

It was on the Front Page



A short guide to Sheffield's Newspapers

Newspapers are valuable because they are seen as the personal diary of a town, and reflect popular opinion, though bear in mind that even in 1807 Thomas Jefferson stated, "*Nothing can be believed that is seen in newspapers!*"

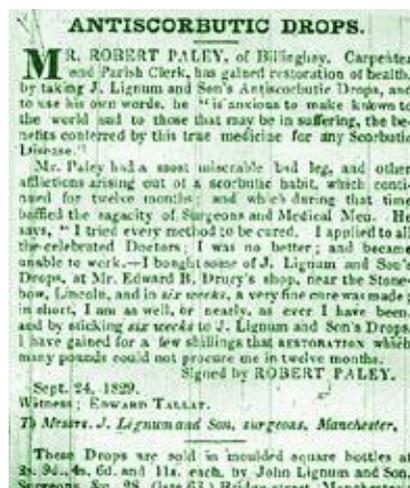
Local Newspapers can be divided into 3 main time periods: before 1840, 1840-1900 and 1900 onwards.

Before 1840

Newspapers from this time tended to be short and weekly because of stamp duty and taxes. They contained no headlines or pictures, and very little local news. Their focus was political, legal, business and international items. In July 1789 the Sheffield Register ran articles on a "Revolution in France" and in 1837 the Iris reported on the accession of Queen Victoria.

Contents of local newspapers included:

- **Births, marriages and deaths**, though mainly gentry from all over the county.
- **Crime news**, includes bankrupts and absconded apprentices.
- **Business section**
- **Travel information, Sports page**
- **Planning information**, eg turnpike roads or enclosures.
- **Entertainment section** which could be theatre events or serialisation of a novel.
- **Local Health and Social News** includes numbers of people admitted to hospital and workhouse, and in 1832 regular updates of victims of the cholera epidemic.



Local Newspapers at the time had distinct political leanings.

Conservative papers	Liberal papers
<i>Public Advertiser</i> 1760-1793 (few early copies).	<i>Sheffield Register</i> 1787-1794.
<i>Sheffield Courant</i> Replaced the Advertiser.	<i>Iris</i> replaced the Register in 1794 and ran until 1848.
<i>The Sheffield Mercury</i> , a Tory contender for the Iris, started in 1807 and ran until 1848.	<i>The Sheffield Independent</i> began in 1819, co-existing with the Iris, and survived until 1938.

1840 to 1900

This period saw a significant growth in newspapers. Stamp duty and taxes were abolished in 1855, and the first daily newspapers appeared at this time. The invention of the electric telegraph saw a rise in evening papers as the current day's trading information and racing results could be instantly recorded and distributed.

National news, such as the Great Exhibition of 1851, was still being reported in great detail, but local news was beginning to become more significant. Items such as local chartist activities, royal visits, the arrival of the railway, train crashes and temperance movements were all recorded as news items. Headlines and drawings made their first appearances.

Additional items to appear during this period were:

- **Births, marriages and deaths** and obituaries became more locally based.
- **Correspondence** - many letters were received on the issue of a half-day closing.
- **Court and Police Reports**
- **Editorials**
- **Council Reports** - Usually a special meeting rather than the general council meetings.
- **Sports News** - particularly after the half-day was put into practice, and football teams proliferated.
- **Accidents and Inquests**



- Church News
- Train timetable

Some newspapers from this time are:

<i>Sheffield Independent</i> Still going strong during this time and became a daily paper in 1861.
<i>Sheffield Times</i> 1846-1873.
<i>Sheffield Daily Telegraph</i> Began in June 1855 and was Sheffield's first daily newspaper.
<i>Sheffield Free Press, and Rotherham & Barnsley Advertiser</i>
<i>Star</i> Began as the <i>Sheffield Evening Star</i> in 1869 and amalgamated with the <i>Sheffield Evening Telegraph</i> in 1887.

The 20th Century

By now newspapers were seen to both inform and entertain. They had become much more local. Headlines were becoming more prominent, and local events such as the sinking of new collieries were often accompanied with photographs. However, such photographs could appear up to a week later, so don't give up the search! Only national news with local implications was now being reported, such as the general strike.

Items that appeared in 20th Century newspapers were as follows:

- **Wartime reporting** was different for security reasons. Reports were minimal and vague. Instead there was information on the town's war efforts, Government information such as what to do if your house was hit or where to obtain new ration books. During the First World War a thorough casualty report was produced often with photographs and a biography.
- **Feature columns**, such as women's or children's pages, or gardening items.
- **Local history columns** looking back at news from 25 or 50 years ago.
- **Classifications** were modernised to look as they do now, with items for sale, situations vacant, auctions and even lonely hearts.



- **Adverts** becoming fuller and often illustrated, particularly for fashion and furniture items.
- **Events** listing became much more comprehensive, along with adverts for all kind of leisure activities.

Local 20th century newspapers include:

<i>Star</i> , remains a daily, evening paper.
<i>Sheffield Independent</i> , taken over by the Sheffield Telegraph in 1938.
<i>Sheffield Telegraph</i> , stopped in 1986, restarted in 1989 as a weekly paper.
<i>Penistone, Stocksbridge and Hoyland Express</i> , 1898-1940. Became an edition of the <i>South Yorkshire Times</i> .
<i>Sheffield Guardian</i> 1906-1915. Weekly newspaper of the Sheffield Independent Labour.
<i>Green'Un</i> began 1907. A weekly sports paper.
<i>Sheffield Mail</i> , a daily paper running from 1920 to 1928.
<i>Sheffield Gazette, Journal and Leader</i> . Free.

Local newspapers are available at the Local Studies Library. Most are available on microfilm. The availability of titles which have not been filmed may depend on the condition of the original volumes.

Please email/telephone in advance to book a microfilm reader or to check if other non-microfilmed titles are available.

The *Sheffield Independent*, 1819 - 1900; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 1855 - 1903 and *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 1887 - 1897 are available online at www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies services collect and preserve original records and printed material relating to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The information dates from the 12th century to the present and relates to Sheffield, South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire.

Included are extensive collections of books • pamphlets • photographs • church registers • newspapers • census records • minutes • diaries • films • maps • deeds • records from schools • hospitals • businesses and charities • family estates • personal papers etc.

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