

Andrew Hobbs (ed.), *The Diaries of Anthony Hewitson, Provincial Journalist*, vol. I: 1865–1887. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022. xlix + 672pp. 5 plates. 3 figures. Bibliography, £35.95 hbk. £25.95 pbk.
doi:[10.1017/S0963926823000226](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926823000226)

Personal diaries can provide valuable insights into many topics of interest to urban historians, and the diaries transcribed in this volume are no exception. Anthony Hewitson was, variously, a compositor, journalist, editor, newspaper proprietor and author, based mainly in the town of Preston, Lancashire. He was born in Blackburn in 1836, and his first surviving diary begins in March 1865 when he was working as chief reporter on the *Preston Guardian*. His diaries continue until his death in 1912 and all the diaries, together with many of his other writings, are in the Lancashire Record Office (Preston). The volume reviewed here contains all his diaries and other personal writing from 1865 to 1887, with a second volume promised. Andrew Hobbs and his helpers have carefully transcribed the diaries, Hobbs has written a useful introduction to the life and work of Hewitson and the team have also assembled a full bibliography of his work, a family tree, a list of the books read by Hewitson, a glossary of technical and dialect terms and an explanatory list of all the people mentioned in the diary. The volume is very carefully referenced and provides a scholarly introduction to the writings of Hewitson.

In many respects, the Hewitson diaries are unremarkable. Like many other diaries, his entries provide a description of everyday activities, including his travel, work and family matters. He includes comments on politics and religion (partly related to his reporting activities, but also reflecting his own views), together with details of his domestic life. In common with many other diarists, Hewitson was not always consistent in his entries. There are quite long gaps in the diaries with 11 years completely missing from the series published here, either because a diary was not kept, or it has not survived. However, Hobbs argues persuasively that what is distinctive and important about these diaries is that they provide a detailed picture of the work of a prolific journalist working in a Lancashire town in the second half of the nineteenth century, where he saw and reported on numerous aspects of urban politics, religion and everyday life. They demonstrate both how he worked and how he reflected those events in his writings. Diary writing is not always compatible with a busy working and family life, so a run of diaries that covers most of the author's adult life, and which provides a detailed account of his wide-ranging activities, provides a valuable insight to aspects of urban history which may otherwise remain hidden from view.

Hewitson was very hard working, often at his desk late into the night, though he did not neglect his family duties when work pressures allowed. His reporting activities took him all over north-west England, but to my mind his diaries give only limited insights into his actual working day, as his entries often said little more than 'worked all day'. He did undertake some longer-distance travel during the course of the diary, sometimes entirely for leisure purposes, but often combining work and pleasure. For instance, in October 1887, he and his wife travelled to London to inspect and order Christmas cards for the stationery shop that he owned, and which was principally managed by his wife. However, while in London they also attended theatre performances most evenings and visited tourist locations during the daytime. He also travelled abroad, including a trip to the USA and Canada in 1883, a year for which no diary survives, though he lectured on the trip and wrote about it in a later publication. In August 1887, he took his wife and one daughter on a 10-day tour of

Holland and Belgium, visiting Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels. His account of this trip, and his impressions of the cities he visited, are covered in some detail in the diary.

The team that worked on the diary manuscripts appear to have fully transcribed the diaries, including some sections that had been crossed out, but which remained legible. For me, this raises some ethical issues about whether material that was written but then (presumably) deliberately, partly, obscured, should actually be transcribed. I would probably not have included these entries. In conclusion, the transcription and publication of these diaries is a valuable contribution to the history of journalism, and provides useful commentary on some of the urban areas of north-west England in the second half of the nineteenth century. I suspect that few will read the book from cover to cover, but there is a good index, and the volume can be easily dipped into to extract information relevant to a particular purpose.

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Amy D. Finstein, *Modern Mobility Aloft: Elevated Highways, Architecture, and Urban Change in Pre-Interstate America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020. 304pp. 103 halftones. 12 maps. \$115.50 hbk. \$29.95 pbk.

doi:[10.1017/S0963926823000251](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926823000251)

Amy Finstein's *Modern Mobility Aloft* is a timely book amidst our present-day focus on infrastructure, a focus spurred by the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law and growing conversations about the historic impacts of highway projects on marginalized communities. In the book, Finstein offers an important addition to our understanding of the roots of America's current transportation systems and of modern American cities. She posits that to understand contemporary struggles about the legacy and future of auto-centric infrastructure, we have to look at the rise of elevated highways before World War II.

The book shows that the push to build elevated highways through city centres in places like Chicago, New York and Boston was an important early step in America's shift to an auto-oriented world. To Finstein, the construction of the elevated highways opened the door to the idea that officials and engineers could rebuild entire cities to incorporate the car and to address the problems caused by growing density. Further, she shows that the era of the elevated highway set an example that later officials would supersize through post-war urban renewal and interstate highway construction. But, more than simple antecedents to later change, *Modern Mobility Aloft* shows how the elevated highways helped spur transformation of American cities. Read alongside other works that delve into the rise of auto dominance, as well as into the politics and planning regimes of the 1910s to the 1940s, *Modern Mobility Aloft* helps to clarify how America's streets and transportation systems became what they are today. Finstein argues that within the rapid transitions of the inter-war years, the role and import of elevated highways has been understudied. She contends that the highways reflected the influence of cutting-edge engineering practices, architectural techniques and new ideas