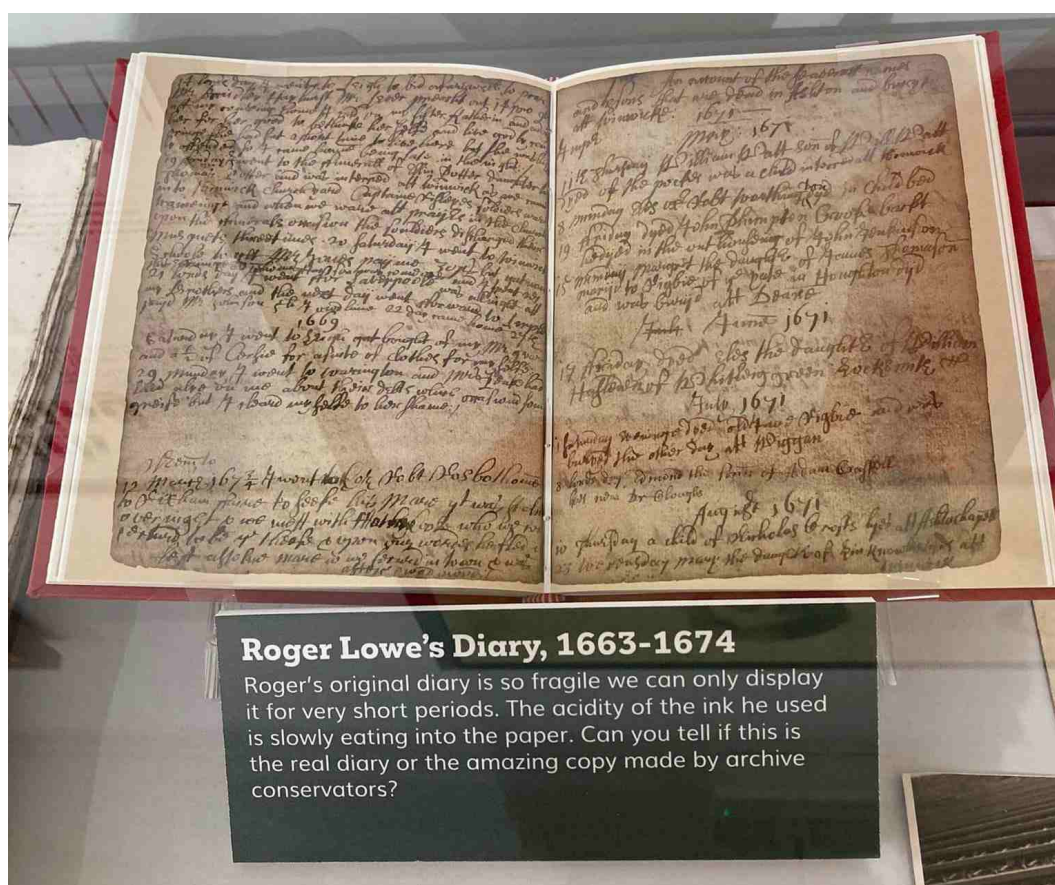


An Illustrated Companion to The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield



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

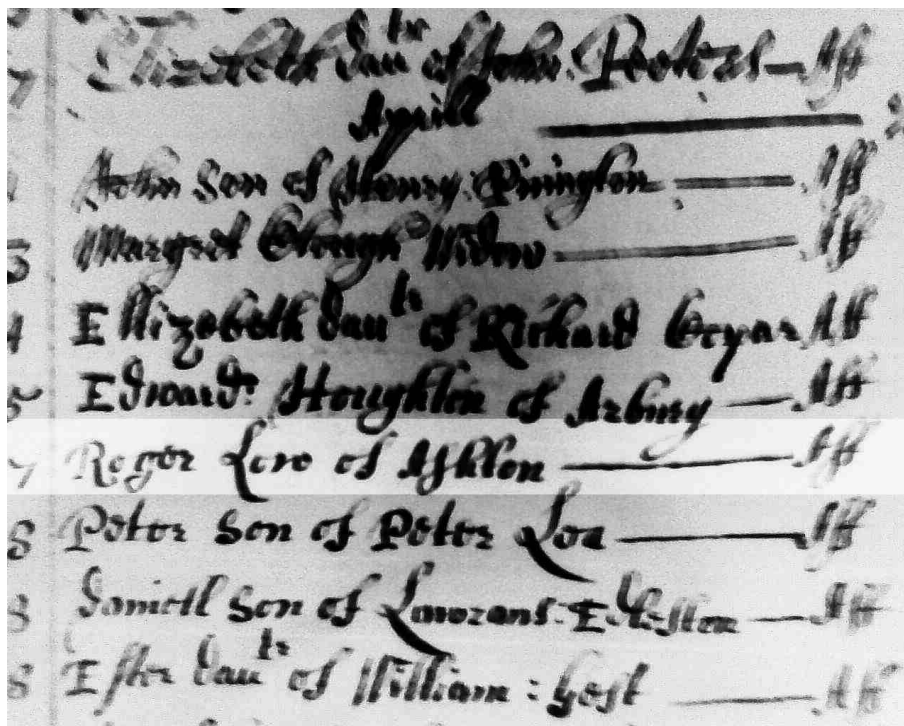
By

The Makerfield Rambler

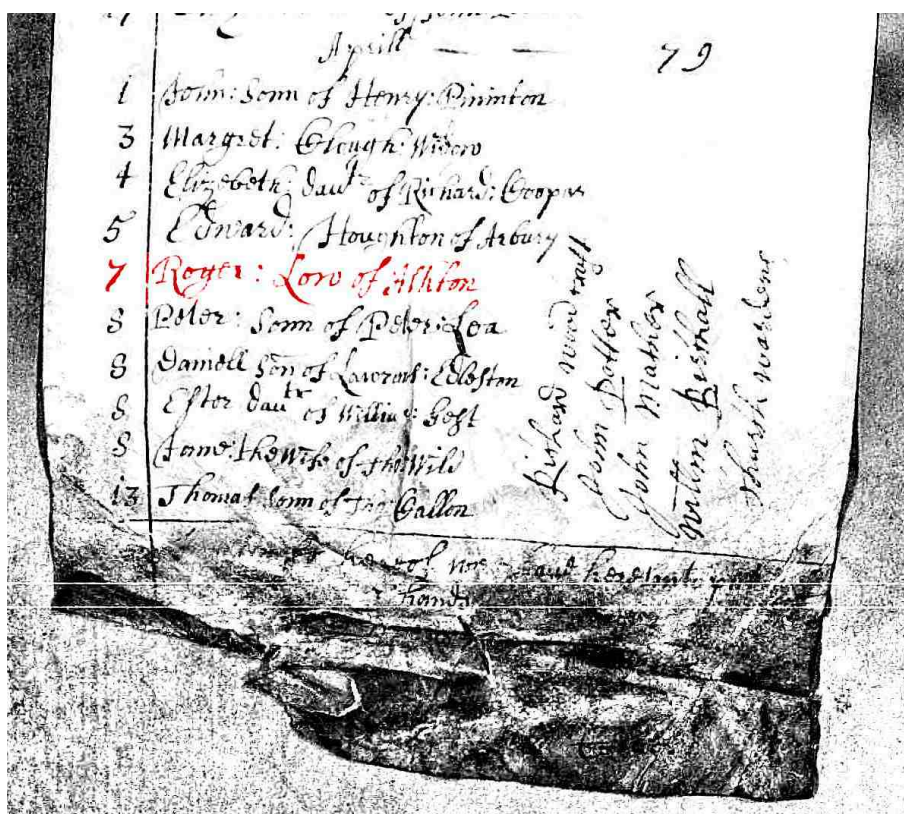
Part 7 : The Diary after Roger
(This edition: June 2025)

The Death of Roger Lowe

The Winwick parish register records the burial of “Roger Low of Ashton” on 7 April 1679. No cause or date of death is specified, and no stone or other memorial of his passing seems to have survived, but given the typically very short interval between death and burial it may reasonably be assumed that Lowe had died on 5 or 6 April 1679. He would then have been about 37 years old.



Entry in the original Winwick register, at Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/2.



Extract from “Bishop's Transcript” of the Winwick register, at Lancashire Archives ref. DRL 2/530.

Evidently Lowe did not leave a will, but an inventory of his possessions and debts owed by him at the time of his death is preserved among the Archdeaconry of Chester Probate Records at Lancashire Archives.



Roger Lowe inventory/wrapper, at Lancashire Archives ref. WCW/Supra/C222/20

This document reads as follows:-

“Roger Lowe late of Ashton husbandman; administration to Emma Lowe widdow, the relict, 5 May 1679.

The 22 Aprill 1679. A true and perfect inventory of all the goods cattels chattels debts and rights of Roger Lowe late of Ashton late deceased appraised and valued by us Matthew Deane John Potter Thomas Harrison and Willm Lowe.

Imprimis two milke cowes at £6.0.0; one presse in the loft over ye house £0-8-0; one long table in ye said loft £0-10-0; 6 cheeres in ye said loft £0-16-0; one table cloth £0-1-0; 3 chusshions £0-2-0; one bedstead in ye roome over the shop 2 featherbeds 2 feather boulsters one chaffe boulster three feather pillowes 2 coverlids and 2 blankitts at £3-0-0; one arke in ye said roome £0-10-0; one truncke £0-4-0; 3 tresses 2 boxes 2 cowfors and 4 cusshions £0-9-0; one bedstead and bedding in ye chamber as it now stands £1-10-0; one cupboard in ye house £1-0-0; one settle in the howse £0-6-0; one little table 2 cheeres, fall board, backestoole £0-5-0; one clocke weights and case £1-10-0; one close stoole 2 looking glasses £0-3-0; one backestone 2 iron grates and other iron geere £1-0-0; one churne and other treene ware £0-10-0; in earthen vessels £0-2-0; 4 dosin of trenchers £0-3-0; one white plate £0-1-0; in pewter £1-16-0; in brasse £1-11-0; in linnen £2-0-0; two bedsteads and one table £1-6-0; for goods beinge in ye shop £29-3-0; in moneyes oweinge by severall persons in ye

debt booke £6-0-0.

Sum tot. £60-6-4.

[Signatures] Matthew Deane. John Potter. Thomas Harrison. Willm. Lowe.”

The “arke” was most likely a chest or box with a domed lid for storing meal or bread. A “cowfor”, or coffer, was another type of box or chest. A “fall board” was a foldable table. A “backestoole”, or “backstow”, was a single chair without arms. The “backestone” would have been a large flat stone or iron plate, used for baking over a fire. “Treene ware” was the description given at this time to wooden items, turned rather than sawn and usually of sycamore. “Trenchers” were wooden plates, but the term could also refer to metal as well as to earthenware plates.

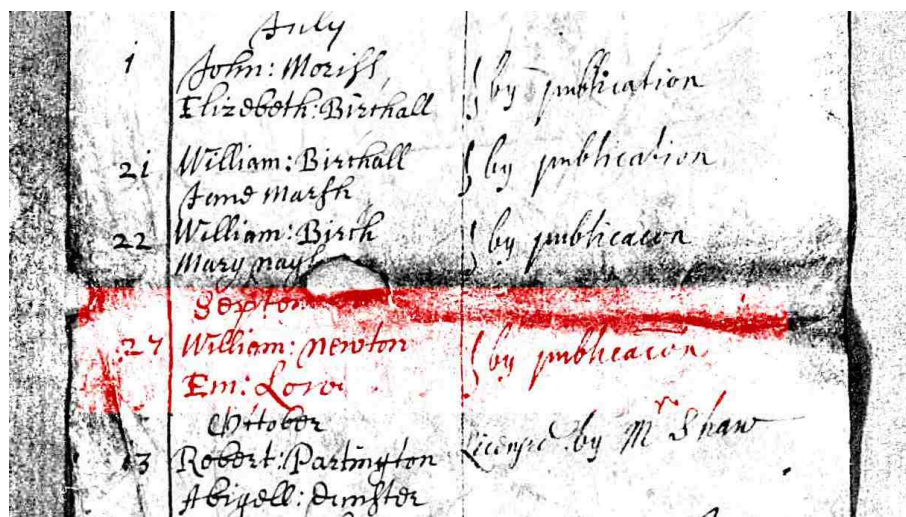
It will be noted that there is no specific mention of the Diary.

Of the four appraisers, Matthew Deane has not been identified. William Lowe and John Potter were, respectively, the diarist's brother and brother-in-law. Thomas Harrison was another close friend who, like John Potter, occurs throughout the Diary.

Custody and Treatment of the Manuscript after 1679

The story of the Diary's survival and preservation after more than three centuries at Archives: Wigan & Leigh is itself an interesting one. It would appear that the Diary was at first retained by Roger Lowe's widow and then, after the death of her second husband, by the Leyland family.

Having mourned Roger's death for a year and a half, Emma Lowe married another Ashton shopkeeper, William Newton, on 27 September 1680.

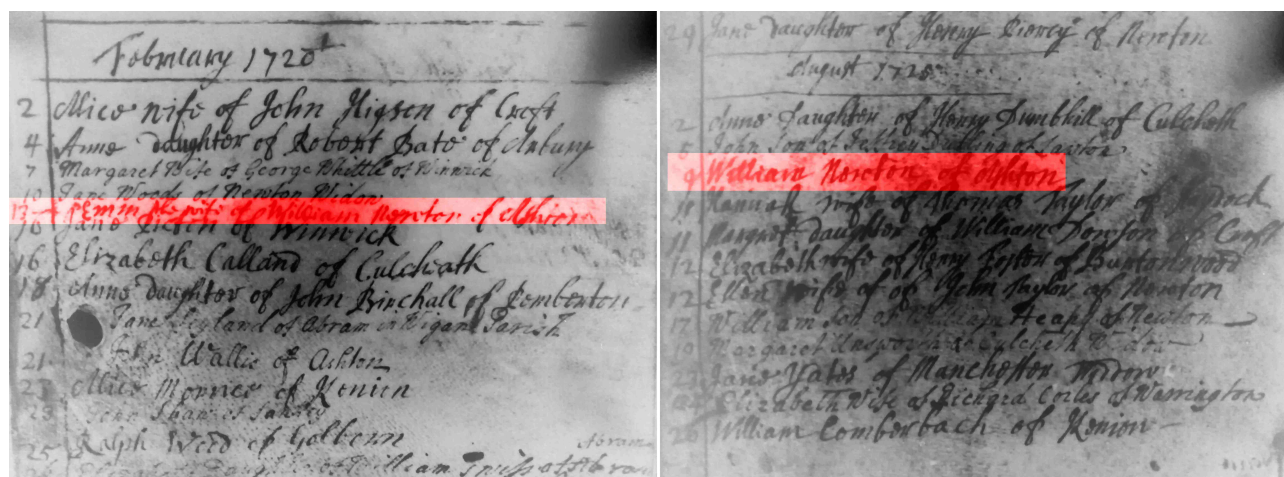


Newton/Lowe marriage in the "Bishop's Transcript" of the Winwick register, at Lancashire Archives ref. DRL 2/530.

Possessed of "a seartaine eastate situated and lying and being in Ashton next to ye Whitlege Green and called by ye name of old Croft house", William Newton was twice related to the Leyland family; first, through his mother's second marriage around 1660 to James Leyland and, second, through the marriage of his sister, Ann. His will is preserved at Lancashire Archives ref. WCW/Supra/C335B/85. The ownership history of Holcroft (or "old Croft") House can be traced through the papers of Messrs Peace & Ellis, Solicitors, at Archives: Wigan & Leigh ref. DDZ A7.

The fate of the diarist's son, John, and brother, William, after 1679 is not known.

The Winwick register records the burials of Emma and William Newton on 13 February 1721 and 9 August 1725 respectively-



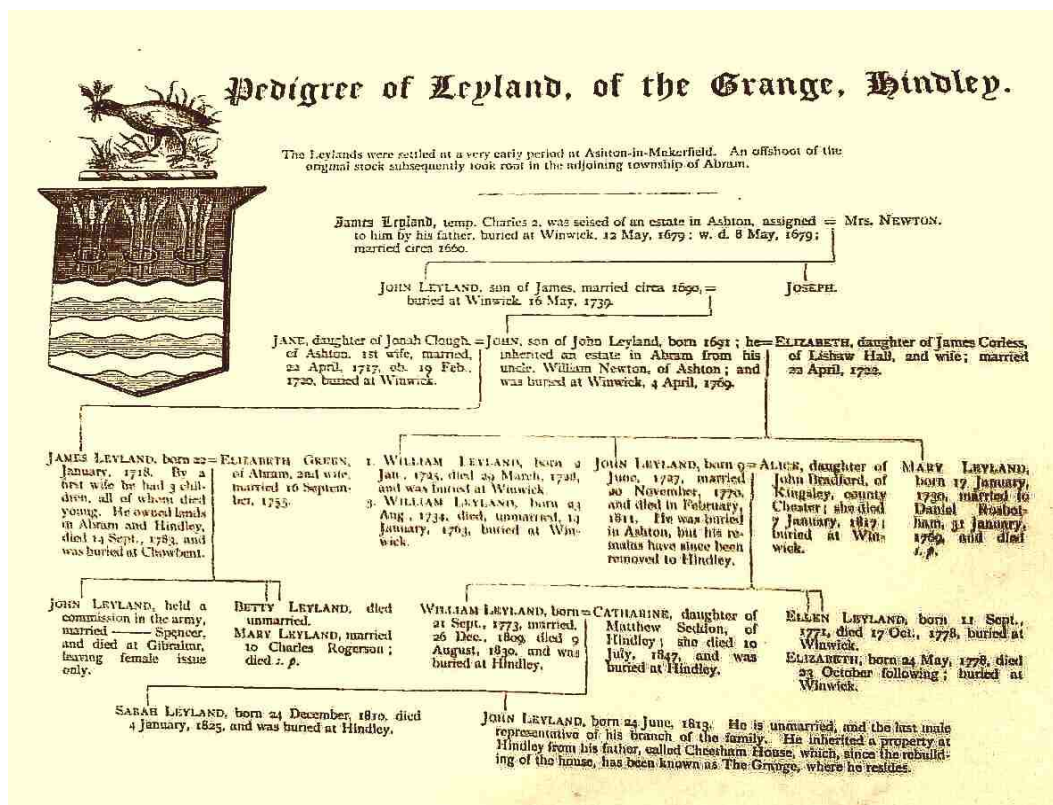
From the original Winwick parish register at Cheshire Archives ref. P 158/1/5

The administration of William's estate was entrusted to John Leyland and Thomas Richardson. This John Leyland (1691-1769), to whom Mr Newton bequeathed other property at Abram, was the eldest son of the deceased's step-brother. Holcroft House was left first to Ann and then to her son, Joseph Leyland, subject to an annual charge during Ann's lifetime of 40 shillings and to a final payment at her death of £40 in favour of the Ashton Coat Stock Charity. A separate bequest of £10 was to be invested for the benefit of the poor of Abram. John Leyland and Thomas Richardson were to act as trustees in this regard and the survivor out of these two was to appoint, as successor to the other, "James Leyland, nephew to John Leyland, Trustee for the saide charity, if he be then living".

Ashton Coat Stock.			
1693	Thomas Harrison, of Ashton, to provide for the poor of Ashton, with the Interest thereof, grey woollen Cloth Coats, edged down the Seams with red, and having a red Cross on the right Shoulder, gave	L	s d
		50	
1714	George Richardson, of Ashton	10	
1720	Elizabeth Taylor	2	
1720	William Newton, of Ashton	5	10
1720	Half of the Stubshaws, consisting of two fields, called the Stubshaws, was purchased, by the Trustees, with	67	10
		57	10
1720	Mary Harrison	10	
		5	
1721	Thomas Potter	5	
1728	William Newton, of Ashton	40	
1728	Elizabeth Arkwright, of Ashton	5	
1732	Catherine Wallis, of Ashton, gave a Rent Charge, of L 10, a Year, upon her Estate in Ashton, to be laid out in drab woollen Cloth, for the impotent poor of Ashton		
1734	Henry Darbyshire	5	
1746	Reduction of Stock by Money lost	66	
		9	
1774	Peter Smith, of Ashton	57	
		20	
		77	
1800	Stock augmented by Sale of Timber	14	14
1807	Half of the House, and Outhouses, built on the Stubshaws	9	14
		14	5
1807	This Stock in Debt	49	11
1820	Half of the Bakehouse built on the Stubshaws	5	
1822	The Debt of this Stock was liquidated, by yearly payments, out of the Rent of the Stubshaws, from 1807, to this time	54	11
		54	11

Ashton Coat Stock Charity ledger, now preserved in the town's public library, showing donations made by and on behalf of Emma's second husband, William Newton

John Leyland's family came originally from Ashton-in-Makerfield, and had been closely associated with Park Lane Chapel. In 1717, however, John had moved to Abram. In 1779 his second son (also John, 1727-1811) and grandson (William, 1773-1830) moved to Hindley, where they carried on the business of fustian manufacturers and served as trustees of the Presbyterian chapel there. William's son - another John - was born at his mother's family home in Mill Street, Hindley, in 1813. In 1832, following William's death, John Leyland III moved to Cheetham House, Hindley, which he re-named The Grange.



From J Foster's "Pedigrees of The County Families of England, Vol. 1: Lancashire" (1873)

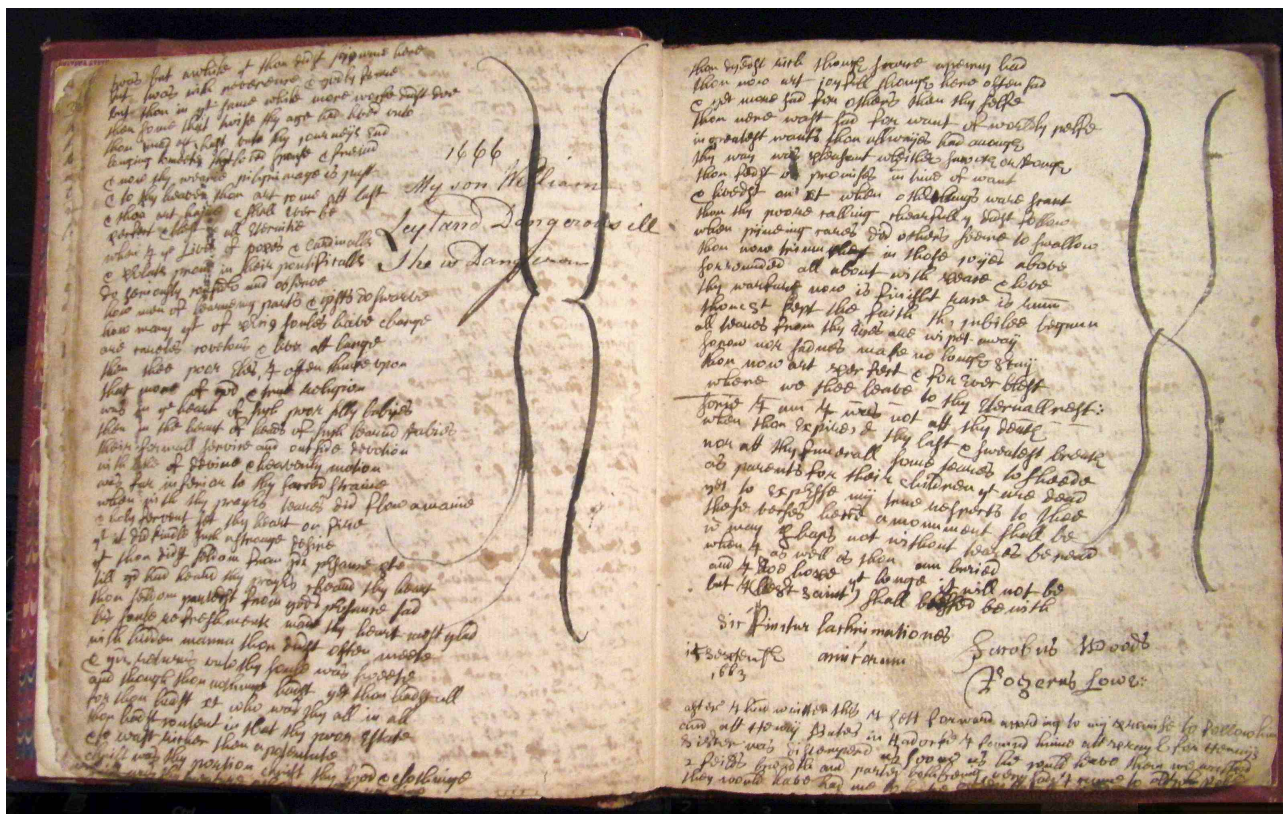


John Leyland III, photographed outside "The Grange", Hindley, in 1872

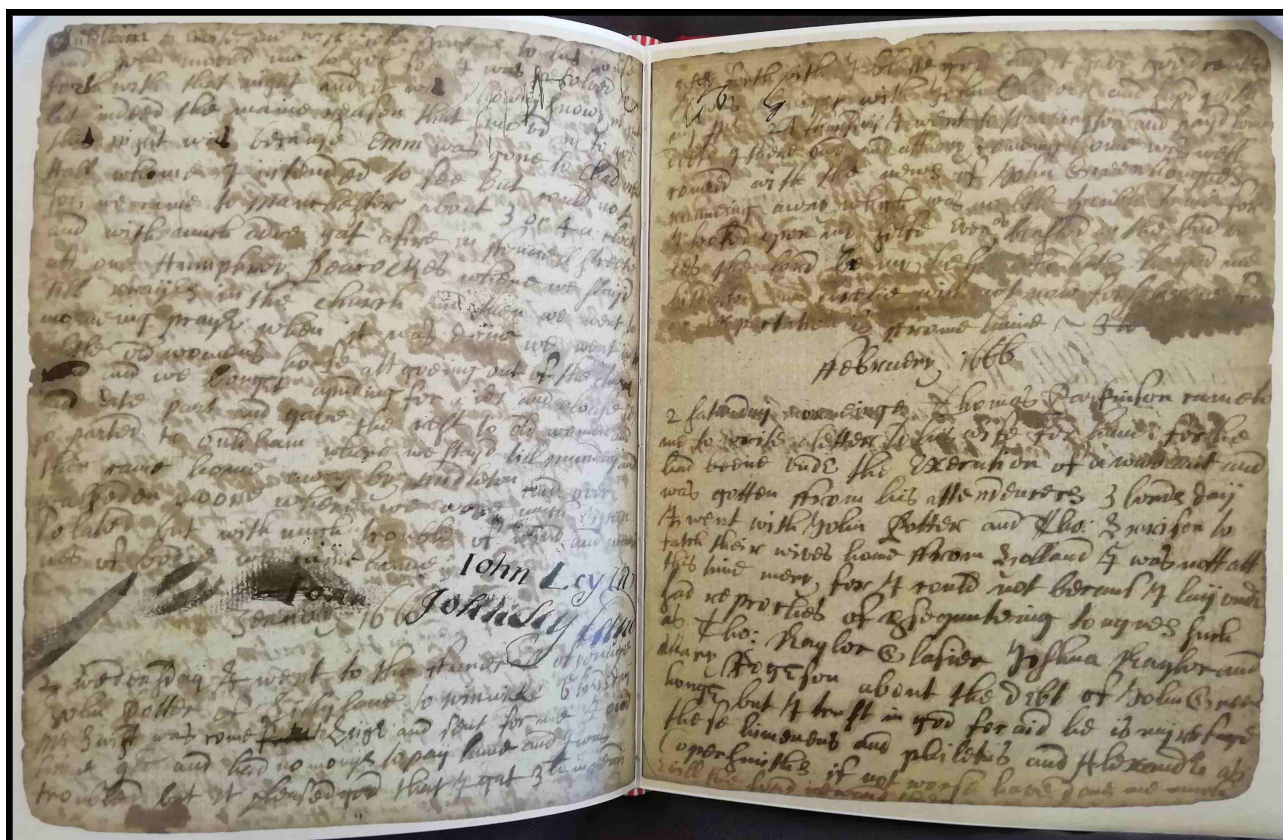
[illegible]

the saxon kinges
819 Edward the firste soall monche
Eugene
836 Ethelwoldes sonne
847 Ethelbald the mayored his mother
860 Ethelred the firste son 1780
866 Ethelred the firste son 179
872 Edward first son of Ethelwold 172
901 Edward son named the elder
924 Ethelstan the first son of Edward
940 Edmund the first son of Edward
946 Edward the first son of Edmund
947 Edward the first son of King Edmund
Katharine for a very long time
949 Edward son named the first
977 Edward the martyr
978 Ethelred for his glorie
1010 Edmund for his great strength
the Danish king of england
1017 Canute the firste Danish king
1079 Harold for his great strength
1040 Rurik the firste son of Rurik
the saxon king of england
1042 Edward for his great strength
1066 Harold the firste son of Harold
the Norman king
1066 William the firste son

John Lowe may also have been responsible for the list of Saxon kings on the very last page of the manuscript (image from facsimile).



Inscription alongside Lowe's transcript of the epitaph composed by James Wood in September 1663: "1666 My son William Leyland Dangerous ill He is Dangerous"



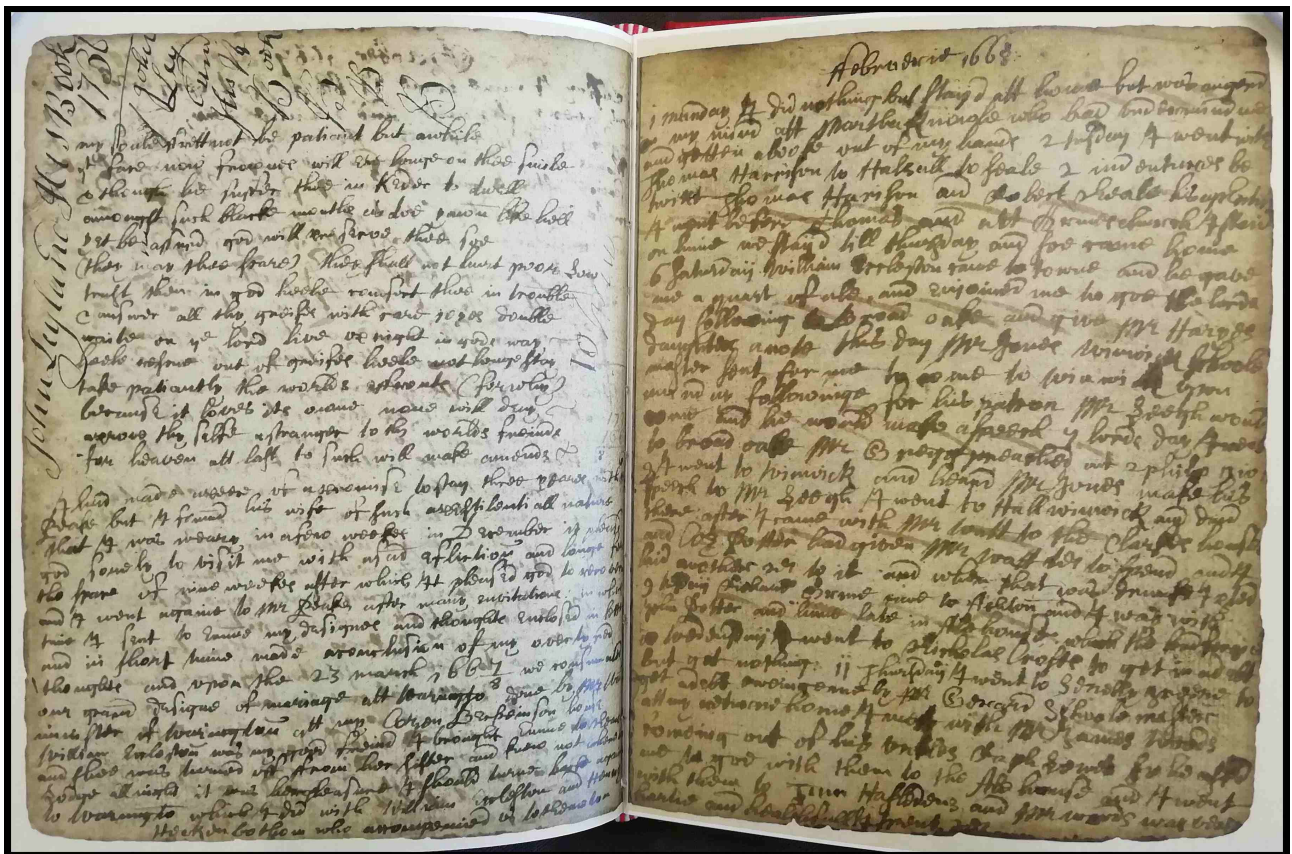
Inscription added following Lowe's final entry of December 1666: "John Leyland" (twice) (image from facsimile)

I have receivd for John B. Woodhouse and I have
 sent for me but before it is treated with
 Courts but I have not and I have since all my
 with I have some better satisfied approach
 6 weeks pay my the name to Ashton and Woodhouse
 and I had to send it was sent before the
 and people it was sent I have not yet
 but I have not yet received it
 James Leyland
 He is at first in his own house
 and I have not yet received it

Inscription added to an entry of February 1667 recording the diarist's receipt of "that sad sorrowfull newes of Mr Woods death": "James Leyland" (twice).

27 August 1667 I went to Driffield and to the
 but he was not at home
 September 1667
 8 Sunday I went to Driffield to see the
 10 Monday I went to Driffield to see the
 11 Tuesday I went to Driffield to see the
 12 Wednesday I went to Driffield to see the
 13 Thursday I went to Driffield to see the
 14 Friday I went to Driffield to see the
 15 Saturday I went to Driffield to see the
 16 Sunday I went to Driffield to see the
 17 Monday I went to Driffield to see the
 18 Tuesday I went to Driffield to see the
 19 Wednesday I went to Driffield to see the
 20 Thursday I went to Driffield to see the
 21 Friday I went to Driffield to see the
 22 Saturday I went to Driffield to see the
 23 Sunday I went to Driffield to see the
 24 Monday I went to Driffield to see the
 25 Tuesday I went to Driffield to see the
 26 Wednesday I went to Driffield to see the
 27 Thursday I went to Driffield to see the
 28 Friday I went to Driffield to see the
 29 Saturday I went to Driffield to see the
 30 Sunday I went to Driffield to see the

The pages containing Roger Lowe's entries for 27 August to 28 October 1667 have been defaced; "John Leyland" is written vertically alongside the first part of Lowe's poem about his Warrington experiences (image from facsimile)



"John Leyland His Book 1736" is twice written vertically, first alongside and secondly above the remainder of Lowe's October 1667 poem (image from facsimile)

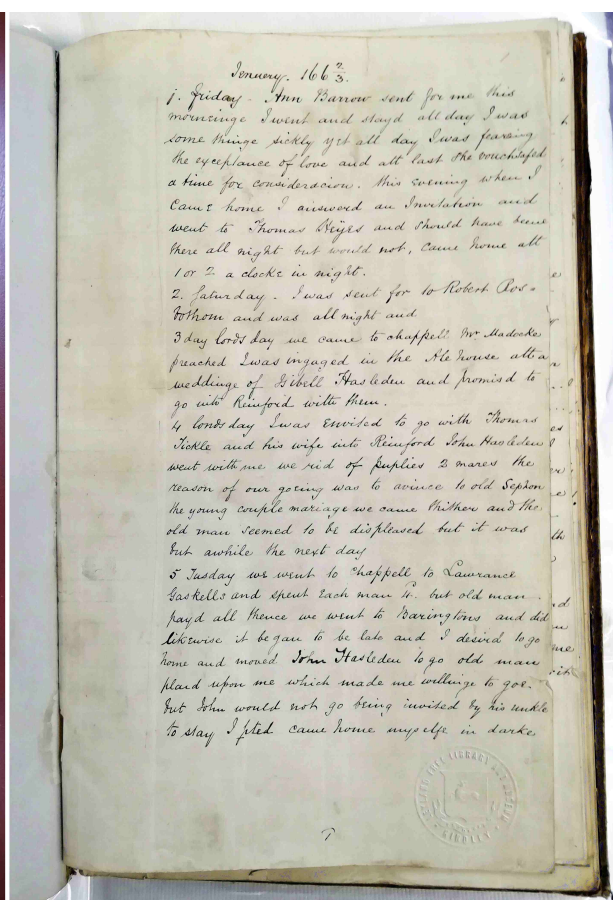
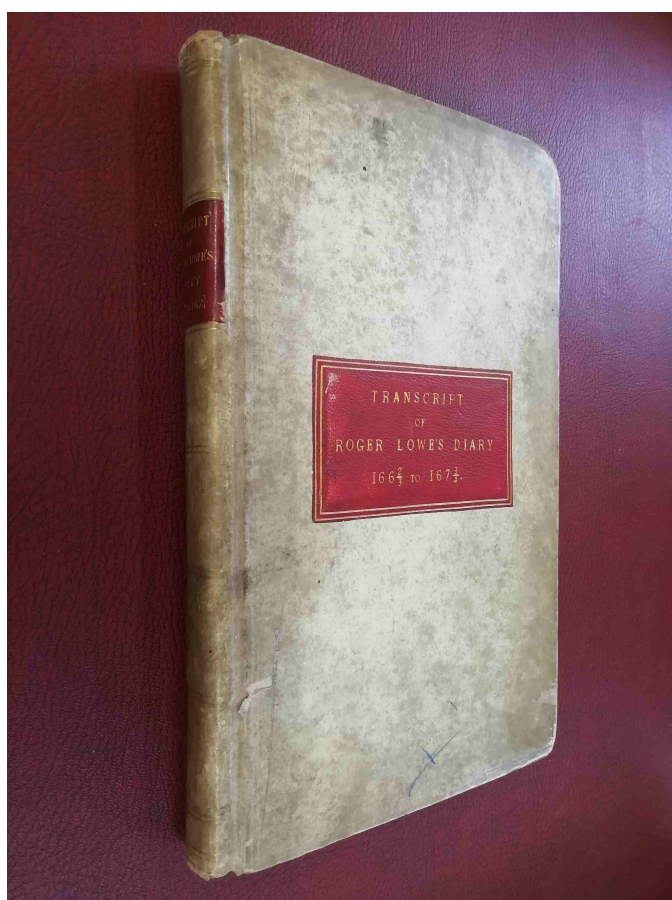
29th December 1675
 John Darbishire who was brought to a Protestant
 Cole Pitt who was a papist till we in the marriage
 of my lady Harknophord he was a husband he married
 it please god to visit him with sickness & from the
 turne his religion & was a man in his language
 a very sad story if highly understood
 to be a useful instruction where they were
 John Leyland His Book
 1720

Inscription added after Lowe's account of the death of James Darbishire on 29 December 1675:
 "John Leyland His Book. 1728"

John Leyland
December 11th 1861.

"John Leyland \ December 11th 1861" written on the first inner page of the bound manuscript as currently preserved at Archives: Wigan & Leigh (image from facsimile)

In or about 1876 John Leyland III made or commissioned a transcript of the Diary "so far as it can be deciphered" which he then offered to The Manchester Courier and other local newspapers for publication.



Undated and uncatalogued "Transcript of Roger Lowe's Diary", Archives: Wigan and Leigh Acc. 2012/11(13). The provenance of this item is not entirely certain but I infer from the contents that it is in fact the transcript made available to newspaper editors by John Leyland III in and after 1876.

A stamped and addressed label bears the particulars of Manchester Courier editor J P Earwaker. Labels on the inner front cover state that the Leyland Free Library acquired it via Manchester bookseller Joseph Mitchell from a "Hindley House Sale" in 1911. A photostat copy had been received into the Archives at an earlier date: Acc. 1972.

John Leyland III died on 28 June 1883, leaving the bulk of his estate to his friend Nathaniel Eckersley. As later reported by The Wigan Observer, Mr Leyland had "for some time before his death ... nursed many projects for the benefit of Hindley (notably the formation of a public park and constitution of a free public library and museum)". With his demise it was left to Mr Eckersley to bring these plans to fruition, and the Leyland Free Library and Museum at Hindley was duly completed and presented to the township by him in 1887. A dedicated bookcase within the Library's reading room housed the late benefactor's personal collection of nearly 500 books and manuscripts, including the original manuscript Diary of Roger Lowe and a private printing of the Leyland transcript as published by The Leigh Chronicle in 1877.



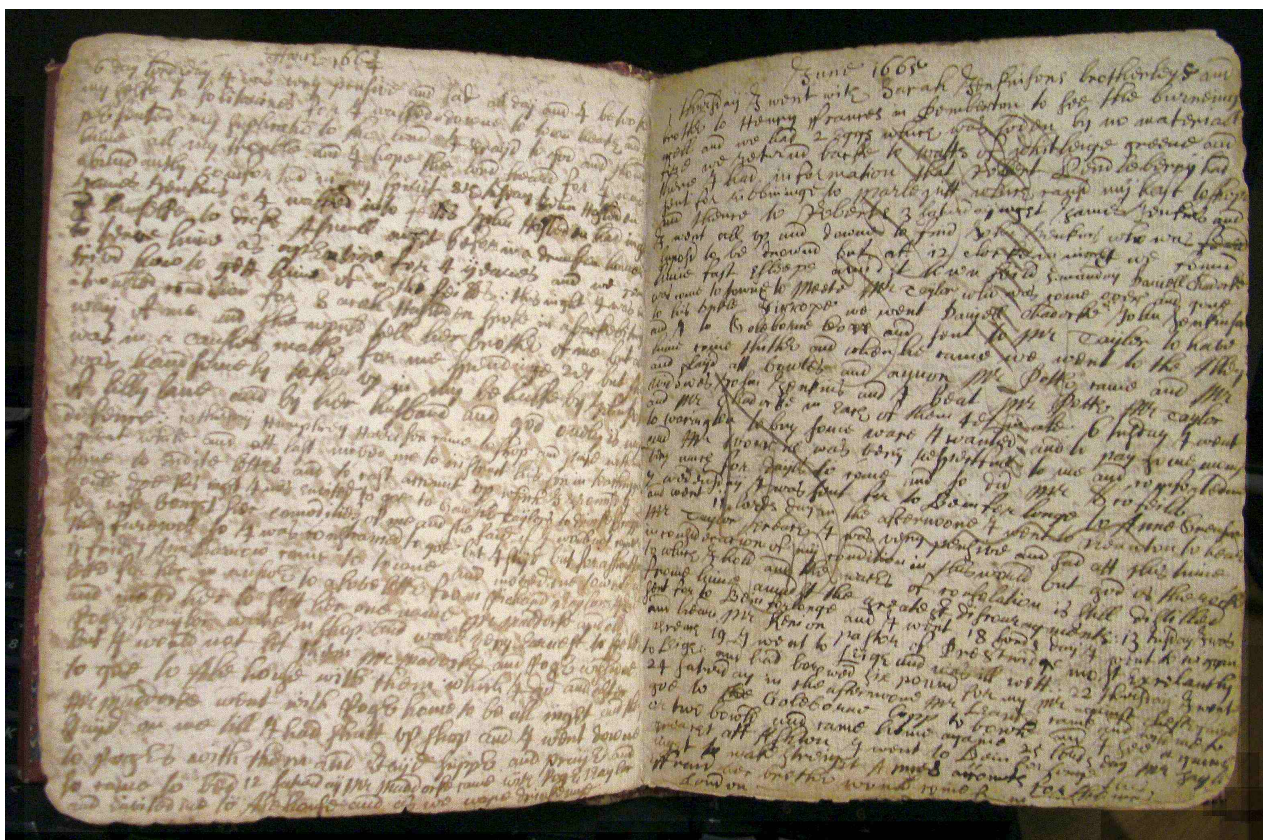
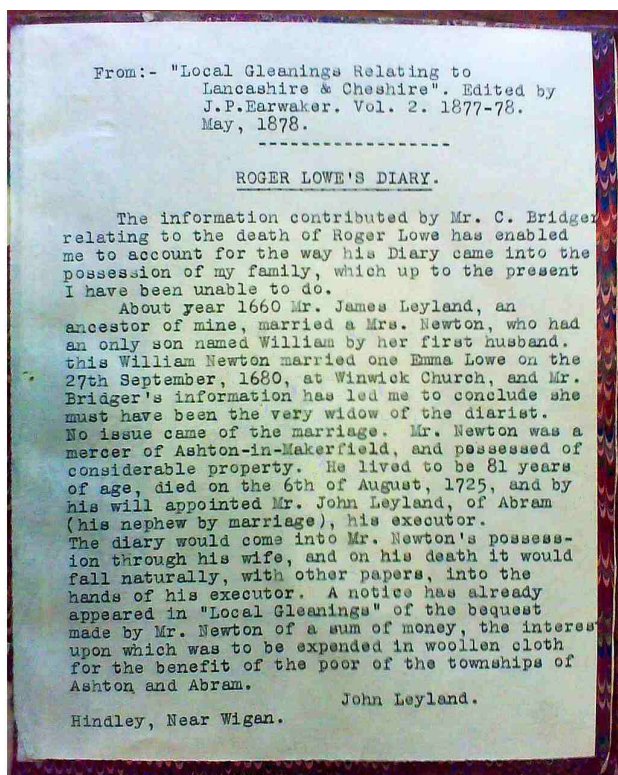
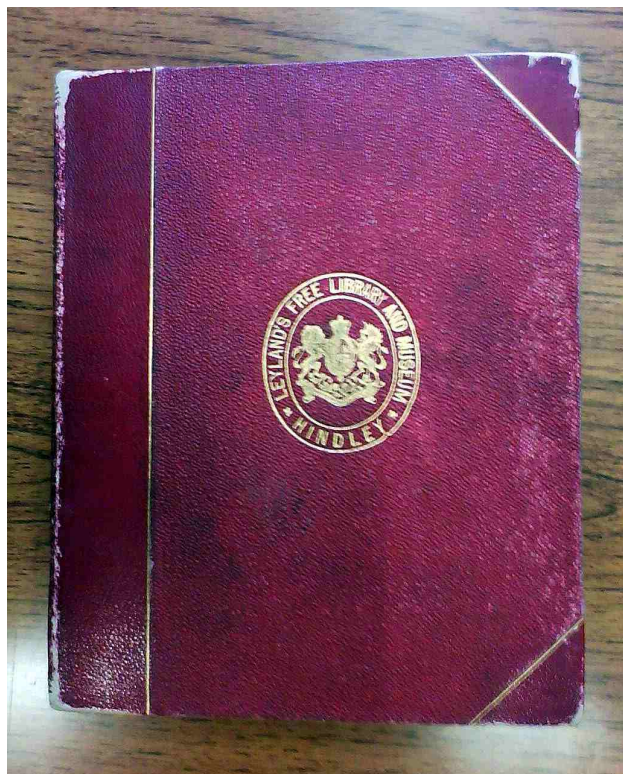
LOWE (ROGER).

Diary, 1673-1678. [The original manuscript, 150 pp. sm. 4to.]

- [Not published]. **The Diary of Roger Lowe, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire, 1663-1678. (Reprinted from "The Leigh Chronicle.") sm. 4to. Leigh, 1877. Large paper copy.**

From "Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts belonging the late John Leyland Esquire JP of The Grange, Hindley, preserved in The Leyland Bookcase at the Leyland Free Library and Museum, Hindley", Henry T Folkard FSA, 1896

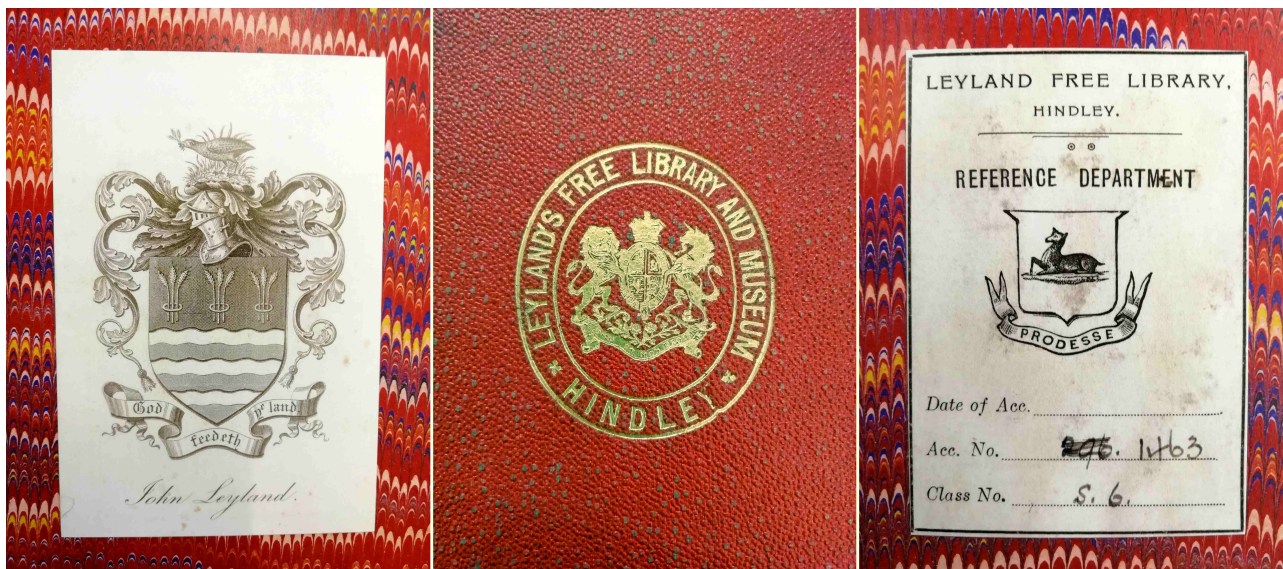
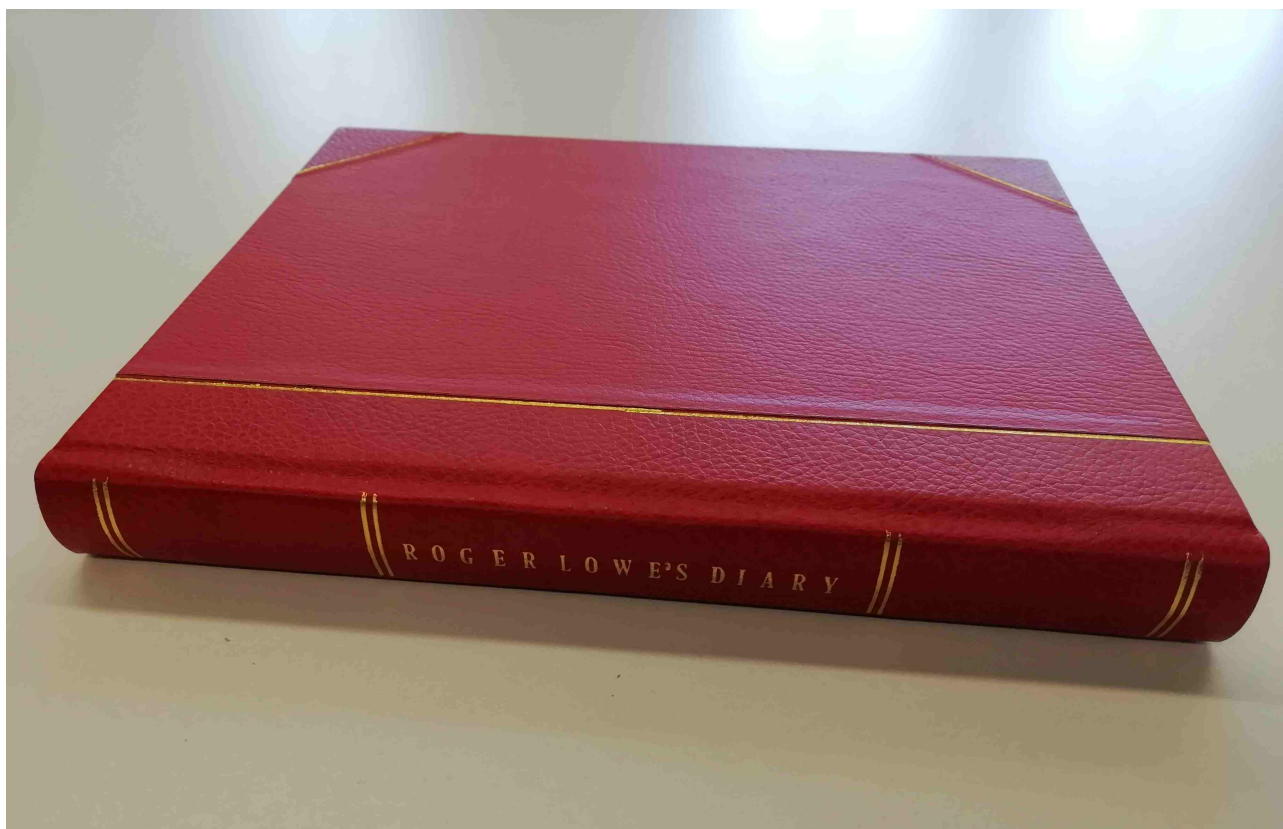
At or soon after its deposit in the Leyland Free Library the Diary was re-bound and a copy of John Leyland III's account of how it had come into his possession was pasted onto the inner front cover. It would appear that in course of this operation Lowe's diary entries covering the period from 12 March 1664 to 28 May 1665 - and, as my correspondent John Taylor argues persuasively elsewhere, possibly other entries besides these - were reinserted out of sequence.



The pages on which Lowe records the events of early March 1664 and June 1665 now face each other, his entries for the intervening period having been inserted elsewhere in the volume.

Eventually the public library at Hindley moved to new premises and the Leyland Collection was dispersed. Several volumes from the Collection can now be found at “Wigan Local Studies” in the former Wigan Reference Library but most of the items were transferred to Archives: Wigan and Leigh which is based in the Town Hall at Leigh. The Diary manuscript was received into the Archives – “Wigan Record Office”, as it then was - on 14 October 1981 (Acc. 2112). Subsequently it was catalogued as “Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield” and allocated a reference no. D/DZ A58.

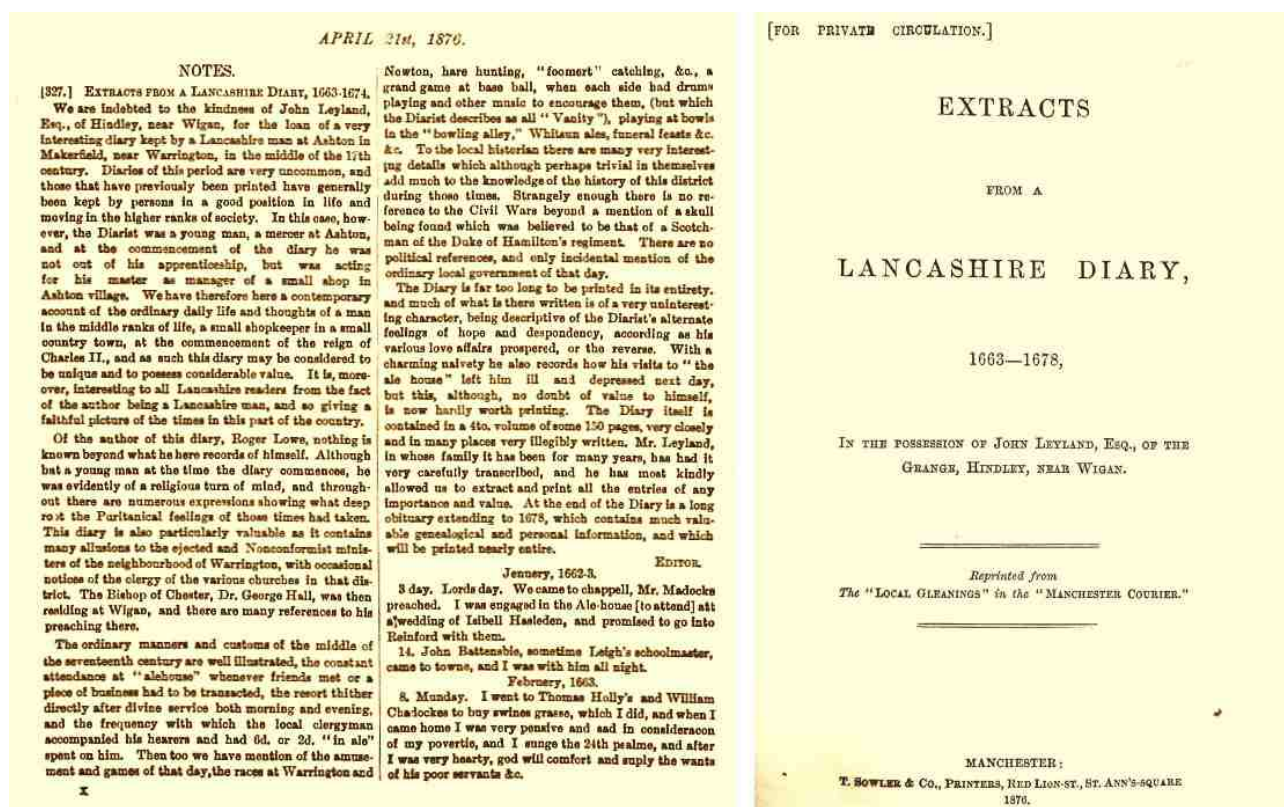
Owing to the fragility of the original, a facsimile of the Diary has been produced by conservators. This enables public display and study of Lowe's text without risk of further damage to the physical manuscript. The facsimile is a faithful copy of the original in the condition in which it was received into the Archives in 1981 except that the “Leyland's Free Library and Museum” emblem does not appear on the outer front cover.



The Diary in Print

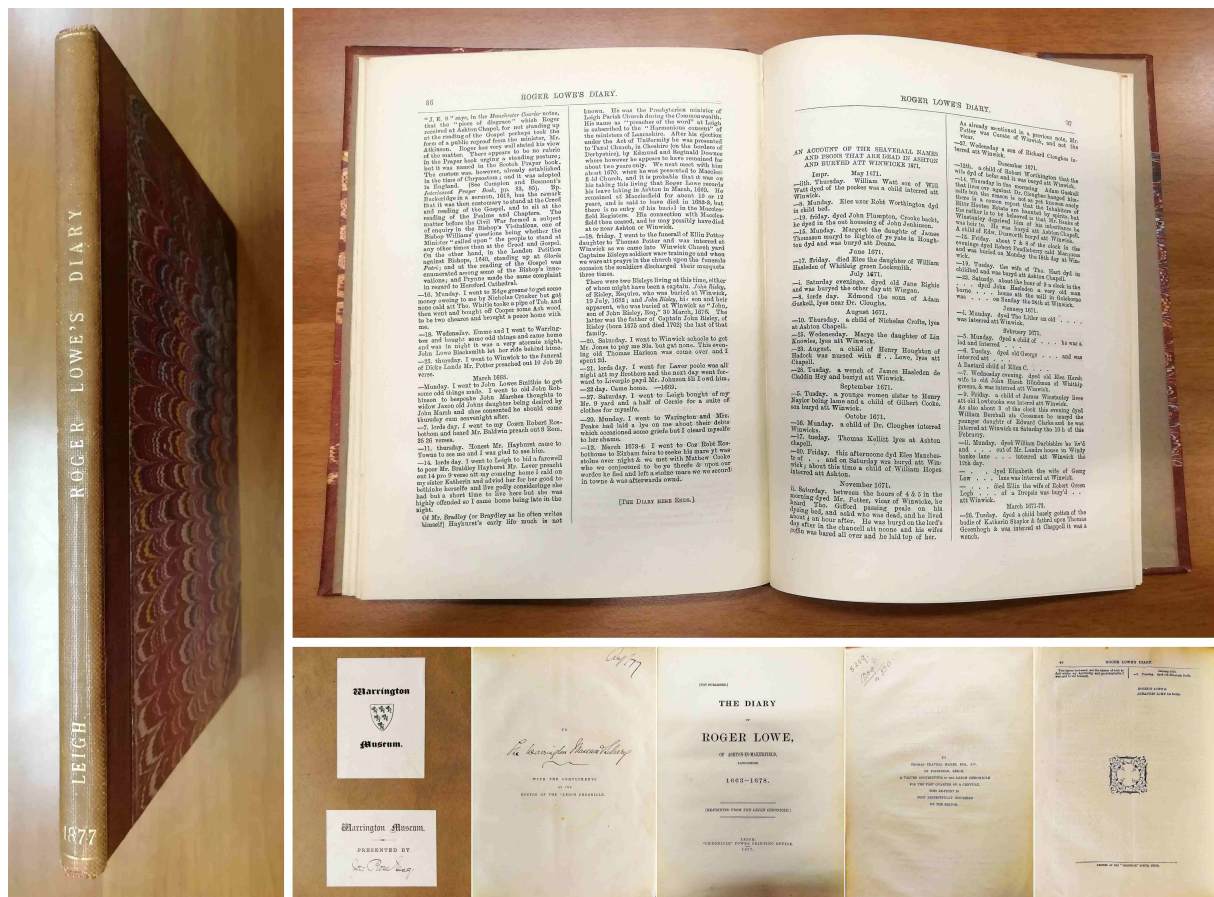
Several versions of the Diary of Roger Lowe have appeared in print.

Beginning on 21 April 1876 and continuing over a period of several months, extracts from the transcript made by or on behalf of John Leyland were first published in the "Local Gleanings" column of The Manchester Courier. The material aroused considerable interest, and served to elicit additional information from readers of the column concerning the events, personalities and locations mentioned by Lowe. Shortly thereafter the Courier extracts and edited readers' contributions were reprinted in a stand-alone volume, "Extracts from a Lancashire Diary, 1663-1678".



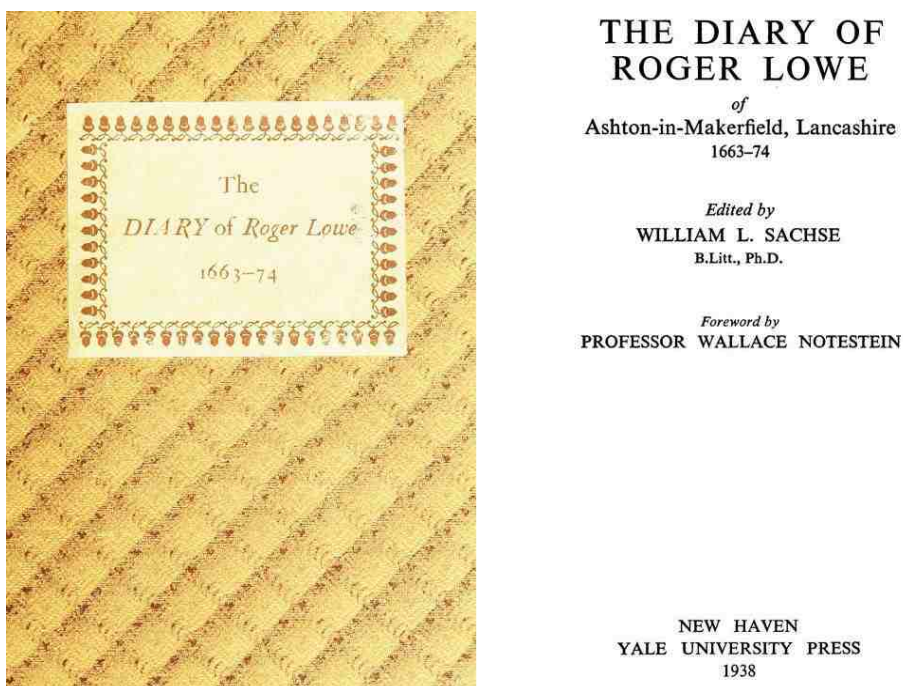
Left: extract from *The Manchester Courier*, 21 April 1876. Right: from an example of the 1876 *Manchester Courier* reprint at Wigan Local Studies ref. 942.736

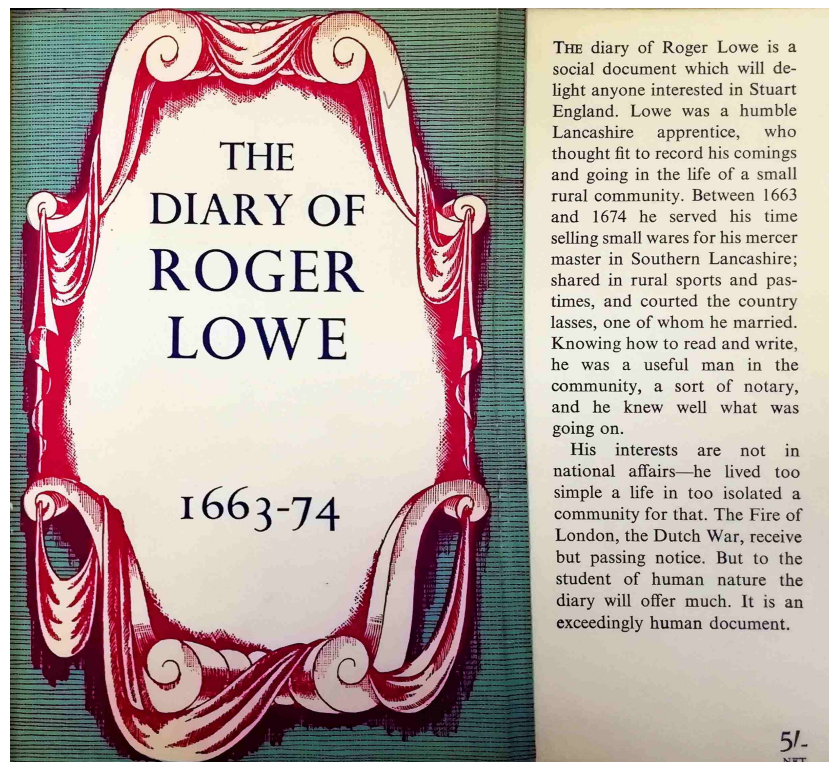
Soon after this The Leigh Chronicle began serialising the entirety of the Leyland transcript in its own "Scrap Book" column. Chronicle editor Josiah Rose then once again followed the Manchester Courier's example by arranging the private printing of a stand-alone volume, "The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire. 1663-1678", but distinguished his approach by stating that "Although many of the entries are trivial and valueless, it was deemed better to print all lest, in leaving out, something of importance might be omitted. The Diary was therefore for the first time published in extenso in the 'Chronicle Scrap Book'". The preface to the 1877 reprint further explained that, in course of production, "some manifest errors and blunders" in the Leyland transcript had been "corrected by comparison with the original": "It should be understood that the reprint is from the newspaper type, as it appeared week by week in the Chronicle during the autumn of 1876... No pretence is made of editorial work; and an acknowledgement is due for some of the explanatory notes to the Editor of the 'Local Gleanings' of 'The Manchester Courier' and his contributors....". The reprint was dedicated to Thomas Travers Hayes (1850-1893), one-time treasurer of the Leigh Union and "a valued contributor to the Leigh Chronicle for the past quarter of a century".



An example of the 1877 Leigh Chronicle reprint at Warrington Heritage Hub ref. W5209. A handwritten and signed dedication to “The Warrington Museum & Library” by “Jos. Rose Esq.” is dated August 1877.

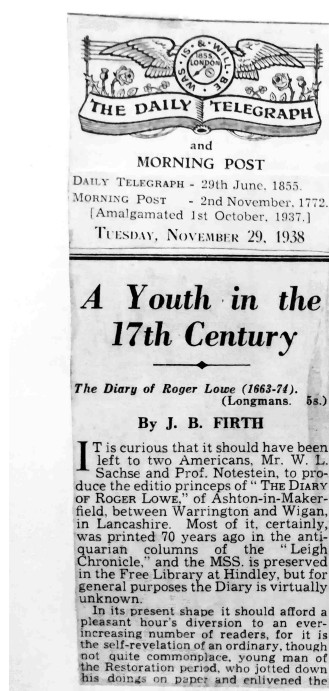
At the prompting of Professor Wallace Notestein, then Sterling Professor of English History at Yale University, an entirely new transcript of the Diary was made from the original by his colleague Dr William L Sachse, afterwards Associate Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin. This transcript was published in 1938 by Yale University Press in New Haven, USA, and elsewhere by Longmans, Green & Co.





Insert from the Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd edition, 1938

The Sachse transcript as published includes the passages that were left out of the Leigh Chronicle printing of 1877 but omits the lists of “the seaverall names and persons that are dead in Ashton and buried att Winwicke” and “such as dyd within My Aprentiship and providentiallie I was cald to the funerall”. In terms of style “the irregular and inconsistent spelling has been preserved in the hope that a certain archaic charm and indescribable bygone atmosphere might not be dulled” but capital letters and punctuation are introduced “where usage requires them”. Introductions by Professor Notestein and by Dr Sachse himself help to place the Diary in its historical context. The 1938 editions are completed by a transcript of the 1679 probate inventory, end-notes and an index.



record of "the daily round, the common task" with occasional comments on the state of his soul, his views on "Episcopacy and Presbitery," and the progress alike of his serious and his more casual wooings.

Roger was in the bloom of adolescence, easily persuaded to obey the call to "a drinking" at an alehouse, especially if it was to cost him nothing, yet by no means an idle apprentice at his master's shop, and always, despite his occasional follies, "a good sound Christian at the heart."

If he drank rather too much, or parted from a dear friend, or lost at "bowles," he would go off into the fields and get down on his knees and pray, or read or sing a psalme, and then go home "very well satisfied, for the Lord will be a rocke to those that trust in Hime."

Artless Antique Flavour

Mixed up with all this are the entries in which appears the name of Mary Naylor, who caused him "great perplexitie, for she was too strange in her effections" and evidently blew hot and cold by turns, leaving him in the end to be carried off by Emm Potter, though Mary Naylor in the interval could have had him for the asking.

Births and funerals also play a prominent part in the story, and his efforts to get in the money that was owing by his customers over against the visits of his master, and his junketings at neighbouring fairs and his rare travels farther afield.

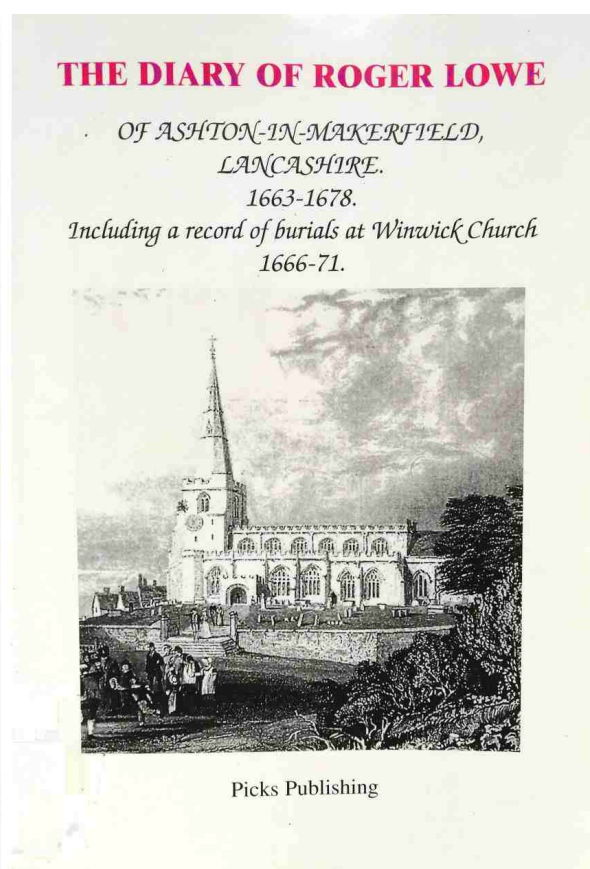
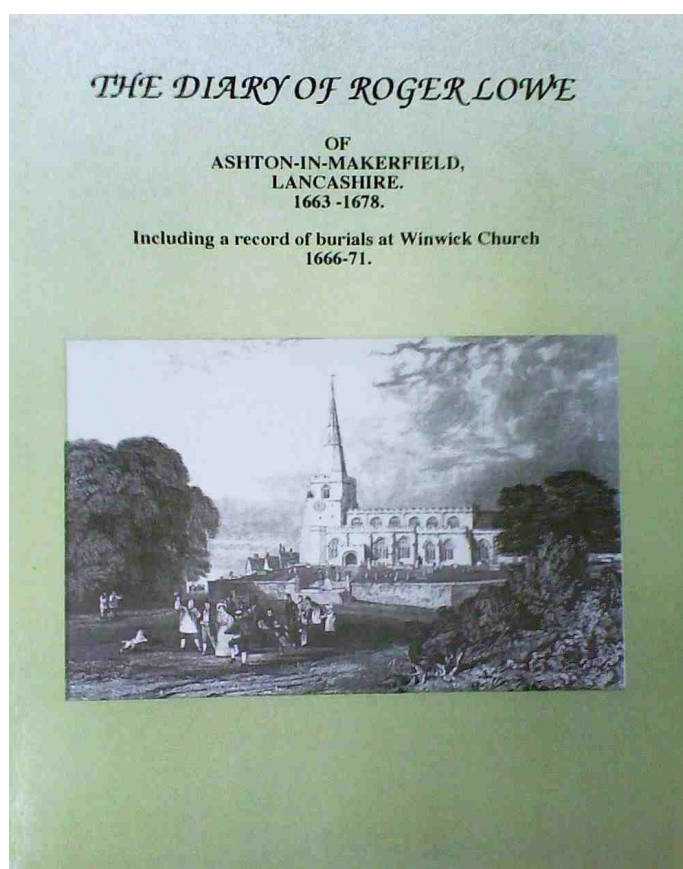
It is the artless antique flavour which lends the Diary most of its interest, for there is hardly a word on current political events, and not a glimpse of the roystering spirit of the Restoration. Ashton-in-Makerfield was, indeed, right off the map. But now Roger Lowe has put it on, and for once in a way we know intimately a score or two of the ordinary folk of a district and scarcely the name of the squire.

One scrap of Roger's philosophy can be taken to heart by all: "Nothing worse to a man than over-hastiness, especially in hott concernements; hott women, hott pottage and angry tupps be ware of and pray to be delivered from."

"It is curious that it should have been left to two Americans..." - Daily Telegraph review of the Longmans edition, 29 November 1938

In 1994 the Diary became once more accessible to the public in the form of a reprint of the Leigh Chronicle edition. "The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire, 1663-1678. Including a record of burials at Winwick Church 1666-71" by Picks Publishing is a faithful reproduction of the 1876/7 text - with all of the latter's omissions and other imperfections. It does however include the original preface of 1877 by Chronicle editor Josiah Rose and, as indicated by the title, Roger Lowe's lists of "the seaveral names and persons that are dead in Ashton" etc. Completing the 1994 edition is a short "Publishers Note" by Picks Publishing's founder and proprietor Ian Winstanley and – although not identified as such here – a reprint of the chapter on Roger Lowe from Professor Wallace Notestein's "English Folk: A Book of Characters" (originally Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York, 1938).

A further – and, to date, final - edition of the Diary was published by Picks Publishing in 2004. The content of the 2004 edition is identical with that of its predecessor except that the March 1994 "Publisher's Note" is omitted from the later version, and the order in which the Josiah Rose preface and the (still uncredited) Wallace Notestein essay appear is reversed.



Picks Publishing 1994 and (right) 2004 editions of the Diary

The Diary in Academic Literature

“Social history” or “history from below” came into vogue as a legitimate focus for serious study in the middle decades of the 20th century. The development was a reaction against the orthodox view that the human story could be adequately told through the lives of those – usually men – who wielded the greatest political, economic or military power and influence.

English Folk

A Book of Characters

BY WALLACE NOTESTEIN

*There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased.*

MLN. IV, PT. II, ACT III, SC. I.

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY
NEW YORK

Characters

FREDERICK BETTESWORTH, 1837 (circa) – 1905	3
LUCY LYTTTELTON (<i>Lady Frederick Cavendish</i>), 1841 – 1925	23
THOMAS COKE OF HOLKHAM (<i>finally Earl of Leicester</i>), 1754 – 1842	51
THOMAS BEWICK, 1753 – 1828	73
PARSON WOODFORDE AND NANCY, 1740 – 1803	93
THOMAS TYLDESLEY, 1657 – 1715	125
ALICE THORNTON, 1626 – 1707	143
LEONARD WHEATCROFT, 1627 – 1706	163
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In the vanguard of this movement, and among the first to recognise Roger Lowe's Diary as a valuable source of information about the lives of “ordinary” people in the 17th century, was Professor Wallace Notestein. It was at his suggestion that a new transcript of the Diary was made and edited for publication by his Yale University colleague Dr William Sachse in 1938. Published almost simultaneously with the Sachse edition was a collection of pen-portraits by Professor Notestein of thirteen individuals, three of whom – including Roger Lowe – belonged to “the lower class”. As he explains in his introduction to “**English Folk: A Book of Characters**” (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1938), Professor Notestein started from the premise that “the story is subordinate to the study of a character as part of his time and class”:

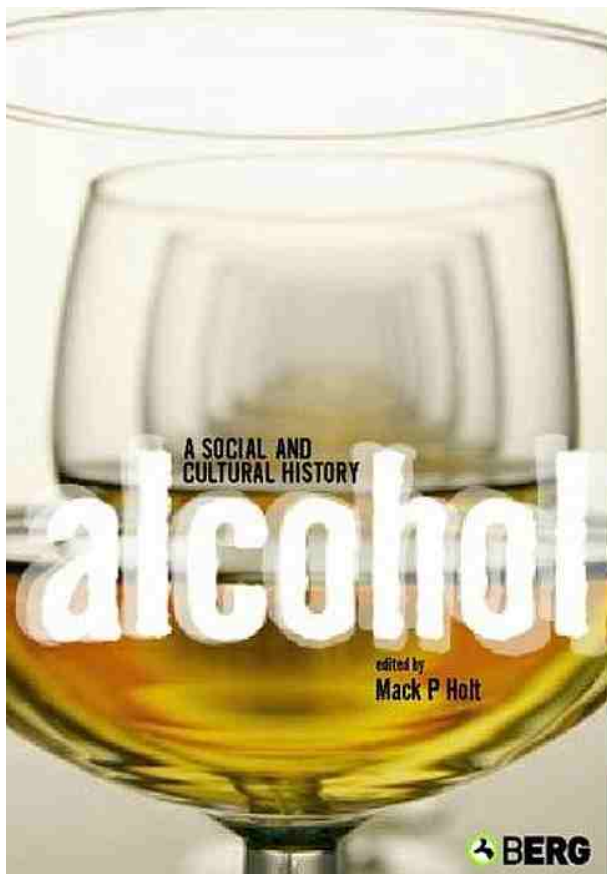
“We are less interested in what happened than in certain kinds of English people, what they thought and believed, what was right and wrong to them, what was “done” and not done, how they lived with fellows of their own class and other classes, how they looked upon those other classes and on themselves in relation to others. Their immediate circles and the boundaries of those circles are matters of import”.

In the Diary, Lowe “managed to give away all that was in his peasant soul and also to furnish us with an intimate record of village goings-on. A nonconformist youth with convictions that demanded utterance, he was at his best in a prayer-meeting or in theological controversy but no less happy in the alehouse or on the bowling green. He was always in and out of love and so affords us many a hint as to the peasant formulae for courtship. So trusting was he and so expansive that he must have been laughed at for miles around. But his friends laughed with him, too, and went out of

their way to spend an evening in his company.”

Others, following Professor Notestein's lead, have similarly found in the Diary a treasury of information about provincial practices, habits and concerns during the Restoration era and its immediate aftermath.

Like many of his contemporaries Roger Lowe spent a good deal of time in the alehouse, both transacting or facilitating business and enjoying the company of friends and neighbours. The Diary has accordingly attracted the attention of one my former tutors and now Emeritus Professor of History at Warwick University, Dr Bernard Capp, and Professor A Lynn Martin, founder and former director of the University of Adelaide's Research Centre for the History of Food and Drink. Dr Capp's **“Gender and the culture of the English alehouse in late Stuart England”** in COLLeGIUM: Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences 2., Vol. 2 (2007), references Lowe's female drinking companions and also his use of a private room in a Leigh alehouse in which to discuss matters of a personal nature. Professor Martin's **“Drinking and Alehouses in the Diary of an English Mercer's Apprentice, 1663-1674”** in Mack P Holt's **“Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History”** (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2006) considers the themes explored by Dr Capp in more detail, noting that 47 separate drinking establishments are mentioned in the Diary of which 25 were in Ashton itself and six were run by women.



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Amanda Flather's **“Gender, Space and Place: The Experience of Servants in Rural Households 1550-1750”** in “Mundo Agrario” Vol. 18/No. 39 (September-December 2017) briefly considers the relationship between Roger Lowe and his master, Thomas Hammond. She also instances Lowe's dining with the servants at the home of Henry Lee, deducing that his “obvious horror at what he experienced suggests that mealtimes in middling households may often have followed more orderly rules”.

Steven King and Lindsay M Klodt both found the Diary to be a rich source of evidence about how

those of modest means went about finding a marriage partner. King's **"Chance Encounters? Paths to Household Formation in Early Modern England"** in "International Review of Social History" No. 44 (1999) examines the diarist's "turbulent" love life and his three-and-a-half year courtship of Emma Potter, concluding that Lowe's decision to marry Emma in 1668 was "hardly a decision at all, but merely the favourable outcome of a route which [he] had found blocked by rigidities [of convention] on previous occasions". In **"Courtship and Marriage Rituals in Seventeenth Century England"** (2008 PhD thesis at http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=akron1207872854) Klodt cites the Diary as evidence that free-choice relationships, even when sexually intimate, "did not necessarily end up in a marriage" at this time: "The details of Roger Lowe's several courtships show us that not only was there freedom to choose whom one wanted to court, but also that it was not uncommon for a middle-class man or woman to have several failed courtship attempts before finally entering into marriage. Furthermore, ... there is very little discussion of parents, and no discussion of money or property transactions. Instead, it appears Roger chose his companion based on personal traits and romantic inclinations".

Finally and perhaps most obviously, the Diary demonstrates the impact of rising rates of literacy as a driver of social change at this time. Brodie Waddell's **"Verses of My Owne Making": literacy, work and social identity in Early Modern England"** in Journal of Social History Vol. 54/Issue 1 (2020) demonstrates "how tradesmen and others of similar rank used reading and writing to create a powerful identity that cut across some of the sharpening divisions in wealth from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries" and "reveals a broad literary culture that was emerging in provincial towns at this time". Roger Lowe is of course an exemplar of both these phenomena. Waddell sees the Diary as, first and foremost, "a providential narrative that could both explain [the writer's] current circumstances and set out the prospect of a divine remedy". Additionally, however, he sees Lowe using his literacy and numeracy to further not just his own economic interest but also that of others within his community:

"The tradesmen of township of Ashton-in-Makerfield, which lacked any official corporate structure in this period, nonetheless participated in the apprenticeship system by having their indentures written up and sealed, often by the shopkeeper Roger Lowe. The 'white smiths' there went further, meeting with Lowe in 1665 to have him write up 'an agreement For them to goe to councell with about their trade', suggesting that these artisans wanted a formal document to support their collective legal position".