

## A Lady & her Grand Tour

The Grand Tour was more usually undertaken by young men, having left school or university, on the pretext of broadening their education before settling down to manage their estate. Conversely, for women the Grand Tour may have been a means of escaping a tyrannical husband, or the scandal associated with an illicit liaison. As a middle-aged brother and sister neither Winifred nor William Constable were typical Grand Tourists. They were not only travelling in search of enlightenment but also in the hope of finding a cure for William's crippling gout.

Even by the latter half of the eighteenth century, the journey to Italy was by no means an easy one. Difficulties caused by bad roads, bad inns and bad food were further exacerbated by the dangers of bandits, pirates and foreign illnesses, and Winifred's journal provides a vivid picture of the tortuous progress across Europe. Due to the unpredictable nature of William's condition, whether from attacks of gout, sickness or diarrhoea, forward planning was difficult. The travellers were constantly forced to make unscheduled stops or extend the length of time spent in a particular town to enable William to recover sufficiently to proceed with the journey. Winifred herself was 'also sick ... from some of the Bad Water ... drunk upon the road.' As Winifred records, Naples was:

*... a Place which had painfully disagreed wth us all... My Brother was never one day while there without a Cough, a Looseness or Vomitings as the same happened to me and many more of the English then at Naples.*