

# ***An Illustrated Companion to The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield***



**WITH SELECTIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT NOW IN  
PRESERVATION AT WIGAN ARCHIVES**

By

The Makerfield Rambler

**Part 5 : 1667-1674**  
*(This edition: May 2024)*

**1667**



“The businesse was brought on against me with a greate deale of furie..., and Mr Earle, the minister of that place, interposing a few words on my behalfe to sweeten them, had like to have been committed for his labour, as he soon after writ to me”.\*\*

Peter Earle is said to have “left for a better preferment” after the amount yielded by the minister's salt rights at Northwich was reduced to just £2 10s per annum, and first occurs as “Peter Earle, Clerk, Curate of Wigan” on 14 July 1663.\*\*\* His house on Standishgate was evidently the setting for a hearing by Bishop George Hall of a dispute between the Bankes and Pennington families over rights to a pew in the parish church.\*\*\*\*

Mr Earle makes one further appearance in the Diary. On 6 August 1667 Roger Lowe “*went with William Hasleden to Wiggan to speake to Mr. Earle to marry hime*”. Whether anything came of this meeting is not clear, for there is no record of a marriage licence being granted to William Hasleden at this time and by 14 March 1668 Mr Earle had died. The particulars of a deathbed will are given by his descendant, T Algernon Earle, in “Earle of Allerton Tower” (Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches., Vol. XLII /N. S. Vol. VI, 1890). “Commending his soule into th'ande of Allmightie God, ... and his bodie to be buried in the Parishe Churche at Wigan”, he lists and provides for the disposal of his interests in land and other property at Wigan and elsewhere which, taken together, mark him out as a man of some substance. The will concludes by reserving “the great table in my hall in my house at Wigan” which, the testator directs, “shall not be solde, but pass as an heirloome”. He was survived - but only briefly - by his wife and their two children.

\*Cf. the Duke of York's aside, in Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI (1591), when news is brought to Henry that all his French territories have been lost: “Cold news for me, for I had hope of France, \ As firmly as I hope for fertile England. \ Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud \ And caterpillars eat my leaves away...”.

\*\*“A History of Sir John Deane's Grammar School, Northwich, 1557-1908”, M Cox & L A Hopkins, Manchester UP 1975; “The Life of Adam Martindale” in Chetham Soc. Vol. IV. The school accounts mention payments in 1657 and 1658 for glazing and thatching “Mr Earle's chamber”.

\*\*\*“Marriage Licences Granted Within The Archdeaconry of Chester in the Diocese of Chester: Vol. V, 1661-1667”, in Rec. Soc. Lancs. & Ches. Vol. 65 (1879). He is styled “curat de Abram” in the register entry for his own marriage to Elizabeth Mawdesley on 12 April 1664 but is, again, “clerk, curat de Wigan” when his daughter is baptised on 7 February 1667 (Wigan Archives ref. DP 24/1/2).

\*\*\*\* National Archives ref. PL 10/87: Palatinate of Lancaster: Chancery Court: Depositions, 23 Chas. II.

Shown above are:

-Earle pedigree by T Algernon Earle;

-Heraldic design from the seal of Peter Earle's will. A similar device - “Argent, three pallets Sable; a lion's gamb holding a harpoon point downwards”- was afterwards used by the family at Liverpool;

-A portrait of Peter Earle's nephew, John (1674-1749), as Mayor of Liverpool in 1709;

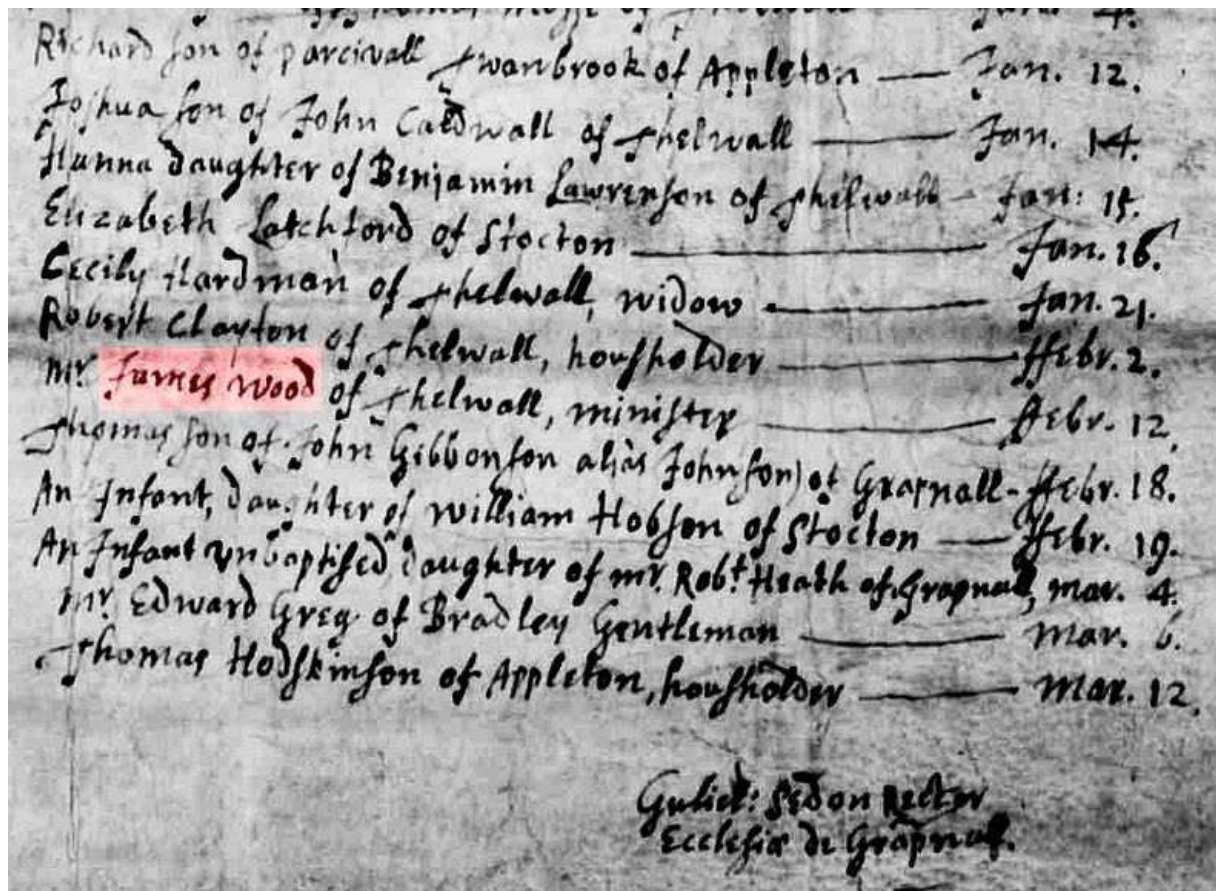
-Charles Bell Birch's bronze statue at Liverpool of their descendant and hero of the Sudan Campaign, Major-General William Earle CB (1833–1885). His father, Sir Hardman Earle, had been given a baronetcy in 1869 on the recommendation of prime minister W E Gladstone;

-Baptismal font of Norman design, believed to have been in the Parish Church of All Saints, Wigan, until 1707 and thus likely to have been used by Peter Earle including at the christenings of his own children, Dorothy (7 February 1667) and Peter (16 July 1668). It was returned to the Church after many years' service as a water butt in the garden at Wigan Hall. See, further, “The Medieval Fonts

of the Hundreds of West Derby and Wirral” in Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches. Vol. 53 (1901).

The photographs were taken on 9 September 2017 (font) and 13 September 2019 (statue).

**“that sad sorrowfull newes of Mr. Woods death”**



[1667, February] 11.—Wednesday. I received that sad sorrowfull newes of Mr. Woods' death..."

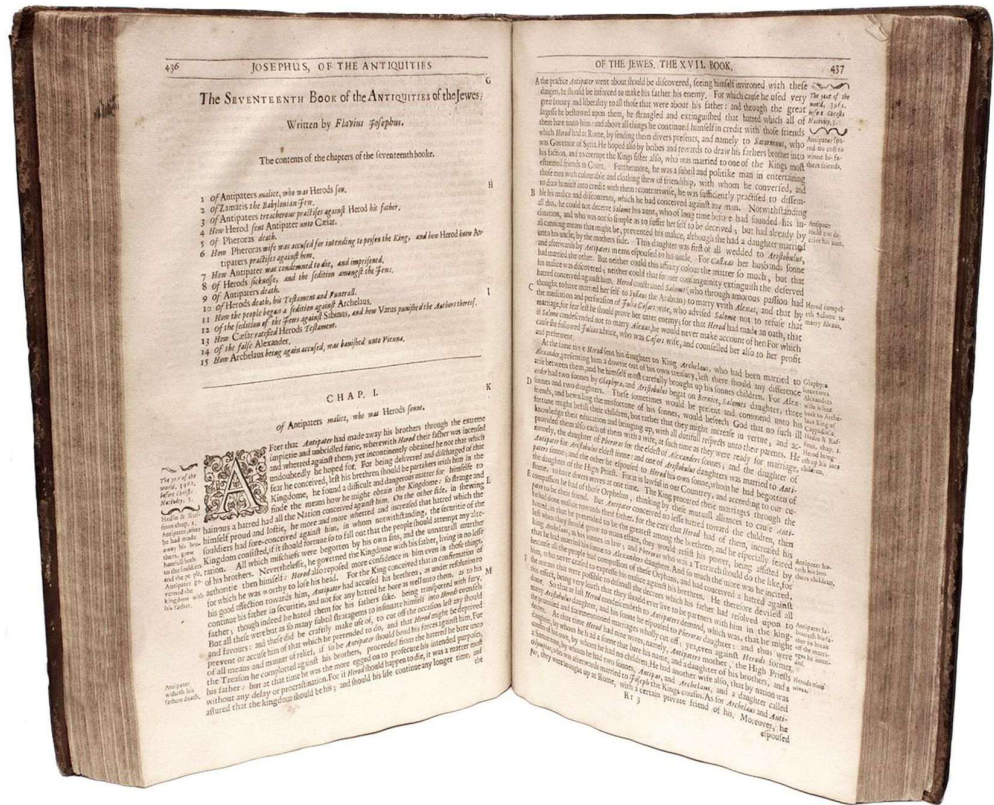
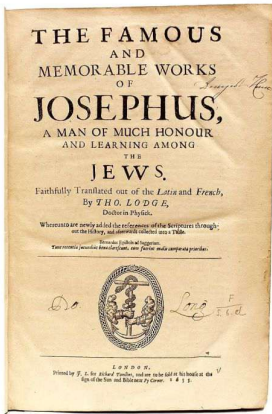
[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Lowe's account of the death of the former Ashton-in-Makerfield minister is supplemented by the following from his list of “such as dyd within My Aprentiship and providentiallie I was cald to the funerall”:

“10 february... Lords day night dyed old Mr James Woodes”.

A corresponding entry in the Bishop's Transcript of the Grappenhall Parish Registers at Cheshire Archives ref. EDB 96, of which an extract is shown here, confirms the burial of “Mr James Wood of Thelwall, Minister” on 12 February 1667. The designation “of Thelwall, Minister” seems to be behind a suggestion on the All Saints Thelwall website that he eventually conformed and was re-engaged by the Anglican church. This, however, would have been wholly out of character and contrary to family tradition; both his son and his grandson were, in their times, leading dissenters. It is also noteworthy that when Roger Lowe attended Thelwall chapel during a visit in February 1664, a “Mr Swetnam” - not James Wood - was in the pulpit. This was possibly the Derbyshire minister Thomas Swetnam, whose licence to preach from his bishop was - per Edmund Calamy's “The Nonconformists's Memorial” (Vol. 1, 1775 edition) - “never recalled”.

**“a booke soe cald concerninge Jewish warrs”**



“[1667, May] 17.—friday. I went to Warrington and sold Josephus[,] a booke soe cald concerninge Jewish warrs...”

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

“The History of the Jewish War against the Romans” (also called in English “The Wars of the Jews”, “The Jewish War” etc) is the earliest known work by the first century Romano-Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus. The first English translations of Josephus' writings, based on earlier Latin and French translations from Greek texts possibly approved by Josephus himself, were made by Thomas Lodge. First published in 1602, Lodge's “The Famous and Memorable Works of Josephus, A Man of Much Honour and Learning Among The Jews” combined the 7-volume “History of the Jewish War” with a further 24 books by, attributed to or about Josephus. The result is described by Freja Cox Jensen in The 16<sup>th</sup> Century Journal (Vol. 49 No. 1/Spring 2018) as

“demonstrably a high-value product, aimed at a market of educated and aspiring members of the upper social orders”,

and by Erin Kelly in the same volume as presenting to English readers

“the works of Josephus as a defense of Catholic understandings of Christian history and theology..., defending the canonicity of the books of Maccabees and the authority of Catholic traditions of interpreting Scripture years before the Douai Old Testament was available to make the case more directly”.

A transcript of the first edition is available at <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A04680.0001.001>.

Despite what might be considered their limited appeal, the Lodge translations had run to more than

twenty editions by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For Roger Lowe, however, it would seem that the "*booke soe cald*" - he does not appear to have had a complete set - held only commercial interest.

Shown above are pages from a 1655 printing of "The Famous and Memorable Works..." with (left, below) an imagined likeness of Josephus taken from an edition of the 18<sup>th</sup> century translation of his "Wars of the Jews" by William Whiston.



***“Att Ormskirke I went into church and lookd in Earle Darbyes Tombe”***



*“[1667, July] 15.—Monday. I went to Halsall for to fatch Eles Taylor home but she could not come with me soe I lost my labour. Att Ormskirke I stayd and spent 2d and went into church and lookd in Earle Darbyes Tombe and we came home onely I cald att Holland att one Corles house and gave my horse 4d in ale.”*

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

On the outbreak of the first English Civil War James Stanley, shortly thereafter the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby, declared for the King and was prominent in several military campaigns, most notably against the Parliamentary strongholds of Manchester and Bolton. In July 1642, following the assault on Manchester, Parliament impeached him for “levying war against the King, parliament, and kingdom” in that “he entered Manchester maliciously and treacherously, with force and arms, and in a hostile and warlike manner, and ... did kill, murder, and destroy Richard Percival, linen-webster”. However, it was his role in the “bloody and barbarous massacre” at Bolton on 28 May 1644 that brought him the greatest notoriety. An account by a self-declared eye-witness states that, when the Royalists entered the town,

“nothing heard but kill dead, kill dead, was the word in the town, killing all before them without any respect without the town by their horsemen, pursuing the poore amazed people, killing, stripping and spoiling all they could meet with, nothing regarding the doleful cries of women or children; but some they slashed as they were calling for quarter, others when they had given quarter, many hailed out of their houses to have their brains dasht out in the streets, those that were not dead in the streets already pistoled, slashed, brained or troden under their horses feet, with many insolent blasphemous oaths, curses and challenges to heaven itselfe... But the principal stain of all this cruelty, as is reported , was set off by that strange earle, his ignoble, nay base killing of valiant

Captain Bootle after quarter given”.\*

Another account of the latter incident states that Captain Bootle “before tyme had been a servant to the Earle of Darby at Lathom House... He, a prisoner, hearing that the Earle was in the towne, was desirous to be brought before him hoping (belike) to have found favour with him. The Earle instead of favour drew upon him and run him through with his sword twoo men having the Prisoner by eyther Arme, a cruell and butchery act, not becoming a noble spiritt.”\*\*

The Earl spent the next few years at his home on the Isle of Man, but returned to the mainland to support a reinvigorated Royalist campaign led by the future Charles II. Narrowly avoiding capture after the Battle of Wigan Lane on 25 August 1651, he was apprehended near Nantwich and put on trial at Chester a month later. On 1 October the court declared that “the said James, Earl of Derby, is a Traitor to the Common Wealth of England, and an abettor, encourager, and assister of the declared traitors and enemies thereof, and shall be put to death by severing his head from his body at the market place in the town of Bolton, in Lancashire, upon Wednesday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of this instant October, about the hour of one of the clock of the same day”. To the last he maintained his innocence of the murder of Captain Bootle, but an appeal to the House of Commons Speaker Sir William Lenthall on 11 October did not avail him and sentence was carried out on “a scaffold ... erected not far from the Market Crosse in Boulton and neare unto that place (by all relation) where he slewe Captain Bootle”. The author of “A Discourse of the Warr in Lancashire” goes on to say that, “being taken up by his Servants that attended about him”, the Earl's severed head was “put to his bodye again. And with his Clothes upon him [he] was put into the Coffin, there readie, which had abundance of seedes in it to receive the blood. And he was carried away that night to [Wigan?] and from thence to Ormeskirke there to be buried amongst his Ancestors”\*\*\*.

The Derby Chapel, in the south-east corner of the Parish Church of SS Peter and Paul at Ormskirk, occupies part of what was previously “The Chaurtrie at the alter of o'r Ladye”, founded by subscription in 1366. The will of the 3rd Earl of Derby ordered “the erecting and bylding of one Chappell, and one Monumente and Towmbe at Ormschurtche”. As noted by James Bromley, “his body lay at Lathom House for six weeks in 1572, whilst the burial vault alone was constructed, but the chapel itself was not finished and dedicated, as its heraldry shows, until circa 1575”.\*\*\*

According to Peter Draper, the vault

“is in the centre of the chapel; and, previously to being closed after the funeral of the thirteenth Earl, in July, 1851, was entered by three folding doors but ... is now bricked over... When closed, [it] contained about thirty coffins, but many of them were fast going to decay, and the inscriptions on about sixteen only could be deciphered.... The coffin containing the remains of the illustrious and heroic Countess Charlotte de la Tremouille could not be singled out with certainty but the coffin, or rather the coffins, the one containing the headless body, and the other the head of her beloved and loyal husband - the brave and martyred Earl of Derby - were in a very good state of preservation, but bore no inscriptions, their uncoffin-like shape being their only indication...”.\*\*\*\*

James Bromley recalled that

“before the Stanley vault was sealed up I, when a boy, went down into it and noted that the body of James, 7th Earl of Derby, was in one coffin and his head in another, the ends of both fitting each other at a reverse angle of 45 degrees, indicating that at which the neck had been severed when he was executed in 1651”.\*\*\*

It is now thought more likely - and would be consistent with the account given in “A Discourse of the Warr ...” - that the 7th Earl's head and body were embalmed together in a single coffin and that

the smaller of the two containers served as a receptacle for his entrails.

The following artefacts were also in the Church at the time of Roger Lowe's visit, and would doubtless have caught the ever-curious eye of the diarist:-

(Shown above, top left:) Now situated in the Bickerstaffe Chapel in the north aisle of the Church, the baptismal font of 1661 was, by tradition, given by the 7th earl's widow, Charlotte. Its first use is confirmed by the following entry in the baptismal register now preserved at Lancashire Archives ref. PR 2886/1/3: "2 January 1661[2]. Elizabeth Grise d : William de Ormsk[irk] : Bapt. Being ye First in ye new Font p~. Nath. Heywood". The six faces of the basin show the year of presentation; a crown with the initials "C R" (for "Carolus Rex" - i.e. Charles II); the eagle-and-child emblem of the Earls of Derby; an hour glass; a Latin cross on a three-stepped calvary; and a St Andrew's cross. After occupying various positions within -and, for a while, without- the Church, the font was moved to its present position under the supervision of architect George Pace in 1973. Mr Pace also designed the decorative wooden cover.

(Bottom left and main image:) Several mural bas-reliefs in the Derby Chapel help to date its construction. The relief in the north-east corner of the Chapel, in a curved frame, depicts the arms of Henry Stanley - the 4th earl - as a Knight of the Garter. Taken together with the arms of William Chaderton DD as Archdeacon of Richmond (on the south wall, not shown above), this feature thus puts the date of completion somewhere between 20 May 1574 (when the 4th earl was invested with the insignia of a Garter Knight) and 9 November 1579 (when Dr Chaderton became Bishop of Chester). The eagle-and-child motif can again be seen on the other side of the eastern-most arch in the north wall, above which are the arms of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, afterwards - albeit for seven months only - the 5th earl.

(Right, top and middle:) A pair of marble effigies, both now badly damaged, can be seen either side of the altar in the Derby Chapel. These are understood to represent (top) the first earl with his first wife, Eleanor Neville – sister of the famous Warwick-the-Kingmaker - and (middle) the first earl's second wife, Lady Margaret Beaufort - mother, by a previous husband, of Henry VII - alongside the third earl. The latter's will of 1572 had mandated the relocation of the first three effigies from Burscough Priory and the creation of the fourth. The male figures are dressed in armour emblazoned with the Stanley family insignia. The females wear near-identical shift dresses and necklaces, but the one believed to represent Lady Margaret Beaufort also has a coronet. The males' legs are missing from the knees downward, whilst the females' arms have been broken off entirely. As Mr Bromley observes, the damage must have been inflicted after 8 April 1665 as the effigies are shown intact in drawings made by Gregory King for Sir William Dugdale on 23 September 1664 and verified by Sir William on his return to Ormskirk the following year.\*\*\*

(Right, bottom:) Two panelled tomb-chests or "pontombs", originally in the Bickerstaffe Chapel, can be seen alongside the south wall of the Derby Chapel. The heraldic designs on the tombs indicate that both were made about 1595 by Margaret Stanley of Bickerstaffe and her husband, Henry Stanley of Cross Hall, to commemorate Margaret's parents - Peter Stanley of Hooton and Elizabeth Scarisbrick - and grandparents - James Scarisbrick and Margaret Atherton of Bickerstaffe. A description of a now-vanished brass that once adorned the Scarisbrick tomb survives in the Bodleian Library (Towneley MSS), Oxford:

"In ye Church of Ormschirche in ye Co. Lancaster, on a tomb- 'Of Charity pray for ye soules of James Scarisbricke, of Bickerstaffe, Esquier, and Margarett, his wife, and Elizabeth, their daughter, the w'ch Margerett deceased ye 18 daye of Jan., in ye yeare of our Lord God 1517, and ye same James dec'ed ye – day of – in ye yeare of our -.' On ye tombe ther is ye portraitures of a man and a woman in brass; he hath graven by him ye coates of Scarisbrick differenced with a crescent. The

woman ye coate of Bicarstaffe and Atherton without difference. Another [coat?] showing Atherton to have been ye Lord of Bicarstaffe.”

The photographs were taken on 19 July 2018.

\*From “An Exact Relation of the bloody and barbarous Massacre at Bolton in the Moors in Lancashire, May 28, by Prince Rupert, being penned by an Eye-Witness admirably preserved by the glorious and mighty hand of God in that day of trouble”, London, R W for Christopher Meredith, 22 August 1644. A full transcript is in “Tracts Relating to Military Proceedings in Lancashire During the Great Civil War”, G W Omerod (ed), Chetham Soc. Old Series Vol. 2, 1844.

\*\*From “A Discourse of the Warr in Lancashire”, W Beamont (ed), in Chetham Soc. Vol. 62, W Beamont (ed), 1864.

\*\*\*From “The Heraldry of Ormskirk Church” in Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches. Vol. 58/N. S. Vol. XXII, 1907. The drawings made for Sir William Dugdale's visitation in 1664-5 are preserved at the College of Arms.

\*\*\*\* From “The House of Stanley; Including The Sieges of Lathom House, With Notices of Relative and Co-Temporary Incidents &c”, T Hutton/Ormskirk, 1864. On the other hand, Fiona J Steele's “Some Brief Notes for Visitors” - handed to me as I entered the Church - states that the vault “can no longer be visited for Safety reasons”.

***“I came away by my brothers who lived near Windleshey Chapell”***



*“[1667, July] 18.—thursday. I went to Prescott for to receive 5li 10s of John Walls for Henry ffeildinge but received none. I came away by my brothers who lived att one Traves house near Windleshey Chapell[. St]ayed diner and soe came home and at the gate that enters into the further end of town field comeing from Dock lane I found a shoo with a silver clasp in the highway.”*

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

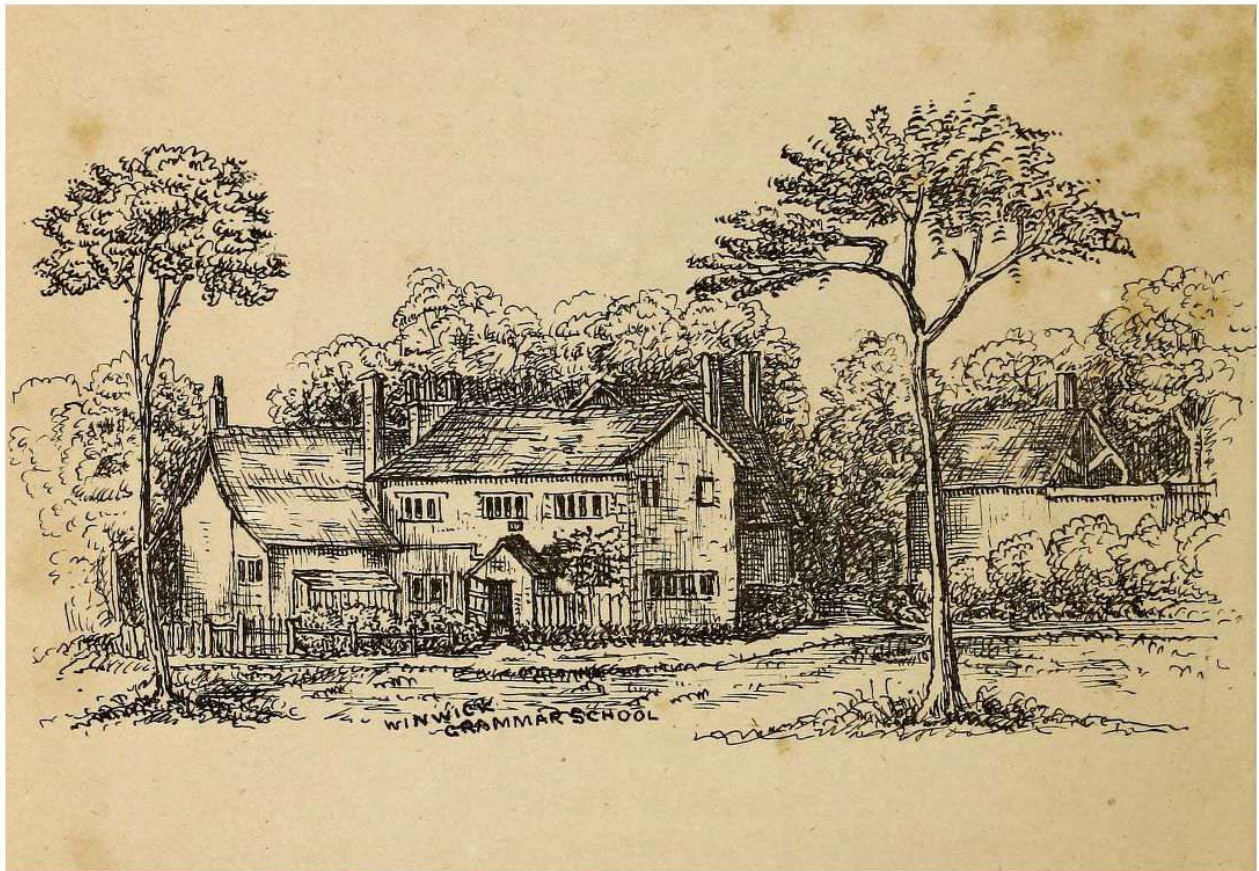
Windleshaw Chapel, near St Helens, is first mentioned in a document of 21 June 1415.\* By 1650, however, it was described as “an ould ruinated building”.\*\* The above photograph of the chapel ruins and burial ground was taken on 5 May 2017.

“Dock lane” was that part of the present-day A58/Liverpool Road situated between Ashton Cross and the town centre, so called because it was on the route to the docks at Liverpool.

\*Brockbank Papers at St Helens Local History & Archives Library, ref. MBR.

\*\*“Inquisico identat capt apud Wigan...”, in National Archives ref. C 94/4 “Chancery: Surveys of Church Livings 1650-8: Lancs”.

***“I went to Winwick schoole to get Mr Jones to pay me 30s, but gat none”***



[1667, July] 28. —Munday. I went to Warrington in compenie with John Potter to Winwick who was exceedinglie troubled with tooth ache and James Corles in pullinge it out broke it. Att comeing home from Warrington I went to Mr Potters and John Potter was laid down soe I went to the schoole and Mr. Jones and I went to the springe...

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Writing a few years after Lowe, Richard Kuerden states that

“a mile farther [from Hulme] stands a fair built Church call'd Winicq Church a remarkable fabric dedicated to ... a Christian Prince and King of Northumbria slain by Penda King of Mercia in Makerfeld when the sd Penda invaded the Northumbrian Territories; in memory of which battle this Church was dedicated to St Oswald. Leaving the Church on the right about a quarter of a mile westwards stands a princely building equal to the revenue call'd the Parsonage of Winquic. And near the Church on the right hand stands a fair built School House”.\*

The Grammar School at Winwick was founded by the Legh family c.1550. A new schoolhouse had been built by the founder's great-nephew in 1618, an inscription over the door reading as follows:

“This house was builte by Sir Peter Legh, knight, upon his owne charges, in the yere of our Lord, 1618, to be a schoole-hous for ever, for the free schoole of Winwicke, founded by Gualter Legh,

Esquire, great uncle of the said Sir Peter Legh, which Gualter gave ten pounds of yerly rent for the perpetual maintenance of the said school; and the said Sir peter hath augmented the same with ten pounds per annum mor, which he hath assured to be yearlye paide to the same free schoole for ever, for his zeal to God's glorye and his love to the parish of Winwick and common good of the countrey”.

According to the “Local Gleanings” column of The Manchester Courier, 4 August 1876,

“There was formerly upon the gables of the building large oval carvings of the Legh crest (out of a ducal coronet a ram's head, holding in its mouth a branch of leaves), surrounded by a fretwork ornament. Most of these fell down about 1859, and were so much decayed with age that it was not possible to replace them”.

Evidently a customer of Roger Lowe, “Mr Jones” had become master of the school in succession to Ralph Gorse in 1667. He occurs again in the Diary as follows-

[1669, February] 6. —saturday... *this day Mr Jones Winwick schoole master sent for me to come to Winwicke upon Monday following for his patron Mr. Leegh would come and he would make a speech....*

8. —*I went to Winwicke and heard Mr. Jones make his speech to Mr. Leegh I went to Hall Winwick and dined there...*

[March] 20. —Saturday. *I went to Winwick schoole to get Mr Jones to pay me 30s, but gat none...”.*

The school finally closed in 1890.

\*From “Notes for a history of Lancashire”, a manuscript of c.1670 at Chetham's Library, Manchester, ref. Mun. C.6.1-3.

Image: “a reduced copy from a neat drawing in pencil, made early in the [19<sup>th</sup>] century by Robert Booth, a Warrington artist and drawing-master, [showing] the ancient Grammar School at Winwick ...as it appeared to the eyes of Leland, Herle, Sherlock, Bishop Wilson, the martyr Earl of Derby, and others, who must have visited it at different times...”. From “Warrington Local Studies”, J Kendrick, in Hist. Soc. Lancs. and Ches., Series 3 Vol. 5, 1876-7.

***“went to Mr Walls in Prescott but gat no monys”***



*“[1667, August] 15.—Thursday. I went to Mr Walls in Prescott but did not gat no monys...”*

*[1667, August] 27.—tusday. I went to Prescott againe to Mr. Walls but he was not at home...*

*[1667, September] 13.—ffriday. I went to Prescott to Mr. Walls[.] John Hampson went with me and about one and the same occasion but he would not be seene”.*

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

John Walls (d.1705) succeeded to his father's business as an innkeeper, vintner and “shearman” (cloth-cutter) at Prescott in 1660 but he had also by then become, through his own endeavours, a prosperous merchant and ship-owner. He occurs in the Prescott churchwardens' accounts from 1658 onwards, being credited firstly with the supply of “six yards of hollond for a communion table cloath” and thereafter with the regular provision of such commodities as “oile candles and nailes”, “wyne for the communion” and “wyre for the clocke”. Walls was himself elected to serve as a churchwarden “att a publicke meetinge of the parishioners” on 21 April 1663.\*

According to the Diary, Lowe's first meeting with him - on 18 July 1667 - had been with a view to collecting a sum of £5 10s owed to Henry Fielding. (The latter, “an hour-glass maker ...



*and a very honest man*”, first occurs in the Diary entry for 3 May 1664.) Then, as on each of the subsequent occasions recorded here, the diarist left Prescott empty-handed. It would seem that, following his appointment as churchwarden, Walls had adopted the *modus operandi* of his counterparts in the adjacent parish of Childwall-

“To ken and see and say nowt,  
To eat and drink and pay nowt”.\*\*

A silver chalice still in use at the Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin is inscribed “John Walles, Robert Mosse, Henry Gaskell, churchwardens of Prescott, 1663”. Also surviving from this period are (see photograph, above)-

- A. Choir stalls and misericords, probably adapted from existing gentry seats, by John Rigby of Wigan in 1636.
- B. A 'poor box', also by John Rigby.
- C. A life-size plaster effigy of Church benefactor Sir John Ogle (1555-1612) of Whiston Hall, here dressed in simple hose and a skull-cap.
- D. Black oak panelling, again by John Rigby.
- E. An ornately-carved wooden chair bearing the name of the Church and other details; the gift, in 1610, of the aforementioned Sir John Ogle.\*\*\*
- F. A moveable Jacobean “communion table”.
- G. A 'staggered' communion rail with turned balusters installed in 1664 by Peter Marsh of Eccleston to replace an earlier rail of 1636 by John Rigby; the latter possibly destroyed when the Church was used as a billet and stable by Parliamentary troops during the Civil Wars.

John Hampson, evidently a resident of Hindley, additionally occurs in the Diary entries for 7 and 16 October 1664 and 14-15 January 1665. The nature of his business with John Walls is not disclosed.

\*Lancashire Archives ref. PR 3404/4/1, fols 292, 327, 349, 353-4, 357.

\*\* J C Cox, “Churchwardens' Accounts...”, Methuen & Co. 1913.

\*\*\*Like the Anglo-Saxon font, another object in the Church with a somewhat chequered history; see, further, F. Crooks' “The sanctuary chair of Prescott church, 1610” in *Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Ches.* Vol. 79/1927.

My photograph of the sanctuary at St Mary's was taken on 11 September 2021.

***“a pretie young man he was, and very sorie I was”***



*“[1667, September] 29.—lords day. I went to John Robinson’s and was all night for they lent me a horse to Chester faire... I gat to Chester..., and I went to the castle to see a man condemned [to death;] a pretie young man he was and very sorie I was I gave a man 2d in ale to let me admittance into castle yard and he tooke me up and downe. The souldiers was most of them all drunke and glad I was when I was gotton out of the gates from amongst them.”*

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

A very wide range of offences from shop-lifting to murder were at this time punishable by hanging. Until 1868, when public execution was abolished, the notion that justice must not only be done but *seen* to be done was given a very literal application. A graphic description of the scene surrounding an early 18<sup>th</sup> century hanging at Tyburn, London, is given by Bernard Mandeville MD in “An Enquiry Into The Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn” (London/F Roberts, 1725) -

“When the Day of Execution is come, among extraordinary Sinners, and Persons condemned for their Crimes, who have but that Morning to live, one would expect a deep Sense of Sorrow, with all the Signs of a thorough Contrition, and the utmost Concern; that either Silence, or a sober Sadness,

should prevail; and that all, who had any Business there, should be grave and serious, and behave themselves, at least, with common Decency, and a Deportment suitable to the Occasion. But the very Reverse is true. The horrid Aspects of Turnkeys and Gaolers, in Discontent and Hurry...; the Variety of strong Voices, that are heard, of howling in one Place, scolding and quarrelling in another, and loud Laughter in a third; the substantial Breakfasts that are made in the midst of all this; the Seas of Beer that are swill'd...; the Impudence, and unseasonable Jests of those, who administer them; their black Hands, and Nastiness all over - all these, joined together, are astonishing and terrible...

At last, out they set; and with that a Torrent of Mob bursts through the Gate.... 'Prentices and Journeymen are the most honourable Part of these floating Multitudes. All the rest are worse. The Days being known before-hand, they are a Summons to all Thieves and Pickpockets, of both Sexes, to meet ... Here the most abandon'd Rakehells may light on Women as shameless: Here Trollops, all in Rags, may pick up Sweethearts of the same Politeness: And there are none so lewd, so vile, or so indigent, of either Sex, but at the Time and Place aforesaid, they may find a Paramour... Where the Crowd is the least, which, among the Itinerants, is no where very thin, the Mob is the rudest; and here, jostling one another, and kicking Dirt about, are the most innocent Pastimes. Now you see a Man, without Provocation, push his Companion in the Kennel; and two Minutes after, the Sufferer trip up the other's Heels, and the first Aggressor lies rolling in the more solid Mire: And he is the prettiest Fellow among them, who is the least shock'd at Nastiness, and the most boisterous in his Sports. No modern Rabble can long subsist without their darling Cordial, [and] the Traders who vent it among the Mob on these Occasions are commonly the worst of both Sexes but most of them weather-beaten Fellows that have mis-spent their Youth. Here stands an old Sloven, in a Wig actually putrify'd, squeez'd up in a Corner, and recommends a Dram of it to the Goers-by: There another in Rags, with several Bottles in a Basket stirs about with it where the Throng is the thinnest, and tears his Throat with crying his Commodity...

It is incredible what a Scene of Confusion all this often makes, which yet grows worse near the Gallows; and the violent Efforts of the most sturdy and resolute of the Mob on one Side, and the potent Endeavours of rugged Goalers, and others, to beat them off, on the other; the terrible Blows that are struck, the Heads that are broke, the Pieces of swingeing Sticks and Blood that fly about, the Men that are knock'd down and trampled upon, are beyond Imagination, whilst the Dissonance of Voices, and the Variety of Outcries, for different Reasons, that are heard there, together with the Sound of more distant Noises, make such a Discord not to be parallel'd....”.

As V A C Gatrell explains, “executions were mounted FOR the people, and the crowd's function was to bear witness to the might of the law and the wickedness of crime and to internalize those things”. In practice, however, the crowd “wore many faces”, appearing “festive, reverential, defensive, defiant, or cowed by turns”.\*

Lowe's sentiments on witnessing the hanging of the “*pretie young man*” at Chester strangely echo those of London diarist Samuel Pepys who, on 21 January 1664, was present at the hanging of “Colonel” James Turner for kidnap and burglary:

“I got for a shilling to stand upon the wheel of a cart... A comely-looking man he was, and kept his countenance to the end – I was sorry to see him”.

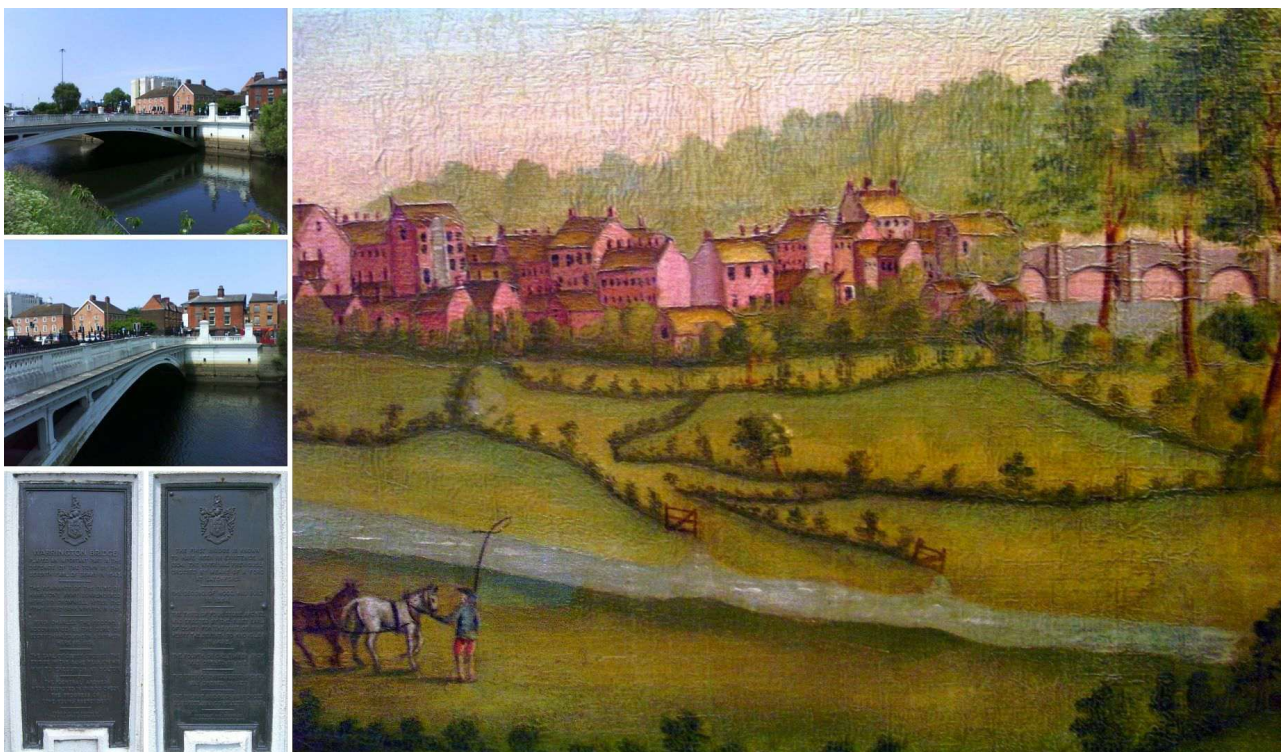
Roger Lowe additionally records the hanging at Chester of Hamblett Ashton on 7 September 1663. Although his crime – the murder of a tapster (barman) - was committed at Nantwich, he was evidently a local man as Lowe includes his funeral in the list of those to which he was “*providentielle*” called during his apprenticeship. To this account the diarist adds: “*The*

*Lord preserve us from such practices and such end. Amen.”*

\*“The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868” (Oxford UP, 1994). See, also, Sarah N Redmond's “Staging Executions: The Theater of Punishment in Early Modern England” (2007 Ph D thesis at <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu%3A176386>).

Illustration from “The Wicked Life and Penitent Death of Tho. Savage” (London/J Black, 1680).

## ***“I parted with hime att Warrington bridge”***



*“[1667, September] 10. —Wednesday. I went to Warrington. John Plumpton tooke his leave of Ashton this day and I p[ar]ted with hime att Warrington bridge very dolefully[.] Thomas Peake would gladly hire me.”*

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Thomas Peake of Warrington first appears in the Diary on 4 April 1664, when Lowe called at his shop en route from a visit to James Wood at Thelwall. He is almost certainly the same “Thomas Peake, mercer” of Warrington who in January 1663 was petitioning for the ejection from the parish of Anne, widow of James Maykin/Meakin\* and thus likely to have been party to the marriage at St Peter's, Blackley, on 22 October 1688 of “Thomas Peake & Jane Meakin of Broughton”.\*\* A will, in respect of which a first grant of probate was made on 12 May 1674, is preserved at Lancashire Archives.\*\*\*

As early as December 1665, just a month after Lowe's release from his apprenticeship to Thomas Hammond of Leigh, Mr Peake had sought to engage the diarist as a “*journey man for him in Laverpoole*”. May 1667 brought another offer for Lowe to consider: “*Mr Harwood who lived in Shrowsbury*” proposed a live-in position, engaging “*one Edw[ard] Bowker de Warrington to enquire of my disposition*”. For several months Lowe weighed up his options. At last, on Wednesday 18 September 1667-

*“I went to Warrington and I promised Peake to serve hime for three years for 20li”.*

Tablets placed by The Warrington Society at the southern end of the existing bridge over the River Mersey at Warrington explain the history of the crossing and its strategic importance. According to

the tablet at the south-east corner-

“The first bridge is known to have been in existence in 1304. The river was previously crossed by means of a ford at Latchford. The second of wood was built in 1364. The third, of four stone arches, was erected by the First Earl of Derby for the visit of King Henry The Seventh to Knowsley in 1495. The fifth, of three stone arches, was opened in 1837. The present bridge, of reinforced concrete, was completed in 1915.”

The main image above is a detail from a painting of Warrington in about 1772, usually attributed to the little-known artist D(aniel?) Donbavand. It shows the four-arched bridge of 1495 upon which, a century earlier, Roger Lowe and John Plumpton had said their goodbyes. The original can be seen at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery (acquisition no. WAGMG: RA 1517).

The photographs were taken on 11 June 2018.

John Plumpton does not occur again in the Diary unless he is the “*Crooke backt*” individual of that name whose death “*in the outhouseing of John Jenkinson*” Lowe records taking place on 19 May 1671.

\*Lancashire Archives ref. QSP/235/29: Lancashire Quarter Sessions: Petitions: Wigan, Epiphany 1662/3: Warrington: ejection of Anne widow of James Maykin by Thomas Peake, mercer.

\*\*Manchester Archives & Local Studies ref. M441/1/1/1: Early Register of St Peter's, Blackley:

“Thomas Peake & Jane Meakin of Broughton, were marryed in the Chappell of Blakely, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1668 by J Brereton Minr. Of ye sd Chappell by a Lychense”.

\*\*\*WCW/Supra/C214/13 : Archdeaconry of Chester Probate Records: Testator's name -Thomas Peake; Occupation/status - Mercer; Place - Warrington; Contents - will, renunciation, wrapper; Date - 12 May 1674 (1st Grant), 14 Mar 1677 (2nd Grant), 5 May 1679 (3rd Grant).

**“I resigned all shop effaires over to Thomas Hamond”**

nd in behalfe of Nathaniel being his prop<sup>r</sup> debt of therefore the said Nathaniel doo and sh<sup>all</sup>  
 game unto mee the said hundred pounds with due Interest for the same before the time  
 when my will and mind is what I shall enter into have and enjoy the Stone house of late  
 from within year at the next Candlemas after my decease. But the profits or rent there  
 of next Candlemas after shall come into the hands of my Executors to be distributed by  
 others <sup>to their issue</sup> ~~and next~~ relations. But upon default of payment of the said hundred pounds  
 with interest for the same then it shall and may be lawfull to and for my said Executors the  
 signed into the said messuages lands and tenem<sup>ts</sup>. called the Stonehouse and the same to have  
 and enjoy untill out of the yearly issues and profits thereof they shall have had returned  
 and paid <sup>£100: yearly</sup> unto the said John Hamond my sonne by ex<sup>ecutors</sup> <sup>to be after named</sup> **And** if  
 Nathaniel happen to sell his to the and inheritance of the said Stone house & <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>same</sup> ~~thereof~~  
 except to his brother or next relations my will is that I shall deposit and pay of surety  
 the sume of fifty pounds of current money unto my said Executors to be equally divided  
 amongst or care relations. **And** whereas by the said agreement I have stated and conveyed  
 Hamond my sonne for his maintenance and livelihood certaine lands lying and being in  
 my will and mind allow is that I shall enter thereupon at Candlemas next after my decease  
 and profits thereof be w<sup>ith</sup> my deat<sup>h</sup> and Candlemas des<sup>cent</sup> and come into the hands of my said  
 to be divided and distributed as aforesaid and if I sell the same or any pt<sup>er</sup> thereof except to  
 next relations hee shall pay back to my said Executors the sume of ten pounds to be distributed  
 Thomas  
 Hamond

“[1667, October] 28. — I quitted my selfe of all shop effaires in Ashton and resigned them over to Thomas Hamond ...”

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Since November 1665, when Thomas Hammond had released him from his apprenticeship and agreed terms on which he could take over the running of the shop at Ashton, Roger Lowe had been trading on his own account. However, as the author of the introduction to the 1994 edition of the Diary explains, “it was not long before he found that being on his own was not what he had expected; his worries were increasing rather than diminishing... His difficulty was probably that he did not have long credit, as his master had had, and that he found old debts to the shop impossible to collect.” This, it is supposed, was the immediate cause of his decision to accept Thomas Peake's offer of alternative employment in Warrington.

Up to this point in the Diary, Lowe's former employer has not been referred to by name but there have been several clues to his identity. The christening at Leigh that Lowe attended in July 1663 (“he was named Edward”) corresponds with the entry in the Leigh St Mary's registers confirming the baptism on this date of “Edward son of Thomas Hamond de Westleigh”. Lowe's “I was sent for to Leigh by my M[aste]r who had a child interred on this day” on 8 April 1667 likewise corresponds with the register evidence that the deceased was “Martha da. Of Thomas Hamond de Westleigh”. The son being wet-nursed at Morley Hall when Lowe and his master called there on 12 April 1663 was most likely the “Richard hamond son of

Thomas of [originally “Pennington” but amended to] Westleigh” baptised at Leigh on 10 November 1661.\*

Thomas Hammond also occurs in the Hearth Tax assessments for “Westleigh” in 1664, being then liable for tax on a single hearth.\*\*

A will dated 2 February 1691/2 is preserved together with an inventory of “all the goods ... and Chattells of Thomas Hamond of Pennington [Leigh] in the County of Lancr. Mercer deceased valued & [a]prized the 28<sup>th</sup> day of April 1692...” within the Archdeaconry of Chester Probate Records at Lancashire Archives.\*\*\* The will names Thomas Hammond's then wife, Anne, and five of his children: Sarah, Mary, Nathaniel, Richard and John. Sarah may have been the “Sarah Hamond daughter of Thomas of Penington” baptised at St Mary's, Leigh, on 11 April 1658. The will refers to her marriage a year earlier to man named Geoffrey East or Earl but I cannot find any corresponding entry in the local registers. Mary may have been the daughter baptised on 11 March 1660; a codicil anticipates the possibility that she “happen to dye before shee become possessed of her Part or not bee capable legally to make her will or dispose of the same”, and this unfortunately appears to have transpired: the St Mary's register records the burial of “Mary daughter of Thomas Hamond de Pinning[ton]” on 19 March 1691/2. Baptised at Leigh on 19 March 1656, Nathaniel was ordained deacon and priest at Chester Cathedral on 21 September 1679 and 11 June 1692 respectively; he occurs as Vicar of St John the Baptist Parish, Erith, in 1693-1705.\*4 “Richard” was presumably the son of that name baptised on 10 November 1661 and (by implication) wet-nursed at Morley Hall. Again the codicil provides for the possibility that “Richard my sonne returne not againe into the Country nor be living...”; this tallies with another will in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury records at National Archives made on 20 February 1694/5 by “Richard Hammond of the Parish of Leigh in the County of Lancaster mariner now belonging to His Majesties Shipp the York”.\*5 Probate in respect of Richard's estate was granted to his brother Nathaniel on 18 April 1695, indicating that death - perhaps caused by some injury or disease from which Richard was already suffering - occurred soon after the will was made. Thomas Hammond's youngest son, John, had been baptised on 5 June 1670. It must be assumed that Edward and any other children had predeceased their father.

The inventory taken on 28 April 1692 details items found in “the boarded room and landing”, “the closet”, “the yellow chamber”, “the little Parlor”, “ye old Parlor”, “the Buttery” and “Citchen”. More interesting for present purposes are the “Goods in the shop” - presumably the shop at Leigh where Lowe's fellow apprentice, John Chaddock, had laboured during the period of the Diary and to which Lowe himself had occasionally been under threat of recall during his apprenticeship.\*6 These comprised “wollen choats” valued at £99-05-05, “Groscery and other od goods” valued at £41-02-10, “Bonds [presumably customers' debts] and other specialties” to the value of £211-13-00, “Silver and Gould” valued at £20 and other sundry items and “specialties” worth in total £155-7-0.

Wife Anne and son John are named in the codicil to the will as executors but Anne's death, perhaps from the same disease that had killed daughter Mary a month earlier, seems to have occurred simultaneously with that her husband: both were buried at Leigh on 18 April 1692. This left John as sole executor and recipient of the grant of probate made on 12 May 1692.

\* Early Registers of St Mary The Virgin, Leigh, at Manchester Archives & Local Studies ref. L211/1/1. A probable first-born son, referred to several times in the Diary as “little Thomas”, has not otherwise been traced.

\*\* National Archives ref. E179/250/11.

\*\*\* Lancashire Archives ref. WCW/Supra/C261B/27 - detail from the will shown above.

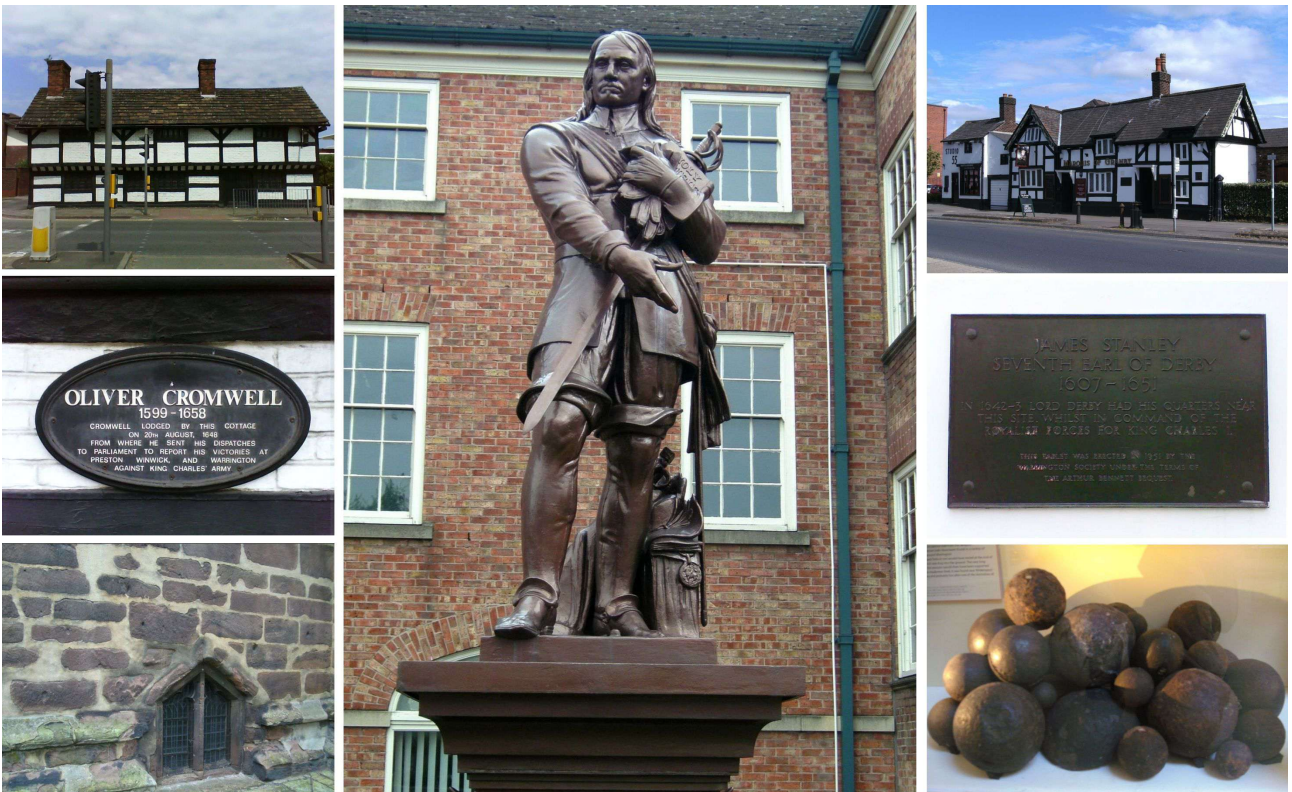
\*4 Nathaniel was formally inducted as Vicar at Erith on 11 September 1693: Kent History & Library Centre ref. Dra/A/i/29/5.



\*5 National Archives ref. PROB 11/425/153. Also referencing Richard's earlier service on HMS Canterbury, the will commits everything into the care of "my well beloved brother Nath. Hammond of the Parish of Erith in the County of Kent". Erith had been the site of a naval dockyard in the time of Henry VIII and no doubt still had connections with the navy.

\*6 "*I came to shop and anon John Chaddocke came and brought me some commodities and told me that my M[aste]r intended to have me home and that some of his ladds should be set up in Ashton all which greaved me extremely...*" (2 October 1663). The prospect of a recall to Leigh - where, it would seem, Lowe had begun his career - was again raised by Thomas Hammond on 11 May 1665.

***“I found his wife of such a pestilential nature that I was weary in a few weekes”***



*“[1667, October] 28.—... I ingaged myself in Thomas Peake[’s] service and after I came to him I found his wife of soe cross a disposition that it put me in a troubled condition and occasioned me to write these verses followinge:—*

*In to w[ha]t strange region am I posted now  
 Soe hott a climate as I know not howe  
 To enjoy my selfe much more to live in peace  
 Unles Jehovah move their tongues to cease  
 The lord of hosts [tha]t rules in heaven high  
 Looke downe and help thy serv[an]t mightily  
 Show me such favour as the world may know  
 [Tha]t thou esteemeth of thy servant Lowe  
 [Tha]t such as have no reason nor yet faith  
 May learne to live in peace and not in wrath  
 Lord if thou please to show thyselfe my friend  
 I matter [not?] this would for to offend  
 My Saviour dear in griefs I[’]ll come to thee  
 Theres safe protection in necessitie*

I live in griefes I know not where to goe  
 I come to thee (lord shelter thy poor Lowe)  
 Deliverance I hope will come ere long  
 And I shall sing not long the mourners song  
 Providence sees it good I tosse should be  
 Upon the waves of worldly miserie  
 And tho I be thus fettered in worlds grieffe  
 Providence will at last yeild me reliefe  
 And this I[\*]m sure my faults have caused this  
 (Require then not) God doth nothing amisse.  
 My soul frett not be patient but awhile  
 [Tha]t face now frownes will ere longe on thee smile  
 And though he suffer thee in Kedar to dwell  
 Amongst such blacke mouthes as doe yawn like hell  
 Yet be assured god will preserve thee soe  
 (They may thee scare) they shall not hurt poor Lowe  
 Trust then in god [-] he[\*]ll comfort thee in trouble  
 And answer all thy grieves with care joyes double  
 Waite on the lord live up right in gods way  
 He[\*]ll rescue out of greives he[\*]ll not longe stay  
 Take patiently the worlds affronts (for why)  
 Because it loves its owne none will deny;  
 Aprove thyselfe a stranger to the worlds friends  
 For heaven att last to such will make amends.

I had made a piece of promise to stay three yeares with Mr peake but I  
 found his wife of such a pestilentiall nature that I was weary in a few  
 weekes[. I]n december it pleased God sorely to visit me with a sad  
 affliction and longe for the space of nine weeks after which it pleased  
 god to recover me and I went againe to Mr. Peakes after many  
 envitacions..”

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

It is clear from the above that Roger Lowe came very quickly to regret his decision to work for  
 Thomas Peake. However, except for this entry (which continues with an account of his wedding  
 “att my cozen Beckinson[’s] house” in Warrington on 23 March 1668), Lowe draws a veil  
 over this period of his life. The nature of his duties in Warrington, his social life there and the  
 terms on which he was eventually able to return to Ashton\* are all matters on which we are left to  
 speculate. We last hear of the “pestilentiall” Mrs (Jane?) Peake\*\* on 29 March 1669, when-

*“I went to Warrington and Mrs Peake had laid a lye on me about their debts which occasioned some griefe but I cleared myself to her shame”.*

The town that Roger Lowe inhabited for at least some of the period from 28 October 1667 until 1 February 1669 was one still scarred by the recent Civil Wars. Parliamentary forces had besieged Warrington in April-May 1643, concentrating their fire on the Parish Church of St Elphin until that building was surrendered to them on 26 May. The minutes of the vestry meeting for June 1647 – the first such meeting following the surrender - refer to a need for funds for “the repaire of the church now far decayed in respect of the long dis[as]taurs as also for repair of glasse, bells and clock” (Cheshire Archives ref. P 316/5448/204). Among the items needing to be repaired or replaced were the windows of the chancel, one of which - on the north side - had originally featured the arms of the Gerards of Bryn. Insufficient funds meant that restoration of the church's battered tower was only completed in the 1690s, whilst damage inflicted by the Parliamentary artillery is visible to this day on the exterior east wall of the chancel. A quantity of shot recovered from this and nearby sites is displayed in the town's museum.

Various other reminders of the Civil War can be seen in Warrington, some at locations that must have been familiar to Roger Lowe. Two of these, on Church Street, are easily identifiable by the plaques placed there to mark their associations with, respectively, Oliver Cromwell and James Stanley, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby. On the west side of the junction with Eldon Street, a restored 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage, now Grade II\*-Listed, bears a plaque declaring that

“Oliver Cromwell .... lodged by this cottage on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1648, from where he sent his dispatches to Parliament to report his victories at Preston, Winwick and Warrington against King Charles' Army”.

Cromwell's actual lodging place is thought to have been an inn, afterwards called “The Spotted Leopard”, on the other side of the Eldon Street/Church Street junction. Almost directly opposite, the Grade II-listed “Marquis of Granby” and an adjoining property (the former stables) date from 1660. A tablet placed there by The Warrington Society records that

“In 1642-3 Lord Derby had his quarters near this site whilst in command of the Royalist Forces for King Charles I”.

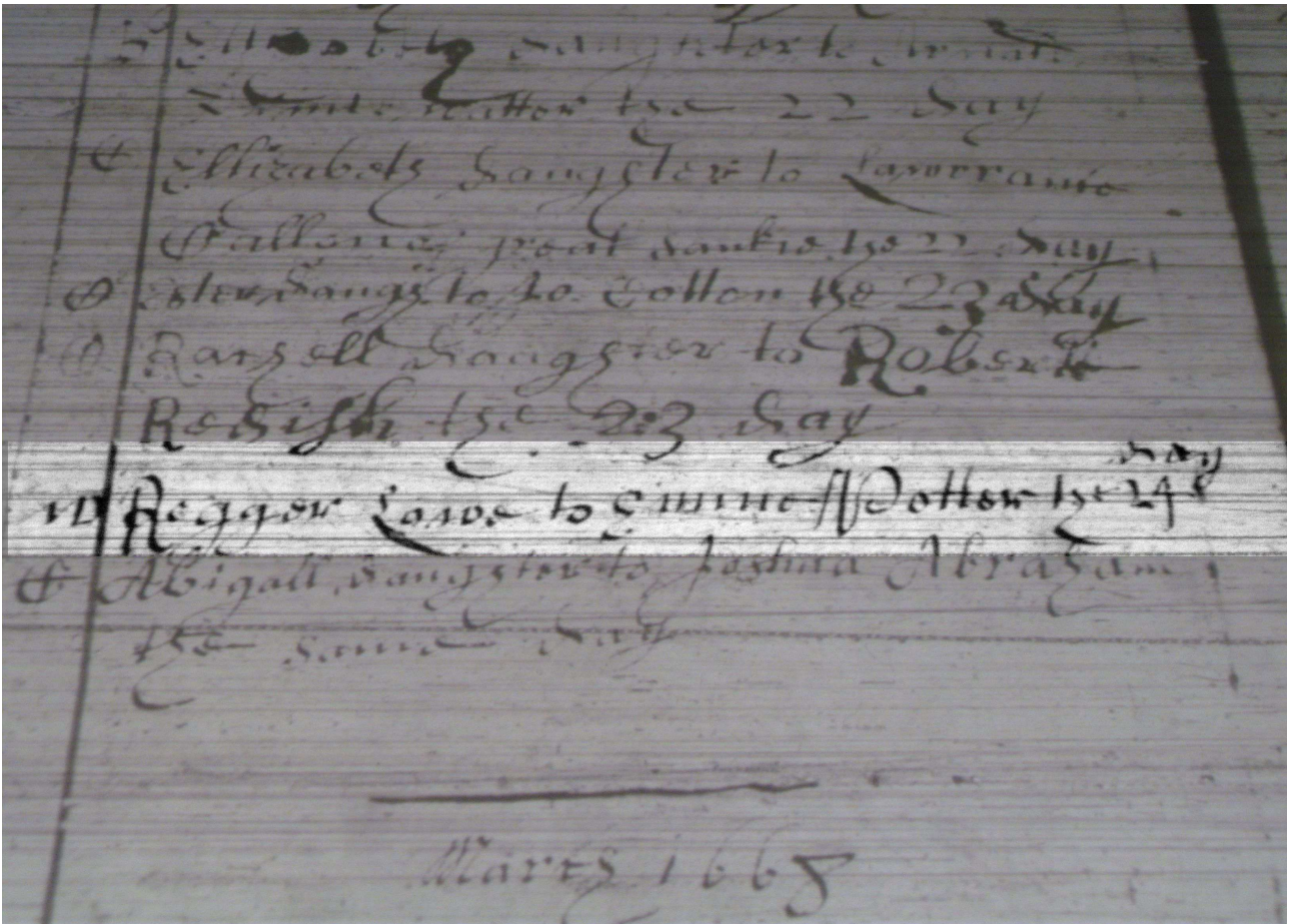
Obviously not part of the Restoration townscape, the statue of Cromwell looking across the Mersey from his new vantage point by the rebuilt Academy was presented to the people of Warrington by Frederick Monks in 1899. Also Grade II-listed, the statue had been made by John Bell of Kensington for the International Exhibition of 1862. It was moved to its present position as part of a road-widening scheme in the 1980s.

\*In an apparent final reference to Thomas Hammond on 27 March 1669 the diarist reverts to calling him “my Master”. Whether this was merely force of habit or a reflection of their contractual relationship after Lowe's return from Warrington is unclear.

\*\*Early Register of St Peter's, Blackley, now at Manchester Archives & Local Studies ref. M441/1/1/1: “Thomas Peake & Jane Meakin of Broughton, were marryed in the Chappell of Blakely, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1668 by J Brereton Minr. Of ye sd Chappell by a Lycense”. Jane may have been the daughter or step-daughter of Anne Maykin, for whose “ejectment” Thomas Peake had petitioned the Quarter Sessions at Wigan in 1663 (Lancashire Archives ref. QSP/235/29).

The photographs were taken on 30 May, 11 June and 20 June 2018.

**“we consumated our grand desine of marriage att Warrington”**



“[1667, October] 28. — ... I sent to Emme my designes and thoughts enclosed in a letter and in short time made a conclusion of my overyred thoughts and upon the 23rd of March [1668] we consumated our grand desine of marriage att Warrington done by Mr Ward minister of Warrington att my cozen Beckinson[’s]\* house[.] William Eccleston\* was my good friend I brought Emme to Neawton and shee was turned off from her sister and knew not where to Lodge all night[. I]t was her pleasur that I should turn back againe to Warrington which I did with William Eccleston and Henry Heckinbothom\* who accompanied us to Neawton.”

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

In his “Warrington Church Notes” (Percival Pearse, 1878), William Beamont cites this diary entry as evidence of the “irregularity” that frequently attended the celebration of marriage at this time.

Ecclesiastical law required that

“No Minister, upon pain of Suspension per triennium ipso facto, shall celebrate Matrimony between any Persons without a x Faculty or Licence granted by some of the Persons in these our Constitutions expressed, except the Banns of Matrimony have been first published three several Sundays or Holy-days in the time of Divine Service in the Parish-Churches and Chapels where the

said Parties dwell, according to the Book of Common Prayer. Neither shall any Minister, upon the like pain, under any Pretence whatsoever, joyn any Persons so Licensed in Marriage at any unseasonable times, but only between the hours of Eight and Twelve in the Forenoon, nor in any private Place, but either in the said Churches or Chapels where one of them dwelleth, and likewise in the time of Divine Service..." (Title XXII/Canon 62 of 1603, as stated in E Gibson's "Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani", London, 1713).

Roger Lowe's marriage to Emma Potter "*att my cousin Beckinson[’s] house*" was at the very least contrary to the prohibition on marriage "in any private Place", putting it into a morally- and legally-ambiguous category known as "clandestine" marriage. Typically, as Lawrence Stone explains in "Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England, 1660-1753" (Oxford UP, 1992), such a marriage was one "conducted by a man who at least purported to be a clergyman (although often not one holding a cure) and which followed the ritual prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer. But it could be irregular and in violation of canon law in a number of ways, the central one being that it was done in secret rather than in public...: First, it was performed without either the prior reading of banns or the procuring of a valid licence from a church official. Second, it took place anywhere but in the parish church of one of the spouses... it could equally well take place in a private house, an alehouse, a coffee shop, a prison or even a brothel. Third, it could, and usually did, take place outside the canonical hours of 8 to 12am, often in the middle of the night..."

There are several reasons why this arrangement might have been preferred over one that conformed more precisely to the rules of the Church. During the Commonwealth period and subsequently, many traditional ceremonies were denounced as "popish" and it became something of a religious duty for nonconformists like Roger Lowe to marry privately using forms and rituals of their own invention. Others were motivated by a need for secrecy: couples who might otherwise face interference by a disapproving relative or other third party; itinerant workers, apprentices and the like who might be physically or contractually unable to marry in their home parish; shy and retiring types who preferred to forego "the often boisterous rituals of treating, feasting, practical jokes and ribald songs, culminating in public bedding and the throwing of the bride's stocking across the bed.... Last but not least there were increasing numbers, running into thousands, who were not seeking so much secrecy or speed as economy". Although the bride and groom were technically at risk of excommunication, and the celebrant liable to prosecution and exclusion from clerical office for up to 3 years, the resulting union was recognised by both Church and State "as legally binding and as carrying with it full property rights" (Stone).

Joseph Ward, who officiated at the Lowe-Potter marriage, possibly came from Leicestershire, graduating BA from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1661 (<http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk>). As "Josephus Warde" he was ordained a deacon (20 August 1662) and priest (25 September 1664) before being made rector of Warrington by Bishop George Hall on 4 October 1664 (Cheshire Archives ref. EDV 2/8 "Exhibition Book", 1674; National Archives ref. E331/Chester/7 "Returns to First Fruits Office", 1660-4). There is a discrepancy between the Diary and the St Elphin's parish register as to the date of the marriage, the latter suggesting that it actually took place on 24 March.\*\* Otherwise there is nothing *in the register* to indicate that there was anything unusual or untoward about the ceremony – which begs the question how many other registered marriages of the period were similarly non-compliant with the canon law requirements as to time and place of solemnization. We might also ask what prompted Joseph Ward's active participation in what Archbishop John Stratford's "Humana concupiscentia" of 1342 had referred to as "hoc frequens vitium" ("this common vice"). At any rate he does not seem to have suffered any punishment, continuing to sign the register until 1688. He exhibited his induction mandate at the episcopal visitations in 1671, 1674, 1677 and 1686 (Cheshire Archives refs. EDV 2/8-10) and, as "John" Ward (probably a transcription error), appears on a list dated 1689 of "conformable clergy who have taken the oathes within this County" (Kenyon MSS Item 712/p.230). He was buried at

Warrington on 9 December 1690 (Cheshire Archives ref. P 316/5448/4).

The present Parish Church of St Elphin dates mainly from a rebuilding of 1859-67 by the then Rector, William Quekett. It followed at least four earlier buildings on the same site, of which the first - "probably of mud and wattle" - may have been completed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The chancel and crypt are the only surviving parts of the building constructed by Sir William le Boteler in c.1354 and, as such, may have been familiar to Roger Lowe. A detailed history by H Wells ("Warrington Parish Church", self-published, 2017) is available from the Church.

\* "Cozen Beckinson" and "Henry Heckinbothom" (Higginbotham??) do not otherwise occur in the Diary. On 6 February 1669 William Eccleston "*came into towne [Ashton?] and he gave me a quart of ale*"; at William's suggestion the pair visited Broad Oak the following day.

\*\*The register extract shown above is from a microfilm copy at Warrington Library ref. MF 35 ("BMDI Vol 3: 1653-1680"); the original is at Cheshire Archives ref. P 316/5448/3. The relevant entry – highlighted - reads "M. Rogger Lowe to Emme Potter ye 24th day".

**There is a break in the Diary at this point. Apart from what was obviously a later addition to the entry for 28 October 1667, where he briefly describes the circumstances of his wedding to Emma Potter in the following March, Lowe has left no record of the events of 1668. We are thus left to speculate on how he was able to engineer his release from the agreement with Thomas Peake at Warrington and the terms on which he was eventually able to resume trading in Ashton....**



**1669**

***“angered in my mind att Martha Knowles who had gotten a booke out of my hands”***



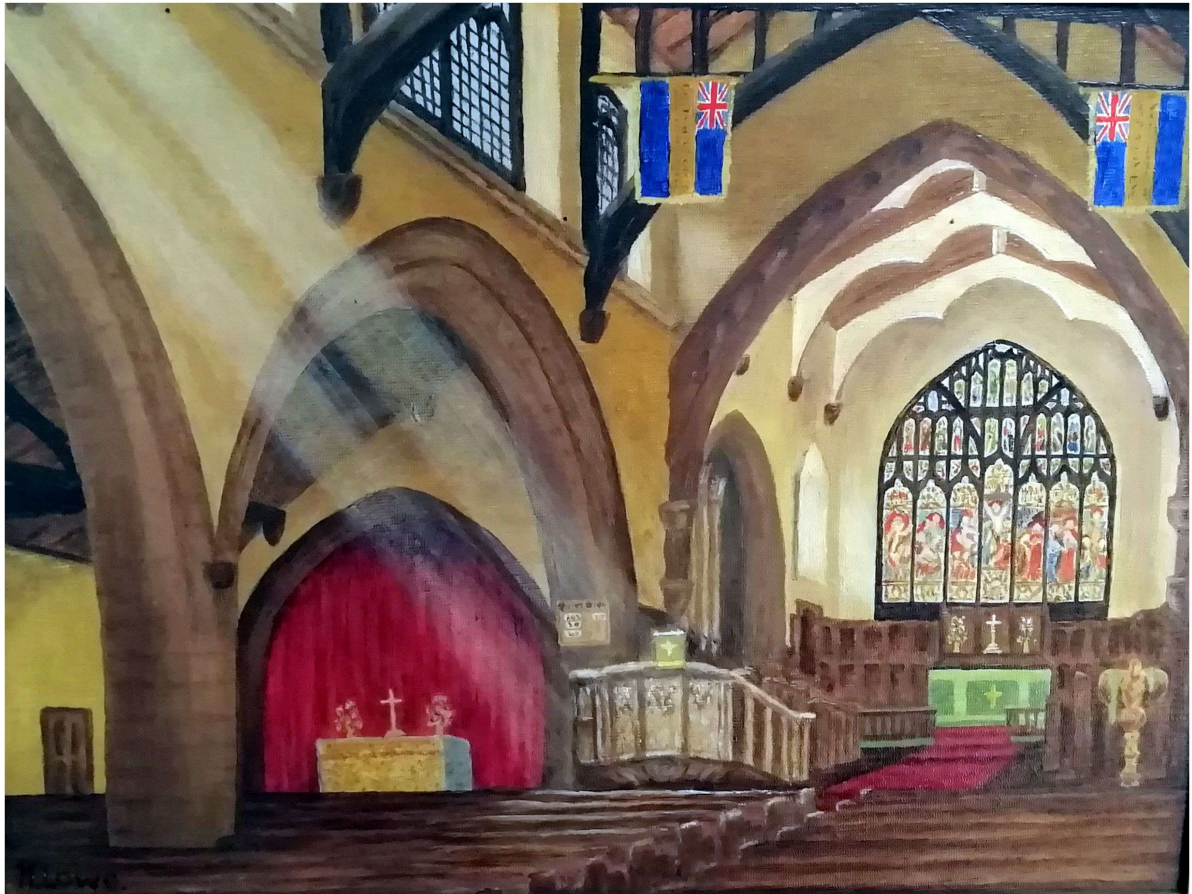
*“[1669, February] 1. —Munday. I did nothing but stayd att home but was angered in my mind att Martha Knowles who had undermined me and gotten a booke out [of] my hands.”*

[From “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Whilst the only book to feature in an inventory of Roger Lowe's possessions at the date of his death was his “debt booke”, it is clear from the Diary that he had an appreciation of devotional works such as Ambrose's “Media” and Foxe's “Book of Martyrs” and that trade in books formed at least part of the business transacted from his shop in Ashton. Martha Knowles -who does not otherwise occur in the Diary- may have been a business rival, or perhaps a customer to whom Lowe had unwisely extended credit.

The above illustration, from Lauren van Zanten's “Spiegel der gedenckweerdighste wonderen en geschiedenissen onses tijds...” (“Mirror of the most memorable wonders and histories of our time...”) of 1661, shows bookseller Johannes van den Bergh in his shop in Amsterdam. Van den Bergh traded successfully throughout the 1660s. His promise to his customers was “Altijt wat nieuws” - “Always something new”.

***“some piece of disgrace in the chapell”***



*“[1669, February] 5.—lord's day. I received some piece of disgrace in the chapell from Mr Atkinson by reason I did not with others stand up at the readinge of the Gospell but as to the publicke it was little noted but I took it heinously in my [own] thoughts by reason I had bespoke my thoughts to hime before that I could not conforme to any such formes but att after eveninge prayr I went to himme att Elline Ashton[s] and I told hime my mind to the full that standing att Gospell with other ceremonies now in use was a meere Romish foperie and I should never doe it[. And if] I could not come to the publick ordinances without publik disturbance for a ceremoniall failinge I should thenceforward betake my selfe to such recepticles [conventicles?] where I could to my poor abilitie serve god without disturbance. Ralph Winstanley Atkinson[s] disciple] of the Blacke tribe of Gad, came in and spoke his venome in a very arogant manner but I flie to god for refuge.”*

[From “The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

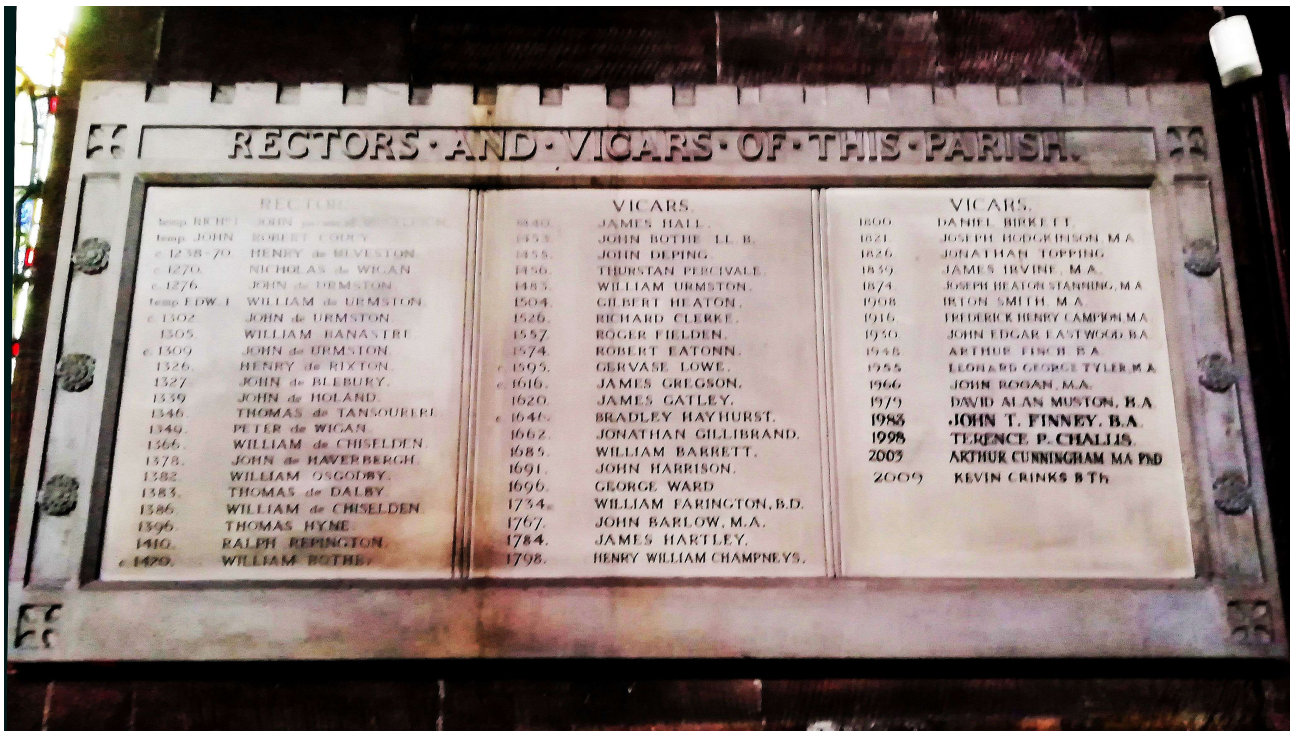
It is evident from this diary entry that James Wood's ministry at Ashton cast a long shadow. Almost

30 years earlier standing for the Gospel reading had been one of “the manifold evils, pressures, and grievances caused, practised and occasioned by the prelates” listed in the London Petition against Bishops - also known as the “Root and Branch Petition” - of 1640. It seems likely that Mr Wood had preached on the matter, either from the pulpit of Ashton Chapel or in some more intimate setting following his ejection, and that the diarist had taken his message to heart.

“Mr Atkinson” has not been positively identified. He may have been Miles or Michael Atkinson, schoolmaster at Ellenbrook, Eccles, who became a deacon in 1671 and was afterwards rector at Thurlaston.

The present Grade II-listed Church of St Thomas the Apostle is the result of a re-building on the original site of Ashton Chapel in 1892-3. The above painting by local artist Margaret Lowe shows the Church interior c.1989; the fixed pews in the nave have since been removed.

**“went to Leigh to bid farewell to Mr Braidley Hayhurst”**



“[1669, March] 14.—lords day. I went to Leigh to bid farewell to poor Mr Braidley Hayhurst Mr Lever preached out 14 pro 9 verse att my coming home I cald on my sister Katherin and advised her for her good to bethinke herselfe and live godly consideringe she had but a short time to live here but she was highly offended so I came home being late in the night.”

[From “The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Bradley Hayhurst had been appointed vicar of Leigh by the Parliamentary authorities in 1646, the patron-at-law, Richard Urmston, then being under sequestration as a Royalist. Originally from Ribchester and a graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, he was found in 1650 to be “a man of good lyffe and conversacion, and constant in preaching the word”.\* However, he resigned his position at Leigh around 1657 and on 18 October 1661 was presented to the living at Taxal, Cheshire. It may have been there that he fell foul of the Act of Uniformity, as a successor was appointed in 1663 and the frequent references to him in the Diary of Henry Newcome\*\* indicate that he spent most of the period 1661-3 in Manchester. Eventually he did conform and was appointed minister at Macclesfield in 1671.

“Mr Lever” was John Leaver, ordained in 1664 by Bishop George Hall and, according to a note in the Parish Register, appointed curate at Leigh in July 1667. In 1672 he became Vicar at Bolton-le-Moores.\*\*\*

\*“Chancery: Surveys of Church Livings, 1650-8: Lancashire”, National Archives ref. C94/4.

\*\*Chetham Society, Old Series Vol. 18.

\*\*\*Leigh registers at Manchester Archives and Local Studies ref. L211/1/1 - an entry of 14 November 1667 records the baptism of “Anne d. Mr John Lever Minister of God's word at Leigh, born the 3 day & baptized at Bickershaw Hall by himselfe”; Cheshire Archives ref. EDV 2/8.

A stone tablet listing the “Rectors and Vicars Of This Parish” can be found near the entrance to the present Church of St Mary The Virgin at Leigh. (Until about 1450 the incumbents were rectors; since then they have been vicars.) The photograph was taken on 23 August 2023.

**“when we ware att prayrs, the souldiers discharged their musquets three times”**



Bould	William Robinson of Bould for want compleat furniture	0: 2
Goulborn	John Dunn for the same	
Lowton (Discharged)	Robert Titfell for refusing to contribute since the beginning	0: 10
Haydoke	William Downall for want of compleat furniture	0: 2
Haydoke	Robert Cash default in not sending his men to winwicke	0: 2
Warrington	Samuell Booth of Warrington for defect of Armes and other furniture	0: 5
Burton Wood	Robert Tipton want of a serjeant	0: 5
Burton Wood	Richard Carrowsmith & Richard Woody refusing to contribute	0: 5
Burton Wood	John Mogg & Ralph Burston refusing to contribute	0: 5
Whitton	James Simon want of compleat furniture	0: 2

“[1669, March] 18.—Friday. I went to the funerall of Ellin Potter daughter to Thomas Potter and was interred at Winwick as we came into Winwick Church yard Captain Risleys soldiers ware in training and when we ware att prayrs in the church upon the funeralls occasion the souldiers discharged their musquets three times.”

[From “The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield”, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

As a Deputy-Lieutenant of Lancashire, one of the responsibilities of Sir Roger Bradshaigh of Haigh was to raise and maintain a militia of 1800 foot soldiers to put down any attempted sedition or insurrection. Provision for the militia was to be made in cash or kind by the local citizenry, assessed in proportion to their wealth. A “Letter-Book” preserved at Manchester Archives & Local Studies ref. L1/48/6/1 includes copies of orders in this regard given and received by Sir Roger in the period 1660-76. A memorandum on page 311 records a payment to Captain Risley on 4 March 1669 of “eight days pay for two serjeants and two Drums in the said Captain Risleys Company for duty performed by them this p'sent yeare”. The following month Sir Roger ordered the imposition of fines on those who had failed to provide the requisite men “upon notice given of the severall Musters, or [who] have sent them very defective in their Armes or other furniture Contrary to what the law required and to the Evill Example of others”. One of the appended schedules - shown above, right - lists the “Defects in Capt. Risley's Company” as follows:

“Bould – William Robinson of Bould for want of compleat furniture - £0-2-6.

Goulborn – John Dunn for the same.

Lowton (Discharged) – Robert Titfell for refusing to contribute since the beginning - £0-10-0.

Haydoke – William Downall for want of Compleat furniture - £0-2-6.

Haydoke – Robert Cash default in not sending his men to winwicke - £0-2-6.

Warrington – Samuell Booth of Warrington for defect of Armes and other furniture - £0-5-0.

Burton Wood – Gilbert Croft want of asperants [?] - £0-5-0.

Burton Wood – Robert Arrowsmith of Burton Wood refusing to contribute - £0-5-0.

Burton Wood – John Moss & Ralph Burscow refusing to contribute - £0-5-0.

Middleton – James Kenyon want of compleate furniture - £0-2-6”.

A “Note on Roger Lowe's Diary” in the Local Gleanings column of The Manchester Courier on 4 August 1876 states: “There were two Risleys living at the time, either of whom might have been the captain: John Risley of Risley, Esquire, who was buried at Winwick 19 July 1682, and John Risley, his son and heir apparent, who was buried at Winwick as 'John, son of John Risley Esq' 30 March 1676. The latter was the father of Captain John Risley of Risley (1675-1702), the last of that family”.

Cumbersome and slow to load but devastating when used by a formed body of men at close range, the musket had been a key weapon during the civil wars. No doubt the sound of the weapons being discharged startled Roger Lowe and his fellow mourners, perhaps bringing back unhappy memories for some of them. In “The Muster Master”, written about 1630, Gervase Markham describes the infantryman's equipment at this period:

“Comb-cap, sword and belt, Bandelaires with Bullet-bagg, wherein is Moulde, worme, scrawe, scourer, Bullets, a sufficient rest, with a string, and the rest so small that it maye goe, into the Barrell of the Musquet. [The muster master] shall see that the Musquett be of true Lengthe, and Bore; and to that end he shall have a gage, made according to the kings true height and Standard, and that with that gage he shall trye every Musquett Downe to the Bottom; he shall see that the Stocke be of sound wood, and true proportion, the nether end shodd with Iron; the Locke, Tricker, and pan, serviceable, and the scouring sticke, strong, and sufficient”.

The illustration above, left, is from Jacob van Gheyn's “Wapenhandelingen van Roers, Musquetten ende Spiesen”, 1608.

According to the Winwick register (Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2), “Margret d. Tho. Potter” was buried on 10 - not 18 - March. She may in practice have been called “Ellin” to distinguish her from her mother, also named Margaret.



**The Diary again breaks off after Lowe's entry for 29 March 1669. He resumes for the last time on 12 March 1674, recording the day's events as follows-**

*I went to Coz Rob[er]t Rosbothom to [W]Rixham faire to seek his mare [tha]t was stolen over night & we met with Mathew Cooke who we conjectured to be ye theefe & upon our wordes he fled and left a stolen mare [which] we secured in towne & was afterwards owned.*

**This final entry is followed in the bound volume at Wigan Archives by some obituaries penned by the diarist of friends and acquaintances who had died in the period May 1671 to December 1678, and a list of those whose funerals he had attended in the years 1660-1668. Selections from these pages will feature in the next Part.**