The Shorthand of Robert Willis, Physician-in-Extraordinary to King George III

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This article reports on a palaeographical aspect of several documents written by the physician Robert Willis (1760-1821), hitherto one presenting an obstacle to scholars attempting to read them: their numerous shorthand words and phrases. Contrary to the statement in the British Library’s *Catalogue of Additions* (1959) that Willis employed Samuel Taylor’s method, this shorthand is very different from Taylor’s. It bears instead significant similarities to William Fordyce Mavor’s *Universal Stenography; or a New Compleat System of Short Writing* (c. 1780), but with pronounced distinctions from Mavor in the formation of several consonant characters. Willis may have learned it from one of Mavor’s several adapters, but consultation of such adaptations in print has not revealed any advocating those character variants. It seems possible, therefore, either that he used a privately circulating method that never reached print, or that he adapted Mavor himself—or misremembered it, partially reconstructing it—from study of an edition of Mavor’s book or an ephemeral lesson sheet summarizing it. Whatever the case, it seems appropriate to style this shorthand writing ‘Mavorian’, or perhaps more safely, ‘Mavoresque’.

The documents in which this shorthand appears form a subset of the extensive Willis Papers collection (BL, Add. MSS. 41690-41736, 54202-54206), and solving of the method now allows for this subset’s fuller transcription and study. This is being undertaken in the course of a wider, clinically informed project coordinated by Timothy Peters investigating King George III’s health and its treatments—one which has been showing why a controversial but influential retrospective diagnosis of variegate porphyria made in the 1960s must be laid to rest. Appendices 1-4 below are

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1 He is sometimes named in full ‘Robert Darling Willis’, to distinguish him from another eminent member of the Willis dynasty: his illegitimate son, Robert (1800-1875), the polymathic engineer and architectural historian.


3 Mavor’s work reached its eighth edition in 1820. See E. H. Butler, *The Story of British Shorthand* (London, 1951), p. 82; R. C. Alston, *A Bibliography of the English Language from the Invention of Printing to the Year 1800*, vol. viii: *Treatises on Short-hand* (Leeds, 1966), pp. 255-9 and plate lx. Alston notices an earlier production by Mavor, *A Concise System of Universal Stenography* (Cirencester, 1778), but no surviving copy has been located. Willis’s most important departures from Mavor’s stenography are in the formation of several consonant characters. Willis may have learned it from one of Mavor’s several adapters, but consultation of such adaptations in print has not revealed any advocating those character variants. It seems possible, therefore, either that he used a privately circulating method that never reached print, or that he adapted Mavor himself—or misremembered it, partially reconstructing it—from study of an edition of Mavor’s book or an ephemeral lesson sheet summarizing it. Whatever the case, it seems appropriate to style this shorthand writing ‘Mavorian’, or perhaps more safely, ‘Mavoresque’.

intended to assist readers of the shorthand occurring in these documents in the meantime. Little of what is transcribed here leads to new revelations about the King’s illness, but the material enhances our knowledge about the nature of prescribed medications during the relevant periods. Furthermore, noteworthy details such as the riling of the King who ‘cursed the whole college of Physicians’ during attempts to make him sign a payment draft on 15 November 1810, the nature of the doctors’ day-to-day attendance for over a whole week in March 1811, and the King’s proposing to take a dose of salts on behalf of ‘two imaginary ladies’ on 10 January 1812 – details which we would not know about were it not for deciphering the shorthand – cumulatively and valuably add to the record of events. These contribute to building a fuller picture of Willis’s activities going beyond secondary epistolary sources.

Not helped by a tendency to bracket his family together (‘the Willises’), Robert Willis’s reputation has been overshadowed by the fame – or notoriety – of his father, Francis Willis (1718-1807), and of Francis’s second son John (1751-1835) and third son Thomas (1754-1827). The project’s revaluation of these and other physicians’ roles in the King’s treatment and their place in the wider politics of Georgian court medicine calls for him to be brought more into the spotlight. Details in the Appendices show him keen to emphasize his presence at proceedings, one which is not always made clear in related (longhand) sources noticed below. Willis was not directly involved with the King during his first and best known period of mental illness – the acute mania of October 1788-March 1789 – but together with brother John attended him during his relapse in the first half of 1801. He gained more prominence when from November 1810, about a month into a new relapse into chronic mania and most likely dementia, he became one of a group of eminent practitioners at Windsor, along with the official members of the King’s medical household. His anti-Republican pamphlet attack on natural rights theory might have been penned with an eye to such advancement, and could hardly have harmed his reputation in court and government circles. Nevertheless, this appointment was highly controversial because of opposition to the Willis family as a whole from the King’s sons especially, even if it was thought by others that ‘his Knowledge of The King’s Constitution [is] equal to that of any one’. Prime Minister Spencer Perceval forced through Willis’s appointment, in the face of added opposition from the eminent Henry Halford and his medical circle. He justified it on the grounds that ‘however obnoxious Dr R. Willis might be to His Majesty he was less so than any of the other medical persons of this description who have previously attended him’. Appointing a recognized mad-doctor was bound up with political implications surrounding the prospect of a regency, hence the controversy arising over whether Willis should be allowed to sign medical bulletins. This is the context of the document, written almost entirely in shorthand and transcribed in full in Appendix 1, in which Willis recounts events over 5-8 November 1810 relating to his appointment by the Cabinet to attend the King from 6 November. (There are three pointers to its having been written up a while afterwards: reverse date order sequencing of the entries, internal correction to day-of-the-week references, and the large space gap between the entries for 6 and 5 November, presumably intended for the insertion of further material.)

More important as source materials are Willis’s fourteen slim notebooks (Add. MS. 41733) of neatly penned daily reports on the King’s health and treatment together with transcriptions

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5 Physician-in-Extraordinary Matthew Baillie (1761-1823), sergeant-surgeon and Household Apothecary at Kew. David Dundas (1749-1826), sergeant-surgeon Henry Halford (1766-1844), and Physician-in-Ordinary William Heberden the Younger (1767-1845). During this time Willis also held a junior fellowship at Cambridge University, which (highly unusually at that time) he retained until his death. Christopher Brooke, A History of Gonville and Caius College (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 203, 203n, 224.


7 See Cambridge University Library (CUL), Spencer Perceval Correspondence, Add. MS. 8713/III/6, 7, 8. The quotation is from CUL, Add. MS. 8713/II/9: Viscount Sidmouth to Spencer Perceval, 3 Nov. 1810.

8 CUL, Add. MS. 8713/IV/B/16. See also CUL, Add. MS. 8713/IV/B/14 (a draft of this letter), and Perceval’s drafts of Cabinet minutes and correspondence with the Queen, CUL, Add. MS. 8713/III/3, 4.
of relevant matter such as official questions posed to the royal physicians and their responses. In a simple uniform binding, with page size approximately 10cm wide and 16 cm high, these notebooks are catalogued as A–O (there is a single notebook for I/J), spanning the period 27 October 1810 -10 May 1812, with some gaps. Those gaps are supplied by Add. MSS. 54203-54206, later acquired by the British Museum in 1967; their binding, layout and paper show that they belong with the Add. MS. 41733 sequence. Closely related to all these is a much longer sequence of documents (Add. MSS. 41696-41732), which also record daily bulletins and transcribe relevant materials. This sequence was compiled by several hands, chiefly, in the period under consideration, by Physician-in-Extraordinary Matthew Baillie; occasionally we find Willis’s writing (always in longhand) appearing. For convenience, these documents are referred to below as the ‘registers’ sequence as a simple way of distinguishing them from the notebooks.

Since their acquisition, Willis’s notebooks have hardly been hidden to students of the King’s reign: one was displayed in an exhibition at the Museum in 1977, and a plate of a (longhand) page featured in Christopher Wright’s *George III* (2005) in the British Library’s ‘Historic Lives’ series, for example. But they have not been examined in any scrupulous detail before. In the first four notebooks (A–D), covering 27 October 1810 – 29 Jan 1811 and 1-9 March 1811, each entry is partly in shorthand. Shorthand also features on f. 10v in notebook L (10 January 1812), recording a detail of the King’s fantasizing, and throughout Add. MS. 54203 (30 January- 28 February 1811), a notebook which fits in sequence between C and D. Very minor use is made of it too on f. 7v of Add. MS. 54206 (July 1811). Notebooks E and O were prepared with header dates by Willis but never came to have some entries written up; the former contains a single sheet (inserted at f. 23) of rough diary notes for the period 22-31 July 1811, which he may have intended to copy, albeit as a substitute for longer entries. The folded single sheet transcribed in Appendix 1 was probably detached from a different type of notebook now lost.

Often more perception than actuality, the indecipherability of doctors’ handwriting is a longstanding target of jest, even scorn. The stereotype stems from the layperson’s inability to comprehend readily the plethora of prescriptions’ contracted forms (themselves a type of shorthand), particularly in a time when doctors used Latin and prescribed in scruples and drachms denoted by apothecary symbols. The notebooks abound in examples. Willis tended to adopt a more formal, while abbreviated, approach in registering prescription make-up than the writers of the equivalent records in the registers sequence. Hence instead of Baillie’s ‘Lemon juice’ prescribed on 31 October 1810, Willis refers to ‘succ. lim.’, and instead of Baillie’s ‘Emetic Tartar’ or ‘Tartariz’d Ant[jmony]’ on 17-18 January 1811 he records ‘Ant. Tart’.

Folios 2r and 8r of Notebook D, transcribed in Appendix 4 below, give a flavour of this highly condensed style of prescription layout. However, these notebooks are anything but cacographic: in them Willis’s shorthand, like his longhand, is neat and deliberated. Furthermore, on occasion he supplied longhand over a shorthand word (in rare instances the longhand is a correction), indicating that he intended to return to the document to reread it and that he lacked confidence in his abilities to do so otherwise; reading shorthand is invariably harder than writing it. Adequate space was usually left between the lines to enable insertion without undue squeezing or size reduction. This concern for accurate rechecking and recording of source detail is revealed by some small documentary details. Take, for example, one instance in Add. MS. 41734, f. 22, a copy in shorthand and longhand of a letter of 8 November 1810 from Lord Westmorland to Perceval reporting the ‘very favourable Judgement’ of Willis’s brother about the King’s condition, the original of which survives bound in the same volume (ff. 18-19). Interlineal correction in the transcript of the word ‘those’ in shorthand to the word ‘more’ in longhand (‘... he has not now had the opportunity of doing those/more things ...’) shows Willis rereading and correcting his copy carefully against the source text. The slip, perfectly understandable given Westmorland’s unclear handwriting, might so easily have otherwise stood, as both words make perfect sense in context. A similar piece of evidence that

9 Add. MSS. 41696, f. 5r; 41733C, f. 3r; 41696, ff 88r, 89r; 41733C, ff. 17r, 18r.
Willis wanted to adhere closely to an original was his placing small raised numerals above words to indicate that the order of adjectives in the originally written phrase ‘generally silent and quiet’ needed amendment to ‘generally quiet and silent’.

Neatness is one of four main reasons why Willis’s shorthand has not proved hard to decipher, after some initial headaches. The second reason is that it is usually surrounded by a fair smattering of longhand words, aiding contextualization. (In the transcriptions in the Appendices, the presence of longhand is indicated by underlining. If somewhat unsightly, this is intended to convey a flavour of the mingling of longhand and shorthand in the manuscripts.) The third is that many of the details occur repeatedly across daily bulletin entries; there were ample grounds for Lord Auckland’s criticism of the doctors’ bulletins as being ‘comprized in an artificial ringing of changes of about twenty words’. Though it was not realized from the outset by the present decipherer (hence the headaches), the fourth, and most crucial, is that comparison with the longhand entries of equivalent dates in the notebooks and the registers soon establishes that they are very closely related indeed in their content. Hence the former furnish an invaluable key to any shorthand words which are not readily apparent in the latter, helping to determine the shorthand’s full alphabet, its means of character linking, and its abbreviation methods.

Superficial comparison might have led anyone consulting these manuscripts without knowing the shorthand into assuming that Willis’s notebooks were actually an earlier version of material transcribed by Baillie and others or conversely that Willis was simply copying directly from the registers material for his own use. Detailed comparison of the notebooks with the registers sequence establishes that while much of the material appears to be closely duplicated, there are numerous variants. The vast majority of these are of minor kinds, typified by the following examples: ‘one o Clock’/’one’; ‘Restraint employed for the first time this night’/’Restraint employed this night for the first time’; ‘in search of’/’in the search of’; ‘most willingly shall’/’shall most willingly’; ‘His Pulse’/’P’; ‘in attendance upon’/’attending’. Such variants occur throughout, in both shorthand and longhand. Punctuation differences are widespread, with the notebooks tending to be more sparing in its use. That must not be taken to indicate the notebooks are a ‘rougger’ earlier version: many of the variants might be taken to point to the reverse, for example the notebooks’ more consistent layout in dating entries and according them days of the week. Far more importantly, there are assorted cases where material occurs in one of the notebooks which is not present in the registers sequence, and vice versa. While usually fairly brief, the scope and nature of these cases indicate that other source texts were employed in the course of compilation and transcription: evidently there is a more complex, mediated textual relationship between the two sequences of manuscripts than might at first appear, something that further editorial work on the Willis papers must attempt to tease out. A further pointer to this is sometimes the different ordering of information within equivalent entries; 15 November 1810 is a good example. (In this entry, incidentally, the phrase expanding on how the King’s conversation was ‘irrelevant’ – ‘viz. about some lady he had loved and was to marry’ – is censored by crossing through in Baillie’s writing in Add. MS. 41696 (seemingly by the writer himself), but preserved unscathed in Willis’s shorthand.)

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10 Add. MS. 54203, f. 28r. (The equivalent entry in Add. MS. 54202, f. 39r has ‘quiet and generally silent’, indicating that this was not the source text.)

11 Not supplying a ready means of distinguishing longhand from shorthand is arguably a shortcoming of the ‘clear’ text presented by William Matthews and Robert Latham in the now standard edition of the best known of all shorthand manuscripts, Samuel Pepys’s diary.


13 Add. MS. 41696, f. 5v /41733A, f. 3r; 41696, f. 6r /41733A, f. 5v; 41696, f. 11r /41733A f. 8v; 41696, f. 12r /41733 A, f. 9r; 41696, f. 33r /41733A, f. 24r. The longhand P is regularly used by Willis for ‘pulse’.

14 Add. MS. 41696, f. 24r /41733A, f. 16r. A similar case of censorship is ‘Q—’ which is overwritten in Add. MS. 41696, f. 6 (‘He conceived that it was his marriage night, and he was searching for the Q—’); in Willis’s Notebook A the shorthand gives ‘Queen’, undeleted (f. 6r).
Appendix 2 tabulates the more significant instances of where material present in shorthand (or a passage of mixed shorthand and longhand) in Notebooks A-C and L does not appear in the registers sequence. One aspect of these differences is the recording of the name of the physician who ‘sat up’ on a particular night. Willis’s notebooks furnish more information in this regard from November, helpful in building a fuller picture of events day-to-day and clarifying certain responsibilities. Some of these show Willis at pains to record his own whereabouts and his part in proceedings, sometimes adding a short detail accordingly on a page verso, facing the main body entry for the day. (Some of this information was originally written in pencil, and subsequently gone over in ink.) But it is not always the case that, where there is a difference, the notebook carries a fuller entry. An example of the reverse is the entry in Notebook A for 13 November 1810 where, perhaps surprisingly, we find nothing paralleling Baillie’s recording in the equivalent registers document that the King ‘took some tea and toast in the night’ and ‘Restraint taken off this day about One O Clock.’

A gap in the registers sequence between 27 January and 1 July (partially compensated for by Add. 41697, a volume of transcripts of documents during the period compiled by Francis Willis) means that there is nothing here with which to compare the contents of Notebook D. Therefore a full transcription of that notebook has been supplied in Appendix 4.

This article has concentrated on how Willis used his Mavoresque shorthand; the question remains: why did he? The answer is not quite clear. Shorthand had long been employed by members of the medical profession and by Mavor’s time there was increasing targeting of medical students by stenographers; surviving instances of shorthand use for medical lecture notes from the period are widespread. A major benefit of shorthand was assisting towards writing to-the-moment, fundamental in contexts such as taking down sermons and speeches in an age before mechanized sound recording. Although strict verbatim reporting remained largely the fantasy of stenographers’ promotional copy, it is easy to see how, to members of the medical profession, the prospect of using shorthand to preserve aspects of their first-hand observations would have been appealing. But there is nothing to indicate that Willis looked to his shorthand in the same way as the general practitioner David Hartley had looked to John Byrom’s system in the eighteenth century, or the neurologist William Gowers was to look to Isaac Pitman’s later in the nineteenth. This is not to say that Willis did not; but the shorthand in the materials under discussion appears to be that of a careful, novice user, not that of a practised speedwriter. (The only material resembling anything like transcription to-the-(near)-moment in the notebooks is actually in longhand: a loose sheet (f. 28) inserted before Willis’s entry for 27 November 1810 in Notebook A. Pencilled in haste – with three insertions in ink by Henry Halford – this highly intriguing, only partially legible, document warrants further investigation elsewhere, as it captures some of the King’s actual conversation with those around him, very much according with the description ‘irrelevant’ that his doctors were wont to give it.) Secrecy is another reason why some people wrote shorthand, particularly prior to the mid-nineteenth century. By using shorthand Willis indeed could have prevented ready reading by any prying eyes; after all, the material was highly sensitive, as it dealt with the King and his family. But as noticed earlier, the particular method he used is relatively straightforward to crack, especially in contexts where there is much surrounding longhand. Besides, the content of notebooks A-D does not seem to warrant any more secrecy than that of the remaining notebooks.

It seems more likely, then, that more mundane factors to do with the transcriber’s workload came into play. A simple instance of this is the shorthand contained in a mainly longhand transcript of a letter Willis wrote at Windsor Castle to William Heberden in July 1811, where it is deployed merely for some standard words: ‘The ... has had a very bad ... His Majesty this morning in ... an ... therefore we ... very ... to ... His Majesty ...’. Space-saving even more than speed was probably Willis’s motive for using shorthand in this particular case; it helped his transcription keep neatly to the confines of the page. But if such cases (a contrast with the more sustained use of shorthand we

15 Add. MS. 41696, f. 19r.
16 BL, Add. MS. 54206, f. 7v.
see in the Appendix 1 document) seem trivial, it is worth remembering that at this time shorthand was hardly standard office practice; arguably it continued to be a cutting-edge writing technology and as such had the power to interest any man or woman of ingenuity. It may be quite simply that Willis was using his transcription as a simple way to gain practice in it simultaneously. If far more manuscript evidence needs exploration before we can gain a fuller purchase upon the nature and extent of Willis’s shorthand use and its context, we can be fairly confident it was an interest he in turn passed on to his even more ingenious son and namesake.17

Appendices

The following editorial practices are adopted:

1. Words written in longhand are underlined. In cases where a single longhand letter is used for an abbreviation, such as P. for Pulse or H. for Heberden, the longhand letter is underlined and a silent expansion provided (removing any abbreviation point after the letter), hence: Heberden, Pulse. If several longhand letters are used for an abbreviated word, the expansion is given with any abbreviation stop removed, e.g. Phy, has been transcribed as Physicians. Otherwise, all material is transcribed from shorthand.
2. Caret marks are used to denote ‘material placed above the line’, aside from superscript letters used in abbreviating longhand words. The latter are lowered to the line, removing any dot underneath a letter.
3. Some punctuation and numerals are supplied [in square brackets] to aid clarity. Other <editorial insertions> are supplied in italics in angled brackets. Illegible deleted words are indicated by <deletion>. Legible deleted words are indicated by a strikethrough: word.
4. Willis’s longhand spelling is preserved. Where two words are clearly separated (e.g. some time) rather than one, whether in longhand or shorthand, they are written as two.
5. Following Mavor, Willis usually used virgules as full stops in his shorthand. No attempt has been made to preserve a distinction between virgules and ‘normal’ stops in this transcription, for none seems to have been intended.

Appendix 1: Transcription of BL, Add. MS. 41734, ff. 11r-12r

Nov. 8 Thursday –

The King passed a restless night with only half an hour’s sleep. Dr Heberden sat up. Soon after breakfast Sir Henry Halford reverted to the signature of the bulletin[.] He put it to me to consider the feeling of the family and the consequence which would <deletion> arise for the bulletin getting into the French papers.18 I told him in reply that I presumed that His Majesty’s servants had fully considered these matters and as I had their authority for the signature I did not feel at liberty to decline it. I then showed him again Mr Perceval’s letter who being peremptory the matter dropped. The King has been highly delirious all day refusing all sustenance. At a quarter past six he fell asleep and slept three and a quarter hours. He then took some nourishment and

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17 See e.g. CUL, Add. MS. 7574. John Willis Clark commented on Willis junior’s extensive use of ‘a species of shorthand, to which he alone could have supplied the key’ (Robert Willis, The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge, and of the Colleges of Cambridge and Eton, ed. John Willis Clark (Cambridge, 1886), vol. i, p. xxiii. For the record, the shorthands used by father and son have little if anything in common with the early seventeenth-century century system devised by Edmond Willis.
18 The shorthand is ‘{ptrs}’, probably a scribal slip for ‘{pprs}’.
Fig. 1. BL, Add. MS. 41734, f. 11r.
showed his tongue. In the course of the day Mr Bott\(^{19}\) told me that Clarke\(^{20}\) had called to offer his service. He talked about the absurd prejudices which the King formed after his illnesses. He spoke also of the zeal and attention of Dr John\(^{21}\) in the last illness. To day I saw Mr Brawn\(^{22}\) for the first time. I wrote the letter to Mr. Bryand.\(^{23}\)

**Nov. 7. Wednesday.**

After the consultation this morning I went in a post chaise and four horses to Downing Street. I found Mr Perceval who was just arrived from Ealing.\(^{24}\) I represented to him the reception I had met with which had exceeded my expectation but that when my returning into the Physicians room[,] having stayed behind to give direction to Mr. Bryand[,] Sir Henry Halford asked me what I thought about putting my name to the bulletin.\(^{25}\) I replied that I had not thought about the matter and as I had received no instruction upon the subject I presumed it would take place in course. Dr Heberden said he had hoped that I should have voluntarily declined it. I replied that I was not aware that I was authorized to decline it. The ministers had sent me as I presumed for their own satisfaction in the first place and ultimately for the satisfaction of the public. That I could not see how that satisfaction was to be obtained if my name did not appear. That there was no difficulty in [17]88 to my father's signature and the reason why our signature was withheld in [18]01 and Dr Simmons's\(^{26}\) in [18]04 was because the matter had not been notified to Parliament, and the King was supposed to be doing business the whole time. In this attack the nature of the malady was notorious and it was also notorious that I was at Windsor.\(^{27}\) What then could be the object of my concealment when I was liable to be dragged behind the curtain at any minute. That however I had no objection to decline it though not till I could see Mr Perceval and take his pleasure upon it. Mr Perceval thanked me for the quiet manner in which I had conducted myself. He said if he had intended secrecy he would have mentioned it to me. On the contrary he was surprised at not seeing my name the night before. He would see the rest of the ministers and send me a letter before five. He then read the second answer to Mr Perceval's letter on my introduction. His Majesty strongly protests against the introduction of a person of the most obnoxious\(^{28}\) description after His Majesty had chosen His own physician. You see[,] said Mr Perceval, the objection is only against the description not the person itself. We then talked about the case\(^{29}\) and the loss of time from the improper deliberation. The Solicitor General\(^{30}\) was with Mr Perceval when I called and the Attorney General\(^{31}\) and several noblemen called but they were desired to wait. The letter arrived soon after five and I arrived at Windsor before eight. I put my name to the attaching bulletin and all seemed right. When I was in town I went to Mr Burrows\(^{32}\) and sent two men in addition to Mr Bryands.\(^{33}\)

**Nov. 6. Tuesday.**

Soon after 9 a.m. I set off in a post chaise and four with Salter\(^{34}\) and called upon Lord Westmorland\(^{35}\) and reached Ealing at twenty minutes past ten. Mr Perceval read me several letters which he

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19 John Bott (1779-1832), George III’s Principal Page of the Backstairs.
20 Probably John Clark (fl. 1793-1812), Page of the Backstairs.
21 Robert’s brother John.
22 John Brawne (fl. 1795-1818), Senior Clerk to the Treasury.
23 Everard Augustus Brande (1776-1868), Royal Apothecary.
24 Samuel Foarte Simmons (1750-1813), physician to St Luke’s Hospital for Lunatics.
25 Willis also writes the word in longhand above the shorthand outline. Cf. the references in n. 10 above.
26 Or possibly ‘cause’.
27 Thomas Plumer (1753-1824).
28 Vicary ‘Vinegar’ Gibbs (1751-1820).
29 George Man Burrows (1771-1841), at this time a general practitioner, who was later to specialize in mental illness.
30 Identity not established.
31 John Fane (1759-1841), 10th Earl of Westmorland, Lord Privy Seal.
thought it necessary to arm me.\textsuperscript{32} The letter to the Queen expressed the unanimous determination of the Cabinet to send some person who had attended His Majesty in a former illness and in selecting Dr Robert Willis they hoped that they had chosen the least obnoxious person. I brought a letter to Dr Reynolds,\textsuperscript{33} Sir Henry Halford, Dr Heberden, and Mr Dundas. Besides these I had a letter to Lord Arden,\textsuperscript{34} enclosing the Queen’s. One to Colonel Taylor.\textsuperscript{35} One to housekeeper and one to Mr. Bryand. Thus armed I left Mr Perceval at twelve and reached Windsor soon after two. I averted Dr Forster Piggot\textsuperscript{36} who showed me to Lord Arden’s apartments. He found Colonel Taylor who took the letter to Dr Reynolds and the Colonel returned and showed me to the Physicians room in the Castle. We met Sir Henry Halford who expressed great pleasure in seeing me. So did they all. Some conversation then took with Mr Bryand who had been placed about the King by Dr Heberden. We then went to the King and found him in the same state as in [18]01. Pulse under 80 sullen, silent, blowing, verging towards delirium. On leaving the room a conversation took place respecting the signature to the bulletin. I concluded it by declining it that night and promising to see Mr Perceval the next morning[.]

Nov. 5, Monday.

Lord Westmorland called at 5.30 and said that Mr Perceval was not returned from Windsor and that the Cabinet would sit again at nine. In the mean time the Physicians had sent a very favourable report in hope of defeating the Cabinet but they would be foiled. Soon after Lord Westmorland left me a note came from Mr Perceval desiring to see me as soon as I could. I went directly to Downing Street and after waiting a few minutes I was desired to go to Lord Liverpool.\textsuperscript{37}

Appendix 2 : Comparison of Add. MS. 41733 notebooks A, B, C with Add. MS. 41696: tables of main additions and variants

These tables transcribe shorthand (or mixed shorthand and longhand) material in the notebooks which is not present in Add. MS. 41696, the equivalent volume in the ‘registers’ sequence covering the dates spanned by them. In cases where the latter records something similar, this is transcribed in italics in the column furthest right, with the corresponding folio reference.

(i) Notebook A

| 30 Oct 1811 | f. 2r | His conversation very irrelevant and unconnected[.] He has had 2 motions within the last 12 hours | His conversation unconnected, and he is in good spirits – (f. 3r) |

\textsuperscript{32} For drafts and copies of some of these letters, see CUL, Add. MSS. 8713/IV/B/12, 13 (to Briand); 14, 16 (to Halford, Heberden and Dundas); 15 (to Reynolds).

\textsuperscript{33} Henry Reynolds (1745-1811), MD, FRCP, who had attended the King during earlier periods of mental illness.

\textsuperscript{34} Charles Perceval (1756-1840), 2nd Baron Arden, Lord of the Bedchamber.

\textsuperscript{35} Herbert Taylor (1775-1839), Private Secretary to the King.

\textsuperscript{36} William Foster-Pigott (1749-1827), Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the King.

\textsuperscript{37} Robert Banks Jenkinson (1770-1828), 2nd Earl Liverpool, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.
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\(^{38}\) Identities not established.  
\(^{39}\) sic; probably omission of a time detail.  
\(^{40}\) John Jeffreys Pratt, Earl Camden (1759-1840), Lord President of the Council.  
\(^{41}\) John Scott, 1st Earl of Eldon (1751-1838), Lord Chancellor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notebook</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f. 30r</td>
<td>... night and upon the whole is much the same ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. 30v</td>
<td>Dr Willis sat up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. 31v</td>
<td>Sir Henry Halford sat up who began a system of quiet this morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Notebook B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notebook</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dec</td>
<td>f. 1v</td>
<td>Mr Dundas sat up I and Sir Henry dined with the equerries Gen Cartright(^4) in waiting the Dean of Windsor,(^4) Major Talbot, Mr. Watson Major Price(^4) &amp; Col. Taylor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dec</td>
<td>f. 2v</td>
<td>restraint taken off (\text{Taken off (f. 40r)})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dec</td>
<td>f. 3v</td>
<td>Sir Henry sat up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dec</td>
<td>f. 4v</td>
<td>Dr Willis sat up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Dec</td>
<td>f. 5v</td>
<td>Sir Henry Halford sat up and (&lt;\text{Lord Liverpool and Mr Ryder}&gt;) conversed with Sir Henry Halford and myself The King began to be angry with me this evening after parting from me in the best humour. He imagined that his bed had been altered to tease him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Dec</td>
<td>f. 6v</td>
<td>Mr Dundas sat up Sir Henry and myself dined with equerries yesterday Gen. Cartright, Manners,(^4) Major Price,(^4) Col Taylor and Capn. Marshall(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Dec</td>
<td>f. 7v</td>
<td>The leeches could not be applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dec</td>
<td>f. 8v</td>
<td>Dr Willis “Heberden” sat up I went to town today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Dec</td>
<td>f. 9v</td>
<td>Dr Willis sat up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) William Cartwright (d. 1827), equerry.
\(^4\) Edward Legge (1767-1827).
\(^4\) William Price (1749-1817), former Equerry, and Vice Chamberlain to Queen Caroline.
\(^4\) Robert Manners (fl. 1783-1812), Chief Equerry and Clerk Martial.
\(^4\) William Price (1749-1817), former Equerry, and Vice Chamberlain to Queen Caroline.
10 Dec  f. 10v  Sir Henry Halford sat up  
Dined with the equerries

12 Dec  f. 12v  The King send for me to day to apologise  
for his conduct to me since Wednesday last  
He <i.e. Dundas> remained in the  
Physician’s room with Dr Heberden.

17 Dec  f. 17v  Sir Henry sat up

19 Dec  f. 19v  Mr Dundas sat up

20 Dec  f. 20v  Dr Willis sat up
Dr Willis dined with the equerries.  
Cartright, Northey, Col. Menzies, Taylor.

21 Dec  f. 21v  Sir Henry Halford sat up  
Sir Henry dined with the equerries

22 Dec  f. 23r  anger was excited against Sir Henry  
Halford  
anger was excited  
(f. 60v)

24 Dec  f. 25r  between the shoulders  
The blister was not applied.  
above his shoulders  
(f. 63r)

27 Dec  f. 28r  Dr Willis first saw them <i.e. Ryder and  
Dundas> and then Sir H. Halford went to  
them.  
Dr Bailie sat up

30 Dec  f. 31r  in the Blenheim Tower  
beyond his  
bedroom (f. 69r)

(iii) Notebook C

3 Jan  f. 2v  I went to Town this morning and took Dr  
Reynolds in the chaise. Saw Sir Thos. and  
returned to Windsor in the evening.

5 Jan  f. 5r  No restraint necessary  
N.B. Not enough to require restraint (f. 76r)

8 Jan  f. 7v  I went to Town this morning with Salter  
and returned about 9 ½. Called on Lord  
Westmorland.

8 Jan  f. 8r  Pulse 84  
<no reading given>  
(f. 79r)

9 Jan  f. 9r  5 hours  
four hours (f. 80r)

13 Jan  f. 12v  I went to Cranford Bridge this morning  
at 10 ½ <i.e. 10.30> and returned to the  
Castle at ¼ 4 <i.e. 3.45>.

13 Jan  f. 14r  Lord Camden was at the lodge this  
morning and saw Drs. Heberden and  
Willis.  
Lord Camden was at Windsor and saw  
Dr Heberden and  
Dr Willis (f. 84r)
Appendix 3: Shorthand in Add. MS. 41, 733 Notebook L

These two paragraphs contain the only shorthand in this notebook. There is no equivalent to them in Add. MS. 41700, the volume in the ‘registers’ sequence which includes this date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Jan 1812</th>
<th>f. 10v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sir Henry Halford took it &lt;some salts in orange juice&gt; to him. He kissed the cup and asked how much he would give to two imaginary ladies whom he mentioned. Sir Henry said the same quantity[,] the King then said he would take it for them. He then asked Sir Henry to bring the rolling chair which Pemberton[^48] had refused and was angry that I will not let him bring it. I said the King will think no more about it but Sir Henry waits[^49] an hour in the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 4: Transcription of Add. MS. 41,733 Notebook D

All versos are blank, except for 8v and 9v. Those, together with f. 10r, contain a transcript of questions about the King’s health proposed by the Queen’s Council on 9 March 1811 and the physicians’ answers to them. Aside from a very few minor variants, that material matches the longhand transcript in Francis Willis’s hand in BL, Add. MS. 41697, ff 10r-11r, and so is not included here.

[f. 1r]

March 1, 1811

Bulletin. The King remains in the same state in which he was before. His Majesty slept last night about 2 ½ hours and while awake he was silent but employed himself a good deal in adjusting the bed clothes. One motion in the night rather pale. Pulse 80. His conversation this morning proper.

Dr. Willis sat up

Pers. in usu pil. Mitte Sodæ Tart. j. 50

His Majesty was visited by the Queen and Princess Sophia for a hour. The conversation better than yesterday. His Majesty walked between 2 and 3 hours on the terrace with Drs. Willis and Baillie. His conversation less good. When alone with Mr. Bott his Majesty spoke of his usual error about E. 51

[f. 2r]

March 2

Bulletin. His Majesty goes on well.

The King slept 5 ½ hours and appears very well this morning.

Nothing of delusion has been observed since his conversation with Mr. Bott yesterday at about 4 p.m. (except a slight allusion when he went to bed)

[^48]: Christopher Pemberton (1765-1822), Physician-in-Extraordinary.
[^49]: ‘Waits’ is a tentative reading of the shorthand which appears to be {wds}.
[^50]: Continue the pills; send 1 ounce of tartrate of soda.
[^51]: Lady Pembroke (Elizabeth Herbert (nee Spencer), Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery (1737-1831), courtier), with whom George was infatuated and to whom at times he believed he was married.
March 1, 1811

Friday

B. 1c removes 0 1 0 state 0

r or 8

L 0 7 4 1 9 2 2 6 7

0 7 am
de

r or silent 9 employed 0 2 0 or deal

in adjusting 12 clothes 0 one 0 1

y & half. P. 0 0 0 0 0 0

v Willis 7 4

Per. in 0 con 0 rad.
belle 0 0 0 0

BL, Add. MS. 41,733 Notebook D, f. 1r.
His Majesty has had a **common Cold** in his head for the last 24 hours. **one greenish stool** in the night and **one** this morning.

**Extr. Anthem. gr. xii**

**Extr. Pap. gr. x.**

Rhei gr iij – pil. ii. s. 7. m. & h. s. 52

The **whole** of the Queens Council were at **Windsor** to day and examined the Physicians and Mr. Dundas severally respecting the less *favourable state* of the King during the last 3 *days* and the propriety of *making any change* at present in the attendance when it was determined that every thing should be conducted as before *till further notice.*

The King walked with the **Dukes of York and Cumberland[.]**53 He showed no delusion through the day but was more *irritable* than usual.

At night gr ½ of **Ant. tart.** 54 was taken with his pill.

---

[f. 3r]

**March 3. Sunday**

Bulletin. His Majesty **remains** in the same state in which he has been during the last few days. The King slept 4 hours in the night. He was this morning *busied in arranging* his bed clothes and as soon as the Physicians went in to him he expressed considerable anger that no steps had been taken by the Queen’s Council. This however subsided entirely in a short time and the day was passed *calmly* and well. The Prince of Wales was with the King about ¾ of an hour. Mr. Dundas sat up last night. The same medicines were repeated. The cold in His Majesty’s head better.

During the last time that the King was left alone this day we are informed that he *spoke* of his attachment and marriage. Nothing of the kind occurred on his retiring to bed.

---

[f. 4r]

**March 4. Monday.**

Bulletin. His Majesty is going on well. The King slept 5 hours. He *talked* a good deal from about half past 4. Had **one stool** in the morning. Conversation very good. Pulse 80. **Catarrh almost gone.**

Sir H. Halford sat up.

---

[f. 5r]

**March 5. Tuesday.**

Bulletin. His Majesty is nearly in the same state to day in which he was yesterday.

Mr. Battiscombe55 sat up

His Majesty slept 6 hours. He had 3 motions in the night one of which was of a *pale* colour. More of irritation and irascibility in his manner this morning than usual, but no error when conversing with his medical attendants. Some reference however to E ^both^ in the morning and when his Majesty went to dinner. The Pills as before

His Majesty walked on the **terrace** with Drs Heberden and Baillie and Mr Dundas. His conversation without error but sometimes trifling. His Majesty played at Backgammon this evening with Dr. Baillie and Mr. Dundas. He was in too high spirits. Some *reference* with Mr. Dundas to the usual error.

---

52 12 grains of camomile extract, 10 grains of poppy extract, 3 grains of rhubarb: take 2 pills at 7 in the morning and at bedtime.

53 His sons, Frederick (1763-1827) and Ernest Augustus (1771-1851).

54 Half a grain of tartrate of antimony.

The Shorthand of Robert Willis, Physician-in-Extraordinary to King George III

[f. 6r]

March 6. Wednesday.

Bulletin.

His Majesty continues to go on well. The King slept 4 ¼ hours and was very still and silent, had one rather loose motion this morning. His conversation with the Physicians particularly mild and composed.
Pulse 76. The Pills as before.
Dr. Heberden sat up.
The Arch Bishop of Canterbury Duke of Montrose and Lord Aylesford came to Windsor and saw Drs. Baillie Heberden and Willis. In the mean time the King walked along with Mr. Dundas on the terrace and talked of Lady P. There was no further reference to that subject through the day and indeed the whole day was passed particularly well.

[f. 7r]

March 7. Thursday.

Bulletin.

His Majesty is going on favourably. The King slept about 3 ½ hours and scarcely spoke during the night. He had a motion at half past 7 and another between 7 and 8. Conversation with his Physicians not improper but some what irritable in his manner. Pulse 76.
Dr Willis sat up.
The Queen and Princess Elizabeth visited the King at 11 and remained 1 hour with His Majesty. He afterwards walked upon the terrace with Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Willis. Some allusion to E whilst alone with one of the Pages after he returned from walking. The day was otherwise passed free from error.

[f. 8r]

March 8. Friday.

Bulletin. His Majesty continues in the same state in which he was yesterday. The King had only 4 hours sleep in the night but when awake was quiet, talked but little but employed himself much in adjusting the bed clothes. His Pulse this morning 76. He had one small motion of a pale colour at 7 o’Clock this morning and another about 4 in the afternoon of the same kind. His Majesty had some appearance of nervous irritability this morning but that disappeared after he proce and his conversation through the whole of the day has been reasonable and his manner natural. No delusion has been manifested to day.
Sir Henry Halford sat up last night.
Extr. Anthemidis gr. xij.
– Papav. gr. x.
Rhei. contriti
Pulv. febrifugi Jamesiens. â gr iii
Syr. q.s. – pil. ii. 58
The Queen being indisposed did not visit the King this morning but the Princess<ex> Augusta and Mary passed an hour with him and were much gratified by his conversation and manner.

56 Charles Manners-Sutton (1755-1828); James Graham, 3rd Duke of Montrose (1755-1836), Master of the Lord Justice General of Scotland and Master of the Horse; Heneage Finch, 4th Earl of Aylesford (1751-1812), Lord Steward of the Household.
57 Lady Pembroke.
58 12 grains of camomile extract, 10 grains of poppy extract, powdered rhubarb, 3 grains of James’s powder, sufficient syrup – 2 pills.
March 9.

Bulletin. His Majesty has made considerable progress in his recovery and is going on favourably. The King slept 4 hours last night. When awake he was silent but adjusted very much the bed clothes. 2 motions in the morning of a pale colour. Pulse 76. Conversation this morning with his medical attendants good and his manner natural.

Mr. Dundas sat up.

Pers. in usu pil. 59

The Queen and Princess Sophia were with the King. The Dukes of Yorke Cumberland and Cambridge 60 walked with the King on the terrace. All the Council except Lord Ellenborough 62 met the medical attendants to day when some alteration in the plan of medical attendance and other management of the King was proposed and approved. 62 The ArchBishop of Canterbury had an audience of the King and was much satisfied with the interview. 9

59 Continue the pills.
60 George III’s son Adolphus (1774-1801).
61 Edward Law, 1st Baron Ellenborough (1750-1818), Lord Chief Justice.
62 See BL, Add. MS. 41697, fols 11v-12r.