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 apprenticeship 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 attending 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.

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The first entry in the diary of Anthony Hewitson records the death of his three-year-old daughter, the second describes her burial, before which Hewitson climbed into the family grave to look through a glass window in the coffin at the face of another daughter who had died at the same age two years earlier. The third entry, three days later, celebrates the birth of his first son. These extremes of life and death could explain why he began his diary when he did. He had also recently witnessed the hardships of the Lancashire Cotton Famine. He was almost certainly writing ‘to cheat the clock and death of all the things that [he] had lived’, afraid that he might leave nothing behind.¹

Hewitson’s first surviving attempt at writing his life was made three years earlier, in 1862, at the age of 25, when he began a short account of his childhood and early years with these anxious musings on mortality:

To die, to be buried and forgotten is brutish. Humanity is too great … to be finally covered over by its own flesh and blood with the ashes of forgetfulness. Oblivion is repulsive … To my own family I will preserve myself. Those whom I have loved and lived for shall have, in this, an index of the events which have surrounded me, the thoughts which have influenced my mind, and the sentiments which have, more or less, animated my heart.²

These 17 volumes of diaries and a short memoir, written between 1862 and 1912, reveal Hewitson as a loving Victorian father and husband, but their significance comes from his work, as a newspaper reporter and editor. Anthony Hewitson was a typical Victorian journalist, working in

¹ T. Mallon, A Book of One’s Own: People and Their Diaries (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1984), 34.
one of the largest sectors of the periodical press, provincial newspapers. His diaries lift the veil of anonymity hiding the processes and networks involved in the creation of Victorian newspapers, helping historians to interpret this widely used source. They present and contextualise a wealth of new information about reporting, freelancing, sub-editing, newspaper ownership and publishing. They illuminate aspects of Victorian periodicals, and Victorian culture, far beyond provincial newspapers.

Census reports show that most Victorian journalists worked in the provinces, making Hewitson representative of this era’s journalists. The diaries describe the daily life of a reporter, editor and owner of weekly newspapers in Lancashire and Yorkshire; he was part of a national network of news through his reporting for The Times, the Manchester Guardian and other papers. Hewitson began his career as a printer’s apprentice and attended mutual improvement classes. He was interested in local history, and involved in political, religious and voluntary causes. He was unremarkable, save for one thing—he wrote the only known diaries of a UK provincial journalist.

He made a name for himself with his opinionated, gossipy writing style, and with his books of local history and topography. But his fame, if it could be called that, never spread beyond North Lancashire. His diaries record occasional meetings with famous men: he calls on Thomas Carlyle unannounced and has a chat and a smoke with him at Cheyne Row, Chelsea, he meets William Gladstone and attends lectures and performances by Charles Dickens, ‘the Tichborne Claimant’ (a famous fraudster) and infamous female impersonator Ernest Boulton (‘Stella’). But these are unusual events, and the value of the diaries is in the usualness of Hewitson’s work routines, his socialising and his family life. His ordinariness makes him representative of thousands of other small-town reporters and editors who, between them, week after week, produced a national network of local newspapers which were at the heart of Victorian culture.

One other diary of a Victorian provincial journalist is in the public domain, that of James Brown, owner-editor of the Isle of Man Times (the Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea, is not part of the UK). Brown wrote

about 6,000 words during his 53 days in prison in 1864.\(^4\) In contrast, Hewitson’s diaries total more than 226,000 words. Other candidates might be Edwin Waugh (1817–1890), who, like Hewitson, was a compositor, and, like another diarist, Samuel Bamford (1788–1872), was an occasional contributor to Manchester newspapers. But neither Waugh nor Bamford worked as staff reporters or editors of local papers. Henry Lucy (1842–1924) began his career on local newspapers, but his *Diary of a Journalist* (1920) does not mention those years (although his memoirs do). The unpublished diaries of William Linton Andrews (1886–1972), editor of the *Yorkshire Post*, only begin in 1915, and he was a more distinguished editor of a more distinguished paper.\(^5\) However, scholars have used other types of archival documents to explain what appeared in the newspaper, why and how. David Ayerst’s superb ‘biography’ of the *Manchester Guardian* relies on editors’ correspondence and business records, as do the official histories of *The Times*.\(^6\) But those books, and those two newspapers, tend to focus on high politics, whereas smaller provincial weeklies (and Hewitson’s diaries) cover more of the spectrum of Victorian culture and society. Personal and business letters can serve a similar purpose; for example, the letters of *Manchester Guardian* editor C.P. Scott, or of Dickens, often illuminate the published texts they oversaw, but Scott was never a reporter, Dickens only for a few years. And neither edited a provincial weekly paper, the most common type of nineteenth-century periodical.\(^7\)

\(^4\) Brown (1815–1881) was the son of a freed slave. His diary is reproduced in full in Robert Fyson, *The Struggle for Manx Democracy* (Douglas, Isle of Man: Culture Vannin, 2016), 126–44.


Hewitson’s diaries can tell us how Victorian newspapers were made. Most articles were anonymous, unbylined. But these diaries bring to life the people, networks, processes and choices behind millions of newspaper pages, answering the questions, ‘Who wrote all this stuff, and how?’ The diaries reveal relationships, which led to Hewitson the editor covering his friend’s fashionable wedding, Hewitson the reporter sharing his notes with a colleague on a rival paper, and Hewitson the historian sending his manuscript to other historians for peer review. The diaries enable us to follow him as a reporter on his daily round, hunting for ‘paragraphs’ of gossip, taking shorthand notes of meetings, court cases and speeches, ‘dressing up’ incoherent and ungrammatical speeches, privately disapproving of the public executions he attends, dutifully reporting his employer’s public activities, or offering what is now called ‘copy approval’ before submitting a report of a priest’s lecture. They reveal long hours (‘Made a calculation today that I had written 90 pages of manuscript for our Wednesday supplement’) and long distances on foot, horseback or by train. They show how Hewitson mixed work and leisure, taking friends and family on reporting assignments (even inviting his wife to view a corpse found in a field), reviewing performances by the actor Barry Sullivan, blackface minstrels and opera, enjoying free dinners and often ending the day in a pub, gossiping or discussing Carlyle.

The diaries are of interest to scholars of Victorian journalism, and social and cultural historians, especially historians of reading, publishing, gender and masculinity, the family, emotions, life writing and provincial cultures. They illuminate the economics, politics and work routines of the provincial press, and the place of journalists in local culture. They also cover family and social life, and leisure.

Biography: Anthony Hewitson (1836–1912)

Hewitson, like his hero Thomas Carlyle, was the son of a stonemason, born in Blackburn on 13 August 1836. He grew up in Ingleton in Yorkshire (see map, Figure 2) with his maternal grandparents, who had recently inherited enough money for Hewitson’s grandfather to retire from shoemaking. His grandmother died in 1841, and for the next nine years his grandfather looked after him and sent him to the village school. Hewitson looked back on his childhood fondly, and contrasted the village with the dirty streets and uncouth manners of
Lancaster, where he went in 1850, at the age of 14, to begin a seven-year apprenticeship. He learnt the ‘art and mystery’ of printing at the *Lancaster Gazette*, a Tory weekly paper. Hewitson’s comfortable rural childhood was funded indirectly by the labour of enslaved people in Jamaica. His grandmother’s inheritance came from Ann Sill of West House (Whernside Manor), Dent near Ingleton.\(^8\) Ms Sill’s estate received £3,783 (almost half a million pounds in today’s money) posthumously as compensation for the liberation of 174 enslaved workers on her Jamaican sugar plantation (one of her executors who dealt with the will was the Cambridge geologist Adam Sedgwick).\(^9\)

In Lancaster, Hewitson was reunited with his parents and younger brothers and sisters, who had settled there some years before. He taught himself shorthand and began to report for his own paper and as district correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*; he continued his education at mutual improvement classes, had a religious conversion and met Margaret Wilson, his future wife. In 1857, a week after completing his apprenticeship, he left Lancaster to gain experience on a succession of local papers in Kendal, Dudley, Wolverhampton and finally Preston. In 1858, he joined the *Preston Guardian*, then edited by temperance pioneer Joseph Livesey’s son William, who became Hewitson’s lifelong friend.

Over the next ten years Hewitson worked on three of Preston’s four papers at least once, as a reporter on the *Chronicle* for 28 shillings a week (exact dates unknown), as ‘manager’ (similar to editor) of the bi-weekly *Preston Herald* from 1861 to 1862, earning two pounds and six shillings a week, then as chief reporter of North Lancashire’s biggest paper, the *Preston Guardian*, where he earned three pounds a week, a good wage for a reporter in 1865. He developed a lucrative sideline in freelance reporting for other papers, including *The Times*, and it was probably this ‘moonlighting’ which led to him being dismissed in 1867. In 1868 he bought the town’s third-ranking paper for £580 (paying in instalments over five years): the Liberal *Preston Chronicle*, which he ran until 1890.\(^{10}\) Before he bought the *Chronicle* he had mastered news reporting,

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10 He paid £300 for good will (also described as the copyright) and £280 for printing type and machinery (16 Dec 1867, 23 March 1868). The Toulmins had paid £6,600 for the *Preston Guardian* in 1859, revealing the *Guardian*’s greater sales, profits and prestige.
The Diaries of Anthony Hewitson, Provincial Journalist
descriptive writing and commentary, and adopted the pen-name of ‘Atticus’ (a Latin name with connotations of literary sophistication), for a series of irreverent sketches of local officials and institutions. He developed a distinctive style that made him Preston’s best-known writer for the rest of the century.

In 1858 he married Margaret Wilson, daughter of a Lancaster tailor and draper, with whom he had 11 children, seven of whom survived to adulthood. Eight years after they married, the Hewitsons were able to buy their own house, thanks to Margaret’s ‘economy’. They moved house frequently, sometimes renting, sometimes buying, depending on employment or business activities, moving steadily up the social scale.

Hewitson worked long hours and made a comfortable living from the Chronicle and from properties he bought in Preston and the West Riding. In 1890, at the age of 54, he sold the Chronicle, which was struggling in an overcrowded and capital-intensive local newspaper market. He did not retire; in 1893 he was launch editor of the Conservative Lancaster Standard, and in 1894 became a partner in the Conservative Wakefield Herald, buying the paper outright in 1896. His eldest son Ethelbert ran the paper for him, until it was sold in 1911. By this time Hewitson was semi-retired, spending the winter in Preston and the summer in the seaside resort of Morecambe. He died in Morecambe in 1912, survived by his wife, who died in 1916. Hewitson was focused on his local area but he also lived on a larger map: he visited the United States at least twice, and corresponded with British reporters working in America; his son Bertie worked as a reporter there for more than four years, and friends emigrated to America, Canada and Australia.

The diaries

The diaries are owned by Lancashire Archives, purchased in 2004 by the Friends of the Archives from Hewitson’s great-grandson Robert Blackmore in Australia (copyright remains with the family until 2039). They were brought to light by Margaret Dickinson, Hewitson’s great-great-niece, who had seen the diaries in the 1970s and told Preston historian Marian Roberts. She, in turn, urged the head of Lancashire Archives to acquire them.

Hewitson wrote in pre-printed diaries of different shapes and sizes. He wanted them to be read, at least by his family, as he bequeathed them
to his eldest son Ethelbert. Not every entry was written on the day of the events; on 18 December 1865 he writes: ‘Have got nine days behind hand with my diary. Very bad; but I have been terribly hard worked’. There are gaps in the diaries, sometimes for months, particularly when Hewitson was busy—for example, when he took charge of his own paper, the *Preston Chronicle* in 1868. There are also gaps between diaries, sometimes because he did not write a diary (1869–1871), but there may be missing volumes.

Death and new life may explain why Hewitson started his diary when he did, and his urge to be remembered by his family was one motivation for preserving his life in writing in the first place, but there may have been other reasons, too. As a journalist he was used to writing for publication, and may have hoped that his diaries would go into print. There are hints of this when he addresses an imagined reader (‘This may be of some service to somebody...’ prefacing his thoughts on work, 9 May 1884). We know he was interested in diaries as historical documents because he published two, one of a colonel in the army of William of Orange shortly after he became king of England in 1688, and another of a Jacobite rebel in the years before the failed 1715 uprising. In the introduction to the diary of the Jacobite Thomas Tyldesley, he wrote from experience about the difficulty in maintaining the diary habit:

> Few tasks seem easier, and yet we know of none very much harder, than that of keeping a private diary. Primarily, the work may gratify the idiosyncracies, or tend to usefully methodise the experience, or give a species of charm to the reminiscences of the writer; but the continuity of attention, the perseverance and exactitude of habit involved in it, operate frequently as a barrier to ultimate success, and surround with weariness or monotony a labour originally invested with daily freshness. It is on this account that few men succeed as diary keepers.\(^\text{11}\)

Luckily for us, Hewitson did succeed.

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His diary allowed him to write about things that were not suitable for the newspaper, such as family events, his feelings and mental states (he acknowledged feelings of ‘melancholy’—depression?—for weeks and months at a time in his late twenties and early thirties), business matters, and private opinions, often quite different from those he expressed in print. He also came from a Nonconformist religious background, which had a Puritan tradition of self-examination through diary-keeping.\(^{12}\)

And, although this may not have been his original intention, he sometimes used them for reference (24 October 1906: ‘Searching some of my diaries for the nineties—1895–1900 & found what I wanted on nearly the last page’).

Keeping a diary, and reading published diaries, were popular pastimes in the Victorian era. The fashion began with the publication of the diaries of John Evelyn in 1818 and particularly those of Samuel Pepys in 1825, followed by John Wesley’s in 1827 and Lord Byron’s in 1830. A list of Hewitson’s books, auctioned after his death, includes the diaries of Sir Walter Scott, Evelyn, Pepys and William Allingham.\(^{13}\)

Letts started making dated blank diaries in 1812 of the type used by Hewitson, and by 1862 offered 55 different kinds.\(^{14}\) This popularity meant that ‘by the 1830s it was impossible for a diarist to write without a degree of self-conscious positioning within a published tradition, and without being fully aware of the ambiguous status of the diary’s claim to privacy.’\(^{15}\)

Rebecca Steinitz believes the diary is ‘a profoundly cultural form’, influenced by the ideologies of its time, and far from a simple, unmediated expression of an individual’s personality.\(^{16}\) ‘The diary is not an artless form… diaries are literary productions, crafted to give the impression of spontaneity and sincerity’, according to Penny Summerfield.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{13}\) Auction catalogue for Hewitson’s library, 1916 (Lancashire Archives DDX2544).


\(^{16}\) Steinitz, *Time, Space, and Gender*, p. 6.

the time, according to Christa Hammerle: they borrow writing styles, terminology and metaphors from ‘literature and other media, from the institutions of the Church, school education, political systems and so on’.\textsuperscript{18} Hewitson’s diaries are full of ‘Carlylese’ (the distinctive mannerisms of Thomas Carlyle) and phrases from Shakespeare, the Bible and popular songs. But none of this is to deny the uniqueness of any diary, including his.

Hewitson’s diaries, like all diaries, should be judged on their own terms, not by the standards of literature or memoir.\textsuperscript{19} Like newspapers, diaries are open-ended, written in the midst of life, in ignorance of how the stories will end, unlike memoirs, which are written after the events, and have the luxury of imposing coherence on a life.\textsuperscript{20} Some Victorian journalists’ memoirs do mention work on provincial newspapers, but they tend to use it as a narrative device in their first few chapters, to contrast with later success; most of these memoirs are jumbles of anecdotes, about reporting escapades or meetings with famous figures. Some of the immediacy of Hewitson’s diaries can only be seen in the original, as when his handwriting becomes less legible after a few brandies. He uses pre-printed diaries but often writes beyond the space allotted for each day, especially on weekdays, perhaps knowing that his weekends will be less eventful.

The diary format allows the rhythms and seasons of newspaper publishing, family, civic and religious life to emerge. He is a man, writing a type of literature (the diary) considered to be feminine (at least in fiction, where it is often used as a narrative vehicle for a female character),\textsuperscript{21} mixing his public life and his private life; writing in a private form, but with readers in mind (his family, perhaps even the public), strongly influenced by his upbringing and his times, yet


\textsuperscript{21} Steinitz, Time, Space, and Gender, p. 1.
still revealing his idiosyncrasies. When read continuously, the diaries take us into his world and we start to see through Hewitson’s eyes. We are fortunate to have access to the newspapers on which he worked (some of them digitised) and to rival newspapers which reported on his doings, and commented on his personality and his writings. His style in the diaries is usually plainer than his published writing, and these comparisons tell us how he wanted to present himself to the world. His diaries are mainly about things that happened but with frequent mentions of his feelings and mental states; they are rarely intimate, but occasionally introspective, and written in connected prose (with a couple of exceptions written in shorthand; for example, when he appears to be paying bribes to voters on behalf of the Liberals, yet he knows that his sons can read shorthand).

A diary allows the writer to craft a persona, and a comparison of Hewitson’s diaries with other historical sources reveals aspects of his personality absent from the diaries. Records of the local printers’ union suggest that he was one of Preston’s worst printing employers, in his over-use of cheap apprentice labour and non-payment of overtime and night-work payments; his attacks on George Toulmin, owner of the Preston Guardian, during his unsuccessful 1870 evening newspaper rivalry claimed that Toulmin stole his idea, whereas printers’ union minutes show that Toulmin had been considering a daily paper for more than a year (Hewitson also underplays Toulmin’s triumph in his History of Preston), and his bad temper and petulant spite in his 1874 libel trial are certainly not part of his diary persona.

The timespan of Hewitson’s diaries, from 1865 to 1912, covers huge change in society, newspaper publishing, technology and many other areas. He remembers stage coaches before he saw the railway come to Ingleton in 1848–1849, and watches a ‘flying machine’ pass over him in 1911. He was active during the golden age of the provincial press, but struggled to adapt to the New Journalism of the 1880s, dismissing football as a passing fad, and refusing to change his writing style, with its over-wrought syntax and literary allusions. The diaries are a superb historical source, and a gripping read in themselves.
The nineteenth-century provincial press

When Hewitson began his apprenticeship in 1850, the provincial press was growing in importance, but still overshadowed by London newspapers, which sold more than twice as many copies in total. By the time he became a journeyman compositor and reporter, seven years later, local and regional newspapers had undergone a revolution, as changes in newspaper taxation reduced operating costs and made it possible to publish a profitable daily paper outside London priced at a penny. From 1855 onwards, weekly papers such as the *Preston Guardian* became bi-weekly, and bi-weeklies such as the *Manchester Guardian* became dailies. New titles were launched. Newspapers everywhere dropped their cover prices, sales increased and advertising became more profitable. By the early 1860s, and probably before, provincial newspapers were outselling London titles, a situation that continued until the 1930s. Hewitson and other young reporters could take advantage of the expanding opportunities afforded by this cultural revolution, and provincial papers in particular were at the centre of this publishing turmoil.

Hewitson’s rapid job changes at the start of his career took him from Lancashire to Westmorland, Staffordshire and back to Lancashire. This pattern was not unusual, and demonstrates that provincial journalism was a national industry, in which personnel moved freely from one part of the country to another. News also moved quickly around this national network of local and regional papers, in an age before ‘national’ newspapers as we understand them today. *The Times* reached many parts of Britain a day after it was published, and contained little news of Britain beyond the South-East. In contrast, local papers carried national and international news, including parliamentary reports. They could provide telegraphed news from London to local readers hours before the London papers arrived. The local press, not the London press, was the nearest thing to a national press at this time. Hewitson, and other ‘moonlighting’ reporters who sent local news to papers further afield, acted as nodes in the national news network. He also sent many copies of his own papers to other newspaper offices in return for copies of their titles each week, and as a reporter he would scour these ‘exchange’ papers for news of interest to local readers.
The papers for which Hewitson worked were different from London titles and today’s local newspapers. Their more varied content included poetry and short stories (some in local dialect), serialised novels, columns for women and children, local history, biography and geography, book reviews, literary extracts and jokes and sayings from *Punch* and other London periodicals. When seen as a national network, the local press was a major publishing platform for many different types of writing, including serial fiction, poetry, history, topography and biography.

The diaries add greatly to what we already know about provincial newspaper editors, owners and owner-editors, and break new ground with their detailed information about the work routines of the reporter. The biography of W.E. Adams, editor of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* from 1864 to 1900, is one of the best, using Adams’s memoir and correspondence between him and his proprietor to illuminate what went in the paper. The correspondence is especially useful for revealing decisions and reasoning for the inclusion or exclusion of types of content. F. David Roberts used the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Boase’s *Modern English Biography*, memoirs and individual biographies to create a collective portrait of hundreds of early Victorian editors of the 1840s, most of them conducting provincial newspapers. His method draws out the networks, status, class and family backgrounds, their personal interests and connections to other livelihoods, showing consistent patterns. Hewitson is remarkably similar to this earlier generation of editors, in his energy, upward mobility, self-education and love of history. Victoria Gardner’s studies of local newspaper proprietors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries place them in their local social and economic contexts, as members of communities who read, advertised with and influenced the newspapers, and valued the publishers as ‘communications brokers’. She uses business records

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22 For a more detailed study of the local press, see Hobbs, *Fleet Street*.
and correspondence archives which are not available for Hewitson and his papers.

By Hewitson’s time, local newspaper markets were more competitive, and their study can reveal the type and level of competition, success or failure to find a niche, political and other subsidies, and other dynamics of each distinctive market. Maurice Milne’s study of North-East England focuses on political differentiation, as does Lisa Peters’s analysis of North-East Wales, the latter using the correspondence of political figures to reveal secrets of ownership and financing hidden in the newspapers themselves.26 Peter J. Lucas’s work on the newspapers of Furness in North Lancashire shows the different functions of newspapers in new and old communities, positioning inside or outside local power blocs, and the co-opting of newspaper publishing as marketing material for bigger business interests.27 In the absence of archives, Lucas relied on the enmity between newspapers to reveal details of finance, ownership and personnel. By contrast, David Ayerst’s study of the Manchester Guardian benefits from one of the best archives of any newspaper, including detailed business and financial records, correspondence and analysis of competitors.28 But even the Guardian archive does not contain any personal diaries, and those of Hewitson bring extra detail and flavour missing from these other studies of editors and owners; they fully come into their own as a record of that neglected figure at the centre of Victorian journalism, the reporter.

28 Ayerst.
Preston

Hewitson’s adopted home was halfway between London and Edinburgh, a market centre and administrative and legal hub for Lancashire outside the large, self-governing towns. It was the most Roman Catholic town in England, according to the 1851 religious census, with about a third of its population Catholics, mainly English rather than Irish (although a high proportion of the population were Irish-born, 12.3 per cent in 1861). At the turn of the century it had been a quiet, genteel place, known for its social life, which revolved around the Earl of Derby, who had a mansion in the centre of town. Industrial cotton manufacture came late to Preston, in the final years of the eighteenth century, and grew slowly, accelerating in the 1830s. The population grew from some 25,000 in 1821 to 69,000 in 1851 and 130,000 in 1911, and its main industries were the spinning and weaving of cotton, and engineering. Its railway connections, its river port and its army barracks (and its newspapers) connected it to the rest of the country and to the world beyond.

Hewitson had arrived in Preston at the end of a cotton trade depression in 1858, only a few years after the infamous 1853–1854 Preston Lock-Out, when most of the town’s mill owners had combined to lock workers out for 28 weeks over broken promises to reverse a previous pay cut (Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell used this national cause celebre as raw material for their novels *Hard Times* and *North and South* respectively). The Lancashire Cotton Famine (1861–1865) brought more poverty and hunger, as mills closed due to overproduction and a blockade of cotton imports during the American Civil War. The town had low literacy rates and one of the highest death rates in the country, due in part to poor housing and infrastructure, which had not kept pace with Preston’s rapid growth.

Preston was a two-member parliamentary constituency which had enjoyed universal male suffrage from 1768 to 1832 (so the Reform Act of that year actually reduced the franchise in Preston). This male working-class vote had encouraged some radical politics, including the election of Henry Hunt (the ‘Orator’ of ‘Peterloo’ fame) in 1830. But for most

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of the nineteenth century the constituency returned one Whig and one Tory to the House of Commons, until 1865, when the Conservatives took control of both seats for the next 41 years.\(^{30}\) One reason for their success may have been their efforts to attract working-class voters after 1868, while the Liberals, in contrast, were seen as elitists, the party of the mill and factory owners.\(^{31}\)

Preston was the third newspaper production centre of Lancashire, after Manchester and Liverpool. Most of the 50 or so newspapers and magazines published there during the nineteenth century survived for only a few years. The exceptions were the Liberal *Preston Chronicle* (1812–1893), the Tory *Preston Pilot* (1825–1888)—both weeklies—the Radical Liberal *Preston Guardian* (1844–1964), which was the town’s most successful paper, with a circulation area covering most of Lancashire north of Wigan, and the Conservative *Preston Herald* (1855–1970). The *Guardian* and the *Herald* were bi-weekly from the 1850s. The *Lancashire Evening Post* (1886-) was produced by the publishers of the *Preston Guardian*.

**Reporting**

Much of the information in the public domain during the Victorian era came originally from newspaper articles written by reporters like Hewitson. *The Times* could not thunder without them, essayists could not pontificate without their input, and novelists relied on them for plot ideas.\(^{32}\) Reporters were the majority of Victorian journalists, and the information they gathered became raw material for leader writers, essayists, authors, poets and artists, reappearing in other newspapers,

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in magazines and periodicals, in books and even in paintings. If we think of the systems of Victorian information and knowledge as an ecosystem, the reporter is at the lowest level. The information becomes increasingly processed and refined as it moves up the food chain. The diaries reveal this information eco-system, linking provincial and London newspapers, periodicals, book publishing and reviewing, and the porous boundaries between amateur and professional writing. Digitised newspapers have made much more visible the ways in which news reports first published in one place quickly spread to other publications. Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen use a different metaphor, calling these ‘news workers’ the ‘rank and file’—a military metaphor that has moved into the discourse of trade unionism. And perhaps the idea of miners or shop-floor workers is useful: workers who extract raw materials or produce basic goods, which are then passed on to others who make more complex products from them. Of course, not all information entered the Victorian public sphere via the newspaper reporter. Other sources included eye witnesses, parliamentary inquiries, official reports by those such as Poor Law inspectors or railway inspectors, authors researching their books, readers’ letters, social investigators and academic journals.

Scholars of nineteenth-century journalism are familiar with George Augustus Sala, Charles Dickens and W.T. Stead. The journalistic careers of these three big names were unusual, if not unique, and so they can tell us little about the generality of reporters and reporting, the day-to-day recording of Victorian life. Dickens taught himself shorthand in order to make a living briefly as a London penny-a-liner, before moving into the prestigious field of parliamentary reporting. However, he was unusual in working in the capital rather than the provinces. Unlike Dickens, Sala

had no reporting experience, and his schooling in Paris and background as an artist and illustrator was not the training of a typical reporter. Later in the century, W.T. Stead went straight from accounts clerk to editor of a morning newspaper, the *Northern Echo* in Darlington, at the age of 21. His only qualification had been a series of letters he had written to the paper, which were judged good enough to be used as leading articles. He, too, had no background in reporting. To understand the conditions under which most Victorian news was produced, we need to look elsewhere, at obscure provincial reporters like Hewitson.

Hewitson’s varied and proactive reporting for local papers (uncovering a local vicar’s secret marriage, for example) contrasts with the set-piece speeches he covered, freelance, for *The Times, Manchester Guardian* and other daily papers, as part of a national network of local correspondents. He wrote for trade, professional and specialist publications such as the *Licensed Victuallers’ Guardian* or the Roman Catholic *Universe*, illuminating how provincial news reached such periodicals. Sometimes he was paid to write promotional articles, and sent cuttings from local newspapers to *The Times* in lieu of his own report—examples of the hidden processes made visible by these diaries. As a reporter, Hewitson covered large distances on foot and by train, but there were compensations such as free dinners, after which the speakers might toast the press and Hewitson would respond.

Hewitson reported the speeches of famous orators such as William Gladstone and John Bright as they toured the country, creating a new culture of ‘systematic extra-parliamentary oratory … in which a great national debate was carried on over periods of weeks’. This debate was only possible because of Hewitson and other reporters. Their reporting soon developed into a wholesale trade in speeches, based on supply and demand, with a sliding scale of detail and fees. Up to five columns verbatim might be devoted to important speeches by Gladstone and a few other senior politicians, or about one and a half columns, written in the speaker’s first-person voice for less important speeches; further down the scale a summary, usually half a column, would be written in the third person. In contrast, Hewitson’s ‘paragraphing’ (writing

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36 See Figure 6 for a list of some of his freelance outlets.

gossipy anecdotes or opinion) required proactive news-gathering techniques, involving chatting to a wide range of contacts.38

Editing and managing a newspaper

From March 1868, Hewitson was editor and owner of the *Preston Chronicle*. A description of the duties of a typical provincial or ‘country’ weekly editor in the 1846 *Newspaper Press Directory* captures Hewitson’s role well:

The sub-editor abridges and condenses the parliamentary reports, the foreign news, and the general occurrences of the country; and makes such selections for the miscellaneous departments of the paper as he may think will suit the taste of its readers … The editor writes the leading articles, the criticisms on books, music, the drama, and the fine arts; and gives the general tone and keeping to the paper … On most country papers the duties of editor and sub-editor are united.39

The diaries describe Hewitson the editor, in the office, at home or at large. He reads *Leisure Hour*, cuts out items from *Notes & Queries*, replies to readers’ letters, proof-reads (sometimes with his wife’s help), canvasses for advertising or collects debts (locally and in London), meets a local poet, commissions a natural historian after reading his work in a learned journal, or entertains the writer of a syndicated ‘ladies’ column’. His literary reviews of Benson’s life of Pater or the monthly crop of magazines (for example) are written only for his own weekly local newspaper, challenging ideas of hack reviewing as mainly London-based. He ran his newspapers as family businesses, employing his younger brother William briefly as a reporter, and later his sons Ethelbert, Horace and Llewellyn. He probably bought the *Wakefield Herald* in 1896 to provide employment for his three sons.40

Hewitson was far from anonymous as an editor, taking part in public life, selling copies of his newspaper and gossiping at his shop counter. This lack of anonymity made him a target, sometimes literally, as

40 For more on editors see Hobbs, *Fleet Street*, pp. 196–201.
when he was slapped around the face with a rolled-up copy of his own paper. In 1871 an effigy of Hewitson was paraded around the streets of Garstang (a small town which he mocked for its backwardness) before the effigy was burnt in the marketplace.\footnote{‘Atticus’s effigy burnt at Garstang’, \textit{PH}, 11 November 1871.} His more opinionated material was written under the pen-name Atticus, a persona he established as a reporter on the \textit{Preston Chronicle} in 1863. Rival newspapers took every opportunity to mock him. In 1868 the \textit{Preston Herald} printed letters against him (possibly from genuine readers, possibly not). ‘A Conservative From Conviction’ wrote:

His attack upon our worthy rector, a few months since, was the most violent and disgraceful ever penned by a writer on the press. His personal remarks on the Poor-law Guardians were abominable, as also were his comments on certain members of our Corporation. His attack on the clergy of St Peter’s is not forgotten.\footnote{“Atticus” and his bone’, \textit{PH} letters, supplement week ending 12 Sept 1868, p. 2.}

In the same issue, ‘Eukosmia’ wrote that ‘men of ordinary penetration have never regarded ‘Atticus’ as anything but a paltry, pettifogging, sensation-monger, notorious for redundancy, for fault-finding against everything and everybody.’\footnote{‘The “Chronicle” and Mr Hermon’, \textit{PH} letters, op cit.} The \textit{Herald} gleefully reprinted two bad reviews of Hewitson’s books in 1871. The \textit{Catholic Times} described his writing style in ‘Our Churches and Chapels’ as ‘worthy of the great George Augustus Sala, whose style he has evidently taken for his model, blending with it just a dash of Dickens’, a ‘farrago of dismal jocosity and flippant description … the criticism of a feeble witling’, while the \textit{Athenaeum} mocked a passage in his history of Stonyhurst, a Roman Catholic public school near Preston, as ‘English run stark mad’, with its ‘roundabout style’, describing shoemakers as ‘gentlemen of the Crispinean order’.\footnote{Both reviews are excerpted in \textit{PH}, 20 Sept 1871.}

Despite his flowery writing style, Hewitson built a reputation as a historian, in common with many other local newspaper editors. Most of his 14 books were historical, and the headline on his obituary in the \textit{Preston Guardian} called him a ‘well-known local historian’ rather than a journalist.\footnote{‘Mr Anthony Hewitson: Death of a Well-Known Local Historian’, \textit{Preston Guardian}, 2 November 1912.} These books usually began as weekly series in his
newspaper, which he then revised and republished in book form. For at least one, the Tyldesley diaries, he sent the manuscript to other local and regional historians for informal peer review. In 1868, week by week in the *Preston Chronicle*, Hewitson ‘reviewed’ every church and chapel in Preston, commenting on architecture, décor, incumbents and congregations, including their dress and their singing, in the series, ‘Our Churches and Chapels’. In 1871 he wrote a similar series on rural churches and chapels. In 1900 he wrote a weekly series for the *Preston Guardian* entitled ‘Northward’, describing every town, village and hamlet between Preston and Lancaster. This writing in celebration of local identities might well have been forgotten had it not been re-published in volume form. All three books sold well, and have been reprinted into the twenty-first century. Even today, many people can proudly recite Hewitson’s insults about their church or village.

**Work and leisure**

The diaries include a great deal of information about Hewitson’s visits to the theatre, circus, lectures and concerts, excursions in the Lancashire countryside, to other parts of the country, to Europe and the United States, and his socialising in Preston’s pubs (often followed the next morning by a visit to a Turkish bath, his preferred hangover cure). He sometimes observed ‘Saint Monday’, taking all or part of Monday off. There is even more about work and its value for the spirit as well as the wallet. Hewitson was influenced by the views of Samuel Smiles, who wrote that ‘it is the diligent hand and head alone that maketh rich—in self-culture, growth in wisdom and in business’, and particularly by Carlyle, who glorified work and scorned idleness. The motto ‘Labor omnia vincit’ (‘Work conquers all’) appears many times, and this entry from 1875 is typical: ‘A very hard day’s work and therefore a very good day’s work. All work is religion. At it till 11.30 at night.’

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46 For more on history in the local press see Hobbs, *Fleet Street in Every Town*, pp. 284–87.


48 4 February 1875.
worked hard, particularly when he was a reporter and in the early years of his ownership of the *Chronicle*. He often combined business and pleasure, as when he took his wife Margaret and daughter Florence on a reporting assignment to the village of Great Eccleston, making it ‘a lovely out[ing]’.

**Home and family**

Hewitson wrote many leading articles promoting the ideology of ‘separate spheres’, public for men, domestic for women, but his diaries reveal that this was more prescriptive than descriptive. The domestic sphere was very important to Hewitson, while Margaret, his wife, ran a business and often accompanied him in the public sphere. The couple had 11 children, almost double the average number of six at that time. The diary begins with the death of one infant daughter, Ethelind, and records in painful detail the death of another, Ada. Death ‘grew up’ during Hewitson’s lifetime, changing its associations from childhood to old age, but the high risk of losing a child did not lessen the pain. Fatherhood proved a Victorian man’s virility, but it also made him vulnerable, especially when a child fell ill or died. The 1873 diary includes an agonising section starting with his two-year-old daughter Ada’s slight cough, and ending with her death 12 days later. His wife and children feature frequently (see family tree, Figure 8), his siblings occasionally, but his parents are mentioned less often than his wife’s parents (perhaps because he was brought up by his grandfather). His children were a cause of concern even as adults: Mabel became an inmate of Whittingham Asylum, Llewellyn went AWOL in America, Florence became estranged, and Horace married his newly widowed

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49 4 October 1865.  
50 For a summary of the debate, see Susie Steinbach, ‘Can We Still Use “Separate Spheres”? British History 25 Years After Family Fortunes’, *History Compass*, 10 (2012), 826–37.  
Wakefield landlady in New York, a few weeks after her husband died in mysterious circumstances.

Reading

Like all good journalists, Hewitson was an avid reader, and his diary makes valuable source material for the historian of reading. ‘What a misery!’ he wrote when his eyes were too inflamed for him to read (29 October 1881). His diaries present most of his reading as taking place on Sundays, although he must have skimmed hundreds of newspapers and magazines as part of his job during the week. Carlyle believed that ‘history … is at bottom the History of … Great Men’ and this may explain Hewitson’s fascination with biography and memoir.\(^54\) He also read theology, both contemporary mainstream and liberal (some of it bordering on freethinking or atheist), but also older Nonconformist and Puritan texts such as the eighteenth-century sermons of John Barker, and essays, from the sixteenth-century Montaigne to contemporaries such as Ruskin and Carlyle, and writers associated with Carlyle. Other topics included phrenology, spiritualism, history, natural history, popular science, philosophy, and occasionally poetry. He lends Darwin’s *Origin of Species* to a curate, hears Froude’s life of Carlyle defended from the pulpit, and reads W.T. Stead’s *Real Ghost Stories*, Emerson, and Pepys’s diary. He was a literary tourist, visiting sites associated with Emerson, Carlyle and Burns, and he read part of *A Christmas Carol* to his family on Christmas Day afternoon, and lines from Tennyson on New Year’s Eve.

Sunday reading usually included the Bible, some devotional reading such as a sermon, a prayer or an excerpt from *Puritan Gems*. In later years Hewitson also read newspapers on a Sunday. In the early twentieth century he read the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *TP’s Weekly*, *Notes & Queries*, the *Weekly Despatch* (he was particularly keen on the articles of Robert Blatchford, a socialist writer), *Daily Dispatch*, *Yorkshire Weekly Post* (on sale in Morecambe for Yorkshire holidaymakers), *Sunday Chronicle*, *Lancaster Guardian*, *Manchester Weekly Times*, *Lancaster Observer* and ‘Preston and Lancashire newspapers’.

Fiction is strikingly absent from his reading, the few exceptions including Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, a local Preston novel, Kipling’s *Soldier Stories*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* and a couple of classical works. Biography, he believed, ‘beats fiction hollow’ (20 December 1906). As an aspiring reader from the lower middle classes, Hewitson may have been sensitive to ideas of fiction-reading as low-status and feminine. These records allow us to follow Hewitson’s trains of thought, for example moving from Carlyle’s *Reminiscences* to a biography of the writer, then his book on the French Revolution which includes many references to the German poet Goethe, followed by a book of conversations with Goethe. The auction catalogue of Hewitson’s library gives another glimpse into his reading world (see Vol. 2), as do the influences apparent in his writing, including Carlyle, Sala, and journalistic innovations from America and around the UK. His pen portraits of local councillors may have been influenced by those of Hugh Shimmin in the *Liverpool Mercury*, and his ‘reviews’ of local churches follow the tradition established by the *Bristol Times* in 1843, headed ‘The Church-Goer: Being a series of Sunday visits to the various churches of Bristol’. The literary, serious tone of most of the books recorded in Hewitson’s diaries raises suspicions that he was showing off. Yet he mentions lighter reading—such as the transatlantic humour of Sam Slick or the memoirs of dancer and courtesan Lola Montez—without apology, suggesting that much of his usual reading genuinely was high-minded.

**Politics**

Most local newspapers were politically aligned in the nineteenth century, in the same way that British national papers are today. Hewitson began as a Liberal but parted ways with them in the 1880s, espousing conservatism in later life. He was an apprentice on a Tory paper and worked for a Preston paper directly subsidised by local Tories, the

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56 Shimmin’s series appeared in the *Mercury* 21 March 1856–16 January 1857, and was reprinted as *Pen-and-Ink Sketches of Liverpool Town Councillors, By a Local Artist, Reprinted from the Liverpool Mercury* (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1857). The series on Bristol churches, by *Bristol Times* editor Joseph Leech, began on 2 September 1843 and was also reissued as a book.
Preston Herald, but when he began writing his diary in 1865 he was chief reporter of a Radical Liberal paper, the Preston Guardian, which was associated with ex-Chartists such as John Baxter Langley, John Hamilton and Washington Wilks.\(^{57}\) He bought another Liberal paper, the Preston Chronicle, in 1868, and maintained its Whiggish editorial line.

On the handbill advertising his purchase of the Chronicle, he claimed that ‘the only independent paper in Preston—will now be a general and not a mere party organ’. However, he was involved in the Liberal candidature of Major James German in the 1868 election and 1872 by-election, claiming to have persuaded German to withdraw in favour of two more popular Liberals in 1868.\(^{58}\) In 1874 he travelled to Barrow, Lancaster and London in search of a Liberal candidate for Preston, the same year that he initiated and ran a campaign for two Liberal council candidates. Hewitson also worked in a personal capacity for non-political objectives such as an industrial institute for the blind (perhaps because he was himself blind in one eye), the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate and public health. As a lower-middle-class disciple of self-help, Hewitson was for free trade and therefore (as he saw it) against trade unions.\(^{59}\)

He began as a great supporter of Gladstone, writing in his diary in 1865: ‘He is a glorious fellow.’ But in 1886, like many other Liberals, he fell out with his hero over Home Rule for Ireland, and sided with the breakaway Liberal Unionists (a grouping which eventually merged with the Conservatives). This explains why, in May 1887, he was approached by Lancaster Conservatives to edit a monthly paper for them. After six years of talking, this came to fruition with the launch of the Lancaster Standard in 1893, which Hewitson initially edited. But he was not one for self-sacrifice. After one of the many meetings about the paper, he wrote in his diary: ‘I mean to promote the cause of common sense, honesty, rightness and political progress as well as the interests of my own


\(^{58}\) Leader column, Preston Chronicle, 22 August 1868, p. 4; diary, 21 August 1872.

\(^{59}\) Geoffrey Crossick, ‘The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion’, in The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870–1914, ed. by Geoffrey Crossick (Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 11–60 (pp. 20, 44).
purse and my family’s welfare by this enterprise.’ In 1896, he bought a Conservative paper, the Wakefield Herald, and in 1898 he became, briefly, a Conservative Preston councillor.

Religion

The diaries show Hewitson’s development as a believer, from radical beginnings in Lancaster through to attendance at services of the established church and ceasing to attend church altogether in his later years. Halfway through his apprenticeship in Lancaster, he ‘became strongly involved with the sentiments of religion’, and attended a Sunday School attached to an Independent chapel. He joined two essay classes, one of which included the communist Goodwyn Barmby, then-minister of the Free Mormon Church in Lancaster, where Barmby gave himself the title of Revolutionary Pontifarch of the Communist Church. He was mixing with very free-thinking Christians, and he continued to read and think about theology (particularly in his Sunday devotional reading) for the rest of his life, giving him the confidence to debate with priests and bishops. He even wrote his own creed (statement of belief), and taught it to his children. He was consistent in condemning the widespread discrimination against Roman Catholics, although he thought their religion ‘childish’ and ‘superstitious’. In contrast to his political and social activism, Hewitson never held office in any of the wide variety of churches and chapels he attended. Choosing a place of worship was sometimes dictated by commercial considerations (he left the Unitarians in disgust after they gave their printing work to a Methodist, despite Hewitson having published their ‘very heterodox’ sermons in his paper), and perhaps also because Preston’s Nonconformists lacked political clout.

60 6 June 1887.
Gender, race and class

By the standards of his own times, Hewitson was not progressive in his views on race and gender, tending towards the reactionary. As for class, he was upwardly mobile, from the son of a skilled craftsman to a comfortably-off businessman.

There is racism in the diaries, including the N-word (17 February 1885), less common when recording meetings with people of colour, such as a visiting American Indian preacher ‘Nar Kar Wa’ or a local preacher’s Jamaican wife. Some of his published writing is uglier. There are anti-Irish jokes, anti-Semitic views and Hewitson used the N-word at a time when it was known to be abusive and not neutral, for example in an 1863 column when he condemns both sides in the American Civil War. He acknowledges the fundamental cruelty and wrong of slavery, but does not seem to consider black people as equal to whites: ‘And now a word or two about the inner nature of Sambo [sic], who ought by every right, human and divine, to be free, but who evidently either does not care for freedom or who thinks that at present slavery is preferable …’ He then recites a string of anecdotes about former slaves approving of slavery and of black Northerners’ lack of support for the liberation of Southern slaves. There are other examples. He probably knew that his grandparents’ inheritance came in part from government compensation paid to former slave owners.

On gender, Hewitson’s deeds were more egalitarian than his words. His long hours were made possible by the domestic labour of his wife and paid servants, but he notes his time spent with his children and on domestic chores, he appreciates his wife’s skills in domestic economy and business finance, and approves of her running a stationery business. He often worked at home, suggesting ‘a cultural acceptance of permeable boundaries between gender-specific work and home-based activity’. But, like most men of the time, he did not believe that women were equal to men. His attitudes are summed up in an 1875 leader column on the annual meeting of the Women’s Suffrage Association in Manchester, entitled ‘The Shrieking Sisterhood’:

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63 The full word has been left in the diaries, for accuracy.
64 For example, ‘Stray Notes’, PC, 17 December 1881, p. 4.
66 Sanders, p. 196.
the fairer and weaker division of humanity ... the companion and social equal of man ... physical and mental weakness must ever forbid the thorough intellectual and political equality of the sexes ... If every picture ever painted by a woman were destroyed in one grand holocaust, could any dispassionate lover of Art declare that the world would be much the worse for the process? Take, too, the domain of literature ... As novelists, as lyric singers, they may indeed compete with the stronger sex. But they have never attained, even by a single route, to the highest pinnacles of literature ... To woman God gave the holiest office that He has decreed to humanity—that of maternity.\(^67\)

He would have been horrified to think that diary-keeping is now seen as a feminine activity.\(^68\) In his diary, as in newspapers of the day, women are usually treated as invisible infrastructure, rarely given their own names.

Hewitson’s comments on class distinction are occasionally reminiscent of the lower-middle-class Charles Pooter, comic hero of The Diary of a Nobody, but his education and, once he became a newspaper proprietor, his income, seem to have made him socially secure.\(^69\) The Hewitsons’ employment of servants did not necessarily mean they were middle-class; a survey of households in Victorian Rochdale found that one in seven working-class homes had live-in servants.\(^70\) The rate of attrition among their servants (44 came and went in 17 years) was not unusual, only a little higher than the Carlyles, who hired and fired 34 maids in 38 years; it was difficult to find maids especially in cotton towns like Preston, where work in the mills paid better and allowed more leisure, and it was easy for servants to switch employers if they fancied a change.\(^71\)

In contrast to Hewitson’s social advance, some of his children were downwardly mobile: Llewellyn ended his days in a Church Army hostel in Leeds, and Mabel spent time in Chorlton workhouse before

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67 Preston Chronicle, 13 November 1875.
69 George Grossmith and Weedon Grossmith, The Diary of a Nobody (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1892/1994).
living the rest of her life in Whittingham asylum. Hewitson had close friends across the classes, as long as they were intelligent and well-read, such as potato merchant Joe Crombleholme or Mrs Clemmey the bootmaker; but his dismissal of ‘labour’ candidates for parliamentary seats suggests that he did not believe working-class people should have political power.

Conclusion

Hewitson’s diaries are fascinating for anyone interested in the social history of the Victorian era, and for anyone wanting to see the world through another person’s eyes. But they are of particular interest for the history of journalism, enabling a new approach to this topic using the insights of social history and labour history. If Dickens, Sala and Stead are the majestic oaks of nineteenth-century journalism, Hewitson is a smaller tree, but he is part of a huge forest that also defined the landscape. There are many comparisons to be made between the diaries and Hewitson’s published work. Computational techniques can bring out new themes and findings, perhaps examining Hewitson the reader, mapping his journeys as a reporter or analysing his social and work networks. I hope scholars will use these diaries alongside other sources, including the newspapers with which Hewitson was associated.\(^2\) I have occasionally done this here, but the primary aim is to publish the diaries, and leave others to put them to use.\(^3\)

It seems appropriate to end with Hewitson’s thoughts on diaries, from the introduction that he and Joseph Gillow wrote to the Tyldesley diaries:

we relish anything in the shape of personal records characterised by consecutiveness and order. Out of diaries numbers have obtained many an unexpected pleasure, many an item of strangely-quaint and peculiarly-valuable information; and through diaries our literature has, in many of its best and most entertaining departments, been enriched and beautified. Upon contemporary life, upon the manners and customs of his age, the diarist, if intelligent and faithful, throws numerous lights;

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\(^2\) Many have been digitised, including the *Lancaster Gazette, Preston Chronicle, Preston Herald, Lancaster Standard* and *Wakefield Herald.*

\(^3\) Two weeks of diary entries are analysed in detail in Hobbs, *Fleet Street,* Chs. 4–5.
and whilst he saves from oblivion much that is curious, and more that is true, he enlivens and instructs the present with the incidents and peculiarities of the past.\textsuperscript{74}
How to use this book

Footnotes give biographical information, and full references to books or articles, at first mention. Asterisks denote people or places frequently mentioned, or technical, dialect and archaic words. Please refer to ‘People Frequently Mentioned’ (p. 615), a family tree (Figure 8), maps of Lancashire and Preston (Figures 2 and 3), or the glossary (p. 629). Hewitson’s wife and children are mentioned frequently but in a self-explanatory way, so are not asterisked. Use of the index and online search facility is recommended.