularly valuable are references in her diaries to printed items, perused, seen and borrowed, as well as actually read. The kinds of titles she consulted prior to commencing her Welsh tour were in many cases learned and information-dense, and show the enduring influence of eighteenth-century figures like Thomas Pennant: they were not the treatises on the picturesque which scholars have often assumed that

Romantic-era travellers read.³⁰ In the weeks preceding her Welsh tour, Lister looked up information about the salt mines at Northwich (noted as worth a visit by William Henry Rawson) in Robert Bakewell's *Introduction to Geology* (1813), and researched information about Welsh scenery and history. In May she recorded in her diary: 'looking over the Halifax library catalogue, & made minutes of the works there are respecting Wales'. 'I shall', she noted, 'get Pennant, Aikin, Warner, & Bingley.'³¹ We know she first read 'Bingley's Tours in North Wales' in 1810, and reread his *A Tour Round North Wales* in 1822.³² Although much of this detail is omitted from Whitbread's extracts, returning to the original diary reveals that Lister read volume II of Thomas Pennant's *Tour in Wales* (1781), Arthur Aikin's *Journal of a Tour through North Wales and Part of Shropshire with Observations in Mineralogy and Other Branches of Natural History* (1797), the article 'Conquest of Wales' in the *Retrospective Review* (1822), William Warrington's *History of Wales* (1786) and Samuel Parke's *The Chemical Catechism* (1806), which she noted said asbestos was found on Anglesey.³³

The only book we know that Lister bought specially for her Welsh tour was George Nicholson's *The Cambrian Traveller's Guide*, which she purchased for eighteen shillings from her landlord at the Cernioge Inn near Betws-y-coed.³⁴ The *Guide* written by Nicholson (1760–1825) was first published in 1808, with the second enlarged edition, used by Lister, coming out in 1813. The book aimed to collect, in one volume, information required by travellers currently contained in multiple books, and included proto-guidebook elements such as a fold-out map, notes on Welsh pronunciation and descriptions of the routes of published tours. Lister's references to *The Cambrian Traveller's Guide* suggest that she read it mainly at their inn: this would have provided entertainment and the chance to review what she had seen that day and plan what she intended to do next. Like many tourists, she used it to check the names of places and other facts when writing up her journal.

More information about Lister's use of early guidebooks is provided in her account of the three-month tour of Scotland she took in 1828 with Sibbella Maclean. As with many contemporary tourist texts, Lister's diary reflects an experience of Scotland which was heavily influenced by improving transport infrastructures, but also interest in Scotland's past stimulated by the popular historical novels and poems of Sir Walter Scott. It is testament to Scott's influence that even though Lister was not particularly an admirer of his works ('stupid enough' was her opinion of Scott's *The Monastery*), she made the fashionable literary pilgrimage to Loch Katrine.³⁵

The guide which Lister and Maclean consulted, *The Scottish Tourist and Itinerary; or a Guide to the Scenery and Antiquities of Scotland and the Western Islands. With a description of the Principal Steam-boat Tours*, was first published in 1825 with a second edition appearing two years later, and at least a further seven editions or reprints in the next twenty years. The book was dedicated to Scott and in the preface set itself up as meeting the needs of the modern tourist:

such a work as the present must be useful, since the formation of new roads, and other important changes, have created new facilities for travelling, opened new communications, and rendered many places accessible by carriages and steamboats, that formerly could only be approached by the pedestrian.³⁶

A comparison of the guide's suggested routes with Lister and Maclean's itinerary demonstrates that the independently minded traveller in this period was not entirely reliant on their guidebook, but Lister's tour demonstrates that she embraced the modern transport links with which guidebooks were keen to align themselves. The compact format of *The Scottish Tourist* with its fold-out map means that it is likely Lister carried it with her on journeys, such as on their steamboat passage along Loch Long from Arrochar to Glasgow; however, evidence of her reading the book at tourist sites is scarce. Her diary shows that she consulted the book at the top of Ben Nevis, but tantalizingly, she has little to say, probably due to her sickness on the climb.³⁷ Lister's diary contains frequent references (nearly eighty) to specific pages of *The Scottish Tourist*, but these supplement her personal narrative rather than providing a substitute for her own impressions. Why Lister provides such frequent and precise citations is unclear, but two practical purposes suggest themselves: avoiding copying out long passages from the book and facilitating location of particular passages in the future. The latter would have allowed her to plan future tours of Scotland or make recommendations to others going there. As noted above, Lister was part of a social group making home tours, and in the context of her relationship with Sibbella Maclean, and the Scottish aristocratic circles this might open up to her, having such information could have proved particularly useful.

Lister's diaries are an important new source for the history of tourism and book history, containing detailed insights which are rare within more conventional travelogues. While her voracious reading might not surprise Lister scholars, it highlights the way in which her travel experiences were filtered through accounts of the same tourist sites by previous visitors. Her

undertaking of, and writing about, domestic tours also shows her to be engaging in contemporary tourist practices such as travel for health and the appreciation of picturesque scenery. But because her diaries include personal details, and perhaps attempt to reconcile the complicated and contradictory elements of her life, they offer insights into the interplay of public and private in her life, and in manuscript travelogues more generally.

Public and Private Narratives in Anne Lister's Home Tours

Commencing and concluding her 1822 Welsh tour at Llangollen allowed Anne Lister to make enquiries about the 'Ladies of Llangollen', Eleanor Butler (1739–1829) and Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831), and to call on them. The two women were well known, having fled from unhappy lives in Ireland and set up home at Llangollen in 1778. The Ladies and their cottage at Plas Newydd, which they moved to in 1780, quickly became an object of curiosity for visitors on the North Wales tour. Tourists recorded descriptions of the cottage and its residents in their journals and sketch-books. The 1790 article entitled 'Extraordinary Female Affection' which appeared in several newspapers, Fiona Brideoake points out, presented Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby 'within a sexualized model of gender difference' describing Butler as 'tall and masculine' and Ponsonby as 'polite and effeminate, fair and beautiful' and their clothing as 'somewhat peculiar, dark cloth pelisses or habits, of rather masculine shape'.³⁸ Lister read of their story in an article in the 1791 volume of *La Belle Assemblée*, and in her opinion, Ponsonby (she did not meet Butler) was 'certainly not masculine, & yet there was a je-ne-sais-quoi striking'.³⁹

Lister's visit to Llangollen is well known, but it is a good example of how it is only through her diaries and letters that we can understand the significance of this place to her (and other nineteenth-century women who loved women). The unique perspective that Anne Lister's diaries offer is thrown into relief when compared with other contemporary tourist accounts. Anne Choma and Caroline L. Eisner have both investigated the ways in which Lister maintained two selves, with Eisner suggesting that through the use of code she could divide, at least on paper, 'her deviant self from her public self'.⁴⁰ The crypt-hand passages in Lister's 1822 diary allow us to understand that the Ladies offered Lister a model of two women living together, something she wanted for herself and Mariana Lawton. However, reading only the plain-hand narrative presents a travelogue suitable for public consumption.

Christopher Rawson, one of Lister's Halifax neighbours, made a tour of Wales in 1817 with his brother. He wrote in his travel journal of their visit to Llangollen: 'We saw the fair inmates, but could not tell till we neared them close, which sex they belonged to & even then it was a doubtful case from their exterior appearance.' The Ladies, he noted, 'may justly be entitled to the honor of admiral Hood's boys as every hair on their chins could make a toothpick & quire if they share not like the hottentot a leather guard-du-costa got? A sort of lid to a tin pot.' These latter comments quote from the 1815 satirical naval poem *Paddy Hew*. In doing so, Rawson could be suggesting that the Ladies were not only masculine but also unnatural, perhaps even exotic, as the hottentot reference occurs in a section of the poem in which two sailors discuss unusual and unbelievable things said to take place in foreign lands. The line following the one quoted by Rawson reads as follows: 'An't this unnatural and queer? And yet 'tis no less true, my dear.'⁴¹

Lister records her conversation with Rawson's sister, Emma Saltmarshe (who visited Wales in 1820), about the Ladies of Llangollen during a social call in August 1822. Saltmarshe's remarks, as related in Lister's journals, were that 'they must be 2 romantic girls' and she records that as she walked with Saltmarshe to see her off, 'she said she had thought it a pity that they were not married; it would do them a great deal of good'.⁴² The reference to marriage hints at the debate about whether the ladies' relationship was purely platonic. Choma reads this entry as Saltmarshe making the 'contemporary distinction between romantic friendship and marriage', but perhaps there was a more knowing undercurrent to her comment directed at Lister because of local gossip surrounding Lister's own relationships with women and her 'unfeminine' dress.⁴³

Lister's first tour with a female partner was a week spent with Isabella Norcliffe apart from the rest of the tour party after leaving Bath in 1813. As Steidele has pointed out, 'such excursions not only satisfied her inquisitive mind, but provided privacy for pursuing relationships with women'.⁴⁴ Lister's tour with Sibbella Maclean (c.1784–1830), until recently largely unknown, provides an example of how Lister used travel (traditionally used to cement heterosexual unions or nuclear family units) to provide opportunities for pursuing relationships with women. During the tour, Anne and Sibbella were able not only to spend time getting to know each other, and for Lister to initiate sexual contact, but also to visit Maclean's family on Mull and to discuss arrangements for Sibbella to go to Paris with Anne. Again, Lister's narrative hides private content using code, but the

plain-hand passages, because they describe travels, might be seen in some way as semi-public.

There has been little scholarship on travel narratives recorded within diaries, but recent research on manuscript culture suggests that accounts of journeys in the forms of reminiscences, journals or letters were often circulated amongst literary coteries or networks of family and friends. Lister's diary opens up interesting questions about the public/private nature of manuscript texts in the early nineteenth century. Her approach contrasts with that of a writer like Ellen Weeton (1776–1850) whose account of her 1825 excursion to Wales does not engage in many of the usual tourist discourses. Weeton prioritises the recording of her life story above the need to create a piece of travel writing which responds to the expected sites and tropes.⁴⁵ Betty Hagglund, in her study of the 1822 diary kept by Sarah Hazlitt (1774–1843), has suggested that passages relating to Scottish tourist sites are less 'truly private' than other sections of her diary because writing a travel diary differed from the writing of a domestic diary.⁴⁶ Lister's diary perhaps also reflects this distinction, but further investigation is needed. We know that Lister shared passages from her diary with her friends and lovers, and she records listening to Sibbella Maclean read her an entry from her own journal in 1828 (which she thought 'nicely done').⁴⁷ So, while the diaries themselves might not be shared without Lister's mediation, the content in them might be written with a wider audience in mind. What is clear is that Lister's detailed writing style and minute observations made her a natural travel writer. Her journals contain comments on topics of specific interest to herself, but many of the observations she makes on her journeys, on topics such as geology, manufactures, historical sites, architecture, agriculture, language and landscape features, are also features of contemporary travelogues.

What sets Lister's descriptions apart from those by other contemporary travellers is the level of detail in her diary travel accounts: not only of new and unfamiliar places, but of everyday aspects of her life. Many of the interesting conversations she records align with the aims of travel writing in collecting useful information and learning about other cultures. Being a tourist allowed her to question the locals she met, request entry to factories and institutions, and (as a woman from the landowning classes) to go into the homes of the working classes. Studies of published travel writing have emphasised the importance authors placed on creating an impression of a reliable and accurate narrative for their readers. Carl Thompson, for example, describes how the 'protocols of epistemological decorum'

established in the context of scientific discovery in the seventeenth century had, by the eighteenth century, become 'a rhetorical necessity for travel writers who wished to be believed'. However, the rise of the guidebook, he has argued, resulted in increased 'subjectivism' in travel accounts from the 1840s.⁴⁸ Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelogues were also influenced by the Grand Tour model of travel for developing taste and cultural awareness, and this, as noted above, manifested itself in the appreciation of British landscape. This vogue for picturesque landscapes required tourists to develop an aesthetic vocabulary, and also encouraged Britons to undertake home tour travel as an expression of British patriotism. Therefore, the expectations of travel writing in the 1800s included the 'on the spot' observations which originated in a scientific context, with a personal and emotional response, influenced by aesthetic and cultural discourses of the period, to sites such as lakes, waterfalls and mountains.

Comparison of Lister's descriptions of travel within her daily diary, her discrete travel journals and her letters is a potentially rich area of research. Letters are explicitly communicative forms, intended often for circulation and reading aloud. The quotation of outgoing letters in her journal suggests Lister was interested in developing or rehearsing her public voice. Extracts of an 1822 letter to Mariana Lawton might be seen as reflecting the patriotic aspects of travel writing, when Lister writes of the Menai Bridge that: 'I am delighted with it & think it so far the germ of the finest thing I ever saw.' She also demonstrates her abilities to write lyrically about landscape when she describes

The winding down the chasm before Penman Mawr; the 1st view of the sea bounded by Anglesea & Puffin Island; the sun setting most gloriously; the road cut out of the rock about 50 yards from the foot of Penman Mawr, the waves or rather water smooth as glass just murmuring below, formed altogether so fine, so sublimely beautiful a scene as I shall not hastily forget – the shades of evening ushered us into Aber, where we slept & breakfasted the next morning comfortably.⁴⁹

Writing in a format which ensured privacy allowed Anne Lister to record both socially acceptable and private aspects of her life on tour. The dialogue between the personal and the performative aspects of touring, found in many travel journals of the period written for a limited (or imagined) audience, is thrown into relief in Lister's extraordinarily frank and detailed diaries. Below I further explore this topic by discussing the public and private in relation to Lister's sense of her social and gender identity as expressed in her diaries.

Class and Gender in Anne Lister's Home Tours

Lister's account of her excursion to the English Lakes with her aunt in 1824 is notable for the description of her walk of more than twenty miles. The plan to walk to Scale Hill and meet up with her aunt (travelling there by gig) was a spur of the moment decision, she writes, which the local tourist guide tried to persuade her not to undertake. Lister, a keen walker, was not dissuaded, but she found the road over the mountains tough, and described her state on arriving at Gosforth: 'Not a dry thread upon me from fatigue, or rather exertion & anxiety at the thought of our being so lost at night when we could not possibly see to set ourselves right, & the people were gone or going to bed.' At the end of her entry for the day, she reflects: 'we had walked very fast up the mountains & averaged 3 miles an hour the whole way. . . left to myself I should not have got lost myself – I said repeatedly we must be wrong, but that my guide must know better than I did'.⁵⁰ Lister had been accompanied on her walk by a local man, son of the landlady of the inn at Rosthwaite. Although independently minded, Lister, like other contemporary tourists, used local guides with knowledge of the area. Pedestrian travel was traditionally associated with the working classes, and Robin Jarvis has suggested that it was only after the turn of the nineteenth century that pedestrian tours began to be regarded as less unusual, losing their earlier negative connotations of poverty and radicalism, and being seen as healthy, certainly for men.⁵¹ But Sarah Hazlitt, a contemporary of Lister, commented in her journal on her conspicuousness as a lone woman walking through the Scottish countryside in 1822, and records that some assumed she must be a lady's maid seeking work.⁵² Kerri Andrews, in her history of women walking, quotes Thomas De Quincey on Dorothy Wordsworth, to draw attention to the way in which walking was seen as an unbecoming habit in her (in contrast to her brother William Wordsworth). De Quincey suggested that 'the quickness of her motions, and other circumstances in her deportment . . . gave an ungraceful, and even unsexual character to her appearance when out-of-doors'.⁵³ Walking, therefore, was an activity with the potential to transgress the boundaries of class and gender.

In a letter to her brother, Anne Lister senior described her niece climbing Snowdon in 1822: 'Anne clamber'd up with the activity of a goat, and quite astonish'd the guide who said he had never seen anyone go up like her.'⁵⁴ In making mountain ascents, women also had to negotiate a complicated set of gender boundaries. In his recent study Simon

Bainbridge has suggested that 'women played an active part in the Romantic-period development of mountaineering and its literature' and in some cases 'offered a strong challenge to prevailing social expectations of gender roles'.⁵⁵ The examples Bainbridge cites suggest that by 1810 mixed male and female groups were taking part in mountain and hill climbing, but that even in the later Romantic period, when it became more socially acceptable for women to climb mountains, the methods of their ascents were expected to fit within gendered models. As Thompson has pointed out, 'most female travellers and travel writers historically have sought to negotiate the gender norms of their day, rather than confront them head on', but 'travel and travel writing constituted an important route to self-empowerment and cultural authority in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.⁵⁶ Lister was perhaps able to exploit the persona of a traveller to publicly display traits which reinforced her own sense of her gender identity. Characteristics of successful travellers, such as physical ability, planning and decision-making, and a capacity for observation, aspects of Lister's personality which she valued, might be expressed on tour because the social implications were not so conspicuous outside a domestic setting.

Devoney Looser draws attention to social status and conservative political views as means by which women might protect themselves against criticism when writing travel narratives for publication, and these strategies may also have influenced Lister in presenting herself to the world in a way which never overstepped too far the boundaries of acceptable, polite, behaviour.⁵⁷ Interestingly, one of the female travel writers who seems to have largely avoided censure was Sarah Murray. Her *A Companion and Useful Guide to the Beauties of Scotland, to the Lakes of Westmoreland, Cumberland and Lancashire...*, first published in 1799, was read and praised by Lister on her 1824 tour of the Lakes.⁵⁸ Hagglund suggests that social standing and her previous travel experience were key to Murray's authorial persona, and asserts that within her guide she does not depict herself as having attracted disapproval.⁵⁹ She played an important role in establishing natural scenery as a key attraction for domestic tourism, and Nigel Leask has asserted that 'Murray assertively unites the sensibility of a socially privileged female tourist with the rhetoric of the picturesque' and 'both for the performative quality of her travelling, as for her writing style, Murray is the "diva" of the Highland Tour'.⁶⁰

But that being a good walker and traveller are not always compatible with being ladylike is suggested by Lister's description of climbing Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh in 1828. While Maclean's friend Miss Riddell ('a nice ladylike sort of person') waits for her, she records:

[I] got to the top in 10 minutes as fast as I could – wind very high – dared not stand, but sat a while on the topmost crag admiring the fine views all around me – well worth the trouble – amply repaid – no traveller should miss it – the city as a map at my feet – the Firth of Forth very fine – descended in 10 minutes right down in a straight line down the crag never dreaming of its being so bad – ladies should not attempt it, but go round.⁶¹

The way in which Lister's pedestrian travel is often counterpointed by the activity (or inactivity) of her companions is intriguing, and perhaps suggests it functions as a type of self-fashioning. At the Falls of Clyde, for example, she records leaving Sibbella Maclean at Corra Linn viewing station whilst she walked 'quickish' for ten minutes to reach the fall of Bonnington Linn.⁶² Her diary entry for 18 June 1828 contains two descriptions which present Maclean in a domestic role: mending Lister's stays and on their journey up Mount Stronachlachar, where the Scotswoman was on horseback with Lister walking by her side. Interestingly, the latter activity fits with advice identified by Bainbridge from the early decades of the nineteenth century, which recommended that women should ascend mountains on horseback rather than on foot.⁶³ But it can also perhaps be read as Lister representing herself as taking the lead in their relationship. Lister scholars have identified a number of novelistic devices which Lister adopted in her journals for the purposes of self-representation, and Choma has suggested that she sought to establish a power dynamic between herself and her female circle, using 'feminine ideologies' to create 'a new world in which gender non-conformity and sexual liberation could take place, whilst at the same time reinforcing the proper virtues that these ideologies espoused'.⁶⁴

In travel narratives a tourist often contrasts their behaviour with that of others. The characterisation of fellow 'tourists' as ignorant, frivolous or unobservant in order to present the author as a well-informed, adventurous, proper and serious 'traveller' is a widely acknowledged travel writing trope which is not confined to published travelogues. Lister's diary account of the ascent of Snowdon she and her aunt made on foot in 1822 expresses her irritation at their male companions, who have forced themselves into the party:

As we went along in the gig we had perceived 2 men on horseback after us – they rode to the pass of Llanberis, sent their horses to the village & we soon found them at our heels going up the mountain – They contrived to join us for the benefit of our guide to which I should have objected but one of them was the son of our innkeeper & the other's (a Mr Reid, an attorney) arm was taken by my aunt.⁶⁵

But she also expresses doubts about her and her aunt's conduct, and that their appearance and behaviour might not reflect their social status. In Wales and the Lakes her comments on tipping guides reflect her concerns around etiquette. In a coded passage she reflected that 'The art of travelling requires an apprenticeship' and lamented:

We do not cut a figure in travelling equal to our expenses. My aunt is shabbily dressed & does not quite understand the thorough manners of a gentlewoman – for instance, taking the man's arm so readily to Snowdon &c &c. Indescribable. George too is a clown of a servant – simple in the manners of the world. But we are not known. I will try to learn & improve in travelling matters &, by thought & observation, may turn all this to future advantage.⁶⁶

Examples like these show a preoccupation with appearance and an understanding of the performative nature of tourism, and are rare insights into inner thoughts and feelings about travel. Such comments might be confided in a private diary but are less suited to the more public tone of a travelogue. Touring in the nineteenth century, because it was largely restricted to an elite who possessed the resources to undertake leisure travel, was a signifier of social rank. Lister's sense of her social identity as a member of the landed classes was linked both to her roots in Halifax and to mobility. Her tours of Wales, Scotland and the Lake District (and later abroad) therefore had a role in asserting her place in society. Her 1828 tour of Scotland also offered, through Sibbella Maclean, an entry into Scottish aristocratic circles and opportunities for socialising in high society. Therefore, in contrast to her Welsh and Lake District tours, there are comments on socialising in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Through Maclean, Lister made the acquaintance of Lady Stuart and her circle. However, as Steidele has highlighted, travelling in elite circles did not necessarily measure up to Lister's expectations. Not only was it very expensive, but she felt compelled to fit in. Of her 1829 European tour with the dowager Lady Stuart she complained: 'I get no real walking, am getting fatter and all day tortured by dress too tight. Oh that I was unknown and walking and riding about at my ease.'⁶⁷

Conclusion

Lister is a good example of an independently minded woman who skilfully used the structures of tourism and travel texts to give her access to, and information about, places which met her own particular interests as well as access to the usual 'must see' tourist sites. The details her diaries give us

about travel are important contributions to the study of tourism, manuscript culture and book history. Her writing offers a valuable record of her walking and climbing activity, but also incorporates more conventional episodes of picturesque tourism and responds to contemporary expectations of travel writing. Lister's attention to detail, including recording precise timings, offers us a new insight into the experience of travel in the 1820s, but as her diaries were also a site of self-fashioning, the sense of objectivity implied by those details may sometimes be misleading. Descriptions of travel within Lister's diaries offer important material for scholars of gender and sexuality, and of nineteenth-century travel writing, and our understanding of Lister's life can be enhanced by drawing on research in both disciplines. This chapter, focusing on Lister's descriptions of travel from her 1820s diaries, has not only sought to develop a new perspective on Lister as a travel writer, but also to insert her invaluable insights into the broader field of women's travel writing from this period.

Notes

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- 16 A. Steidele, *Gentleman Jack: a Biography of Anne Lister, Regency Landowner, Seducer and Secret Diarist*, trans. K. Derbyshire (London: Serpent's Tail, 2018), pp. 85, 89–90, 150.
- 17 2 September 1822, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/6/0048.
- 18 3 May 1827, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/10/0088.
- 19 Lister's travelling accounts can be found within the *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/AC.
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- 28 20 May 1822, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/6/0007; 5 July 1822, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/6/0022, Shibden Hall library auction catalogue, SH:3/L/92.
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- 32 13 February 1810, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/26/1/0036; 21 May 1822, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/6/0008. William Bingley wrote *A Tour Round North Wales* (1800) and *North Wales Delineated from Two Excursions* (1804).
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- 34 15 July 1822, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/6/0026; auction catalogue, *Lister Papers*, SH:3/L/92.
- 35 10 April 1820, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/4/0044.
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- 37 15 July 1828, *Lister Papers*, SH:7/ML/E/11/0034. For a more detailed analysis, see McHugh, 'Sightseeing, Social Climbing, Steamboats and Sex'.
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- 46 B. Hagglund, *Tourists and Travellers: Women's Non-Fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770–1830* (Bristol: Channel View, 2010), p. 127.
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