

‘The faithful, unflinching and unexampled organ of the working classes...’

How the *Northern Star* was published

There had never been anything like the *Northern Star*. For fifteen years it was at the centre of the Chartist cause, as a forum for radical ideas, organisational enabler and noticeboard for the movement. Mark Crail explores how the pioneering mass-circulation broadsheet was put together week after week.

‘I ASK MR NEESOM if he supposes that the labour attendant on preparing matter for a weekly paper is only equal to that of a tailor who makes a suit of clothes per week? If he does, he is strangely mistaken,’ declared William Rider, assistant clerk at the *Northern Star*, in a somewhat condescending response to criticisms raised by the London Chartist and tailor Charles Neesom. ‘One tailor and one shopboard is quite sufficient for the suit, but it requires more than one pen or one desk to do the work at the *Star* office.’¹

From the start, Feargus O’Connor conceived of the *Northern Star* as something on a far grander scale than the typical radical journal. O’Connor first talked to the Leeds publisher and printer Joshua Hobson about his ideas at the West Yorkshire anti-poor law meeting at Hartshead Moor on 15 May 1837. He wanted to launch a truly national newspaper, based in the North of England, and able ‘to bring coherence to local protest and radical organisation’². O’Connor was, he confided, fed up with speaking at endless radical meetings only to have his words ignored by the press and his message to the radicals of one town quite unknown to those of its neighbours.

When the two men met again a few days later, Hobson advised O’Connor that no provincial printer had the machinery needed to produce a paper of the scale he envisaged, and that none would risk the large capital outlay needed to launch one when it might soon fail. O’Connor returned to London to consider his options, but weeks later he was back to assure Hobson that he intended to go ahead, and to suggest to him that money would not be lacking. Hobson would later claim that O’Connor told him, ‘Hobson, I pay ready money for all I get; mind that’ (*Manchester Examiner*, 6 November 1847, p7).

Eventually, as Hobson recalled: ‘The machine was set up, the type “laid,” men engaged; and at the latest moment (when sureties at the stamp office had been found by a friend of mine, O’Connor not having himself any that the authorities would accept), with 3,000 stamps brought on the Thursday by Mr O’Connor himself on the coach, the *Northern Star* first saw the light, amidst difficulties and hair-breadth escapes “too numerous to mention”.’

Within eighteen weeks the *Northern Star* was ‘considerably a-head of any other provincial paper in the Empire – a fact utterly unparalleled in the history of newspapers’, and just a year after its launch it could claim an average weekly sale of 11,932 (*NS*, 17 November 1838, p4). Speaking at an

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anniversary dinner, Samuel Healey, secretary of the Dewsbury Radical Association raised a toast, 'To the faithful, unflinching and unexampled organ of the working classes, the *Northern Star*.' It was drunk 'amid the deafening cheers of the company' (*NS*, 17 November 1838, p8).

But what financial and human resources were required to produce a weekly eight-page newspaper of the scale and scope of the *Northern Star*? How many people worked in the editorial and commercial offices, or in the print workshop – and what jobs did they do? How much were they paid?

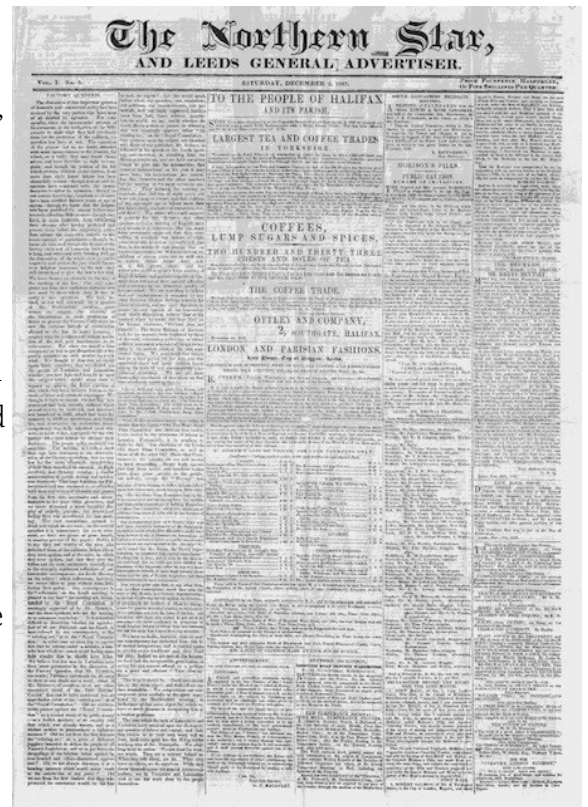
The answers to all these questions would undoubtedly have evolved over time. Starting with its first issue in November 1837 (no example of which survives), and ending in 1852 after George Julian Harney merged it with his *Friend of the People* to create a short-lived *Star of Freedom*, the paper had no fewer than three proprietors, four titles, and four or possibly five editors depending on how you count Harney's occupation of the editor's chair for two periods separated by a gap of three years (see Appendix 1). There were numerous and often unheralded changes in editorial and business staff, and with the paper's move from Leeds to London in 1845 and Hobson's departure, it seems highly unlikely that any of the compositors or printers of 1837 were still there to see the final issue roll off the press.

What follows focuses mainly on the period from 1837 to 1844 when the *Northern Star* was edited, printed and published from Joshua Hobson's premises at Market Street in Leeds. It attempts to uncover the practicalities of launching and sustaining a great radical newspaper at its peak, but necessarily ranges through time in searching for the sometimes sparse evidence of how it all worked.

Pages, columns, words and characters

The *Northern Star* and its direct successors published 755 issues between 18 November 1837 and its final appearance on 1 May 1852 (after which, under the new ownership of George Julian Harney, it began renumbering from vol.1, no.1 until its eventual disappearance after eight weeks). Every issue from start to finish contained eight broadsheet pages, each page just over 24 inches (61cm) high by 16 inches (41cm) wide, and with each page having six columns of mostly closely set text. As Malcolm Chase noted: 'There were barely a dozen illustrations of any note in nearly eight hundred issues of the paper.'³

Ensuring that the paper appeared on time every week was a challenge for all. 'We regret much that we cannot persuade our friends to practically to observe the very plain and clear directions which we have so often given and repeated about the sending of matter for the *Star*,' declared its editor, William



Earliest surviving copy of the *Northern Star*, from 2 December 1837.

Hill (*NS*, 2 October 1841). ‘Every word of the paper has to be put together by single letters, and the whole space filled before we can go to press, and it is impossible to do this in one forenoon.’ Given the scale of the task facing him every week, it is hard not to sympathise.

Rough calculations based on counting the words in randomly chosen pages suggest an average of around 1,950 words in a full column of type or around 8,660 characters, excluding spaces between words. An unbroken page of text would run to 11,700 words (51,960 characters). This, however, would have been a rare occurrence even for the text-heavy *Northern Star*. A typical page might include section headings (‘To readers and correspondents’, ‘Chartist intelligence’ or ‘Police report’), headlines or short items set on increased leading between lines of text, or horizontal rules to break one article from the next. Some issues included poems and lists of donors or subscribers to Chartist causes, both of which were less word-intensive. The masthead and date-line on the front page also took up space. Even taking account of all this, however, it seems wholly reasonable to suggest that each page of the *Northern Star* ran to an average of 10,000 words or 45,000 characters – a total of 80,000 words or 360,000 characters per issue.

For comparison, over its lifetime the *Northern Star* published some 60,400,000 words; the novels of Charles Dickens run to just over 4 million, the complete works of William Shakespeare to 884,647, and the King James Bible to a little under 790,000. This rather lengthy article has a little over 9,000 words, or less than a single page of the *Northern Star*.

To modern sensibilities, the paper looks daunting. There was little to break up the solid wall of words, and where used, headlines were usually in the same font and in the same type size as the body text (as a second font or size of type would have required the purchase of a whole additional type face from the letter foundry). As a compromise, headlines might be set in capitals, small capitals or a combination of the two to differentiate them and break up the text; they might be centred in the column where the body text was invariably justified; and they were given a little more space to breathe, with additional leading between the rows of text. One exception to this uniformity is the Gothic ‘Olde English’ font used sparingly to signal the paper’s various sections. Most likely such section headings were kept set up in type from week to week.

To Readers and Correspondents.

Above: exception to the rule: a Gothic font for section headings

Equipping the print office

Joshua Hobson was a Huddersfield man, but he chose to establish the *Northern Star* office in Leeds for good reasons. Feargus O'Connor had been clear in wanting a paper based in the North of England rather than in London so that it could be close to and identifiable with the radical working-class communities of the West Riding, and Lancashire, and enable them in turn to have easy access to the paper and its staff. And Leeds was the obvious location.



Lower Briggate in the 1860s.

On a practical level, the town was already at the heart of newspaper publishing in the North, and home to three widely read weekly papers – the radical-liberal *Leeds Times*, Tory *Leeds Intelligencer* and Whig *Leeds Mercury*⁴. This meant that Hobson had a pool of skilled workers from which to recruit for the new paper, and an established local infrastructure of companies able to supply the paper, ink and other requirements of a busy newspaper office. The opening of the first Leeds railway station in 1834 also meant easy access to an ever-expanding rail network able to distribute the paper nationwide; without it, the *Northern Star* would barely have circulated beyond its heartlands, and this in turn would have badly undermined the organisation of a national Chartist movement.

Hobson established his office at 12 and 13 Market Street, Briggate, and the paper was published from his home at number 5, as the paper said in each issue. There was an ‘internal communication existing’ between the buildings, and together they constituted ‘the whole of the said Printing and Publishing Offices, one Premises’. It must have been a substantial space to accommodate the scale of business that the *Northern Star* rapidly became.

A few years earlier, Hobson had famously made the wooden frame of his first printing press himself. Such a device, however, would have been unable to print more than 200 ‘pulls’ per hour – or 100 pages of a double-sided broadsheet. This had been sufficient for Hobson’s *Friend of the West Riding*, launched in 1833 with a limited local circulation; but it was completely inadequate for the large print-run paper he and O'Connor envisaged in 1837. The *Northern Star* would need a modern press and industrial quantities of type. And Hobson would need to find and fit out a printing office.

While O'Connor was supposedly seeking out a printing press, Hobson sourced the fonts he needed from a Sheffield letter foundry (‘John Ardill and his traducers’, *The Manchester Examiner*, 6 November 1847). He later recalled visiting Bower, Brothers ‘with whom I had done business, and with whom I was in credit’. Hobson told the foundry’s senior partner that he had confidence in the project and had O'Connor’s assurances that he could pay ‘ready money’, for which he hoped to get a ‘handsome discount’ on the type. ‘The result was that Mr. Bower undertook the order to supply Feargus O'Connor with all the type, chases, leads, cases, galleys, and rules, necessary to bring

out a newspaper of a certain size.' Within 'a very few weeks', everything was on its way to Leeds where Hobson was busily setting up his new print shop.

Newspaper fonts can be difficult to identify with certainty, especially when working from digitised copies. With a few minor exceptions, from its launch until its move to London in 1844 the *Northern Star* is set throughout in the same serif font). In addition to the font's standard roman typeface (used for body copy), Hobson would have had to acquire the font's bold, italic and small capitals variants, all of which are used to a lesser extent in the paper. And within each typeface, he would, of course, have needed both upper and lower case letters. He appears, however, to have bought just one size of type in any significant volume: possibly, though it is impossible to be certain without access to the original paper and a typescale, 8½pt Baskerville, which the paper then typically used throughout for body text on 9pt leading.

Hobson must have bought vast quantities of type. There were some 360,000 characters in a typical issue of the *Northern Star*, but the typesetters would have required far more than this to work from - or risk running out of the letters they needed as, of course, the precise number of each letter used in each issue would have varied considerably.

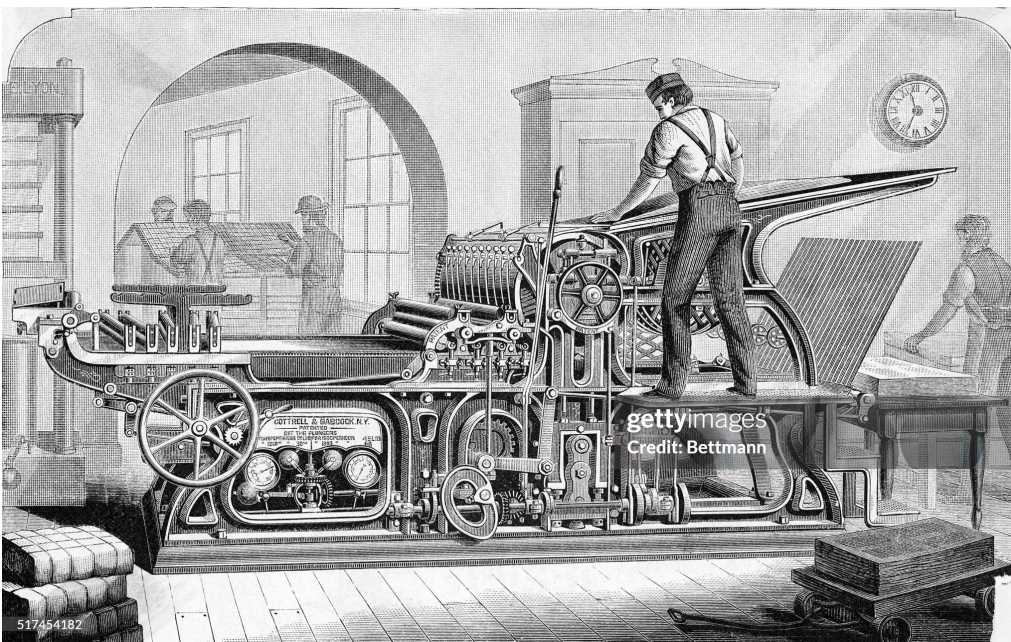
While Hobson was getting hold of the print, O'Connor had, after some delay, found a company run by a Mr Lloyd in Southwark that could make the printing press. Eventually, and after some scrabbling around for money from potential shareholders in Leeds, O'Connor paid for the machine and it, too, was packed and shipped.

The press previously used by Hobson for the *Voice of the West Riding* would have been of a design tried and tested over hundreds of years. Once set up in type, the page would be inked by hand, and the paper lowered flat to pick up the impression. It was a time consuming process. But technology had moved on. More modern machines used rollers to ink the flat metal forme and press the paper against the metal type, which was faster and meant more pages could be printed. A further technological advance enabled the paper itself to be rolled across the forme, which was faster still. The addition of steam power, pioneered by *The Times* as far back as 1814, raised print speeds to 1,200 pulls an hour, and this would increase over time, enabling mass circulation newspapers for the first time. Intriguingly, although the *Northern Star's* printing press was supposed to have come from Southwark, an advertisement placed by Leeds manufacturer Joseph Priestley advertising printing presses for sale notes that: 'One of the Victoria-Presses may be seen on application at the Office of the *Northern Star*' (*NS*, 20 January 1838, p2).

It seems, however, that whatever press they used, for the first four months of its existence, copies of the *Northern Star* were still cranked through the machine by hand. It was not until March 1838, by which time circulation had risen above 10,000 copies a week, that the paper announced that it was now

using a steam engine supplied by Smith, Beacock and Tannett of Leeds. Evidently delighted by his purchase, the *Star's* editor, William Hill declared: 'The Engine is of two horse power, and the whole of it, with the exception of the fly wheel, stands in a space not more than two feet six inches square. The working of it is most satisfactory; indeed it commenced work without the least difficulty the first moment the steam was properly applied to it' (*NS*, 31 March 1838, p4).

But as circulation continued to rise, hitting 50,000 in exceptional weeks, even this was not enough, and in September 1839, Hill announced in a note 'to readers, agents and correspondents' that: The new Machine we some time ago announced, as in the course of erection, is now at work. We shall, therefore, now be able to supply the Agents much more promptly, and much more amply.' He added: 'Our machinery was only calculated at its utmost stretch



Left: A Babcock press. The printer standing on the machine is feeding in the large sheets of paper on which each copy was printed. In the back-ground, compositors can be seen at work. Although the press used by the *Northern Star* may have looked very different, this shows the level of technology it used. [Getty Images](#).

to supply a circulation of about 20,000, while the demand, for more than eight months, has been greatly more than double that number.' (*NS*, 7 September 1839 p4).

Despite the compact size of the steam engine, the press itself would have been of substantial proportions, and the print shop must also have had space for warehousing. The paper used up vast quantities of paper every week. With stamp duty payable on every sheet, newspapers had not yet moved over to the great rolls of paper that could feed continuously through the press and further speed up the process, so like its competitors, the *Star* used sheets of paper each of which could accommodate a whole paper (four broadsheet pages printed on each side) before folding for despatch. By 1839, the *Northern Star* had an average sale of 36,000 copies, rising to 50,000 at its peak that summer. For comparison, the [Chartist leviathan petition](#) of 1842 was made up of 20,000 broadsheet pages – or the equivalent of 5,000 sheets. Even if there was a fresh delivery of paper each week, Hobson's print shop must have had sufficient space to store a quantity of blank paper some ten

times the size of the petition, and room in which the printed copies could be held awaiting despatch.

Additionally, of course, although the *Star* formed the greatest part of Hobson's business, the building and press were put to wider uses: Hobson was one of a triumvirate of radical printers, along with John Cleave in London and Abel Heywood in Manchester, who stocked and sold each other's material; Hobson himself published much else beside the *Star*, including between 1838 and 1842 the weekly Owenite *New Moral World*; and at the front of the premises facing on to Market Street, Hobson's shop stocked and sold not just radical tracts and newspapers but a wealth of Chartist products, including a wide selection of pills, herbal remedies and ointments, breakfast powders and boot blacking. This was also a space for passing radicals to call in and exchange news and gossip.

Men at work: staffing levels, roles and responsibilities

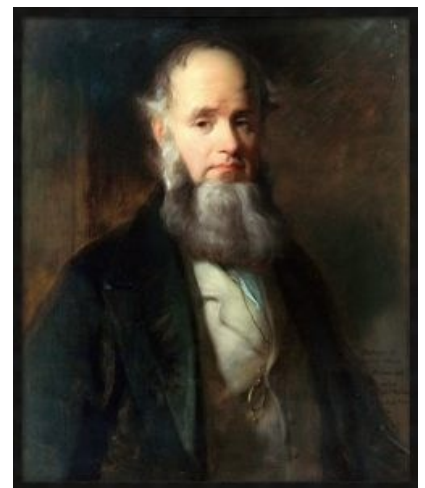
The production of a weekly newspaper on the scale of the *Northern Star* takes an enormous amount of work. In the late 1830s, all copy had to be hand-written and corrected; it meant, as William Hill told his readers, assembling the entire paper, one letter at a time, setting every line of text upside down and back to front from huge type cases; and it required press men to insert and remove giant sheets of paper, each sufficient for an eight-page paper, one at a time. Only later in the century would the invention of the typewriter and the linotype machine and the introduction of great rolls of paper enabling continuous high-speed printing revolutionise the press.

What follows introduces some of the men and boys who made publication of the *Northern Star* possible each week, and looks at the work of its editorial, commercial and print shops.

The editorial office

In-house writers, editors and contributors

Three names are most associated with the *Northern Star* in its early years: Feargus O'Connor, its proprietor and guiding spirit; [Joshua Hobson](#), its publisher, printer and subsequently editor; and [William Hill](#), the Swedenborgian minister and editor from its launch until his dismissal in 1843. O'Connor wrote extensively most weeks, but his contributions (in the form of a lengthy signed letter to readers) were of variable length and O'Connor himself was frequently elsewhere in the country on speaking tours and other business: planning the space to allocate in the coming week's paper must have been difficult. Hobson also wrote bylined pieces and must have contributed much else which is unattributed simply to fill the pages, but he had other work to attend to as publisher, overseeing the print shop and managing other aspects of his business – printing a range of radical publications and selling them through his shop. And Hill would have been busy both with his weekly leader articles and with the section titled 'To Readers and Correspondents' in which



Joshua Hobson by
Richard Waller, © Kirklees
Museums and Galleries

he replied publicly, though usually briefly and sometimes abruptly, to those who had written with questions, poems and reports for publication, and in which he passed on news of O'Connor's travels to those hoping to see him speak. But no newspaper on the scale of the *Northern Star* could hope to appear in print with such a sparse editorial office.

From asides and explanations of the paper's operation in its pages, it is possible to identify additionally an assistant editor, a sub-editor and a reporter.

Though not credited by name for their work, there are passing mentions of both a sub-editor and reporter. In one of his lengthier letters, 'To the Fustian Jackets, Blistered Hands and Unshorn Chins', O'Connor explains how an earlier article had come to be: 'The sub-editor of the *Star* thought it worth the insertion, and gave it accordingly, with other news' (*NS*, 30 January 1841). And later that same year, after Hill was arrested, Hobson writes that he had been unable to be in court: 'The Sub-Editor and Reporter had to go to procure a report of the proceedings; and it was impossible that we could both be away at that time' (*NS*, 8 October 1842, p4). This is interesting both in adding two otherwise uncredited members of staff, but also in that it shows both that Hobson could substitute for Hill in his absence, and that to some extent their work overlapped with that of the sub-editor.

In 1843, [George Julian Harney](#) would be brought in as sub-editor, and it is often assumed that the job title suggests he was Hobson's deputy. More usually, however, a sub-editor is responsible for the editorial production of a paper – correcting and editing text written by others, marking it up so that the compositors know the type size, leading and measure across which it is to be set, overseeing the flatplan and dealing with page proofs. On a paper with just half a dozen editorial staff, however, there must have been times when everyone had to do their share of whatever work was required, and the sub-editor, or assistant editor, may have been able to deputise for the editor on occasion.

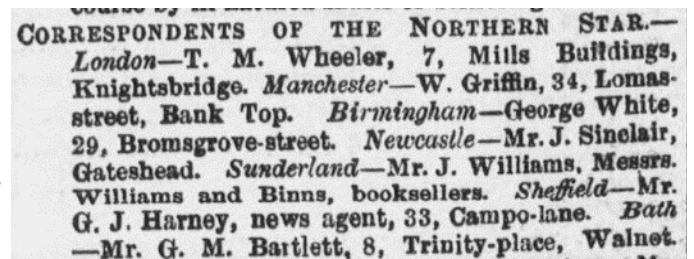
The role of the assistant editor was helpfully explained by William Rider in his put-down of Charles Neesom (*NS*, 6 October 1841), when he wrote that, 'all letters addressed to the office, either to the Editor, to the Publisher, to the Clerk (Mr Ardill), or to Mr O'Connor, go first into the hands of, and are opened by, either Mr Hobson or Mr Ardill, just which may happen to be in the way. These gentlemen, when they open the letters, pass those addressed to the Editor, and all for publication, as news, &c into the hands of Mr Thompson, the Assistant Editor, who looks them through, and prepares such as are on ordinary business for the compositors, into whose hands the "copy" thus prepared frequently passes without being seen by the Editor. Such of the correspondence as needs to be seen by him is reserved for his inspection and decision.' Between them, the sub-editor and assistant editor would have been responsible for much of the day-to-day work dealing with the flow of less contentious items and ensuring that every last inch of space

was filled. The identity of the *Northern Star* reporter who was in court for William Hill's trial is even less publicly acknowledged in the paper's pages than that of the assistant editor. It seems likely, however, that if you were to visit the *Northern Star* offices at its peak, you might well have found an editorial office consisting of Hill and Hobson, Thompson the assistant editor, and the unnamed sub-editor and reporter. But even this would hardly have been sufficient to fill eight pages every week.

The paper relied on paid contributors. [James Bronterre O'Brien](#) contributed a column each week from January to October 1838 for which he was paid a guinea a time. In London, [Thomas Martin Wheeler](#) was engaged as full-time correspondent for the paper in 1841, followed by Edmund Stallwood, who took on the role in 1843 (though Wheeler would return some years later).

George Julian Harney on his release from prison in 1841 was paid by

O'Connor for a dual role as *Star* correspondent and Chartist organiser in Sheffield before joining the paper's staff in 1843 as sub-editor. And George White was the paper's paid Birmingham correspondent. In 1842, the paper listed eight local correspondents, although whether they were unpaid, part-time or full-time employees is not known.



CORRESPONDENTS OF THE NORTHERN STAR.—
London—T. M. Wheeler, 7, Mills Buildings, Knightsbridge. Manchester—W. Griffin, 34, Lomas-street, Bank Top. Birmingham—George White, 29, Bromsgrove-street. Newcastle—Mr. J. Sinclair, Gateshead. Sunderland—Mr. J. Williams, Messrs. Williams and Binns, booksellers. Sheffield—Mr. G. J. Harney, news agent, 33, Campo-lane. Bath—Mr. G. M. Bartlett, 8, Trinity-place, Walnut.

Above: *Northern Star* correspondents, 7 May 1842.

And from time to time, Hill and Hobson might have brought in freelance reporters to help. Later, in 1848, the paper's printer McGowan said that he had hired 'an eminent London reporter' to provide an accurate account of the London convention.

Contributed copy and letters

'If we were to print all the communications we receive, we should some weeks, want six or seven *Northern Stars*,' William Hill wrote despairingly of the task facing him (*NS*, 24 February 1838, p.7). But to a significant extent, the paper's unpaid contributors were what made it unique.

Every week, reports of small local events poured in by post from Chartist localities all over the country. Robert Gammage wrote in his near contemporary history of Chartism: 'There was not a meeting held in any part of the country, in however a remote a spot, that was not reported in its columns, accompanied by all the flourishes calculated to excite an interest in the reader's mind, and to inflate the vanity of the speakers by the honourable mention of their names. Even if they had never mounted the platform before, the speeches were described and reported as eloquent, argumentative and the like; and were dressed up with as much care as though they were parliamentary harangues fashioned to the columns of the daily press.'⁵ Though Gammage wrote this disparagingly, it was in fact a key strength of the paper, building the Chartist identity as a single great movement in which all played their part. And much the same might be said of the paper's letters page, which provided space for Chartists everywhere to contribute their opinions

and engage in the movement's controversies.

Many of those who wrote to the *Northern Star* were, of course, not at all accustomed to writing for publication. Their handwriting had to be deciphered, and their spelling and punctuation quietly corrected, before their contribution appeared in print. But this was time-consuming work for the editorial staff and compositors alike, and William Hill regularly urged contributors to obey a series of simple rules:

- '1. Write legibly. Make as few erasures and interlineations as possible. In writing names of persons and places be more particular than usual to make every letter distinct and clear – also in using words not English.
2. Write only on one side of the paper.
3. Employ no abbreviations whatever, but write out every word in full.'

(for example, *NS*, 7 May 1842, p1).

The frequency with which the message appeared in the paper suggests it was a hopeless ask. But it should probably be noted that neither the prolix Feargus O'Connor nor his later editor George Julian Harney, both of whom wrote vast amounts for publication had especially neat or legible handwriting, so evidently practice did not make perfect.

'Borrowed' copy

The practice of 'scissors and paste' journalism was a widespread and essential part of newspaper production. The launch of Reuters (1851), the Press Association (1870) and other news agencies would later in the century give even the smallest paper access to political news from the capital and the professional reporting of events all over the country and abroad. But before that, editors had to rely on cutting stories from the pages of papers that arrived in their offices, editing and amending them to a greater or lesser extent to their requirements, and republishing them with or without attribution.

Although this practice enabled the *Northern Star* to provide more comprehensive coverage than it would otherwise have managed, even with its own network of paid and unpaid contributors, editors always want to publish original content, and Hill particularly objected to having to fill space set aside for readers' letters with borrowed copy because people had missed the deadline. 'It often happens, that on Monday and Tuesday we have scarcely any letters, and on Wednesday comparatively few till the night post arrives. The consequence is that those letters which do arrive in the early part of the week are carefully attended to and given generally at length; while we are obliged to have recourse to the London papers and various sources, for matter to fill up the remaining portion of so many columns of the paper as must be set up before Wednesday night' (*NS*, 2 October 1841).

The commercial department

As publisher of the *Northern Star*, Joshua Hobson was responsible for the general management of the whole paper. But on a paper with the scale and ambition of the *Star*, he could no more be expected to keep the books himself than sit in the editor's chair or print it. As plans were being made for the paper's launch in the autumn of 1837, Feargus O'Connor introduced Hobson to [John Ardill](#), who joined the *Star* as clerk – a now much devalued job title but then suggesting a job of some significance. Ardill had been apprenticed as an iron founder, but during the 1830s had also become secretary to a number of Leeds money clubs, gaining the experience which would enable him to keep the *Northern Star's* books and manage its commercial affairs. Ardill was responsible for ensuring that agents paid up in full and on time, that they got the papers they had ordered, and that arrangements with other radical printers to sell each other's publications were carried through. He also liaised with engravers commissioned to produce the portrait series that made the *Star* a commercial success.

But Ardill was not alone in this work. William Rider, a long-time working-class activist who had been secretary of the Leeds Radical Political Union in 1831 and Leeds Working Men's Association from 1837, became assistant clerk. A loyal supporter of Feargus O'Connor, he was one of the few on the paper who moved with it to London in November 1844. When O'Connor fell out with both Hobson and Ardill, he became first clerk (*NS*, 30 October 1847, p1) and then publisher of the *Northern Star*. His name only disappeared from its pages when O'Connor finally sold the paper to George Fleming in 1852.

Advertisements

The *Northern Star* carried paid advertising from the start. The first two surviving issues (for 2 and 16 December 1837) devote half of the front page and the whole of page two to adverts, and by the autumn of 1838, the entire front page was taken up with adverts – their small woodblock logos making these the most visually arresting pages in most issues. It was not until the spring of 1839, when news from the General Convention of the Industrious Classes came to dominate the paper that Hobson cleared the front page of adverts, probably in the belief that the increased income from sales of the paper would outweigh any loss of advertising revenues.

There is, unfortunately, nothing to indicate who at the *Star's* office would have handled advertising, but as a straightforward financial transaction it would be surprising if this did not fall to Ardill and Rider. The paper did, however, regularly list the names of its agents in Yorkshire and Lancashire who could accept adverts, and warned that these would need to arrive at Briggate by midday on the Friday eight days before publication.

And what adverts they were. Some, inevitably, were for radical meetings and radical publications. William Hill promoted his books on syntax and gram-

mar. William Whitehead offered a variety of black and green teas, coffees, spices and refined sugars from his retail establishment at 175 Briggate. And B. Joseph sold 'trowsers', woollen and cotton breeches, coats, waistcoats, cloaks and children's dress, with the offer of 'a suit of clothes made to measure at five hours' notice'.

But by far the greatest number were for medical cures. Mr Eskell could fit a set of spring-loaded 'incorrodible mineral teeth' without giving the least pain. Dr Bird offered his bone-setting services beneath a not especially reassuring skull and bones woodcut. J.L. Ward of Trafalgar Street, Leeds, and Liverpool Street, Salford, offered a 'cure for cancer, and for every variety of tumour, fistula, &c.'. C.F. Cheddon provided testimonials from doctors for the claim that his herbal tonic pills would cure 'Scrofula, Scurvy, Scorbutic Affection, Eruptions and Pimples on the Face and other parts of the body, Swellings and Ulcerations of the Neck, sore Breasts' and a host of other conditions. Atkinson's Infant's Preservative, which apparently sold 50,000 bottles a year, would both prevent and cure 'Affections of the Bowels, Difficulty Teething, Convulsions, Rickets &c.,' not to mention being an 'admirable Assistant to Nature' in helping children through whooping cough, measles and cow pox'. A perhaps surprising number advertised cures for sexually transmitted infections. Mr Wilkinson, surgeon, claimed to cure venereal diseases within a week from his consulting rooms at '13 Trafalgar Street (back entrance in Nile Street), Leeds, and every Thursday at No. 2 Dead Lane, Bradford'.

The print shop Compositors

Compositors, who took copy supplied by the editorial staff and set it in type, still worked through an entirely manual process in the 1830s and 1840s, selecting individual lead letters from the cases in front of them and slotting them into a 'stick' to create a line of type which could then be transferred to a galley and then into a larger frame or forme in which the page was put together. The letters were reversed (mind your ps and qs), and slotted into the stick upside down so that the second line set would, when printed, come below the first. A fast-working and experienced compositor could achieve speeds of around 2,000 characters an hour working in this way, and with a typical eight-page issue of the *Northern Star* typically running to some 360,000 characters, each issue would have taken 180 hours (or 18 working days of ten hours each) to put together. With each compositor working six days a week, the paper must have employed at least three men working at full speed in this department alone.


It is worth noting, however, that much of the copy for the *Northern Star* was contributed by working men of varying standards and styles of handwriting – which must have slowed the work, and even with experienced compositors familiar with the subject matter and the handwriting of regular contributors,

TO THE INHABITANTS OF LEEDS,
AND THE
NOBILITY, CLERGY, GENTRY, AND FAMILIES IN THE NORTH
OF ENGLAND.

BEING the best Tea I have exhibited several of the **LARGEST RETAIL TRADERS** for
TEA AND COFFEE in the NORTH OF ENGLAND, by purchasing only the finest Articles that were
subscribed to be of the best quality, and selling them for **Ready Money**, at the **Smallest**
Profit on the Cost Price, relying solely on an **Extensive Trade** for Compensation.

I now respectfully announce to my numerous Friends and the Public generally, that on **SATUR-**
DAY, March 31, I OPENED A

RETAIL
Establishment,
AT
175, BRIGGATE
TO BE KNOWN AS
THE NEW
Golden Canister
11 TEA MART,



SEVEN DOORS
BELOW
THE OLD
Golden Canister
TEA
WAREHOUSE,
NEARLY AT THE
Bottom of Briggate
LEEDS,

TEA was formerly used as a Luxury only by the Rich, but now it is considered as one of the **NECESSARIES** of Life by all Classes of the Community, for although the **Highly** **Indulgent** of Taxation has been
brought to bear upon this Article with great severity, (the duty being 2s. 1d. per pound,) the Consumption
has gone on gradually increasing, and the Importance of this Branch of Commerce now, may be estimated
by the fact, that in the Year 1831 the Quantity consumed in the United Kingdom was **FOURTY-TWO**
Millions of Pounds, and the Amount of Duty paid thereon **THREE MILLIONS** **SEVEN** **HUNDRED** **THIRTY** **SIX** **THOUSAND** **FOUR** **HUNDRED** **SEVENTY** **SIX** **POUNDS** **STERLING**. Now, that the Use of Tea has become so general, the
Quantity consumed is immense, and the Charge for Conveyance of Goods from the principal Ports in the
East Indies to London, and every other place, THERE IS A DEMAND IN THE POPULOUS NEIGH-
BOURHOOD SUPERFICIENT TO SUPPORT AN ESTABLISHMENT for the sale of TEA at the
SMALLEST PROFIT ON THE COST PRICE. TO THIS SYSTEM I HAVE DEVOTED MYSELF EXCLUSIVELY AD-
HERING, AND RELY SOLELY ON AN EXTENSIVE TRADE FOR RECOMPENSATION.

The following List of Prices, to which I invite your attention, will at once show that I shall sell as
Cheap as any Wholesale House in London, but the Quality of my Tea will be in her Recommendation to
those who may favour me with their Orders:—

BLACK TEA.		GREEN TEA.	
COMMON BOHEA... 2s. to 3s. 2d. 1/2.		GOOD GREEN TEA... 4s. 6d. 1/2.	
FINE BOHEA... 8s. 6d. ... or 9d. 1/2.		FINE HYSON KIND... 2s. 6d. ... or 7d. 1/2.	
STRONG CONGOU... 4s. 6d. ... or 3d. 1/2.		YOUNG HYSON... 6s. 6d. ... or 4d. 1/2.	
FINE CONGOU, (full flavoured) ... 4s. 6d. ... or 3d. 1/2.		POWDER... 6s. 6d. ... or 4d. 1/2.	
FINE CONGOU, (full flavoured) ... 4s. 6d. ... or 7d. 1/2.		FINE GUNPOWDER (small leaf) ... 7s. 6d. ... or 5d. 1/2.	
Somehow Flavour) ... 4s. 6d. ... or 7d. 1/2.		FINEST GUNPOWDER (delicious flavour) ... 7s. 6d. ... or 5d. 1/2.	

I shall pursue the same System of Trade with regard to COFFEE, and it is admitted on all hands that
the finest COFFEE cannot now be sold Wholesale under 2s. Price per lb.

FRESH ROASTED COFFEES.
TRIAGE COFFEE... 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. 1/2.
GOOD JAMAICA COFFEE... 2s. 6d. ... or 4d. 1/2.
FINE JAMAICA or TURKEY COFFEE... 2s. 6d. ... or 4d. 1/2.

SPICES, REFINED SUGARS, ETC. EQUALLY CHEAP.

Since the expiration of the East India Company's Charter, Tea has been frequently sold in England,
(without Duty) considerably cheaper than it could be bought in China; this state of things was brought
about principally by excessive Importations and the Scarcity of Money in this Country; and the Result
was materially prejudicial to a Host of annual Importers, consisting of Retail Dealers and Others,
whose Yacht has been in great Distress, without calculating the Cost of their Tolls—they had at
consequently been to be debilitated "Importers of Tea," but having neither Capital, Judgment, nor
Experience sufficient to enable them to embark in such an undertaking, the only Scheme by which they
could gratify their Yacht was to Contract for a Consignment of Tea, direct from the Colonial Empire,
by paying the real Importer his Profit on the cost price, thereby insuring what would otherwise have
been extremely large Importations. And this was the only Tea, for those numerous Consignments
were generally sold as soon as landed, without reserve, to the highest Bidder, in some instances at a
Discount of 25 to 40 per Cent. below Cost Price, thus causing a glut in the Market, and a heavy loss, not
only to themselves, but also to the Importers and the Trade generally.

There are also other Retail Dealers, or self-styled Importers, whose vanity impelled them to boast
superior quality of Consignments and Copies of Tea, which they regarded only, direct from China,
which have not yet arrived; however, these are the most barren Merchants in the World, for their
specimens cannot be compared, and their vanity is unquestionable.

Tea of inferior Quality have advanced in Price considerably during the last Nine Months, but there
has been only a trifling advance on those of fine Quality, which are yet selling at present prices to the Im-
porter, consequently, Fine Tea are now much cheaper to the Consumer than Tea of inferior Quality.
The Coffee Market has been in a very unsettled manner since the West India Company obtained a Bill
of Twenty Millions to induce them to perform in Act of Justice and Humanity, for by this additional
Capital they have been enabled to hold back their Produce in order to secure Advanced Prices, and
to my numerous Friends I return my most sincere Thanks for their Support and Patronage, and beg
to assure them it shall ever be my study to merit a continuance of their Favours.

Your Obedient Servant,
WILLIAM WHITEHEAD,
175, Briggate, and also at 111, Kirkgate, Leeds; and High-Street, Manchester;
WHOLESALE WAREHOUSE, BEATON'S COURT, BY No. 6, BRIGGATE, LEEDS

William Whitehead adver-
tises his tea and coffee
shop, NS 31 March 1838.

this probably meant the workload was practically impossible without the addition of a fourth man.

There were also multiple editions of the *Star*, with new editorial matter replacing less important content for papers printed on the Friday, and this would have taken up still more compositor time, perhaps adding another two men (taking the total to six). Further, as the calculations above allow no time for proofing and correcting pages, or for the lengthy process of breaking down page frames and sorting type back into its cases at the end of each week, the number of compositors in the workshop can probably realistically be increased to as many as seven or eight.



Left: A compositor makes up lines of text one letter at a time using a stick to hold them.

Some of those working on the paper were apprentices. Though cheaper than journeymen, they would have worked more slowly, could not be trusted with more difficult or important jobs, and would have required supervision. Printers also faced pressure from compositors' societies and from their peers not to employ more than two, or in the largest firms three, apprentices at any one time. Interestingly, though, because the *Star*'s apprentices lived in with Hobson, it is possible to tell something of the story of one of them.

Joshua Hobson had no immediate family, but he hardly led a solitary home life in Market Street. Census returns show that in 1841 the household included his housekeeper, Elizabeth Millenson, two teenage apprentices, two messenger boys, and a younger female servant. One of these apprentices was Benjamin Brown. Born a few miles up the road in Otley, seventeen-year-old Benjamin probably began his print apprenticeship at fourteen, soon after Hobson started work on the *Star*. He and Hobson remained close until the

older man's death thirty-five years later. When Hobson sold his business in 1848, he transferred his stock in trade and his print to Brown (*Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 7 December 1850, p7). And when Hobson returned to his home town of Huddersfield, Brown went with him, and lived at his house into the 1860s. Later, with a home and family of his own, Brown printed and published the Tory-leaning *Huddersfield Weekly Examiner*, which for a time towards the end of Hobson's life employed him as editor. Brown did well out of the news business: when he died in 1903, he left an estate valued at more than £10,000.

His is not the only life story that can be associated with the *Star*. Among the more established compositors working for Hobson was [Henry Lundy](#). Born at Malton in North Yorkshire in 1807, he was by the time he began work at the *Northern Star* the secretary of the Leeds Typographical Association. Despite having just nineteen members in 1837, the union split over the issue of apprentice numbers, and remained divided between two rival branches for five years – Lundy serving as secretary to one, and William Hicks of the rival *Leeds Times* to the other. Lundy had already married and settled in Leeds by the time he worked for Hobson. He remained there for the rest of his life, appearing as a printer-compositor in census records up until 1871, just a year before his death (though in 1861 he gave his occupation as 'beerhouse keeper and printer-compositor').

Press men

Once the compositors had finished their work and handed over the completed metal-framed pages of print, these became the province of the press men. The advent of steam power had considerably reduced the number of men required to operate the new presses, and the *Times* had introduced its own steam press back in 1814 under conditions of the utmost secrecy because there was such opposition to it among London's printers. By the time the *Star* appeared, this new technology was still a cause for concern among press men, although their protests were mostly over the use of steam presses to produce parliamentary papers, bibles and other works where speed was hardly of the essence. In a newspaper trade expanding rapidly thanks to steam power, the new technology may actually have increased the number of jobs.

The function of the press men was to oversee and maintain the printing press, the folding machine and now the steam engine. They and any warehousemen and printers' assistants (it has not been possible to identify any) had to keep the press running, to ensure that the paper was fed in swiftly and smoothly, to keep the ink topped up, and to check that the printed pages were clean, straight, folded and bundled up for despatch. A misaligned sheet of paper fed into the press could bring work to a sudden halt and take precious time to clear.

PRINT TERMS

Flatplan Page-by-page listing of content usually compiled by the sub-editor but used by all as a guide and to ensure there are no gaps or duplication

Forme Metal frame in which pages of type are laid to create a page for printing.

Justified Text spaced to ensure that each line fills the full available width, so that it is aligned to both margins. Alternatives including centred or ranged-left text.

Leading Distance between two baselines of text. More leading leaves greater space between two lines without affecting type size.

PRINTING PRESS

Presses were made to a wide range of designs, but the technology shown in the YouTube video at the link below is the same as that used in Hobson's print shop: typeset pages laid flat on a forme and inked, with large sheets of paper rolled across them. The job of feeding paper onto the press required constant attention. [Video](#).

Wages

Feergus O'Connor claimed that the editorial costs alone of the *Northern Star* came to more than £500 a year (*NS*, 9 January 1841, p4). There is only limited and partial information on the paper's wages bill, and some of that was published during a dispute between O'Connor and his former employees, so may not be entirely reliable. But the figure may even be an underestimate.

After Hobson's departure, O'Connor maintained that the weekly wage bill included £6 for Hobson, £3 for George Julian Harney, £2 for his parliamentary reporter George Fleming, and £1 for the London correspondent Edmund Stallwood (*NS*, 26 August 1848, p1). This alone would have totalled £624 a year. But at an earlier period, there must have been more people on the payroll: Hobson, Hill, the assistant editor Mr Thompson, and the unnamed sub-editor and reporter at the very least. Additionally, some of the paper's local correspondents were paid: Joseph Crabtree got £10 year to send reports from Barnsley; and both George White in Birmingham and Harney in Sheffield before he became sub-editor were on the payroll.

O'Connor's figures for 1848 also included wages of £3 for John Ardill, £1 5s for William Rider, and £2 for William Hewitt, who had become the paper's publisher in 1847 - a total of £325 a year.

The cost of composition and printing was far higher. O'Connor put it at £25 a week, but this was after the paper moved to London and was being printed under contract by Dougal McGowan in Great Windmill Street. Although London wages were higher than those in the provinces, there is no surviving figure for the wages paid to the *Northern Star's* compositors, print men and warehousemen in Leeds. However, there is data, originally collected by the Typographical Association, to show that compositors in Leeds were paid on average 26 shillings a week⁶. If there were indeed as many as eight compositors working on the paper, their pay alone could have added £10 8 shillings a week to the wage bill. Press and warehousemen might have taken this up to something closer to £20 a week, or a little over £1,000 a year.

In total, then, the wages bill must have been not far off £2,000 a year.

The weekly schedule

Life in the *Northern Star* office revolved around its weekly schedule. If copy arrived late from the paper's correspondents, it could be omitted, and reluctantly the editors would replace it with news cut from the London papers; if there was no smooth flow of copy from editorial to compositors throughout the week, they would be unable to set and make up the pages in time for the press; and if the final pages were not read to print by Thursday lunchtime, the paper would be late, it would miss the train, and readers would not get it on Saturday morning. A deadline really was a deadline.

The paper was printed on two sides of a single sheet of paper, each the size

of four broadsheet pages, then folded to make the final eight-page paper (see Appendix 2). This meant that one side (consisting of pages 2, 3, 6 and 7) could go to press late on Wednesday, and the second side (consisting of pages 1, 4, 5 and 8) on Thursday (*NS*, 'To Readers and Correspondents', 2 October 1841, p4).

Typically, the paper followed this schedule:

Monday: This was the deadline for non-urgent copy. As Hill warned his readers: 'Original papers, letters to the Editor, personal correspondence, poetry, &c., must be here at the beginning of the week, or we shall not hold ourselves bound even to notice them' (*NS*, 'To Readers and Correspondents', 2 October 1841, p4). Though Hill or Hobson would doubtless make a decision on which poetry to include and which to decline (often with a slightly withering putdown – 'There is not enough of merit in these poems for publication', [*NS*, 'To Readers and Correspondents', 16 May 1840, p4]), most of this material could be lightly edited and handed directly to the compositors to begin work. When away from the office, Feargus O'Connor would sit down to write his weekly front-page letter, posting it on Tuesday to arrive in the first post on a Wednesday.

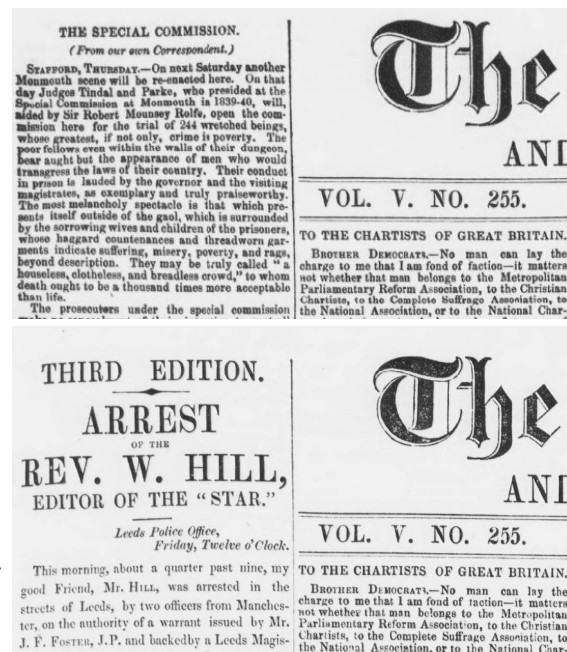
Tuesday: More in hope than expectation, Hill would regularly remind his readers that, 'All matters of news, reports of meetings &c &c referring to occurrences on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, should reach us by Monday's post; such as refer to Monday's occurrences by Tuesday evening's post' (for example, *NS*, 'To Readers and Correspondents', 7 May 1842, p1). Some of these reports would have come from the paper's regular paid correspondents, most notably Thomas Martin Wheeler then Edmund Stallwood in London, and George Julian Harney in Sheffield, and probably required relatively little editing. Much more, however, was written by local Chartist activists and newsagents, and needed more work by the *Star*'s editorial staff. As Hill noted: 'Many of our correspondents might ease us much if they would be less prolix, and give us facts instead of speeches, comments, and opinions. We have very often to wade through four or five pages of manuscript to get out of them the fact of some meeting having been held, or some man's having lectured, which we chronicle in two lines' (*NS*, 3 September 1842). Despite this, some at least of the pages making up the first side of the paper would have to be completed on Tuesday, with space left on others to fill the following day.

Wednesday: As the compositors completed the setting and make-up for pages 2, 3, 6 and 7, and continued to fill the second side, the *Star*'s editorial staff would have been kept busy editing late news as it arrived, identifying spaces still to be filled, and thinking about what they themselves would write. They would also have to check proofs and sign off on the finalised pages. As William Hill told his readers: 'Wednesday night and Thursday morning's

posts bring us a shoal of letters from all parts of the country these come upon us just in the hurry of writing and attending to what are called the leading articles; while in the early part of the week we have more time to attend to correspondence. The consequence is that one half of these letters are passed over entirely; and the other half compressed into the smallest possible amount of space – and the next consequence is, that in the following week we have letters of complaint from various parties about their communications being treated with neglect’ (*NS*, 2 October 1841). Late on Wednesday afternoon, or into the evening, the first side of the paper was printed.

Thursday: ‘It seldom happens that more than one or two columns, besides the necessary space for editorial comment, remain to be filled on Thursday morning,’ Hill told his readers (*NS*, 2 October 1841). Barring major and unanticipated news, the paper was now closed to further new content from the outside world. With the last in-house articles written, and the pages made up and signed of, the press men could finally print the remainder of the paper that afternoon. Or at least, its first edition, which could then be taken to Leeds station for distribution by rail so that even the most distant readers could get it on Saturday. Responding to complaints from readers in Newcastle and Sunderland that their papers did not arrive until Saturday evenings, Hill wrote: ‘We go to press with our first edition on Thursday afternoon and it is all we can do to get off in time for post ... the number required for Glasgow and that part of Scotland; and if the Papers for that quarter are not posted in Leeds on Thursday evening, they are not delivered in Glasgow, &c., until Monday morning!’

Friday: Although the second and third editions of the paper could not be entirely remade, it was possible to update them as events unfolded. These later editions, made up the bulk of the circulation and were distributed to the rest of the country. During his trial for a libel published by the *Star*, Feargus O’Connor told the courts that the first edition consisted of just 3,000 copies, and the second and third of 37,000 between them. In one development especially close to home, when police arrested William Hill in the street outside the *Star* office in September 1842, Joshua Hobson immediately pulled the front page that had appeared on the first editions of that week’s paper, stripped out the first column of text, and substituted the breaking news. His final update has a timeline of 3pm Friday. The headline (shown right) is larger than any other that appeared in the *Star*, and appears to be in a different font - perhaps borrowed for the purpose from another job (*NS*, 1 October 1842). Advertisements for the following week’s paper were required by noon on Friday. A notice to advertisers warned that the paper had been ‘compelled’ to reject several late adverts because its ‘enormous circulation’ meant the page had to go to press at that time (*NS*, 13 January 1838).



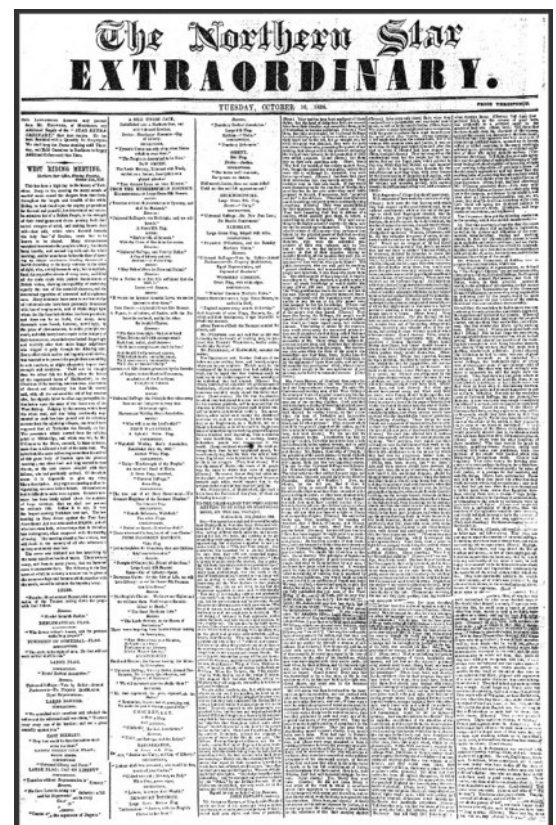
Above: First and third editions, *Northern Star*, 1 October 1842.

Saturday: Late editions of the *Northern Star* and other radical papers published that week would have been in great demand in the shop that fronted Market Street. But behind the scenes, the main project on a Saturday was to return the print shop to a state where it was ready to begin the following week's paper. Tens of thousands of letters needed to be cleaned of old ink and sorted back into the correct slots in their cases – a task which must have fallen quite substantially on the printer's apprentices. The press and steam engine could be cleaned and any minor repairs made. This would have been a good day to take in deliveries of paper. In the editorial office, the editor, assistant editor and sub-editor would be giving thought to the coming week's events and how they might be covered in the paper, with space allocated on the flatplan for reports of significance.

Sunday: A day of rest. In 1847, a printer's apprentice in Liverpool took his employer to court for stopping his wages after he refused to work on Good Friday. The magistrate ruled in his favour: 'Mr Rushton [the magistrate] said the lad had a right to all the protection which his indentures afforded, and could not be required to work on Sunday or Good Friday. He considered it improper to work apprentices on those days, and the complainant must have his wages' (*NS*, 24 April 1847, p5).

But extraordinary events required exceptions to the schedule. On Tuesday 16 October 1838, the *Northern Star* produced an 'extraordinary' stand-alone edition of two pages to report the previous day's meeting on Hartshead Moor called by the Great Northern Union. The paper was priced at 3d and was not included in the paper's numbered sequence. Exceptionally, too, during trial of those involved in the Newport rising a fourth edition of the main paper went to press on the following Monday to carry news of Saturday's hearing (*NS*, 4 January 1840, p4).

And sometimes, there were unexpected and unavoidable delays. Much later in the paper's life, after the move to London, a small item appeared at the top of first column of page 1. Dated 'Friday night' – long after the paper should have gone to press – it apologised to readers and agents for the late delivery of the second edition: 'An accident, against which no care nor foresight could have guarded, occurred at the moment of our going to Press, by which two of the pages of type were demolished, and, in consequence, the Papers which should have been posted on Friday afternoon were delayed by some hours, and posted by Saturday's day Mail.' (*NS*, 16 January 1847, p1). It is only possible to imagine the horrified silence that ensued in the print shop when the pages met with their accident – and the long overnight shift that must have ensued for compositors and press men alike.



Above: Extraordinary edition of the *Northern Star*, Tuesday 16 October 1838.

Notes and references

1. *Northern Star*, 8 May 1841, p6. Newspaper references throughout are given in the text, and are taken from the [British Newspaper Archive](#). References beginning *NS* refer to the *Northern Star*.
2. Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
3. Malcolm Chase, 'Building Identity, building circulation: engraved portraiture and the *Northern Star*' in *Papers for the People: A Study of the Chartist Press*, edited by Joan Allen and Owen R. Ashton (London: Merlin Press, 2005).
4. *Northern Star (1837-1852)* on the Nineteenth Century Serials Edition website. [Accessed here](#) (27 January 2024).
5. R.G. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement 1837-1854*. First edition 1854; Second edition 1894; reprinted with an introduction by John Saville (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969).
- 6 'Table 4: Rates of wages and weekly hours of work in the printing industry in selected years 1780-1968' in *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968* (Department of Employment and Productivity, HMSO, 1971).

Further reading

The following publications were essential reading when thinking about, researching and writing this article.

Clarke, Victoria Jane, 'Reading and writing the *Northern Star*, 1837-1847'. PhD thesis, University of Leeds (2020). [Accessed here on White Rose eTheses Online](#).

J.A. Epstein, 'Feergus O'Connor and the *Northern Star*', in *International Review of Social History*, Vol 21, No 1 (1976). [Accessed here on JSTOR](#) (28 January 2024).

Simon Cordery, 'Joshua Hobson and the Business of Radicalism', in *Biography*, Vol 11, No 2 (Spring 1988). [Accessed here on JSTOR](#) (28 January 2024).

Author details

Mark Crail runs the [Chartist Ancestors](#) website. A former print journalist, he worked as a news reporter, chief sub-editor and editor before the move to online-only publications. He has written extensively on Chartism and labour movement history.

Appendix 1. The Northern Star year by year, 1837-1852

	Title	Proprietor	Editor	Ave weekly sale*	Notes
1837	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	William Hill		First issue 18 November
1838	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	William Hill	11,000	Launch of the Petition and Charter
1839	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	William Hill	36,000	First Petition for the Charter
1840	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	William Hill	18,700	
1841	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	William Hill	13,500	
1842	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	William Hill	12,500	Second 'leviathan' Petition for the Charter
1843	Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	Feargus O'Connor	1. William Hill 2. Joshua Hobson	8,700	O'Connor sacks Hill in July, replacing him with Hobson
1844	1. Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser 2. Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	Joshua Hobson	7,400	Relocates to London with change of title from 30 November
1845	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	1. Joshua Hobson 2. George Julian Harney	6,500	Launch of the Land Company
1846	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	George Julian Harney	6,000	O'Connor sacks Hobson in November, replacing him with Harney
1847	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	George Julian Harney	8,700	
1848	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	George Julian Harney	12,000	Third Petition for the Charter
1849	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	George Julian Harney	7,000	
1850	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	1. George Julian Harney 2. George Fleming	5,000	Harney resigns May 1850, replaced de facto by Fleming and formally in 1851
1851	Northern Star and National Trades Journal	Feargus O'Connor	George Fleming	--	
1852	1. Northern Star and National Trades Journal 2. Star and National Trades Journal 3. Star of Freedom	1. George Fleming 2. George Julian Harney	1. George Fleming 2. George Julian Harney	--	O'Connor sells the paper to Fleming (March), who renames it, and sells it to Harney (April), who renames it again. Final issue, 1 May 1852

* Based on the number of stamps purchased: J.A. Epstein, 'Feargus O'Connor and the *Northern Star*', in *International Review of Social History* Vol. 21, No. 1 (1976), pp. 51-97. Accessed on JSTOR, 14 January 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44581757>

Appendix 2. Layout of pages for print



Note: Pages 2, 3, 6 and 7 were printed first on a single sheet of paper. The paper was then turned over and pages 1, 4, 5 and 8 printed on the back. The paper could then be folded along the two lines and cut.