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**Edward Lloyd, Shoreditch to Fleet Street, 1836–1856:
Popular Print and the Working Classes**

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Abstract

In his lifetime, Edward Lloyd was called the ‘Father of the Cheap Press’ and by tracing his progress from Shoreditch to Fleet Street, this paper explores the development of literacy in working-class London in the first half of the nineteenth century; the parallel development of the printing technology necessary to support rising circulations; and popular literature both as penny serial fiction and inexpensive weekly newspapers produced by Lloyd that combined to form the first media for the masses.

Using evidence provided by consulting the primary sources and original copies of *Oliver Twiss*, *Lloyd’s Entertaining Journal*, *The Penny Sunday Times*, and *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*; comparing the characterisations in Prest’s *Oliver Twiss* with those in Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*; and examining his newspaper’s editorial content, it will be demonstrated that Lloyd was the first in his field to publish an illustrated penny newspaper, and far from cynical manipulation of popular taste, Lloyd’s desire from the very beginning, was to encourage and support the working man (and woman).

He provided cheap reading material that people genuinely wanted to read, rather than the radical or proselytising publications of his competitors. His newspapers always campaigned for his reader’s benefit and were priced at the lowest amount economically possible. As soon as the final ‘Tax on Knowledge’ was abolished, Lloyd reduced the price to the iconic penny and the newspaper Lloyd founded in 1843 became so popular and successful that it was the first in the world to achieve a circulation of one million copies.

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Personal Statement

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work and that I have not submitted it, or any part of it, for a degree at The Open University or at any other university or institution.

Parts of this dissertation are built on work I submitted for assessment as part of A825.

Introduction

After some 100 years of being ignored by historians and literary critics alike, the vast amount of material read by working people in the first half of the nineteenth century began to be assessed by authors such as Louis James, Margaret Dalziel, R. K. Webb, Richard Altick, Victor Neuberg, and Raymond Williams.¹ They revealed that far from popular literacy only beginning after the education reforms of the 1870s, there was a thriving mass culture from the start of the nineteenth century. Industrialisation had brought people from the country to the towns and at the same time developments in printing technology made production of mass reading material possible.

There are three threads to this: popular fiction, mass-produced from the 1830s; newspapers for the masses, published in the 1840s—although held back by the ‘Taxes on Knowledge’; and technological improvements allowing newspaper circulations to go from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands.² This paper will trace the parallel growth of mass reading and the technology required to produce it by focussing on Edward Lloyd, a London printer and publisher who started in a small way in a Shoreditch street surrounded by other printers and publishers producing popular literature for a local audience, yet by the time of his death his Sunday newspaper was the first in the world to have approached a circulation of one million copies.

1 Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man, 1830-1850*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Margaret Dalziel, *Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago—an Unexplored Tract of Literary History* (London: Cohen & West, 1957); R.K. Webb, *The British Working Class Reader, 1790-1848: Literacy and Social Tension*, Reprints of Economic Classics (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1971); Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); Victor Neuberg, *Popular Literature—A History and Guide* (London: The Woburn Press, 1977); Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961).

2 Charles Knight, *The Newspaper Stamp, and the Duty on Paper* (London: C. Knight, 1836).

Chapter 1: Growth of the London reading public

Before the development of mass media and Edward Lloyd's contribution can be considered, it is necessary to look at who might be the readers and, most importantly, purchasers of this material. Although some printers and publishers were driven by altruism or, in the case of the Bible Societies, a desire to 'spread the word', the production of mass fiction and newspapers was a business and for such a business to be successful, sales must prosper. People must want to spend money on acquiring the product and it must be useful or entertaining to them.

Studies on the economics of publishing have concentrated on the book trade, that is, on the production of books rather than periodicals, which is quite different.¹ The print run of a book in the 1840s might have been only 1000 copies or less—to test the market and avoid having money tied up in stock that might not sell. While composition and stereotyping costs were fixed per book and machining costs a small proportion of the total expenditure, the cost of paper due to the necessity of advance payment of Paper Duty was significant.² In contrast, a newspaper of the same period might be producing 10,000 or more copies *per issue* but had the advantage of an income stream from subscribers and the fluidity of being able to adjust the number of copies produced according to the number sold of the previous

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- 1 Margaret Plant, *The English Book Trade* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1965); Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916* (London, England, 2016), 27; Robin Myers, *The British Book Trade from Caxton to the Present Day: A Bibliographical Guide Based on the Libraries of the National Book League and St. Bride Institute*, A Grafton Book (London: Deutsch in association with the National Book League, 1973).
 - 2 Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916* (London, England, 2016), 27; Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800-1919* (Bibliographical Society, 1994); Charles Knight, *The Struggles of a Book against Excessive Taxation* (London, 1850).

issue.³ The view that the literacy of the working population was a product of the Education Act 1870 (G. M. Trevelyan, Helen Lynd) has been comprehensively dismissed by R.K. Webb and others as overly simplistic and failing to consider all the evidence⁴. Webb quotes data from John Freeman who, in 1813, with a rather small sample of 326 adults found that 216, or about two thirds, could read⁵. He extrapolated his findings to the population as a whole and concluded, with remarkable precision, that there were at least 3,454,327 literate adults in England!

How is it even possible to measure literacy in past populations? If by literacy it is meant the ability to read and communicate via written text, then there is very little to go on to assess the state of mind of readers in the past. A text might exist but always ‘the reader is outside the text’.⁶ One way would be to look at what they actually said about their own reading. Extant autobiographies have been predominately by middle-class readers—those of Altick’s Shakespeare-quoting pork-butcher being hard to find. But since the 1980s, more material has started to become available, collated by David Vincent along with John Burnett and David Mayall⁷. Jonathan Rose’s more recent study *The Intellectual Life of the*

3 Patrick Hendriks, ‘The Economic Fundamentals of Newspaper Publishing’, in *Newspapers: A Lost Cause? Strategic Management of Newspaper Firms in the United States and The Netherlands*, ed. by Patrick Hendriks (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1999), 15–51

4 G. M. Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century and After* (London: Longmans & Green, 1946), 160, 342; Helen M. Lynd, *England in the Eighteen-Eighties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 366-7; Robert K. Webb, ‘Working Class Readers in Early Victorian England’, *The English Historical Review*, 65.256 (1950), 333.

5 Webb, *British Working Class Reader*, 21.

6 Jonathan Rose, ‘Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to a History of Audiences’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53.1 (1992), 70.

7 Altick, *English Common Reader*, 244; David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography*, University Paperbacks, 790 (London; New York: Methuen, 1982).

British Working Classes attempts to ‘enter the minds of ordinary readers in history’, and although he bases his thesis on a relatively small sample of autobiographical accounts of self-educated readers it is nevertheless compelling.⁸ Lydia Fash recreates the profile of the readers and creators of the Captain Kidd ballad noting that sailors had a particularly high literacy rate at the beginning of the nineteenth century of between 75–90% and broadsides featuring tales of the sea were very popular and sold well.⁹

One of the few scraps of evidence has been written data found in marriage registers and other legal documents, outliving ephemeral material such as letters. It had been assumed that if a person could sign their name then they could be considered ‘literate’, although as Lawrence Stone said: ‘We do not know now, and may never know, the precise relationship between the capacity to sign one’s name [...] and true literacy, that is the ability to use the written word as a means of communication.’¹⁰ The assumption that if a person can write their name they would be able to recognise it when written and from that other words and sentences is fairly safe, but not the reverse, as writing was not taught as widely as reading, seen by some campaigners as important merely to follow Scripture. Webb quotes the report of the Newcastle Commission in 1861 stating that although reading was taught in the majority of schools writing was only taught in 43.2% of the private day-schools and in 78.1% of the public ones.¹¹

8 Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

9 Lydia G. Fash, ‘The Dying Words of Captain Robert Kidd’, in *Printers, Pedlars, Sailors, Nuns: Aspects of Street Literature* (London: The Ballad Partners, 2021), 37.

10 Lawrence Stone, ‘Literacy and Education in England 1640–1900’, *Past & Present*, 42, 1969, 98.

11 Robert K. Webb, ‘Working Class Readers in Early Victorian England’, *The English Historical Review*, 65.256 (1950), 336.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 1. *Number of marks used to sign marriage registers in England and Wales, year ending 30 June 1839.*

David Vincent presents the table in Figure 1 from the *Annual Report of the Registrar General of Births Deaths and Marriages in England, 1840*.¹² Even by this crude measure, ‘literacy’ in London far exceeds that in the rest of the country. Londoners who signed the register with a mark instead of their signature were a mere 18% (and 12% of men)—

12 David Vincent, ‘The Invention of Counting: The Statistical Measurement of Literacy in Nineteenth-Century England’, *Comparative Education*, 50.3 (2014), 266–81.

everywhere else had more than double that number. The *Eighth Report* contained many caveats about assuming too much from the figures which seem to have been ignored by later commentators.

Some objections have been raised against this return as a test of the state of education; and it should be taken for no more than it is worth. I have already stated that a certain number of the women able to write, either from timidity or from other motives, may not have written their names. Upon the other hand, many who write their names are able to write nothing else; and the writing of the name is no proof of the possession of that stock of the elements of literary and scientific knowledge which it is desirable that the whole mass of a civilized nation should possess. The return is of unquestionable value, as an evidence of the *relative state* of elementary education in different parts of the country, at different times.¹³

It concludes that one might have confidence in use of the figures as a *comparative* measure between different parts of the country. The report also points out that the average age of those signing the register was 25 and thus the data would be a snapshot of education from some ten to fifteen years previously. The data also makes no allowances for those who learnt to read later in life or via the necessities of their trade and takes no account of those who never married. It might, of course, also be the case that people learnt to sign their names solely for the occasion and were otherwise strangers to the written word.¹⁴

As well as marriage registers, other early modern English documents have been investigated by David Cressy correlating the ability to sign one's name with the ability to read, although his figures are now considered an underestimate.¹⁵ Wyn Ford also suggests

13 *Annual Report of the Registrar General of Births Deaths and Marriages in England* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1849), 32.

14 Rosalind Crone, 'Reappraising Victorian Literacy through Prison Records', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 15(1) 2010, 3–37.

15 David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

that signing with a mark rather than a name should not be used as evidence of illiteracy as many were so intricate and repeated over several documents that they certainly indicated dexterity in the use of a pen.¹⁶ There has also been dismissal of those who signed with initials as illiterate, yet this was a perfectly acceptable way of signing a document at the time and indicated a knowledge of the function of the letters.

Another measure writers have used is the educational levels of convicted criminals since data was collected by the Home Office from 1835. This evidence is a rather poor guide for levels of literacy in the general population as even today there is a low level of education and literacy amongst prison inmates. It was even suggested by Mary Carpenter that reports show that levels of literacy were higher in gaols than in the general population.

Nevertheless, one might still compare these figures across the country to see if London showed any advantage.¹⁷

In this period many contemporary writers and campaigners, while constructing arguments about levels of illiteracy (and thus lack of education), had agendas other than promoting literacy; rather seeking to maintain control over the population by religious instruction and ignorance of the Scripture was equated with ignorance in general—as J. D.

Tuckett put it in his report:

the children are for the most part altogether uneducated, [...] they cannot answer the plainest question of the Scriptures, and some state upon enquiry that they have never heard of the Apostles, or any of the great doctrines of our Christian belief. [...]

16 Wyn Ford, 'The Problem of Literacy in Early Modern England', *History*, 78.252 (1993), 34.

17 Tenibiaje Dele Joseph, 'Literacy, Information and Communication Technology as Tools for Empowerment of Inmates', *European Journal of Educational Research*, 1.2 (2012), 117; Mary Carpenter, *Reformatory Schools: For the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders* (London: C. Gilpin, 1861).

although they possess a perfect knowledge of the characters and course of life of Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard...¹⁸

Not so ignorant perhaps, just not interested in religious dogma, and perfectly able to read crime fiction. The British and Foreign Bible Society printed some 2,500,000 copies of the Bible between 1804 and 1819 and religious tracts for working people were printed in enormous quantities in the early decades of the century although circulation should not be equated with readership.¹⁹ Their distribution was satirised by Dickens in *Bleak House* and the tract-bearers' motives were too obvious to be mistaken. In the words of one of Mayhew's interviewees: 'They bring tracts to the lodging-houses—pipes are lighted with them; tracts won't fill your belly.'²⁰

The *Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales*, 1838 has figures for children aged 9 to 16 at workhouses in Suffolk and Norfolk where 87% were able to read to some degree. This is a good figure given the disadvantages these children had, and perhaps they were experiencing some educational benefits from the workhouse.

There is additional evidence of literacy in the circulations of cheap newspapers, other journals, and cheap penny fiction. Defined by price, these publications were intended for, and consumed by, working people in large numbers. Roger Schofield cautions against using the quantity of popular publications as a measure of literacy, suggesting that there is

18 J. D. Tuckett, *History of the Past and Present State of the Labouring Population* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1816), 703.

19 Altick, *English Common Reader*, 107.

20 Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (London: Griffin, Bohn, and Company, 1851). I, 458.

‘no necessary relationship between the volume of production and the size of readership’.²¹

This view may be true for the output of religious campaigners but completely ignores economic imperatives and sheer numerical evidence. This material was not distributed gratis but as a business—if there were insufficient sales, the business would fail. As Charles Knight, pointed out, selling papers at 1d. only makes economic sense if a large number is sold.²²

With an estimated total English population of 14,050,000 in 1836—1,600,000 in London—the proportion of Newspaper Stamps issued to London papers far exceeds the number we would expect by population alone. Many of these London papers were distributed nationally and we can get an idea of the extent from an ‘Advertisement to Advertisers’ published by Edward Lloyd in 1842 which claimed that of a total circulation of 100,000 copies, 65,000 were for the London market, the remainder for the provinces.²³ Even at 65%, the total local London sales per head of population is phenomenal compared to outside London. In the early 1850s, London had six daily papers, but in the provinces, twice- or at the most three times- weekly were more common and the sheer comparative number of London papers indicates a large local readership. These figures undercut the suggestion that literacy was low amongst working people and their primary source was a single copy of a newspaper to be found in the ale house and its contents read to the customers. Although such stories appear in Mayhew’s study, more often than not, his interviewees tell of what they, personally, have read in the newspaper or cheap fiction.

21 R. S. Schofield, ‘Dimensions of Illiteracy, 1750–1850’, *Explorations in Economic History*, 10.4 (1973), 437–54.

22 Charles Knight, *The Newspaper Stamp, and the Duty on Paper: Viewed in Relation to Their Effects upon the Diffusion of Knowledge*, (London: C. Knight, 1836), 11–12.

23 ‘Advertisement to Advertisers’, *Lloyd’s Illustrated London Newspaper* (11 December 1842), 20.

Domestic servants formed over half of the female workforce in the 1840s yet were often overlooked by Victorian social commentators.²⁴ There were a few ‘improving’ publications such as the *Servant’s Magazine*, with cautionary tales of those who attempted to escape household duties only to meet some unsalutary end. The Mayhews’ comic novel *The Greatest Plague in Life, or The Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Servant*, characterises the servant Betsy as one who spends more time reading her favourite stories from Lloyd’s canon than cleaning the kitchen.²⁵ Although Mayhews’ account is itself fiction, its observations and the sheer size of Lloyd’s output suggests it is not far from the truth. Brantlinger gives multiple examples of working-class readers portrayed in Dickens, particularly in *Oliver Twist*, where the eponymous hero, a workhouse boy and beneficiary of rudimentary education, can nevertheless read and Fagin gives him a book about the lives and trials of great criminals to encourage him. Prest’s *Oliver Twiss* has only one low-life character, Gipsy Ned, who cannot read—all the boys in Solomon’s charge can.²⁶

Although this paper is not considering in detail educational provision in the first half of the nineteenth century, it should be noted that there was a haphazard but prolific provision for children of working families—dame schools, Sunday schools, day schools provided by religious organisations, private day schools, factory and workhouse schools, schools sponsored by working-class societies and instruction given by relatives. Education continued after childhood with Mechanics’ Institutes being founded in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Liverpool at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These were places for

24 B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

25 Henry Mayhew and Augustus Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life* (Covent Garden: T. C. Saville, 1847).

26 Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

adult learning in the new skills and knowledge needed for an industrial workforce. At The London Mechanics' Institute, established by George Birkbeck in 1823 and attended by Edward Lloyd, over 87% of the students were working people—tradesmen, labourers, assistants, factory workers, and the second most noted occupation was 'printer'.²⁷

The evidence shows that literacy amongst the London working population was relatively high in the first decades of the nineteenth century, higher than in the rest of the country, and that there was a ready and growing local market for reading material in all its forms.

27 Helen Hudson Flexner, 'The London Mechanics' Institution Social and Cultural Foundations 1823–1830' (UCL, 2014); Thomas Kelly, *George Birkbeck* (Liverpool: University Press), 331.

Chapter 2: Taxes on Knowledge

Provision of reading material for the increasingly literate working population of the 1830s was severely hampered by the so-called Taxes on Knowledge. The increasing regulation of publishing began in January 1699 when the House of Lords passed a ‘Printing Regulation’ bill requiring printers and authors to register their names. It proved controversial and there were so many objections to restricting the freedom of the press that the Act of 1712, which introduced a tax on paper, newspapers, and advertisements, was eventually slipped in as a revenue-raising measure along with taxation of soap and silk¹. The levels of taxation were raised from time to time and by the 1830s the Stamp Duty for newspapers stood at 4d., Paper Duty at 3d. per lb., and Advertising Duty at 3s. 6d.² These taxes increased costs and denied a valuable revenue stream raising the price of newspapers well beyond the unit cost of production and putting them out of reach of working people. Charles Knight, trying to make his *Library of Useful Knowledge* affordable, constantly complained about this, as Paper Duty alone meant that 30% of the pamphlet’s cost was tax and the minimum he could charge was 6d. per copy, drastically reducing the circulation.³ Despite these restrictions, the growth in literacy of the working man, particularly in London, was unstoppable.

During the previous decade there had been few challenges to the stamp laws, but this changed with the appearance of William Carpenter’s *Political Letters and Pamphlets* on 9 October 1830.

1 H. Dagnall, *The Taxation of Paper in Great Britain 1643–1861: A History and Documentation* (Edgware: British Association of Paper Historians, 1998), 15.

2 *Ibid*, 42.

3 Wiener, *The War of the Unstamped*, 13.

Published for the avowed purpose of trying with the government the question of law—whether all publications containing news or intelligence, however limited in quantity, or irregularly issued, are liable to the imposition of the stamp duty of fourpence, &c.;⁴

There were many other unstamped newspapers in circulation with roots in early Chartism and proletarian protest which, by their very nature, were read and supported by the working man.⁵ Altick lists several notable examples and their impressive circulations: Cobbet's *Political Register* (1816) 40,000–50,000; Limbird's *Mirror of Literature* (1823) 80,000; Cleave's *Weekly Police Gazette*, a mixture of sensational crime stories and radical politics, (1834–36), 40,000 and Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* (1831–35), >10,000. Joel Wiener lists over 560 unstamped periodicals that appeared between 1830 and 1836, predominately in London, demonstrating the immense growth in reading by increasingly literate working people, and estimates the total circulation of more than 200,000.⁶

But in July of that year, despite growing Chartist unrest and a second popular revolution in France, Wellington's febrile Tory government continued to oppose electoral reform and lost a vote of confidence on 15 November. The new Whig government, although it had voiced opposition to the stamp duty whilst not in power, was frightened of the proletarian movement and began prosecutions of these unstamped publications deeming that 'any publication, containing any news or intelligence was a newspaper, and as such liable to the stamp duty', and the number of convictions under the stamp acts more than quadrupled.⁷

4 William Carpenter, *Political Letters and Pamphlets* (London: William Carpenter, 1831).

5 Charles Knight, *The Newspaper Stamp*.

6 Altick, *English Common Reader*, 392–393; Joel H Wiener, *A Descriptive Finding List of Unstamped British Periodicals 1830–1836* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1970).

7 Alexander Andrews, *The History of British Journalism*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), II, 194.

Carpenter, who would later become one of the first editors of Lloyd's newspaper, was convicted and imprisoned for the offence. Whilst in prison, he edited *Carpenter's Monthly Political Magazine*, stamped at 6d., published by William Strange. Throughout the 1830s he continued working on journals espousing the working-class cause: the daily *True Sun* (1832–34), *Weekly True Sun* (1832–34), *Political Anecdotist and Popular Instructor* (1831), *A Slap at the Church* (1832), the *London Journal* (1836–37) and the *Charter* (1839–40) published by the London Working Men's Association. It was in October 1830 that Henry Hetherington had launched his *The Penny Papers for the People, Published by the Poor Man's Guardian*, the precursor to the *Poor Man's Guardian*. Hetherington and his newspaper sellers were also hounded by the government and he was imprisoned three times for its unstamped publication.⁸

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 2. *Masthead for The Poor Man's Guardian complete with a satirical imitation of the Newspaper Stamp.*

It has been suggested that growth of mass-market newspapers in the 1820s and 1830s was held back by a lack of literacy in the working class, yet *Catnach's Full, True and Particular Account of the Murder of Weare by Thurtell and his Companions* sold 250,000 in 1823, and five years later, his *Confession and Execution of William Corder* was reputed

⁸ Joel H. Wiener, *The War of the Unstamped* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).

to have sold 1,166,000 copies⁹. Of course, the real reason behind the lack of mass-market newspapers in the early nineteenth century was that the Newspaper Stamp was not just a revenue-earner for the government but was *deliberately* set high to put them out of reach of the lower classes. The effect that price had on circulation had been demonstrated most clearly in the early part of the century with Cobbett's *Political Register* whose circulation soared when it reduced its price from 1s. 6d. to 2d. and similarly declined when he was forced to raise the price to 6d. to comply with the new rules of 1819.¹⁰ At this time, the daily *Times* was priced at 6d., like most contemporary legal newspapers, and was only affordable to the better-off.

9 Altick, *English Common Reader*; 382.

10 *Ibid*, 329.

Chapter 3: Wych Street and Penny Fiction

In 1835, the paucity of reading matter for the working man was about to change. In that year, a young Edward Lloyd, who had a shop at 44 Wych Street, registered as a printer with the Middlesex Clerk of the Peace as required by the Act of 1799.¹ John Farlow Wilson speaks of Drury Lane, Holywell Street and Wych Street in his memoir:

There were many small printing and publishing offices in the neighbourhood, from which emanated story-books issued in penny numbers of eight crown octavo pages. The writers, printers, and publishers of these were, with few exceptions, living more or less from hand to mouth. Edward Lloyd had a small shop in the adjoining Wych Street in 1836, where he sold comic valentines, theatrical portraits, and penny story-books.²

This area was alive with writers, booksellers and printers and Lloyd would have learnt first-hand what appealed to his customers, and most importantly, was able to connect with leaders in the field of popular publishing. It was in this world in 1832, at seventeen, that he introduced his first Sunday publication, the *Weekly Penny Comic Magazine; or, Repertory of Wit and Humour*. At the time, there were at least five so-called comic magazines all combining graphic humour with a smattering of text: *William Marshall's New Comic Magazine*, illustrations by Robert Seymour, *The Penny Comic Magazine of Amorous, Clamorous, and Glorious Society, for the Diffusion of Grins*, and the *Original*

1 39 Geo. III, cap. 79, Statutes at Large, xlii, part 1 (1799), 318–20.; William B. Todd, *A Directory of Printers and Others in Allied Trades: London and Vicinity 1800-1840* (London: Printing Historical Society, 1972), 120. Witnessed by his brother, Thomas Lloyd.

2 John Farlow Wilson, *A Few Personal Recollections by An Old Printer* (London: Gresham Press, 1896), 34.

Comic Magazine.³ The fact that the publication came out on Sunday was significant, as Sunday was the day that working people had some time for themselves—time for reading. With his *Weekly Penny Comic Magazine*, we see Lloyd’s first application of the technique he was to perfect over many years. In prepending the words ‘Weekly’ and ‘Penny’ to an existing title, he both offered the attraction of value for money and the familiarity of an existing formula. With average wages for ordinary people around 19s. a week for men and 11s. for women, a penny was an amount that could just be considered discretionary expenditure—the price of a quart of beer, a cup of coffee, a quarter of gin, a visit to a penny gaff theatre, or the latest part of a serial novel or ‘newspaper’.⁴ He would later also emphasise the ‘Lloyd’ brand, including his name at the beginning of almost every title.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 3. *OS Map of London in 1896 before the destruction of Wych Street in 1901*

3 *Loyal Subversion? Caricatures from the Personal Union between England and Hanover (1714–1837)*, ed. by Anorthe Kremers and Elisabeth Reich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 180.

4 ‘Currency, Coinage and the Cost of Living,’ <<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Coinage.jsp>> [accessed 20 December 2020].

The imprint was shared with some old hands in the business: George Cowie, William Strange and George Purkess, and a major contributor to the magazine was Thomas Peckett Prest whose writing was to feature extensively in Lloyd's later output of penny fiction as were the comic woodcuts of Charles Jameson Grant. Lloyd's first publications were made with the assistance of Cowie and Strange, well established printers and publishers since 1822. They had published the *London Mechanics' Register* during the 1820s when Lloyd was attending the London Mechanics' Institute, and in the early 1830s produced the successful satirical weekly *Figaro in London* edited by Gilbert Abbot à Beckett and illustrated by Robert Seymour, plus a large number of less successful titles and penny fiction.

The tradition of sensational crime reporting in the *Newgate Calendar*, broadsheets, and other forms undoubtedly featured in Lloyd's shop, and between 1836 and 1837 he capitalised on the public taste for tales of the notorious criminals Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard and others, and issued (with Strange and Purkess) *History of the Pirates of All Nations* and *History and Lives of the Most Notorious Highwaymen, Footpads and Murderers, Brigands, Pickpockets, Thieves, Banditti and Robbers of Every Description*.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 4. *The masthead from The Penny Sunday Times, 21 November 1841.*

Heading towards his goal of a penny *newspaper* affordable by all, Lloyd added the word 'penny' to the name of Cleave's earlier title and, in 1840, launched the *Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette* and its *Companion* in 1841. Apparently avoiding actual news, it was not liable for Stamp Duty and contained historical or fictional sensational crime stories and serial fiction. Nevertheless, it has a masthead emulating the style of more

expensive papers, with gothic text for ‘Sunday Times’ and an image of a horseman riding through the countryside delivering the news. The example in Figure 4 has in the first column of its first page an apparent Bow Street police report looking just like crime reports in other newspapers with reported speech from DEFENDANT and MAGISTRATE. It becomes clear upon reading that it is a spoof. The plaintiff

had a frontispiece of the most extraordinary description, and it was prefaced by a nose of the most remarkable length, and adorned with as many pimples as there are plums in a moderate sized Christmas pudding.

and so it goes on, very soon resembling a theatrical sketch of a penny gaff⁵. Also introduced with the *Penny Sunday Times* was a large woodcut illustration on the front page. This was unusual for a newspaper and anticipated the *Illustrated London News* by some two years.

Pioneered and perfected by Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), wood engraving played an increasingly important part in the new wave of satirical publications and comic sketches that began to appear in the 1820s and 30s⁶. Gone were the single sheet, slow to produce, lithographic caricatures of Rowlandson (1756–1827) and Gillray (1756–1815). The newly introduced wood-engraving blocks were made type-high and could be printed at the same time as the surrounding text, but most importantly, in the large quantities required for the growing mass publications. This new technology for illustration, along with electrotyping, cylinder printing presses, and machine-made paper, was readily exploited by Lloyd and he was at the forefront in the widespread appeal of new genres of popular publications—song books, play texts, reprints of classic texts with humorous illustrations. Charles Knight’s *Penny Magazine* had also featured a woodcut illustration on the front page and

5 J. Ewing Ritchie, *Here and There in London* (London: W. Tweedie, 1859), 110.

6 *Loyal Subversion*, 178.

endeavoured to ‘diffuse popular Art as well as popular Literature’⁷, as well as seeking to instil ‘the virtues of industry, temperance and moderation in the working class’.⁸

Cheryl Deedman reports that Lloyd’s mentor, William Strange, was also the first publisher to add an illustration to periodical fiction in *The Penny Story Teller* first published in 1832.⁹ Illustrations were particularly attractive to those whose reading skills were only just developing; a point also made by contemporary writers such as Mary Merryweather and Henry Mayhew’s costermonger:

I have known a man what couldn’t read, buy a periodical what had an illustration, a little out of the common way perhaps, just that he might learn from some one who *could* read, what it was all about.¹⁰

The didactic use of wood-engravings would also be developed later by Herbert Ingram in the *Illustrated London News* as the ‘pictured register of the world’s history’ although Knight complained that the scenes depicted were usually of crowds of respectable people got together for some great event, always avoiding depiction of ‘vulgar poverty’.

“The Illustrated London News,” it is said, never rose into a large circulation till it began to trace her Majesty’s steps wherever she went. During the twenty years from 1842 to 1862 what endless repetitions have we had of solemn directors of the iron road bowing from the platform; of robed mayors and aldermen presenting their loyal

7 Tom Gretton, ‘The Pragmatics of Page Design in Nineteenth-Century General-Interest Weekly Illustrated News Magazines in London and Paris.’, *Art History*, 33.4 (2010), 682; Charles Knight, *Passages of a Working Life During Half a Century with A Prelude of Early Reminiscences*, 3 vols (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1864), I, viii.

8 Jessica Valdez, ‘Dickens’s “Pious Fraud”: The Popular Press and the Moral Suasion of Fictional Narrative’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 44.4 (2011), 377–400.

9 Cheryl Deedman, “‘The Song of the Pen’: Popular Romantic Literature 1839–1889’ (unpublished Doctoral thesis (Ph.D), University of London, 2014), 49.

10 Mary Merryweather, *Experience of Factory Life* (London: Emily Faithfull & Co, 1862). 29; Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*. I, 25.

addresses; of smart ladies waving handkerchiefs from drawing-room windows; of crowds shouting and impeding the way in narrow streets.¹¹

This sanitised version of contemporary life is contrasted by Celina Fox with that shown in other illustrated papers such as the new *Poor Man's Guardian* (1847) which campaigned for poor-law reform and was more likely to depict soup kitchens than royal banquets.¹²

That there was a steady growth in the use of wood engravings can also be seen by looking at contemporary London trade directories where the number of wood engravers listed quadrupled from 1817 to 1852, and most of those listings were of firms who might each have employed upwards of thirty people.¹³

The increasing circulations of Lloyd's publications and the public's demand for print required a significant improvement in printing technology. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the circulation of *The Times* was only 3000. It was still just possible to produce this using methods hardly changed since Gutenberg introduced the concept of movable type to Europe in the fifteenth century. Printing presses were still made of wood and the maximum number of sheets that could be printed per hour was 250, involving the work of two men. It was only when Stanhope built a press made of iron at the very beginning of the nineteenth century that any real progress occurred, as the strength of the structure of the press allowed larger sheets to be printed.¹⁴ Even so, to produce 3000 copies at 250 impressions per hour for a four-page newspaper would take 24 hours—far too long for a daily paper. Assigning another press to perfect each sheet would double the output

11 Knight, *Passages*, III, 247.

12 Celina Fox, 'The Development of Social Reportage in English Periodical Illustration during the 1840s and Early 1850s', *Past & Present*, 74, 1977, 92.

13 Gerry Beegan, 'The Mechanization of the Image: Facsimile, Photography, and Fragmentation in Nineteenth-Century Wood Engraving', *Journal of Design History*, 8.4 (1995), 257–74.

14 Moran, *Printing Presses*, 49–57.

and duplicating the formes by composing the material twice for another pair of presses could further double the output, so it would take only 6 hours to complete the edition. This would also mean 8 skilled pressmen (2 per press) plus more compositors to set the material multiple times.

The technological breakthrough was Koenig's invention of the cylinder press, both because it allowed larger sheets to be printed and because it could be driven by a steam engine producing some 1200 impressions per hour. The *History of the Times* notes the financial savings made by the adoption of Koenig's press needing fewer skilled staff, but also the *saving in composition costs*.¹⁵ This revolutionary idea enabled the explosion in circulations of newspapers and other material in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. In 1830, Carpenter claimed a circulation of 19,000 copies per issue of his *Political Letters* and in the same year *The Times*, with its sister paper the *Evening Mail*, paid for 3,499,986 stamps, which would equate to about 11,200 per daily issue.

The dramatic improvements to printing technology following Koenig's invention had become widespread, so much so that, in France, immediately after the 1830 revolution, journeymen-printers and pressmen drew up a petition for the suppression of mechanical presses and threatened violence against newspaper proprietors should they not revert to the former means of production. The *Temps* published the paper with a mere sixty lines substituted for the usual four pages of closely printed text to show the impracticality of such a demand and after a few days of interrupted production, the newspapers appeared again as normal.¹⁶ Various British newspapers reported these events along with

15 *History of the Times Vol 1, 'The Thunderer' in the Making 1785–1841* (London: The Times Office, 1935), 14.

16 'Combination of the Journeyman-Printers in France', *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, 10 September 1830, 4.

explanations of the industrialisation behind it, pointing out that as there was a *great increase in demand* for printed material any compositors made redundant by this process would easily find new work at a good rate as most of the former pressmen were engaged at the new machines.

Commentaries on this period have emphasised that the machines could now be run by that driver of the industrial revolution: *steam*. Whilst this was undoubtedly the case, these same machines could also be operated by hand. There are several contemporary newspaper advertisements for the sale of one- or two-cylinder machines ‘powered by steam or hand’. This means that a printing office such as Lloyd’s could be set up relatively cheaply as all the infrastructure of steam engines, coal supply, chimneys and all the other necessary equipment was not initially necessary.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 5. *The Napier gripper and perfecting machine* from Lloyd’s Penny Weekly Miscellany.

Napier produced several such cylinder machines from the early 1830s and *Lloyd’s Penny Weekly Miscellany* features one of them, shown in Figure 5. As this publication was, like most of his penny weeklies, simply one quarto sheet, Lloyd could produce a large number

very quickly, efficiently and, most importantly inexpensively, using one of these machines—the supply side of the emerging mass media could now be fulfilled.

Egan's *Life in London* and Dickens's early works had established serial monthly publication at one shilling per issue as a viable form, but the new development in 1828 was to be the penny periodical—*weekly* parts affordable to all, at a time when the standard three-volume novel cost around 31s. 6d. and remained so throughout the century.¹⁷ Along with tales of gothic horror and lives of notorious criminals, stories began to appear that related uniquely to the new urban experience. Louis James suggests that early stories like Reuben's *The Farmer of Inglewood Forest*, where rural dwellers found themselves engulfed and bewildered by the metropolis, mirrored the experiences of those that drifted from the countryside to the town, and later gave way to a form for city dwellers who had known no other life.¹⁸

Lloyd's desire from the very start was to make reading affordable. In his preface to the bound version of *The Penny Pickwick* he restated this aim:

Upon the appearance of those shilling publications which have been productive of so much mirth and amusement, it occurred to us that while the wealthier classes had their Momus, the poor man should not be debarred from possessing to himself as lively a source of entertainment and at a price consistent with his means.¹⁹

This contrast between established publishers' offerings and Lloyd's is exemplified by the popular cultural phenomenon of 'Pickwickiana'. Due to Dickens's success with his serial

17 Simon Eliot, 'The Business of Victorian Publishing', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Deirdre David, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37–60.

18 Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man, 1830–1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 147.

19 Thomas Peckett Prest, *The Posthumous Notes of the Pickwick Club* (London: Edward Lloyd, 1839), Preface.

publication, *Sketches by Boz*, he was chosen by Chapman & Hall to write text to accompany Robert Seymour's new monthly magazine following the successful *Sketches by Seymour* (1834–36)—humorous sporting Cockneys in pursuit of cats, dogs, and stray pigs. It became *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* edited by 'Boz'. Rather than construct text to match Seymour's image, Dickens insisted that the image illustrate his text, which undoubtedly contributed to Seymour's suicide before the second issue could be published. The characters' popularity spawned Pickwick Ale, Pickwick matches, Pickwick spoons, popular songs, woodcuts, stories, and stage adaptations—*The Pickwick Club; or, The Age We Live In!* (Edward Stirling); *The Peregrinations of Pickwick* (W. L. Rede) published by Strange; *Sam Weller or The Pickwickians* (W. T. Moncrief)—the working-class were surrounded by Pickwickiana, but while Dickens's serial publications were too expensive for them to afford at 1s., Lloyd's *The Penny Pickwick* by "Bos" (the *Post-Humourous* (sic) *Notes of the Pickwick Club*) cost only 1d.

IMAGES REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 6. Seymour's illustration (left) and Grant's (right) for issue No 1 of the respective *Pickwicks*.

It was issued in 112 penny weekly numbers with wood engravings by Grant and text by Prest, in the usual single sheet quarto format with two engravings per issue and claimed

sales of 50,000²⁰. The number of engravings was emphasised in the publicity material to reassure even those with limited literacy that they would be well served²¹.

Although the principal characters were shamelessly based on Dickens's, the stories were all original. Indeed, Lloyd's *Penny Pickwick* was so successful, outselling Dickens's version, that Chapman & Hall applied for an injunction to restrain its publication. The case was heard on 8 June 1837, but the Vice Chancellor, Sir Lancelot Shadwell, said 'nothing but the grossest ignorance could allow itself to fancy that when a party meant to have that work which for nearly a year had delighted the world, he would purchase the other' and refused to interfere, although allowing a further hearing should the plaintiffs produce any actual evidence of financial harm.²² The failure of this attempt to prevent publication naturally resulted in yet more continuations of the 'Pickwick' stories by myriad publishers.²³ There now seemed to be nothing to stop any of his characters being mercilessly reused, and shortly after *Oliver Twist* first appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany*, so did Lloyd's penny weekly *Oliver Twiss*. Written by Prest, with two comic wood engravings by Grant, it ran to almost 80 numbers—twice as long as Dickens's version and, as noted by Sue Zemka, whilst Dickens had to introduce a cliff-hanger at the end of every thirty-two pages, Prest had to do this four times as often, after every eight pages!

Lloyd's enterprise certainly had its critics:

it occurred to a wretched bookseller in Bloomsbury, but who should have lived in Holywell Street, [...] a good stroke of business might be done by mutilating, forging,

20 James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, 55.

21 David Kunzle, 'Between Broadsheet Caricature and "Punch": Cheap Newspaper Cuts for the Lower Classes in the 1830s', *Art Journal*, 43.4 (1983), 344.

22 'Vice-Chancellor's Court. Chapman and Hall v. Lloyd.', *The Evening Chronicle*, 9 June 1837, 4.

23 Percy Fitzgerald, *The History of Pickwick* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1891), 214.

and parodying Charles Dickens, [...] written by some gutter-blood hack, and illustrated in the first style of Seven Dials art.²⁴

Yet this view ignores that vast history of literary adaptation that began long before Shakespeare reused large sections of Plutarch to construct his Julius Caesar. Mr Pickwick was not created out of nothing but came directly from the tradition of eighteenth-century comedy caricatures and buffoonery, and particularly from Seymour's original *Sketches*. By denigrating the value of Lloyd's publications it demonstrates, as Williams suggests, 'the fear that as a circle of readers extends, standards will decline and [...] that if the common man reads, both quality and order will be threatened', and mirrors Dickens's refusal to support the removal of the Taxes on Knowledge, as they were some 'protection to the public against the rash and hasty launching of blackguard newspapers'.²⁵

Kristen Starkowski suggests that far from being plagiarisms, these popular adaptations are quite different to their source, 'tailored to appeal to a working-class readership, particularly through the extension, addition and reversal of character position'.²⁶ Oliver's story addresses many themes of the time such as the New Poor Law of 1834, the Vagrants Acts of 1824 and 1838, the perceived crime wave, the injustice and inhumanity of the criminal justice system, but Prest's version treats them with a vivacity and descriptive realism that is missing from Dickens's sentimental detachment.²⁷ In the penny versions, Dickens's working-class characters are elevated to major protagonists rather than mere

24 George Augustus Sala, *Charles Dickens* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1870), 74.

25 Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens: 1833–1870*, ed. by Mamie Dickens and Georgina Hogarth (London: Macmillan & Co, Ltd, 1893), 240; Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), 158.

26 Kristen Starkowski, "'Our Delectable Works': Characterological Novelty in Penny "Plagiarisms" of Oliver Twist', *Victorian Review*, 45.2 (2019), 271–91.

27 Holly Furneaux, "'Worrying to Death"—Reinterpreting Dickens's Critique of the New Poor Law in Oliver Twist and Contemporary Adaptations', *The Dickensian*, 101.467 (2005), 196, 213–224.

adjuncts; significant characters in *Twiss*—Gipsy Ned; and Barbara, for whose murder Solomons is executed rather than being a mere ‘accessory’—do not appear in *Twist* at all and there are many more scenes featuring the daily lives and experiences of butlers, servants, cooks, rogues, and the street children. *Twiss* spends more time in the streets than *Twist* ever does.

When Jem Blount (Sikes in *Twist*) and Gipsy Ned are put in prison, we learn about all the other inmates in the ‘scene of wretchedness’; we experience public houses and penny gaffs through the eyes of our young protagonists, not the sedate middle-class entertainments of gardening, playing cricket and decorating bird cages of Dickens. When Sikes kills Nancy, Dickens, in middle-class sentimental tradition, has her pleading, with talk of love and waving Rose’s handkerchief to Heaven while her *Twiss* equivalent, Poll, is much more practical, hurling her assailant’s knife out of the window before eventually being strangled. In his preface to the third edition of *Twist*, Dickens attempts to defend his ‘realistic’ depictions of low-life characters by evoking Hogarth, Fielding, Defoe, Goldsmith, Smollett, and Cervantes, yet he significantly filters their language, lives, and experiences for fear of offending his middle-class audience.²⁸ Prest had no need to censor his themes or language to placate *his* audience as they knew only too well the violence of the streets and the iniquities of the workhouse. The very first paragraph of *Twiss* takes us there directly and mocks the ‘overseers assembled in the comfortable parlour of the Goat and Ninepins, to discuss the propriety or impropriety of affording certain little necessities to the starving poor’.²⁹ Poll Smiggins has a more explicit sexual history than Nancy, and

28 Louis James, ‘The View from Brick Lane: Contrasting Perspectives in Working-Class and Middle-Class Fiction of the Early Victorian Period’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 11 (1981), 87–101.

29 Thomas Peckett Prest, *Oliver Twiss* (London: Edward Lloyd, 1839), 1.

Prest ‘does not hesitate to portray prostitutes and call them by their right name’.³⁰ Prest was writing about a working-class experience that precisely tallied with that of his readers, who bought copies of Lloyd’s penny publication in abundance. The idea of reinterpreting works by giving their minor characters a greater voice did not die with Prest and Jeremy Rosen’s 2016 study documents the continuing tradition from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Tom Stoppard, 1967) to *The Meursault Investigation* (Kamel Daoud, 2015).³¹

The contrast between the portrayal of working-class characters in Lloyd’s penny romances and that in middle-class fiction extends beyond *Twiss*. As James has noted, Lloyd’s heroines are survivors who rarely faint and ‘have the stamina and courage more generally associated with the hero in “respectable” fiction’.³² Lloyd was reportedly careful to make sure that his fiction would be appreciated by his audience and his manager told Thomas Frost:

You see, our publications circulate amongst a class so different in education and social position to the readers of three-volume novels, that we sometimes distrust our own judgment, and place the manuscript in the hands of an illiterate person—a servant or machine-boy, for instance. If they pronounce favourably upon it, we think it will do.³³

30 James, *Fiction for the working man*, 61.

31 Jeremy Rosen, *Minor Characters Have Their Day: Genre and the Contemporary Literary Marketplace* (New York, USA: Columbia University Press, 2016).

32 Louis James, ‘The Trouble with Betsy: Periodicals and the Common Reader in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England’, in *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), 357.

33 Thomas Frost, *Forty Years’ Recollections: Literary and Political* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1880), 90.

Even after the launch of his first newspaper, Lloyd continued publishing fiction in stand-alone formats, bound series or incorporated into weekly penny journals such as *Lloyd's Penny Weekly Miscellany* (1843–46), *Lloyd's Penny Atlas* (1843–45), *Lloyd's Entertaining Journal* (1844–47), *Ladies' Journal: A Newspaper of Fashion, Literature, Music and Variety* (1847) and the *Family Journal of Useful Knowledge* (1848).³⁴ These publications consisted of a miscellany of different short texts with wide appeal, and the first issue of *Lloyd's Entertaining Journal* on 1 April 1847 contains: an episode of the latest serial, *Evalina, the Pauper's Child*; short tales purporting to be historical fact; an episode of *The Assassins of the Cavern*; short stand-alone humorous paragraphs and jokes; interesting facts. Christie Allen introduces the concept of the 'browsing Victorian reader'³⁵ which she discusses in the context of contemporary novels, yet it could equally be applied to these journals which provide interesting and entertaining snippets without requiring too much commitment of time (or expense) from the reader—perfect for the working man or woman with little leisure time.

Charles Knight's 1850 pamphlet, campaigning against Paper Duty, compares the costs of his *Penny Magazine* with a notional weekly sheet 'from the gutter' which he calls *The Sewer*.³⁶ If he is intending to include Lloyd's publications in his calculations, he grossly and unfairly underestimates Lloyd's costs in paper, composition and stereotyping as pointed out by James.³⁷ Far from producing the 60% profit Knight claimed, producers of weekly sheets often barely covered their costs and according to Wilson were frequently in

34 *Lloyd's Entertaining Journal* (London: Edward Lloyd, 1 April 1847), 1.

35 Christie Allen, 'The Browsing Victorian Reader', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 46.1 (2018), 1–21

36 Charles Knight, *The Struggles of a Book*, 14.

37 Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, 31.

debt.³⁸ As Lloyd had acquired his own printing press in 1835, he was more in control of his costs than many of his contemporaries, yet it was a precarious business as acknowledged by Prest in his preface to *Twiss*

cheap periodicals have been started in every direction, some of which had stood the test of public opinion, whilst others, and by far the greater proportion of them, have fallen.

Lloyd himself was in debt by the beginning of 1839. On 22 January he had to assign his personal estate and effects to his solicitors to protect himself from his creditors, but he was determined to survive. His publications were still selling well enough to continue producing them albeit with a subtle change as he could not publish under his own name. The weekly parts of *Oliver Twiss* until No. 56 (21 January 1839) have Lloyd's imprint, but Nos 56–57 read 'W. Haydon, 30, Turnham-place, Curtain-road'; Nos 58–65 read 'T. Haydon, 56, Long Acre'; and the remainder (from 8 March 1839) Nos 66–79 read 'Published by E. Lloyd for J. Graves, Printer, 30 Curtain Road, Shoreditch'.

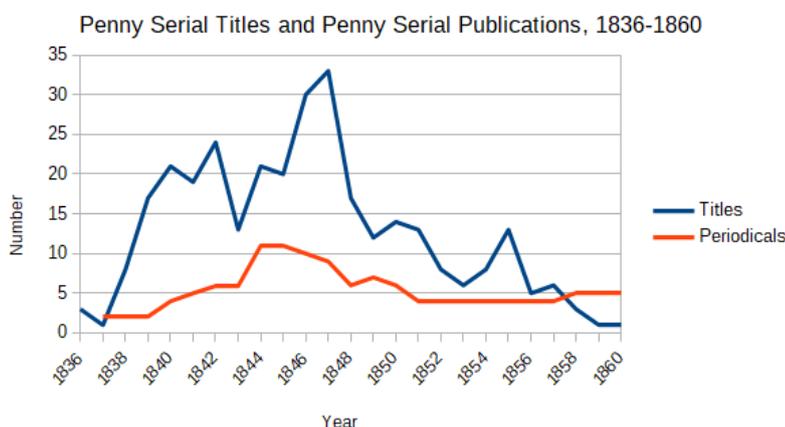


Figure 7. *The number of penny serial titles issued 1836–1860 and the number of periodicals bearing penny serial fiction from the database 'Price One Penny'*

38 John Farlow Wilson, *A Few Personal Recollections by An Old Printer* (London: Gresham Press, 1896), 34.

After further Dickensesque titles—*Nickelas Nicklebery* (1838) and *Mister Humphries' Clock* (1840), Lloyd concentrated on original serial fiction by Prest, Rhymer and others, publishing some 201 titles during the next twenty years from various addresses and finally from his establishment in Salisbury Square off Fleet Street, causing the genre to gain the name of 'Salisbury Square Fiction'.³⁹ Lloyd was very proud of the fact that a previous occupant of the building was none other than Samuel Richardson, printer, and author of *Pamela*, 'the most famous literate servant of the previous century'.⁴⁰

Marie Léger-St-Jean has compiled a comprehensive database of penny serial novels and their publishers.⁴¹ The publishers listed are, without exception, based in London and more than that, they are clustered around The Strand, Holywell St, Fleet St and Wych St, where Lloyd started his career. Figure 7 shows the number of penny serial novel titles printed from 1836–60 counted by the number of dates on title pages, although there are some 760 issues in Léger-St-Jean's database only 313 have dates on the title page, possibly favouring one publisher over another and accounting for gaps in the figures.⁴² Circulation data for these essentially ephemeral works is hard to obtain, although Lloyd claimed sales of 95,000 in 1842 for his *Penny Sunday Times*, which, even accounting for hyperbole, gives an idea of its reach.⁴³ Brantlinger suggests that Lloyd was more successful than Knight in

39 Helen Smith, 'Edward Lloyd and His Authors', in *Edward Lloyd and His World* (Routledge, 2019), 48.

40 Jean Fernandez, *Victorian Servants, Class, and the Politics of Literacy* (London: Routledge, 2009), 2.

41 Léger-St-Jean, Marie. *Price One Penny: A Database of Cheap Literature, 1837–1860*, <<https://priceonepenny.info>> [accessed 01 July 2020].

42 Figures from Marie Léger St Marie's database "Price One Penny" and from personal correspondence.

43 'Sixteen Large Quarto Pages for One Penny!', *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper* (London, 11 December 1842), 20.

reaching the working-class audience, as his readers rejected the Utilitarian proselytising that infused the latter's publications.⁴⁴

Lloyd also pioneered sales techniques that are still in use today. Each of his publications contained compelling advertisements for others; the first issue of a new penny serial was often given away free along with the second; his penny publications appeared in many shops, tobacconists, and sweet stalls as well as traditional newsagents, and he had agents in at least twenty-three towns and cities 'reaching as far as Glasgow and Exeter'.⁴⁵

44 Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson*, 97.

45 Catling, *My Life's pilgrimage*, 39; Smith, 'Edward Lloyd and His Authors', 43.

Chapter 4: Lloyd's Early Newspapers

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 8. 'Waiting for Lloyd's Newspaper', after Haydon's 'Waiting for The Times'¹

Until recently, Lloyd featured only marginally in the majority of books on the history of nineteenth-century British journalism which often concentrate solely on *The Times*, as noted by Andrew Hobbs.² Only those authors concerned with the population making up the mass of the 'mass media' have thought him worthy of study, yet during his lifetime and immediately after his death, he was referred to as 'The Father of the Cheap Press'³. In *Edward Lloyd and his World*, Sarah Lill and Rohan McWilliam pose the question of

1 Bernard Darwin, *The Dickens Advertiser* (London: Elkin Mathews & Marrot, 1930), 107.

2 Ray Boston, *The Essential Fleet Street: Its History And Influence* (Blandford, 1990), 117; Andrew Hobbs, 'The Deleterious Dominance of The Times in Nineteenth-Century Scholarship', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 18.4 (2013), 472–97.

3 Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), 188; *Fortunes Made in Business. Life Struggles of Successful Business* (London: Amalgamated Press Ltd, 1901), 255.

whether Lloyd was a radical reformer or simply a shrewd businessman exploiting the new mass market.⁴

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 9. *The Penny Sunday Times*, 24 May 1840.

Lloyd's *Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette*, published from 5 April 1840, has been discussed in the context of penny serial novels appearing in its pages, but it was really his first popular, penny newspaper. The format was modelled on *Cleave's Weekly Police Gazette* and had a three-column wide wood engraving illustration on the front page. At first glance these images are as sensational and fictitious as the rest of the paper, but on closer inspection—at least of the first 52 issues—the main illustration, the hook to reel in the purchaser, relates very closely to a current event: sensational but not fictional. There is

4 *Edward Lloyd and His World: Popular Fiction, Politics and the Press in Victorian Britain*, ed. by Sarah Louise Lill and Rohan McWilliam, The Nineteenth Century Series (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 15.

usually a headline and image, but any text is background information, not reportage, to comply with the rules on disseminating news. In printing sensational crime stories, Lloyd was following the strong tradition of popular publishing he had experienced in Wych Street. The issues of 17 May 1840 and 24 May 1840 both depicted the murder of Lord Russell on 8 May and its subsequent investigation.⁵ The issue of 5 July 1840 shows the murderer, Courvoiser, looking rather glum in his cell on the eve of his execution and the following week there is an image of the execution itself which was reputed to have been attended by 40,000 people, including Dickens and Thackeray who were both revolted by the spectacle and subsequently campaigned against public executions.⁶ *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* similarly disapproved of these 'fearful and depraving spectacles' and stated that they 'altogether fail in the object for which the Legislature first intended them'.⁷ In the 1840s, the paper reported executions without comment on the principle of the death penalty but continued to campaign against *public* executions. This began to change in the 1850s and the paper started to hope that 'the day may not be distant in which there will be no one to cheer the gallows, or the men by whom it was put in motion' and that 'capital punishment will, at no very distant period of time, cease to exist amongst us'.⁸ It supported the growing campaigns against the death penalty and an editorial on 20 October 1867 condemned the recent scenes of 'legal life-taking. [...] The most ingenious and earnest

5 *Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette*, 17 May 1840; 24 May 1840; 5 July 1840; 12 July 1840.

6 William Makepeace Thackeray, 'Going to See a Man Hanged', in *Sketches and Travels in London* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1887), 227–43.

7 *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 11 January 1846, 10.

8 *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 21 April 1850, 5; *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 2 May 1850, 1.

advocates of the gallows are always ready “to hang some poor scamp for the glory of God””.⁹

In using sensational images, Lloyd tapped into public interest in current events and was able to reach even those who could not read by telling the story in pictures. This format owed much to the long history of chapbooks and broadsides featuring murders and executions popular in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ This was long before Herbert Ingram launched his *Illustrated London News* on 14 May 1842 at 6d., featuring exactly the same sort of stories favoured by Lloyd—those that could have happened at any time, but which made a good image: a conflagration in Hanover; a Canadian steamboat explosion; a French train crash; the great and the good: Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt and Queen Victoria’s Masquerade Ball.

Perhaps feeling that Ingram had stolen his format, six months later on 9 October, Lloyd typically responded by inserting the word ‘Penny’ into the title, and his *Lloyd’s Penny Illustrated Newspaper* at just one penny per issue was born. It contained:

Eighteen Engravings, executed in the first style of art, of her most gracious Majesty’s Return, and other highly interesting subjects, illustrative of her Visit to Scotland.¹¹

At the same time, he was publishing *Lloyd’s Penny Atlas* and *Lloyd’s Penny Weekly Miscellany of Romance and General Interest* neither of which pretended to be newspapers but contained serial fiction.

9 *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 20 October 1867, 6.

10 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), 191.

11 *Morning Advertiser*, 29 September 1842, 1.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 10. Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper, 8 January 1843.

Despite following the formula of the *Penny Sunday Times* and avoiding reporting on current events, the authorities demanded that his latest 'newspaper' carry the Newspaper Stamp. Rather than contesting the imposition as Carpenter and Hetherington had done in the 1830s, Lloyd complied and relaunched his title, stamped, as *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper* on 27 November 1842, now priced at twopence (to account for the payment of the tax of one penny per copy) with the inevitable image of a shipwreck on the front page.

He set out his intentions and hopes for the future, making several interesting points.

First, that the initial offering

was finding its place in thousands of the highest families in this kingdom, as well as cheering the fire-side of the humblest mechanic, and rendering lightsome his hours of labour,

Second, that the paper was now free from the necessity of *avoiding* factual reporting of current events and

how much more shall we be enabled to do now that we have struck the shackles from our hands, and come forward with our news legalized by that stamp, the want of which did, to a certain extent, cripple our exertions.

Third, that it was politically independent:

We have no private interest to serve—no *party* to laud. We enter the political ocean a free trader. Our flag is *independence*, and we will nail it to the mast.

And finally, that the economics of production—the ability to keep the price low—was only possible by the use of up-to-the-minute technology:

But we have called in the giant arm of science to our aid; and by our extensive machinery, multiplied resources, and a system of distributed labour, we are enabled to perform this feat; which, without such aids, would be impossible.

Despite a respectable circulation of 32,000, Lloyd announced on 24 September 1843 that the price would have to be raised to threepence and the illustrations dropped. The fact that the illustrations could now be omitted was a testament to the number of *readers* the paper had acquired. It was no longer bought simply for the pictures. The size of the paper was also increased to twelve pages with five columns on each page, so it had more reading for less money than before, particularly compared to its rivals such as the recently launched *News of the World*.¹²

Promising to emulate all the virtues and to avoid all the vices of other papers, ‘The News of the World’ hardly kept its word. Its Radicalism was more violent than that of ‘Lloyd’s,’ and it was more freely supplied with offensive news; but it pleased many readers, and in the course of twelve years it attained a circulation of nearly 110,000, being some two or three thousand ahead of ‘Lloyd’s.’¹³

Looking at Lloyd’s promises and assertions in turn: first, that the paper had widespread popular readership—not only the ‘humblest mechanic’ but those in the finest homes. One feature of Lloyd’s publications was the ‘To Correspondents’ column with direct interactions with readers, a good indicator of the paper’s readership. Patricia Anderson analyses the correspondence pages and their notional contributors, and, whilst acknowledging that some of the letters might have been fabricated by the editor, she finds

12 *News of the World* launched on 29 September 1843.

13 Henry Fox-Bourne, *English Newspapers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1887).

a large proportion appear to be from working people.¹⁴ Similarly, Virginia Berridge analyses the content of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* and *Reynolds Weekly* to find the preoccupations of working people well served.¹⁵ The 'To Correspondents' entries are certainly a comprehensive mixture of answers to questions about the paper's distribution, semi-legal advice, financial advice, humour, and campaigning, although it is frustrating that they do not state the correspondent's original question:

I. F. ATKINSON.—“*The Fairy Dream*” is pretty; but the present are not times for dreaming.¹⁶

W. P. (Knightsbridge).—*There is no Act of Parliament to exempt soldiers from the tax on hawkers and pedlars; but a child or servant residing under the roof of the person taking out a licence would be protected if travelling in company with the holder.*

J. O. H. N.—*Why should women and children be omitted? Have they not interests to be protected?*

W. L.—*The milliners shall not want our advocacy. The system by which they are crushed is by no means exclusive in its operations, as many thousands of their equally unfortunate countrywomen too well know.*¹⁷

B. B.— *Most decidedly.*

G. R.— *Apply at the Stamp Office.*

A POOR MAN—*If you have no written contract, you are at the mercy of the party referred to.*

A HAIR-DRESSER.—*It shall to the barber's, with your beard.*¹⁸

14 Patricia J. Anderson, ‘“Factory Girl, Apprentice and Clerk”: The Readership of Mass-Market Magazines, 1830–60’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 25.2 (1992), 64–72.

15 Virginia Berridge, ‘Popular Journalism and Working Class Attitudes 1854–1886: A Study of Reynolds’s Newspaper, Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper and the Weekly Times’ (Birkbeck, 1976).

16 *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 26 February 1843, 4.

17 *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 02 April 1843, 4.

18 *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 11 February 1844, 4.

The leading column on 1 January 1843 claimed that the prolific illustrations ‘hastily executed and, most frequently, imaginary representations, of alleged facts’ were having the effect of driving out actual news and in any case ‘The graphic delineations of the Pen speak more forcibly to the heart than the more finished efforts of pictorial art’.¹⁹ Although, it has been suggested that the real reason for the removal of the pictures from his newspaper was cost, Lloyd was still publishing his other illustrated penny publications and had streamlined their production so perhaps his explanation is genuine—he had found an audience for the sort of news reporting and the miscellany of other interests that he had provided, and his public wanted more of it.²⁰ Certainly, on 15 January 1843, after only seven numbers, Lloyd dropped ‘Illustrated’ from the title and renamed it as *Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper*. Whilst the original title and masthead were obvious references to *Illustrated London News*, the newspaper retained ‘London’ in its title for several years to come, showing Lloyd’s commitment to the city and its people, even as its readership spread nationally.

The independence of this new iteration was shown by its continuing campaign on behalf of the poor: its front page has a two-column editorial ‘Education, Habit, Crime and Punishment’ which complains about punishments for the ‘crime of poverty’ (referring to the continued reaction to the Poor Laws) and bemoans not only the lack of serious attention being paid to education of the masses, but the fact that what instruction was available was motivated by religious fervour and sectarianism.

children are so thoroughly saturated [...] by chapters, verses, collects, and texts of scripture that the reverence with which the subject should be approached is fairly

19 ‘Editorial’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Illustrated London Newspaper*, 1 January 1843, 1.

20 Melissa Score, ‘A Radical Relationship’, in *Edward Lloyd and His World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 185; Vizetelly, 1, 271.

trodden underfoot, [...] the determined imposition of “sound Scriptural Principles” [...] tends more than anything else to turn out dunces and hypocrites, instead of scholars and Christians.²¹

Similarly, the centre column of page 4 is a ‘Letter to the Editor’ entitled ‘The Cry of the Poor’ commenting on the iniquities in workhouses perpetrated by the New Poor Law of 1834

asylums [...] arbitrarily perverted from their true intent, by a board of irresponsible and hard-hearted Commissioners.

The 1834 Act had been intended as a temporary measure but was renewed for a further five years in 1842. Opposition to it and its provisions became part of the Chartist cause, readily supported by Carpenter who had edited the newspaper *The Charter* from 1839 to 1840 and would become Lloyd’s editor in 1844.

Lloyd’s newspaper was being continually enlarged as in this advertisement in the *Morning Advertiser* for 12 January 1843 suggests:

GIVE YOUR ORDERS for LLOYD’S WEEKLY LONDON NEWSPAPER, which will next Sunday, the 15th instant, be enlarged to the enormous size of three feet three inches, by two feet six inches, containing forty gigantic columns of closely-printed matter, in beautiful clear type, cast expressly for it by the Austin Foundry.

The advert promised that the paper would contain as much news as any other Sunday paper and included a comprehensive list of categories of information from:

the Gazette, Markets, the Funds, Police Reports, Old Bailey news, Parliamentary Proceedings, Naval Intelligence, the Court, Theatricals, Foreign Intelligence, full reports from the Courts of Law, Births, Marriages, and Deaths, and every event of

21 William Carpenter, ‘Education, Habit, Crime and Punishment’, *Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper*, 15 January 1843, 1.

interest up to the latest moment of publication, forming the best Family Newspaper (stamped) for Twopence Halfpenny.

Hendricks describes this as a central feature of newspaper publishing: ‘the ability to combine mass production of a standardised product with serving differentiated wants and needs of readers. [...] It is this ability to combine different functions for different customers into one physical product that makes it economically viable.’ Lloyd’s later newspaper, *The Daily Chronicle*, would enable the creation of a ‘bundle’ of readers for sale to advertisers—although this could only be exploited after the abolition of Advertising Duty in 1853.²²

The Newspaper Stamps paid for by each newspaper *should* be an indication of how many copies were sold, but there are various problems with this in that the record is of precisely that: the number of Newspaper Stamps paid for. The stamps were placed on blank paper on which the text was subsequently printed. Thus, there is not a direct correlation. Sheets may have been spoiled in the printing, more stamps might have been bought than printed, or copies properly stamped may have not been sold. As outlined by J. Don Vann, there were various accusations of newspaper malpractice with respect to circulation *vs* the number of stamps bought, and in 1844 the Government stopped publishing individual newspaper returns, and subsequently listed only aggregates.²³ Precise circulation figures for Lloyd’s early newspapers have therefore proved elusive except for his ever-optimistic data. On Thursday 19 January 1843, the following advertisement appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*:

22 Patrick Hendriks, ‘The Economic Fundamentals of Newspaper Publishing’, in *Newspapers: A Lost Cause? Strategic Management of Newspaper Firms in the United States and The Netherlands*, ed. by Patrick Hendriks (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1999), 15–51.

23 J. Don Vann, ‘The “Times,” the “Morning Chronicle,” and the Newspaper Stamp Tax’, *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 18, 1972, 36–41.

PUBLIC APOLOGY.—EDW. LLOYD begs to apologise to those Persons who were unable to procure a Copy of LLOYD’S WEEKLY LONDON NEWSPAPER on Sunday, the 15th inst. Not having calculated its sale would be so enormous, he could not meet the extraordinary demand, but will endeavour to do so in future.

There are two possible reasons for Lloyd’s ‘miscalculation’. The precarious economics of Lloyd’s operation and pricing meant that he could not afford to lose a single sale, but neither could he afford to produce an excess as there was no mechanism for reclaiming duty paid for an unsold copy.

To address the problem of shortage of supply he also needed to invest in the latest technology and on 25 June 1843 the paper announced that new machines manufactured by Thomas Middleton of Southwark were to be installed. Lloyd’s rival, the *Illustrated London News*, had made a similar announcement just two weeks previously. At the time, both newspapers had comparable circulations so a printing press that served the needs of one would equally serve the needs of the other. This machine was a double two-feeder machine where each part had a movable bed, the type passing under one cylinder in one direction and a second on its return. This allowed two sheets to be printed in one cycle. This mechanism was then duplicated allowing a second sheet to be printed, or the first sheet perfected.²⁴

24 “‘The Illustrated London News’ Steam Printing Machines’, *Illustrated London News* (London, 2 December 1843), 12.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 11. *Middleton double two-feeder flat-bed cylinder.*

This combination was said to be able to print 2000 perfect impressions per hour, at first sight not much of an improvement on Koenig's first cylinder press except that it printed twice as many sheets and it was not necessary to duplicate the formes. Nevertheless, to produce 32,000 copies the machine would have had to be run for 16 hours just printing one sheet, or four pages; at that time, the newspaper was twelve pages, or three sheets. There are several versions of a further report from the *Illustrated London News* that they had 'just completed the erection of *two* beautiful Steam Printing Machines, upon an improved principle' and if Lloyd had done the same, printing a 32,000 copy edition of a twelve-page newspaper could be completed in 24 hours. In fact, as both Lloyd's paper and the *Illustrated London News* were published weekly, some sheets could have been printed well in advance, leaving the outer sheet to be printed last.

The Newspaper Stamp figures recorded some 32,300 weekly in the first quarter of 1843, and the paper's reach had grown by 25% to 40,250 weekly by the end of its first year.

Alvar Ellegård provides us further figures for weekly circulation rising from 97,000 in 1855; 150,000 in 1860 to 500,000 in 1870.²⁵

Lloyd celebrated his paper's anniversary in January 1844, stressing his continuing desire to reach the poor working man:

And now, on the part of Mr. Lloyd, the proprietor of this paper, we beg, in his name, to offer the tribute of his thanks for the unprecedented success that has attended his efforts to accelerate the march of *mind*. Through his enterprise a newspaper was first placed into the grasp of the poorest man in the empire, an achievement alone deserving the civic crown, were crowns now awarded to merit!²⁶

Despite the success of the new venture, Thomas Catling recalls:

Difficulties beset every step, trade troubles being aggravated by newsagents combining with the proprietors of higher priced papers in endeavouring to check circulation. All in vain, for Lloyd's had come to stay. Still, for seven or eight years, the struggle was very severe. A tax of eighteen pence on every advertisement shut out receipts from that source; the penny stamp on each copy had to be paid for in advance; and in addition there was an oppressive duty on paper. Mr. Lloyd told me that repeatedly he found himself, at the end of the week, in the position of not knowing where the money would come from to bring out the next number. The profits from the sale of a large run of tales, with gardening and other practical handbooks, proved the main source of revenue.²⁷

Consistently claiming its political independence under its early editor, William Carpenter, *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper* was clearly sympathetic to Chartism and other causes that concerned working people, such as the injustices of the Poor Law, the abolition of the

25 Alvar Ellegård, 'The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain: II. Directory', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 13, 1971, 3–22.

26 *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 14 January 1844, 4.

27 Thomas Catling, *My Life's Pilgrimage* (London: John Murray, 1911), 45.

Corn Laws and the campaign for shorter hours in factories. Charles Mitchell's 1846 *Newspaper Press Directory* listed *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* and described it as:

Democratic and Anti-Poor-Law. This paper appeals to the million on the two great principles of quantity and cheapness. [...] It is peculiarly the poor man's paper, and endeavours [...] to embrace as many articles of intelligence, [...] as it can contrive to compress together; giving prominence to police reports, and similar matters of popular interest. At the same time, its contents are far more creditable, and comprise far more of a light and literary character, than might be conceived.

Some forty years later, in 1882, Joseph Hatton interviewed Lloyd and described the paper as 'always a strong, out-spoken Liberal paper, this pioneer of the cheap press.'²⁸

In developing his mass market, Lloyd was a relentless self-publicist. There are several newspaper reports in October 1843 describing an incident in Victoria where two vans emblazoned with advertising for *Lloyds Weekly London Newspaper* caused an obstruction and Thomas Catling recalls many instances of Lloyd's exuberant publicity—posters on rocks in Wales; frequent trips to barbers' shops for a shave and to encourage them to stock the newspaper; a coin pressing machine for embossing pennies with adverts for the paper.²⁹

Edward Lloyd was not only a pioneer of the cheap newspaper press, but he was also pioneer of the system of publicity which regards the landscape as wonderfully improved by "bold advertisement." Wishing to extend the popularity of his paper yet further than had been effected by advertising throughout the country by bills stuck on rocks and walls and five-barred gates, and a strong democratic policy.³⁰

28 Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), 189.

29 Catling, *My Life's Pilgrimage*, 43.

30 Walter Jerrold, *Douglas Jerrold*, 2 vols (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), II.

The use of an embossed penny as advertising was highly symbolic for Lloyd as he had always wanted his publications to be affordable to everyone. Sadly, this particular stunt caused a Bill to be rushed through parliament in August 1853 to outlaw the practice.

IMAGES REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 12. *Lloyd's embossed penny advertising.*

Lloyd was not content for his newspaper to be the cheapest, he also wanted it to be the best. On 26 December 1847, it was announced that the paper was to be further enlarged and 'printed on superior paper with new type'.³¹ As the Newspaper Stamp Duty specified a maximum area of paper that could be used for the price, proprietors were forced to use small type to cram in as much information as possible, so it was important that it was legible, especially to those with limited reading skills.

IMAGES REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 13. *Lloyd's new type in use from 23 January 1848.*

31 'Great Improvement And Enlargement', *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 26 December 1847, 7.

The superior paper and new type over-stretched Lloyd's finances as on 10 January 1848 he was forced to assign all his property to his creditors—John Barry, paper merchant and Samuel Sharwood of the Austen Letter Foundry, Aldersgate—those very suppliers who had contributed to the paper's new look.³² Despite this setback, the edition of 23 January 1848 *was* printed with the new type and on superior paper and later, on 6 March 1848, it was claimed that

The result has been most satisfactory—an enormous additional sale, and a greater profit than was produced before the commencement of the experiment.

The difference and improvement in readability can clearly be seen in the examples shown in Figure 13.

Although the investigations into Lloyd's early readership by Anderson and Berridge's studies of the correspondence columns strongly show working people's interests, by 1852 the subjects of queries had changed from how to manage disputes with employers or masters, to semi-legal advice on being executors or chasing up debts—no longer advice to tenants, but advice to small landlords. The paper had not been abandoned by the working class but had been adopted by the middle class. The advertisement in Figure 14 shows two proper young ladies in a carriage driving through Hyde Park more interested in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* than The Crystal Palace behind them; their servant is similarly fixed on reading the contents.

32 *The Gazette*, (London, 3 March 1848), 895.

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 14. *Advertisement for Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper in 1851 with The Crystal Palace in the background.*³³

In acknowledging this new audience, Lloyd approached Douglas Jerrold to become his editor. A fixture of the literary London Liberal establishment, Jerrold had written many plays, sketches, and pieces for *Punch*, but most recently had seen his own *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* collapse leaving him in considerable debt. After initially demurring, he was persuaded to accept the post by the offer of £1000 per annum. Lloyd was obviously proud of his new editor and placed advertisements in many newspapers and, in his usual style, on placards on walls announcing the appointment.

The issue of 18 April 1852 proudly proclaimed 'EDITED BY DOUGLAS JERROLD' and the reaction from his former colleagues and the literary world to his editorship of Lloyd's paper was that Jerrold had 'found it in the gutter and annexed it to literature'.³⁴ Certainly the first letter to the editor on the iniquities of the Poor Law betrays the author's

33 Darwin, *Dickens Advertiser*, 111.

34 Henry Vizetelly, *Glances Back Through Seventy Years*, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd, 1893), I, 278.

acquaintance with *The Merchant of Venice*: ‘Hath a pauper senses, feelings, passions, impulses, a soul’, nevertheless, the concerns of the working class and iniquities of poverty remained a feature and the first column in the first issue under Jerrold’s editorship immediately starts mocking the Corn Laws:

THE CHEAP LOAF MEMORIAL

Two hundred and fifty thousand working Englishmen have severally paid down a penny protest against the social and political wickedness of the Corn Laws.

As expected, his tenure also attracted other members of the literary establishment, such as Horace Mayhew and Hepworth Dixon, to write for the paper, although according to Catling:

Despite the great interest created in the literary world, there was no immediate advance in the circulation, which ranged between 60,000 and 70,000 a week.³⁵

On the second anniversary of Douglas Jerrold’s editorship the official returns only showed an average weekly sale of 89,385 copies.

As discussed earlier, the greatest impediments to a cheap press for working people were the so-called Taxes on Knowledge, as Cobden said in 1850 with reference to the Newspaper Stamp Duty:

So long as the penny lasts, there can be no daily press for the middle or working class. Who below the rank of a merchant or wholesale dealer can afford to take in a daily paper at five pence? [...] The result is that the daily press is written for its customers—the aristocracy, the millionaires, and the clubs and news-rooms. The great public cannot have its organs of the daily press, because it cannot afford to pay for them. [...] The governing classes will resist the removal of the penny stamp, not on account of the loss of revenue—*that* is no obstacle with a surplus of two or three

35 Catling, *My Life’s Pilgrimage*, 47.

millions—but because they know that the stamp makes the daily press the instrument and servant of the oligarchy.³⁶

Lloyd's original attempt to introduce a paper priced at one penny had been defeated by the Stamp Office and he became a strong campaigner for repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge reporting on every development in the campaign.³⁷ Douglas Jerrold was also on the Committee for the Association for Promoting the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge.³⁸ Cobden quotes Dickens's opposition to reform in 1852,

for ever writing of his desire to elevate the masses and to put down insolence in high places. I saw a note from him in which he refused to sign a petition for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, on the express ground that he would not promote a deluge of printer's ink in England similar to what he had seen in America.³⁹

Partial reform was eventually achieved with the abolition of the Advertising Duty in 1853 and the Newspaper Stamp in 1855. During the Crimean War, several unstamped war sheets were published daring the Government to take action against them. They gained a great deal of support from the public

when their relations were shedding their blood for the Government, and they were taxed to know whether they were dead or alive.⁴⁰

Despite fears that abolition 'would inundate the country with sedition and blasphemy' the Newspaper Stamp Abolition Act received its Royal Assent on 15 June 1855 allowing newspapers to be published unstamped fourteen days later.⁴¹ Accordingly, *Lloyd's Weekly*

36 John Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co, Ltd, 1908), II. 421.

37 'The People's Brain Tax', *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 24 October 1852, 1.

38 'Taxes On Knowledge.', *Examiner*, 2340, 1852, 777.

39 Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden*, ch. xxiv.

40 Collet Dobson Collet, *History of the Taxes On Knowledge*, 2 vols (T. F. Unwin, 1899), II. 16.

41 *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 26 March 1855, 2.

Newspaper of 1 July 1855 appeared at the reduced price of 2*d.* and Lloyd was much closer to his long-stated desire to place his paper ‘into the grasp of the poorest man in the empire’. The reduction in price had the not unexpected effect of increasing circulation, which was reported to have increased to 160,000 weekly by December 1855⁴².

A ‘mass media’ requires two things: demand, and supply. By publishing a newspaper that satisfied the demands of a growing number of people from the ‘highest families in this kingdom’ to the ‘humblest mechanic’ and affordable to both, Lloyd was becoming increasingly unable to keep pace with demand and it

was impracticable to print a sufficient number of that journal to meet the weekly increasing demand (notwithstanding he has erected the finest printing machinery this country has produced, employed duplicate copies and used all other available means)⁴³

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 15. *The Hoe six feeder type-revolving machine.*

42 *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 30 December 1855, 6.

43 *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 1 June 1856, 6.

Since 1851, *The Times* and the *Illustrated London News* had installed machines that operated on a different principle to the traditional flat-bed cylinders⁴⁴. The type was placed around a large revolving cylinder rather than flat on the bed and there were up to nine impression cylinders which could thus produce nine copies for every revolution of the type. These machines were not wholly efficient, and Lloyd decided to import a different design made in America by Hoe & Co which had six impression cylinders and could produce 15,000 impressions per hour. There had been many attempts to create a rotating printing surface either by using special trapezoidal shaped type which was a nuisance to deal with or by fixing normal type onto a polygonal surface. Neither was successful and Hoe's solution was particularly directed to newspapers whose format consisted of narrow columns. He made specially shaped chases called 'turtles' which locked normal type into a slightly curved frame onto a cylinder with a circumference of over six feet. The installation at Lloyd's became such a good demonstration of this principle that in the next twenty years this machine dominated the UK newspaper industry, with machines having up to ten impression cylinders and producing upwards of 25,000 impressions per hour⁴⁵. The relationship between Lloyd and Hoe prospered, the latter establishing a workshop and office in Tudor Street, adjacent to Lloyd's office in Salisbury Square and at the heart of Fleet Street.

44 James Moran, *Printing Presses: History and Development from the Fifteenth Century to Modern Times* (London: Faber, 1973), 185.

45 Frank E. Comparato, *Chronicles of Genius and Folly* (California: Labyrinthos, 1979).

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONSFigure 15. *Hoe & Co.'s curved chase — the 'turtle'.*

After 1855, there was but one of the Taxes on Knowledge still remaining—the duty on paper. On 12 July 1858, a meeting of Representatives of the Metropolitan Newspaper and Periodical Press was held at Peele's Coffee House. In the chair was Milner Gibson, MP, who had long campaigned for the abolition of all these taxes, and The Newspaper And Periodical Press Association For Obtaining The Repeal Of The Paper Duty was formed to work in conjunction with the Society for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge.⁴⁶ Edward Lloyd was on the Committee and contributed £100 to the initial funds.⁴⁷ After three years of campaigning and a couple of false starts, the Paper Duty was abolished in September 1861. There had been much discussion in parliament that the newspaper proprietors would simply pocket the savings, but:

The Proprietor of LLOYD'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, having determined to give to the public MUCH MORE THAN THE WHOLE BENEFIT of the REPEAL OF THE PAPER DUTY, has reduced the price of this journal, to One Penny, thereby showing that the BEST NEWSPAPER can be produced at the LOWEST PRICE.⁴⁸

46 'The Tax Upon Paper.' (The Newspaper And Periodical Press Association For Obtaining The Repeal Of The Paper Duty, 1858).

47 Vizetelly, *Glances Back*, II. 43.

48 'To the Public', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 5 September 1861, 6.

The paper had not lost its enthusiasm for campaigning against injustice and on behalf of the working man, and the issue features a long column about the conflict between Capital and Labour, before a report of a successful case against an employer who was forcing employees to accept vouchers for the company shop in lieu of wages; a favourable report on the bricklayers' strike; and an appalling report of flogging at a public school where the charge of assault against Rev. Mitchinson was dismissed by the magistrates. Lloyd had finally realised his twenty-year dream and *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* of 15 September 1861 was priced at the iconic one penny.

Although the repeal of Paper Duty allowed Lloyd's long-held dream to be fulfilled, other newspaper proprietors also sought to increase circulation by likewise reducing the price of their offerings. This proliferation in print, in turn, caused a shortage of paper. Determined as always to control his costs, Lloyd anticipated this, had obtained a lease on land at Bow Bridge in May 1859, and had been quietly building the paper factory announced in 1861:⁴⁹

the Proprietor, at the expense of THIRTY THOUSAND POUNDS, has had PAPER MILLS erected at Bow-bridge, covering Two Acres of ground, and fitted with costly machinery.⁵⁰

The increase in demand for paper had also caused a shortage in the raw materials for its manufacture, traditionally rags, and papermakers had to search for alternatives. Thomas Routledge (1819-1887) had conducted extensive research on the subject, discovered that esparto grass from Spain was a good source, and proceeded to obtain large quantities and a monopoly on its supply and processing. He claimed 'Assuredly without this new adjunct

49 'Conveyance; 1. William Man Jun., of Woodford, Essex. 2. Edward Lloyd of Bromley', 1874, Tower Hamlets Local History and Archives.

50 *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 15 September 1861, 6.

the cheap press, hailed as a great boon, would not now occupy its present position and the cost of paper [...] would have been enormously enhanced.’⁵¹ Lloyd began using esparto at Bow from January 1862, but to free himself from Routledge’s monopoly, he leased over 200,000 acres of land in Algeria and imported large quantities directly, first for his mill at Bow, and then for his large mill at Sittingbourne which was, some 40 years later, the largest in the world.⁵²

Lloyd went on to acquire the *Clerkenwell News* in 1877, a moderately successful paper which had started life as a vehicle for local advertisements in Shoreditch reflecting ‘a full-blooded, bustling lower middle-class and artisan life’, which he turned into a highly successful national newspaper, the *Daily Chronicle* whilst still retaining the small advertisements which ‘revealed the wants, the hopes, and the working life of the honest burghers who crowded London’.⁵³

51 *Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser*, 30 March 1866, 2.

52 *London Evening Standard*, 28 March 1866, 2.

53 R.J. Cruikshank, *Roaring Century, 1846–1946* (London: H. Hamilton, 1946), 241.

Conclusion

Edward Lloyd was a reforming influence, and the cause of reform was consistently supported in his newspapers. By returning to the original source material, this research has shed new light on his early innovations in publishing. His *Penny Sunday Times and Police Gazette* launched in 1840, was not only a popular vehicle for serial fiction, as other commentators have noted, but the first illustrated mass market *newspaper*. Throughout his life, the Father of the Cheap Press, supported the working man by providing fiction and news at an affordable price continually campaigning on his behalf. It could be said that far from exploiting an emerging literate working-class he vigorously encouraged and developed it, embracing new technology and making money only by his enthusiasm and sheer quantity of his penny publications. He expanded popular readership beyond London such that *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, the Sunday paper he founded in 1843, became the first in the world to achieve a circulation of one million copies.

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