

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**

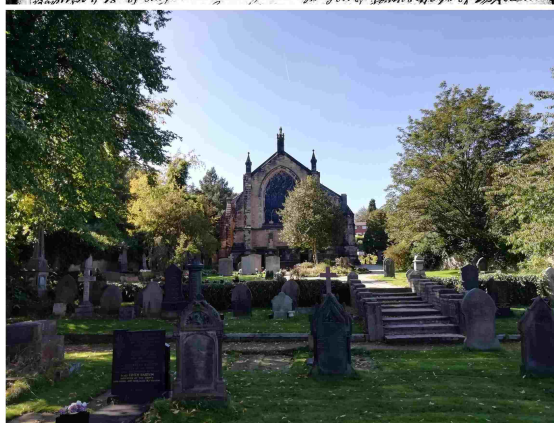
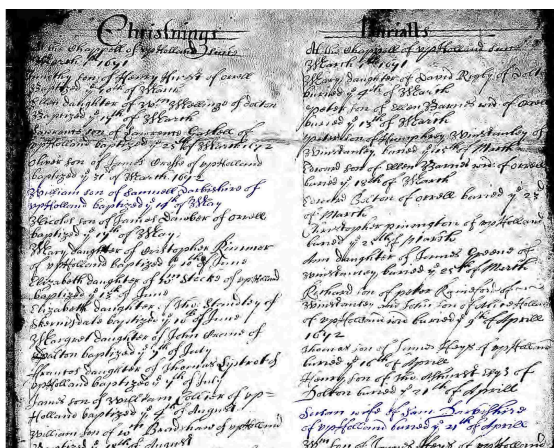
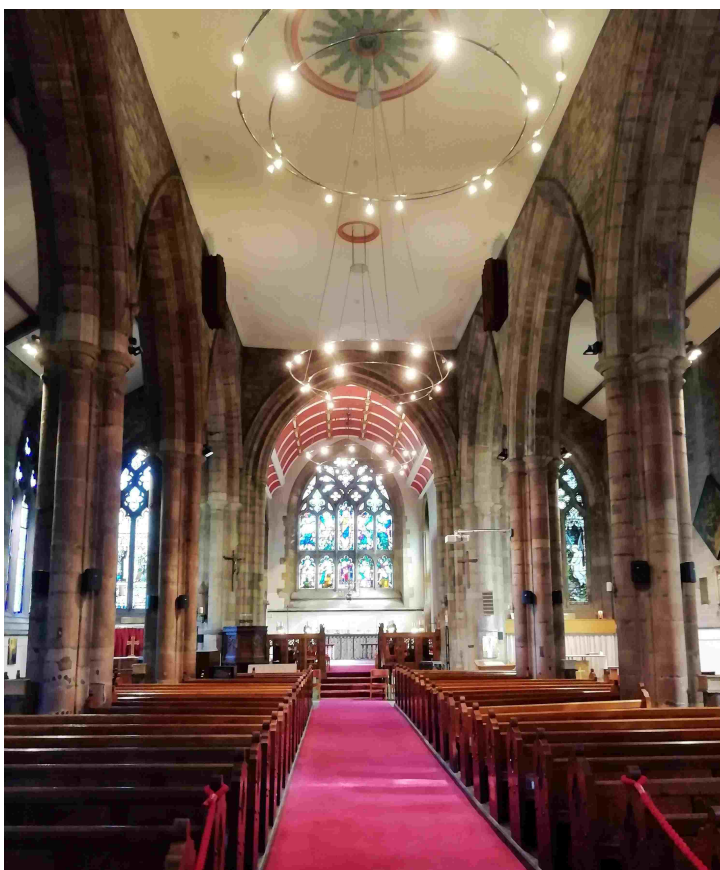
By

The Makerfield Rambler

Part 6 : Obituaries
(This edition: November 2024)

The Diary proper concludes with an entry dated 12 March 1674. In the bound volume at Wigan Archives this is followed by a series of obituaries written by Lowe which he entitles *An Account of the Seaveral Names and P[er]sons That Are Dead in Ashton and Buryed Att Winwicke.* The obituaries cover the period from May 1671 to January 1679. The series is interrupted just before the end with a list of the names of such as dyd within My Aprentiship and providentiallie I was cald to the funerall. The list covers the period from 2 October 1660 to 19 March 1668.

“She laught so hartlie as I judgd little devotion in her”



“[1672, April] 20.—Saturday. dyed Susan the wife of Samuella Darbishire and was buried on Sunday the 21th of Aprill att Holland. She came to John Darbyshires, Sammuell her husbands ffathers, on pleasure and was there deliverd of a child and was visited with a distemper cald Creaze and of it dyed.

25.—dyed William the son of Samuella Darbyshire was interred at Holland the ffriday being 26th day that day fortnight he was borne that same day fortnight and was buryid.”

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

The present Grade I-listed Parish Church of St Thomas The Martyr at Upholland was originally the priory church for a religious community founded by Sir Robert de Holland in 1307 and re-founded as a priory of 12 Benedictine monks by Bishop Walter de Langton in 1318-19. The nave and tower incorporate elements of the 14th century chapel. A new chancel was added in 1882-6, at which time a wooden gallery and organ case originally at the western end of the church were removed.

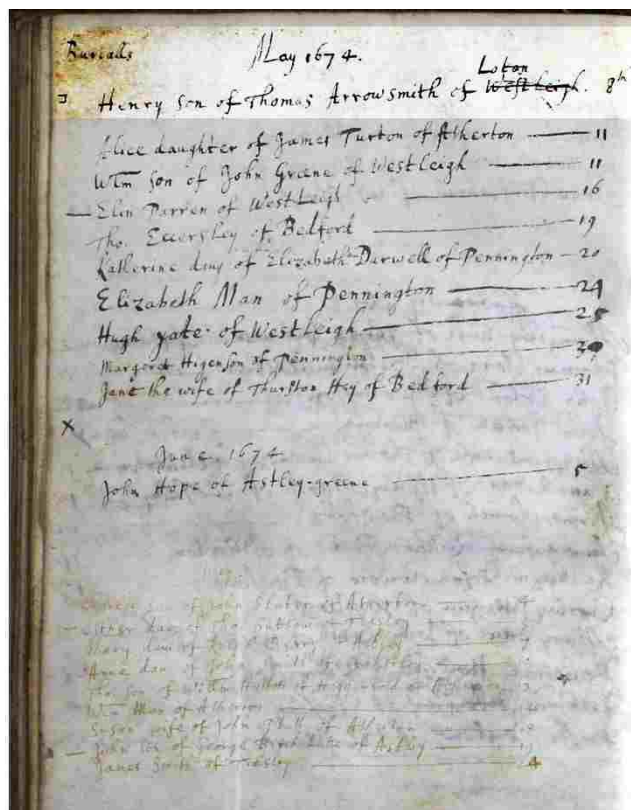
In Roger Lowe's time, St Thomas' was a chapel-of-ease to the Parish Church at Wigan. The original registers for the period are in poor condition but appear to corroborate the information given by Lowe about Susan and William Darbyshire. The corresponding Bishop's Transcripts (above, top right) have the burial of “Suan w. of Samuel Darbeser of Holland” occurring on 23 April 1672 and the baptism of “William s. of Samuel Darbsher of Holland” on 14 May 1672. William's burial does not seem to have been recorded in the Transcripts.*

At Mrs Darbyshire's funeral the diarist found himself "*sate in the Peawe*" next to Rachel Lyon, housekeeper at Bispham Hall and (as he wrote later) "*a very proud young woman*". During the service "*She could not sit without derision of a poor old man [tha]t sat with us & laught so hartilie as I judgd little devotion in her*". By the date of her own passing three years later Lowe states that Ms Lyon had amassed a fortune of £120, all of which she left to her master Thomas Bispham (c.1637-1677).

The photographs of St Thomas' Church were taken on 20 September 2019.

*Both the original registers and the Bishop's Transcripts are at Lancashire Archives, respectively refs. PR 2907/1/1 and Drl/2/520.

“a coale fell on his neck and so kild him”



“[1672, June] 10.—Wednesday. was kild a lad cald Benchall he was drawing coles in lower lane and a coale fell on his neck and so kild him, buryd att Ashton Chapell.”

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

With the intensification of mining activity later in the 17th century began what Alan Davies refers to in “Coal Mining in Lancashire & Cheshire” (Amberley, 2010) as “The Heavy Toll” of mining-related injuries and fatalities. Roger Lowe records another such death on Thursday 7 May 1674:

“there came a lad to the coale pit with a horse for coales & in looking into the Ginn pitt fell downe and soe was killd..., he was sonn to Tho Arrowsmith of Lowton Comon”.

I can find no reference to the “Benchall” fatality in local burial registers. “Henry son of Thomas Arrowsmith of Loton” was buried at Leigh on 8 May 1674.*

*Leigh burial register extract, above right, from Manchester Archives & Local Studies ref. L211/1/1/2.

The illustration is from the lyric sheet for a ballad of c.1680 entitled “A New-Year's Gift for Covetous Colliers”. The ballad celebrates measures taken by Parliament to curb profiteering by the pit-owners.

***“He was interred in the tombe under the great stone
in Sir Williams chappell”***



“[1672, July] 10.—Wednesday. dyed from Ince hall Mr John Gerard, Sir William Gerard[s] youngest sonne, he was marryd to Mr Gerard[s] daughter of Ince Hall and there dyed and the day after Esqr. Gerard his eldest brother caused him to be fatched in the bottom of relune [?] and brought to Winwick and he was interred in the tombe under the great stone in Sir William[s] chappell.”

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

The Gerards settled in the Ashton-in-Makerfield area around 1335 when William Gerard of Kingsley, Cheshire, married Joan, daughter and heir of Peter de Burnhull (or “Brynhill”). The Gerards of Ince were descended from John, grandson of William and Joan and the youngest brother of the Thomas Gerard of Bryn in whom the de Burnhull estates had combined on the death of Joan's sister, Agnes, c.1383. The John Gerard whose interment at Winwick is recorded in the Diary - the youngest son, as Lowe says, of Sir William the 3rd Baronet Gerard of Bryn - had been married to Anne, daughter of Thomas Gerard of Ince and thus a distant cousin. “Esqr. Gerard” was John's eldest brother, another William and the future 4th Baronet.

The Gerard Chapel is at the eastern end of the North Aisle in the Parish Church of St Oswald, Winwick. The most conspicuous object in the Chapel is a brass covering the entrance to the burial chamber which, per the inscription, depicts “Piers Gerard esquire son and heire of Thomas Gerard knyght of the Bryne ... whiche died the xix day of June in the yere of our lord MCCCCLXXXV [1495]”. The vault was the final resting place of subsequent generations of the family until 1854 when, according to the Liverpool Mercury, it was “finally closed, not having further space for

additional interments”.

The following objects can also be seen in the Chapel-

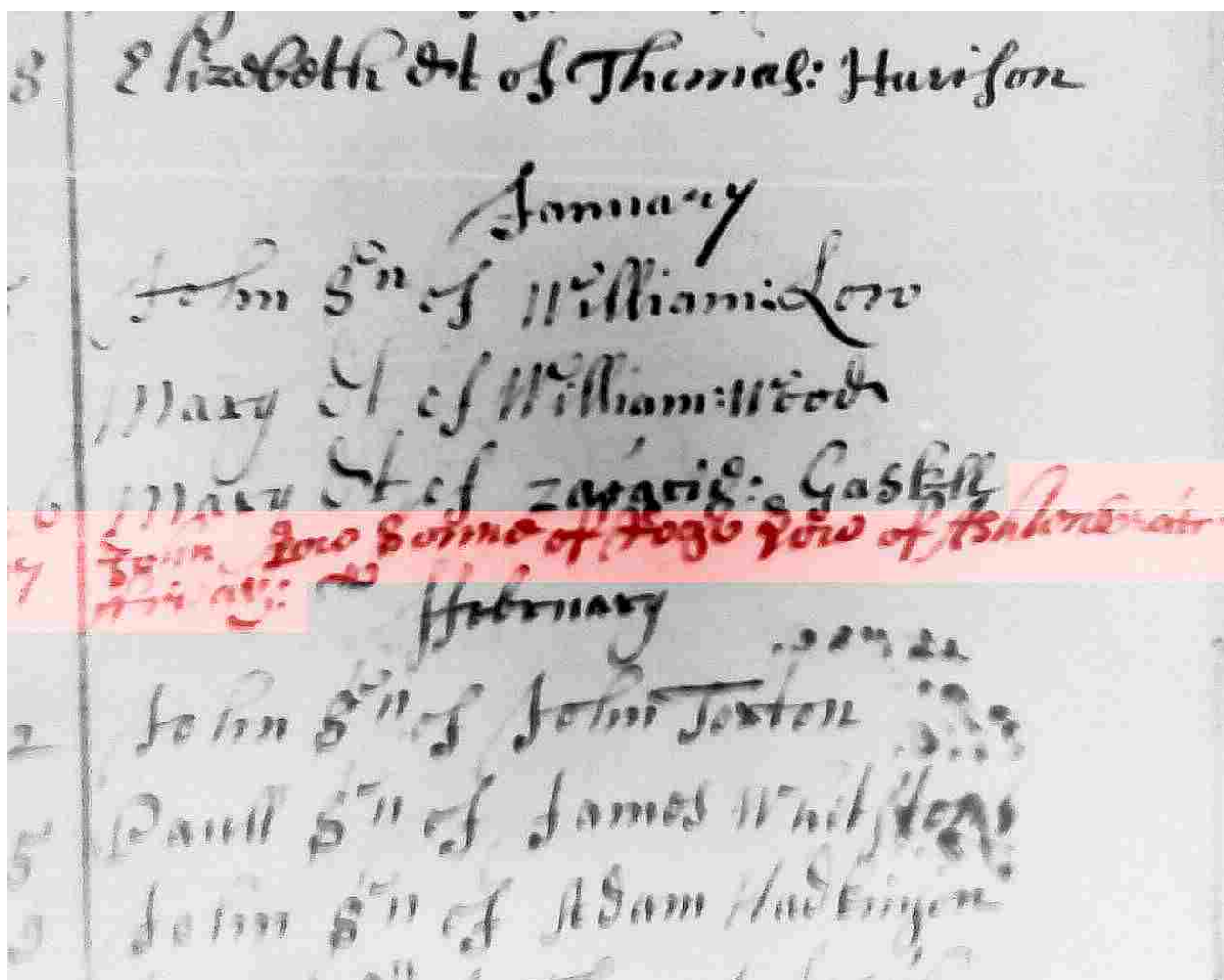
Main photograph: The cross-head of a 10th century stone cross, brought inside from the churchyard around 1911, now sits on the windowsill. In the 18th century it had been re-used as a memorial stone, the underside bearing an inscription as follows “Roger Lowe*, Houghton 1721. Thomas & Alice Holcroft 1793”. Next to this is a 14th century sandstone font, also recovered from the churchyard. To the left of the cross-head, next to the metal screen, is one of four benches made from the “Winwick Oak” which was blown over during a storm on 4 February 1850.

Right, below: This view looks towards the Stone Window (1937) in the east wall of the Gerard Chapel, given by Mary Stone in memory of her parents. It depicts various scenes from the life of Oswald, King of Northumbria, who lived in the 7th century. The hymn board, on the right of the photograph, was salvaged from an old gallery at the west end of the Nave. To the left of the hymn board, on the floor, is a stone “piscina”. Found in the north wall during the recent renovations, this shallow basin would have been placed near the altar and used for washing communion vessels. Its exact provenance is, for the time being, uncertain.

The photographs were taken on 17 August 2017.

*NOT the diarist, but possibly the sidesman at Winwick whose name is inscribed on one of the 6 bells recast in 1710.

“my little John was christened”



“[1673, January] 21.—Munday, was buryd [William Knowles, barley man] on which day my little John was christened”.

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

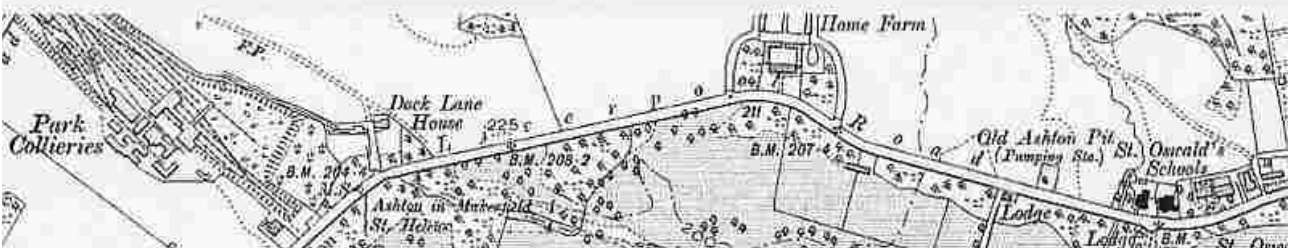
Early in 1673, almost five years after they were married, Roger and Emma Lowe were blessed with a son, John. There is a discrepancy between Lowe's record of the boy's christening and the Winwick baptismal register, shown above, which has the christening of “John Low sonne of Roger Low of Ashton, Grocer” taking place on “Friday” 17 January 1673. It seems likely that the register here is unreliable; at any event, it is apparent that the details of John's christening have been added by way of a later amendment.*

Emma had been assisted at the birth by Emme Darbshire, mother-in-law of the Susan Darbshire whose funeral at Upholland Lowe had attended a year earlier. He records her death on 31 March 1674 in these terms:

“dyed Emme Darbishaire uxor John Darbshire she was my Ems midwife of little Jack a very courteous good woman & her death was much lamented by Em & me”.

*The Winwick Parish registers for the period 1630-79 are at Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2. The burials register has "William Knowle" being laid to rest on 20 January.

“an old Cannibel”



“[1673, March] 7. —friday night. dyed Capt. Sorrowcold, an old Cannibel, [tha]t hath orethrowne many families, but hath now arrived att his one place, abundance of gold and silver was found under his hands.”

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

A corresponding entry in the Winwick parish register identifies the “*old Cannibel*” as “Mr John Sorrowcold”, a younger brother of George and uncle to James Sorocold of Aye Bridge Farm. He was buried at Winwick on 10 March (Cheshire Archives, ref. P158/1/2). It seems from what Roger Lowe says about him that this was the John Sorocold who had served under Colonel John Booth in the Parliamentarian army during the first Civil War (1642-6). As James Gratton states in “The Parliamentarian and Royalist War Effort in Lancashire 1642-1651”*, one of Captain Sorocold's duties in 1644 had been to collect “assessments” - a form of taxation - to sustain the troops then besieging Lathom House, one of the last remaining Royalist strongholds in Lancashire and the ancestral home of the Earls of Derby. The assessments were deeply resented by the civilian population; this alone probably explains Lowe's characterisation of him as a “*Cannibel*”, but the diarist's remarks may also be a clue to where local sympathies lay during the conflict.

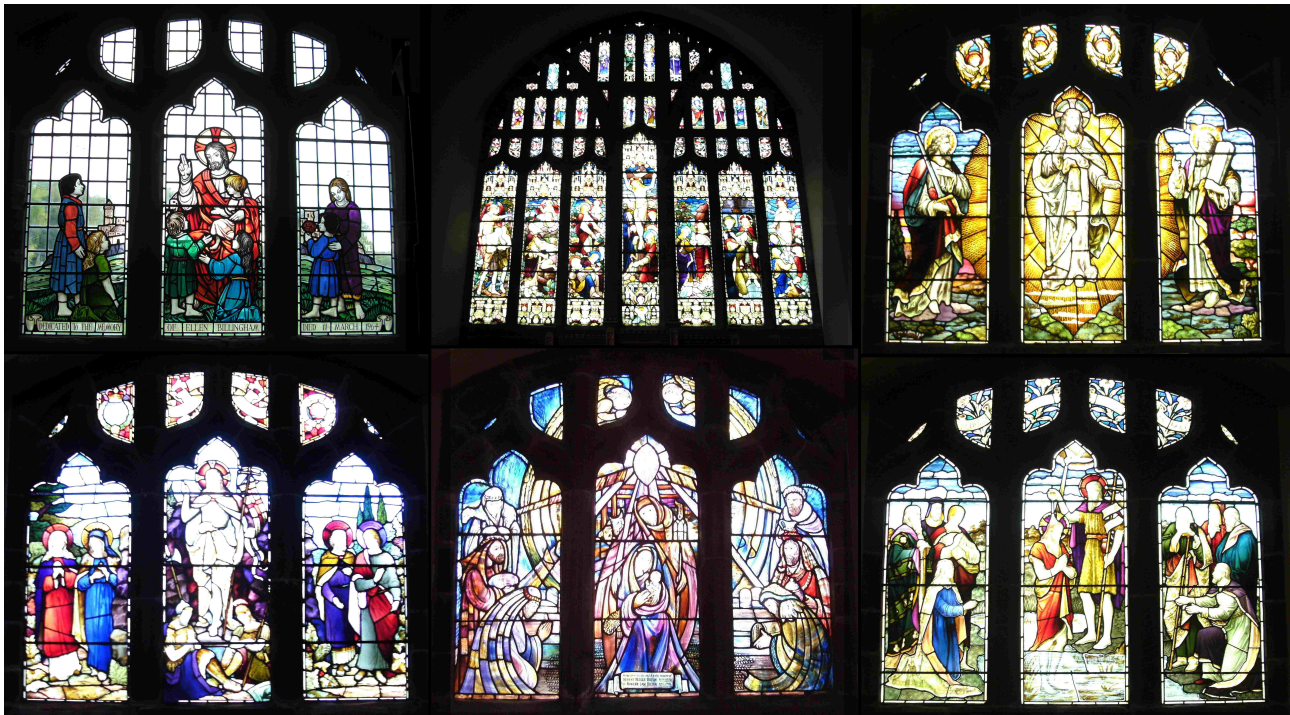
A letter of 22 October 1674 from the Chester Probate Court to Thomas Birchall, a London merchant, in respect of the property of “John Sorocold, gentleman, late of Docklane House in Ashton” is preserved at Lancashire Archives ref. DDGE(E) 278. In 1677 Ralph Hasleden sold to

John Launder (1631-92) of New Hall “all the messuage or dwelling house situated at Ashton, Lancashire, and called Dock Lane House”, viz. the house, outbuildings, yards, orchards, gardens and all closes and parcels belonging to the tenement (DDGE(M) 109). It appeared in an inventory of Launder properties in 1719 (DDGE(M) 146, but passed by marriage to the Master family and was included in the sale of assets prompted by legal action taken by the creditors of Legh Master in 1767-70 (DDCS/4/1-5). Eventually, in 1778, it came to the Gerards as part of the New Hall estate (DDCS/4/19; DDGE(M) 1053). The house was finally demolished in 1959/60 pursuant to orders under the Housing Act 1957 (Wigan Archives ref. UD Ash/A/A1/84).

Dock Lane House is shown above at an unknown date with, below, an extract from the 1906 OS map (sheet 101 NE) indicating its position relative to Liverpool Road. “British Military Vehicles” now occupies the site.

*1998 PhD thesis, citing Chetham Papers ii, 35, at Chetham's Library, Manchester, and Houghton Green Papers Nos. 19 and 29 at Warrington Public Library.

“none to accomanie her to the funerall but God and herselfe”



“[1673, September] 1. —Munday. A poor woman had a child dyed from John Chaddockes in the Flowr [Lower?] Lane and buryed it at Chappell and had none to accomanie her to the funerall but God and herselfe.”
[From The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Of the burials recorded by Roger Lowe in the period 1671-9, 33 are said by him to have taken place “at [Ashton] Chappell”. There are another three entries where he writes that the deceased “lyes” at the Chapel. Given that the earliest surviving burial register for Ashton begins with an entry dated 16 October 1745, and that the town was still part of Winwick Parish at the time, I expected to find these 36 burials listed in the corresponding Winwick register. In fact, except for three marriages in 1632, there is no extant record of baptisms, weddings or burials at Ashton until the surviving registers now preserved at Wigan Archives ref. DP3/1 begin in 1698. This suggests to me that there was an earlier register of local burials which no longer survives.*

Without more information about the woman whose child was buried “at Chappell” we can only speculate on the circumstances that led to this sad end. It would seem, though, that she was not as yet confined to the Ashton poorhouse. According to the Hearth Tax Assessments for 1673 (National Archives ref. E179/132/355), the poorhouse was a property of 5 hearths then under the superintendence of James Winstanley. The location of the poorhouse is not specified in the Assessments, and neither is it mentioned by Roger Lowe, but presumably its construction had followed the passing of an Act in 1601 (43 Eliz. c.2) whereby “convenient houses of dwelling for the ... impotent poor” were to be built on waste or common land within the parish.

The present Church of St Thomas the Apostle is the result of a re-building on or close to the original site of Ashton Chapel in 1892-3. The photographs show:

Left, above: First window from the east end of the south wall of the nave. On the theme “Suffer little children to come unto me”, the window was installed in 1964 in memory of Ellen Billingham. Left, below: Second window, south wall. This window is on the theme of the Resurrection, and was installed by members and officers of the Lancashire Hussars “In memory of their old comrade, Major Benjamin Relf, who died on March 5th 1897, aged 64 years”.

Middle, above: East window, designed by A L Moore of London and installed in 1898 to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

Middle, below: Fifth window, south wall; the most recent.

Right, above: Third window, south wall, “in memory of the men of the 32nd Company Imperial Yeomanry (Lancashire Hussars), who were killed in action or died in South Africa in 1900-1901”. The window depicts the Transfiguration; the men are named below as “Private Clarke, Private H Gerrard, Private A Ogden, Private Fairclough, Private W J Littler, Private Frost, Sergeant A Owbridge, Sergeant S Swan, Private R Collinge, Private R Howard, Private Herrity”.

Right, below: Fourth window, south wall, “to the Glory of God and in memory of James Watson, many years Sidesman of this Church, who died 9th April 1898, aged 45 years”. The theme is Christ's baptism.

*It is apparent from the “humble request” of Ashton residents in c.1697 that interment at the chapel was poorly regulated in this period and had been the subject of criticism by the authorities at Winwick. Thus, the signatories undertake “as much as in us lies, to hinder every person from making any Graves or Interring any corpses within the said Chappel” - from a transcript in the Winwick registers at Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2.

***“very frequent in her discourses with her Cattel,
doggs and cattts”***



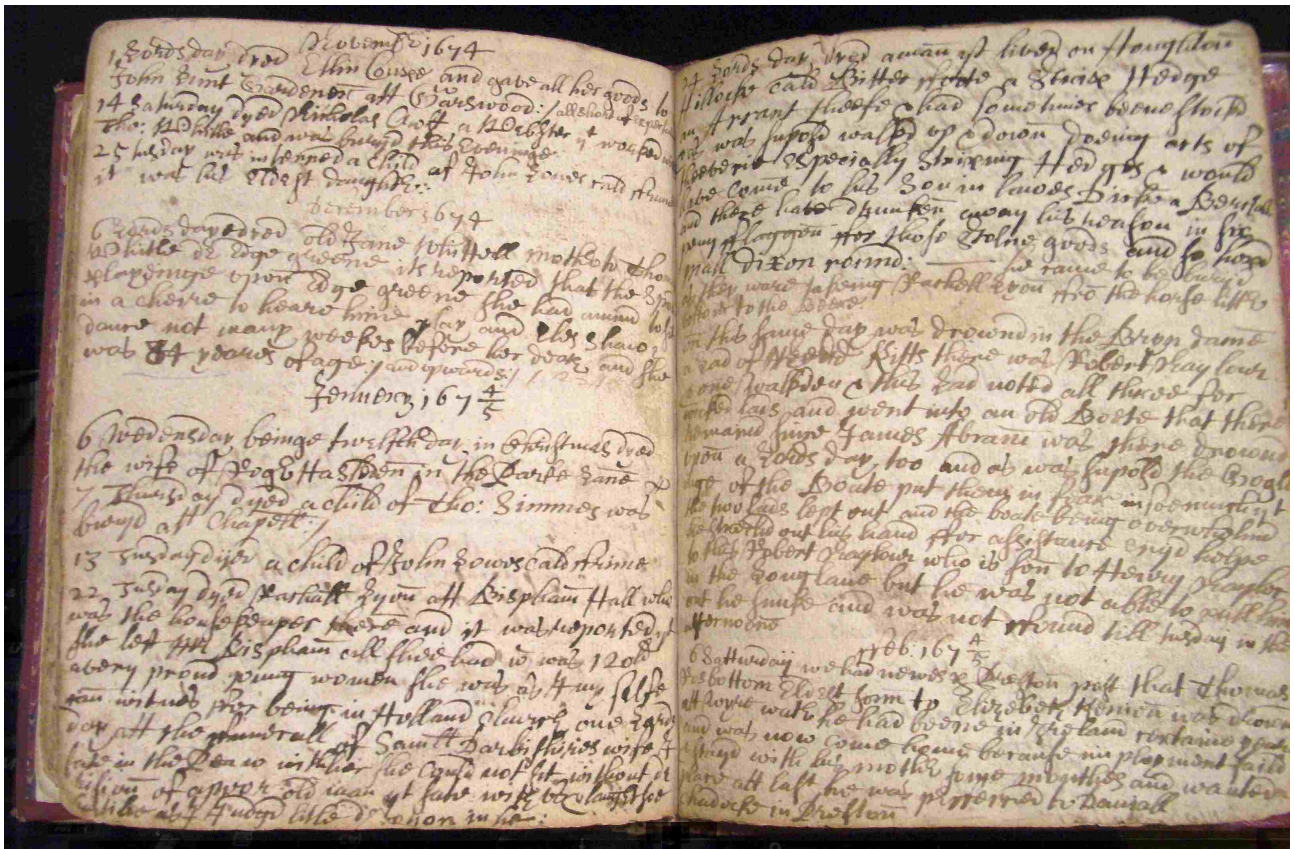
“[1674, September] 26. Saturday. dyed Anne Kenion of the towne heath and who had many wintrs there habitated her onely selfe & was very frequent in her discourses with her Cattel also beasts doggs and cattts.”
[From The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Although the surname of this 17th century Doctor Dolittle is transcribed as “Kerrison” in the published versions of the Diary, the Winwick register confirms the burial of “Ann Kenion” on 27 September 1674 (Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2). “Mrs Anne Kenyon” and “Ann Kenyon” - probably the same individual - appear in the 1664 and 1673 Hearth Tax assessments as liable to pay tax on one hearth (National Archives refs. E179/250/11 and E179/132/355).

In the late 19th century Ashton Heath Farm was managed by several generations of the Rigby family. William Rigby was the farmer when the 1881 Worrall's Wigan & District Directory was compiled, he having succeeded his father Thomas. The Rigbys were followed by the France family. Arthur France was farming there in 1925.

The above photograph was taken on 21 June 2024.

**Diary of Roger Lowe, 1 November 1674 to 6 February 1675
(part)**



“November, 1674

- 1.—Lords day. dyed Ellin Coupe and gave all her goods to John Hunt Gardener att Garswood, all short of expectations.
- 14.—Saturday. dyed Nicholas Croft a webster [tha]t worked with Tho Whittle and was buried this eveninge.
- 25.—tuesday. was interred a child of John Lowes called Frime it was his eldest daughter.

December, 1674

- 6.—Lords day. dyed old Jane Whittell mother to Thomas Whitle de Edge Greene its reported that the Spode playeing upon Edge Greene she had a mind to sit in a cheire to heare hime play and [see] Eles Shawe dance not many weeks before her death and she was 84 years of age, and upwards.

January, 1675

- 6.—Wednesday. being twelfth day in Christmas dyed the wife of Rogr Hasleden in the Parke Lane.
- 7.—Thursday. dyed a child of Tho Summes was buried att Chapell.
- 13.—Tuesday. dyed a child of John Lowes called Frime.
- 22.—Tuesday. dyed Rachall Lyon at Bispham Hall who was the housekeeper there and it was reported [tha]t she left Mr Bispham all shee had [which] was 120li. a very proud young woman she was as I myselfe can witness for being in Holland church one Lords day at the funerall of Samll Darbishires wife I sate in the Peawe with her she could not sit without derision of a poor old man [tha]t sat with us & laught so hartilie as I judgd little devotion in her.
- 24.—Lords day. dyed a man [tha]t lived on Houghton Hillocke cald Bitter Foote a Strip Hedge an arrant theefe and had sometimes been stockd and was suposd walked up and down doing acts of theverie especially striping Hedges and would have come to his son in lawes Dicke a Berchall and

there have drunken away his reason in six peny flaggon of those stolne goods and so hopd Mall Dixon round he came to be buryd as they ware takeing Rachell Lyon fro[m] the horse littr bottom to the Beere.

on this same day was drowned in the Brynn dam a lad of [Edward?] Kitts, there was Robert Naylour and one Walkden and this lad noted all three for wicked lads and went into an old Boate that there remained since James Abram was there drowned upon a Lords day too, and as was supposd the Gogleinge of the Boate put them in feare soe much [tha]t the two lads lept out and the boate being overwhelemed, he stretched out his hand for assistance cryd help to this Robert Naylour, who is son to Henry Naylor in the Long lane but he was not able to pull him out he sunke and was not found till tusday in the afternoone.

February, 1675

6.—Satturday. we had newes p[er] Preston post that Thomas Rosbottom eldest sonn to Elizabeth Kenion, was drowned att Wyre watr and he had been in Ireland certaine yeares and was now come home because imployment faild and stayd with his mother some monthes and wanted a place att last he was proffered to Daniell Chaddocke in Preston [continues, following page: “and was occupied in his service as in rideing about for the preferment of his sale in wines. att this prfam [?] he was occupied in getting wines to shore at Wyre or in seeing it arrived but he was drowned and 3 more he swam the longest of them all and was buryd at Pooton.”]”

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

“The Spode”



“[1674, December] 6. — Lords day. dyed old Jane Whittell mother to Thomas Whittle de Edge Greene its reported that the Spode playeing upon Edge Greene she had a mind to sit in a cheire to heare hime play and [see] Eles Shawe dance not many weeks before her death and she was 84 yeares of age, and upwards.”

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

Edge Green Common is a 5.83-hectare patch of rough ground at the boundary between Ashton and Golborne; a remnant of the peatlands formed at the end of the last Ice Age that once covered the local area, now valued for its biodiversity and as a store of otherwise harmful carbon. The Common may have been the venue for Primitive Methodist “camp meetings” in the middle of the 19th century which preceded the construction of a nearby chapel. In 1972 the land was formally declared to have no identifiable owner and therefore to be protected under the Commons Registration Act 1965. Recent works at the site have included tree removal, moss-planting and landscaping to prevent further drying out of the peat and consequent release of carbon and species loss.

Roger Lowe's use of the word “*Spode*” to describe the musician who played “*upon Edge Greene*” in 1674 is intriguing. So far as I have been able to discover, this usage occurs in only one other context. In February 1597 the case of William Taylor of Winwick came before the Consistory Court at Chester Cathedral. It was put to him-

“that thou the said William Tailor divers & sundry sundayes and holly dayes hast neglected thy duety in the Churche especially in or aboutes the xix th of december last which day thou Camest

into the Church aboutes the readinge of the seconde Lesson with one **Spode** a piper pipinge or goinge before thee very Contemptuosly & disorderlye into the said Church flyringe & laughinge so that therby the Congragacion there heringe devine service were greatly trobled & anoyed & the service therby letted & trobled”.*

It seems unlikely that the piper who behaved “very Contemptuosly” at Winwick in 1596 was the same one that entertained Jane Whittle and her neighbours at Edge Green in 1674. Was the latter a descendant of the former? Or - as Lowe's usage suggests - had “Spode” by then become the local term for a piper? It is just possible that Mrs Whittle remembered the 1596 incident and had been responsible for introducing the word into the local dialect.

“Jane Whittell, wid” was buried at Winwick on 7 December 1674.**

The illustration at top left, above, is from a tapestry of c.1600. My photographs were taken in January 2023.

*Cheshire Archives ref. EDC 5/1596/64.

**Winwick parish register at Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2.

“a Strip Hedge, an Arrant theefe”



“[1675, January] 24.—Lords day. dyed a man [tha]t lived on Houghton Hillocke cald Bitter Foote a Strip Hedge an Arrant theefe and had sometimes been stockd and was suposd walked up and down doing acts of theeverie especially striping Hedges and would have come to his son in lawes Dicke a Berchall and there have drunken away his reason in six peny flaggon of those stolne goods and so hopd Mall Dixon round he came to be buryd as they ware takeing Rachell Lyon fro[m] the horse littr bottom to the Beere.”*

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

In his book “The English Husbandman” (London, 1613), Gervase Markham recommended a clipped hedge of box, “primpe”, lavender or rosemary as being both aesthetically pleasing and “very profitable to the huswife for the drying of linnen cloaths, yarne, and such like”. Of course, drying clothes on a hedge carried a risk that the items would be stolen. “Strip Hedge” and his co-malefactors “Prygman”**, “Bawdy-Basket”*** and “Snow Gatherer”**** were a menace to householders well into the 19th century.

The above enlargement of part of a photograph of a country house in Lincolnshire shows laundry drying on a hedge around 1875.

The identity of “*Bitter Foot*” remains a mystery: according to the parish register, only Rachel

Lyon was buried at Winwick on 25 January 1675 (Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2; the next burials were those of Alice Lealand and an unnamed son of Thorston Arowsmith on 28 followed by Richard Leigh on 30 January).

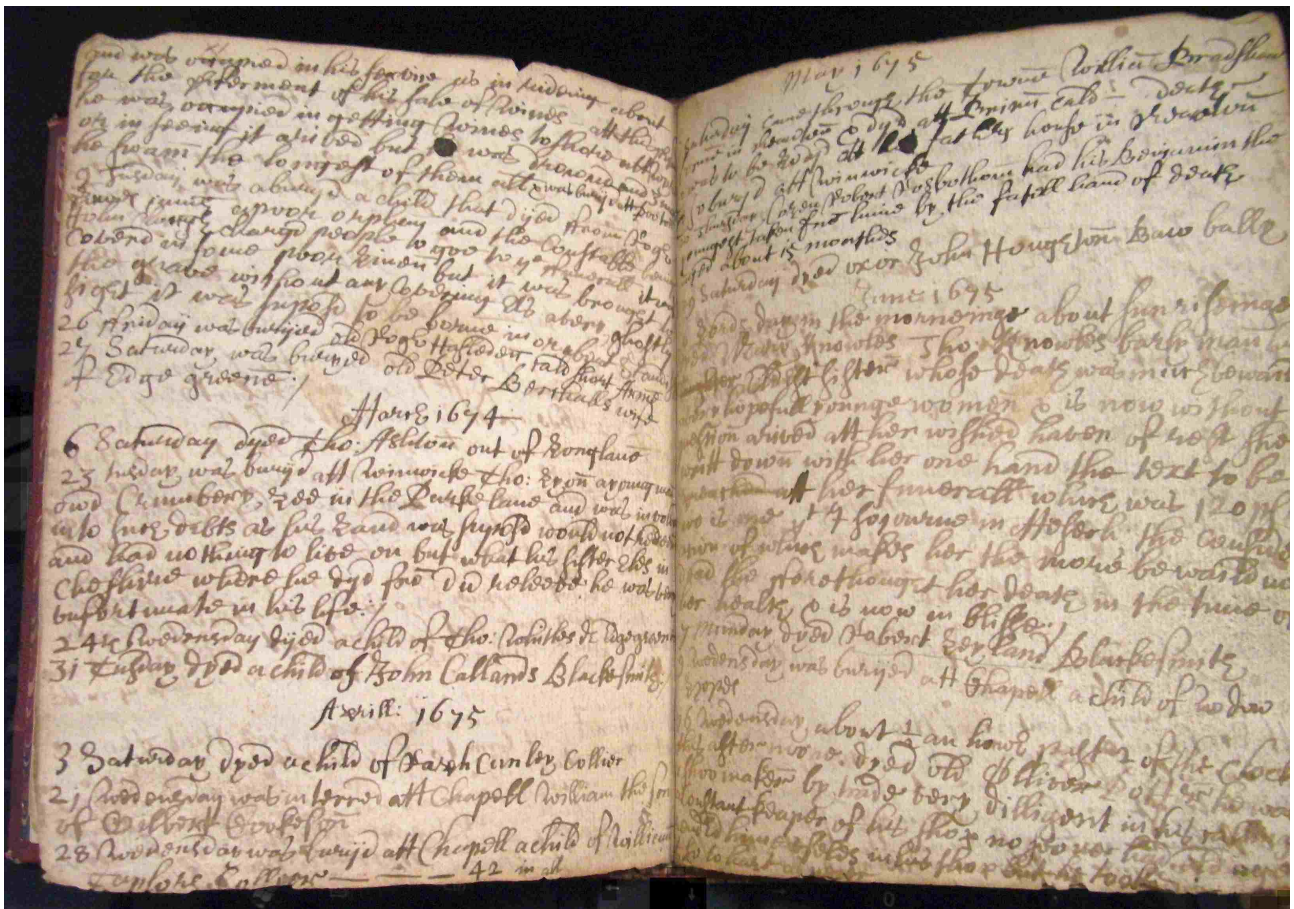
*“*helped malediction*”?? I take Lowe to mean that he hastened his own damnation by drinking himself to death on the proceeds of his ill-gotten gains.

**“A Prygman goeth with a stycke in hys hand like an idle person. His propertye is to steale cloathes of the hedge, which they call storing of the Rogeman: or els filch Poultry, carying them to the Alehouse, whych they call the Bowsyng In, & ther syt playing at cardes and dice, tyl that is spent which they haue so fylched.” - John Awdelay in “The fraternitye of vacabondes....”, 1575.

***“Bawdy-baskets ... go with baskets and Capcases on their arms, wherein they have laces, pins, needles, white inkle, and round silk girdles of all colors. These will buy conyskins and steal linen clothes off on hedges” - Thomas Harman in “A Caveat for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds”, 1566.

****As the name suggests, a “Snow-Gatherer” specialised in white linen.

Diary of Roger Lowe, 6 February (part) to 16 June 1675



[1675, February] 9.—Tuesday. was buryd a child that dyed from Roge Lowes junr a poor orphan and the constable being John Clough chargd people to goe to ye funerall it was covered in some poor linen but it was brought to the grave without any covering as a very ghostly sight it was suposd to be borne in or about Standish.

26.—Friday. was buryd old Rogr Hasleden, cald short arme.

27.—Saturday. was buryed [Grace,] old Peter Berchalls wife of Edge green.

March, 1675

6.—Saturday. dyed Tho Ashton out of Long-lane.

23.—tuesday. was buryed att Winwicke Tho Lyon, a young man owned Crumbery Lee in the Parke lane and was involved in such debts as his Land was suposd would not redeem and had nothing to live on but what his sister Eles in Cheshire where he dyd from did relevee he was very unfortunate in his life.

24.—Wednesday. dyed [Thomas,] a child of Tho Whitles de Edge-greene.

31.—tuesday. dyed a child of John Callands Blacksmith.

April, 1675

3.—Saturday. dyed a child of Raph Cunley collier.

21.—Wednesday. was interred at Chapell William the son of Gilbert Cookeson.

28.—Wednesday. was buryd att Chapell a child of William Taylore Collier. 42 in all.

May, 1675

1.—Saturday. came through the Towne William Bradshaw borne in Neawton and dyd at Brimscauld [?] ... death and was to be he dyd att his fathrs house in Neawton and so buryd att Winwicke.

20.—Thursday. Cozen Robert Rosbothom had his Benjamin the youngest taken from hime by the fatefull hand of death aged about 15 months.

29.—Saturday. dyed [Elizabeth] uxor John Houghton Bawbally.

June, 1675

6.—Lords day. in the morneinge about sun riseinge died Mary Knowles Tho Knowles barley man and and his eldest sister whose death was much bewailed a very hopeful younge woman and is now without question arrived att her wished haven of rest she writt down with her own hand the text to be preached at her funerall which was 120 ps. 5 wo[e] is me [tha]t sojourn in Mesech the consideration of which makes her the more bewailed now dead she forethought her death in the time of her health and is now in blisse.

7.—Munday. dyed Robert Leyland Blackesmith.

16.—Wednesday. about half an hour past 2 of the clock this afternoone dyed old Olliver Potter he was a shoemaker by trade very diligent in his callinge, a constant keaper of his shop no sooner had old age rendrd him useless in his shop but he tooke it so to hart as never looked up after it.”

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

“he was very unfortunate in his life”



"[1675, March] 23.—tuesday. was buryed att Winwicke Tho Lyon, a young man owned Crumbery Lea in the Parke lane and was involved in such debts as his Land was suposd would not redeem and had nothing to live on but what his sister Eles in Cheshire where he dyd from did relevee he was very unfortunate in his life."

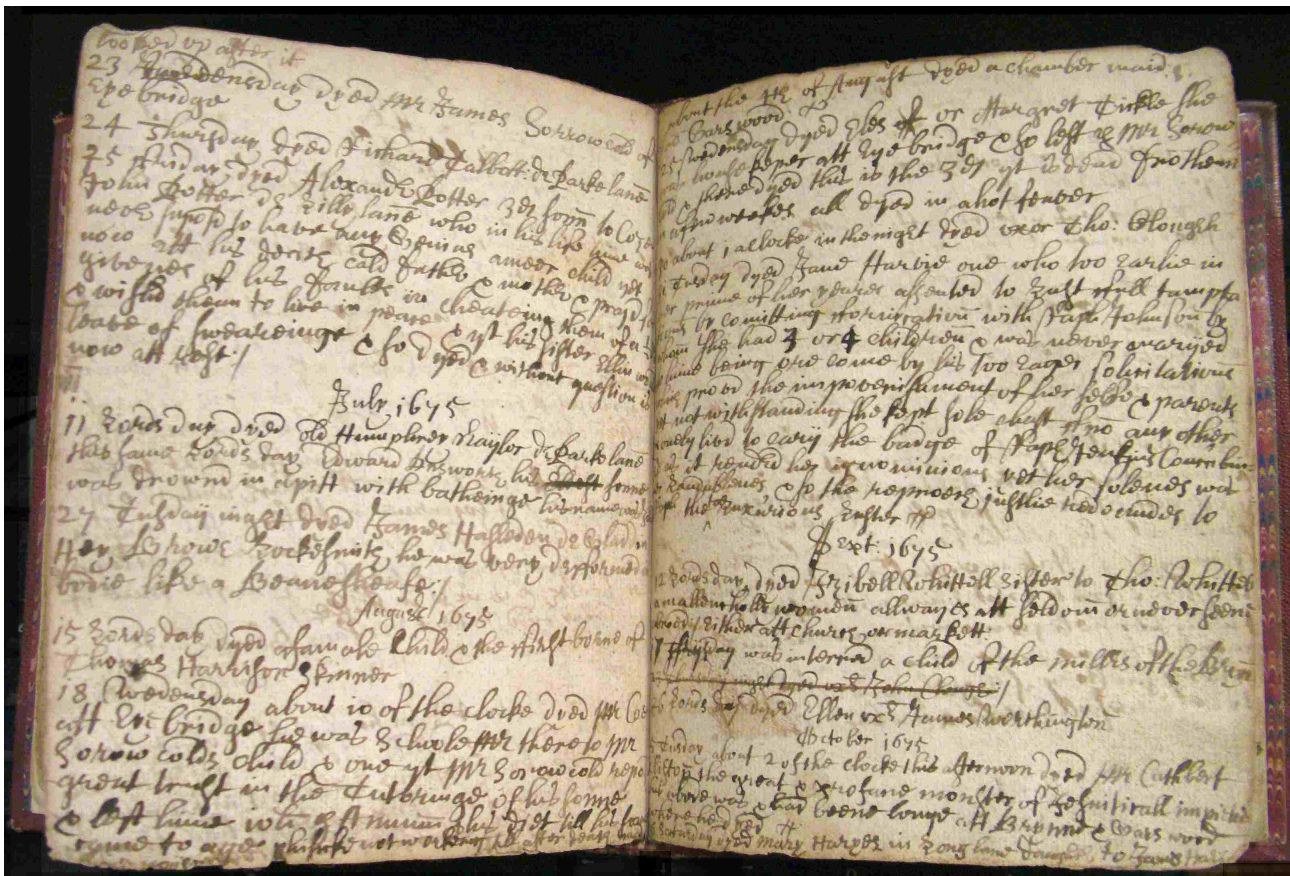
[From The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Deeds relating to the Cranberry Lea estate at Lancashire Archives under ref. DDGE(M) 656-9 and 907-9 show it passing from Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn to his cousin Miles Gerard of Ince and others in 1607, from George Sorocold (as trustee for the sequestered Gerard lands) to Richard Lyon in 1653, and from the Lyon family back to the Gerards in 1776. Later, it came into the hands of the Bankes family of Winstanley Hall and was included in the sale of their properties in 1951. The sale catalogue describes Cranberry Lea as “an excellent dairy farm, tenanted by W Hodgkinson. Approximately 19 acres of this farm are or were under requisition by the Ministry of Works for open cast coal working”.

The Diary corresponds with an entry in the Winwick parish register at Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2, which likewise has Thomas Lyon buried there on 23 March.

The photograph shows Brocstedes Road, North Ashton, looking towards Cranberry Lea Farm on 26 July 2013.

Diary of Roger Lowe, 23 June to 16 October 1675



[1675, June] 23.—Wednesday. dyed Mr. James Sorowcold of Eyebridge.

24.—Thursday. dyed Richard Talbott de Parke lane.

25.—Friday. dyed Alexander Potter 3d son to Cozen John Potter de Lilly Lane who in his life time was nevr supposd to have any genius a meer child yet now att his death called father & mother & prayd forgiveness of his faults in cheating them of a half peny and wished them to live in peace & that his sister Ellin would leave off swearing & so dyed & without question is now att rest.

July, 1675

11.—Lords day. dyed old Humphrey Naylor de Parke lane.

this same Lords day Edward Dusworth his sonne was drowned in a pitt with batheinge his name was Jack.

27.—Tusday night. dyed James Hasleden de Gladdin Hey Browe Locksmith he was very defformed in bodie like Beanesheafe.

August, 1675

15.—Lords day. dyed a female child and the first borne of Thomas Harrison Skinner.

18.—Wednesday. ab[ou]t 10 of the clock died Mr Coe att Eye bridge he was schoole M[aste]r there to Mr Sorowcold's child & one that Mr Sorowcold reposed great trust in the Tutoringe of his sonne & left him 10li p annum & his diet till his sonnes* came of age physick not workinge till after death made him wysre

-about the 4th of August dyed a chamber maid from Garswood.

25.—Wednesday. dyed Elles or Margret Tickle she was housekeeper att eye bridge and so left p Mr. Sorowcold & there dyed this is the 3[r]d [tha]t is dead fro[m] thence in a few weekes all dyed in a hot feaver.

30.—about 1 o'clocke in the night diyed [Alice] uxor Tho Clough.

31.—Tusday. dyed Jane Harvie one who too earlie in [the] prime of her yeares assented to lust Temptations by committing ffornication with Raph Johnson by whom she had 3 or 4 children & was never maryed to hime being oer come by his too eager solicitations which provd the impoverishment of her selfe and parents yet notwithstanding she kept sole from any other & onely livd to cary the badge of Raph Jenkins Concubin [tha]t her Laudablence & so the reproech justilie rebounds to Raph the too Luxurious Luster.

September, 1675

12.—Lords day. dyed Izibell Whittell sister to Tho Whittell a mallencholly woman allwayes att [home,] seldom or never seene abroad either att church or markt.

17.—Fryday. was interred a child of the Millrs of the Bryn.

26.—Lords day. dyed Ellen uxr James Worthington.

October, 1675

5.—Tusday. about 2 of the clocke this afternoone dyed Mr Cuthbert Clifton the great and profane monster of Jesuiticall impietie his abode was and had beene long att Brynne & Garswood where he dyed.

16.—Saturday. dyed Mary Harper in Longlane daughter to James Harper.”

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

“this is the 3rd that is dead from thence in a few weekes”



“[1675, June] 23.—Wednesday. dyed Mr. James Sorrowcold of Eyebridge..

[August] 18.—Wednesday. ab[ou]t 10 of the clock died Mr Coe att Eye bridge he was schoole M[aste]r there to Mr Sorrowcold's child & one that Mr Sorrowcold reposed great trust in the Tutoringe of his sonne & left him 10li p annum & his diet till his sonnes came of age physick not workinge till after death made him wysre...

25.—Wednesday. dyed Elles or Margret Tickle she was housekeeper att eye bridge and so left p Mr. Sorrowcold & there dyed this is the 3[r]d [tha]t is dead fro[m] thence in a few weekes all dyed in a hot feaver.”

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

The Winwick parish register confirms the burial of “James Sorocold of Aye Bridg” on 25 June 1675 (Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2). I cannot find any corresponding entries for the boys' tutor, Mr Coe, or for the housekeeper, Mrs Tickle. The editor of the first published extracts from the Diary identifies the former as John Coe, erstwhile curate of Warrington and post-Restoration “rector of one of the Medieties of Lymme”.*

There is circumstantial – but by no means conclusive- evidence that one of James Sorocold's sons was the hydraulic engineer George Sorocold, a pioneer in the design of urban water supply and distribution systems. This George Sorocold was settled in Derby by 1685, his marriage there being followed by the births of several children (including James and Elizabeth) and construction of the town's waterworks in 1691-3. The Sorocolds of Aye Bridge had acquired an interest in certain of the former Gerard properties in Derbyshire in 1641 (Lancashire Archives ref. DDGE(E) 15), and had left Aye Bridge Farm by 1714. However, the assertion - for example at https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/George_Sorocold - that James Sorocold of Aye Bridge had moved to Derby before 1670 is demonstrably untrue.

*Manchester Courier (“Local Gleanings”), 30 June 1875. If this identification is correct, some particulars of his family can be found in the Warrington parish registers at Cheshire Archives ref. P 316.

Taken from Holt's Well (“Swell”) Brow on 2 September 2017, the photograph shows Aye Bridge Farm swathed in early-morning mist.

“wished that his sister Ellin would leave off swearing”



“[1675, June] 25.—Friday. dyed Alexander Potter 3d son to Cozen John Potter de Lilly Lane who in his life time was nevr supposed to have any genius a meer child yet now att his death called father & mother & prayd forgiveness of his faults in cheating them of a half peny and wished them to live in peace & that his sister Ellin would leave off swearing & so dyed & without question is now att rest.”

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

The Winwick parish register confirms the burial of “Alexander son of John Potter” on 26 June 1675 (Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2). The deaths of two other children of the family - Jane in 1665 and John in 1666 - are also recorded in the Diary. The Potters of Lily Lane were presumably related to Roger Lowe's wife, Emma.

The photograph of Lily Lane Farm was taken on 2 September 2017.

“he was very deformed in bodie like Beanesheafe”



“[1675, July] 27.—Tusday night. dyed James Hasleden de Gladdin Hey Browe Locksmith he was very deformed in bodie like Beanesheafe.”
[From The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

The Winwick parish register at Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2 has James Hasleden buried there on 29 July 1675.

According to Rev George Fox's "History of Park Lane Chapel" (1897), the Hasledens were still in residence at Gladden Hey Farm two centuries later. He also recounts how, as a young girl, congregation member Ann Lowe unwittingly gave information about the Farm to notorious local burglar George Lyon (c.1761-1815). The information enabled Lyon and associates to break in a few nights later.

The photograph of Gladden Hey Farm, Winstanley Road, was taken on 30 July 2013.

“the too Luxurious Luster”



“[1675, August] 31. —Tusday. dyed Jane Harvie one who too earlie in [the] prime of her yeares assented to lust Temptations by committing ffornication with Raph Johnson by whom she had 3 or 4 children & was never maryed to hime being oer come by his too eager solicitations which provd the impoverishment of her selfe and parents yet notwithstanding she kept sole from any other & onely livd to cary the badge of Raph Jenkins Concubin [tha]t her Laudablence & so the reproech justilie rebounds to Raph the too Luxurious Luster.”*

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

Of 100 child deaths at Ashton-in-Makerfield recorded by Roger Lowe in the period 1671-9, nine involved children born outside marriage. In five of the nine cases the identity of the father seems to have been generally known in the community, suggesting a degree of toleration if not actual approval of pre- and extra-marital relations between the sexes.

Whatever may have been thought of the parents, the stigma of “illegitimacy” followed the child, limiting her or his life chances and choice of marriage partner. This explains the diarist's uncharacteristically violent reaction on 3 July 1666 to rumours about his own origins:

“Emm Potter had ecquainted me that she was told that my mother bore me a bastard I conceived who had spoken it for to be Elizabeth Potter

and she was att this present in towne so I sifted it out and found she was the woman and she told me [tha]t Will Morris had expressed it I resolved for Leigh and intended to be the death of Will and intended to call for my brother and have hime with me but I was prevented for I called at Heapys and there was John Chodocke came by and Mr Holewist. I rid behind John Chadocke to Lowton Smithys and so came to Leigh [to] Izibell Grundies cald for a chambr and sent for Will Morris he came and Thomas Rushworth with hime I wished hime to give place awhile when he was gone I to Will and buffeted hime very mery Nicholas Mathr came up and was very vehamant against me we parted that house and went to widow Ranicars I spent me 12d so came and did lye with Clarke the other morninge I went to doe some business with my M[aste]r and I told hime my case and he was ill troubled att it and counceled me for my good so I came home with sad spirit and I cald of my brotherly Henry Haoughton** and he was gone to be married so I parted”.

He writes that Jane Harvie died on 31 August 1675, but I can find no corresponding entry in the local registers.

*Raph Johnson or Jenkins - Lowe himself seems unsure of the surname - was perhaps the same individual that the diarist found confined in the stocks at Leigh on 1 November 1665: “I went to Leigh and when I came into towne I found Raph Jenkins in the stocks and a fire upon Crosse by hime he had been all night”.

***“Brotherly” = brother-in-law. I infer that Henry Houghton had been married to Roger Lowe's sister, Ellin. Sadly, Ellin had died in childbirth six months before. Lowe wrote on 6 February 1666: “I went to the funerall of my deare sister and her child was christened the same day she was buryd at Winwicke p[er] Mr Potter. Mr Watt came to the funerall to accompanie me which I was ingaged for. My sisters child was named Rog[e]r”. I can find no other record of the child's christening or of Henry Houghton's second marriage, but an entry dated 6 February 1666 in the Winwick burial register (Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2) reads “[blank] ux. [wife of] Henry Houghton”.

Image from lyric sheet for “Advice to Young Gentleman”, a popular ballad of the time.

“the great and profane monster of Jesuiticall impietie”



“[1675, October] 5. — Tuesday. about 2 of the clocke this afternoone dyed Mr Cuthbert Clifton the great and profane monster of Jesuiticall impietie his abode was and had beene long att Brynne & Garswood where he dyed.”
[From The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton in Makerfield, Wigan Archives ref. D/DZ A58]

Cuthbert Clifton, alias Norris, was born into an aristocratic family at Lytham in 1611. In 1630 he became a member of the Society of Jesus - a Catholic religious order - and in the early 1640s served as “Camp Missioner” to English and Irish troops in Belgium. He then returned to Lancashire where, as noted by Roger Lowe, he was chaplain to the Gerard family. The latter position may have been obtained for him by his elder sister, Elizabeth (1610-47), who by this time was married to 3rd baronet Sir William Gerard (1612-81).

The report of the English Province of the Society of Jesus for 1651 includes an interesting account of “an endeavour made by Father Cuthbert Clifton, and it would seem with success, to reconcile to the Church the Earl of Derby, when he was already condemned to suffer death for his attachment to the Royal cause, and on his way to the town of Bolton, which had been assigned for the place of execution”. Lord Derby had narrowly escaped capture following Royalist defeat at the Battle of Wigan Lane on 25 August 1651, only to be apprehended near Nantwich and put on trial at Chester a month later. Evidently Fr Clifton's “endeavour” to convert him to Catholicism began at Leigh, where the Earl and his escort spent the night of 14-15 October. Rebuffed by the guards, the priest made a second attempt as the party continued forward to Bolton the next day:

“He joined the cavalcade, and riding as near to the noble prisoner as he could, tried to attract his notice. The Earl, observing him, kindly asked him to come and ride by his side. The Father, making himself known, hastened to say that the object which he wished him to dispose of properly

before his death, was his immortal soul. The Earl said he had suspected something of the kind the evening before, and expressed great gratitude to the Father for thus exposing himself for his sake. The Father briefly and forcibly urged the great principle of faith. The Earl said that he agreed with the Catholics with respect to the Blessed Trinity, the veneration due to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, and the doctrine of Purgatory; that he was so well disposed towards the Catholic religion, that he had resolved, if he had lived, to examine thoroughly into it; that he thought the differences between Catholics and Protestants were not of great importance, but that he could not thus suddenly, and on the point of death, abandon the Church to which he had been attached all his life. The Father tried to overcome this repugnance, though often interrupted by the approach of the guards. Seeing the Earl's Protestant chaplain advance, who had left the halting-place of the preceding night later than the rest of the party, he besought the Earl, by the sufferings and death of his Redeemer, not to resist the grace afforded to him. The guards and attendants now closed round, and the Father was obliged to retire. Yet he kept as near as he could, fervently praying for the success of his attempt."

As they drew near to Bolton, Fr Clifton was afforded one final opportunity to converse with Lord Derby. The latter

"at once declared that he received every part of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and professed himself a member of it, and as such, was ready to confess all his sins and perform whatever penance should be enjoined, asking earnestly for absolution. The Father, having done what circumstances permitted, was about to pronounce absolution when the Earl reverently uncovered his head to receive it. The Father instantly desired him to be covered, and completed the sacramental rite. When all was concluded, the Earl turned round with a smiling countenance, and rejoined the company of his son and attendants"*.

In Volume 2 of his "Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus" (Manresa Press, 1875) Henry Foley notes, firstly, that the above account remained unpublished for more than two centuries and so cannot have been written merely for sensational or propaganda purposes. Second, it accords on several key points with other contemporary accounts of the final days and hours of Lord Derby. Third - and, for Mr Foley, "the strongest proof of the Earl's conversion to the one true faith" - Derby's subsequent actions in venerating the place and instruments of his execution mimicked the actions of other Catholic martyrs. A fourth consideration, not mentioned by Mr Foley, is that the parties would (or should) have known each other already, since the Earl had on several occasions enjoyed Clifton hospitality at Lytham Hall. Against all this, however, must be weighed firstly the absence from the other accounts of any person resembling Fr Clifton, and secondly various statements attributed to the Earl as he waited for the axe to fall - including a declaration that he remained "a dutiful son to the Church of England as it was established in that blessed saint my late master's [i.e. Charles I's] reign, which all men of learning and temperance will acknowledge to be the most pure and agreeable to the Word of God and primitive government of any church within 12 or 1300 years since Christ"**.

The preparations for the execution at Bolton are captured in the above painting.*** My photograph shows the same location on 17 November 2017. To the left of the painting, an undated and anonymous sketch entitled "Jesuite dans un autre habillement de Maison" shows a figure wearing a habit typical of that worn by Jesuit priests in Continental Europe in the 17th century.

Fr Clifton was buried at Winwick on 6 October 1675 (Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2). The burial register does not, of course, acknowledge his status as a Catholic priest but does refer to him as "Mr Cuthbert Clifton", presumably in recognition of his aristocratic pedigree.

As noted in the introduction to the 1992 published edition of the Diary, Roger Lowe enjoyed

theological debate and was as happy to contend with Catholics and supporters of the Established Church as he was with fellow nonconformists. It is unusual, therefore, to find him expressing, on religious grounds, such blinkered hostility as he does in the terse obituary penned following the news of Fr Clifton's death. Perhaps his views hardened as he grew older, or perhaps he shared with other Presbyterians a particular antipathy towards the Jesuits. A kinder epitaph is quoted by Henry Foley:

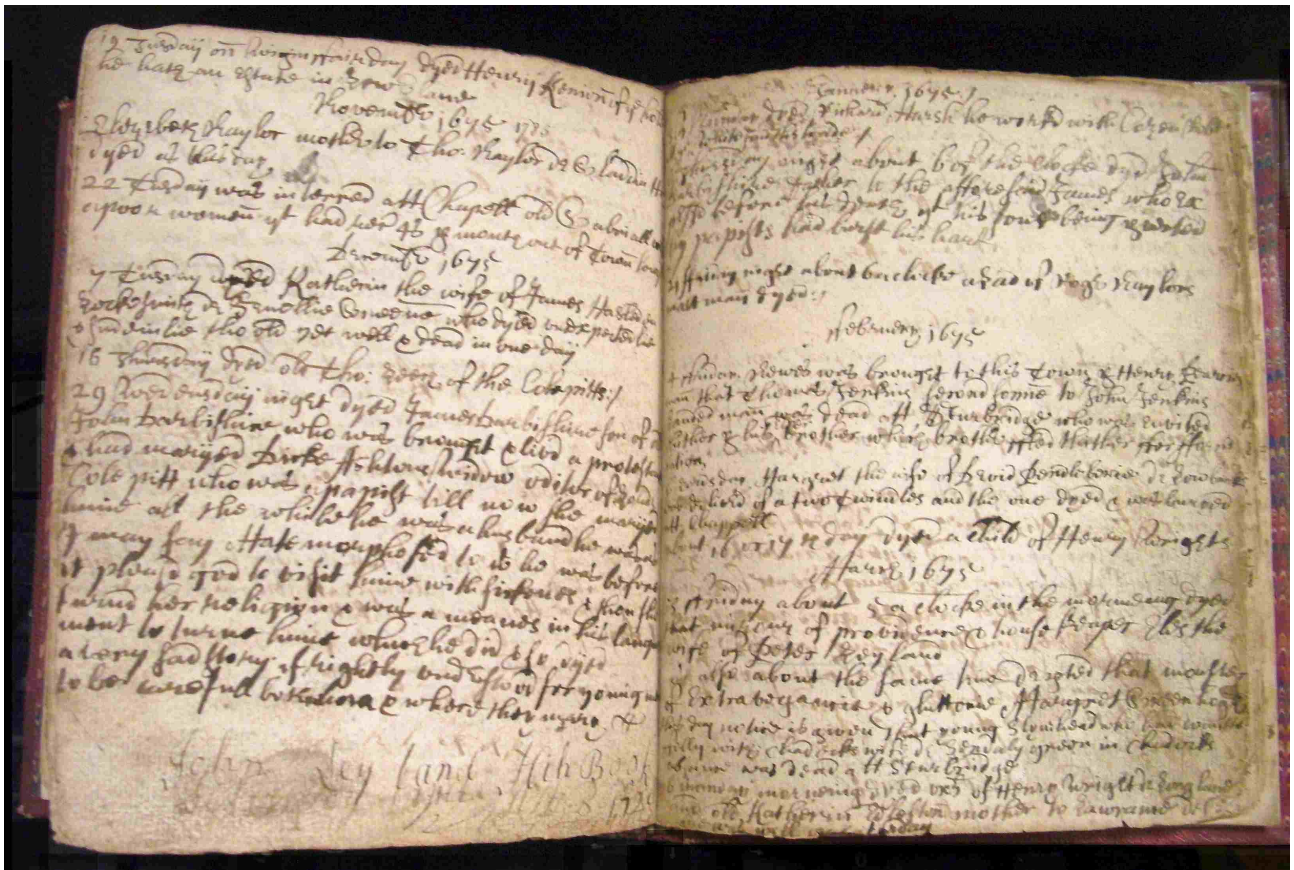
“A holy man who had for many years laboured in the vineyard of our Lord, with much fruit”*.

*As transcribed by H Foley from the “Litterae Annuae Provinciae Angliae Societatis Jesu”, now preserved in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI) at Rome.

**From “The True Speech of James Earl of Derby upon the Scaffold at Bolton, in Lancashire, together with his Depoartment and Prayers before his death on Wednesday, the 15th day of October 1651”, as transcribed in “Lancashire Worthies”, Francis Espinasse, 1874.

***“The Execution of James, 7th Earl of Derby”; oil on canvass, 71-89 cm; Manx Museum Accession No. R-0086. Artist unknown. Digital image by Manx National Heritage, reproduced here under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial 4.0 International licence.

Diary of Roger Lowe, 19 October 1675 to 6 March 1676



[1675, October] 19.—Tuesday. on Wiggin Fair day dyed Henry Kenion of ye hole he hath an estate in Lower lane.

November, 1675

-Elezebeth Naylor mothr to Tho Naylor de Gladdin Hey dyed this day.

22.—Tuesday. was interred at Chapell old Gabriall wife of a poor woman [tha]t had rec[eived] 4s p[er] month out of Town leige.

December, 1675

7.—Tuesday. dyed Katherin the wife of James Hasleden Locksmith de Senellie Greene who dyed unexpectedlie and sudeinlie tho' old yet well and dead in one day.

16.—Thursday. dyed old Tho Leech of the Coalpitts.

29.—Wednesday night. dyed James Darbshire who was brought [up] & lived a protestant & had maryed Dicke Ashton[’s] widow oditor of Louds Coal pitt who was a papist till now she maryed hime all the while he was a husband he was as I may say Metamorphosed to w[i]t he was before it pleased god to visit hime with sickenes & then she turned her religion & was a means in his languishment to turne him which he did and so dyed.

a very sad story if rightly understood for young men to be careful both whom and where they marry.

January, 1676

3.—Munday. dyed Richard Marsh he worked with cozen Robert at ye Whitesmiths trade.

6.—Thursday night. about 6 of the clocke dyed John Darbshire father to the aforesaid James who expressed before his death [tha]t sons being perverted by papists had burst his h[e]art.

21.—Ffriday night. about 6 o’clocke a lad of Rogr Naylor’s maltman dyed.

February, 1676

4.—Friday. Newes was brought to this Town p[er] Henry Pearsies man that Thomas Jenkins second son to John Jenkins Landed man was dead att Sturbridge who was envited thither p[er] his Elder brother which brothr thither for fornication.

6.—Lords day. Margrett the wife of David Pendleberie de Lowbanke was delivered of two Twindles and the one dyed and was buryd att Chapell.

About 17 or 17th day dyed a child of Henry Wrights.

March, 1676

3.—Friday. about 5 o'clocke in the morneinge dyed that mirour of providence & house keeper Eles wife of Peter Leyland.

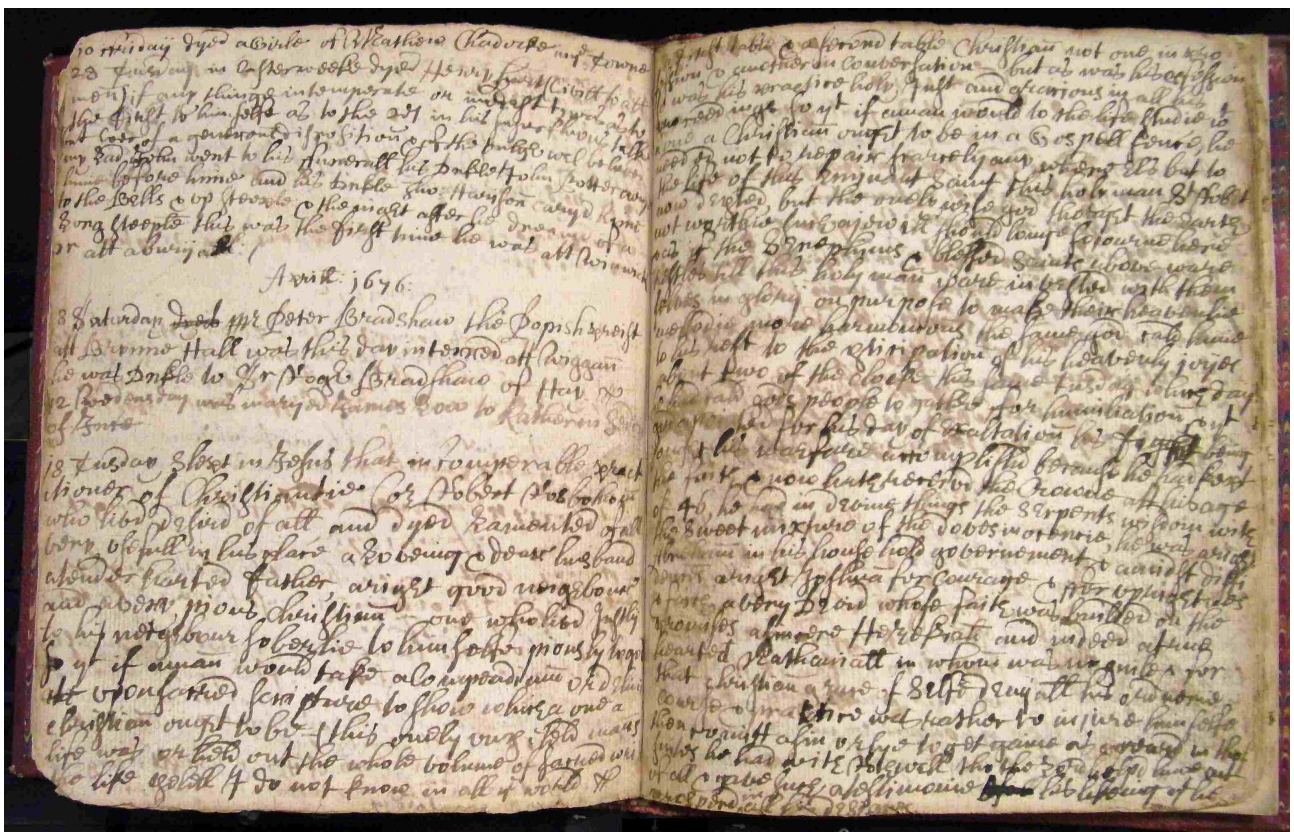
Also about the same time dep[ar]ted that monster of extravagancie & glutton[y] Margret Greenhough this day notice is given that young Slynehead who had committed folly with Chadockes wife de Sendaly green in Chadocks absence was dead at Sturbridge.

6.—Munday morneinge. dyed uxor of Henry Wright de Long lane.

And old Katherin Edleston mother to Laurence de Cro [page corner missing] she was well on Saturday.

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

Diary of Roger Lowe, 10 March to 18 April 1676



[1676, March] 10.—Friday. dyed a girle of Mathew Chaddocke in ye Towne.

28.—Tuesday. in Easter week dyed Henry Hart (civill to all men) if any thing intemperate or imodestly was as to the first to himselfe as to the 2dy in his superfluous talke, but ever of a generous disposition & of the vulge well beloved my lad John went to his funerall his brotherly John Potter carryed hime before hime his Unkle Tho Harison carryd hime to the bells & up Steeple & the night after he dreamed of a Long Steeple this was the first time he was att Winwick or att a buryall.

April 1676

8.—Saturday. Mr Peter Bradshaw, the popish priest at Brynne Hall was this day interred att Wigan he was Unkle to sr Rogr Bradshaw of Hay.

12.—Wednesday. was maryed James Low to Katherin Seddon of Ince.

18.—Tuesday slept in Jesus that incomperable practitioner of Christianitie Coz Robert Rosbotham who livd desird of all and dyed lamented of all. very useful in this place a loveing & dear husband a tender harted father a right good neighbour and a very pious Christian one who livd justly t[owards] his neighbour soberlie to himselfe piously to god so that if a man would take Compendium or delver it upon sacred scripture to show which a one a christian ought to be (this onely unpeleld mans life was or held out the whole volume of sacred writ) the like pelell I do not know in all ye world. a first tablle & a second table Christian not one in profession & another in conversation but as was his profession so was his practice holy, just, and gracious in all his proceedings so that if a man would to the life studie what a one a christian ought to be in a Gospell sence he needed not to repair scarcely any where els but to the life of this eminent Saint this holy man St Robert now departd but the onely wise god thought the earth not wothie such a jewill should longe sojourne here & as if the Serephims & blessed Saints above ware restless till the holy man were invested with themselves in glory on purpose to make their heavenlie mellodi more harmonious the same god calld hime to his rest to the p[ar]ticipation of his heavenly joyes about two of the clocke this same

Tuesday which day he had cald gods people together for humiliation & that god appointed for his day of exaltation his fight being fought his warfare accomplished because he had kept the faith and now hath received the crown at his age of 46. he had in diverse things the Serpents wisdom with the sweet mixture of the doves innocence. he was a right Abraham in his household government & amidst diffidences a right Joshua for courage & for uprightness & faith a very David whose faith was builded on the promises a sincere Hezekiah and indeed a true hearted Nathaniall in whom was no guile & for that christian grace of selfe denyall his ordenerie course & practice was rather to injure himselfe than comitt a sin or lye to get gaine as proved in those suites he had with Rothwell* tho' the Lord helped him out of all & gave such a testimonie of his likeing that he prosperd in all his desires.”

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

*A Thomas Rothwell occurs in the Diary on various dates in 1664 and 1666. The Diary entries suggest that he was an innkeeper at Newton but the nature of his “suit” with Robert Rosbotham is not disclosed.

“He dreamed of a Long Steeple”



“[1676, March] 28. —Tuesday. in Easter week dyed Henry Hart... my lad*

*John went to his funerall his brotherly** John Potter carryed hime before hime his Unkle Tho Harison carryd hime to the bells & up Steeple & the night after he dreamed of a Long Steeple this was the first time he was att Winwick or att a buryall."*

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

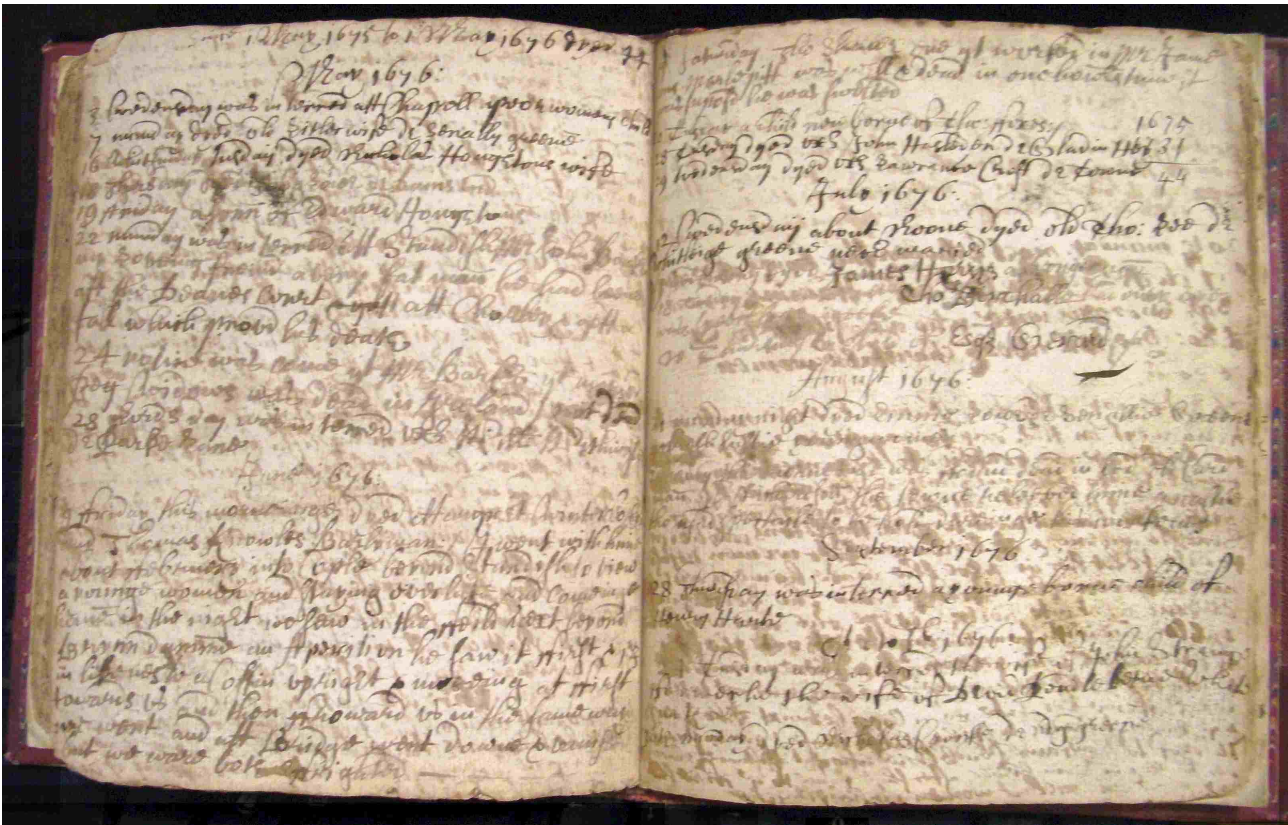
The bell tower and spire at St Oswald's Church were built in 1358. On the external west-facing wall of the tower is the legendary "Winwick Pig", said to have determined the location of the church by squealing "We-ee-wick" in objection to an initial proposal that it should be built elsewhere. More likely, perhaps, it was intended to represent the pigs that feature in several stories of St Anthony - his statue occupies the adjacent niche. At the time of three-year-old John Lowe's visit the niche would have been empty, the original statue (and that of St Oswald on the other side of the tower's west window) having fallen victim to a wave of iconoclasm that swept the country after the English Reformation. The statues that can be seen today were added in the 1970s. The present six bells in the tower were recast from an original peal of four in 1701.

The photograph was taken on 11 June 2018.

*"*dyed Henry Hart*": I cannot find any corresponding entry in the Winwick burial register at Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2. The Deane church register at Manchester Archives & Local Studies ref. L85/1/1 has a "Henricus Hart de Westthoughton" buried there on 20 March 1675, but since Lowe has the funeral taking place "*att Winwick*" in 1676 this must have been a different individual.

**"Brotherly" = brother-in-law. The diarist means his own brother-in-law, i.e. his wife's brother and thus the child's maternal uncle.

Diary of Roger Lowe, 3 May to 30 October 1676



May 1676

- 3.—Wednesday. was interred att Chapell a poor womans child.
- 7.—Munday. dyed old Litler[’s] wife de Senally green.
- 16.—Whitsunday tusday. dyed Nicholas Houghton’s wife.
- 18.—Thursday. dyed John Lowe de Dam End.
- 19.—Ffriday. a son of Edward Houghtons.
- 22.—Munday. was interred att Standish Mr. John Bowth my Loveing friend a very fat man he had been at Deanes Court ... att Chorley & got a fall which proved his death.
- 24.—Notice was come [tha]t Barker [tha]t married Peg Widows was dead in Ireland – not dead.
- 28.—lords day. was interred uxor Will Withington de Parke Lane.

June 1676

- 9.—Friday. this morninge dyed Margaret Winterbothom and Thomas Knowles Barleyman. I went with hime about February into Cople beyond Standish to view a younge woman and staying over late and comeing home in the night we saw in the field next beyond Brynn damme an Aperition he saw it first & then I in likeness to a coffin upright and moveing at first towards us then froward us in the same way we went and att bridge went down & vanished but we were both frightened.
- 17.—Saturday. Tho Shawe one [tha]t worked in Mr Jamesons marle pitt was well & dead in one hours time it is suposd he was sweletd.
- 20.—Tusday. a child new borne of Tho Foxes.
- 28.—Tuesday. dyed uxr John Hasleden de Gladin Hey.
- 29.—Wednesday. dyed uxr Lawrence croft de Towne.

July 1676

- 12.—Wednesday. about noone died old Tho Lee de Whiteleighe green nevr married.
- 29.—Wednesday. dyed James Harrys a young man.
- 18.—Tusday... Tho Berchall had one eye was speechless a weeke.

20.—Thursday. a child of Esqr. Gerard.

August 1676

1.—Munday night. dyed Emme Lowe de Senallie Greene a fresh lustie young woman.

2.—Tusday. this morninge was found dead in bed old Cardman als Richardson the two releevd hime a nastie thou a sad specticle to behold dureinge his weaknes.

September 1676

28.—Thursday. was interred a younge borne child of Henry Harte.

October 1676

24.—Tuesday. was interred the wife of John Strange formerlie the wife of David Pendleburie whitesmith.

30th.—Munday. dyed Nicholas Cronke of Edg green.”

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

“Thomas Knowles, Barleyman”



“[1676, June] 9.—Friday. this morninge dyed ... Thomas Knowles Barleyman. I went with hime about February into Cople beyond Standish to view a younge woman and staying over late and comeing home in the night we saw in the field next beyond Brynn damme an Aperition he saw it first & then I in likeness to a coffin upright and moveing at first towards us then froward us in the same way we went and att bridge went down & vanished but we were both frightened.”

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In Scotland and the northern counties of England the “barleyman” - a corruption of “bye law-man” - was a manorial court official, appointed to enforce the byelaws and orders of the court by apprehending and bringing before it those found to have breached them. Thomas Knowles either shared the position with or assumed it on the death of his father, William. The diarist likewise describes William Knowles as “*barley man*” when noting his death “*about midnight*” on 18 January 1673.* The “Thomas Knowle Barlowe-man of Ashton” who is listed as both a debtor and a creditor to Ellen Garstange of Newton in her will of 13 March 1646 was perhaps William's father.**

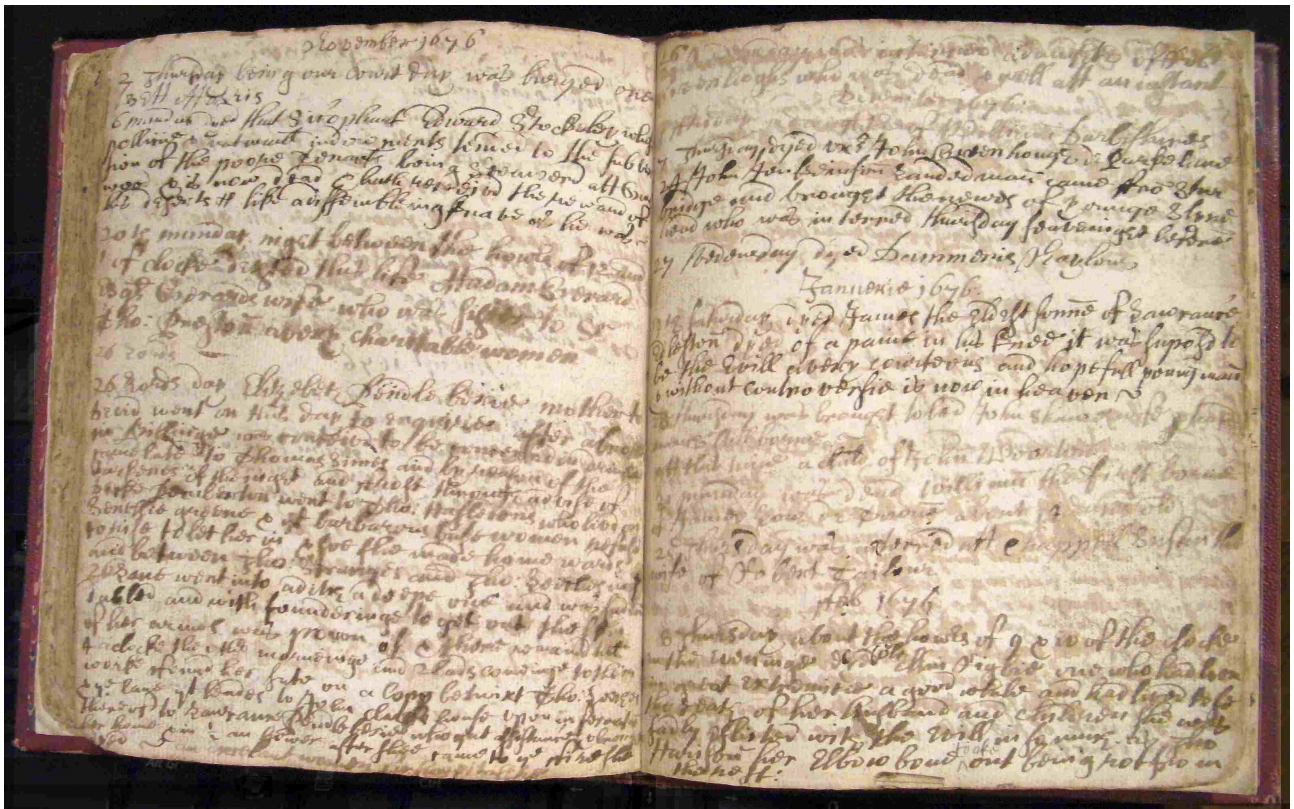
Taken on 17 October 2022, the photograph shows one of the ponds near Landgate Farm created by

the damming of Park (or Perry) Brook at Bryn - presumably the spot where Thomas Knowles and the diarist saw the "*Aperition ... in likeness to a coffin upright and moveing*" on their return from Coppull in or about February 1676.

*William's and Thomas' burials are noted in the Winwick burial register as taking place on 20 January 1673 and 10 June 1676 respectively. Lowe additionally records the "much bewailed" death of William's eldest daughter, Mary, on 6 June 1675: "*a very hopeful younge woman and is now without question arived att her wished haven of rest[. S]he writt down with her o[w]ne hand the text to be preached att her funerall which was 120 ps. 5 'wo is me [tha]t sojourne in Mesech?' the consideration of which makes her the more bewailed now dead[. S]he forethought her death in the time of her health and is now in blisse*". She was buried at Winwick the following day.

**Lancashire Archives ref. WCW/Supra/C138B/16. Two sums of money were owed by "Thomas Knowle Barlowe-man of Ashton" to the testator, one of 20 and the other of 10 Shillings. At the same time she acknowledged her debt to him of an unspecified amount for "one measure of ffitches" - i.e. vetches, a plant considered by some to have medicinal properties.

Diary of Roger Lowe, 2 November 1676 to 8 February 1677



“November, 1676

- 2.—Thursday. being our Court day was buried one Bett Morriss.
- 6.—Munday. dyed that Sicophant Edward Stockley whose pillicie and naturall indowments tended to the subversion of the poore Tenants being Steward att Garswood & is now dead & hath receivd the reward of his deserts like a disembling knave as he was.
- 20.—Munday night. between the hours of 12 and 1 of the clocke dep[ar]ted this life Madam Gerard Esq Gerards wife who was sister to Sir Tho Preston a very charitable woman.
- 26.—Lords day. Elizabet Pendleberie mother to David went on this day to enquire after a brother in Billinge was conceivd to be concerned in drinke came late to Thomas Simes and by reason of the darkness of the night and most through advise of Dicke Pemberton went to Tho Hasleden’s who lived on Senenllie greene & [tha]t barbarous base woman refused to rise to let her in & soe she made homewards and between Tho Stanges and Tho Leeches in lane went into a ditch a deepe one and was sudlin dabled and with founderinge to get out the skin of her armes was worn of. Also remained till 4 a clocke the other morneinge and 2 lads coming to their worke found her sate on a Copp betwixt Tho Leeches & ye lane [tha]t leads to John Clarkes house upon information thereof to Lawrance Pendleberie who got assistance & brought her home & in half an hower after shee came to ye fire she dyed an excellent woman for hospitalite.
- 29.—Wednesday. was interred a daught[er] of Robert Greenoughs who was dead & well at an instant.

December, 1676

- 1.—Friday. a daught[er] of William Darbishires.
- 7.—Thursday. dyed uxr John Greenough de Parke lane.
- 24.—John Jenkinson landed man came fro[m] Sturbridge and brought the newes of younge Swinehead who was interred thursday seavenight before.
- 27.—Wednesday. dyed Dammeris Naylor.

January, 1677

13.—Saturday night. James the eldest sonne of Lawrance Edleston dyed of a paine in his knee it was suposed to be the evill a very courteous and hopefull young man & without controversie is now in heaven.

23.—Thursday. was brought to bed John Shawes wife & had a wench still born.
-att this time a child of John Wooten.

22.—Munday. was dead William the first borne of James Lowe de Towne about 4 days old.

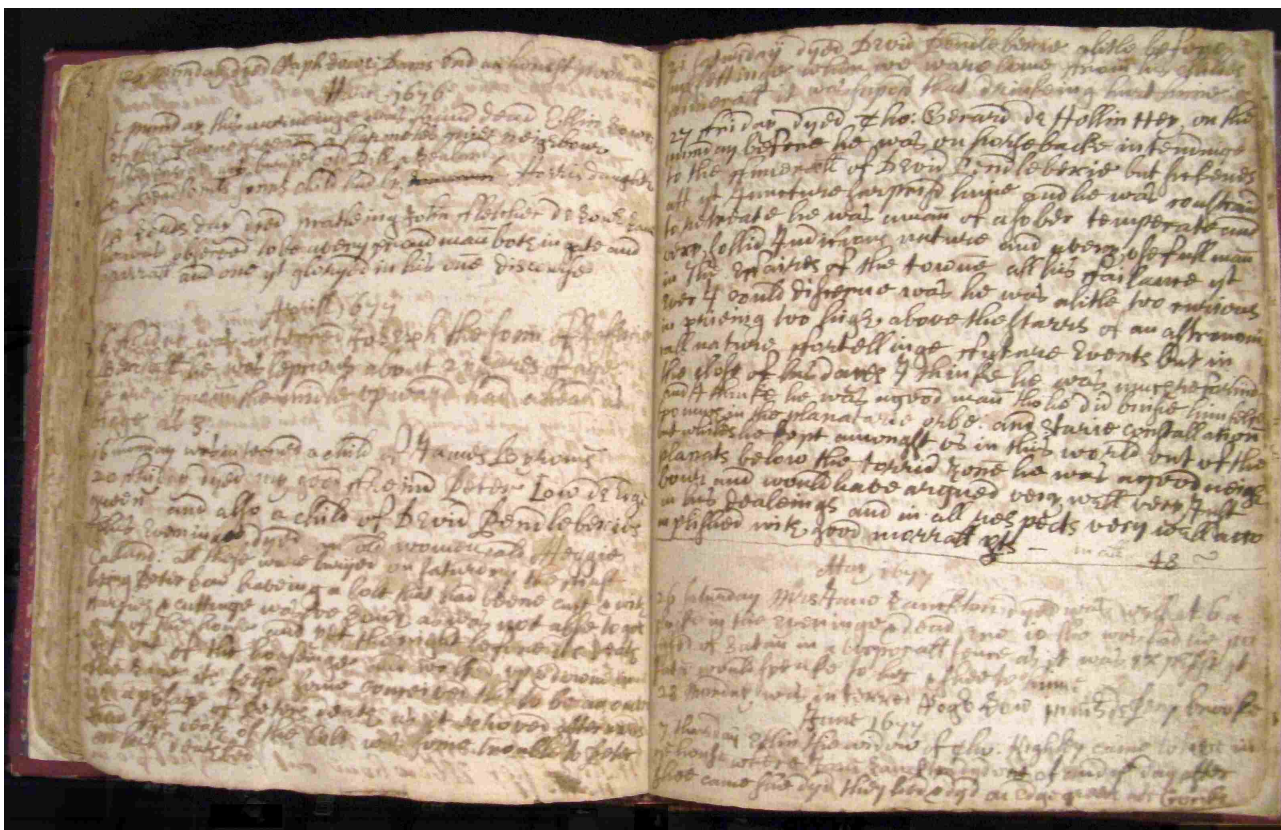
25.—Thursday. was interred att Chapell Susan the wife of Robert Tailour.

February, 1677

8.—Thursday. about the howers of 9 & 10 of the clocke in the eveninge dyed Elin Rigbie one who had been in great extremitie a good while and had lived to see the death of her husband and children she was sadly efflicted with the evill in so much as Tho Harrison her elbow bone tooke out being rot from the rest.”

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

Diary of Roger Lowe, 26 February to 6 June 1677



“February, 1677...

26.—Munday. dyed Raph Lowe Dams end an honest poor man.

March, 1677

5.—Munday. this morneinge was found dead Ellin Lowe of the Towne green a harmless quiet neighbour.

7.—Wednesday. was buried old Dilla Leyland & Beadlomes sonns child had by Morris daughter.

18.—Lords day. dyed prateling John Fletcher de Lowr lane he was observd to be a very proud man both in gate and apparral and one [tha]t gloried in his one discourse.

April, 1677

6.—ffriday. was interred Joseph the sonn of Jefferie Berchall he was leprous about 2 years of age and he grew from t[h]e middle upward had a head as bigge as 3.

16.—Munday. was interred a child of James Byroms.

20.—Ffriday. dyied my good friend Peter Lowe de Edge Greene and also a child of Devid Pendleberies this eveninge dyed an old woman called Meggie Calland. all these ware buried on Saturday the first being Peter Lowe, haveing a colt that had been cutt & with farcie & cutting was soe lowe as was not able to go out of the house and yet the night before its death got out of the houseinge and walked up & down in the Lane itselpe conceived this to be an omen or a pr[e]sage of Peters death as it behoved afterwards and the death of the colt was some trouble to Peter on his death bed.

21.—Saturday. dyed Devid Pendleberie a litle before sunsettinge when we ware home from his childes funerall it was suposd that drinkeing hurt hime.

25.—ffriday. dyed Thomas Gerard de Hollin Hey on the Munday before he was on hosebacke intendinge to [go to] the funerall of Devid Pendleberie but sickness at [that] juncture surprisid hime and he was constrained to retreat he was a man of sober temperate and very solid judicious nature

and a very usefull man in the effaires of the towne all his failance [that] ever I could discerne was he was a litle too curious in prying too high above the starrs of an astronomicall nature fforetellinge future events but in the close of his dayes I thinke he was much reformed and I think he was a good man tho he did busie himselfe too much in the planytane orbe and starie constallation but whiles he kept amongst us in this world out of the planats below the torrid zone he was a good neighbour and would have arg[u]ed very well just in his dealeings and in all respects very well accomplished with good morrall pts.

May, 1677

26.—Saturday. Mrs Jane Lanckton dyed was well at 6 o'clock in the evening & dead bye 10 she was sadlie possessed of Satan in a corporall sense as it was expresst [tha]t Satan would speake to her & shee to hime.

28.—Munday. was interred Rogr Lowe junior de Penybrooke.

June, 1677

6.—thursday. Ellin the widow of Tho Kighley came to live in ye house where James Lanckton dyd out of and ye day after shee came she dyd they livd & dyd on Edge green att Crocks.”

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

“he was a litle too curious in prieving too high above the starrs of an astronomicall nature”



“[1677, April] 25.—ffriday. dyed Thomas Gerard de Hollin Hey on the Munday before he was on hosebacke intendinge to [go to] the funerall of Devid Pendleberie but sickness at [that] juncture surprised hime and he was constrained to retreat he was a man of sober temperate and very solid judicious nature and a very usefull man in the effaires of the towne all his failance [that] ever I could discerne was he was a litle too curious in prieving too high above the starrs of an astronomicall nature fforetellinge future events but in the close of his dayes I thinke he was much reformed and I think he was a good man tho he did busie himselfe too much in the planytane orbe and starie constallation but whiles he kept amongst us in this world out of the planats below the torrid zone he was a good neighbour and would have arg[u]ed very well just in his dealeings and in all respects very well accomplished with good morrall pts.”

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

Some property deeds relating to the Hollin Hey estate are preserved among the Gerard family papers at Lancashire Archives under ref. DDGE(M) 732 to 747. The earliest of these is from 1580, when the estate was sold by Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn to John Gerard, a distant relation. Another Thomas Gerard, probably the original purchaser's son, was, in 1588, one of the six foundation trustees of Ashton-in-Makerfield Grammar School. He occurs in 1590 as “Thomas Gerard of Garswood in Winwick parish, soundly affected in religion”* and as “Thomas Gerrard de

Garswood” on a list of freeholders in 1600.** The Winwick register confirms the burial of “Thomas Gerard of the Hollin Heye” on 26 April 1677.*** The inscription “TG 1680” on one of the interior lintels of the existing Grade II-listed farmhouse is presumably in reference to his son.

A hand-painted map included with the Gerard estate papers at Lancashire Archives shows “Garrats Hollinhey” and “John Garrats House” - the latter highlighted at the extreme top edge of the extract shown above - in c.1720. The exterior photograph was taken on 13 June 2023.

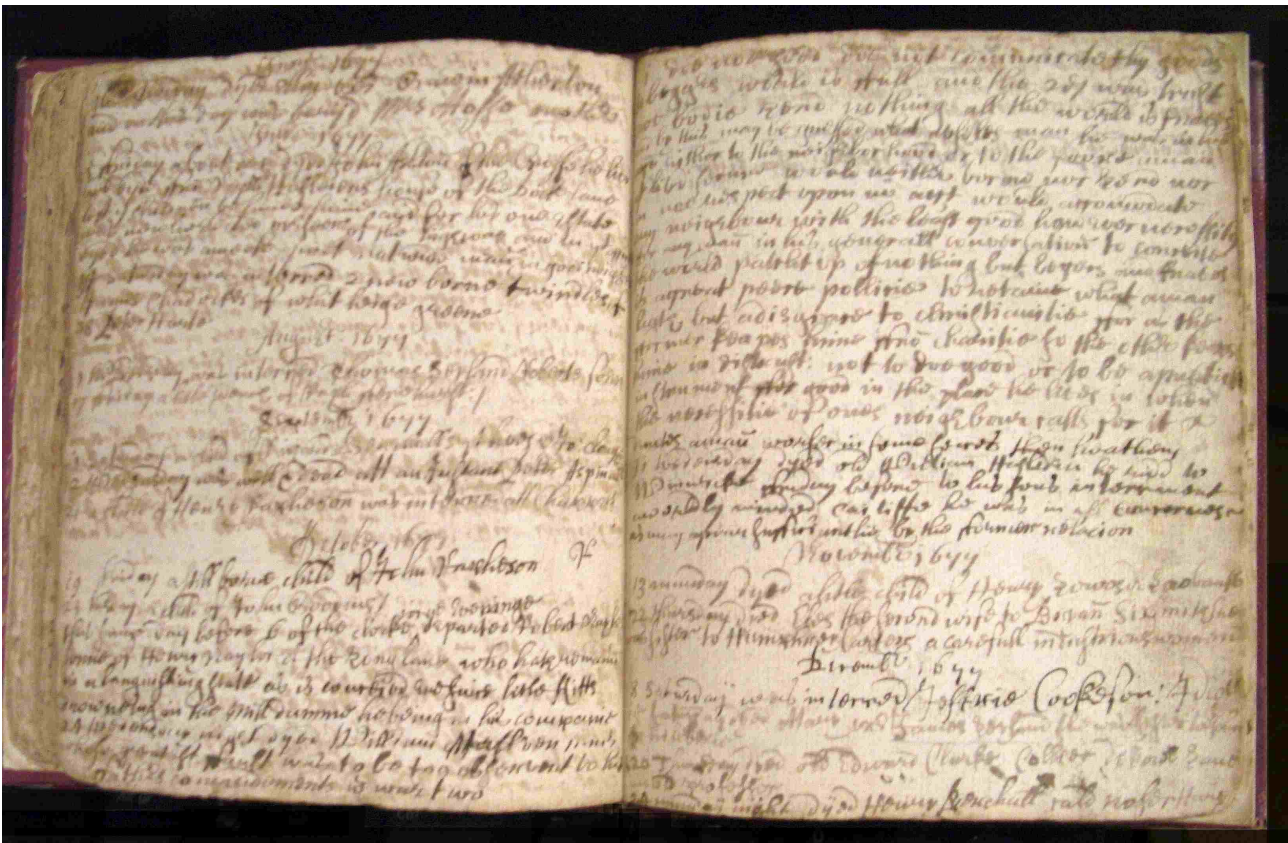
Hollin Hey continued in the same branch of the Gerard family until 1734 when it was sold to John Blackburne.

*“A view of the state of the County Palatine of Lancaster both for religion and civil government” in “State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth I”, National Archives ref. SP 12/235 item 4.

**“Libere Tenetes Infra Hundred De West Derby”, British Library: Harleian MSS No. 2042; a transcript is in “Miscellanies I”, Rec. Soc. Lancs. & Ches. Vol. 22 (1885).

***Cheshire Archives ref. P158/1/2.

Diary of Roger Lowe, 16 June to 24 December 1677



“June, 1677...

16.—Saturday. dyed Ellin uxr Bawin Atherton and on this day was buryd Mrs Mosse mothr.

July, 1677

6.—Ffriday. about day dyed John Ashton of the Crosse he lived and dyed fro[m] Ralph Hasledens house of the Dock lane left 7 children behind hime and from his one estate was newlie elected ovrseer of the highway and in [tha]t office dyed he was a meeke quiet naturde man & a good neighbour.

14.—Saturday. was interred 2 new borne twindles of James Chadockes of Whiteleighe greene.

28.—Peter Harte.

August, 1677

1.—Wednesday. was interred Thomas Leyland Roberts son.

17.—ffriday. a little wench of Raph Ferehurst.

September, 1677

1.—Saturday. a child of Richard Berchalls [tha]t [was born??] to day.

12.—Wednesday. was well & dead att an instant Peter Aspinall.

21.—a child of Henry Raphenson was interred att chappell.

October, 1677

19.—ffriday a still borne child of John Rapheson.

23.—tusday. a child of John Goodings. this same day before 6 of the clock in ye eveninge departed Robert Naylor of the Long lane who hath remained in a languishing state as is conceivd ever since litle kitts drowneing in the milldamme he being in the companie.

24.—Wednesday night. dyed William Hasleden junr whose greatest fault was to be too observant of

his fathrs commandments [which] ware two 1 doe noe good, doe not communicate thy goods to beggrs [the] world is full [of them] and the 2d was trust thee noe bodie, lending nothing, all the world is knaves, and by this may be guessed what a useless man he was att his age eyther to the neighbour or to the poore, a man [tha]t livd secure, would neithr borrow nor lend, nor in noe respect upon no acc[oun]t would accommodate any neighbour with the least good, however necessity for any and in his generall conversation to conceive the world patcht up of nothing but begers and knaves in a great peece pollicie to retaine what a man hath but a disgrace to Christianitie for as the former keapes hime fro[m] charitie so the other keapes hime in distrust not to doe good or to be a publicke instrument for good in the place he lives in when the necessitie of ones neighbour calls for it denotes a man worsen in some feases than heathens.

31.—Wednesday. dyed old William Hasleden he ridd to Winwicke ffriday before to his sons interment worldly minded caitiff he was in all concernss as may prove sufficientlie by the former relacion.

November, 1677

13.—Munday. dyed a litle child of Henry Lowes de Low banke.

22.—thursday. dyed Eles the second wife to Bryan Sixsmith she was sister to Humphrey Carter a carefull industrious woman.

December, 1677

8.—Saturday. was interred Jeffrie Cookeson idiott.

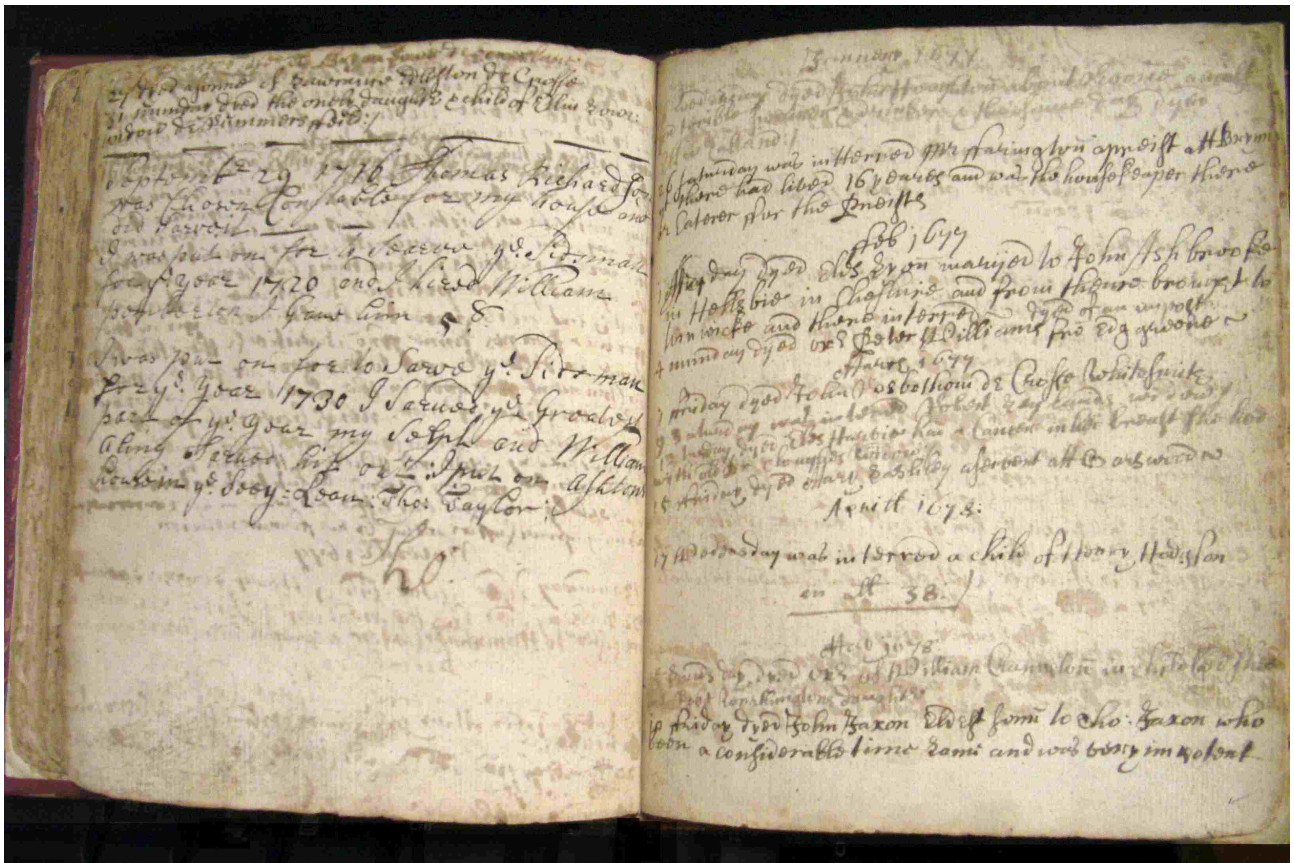
15.—Saturday. dyed Mary uxr James leyland she was sister to John Pendleberie.

20.—Thursday. dyed old Edward Clarke collier de Lower Lane an old professor.

24.—Munday night. dyed Henry Bercall called Noser Hary.”

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

Diary of Roger Lowe, 27 December 1677 to 10 May 1678



“December, 1677...

27.—Thursday. dyed old Bryan Lowe de Lower Lane.

27.—dyed a son of Lawrance Edleston de [Ashton] Crosse.

31.—Munday. dyed the onely daughter & child of Ellin Lowe widow de Drummers feild.*

January, 1678

16.—Wednesday. dyed John Houghton about noone a most sad terrible swearer & drinker & the same day dyed Ellin Calland.

26.—Saturday. was interred Mr Farrington a priest at Brynn [tha]t there had lived 16 years and was the housekeeper there or caterer for the priest.

February, 1678

1.—Ffriday. dyed Eles Lyon maryed to John Ashbroke in Hellsbie in Cheshire and from thence brought to Winwicke and there interred dyed of an impost.

4.—Munday. dyed uxr Peter Williams from Edg Greene.

March, 1678

1.—ffriday. dyed John Rosbothom de Crosse whitesmith.

9.—Saturday. was interred Robert Laylands widow.

12.—Tusday. dyed Eles Harvie had a cancer in her breast she lived with old Dr Cloughs widow.

15.—ffriday. dyed Mary Lashley a servant att Garswood

April, 1678

17.—Wednesday. was interred a child of Henry Hodgson...

May, 1678

5.—Lords day. dyed uxor of William Crumpton in childbed she was Robert Worthingtons daughtr.
10.—ffriday. dyed John Jaxon eldest sonn to Tho Jaxon who had been a considerable time lame
and was very impotent.”

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

*Between Lowe's entries for December 1677 and January 1678, on the left-hand page, are 11 lines of text in an unknown hand. These were evidently added some years later, as reference is made to events in 1716, 1720 and 1730. “Thomas Richardson” may have been one of the trustees appointed by the will of Emma Lowe's second husband, William Newton, to administer certain charitable bequests following the latter's death in 1725.

“Eles Harvie had a cancer in her breast”



“[1678, March] 12.—Tuesday. dyed Eles Harvie had a cancer in her breast she lived with old Dr Cloughs widow.”

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

Cancer was recognised as a medical condition by the ancient Egyptians, and was given its present name by the Greek physician Hippocrates around 400 BC. Its causes remained uncertain but by the 17th century there was increasing awareness that, in the case of breast cancer, early surgical intervention to remove tumours and so prevent the disease from spreading offered the best hope of prolonging life. Of course the surgery itself was, at this time, extremely painful and fraught with danger.

A case study is provided by Françoise de Motteville, secretary to the mother of King Louis XIV of France, whose “Memoires” were published in English in 1902. The queen-mother, Anne of Austria, had been experiencing discomfort in her breast “for some time past” when, in November 1664, she finally sought medical advice. A Monsieur Alliot was prevailed upon to begin treatment, and did so on 24 August 1665-

“At first, Alliot, to accustom the illustrious patient to his cruelties, moderated the strength of his remedies; so that in the beginning there were short intervals when the doctors made the queen-mother hope for the success of the man's science. The flesh mortified and was then cut off in slices with a razor. This operation was shocking to see. It was done night and morning in presence of the

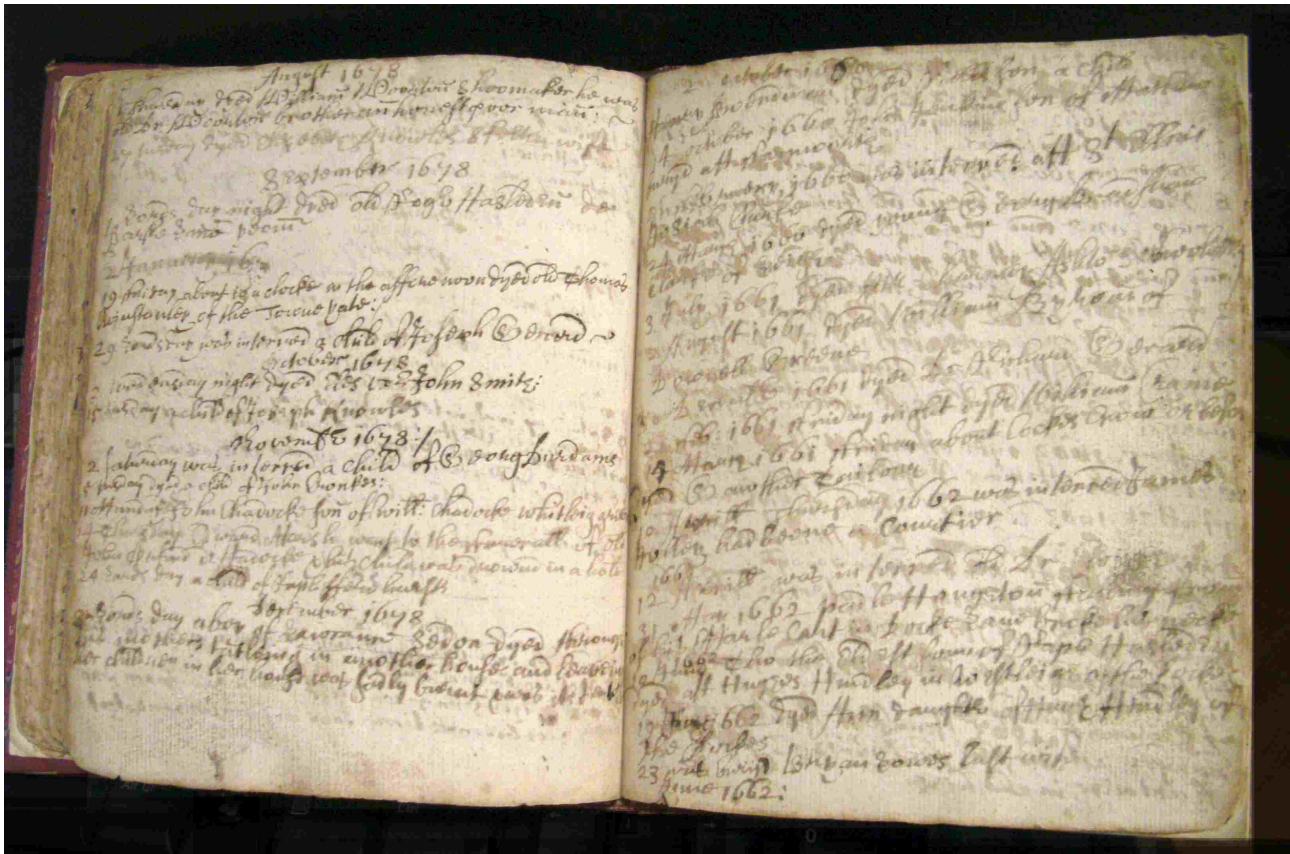
whole royal family, the doctors and surgeons, and all those persons who had the honour to serve her and to approach her familiarly. She saw her flesh cut with patience and estimable gentleness; and she often said she never could have believed that a fate so different from that of other human beings could be hers; that usually no one rotted till after death, but as for her, God had condemned her to rot in life.

Throughout this whole treatment she had suffered much; but her pains increased excessively when Alliot's remedies approached live flesh. She came at last to such an extremity of suffering that, having lost the power to sleep they made her take every night the juice of poppies. In that way alone could she get relief from her pain; and though it was easy to judge that this remedy would bring her sooner to death, it was impossible to blame the use of it, because this fatal soothing put a few moments' interval in the course of her suffering. There were, nevertheless, days and times when Vallot and Guenaud [respectively, physicians to the French king and queen], after having so many times condemned her to death, said she would not die of her cancer. But they were mistaken in all ways; and never did I see them make a sure judgement on this illness”.

The queen-mother died in the early hours of 20 January 1666, having endured several months of excruciating pain. I suspect that most if not all of the “remedies” offered to her would have been beyond the means of poor “*Eles*” (Alice?) Harvie in Ashton. However I can find no entry in any of the local registers relating to her burial.

The illustration, from F Van Hoogstraten's “*Voorhof Der Ziele*” (Rotterdam, 1668), is by the Dutch painter and engraver Romeyn de Hooghe (1645-1708).

Diary of Roger Lowe, 1 August to 30 December 1678



“August, 1678

- 1.—Thursday. dyed William Woorston shoemaker he was old Dr. Woorston[’s] brother an honest poor man.
- 27.—Tusday. dyed Elizabeth Knowles & sefton wife.

September, 1678

- 1.—Lords day night. dyed Roger Hasleden de Park Lane yeom.
- 19.—ffriday. about 10 a clock in the afternoon dyed old Thomas Winstanley of the Town Yate.
- 29.—Lords day. was interred a child of Joseph Gerard.

October, 1678

- 2.—Wednesday night. dyed Eles uxr John Smith.
- 15.—Tuesday. a child of Joseph Knowles.

November, 1678

- 2.—Saturday. was interred a child of Georg Durdoms.
- 5.—Tusday. dyed a child of John Cronkes.
- 11.—Munday. dyed John Chaddockes son of Will Chaddocke Whitleigh green.
- 14.—Thursday. Edward Marsh went to the funerall of old John Orford de Haydocke & his child was drowned in hole.
- 24.—Lords day. a child of Raphe Fewhursts.

December, 1678

- 30.—Lords day. a boy of Lawrence Sedon dyed through his mothers tableing in another house and leaving her children in her house was sadly burnt to death.”

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

The right-hand page shown above is the first of four listing “*such as dyd within My Aprentiship and providentiallie I was cald to the funerall*”. The list begins with “*Henry Boendman*” (Boardman??), who died on 2 October 1660, and ends with “*the daughtr of Tho. Potter named Margrett*”, who was buried (according to the parish register) on 10 March 1669.

Lowe then briefly resumes his “*account of the seaveral names and persons that are dead in Ashton and buryed att Winwicke*”. A final entry dated 7 January 1679 records the death on that date of “*old Elizabeth Swift*”.