Anthony Hewitson (1836-1912) was a typical Victorian journalist, working in one of the largest sectors of the periodical press, provincial newspapers. His diaries, written between 1862 and 1912, lift the veil of anonymity hiding the people, processes and networks involved in the creation of Victorian newspapers. They also tell us about Victorian fatherhood, family life, and the culture of a Victorian town.

Diaries of nineteenth-century provincial journalists are extremely rare. Anthony Hewitson went from printer's apprentice to newspaper reporter and eventually editor of his own paper. Every night he jotted down the day's doings, his thoughts and feelings. The diaries are a lively account of the reporter's daily round, covering meetings and court cases, hunting for gossip or astounding public executions and variety shows, in and around Preston, Lancashire.

Andrew Hobbs's introduction and footnotes provide background and analysis of these valuable documents. This full scholarly edition offers a wealth of new information about reporting, freelancing, sub-editing, newspaper ownership and publishing, and illuminates aspects of Victorian periodicals and culture extending far beyond provincial newspapers.

The Diaries of Anthony Hewitson, Provincial Journalist are an indispensable research tool for local and regional historians, as well as social and political historians with an interest in Victorian studies and the media. They are also illuminating for anyone interested in nineteenth-century social and cultural history.
Anthony Hewitson

ANTHONY HEWITSON was born at Blackburn, on the 13th of August, 1836; his father being Anthony Hewitson, stone mason, and a descendant of an old Northumbrian stock of carriers, &c. Whilst very young, A.H., jun. was taken from Blackburn to the house of his maternal grandfather (Thomas Moor*), at Ingleton, in the West Riding of Yorkshire; was educated at the village school there, the master being the late Mr. R. Danson; and remained at Ingleton until 1850, in the summer of which year he was transferred to his parents at Lancaster, who had been residents for some time in the old county town. Directly after going to Lancaster, he was apprenticed to the late Mr. G. C. Clarke, printer and proprietor of the Lancaster Gazette, in whose news department he served his time. The late Mortimer Collins, Novelist, &c., was editor of the Gazette when Hewitson first went to that paper; and as “p. d.” Hewitson used to go for copy to the house of Mr. Collins, who was

1 ‘Anthony Hewitson’, Yorkshire Bibliographer, 1 (1888): 190–92. The article is anonymous, but is either written by Hewitson or based on material supplied by him.
2 See p. 4 (‘My Life’, fn. 9).
3 See p. 6 (‘My Life’, fn. 13).
4 Edward James Mortimer Collins (1827–1876), journalist, novelist and poet, later known as ‘King of the Bohemians’. He was editor of the Lancaster Gazette c. 1850–1851, on £100 per annum: Keningale Cook and Mabel Cook, ‘Early Days of Mortimer Collins.’, Dublin University Magazine, 90 (1877): 483–84.
5 Printer’s devil, the most junior employee in any printshop.

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at that time a very handsome, swellish-looking person, with a great fondness for a very big dog and a large walking-stick, when out for exercise. During the latter part of his apprenticeship Hewitson studied short-hand, and with the approval of his master, became correspondent for the Manchester Guardian—the first regular news correspondent for Lancaster and the district which the Guardian ever had. One of the journeymen compositors on the Lancaster Gazette in the early portion of Hewitson’s apprenticeship, was Mr. George Harper,6 the present proprietor of the Huddersfield Daily Chronicle. Soon after being out of his apprenticeship, in July 1857—Mr. Hewitson had offered to him and accepted a situation as reporter and compositor on the Kendal Mercury, then owned and edited by the late Mr. Lee,7 a Unitarian minister, one of the kindest of men, who wrote one of the worst hands for “copy” in the world. After a short stay at Kendal, Mr. Hewitson went to the office of the Brierley Hill Advertiser, in South Staffordshire. He went there on the invitation of the foreman of the Advertiser—Mr. R. Quithenton,8 who had been a fellow apprentice at Lancaster, and who is now and for many years has been the foreman of the Budget, in London; there he acted as compositor, reporter, and editor—as editor invariably setting up the leaders himself without any copy at all; but at this place he remained only a few months.9 Towards the end of 1857, he went—attracted by better remuneration—to a new paper at Wolverhampton, set up and printed at the establishment of Mr. Yorke,10 in Queen-street, for a company in Dudley. Here he worked as a compositor, on the paper in question, and afterwards he worked in a like capacity on another paper,

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7 See ‘My Life’ fn. 20.
8 See 15 September 1884.
9 Hewitson’s distinctive style can be seen in some of the leaders in late 1857, for example, one on ‘Sanitary Reform’ (Brierley Hill Advertiser, November 28 1857), a cause which he later pursued in Preston: ‘Is Brierley-Hill now clear, or anything near clear, of the matters we complained of? No, they still exist in all their primitive might and brilliance: there are as many foul, nasty, loathsome, disagreeable, detestable, destructive, disgusting, wretched, vile, tremendous, horrible, diabolical nuisances as ever’, etc etc.
10 Joseph York (?–?). This paper was probably the Dudley and Midland Counties Express, which, from 5 December 1857, was ‘Printed for the Midland Counties Newspaper Company, Limited, by JOSEPH YORK, at his Printing Office, 26 Queen-street, Wolverhampton’.
Biographical sketch of Hewitson from the Yorkshire Bibliographer, 1888

published at the same office—a paper called the News,\(^{11}\) owned by Mr. Yorke. A fact indicating the resources and spontaneity of Mr. Hewitson, which here is worth mentioning: One night, shortly before 12 o’clock—the night preceding the publication morning of the News—the foreman went up to him, at his composing frame, and said: Hewitson, the leading article has not turned up, and we don’t know where the editor is; it won’t do to go to press without a leader; will you try to write us one?\(^{11}\) He consented to make a trial, put down his composing stick, walked in his shirt sleeves into an adjoining room, promptly wrote an article, a column long, relating to an important event which had taken place that week in a neighbouring locality, and next day was highly complimented upon his performance by the editor, who had by that time turned up. And that editor was no common literary hand—he had previously been a summary writer on the Illustrated London News. During the first half of 1858, Mr. Hewitson took a situation at Preston, on the Guardian there, as reporter and compositor. In the latter part of the same year he became reporter for the Preston Chronicle. About five years afterwards he took the literary and general management of the Preston Herald; then he became chief reporter for the Preston Guardian, continuing at that post for about three years, during which period he became acquainted with Mr. T. Wemyss Reid,\(^{12}\) who was sub-editor for a short time prior to being appointed editor of the Leeds Mercury. In addition to his ordinary reporting, Mr Hewitson was for several years—from about 1860 to 1868—much engaged as the Preston and district correspondent for the principal papers in the county. While the Cotton Famine was on he acted as special correspondent for South and North-east Lancashire, on behalf of the London Daily News.\(^{13}\) In March, 1868, Mr. Hewitson became the proprietor, editor, and publisher of the Preston Chronicle, in succession to Messrs. Dobson Brothers, one of whom (Mr. William Dobson*) was the author of the well-known “Rambles by the Ribble” and other

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\(^{11}\) Hewitson may have confused the name of this paper; the Wolverhampton News, published by York, folded in late July or early August 1857, before Hewitson left Kendal (Wolverhampton Chronicle, 2 September 1857, p. 4).

\(^{12}\) See ‘My Life’ fn. 7.

\(^{13}\) An incomplete, leather-bound copy of the journal containing this article was donated by Margaret Dickinson, a relative of Hewitson, to Lancashire Archives (DDX/2544). In the margin in this copy, next to Daily News, is the word ‘Telegraph’, written in pencil, possibly a correction of the newspaper title.
sketches. Mr. Hewitson, who attached to his journalistic enterprise a job printing and a stationery department, still owns, edits, and brings out the *Chronicle*. In the course of his connection with the paper he has written and published the following works:—“Portraits of Local legislators,” “Our Churches and Chapels,” “Our Country Churches and Chapels,” “Stonyhurst College, Past and Present,” “Places and Faces,” the “Tyldesley Diary” (joint editor), “History of Preston,” “Westward Ho!” (description of a trip to America in 1883), “Guide and Visitors’ Handbook to Ingleton,” &c. In 1858, Mr. Hewitson married Margaret, daughter of the late Mr. Joseph Wilson,* tailor and draper, of Lancaster, and two of his sons are now reporters on the Preston *Chronicle*, while a younger brother of his, (Mr. Wm. Hewitson*) was for several years a reporter on the Manchester *Examiner and Times*, and is now on the sub-editorial staff of that paper.