



The News of the World was founded by John Browne Bell and first published on October 1, 1843 “to give the poorer classes of society a paper that would suit their means, and to the middle, as well as the rich, a journal, which from its immense circulation, should command their attention.” By the end of 1844 the paper had the largest circulation of any weekly in Britain. However, following Bell’s death in 1855 the paper’s fortunes declined until 1891 when the Bell family sold out to a consortium headed by George Riddell, Lascelles Carr and Charles Jackson.

Emsley Carr was appointed editor, a post he held for the next 50 years. The paper developed circulation boosting schemes such as free insurance and a wealth of free gifts, special offers and reader participation such as its Knights of the Road Guild, launched in 1928 to promote courtesy by motorists. Carr also established the right to sell newspapers in Scotland on Sundays.

In the early 1900s the News of the World published self-help books, including Law for the Million and Medicine for the Million. These provided guidance to readers who could not otherwise afford professional help. In 1942 Professor John Hilton was recruited to write articles answering readers’ problems. The paper subsequently bought the John Hilton Advisory Bureau and continued to run it and publish advice articles until 1974.

THE POLITICIAN.
THE POSITION OF THE NATION
In presenting to the public, the first number of this paper, it will naturally be expected that a few words should be addressed by its conductors to those whose patronage it claims, and to whose favour it is confidently hoped, it will prove itself entitled. The general utility of all classes, is the idea with which this paper originated. To give to the poorer classes of society a paper that would suit their means, and to the middle, as well as the rich, a journal, which from its immense circulation, should command their attention, have been the influencing motives that have caused the appearance of “THE NEWS OF THE WORLD.” We shall make no apology for those motives, because, we conceive, that in their accomplishment we shall attain an end, that in the present state of England is not only desirable, but absolutely necessary. Journalism for the rich man, and journalism for the poor, has up to this time, been as broadly and distinctly marked, as the manners, the dress, and the habitations of the rich, are from the customs, the squalor, and the dens of the poor. The paper for the wealthy classes is high priced, it is paid for by them, and it helps to lull them in the security of their prejudices. The paper for the poorer classes is on the other hand, low priced, and it is paid for by them; it feels bound to pander to their passions. TRUTH, when it offends a prejudice, and shews the evil of passion, is frequently excluded from both. The first is often as remarkable for its talent, for its early intelligence, as the other, we regret to say, is for the absence of talent, and the staleness of its news. What then, is desirable? A paper that will combine the attractions of the rich newspaper, and that from the smallness of its price, will be certain to secure a circulation amongst the poor and the rich. It will serve as a point of approximation—and we think it cannot but be serviceable by doing so; for it will tell the truth to all, and of all. It will seek for the patronage of no party—it will conceal neither the merits nor the faults of any party, but it will aim alone at doing good service to old England, by maintaining her glory and security, the prosperity of all classes of the people. This is our object, and now let us see whether the present state of affairs, do not call for a paper, such as “THE NEWS OF THE WORLD” will prove itself to be?

The News of the World boasted a lively mixture of news stories, exposés, gossip and human interest stories about politicians and celebrities of the day. As its 1960s advertising slogan said “all human life is there”. Notable contributors included Winston Churchill and Edgar Wallace, Archbishop of York and Canterbury. It also carried biographical serialisations, such as those of serial killer John George Haigh and singer and actress Diana Dors. The paper’s crime stories were a particular strength. Its crime library and murder index were world-renowned and the paper helped the police bring a number of criminals such as Buck Ruxton and Herbert Leonard Mills to justice.

The News of the World also launched “Wake Up England”, a scheme to discover and develop athletes for the 1924 Paris Olympics. This culminated in the Miniature Olympiad held at Stamford Bridge, known as the first British Games which it sponsored until the 1960s. The inaugural national darts competition the paper established in 1947 was the first competition to be played using a unified set of rules and board design. It ran until 1990.

All this drove mass circulation. Under Carr’s editorship it rose from about 50,000 to just over 4,000,000 by 1941. This culminated in 8,659,090 copies of the issue dated June 18, 1950 being printed, the highest print run in the world of an English language newspaper. Between 1949 and 1954 the paper’s circulation was above 8,000,000.

When Rupert Murdoch purchased the paper in January 1969 it was his first venture into the UK market. The Sunday colour magazine was introduced in 1981 and in 1984 the paper switched to a tabloid format. Fabulous was launched in 2008 to replace Sunday. The last issue was published on July 10, 2011.

