

PREFACE

A reconstruction of the life of George Lloyd, a person hitherto completely unknown to history, made up the basis of my doctoral work. I have, therefore, been living with George for quite some time and I am glad to be able to introduce him to my fellow scholars at last. I hope that others will go on to contribute to unlocking the diary's remaining secrets. The text, which covers almost every single day of nearly five years of Lloyd's life, contains a wealth of material touching on all manner of subjects of interest to scholars, most of which I have addressed only briefly in the present volume, and some of which I have not been able to cover at all.

I first transcribed the diary and carried out much of the initial research on Lloyd's life between 2014 and 2018, taking a brief hiatus in 2019 and resuming at the start of 2020. My endeavour to bring the diary to a wider readership, daunting enough in itself, took a strange and difficult turn in the March of that year, with the onset of the COVID-19 lockdown. I have spent the ensuing time in Belfast, Northern Ireland, carrying out much of my research remotely. This has been a challenging but highly rewarding experience but, while this volume is the result of a more solitary effort than it otherwise might have been, there are still a number of individuals and institutions without whom this project would not have been possible.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Camden Fifth Series, the Royal Historical Society, and Cambridge University Press, all of whom provided me with the opportunity to carry out such a special project at an early stage in my career. I am particularly grateful to Andrew Spicer, Siobhan Talbott, Philip Carter, and Miranda Bethell.

Whilst much of the work for this volume was carried out remotely, I am grateful to the staff of the National Archives, London Metropolitan Archives, Lambeth Palace Library, London Guildhall Library, the Essex Record Office, the Hampshire Record Office, Carlisle Archive Centre, and the British Library. I must also thank the staff of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, where the diary is held. I was fortunate enough to be offered a two-month Bodleian Visiting Fellowship to carry out the final stages of my research on the diary – unfortunately, the Fellowship commenced in March

2020. As a result, I was forced to break up my Fellowship into a series of shorter visits. Particular thanks must go to Rachel Naismith and Dr Alexandra Franklin for their flexibility and patience in facilitating my work – completion of this volume would have been impossible otherwise.

Above all, I must extend my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Chris Marsh at Queen's University, Belfast. Chris first convinced me of the fascinating richness of early modern diaries when he introduced me to the diary of Roger Lowe in 2014. His seemingly infinite generosity and patience as a supervisor and mentor has been invaluable to me over the years, and I can honestly say that my career as a researcher would not have been possible without him.

Special thanks also to Professor David Hayton, my undergraduate supervisor at Queen's. He inspired my interest in early modern history, for which I will be forever grateful.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at the University of Huddersfield. I was tremendously excited to take up my first real academic post at the English Literature department at Huddersfield at the end of 2019. Sadly, I have not been able to spend much time there since, but it has nonetheless been a great experience, not least thanks to my closest colleagues Dr Mary Chadwick and Revd Professor Jessica Malay, both of whom have been sources of much-needed advice and support.

Special thanks must also go to my friend Gerard Mc Auley. His constant encouragement and unfailing optimism stopped me from giving up many times. I am also grateful to John Wootton, Louise Dorman, Joe Miller, Peter Hunter, and to all the other friends and colleagues who have listened to me ramble or complain about Lloyd and 'my book' over the last couple of years, or have helped me out in one way or another.

I am also tremendously grateful to my family for their endless love and support – my mother, father, and my brothers Sam and Stephen. Finally, but above all, I thank my partner, Ali Campeau, who has been with me through all the highs and lows of trying to produce this book during an unprecedented global pandemic. This is for all of you.