

The Daily News.

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In 1844 Charles Dickens was unhappy with the Morning Chronicle (1789-1862.) It had rejected some of his articles and did not pay him enough for those it published. The solution, he decided was to start a daily newspaper of his own and edit it himself.

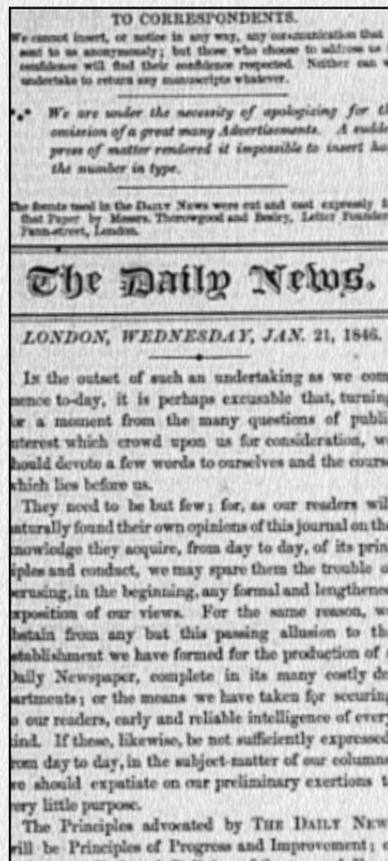
Bradbury and Evans, the owners of Punch became its proprietors. Backing for the Daily News came from Joseph Paxton who was to design the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851. Many of the leader writers, literary and musical critics and reporters engaged were induced by friendship for Dickens or offers of higher salaries to transfer their services from "The Morning Chronicle." Dickens's father was responsible for the parliamentary reporting.

The first issue of The Daily News appeared Wednesday 21 January, 1846. The start date was fixed to coincide with the expected announcement of the abolition of the Corn Laws.

"The principles advocated by The Daily News" wrote Dickens in his introductory article "will be the principles of progress and improvement, of education, civil and religious liberty, and equal legislation - principles such as its conductors believe the advancing spirit of the time requires, the condition of the country demands, and justice, reason, and experience legitimately sanction. Very much is to be done, and must be done, towards the bodily comfort, mental elevation, and general contentment of the English people."

But Dickens only edited 17 numbers. On 9 February he wrote to his friend John Forster saying he was 'tired to death and quite worn out,' despite being paid £2,000 per annum. He left the Daily News to fare as best as it could without him. John Forster stepped in and became the acting editor until the end of the year.

The paper may not have survived had it not been for the appointment of an experienced manager Charles Wentworth Dilke who joined the Daily News in April 1846. The first move by Dilke was to reduce its price from five pence to two pence halfpenny; to reduce the size from eight to four pages and to increase the editorial content. Circulation soon rose from 4,000 to 22,000 per day. But with the paper losing money Dilke was forced, in stages to raise the price back up to its old price. Sales dropped by three quarters but closure was avoided.



In 1870, two years after its new owners had transformed it into a penny paper, the Daily News was in trouble financially. But then the Daily News invested in a telegraphic system. In one week circulation increased from 50,000 to 150,000. This was in large part due to messages from the Franco-German/Prussian war front. Its war correspondents were encouraged to use the telegraph not only to relay brief facts but long descriptive accounts.

Readers were also supplied with records of everyday life during the Paris siege. These came from one of the paper's owners Henry Labouchere, later to become an MP, who was stranded there. 'Diary of a besieged resident in Paris' were ballooned out of Paris by the regular mail. To escape the censors he addressed his dispatches to the actress Henrietta Hobson who afterwards became Mrs Labouchere.

In 1901 George Cadbury, the Birmingham cocoa and chocolate manufacturer and social reformer bought The Daily News. A Quaker, his purpose was to espouse the Liberal cause and oppose Government

policy/war in South Africa. "The Daily News ought to be a power for peace in the South of England as the Manchester Guardian is in the North ... It is a tremendous responsibility, but I am not sure whether it is my duty to endeavour to effect this."

The newly radical Daily News hired HW Massingham a highly respected editor who had resigned from the Daily Chronicle when forbidden to speak out against the Boer War, as leader writer and parliamentary sketch writer. His debut for the Daily News was a brilliant account of the funeral of Queen Victoria at Windsor, (3 February 1901).

The Liberal party was in turmoil and night after night when parliament was in session Massingham wrote his sketch. Many who knew nothing of the debate took their opinions from him. His 'Pictures in Parliament' also chronicled the rise of a young politician Winston Churchill.

In 1910 the Daily News was amalgamated with the Star, a popular London evening newspaper. In January 1928 the Daily News, with circulation of 600,000 amalgamated with the Westminster Gazette, 300,000 and there were no circulation losses. Then in 1930 the Daily News was amalgamated with another Liberal paper, the failing Daily Chronicle and the News Chronicle was born with a total circulation of 1,400,000.



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Additional notes

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