## REYNOLDS'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER;

VOL. 2 - No. 10

THE HERITAGE of FLEET STREET

LONDON 2022

eynolds's Newspaper was one of the most popular and enduring of the mass-market Sunday newspapers aimed at a working-class readership in the Victorian period. It was launched in 1850 by the radical George W.M. Reynolds (1814-1879).

During the 1840s Reynolds established himself as one of the most popular novelists of the period, especially with his serial, The Mysteries of London (1844-48). This linked series of gothic tales, set mainly in the criminal underworld, was, according to some accounts, the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century. The Mysteries of London became an increasingly radical story as it depicted the plight of the poor, helping establish its author briefly as a leading Chartist. Reynolds spoke

at the great Chartist demonstration on Kennington Common in 1848 but thereafter confined himself to fiction and journalism. He launched a periodical titled Reynolds's' Political Instructor in 1849 which was an explicitly Chartist publication, made up of political commentaries that represented his enthusiasm for the liberal and revolutionary movements that had swept Europe the previous year.

Reynolds brought the Instructor to an end in 1850 and replaced it with what was originally titled Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper, published by John Dicks. It took the name Reynolds's Newspaper the following year which it remained until 1922 when it became Reynolds News. The format of the paper was not entirely new. It was clearly based on the kind of journalism sold on a Sunday that had been pioneered by Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper (1842-1931) and the News of the World (1843-2011). It thus specialised in stories of true crime, police investigations. train-wrecks and other forms of sensation. The paper frequently stressed the way that crime of various kinds was undermining the fabric of social life.

## No. 1.

THE PROSPECTS OF THE DEMO-CRATIC CAUSE.

Another glorious victory is gained by the cause o True Freedom : Engene Sue, the Red Republican and Socialist. Candidate, has triumphed by an immens majority of votes over the favourite of the Reaction sies. The writer of tales which everybody has read has beaten the hero of a romance for which no one sould wouch. In spite of the sickening, nauscating mendacious accounts of Loclere's bravery at the barri ades,-in spite of the mandlin sympathy which it was the endeavour to create on behalf of the shop-keeper by the representation of his stole patriotism in fetching out me son to avenge another's death,-in spite of all the sabolical attempts made by the ruffian Prefect of Police to put down the public meetings of the veritable Democrate,-in spite of all these influences, I say, truth has prevailed and Engene Sue is triumphant. Now what will the Times newspaper say ? How will it ac-senut for its prophecies of the inevitable success of M. Leelere? Never was there a public print so cursed by a misinformed, pig-headed, and purblind Paris coradent as this unfortunate Times which dares to call melf the "leading journal of Europe ?" Its predicament was as indicronsly miscrable on the occasion of the last elections as it is in the present instance. Both then and gow its readers were assured-most positively assuredthat the Red Republicans and Socialists had not a mance. What do the aristocracy and middle-classes of England think of their favourite journal note ! Will they still look upon its opinions as gospel? will they still regard its prescience as infallible? Poor wretched drivelling Times-it is not even so truthful, so sapient, the rights of labour. It also continued to report on struggles against tyranny abroad. Reynolds wrote editorial columns under his own name whilst the 'Gracchus' column was written his brother Edward who became editor after Reynolds's death in 1879. The paper remained the most significant radical publication after the end of Chartism.

Reynolds's Newspaper maintained the old-fashioned radical analysis which blamed the evils of society on the domination of the aristocracy. This meant that its columns were not too different from William Cobbett's denunciations of 'Old Corruption' in the early part of the century. The paper claimed that Britain suffered from 'flunkeyism' (too much deference to the monarchy and the elite). It thus became a vehicle for the republican movement whilst also championing the cause of independent labour representation in parliament. The cost of maintaining the

monarchy and the empire were viewed as a financial burden borne by ordinary people. It tended to approach forms of state intervention with suspicion (as radicals tended to do in that period) because they represented unfair interference with the lives of working-class people. An example of this would be the restrictions on Sunday trading (the one day many could shop) introduced in 1855. It also disliked the temperance movement and championed the right of men to drink. At the same time the paper insisted on its innate patriotism, insisting that it was the selfish elite that did not care about the welfare of the country. Although it originally cost 4d, the repeal of the newspaper stamp duty allowed for the reduction of price to a penny in the early 1860s and a boost in sales. The combination of sensation and radicalism proved very popular with a

What made Reynolds's Newspaper distinctive from other publications was its avowedly radical tone evident in its editorial columns which often drew political morals from crime stories, showing how there was one law for the rich an one for the poor. The paper remained true to the tenets of the Chartist movement demanding universal manhood suffrage and standing up for working-class and lower middle-class readership.

Whilst critical of the Liberal Party, the paper usually supported Gladstone. In the twentieth century, it came to support both Labour and the Co-Operative party. The paper continued to offer sensational and populist types of news coverage with a strong focus on gossip and scandal which meant that for some it was not quite respectable. In 1962 it became the Sunday Citizen and only ceased publishing in 1967. The paper was a key location where the political left responded effectively to popular culture.



THIS SERIES OF INFORMATION PANELS WITH THE ASSOCIATED WEB PAGES ON WWW.FLEETSTREETHERITAGE.COM AND THE FLEET STREET HERITAGE SUNDIAL WERE DEVELOPED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION AND PRIVATE DONORS.

© 2022 ENTIRE CONTENT IS LICENSED BY WWW.FLEETSTREETHERITAGE.COM UNDER CC BY-SA 4.0. TO VIEW A COPY OF THIS LICENSE, VISIT HTTP://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/4.0/

## Reynold's Weekly Newspaper Additional notes

Prepared by: Rohan McWilliam

Copyright: All material on this website is subject to our copyright. You may use any of our material under the terms of our Creative Commons – Attribution – Share Alike licence. This permits you to distribute, adapt, or build upon our work, for any purpose including commercially, as long as you (1) credit <u>www.fleetstreetheritage.com</u> (2) includes link where possible and (3) licence your new creation under identical terms to this.