WREXHAM NEWSPAPERS, 1848-1914

Lisa Jayne Peters

Volume 1

The thesis is submitted in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Information & Library Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth

June 2002
Declaration
This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed...........................................(candidate)
Date........................................................

Statement 1
This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed...........................................(candidate)
Date........................................................

Statement 2
I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed...........................................(candidate)
Date........................................................
Summary

This study aims to discover if any Wrexham newspaper could claim “regional” circulation between 1848 and 1914. Eight newspapers are studied, four monthlies: the Wrexham Recorder, the Wrexham Registrar, the Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser, and the Wrexham Albion, and four weeklies: the Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser, the Wrexham Telegraph, the Wrexham Guardian, and the Wrexham Free Press.

Chapter one introduces the topic and briefly explains the methodologies used in the study. Chapter two reviews the literature available whilst chapter three offers a brief history of the English and Welsh provincial press. Chapter four defines what this study meant by a “regional” newspaper by analysing the opinions of local historians and geographers as to how a region can be defined. Chapter five offers a history of the Wrexham press from 1848 to 1914, focusing on the personalities, politics, and progress of each title. Chapter six discusses possible rival newspapers and how they may have affected the sales and circulation on the Wrexham press.

Chapters seven to ten focus on four aspects of the Wrexham press – distribution, district news coverage, news content, and advertising. Each aspect was statistically analysed to ascertain the geographical circulation area of each newspaper, and changes over time.

Chapter eleven draws the thesis together and comes to the general conclusion that no Wrexham newspaper achieved regional status although at least one title attempted to do so and may have been temporarily successful. By 1914, the growth of the north Wales provincial press meant that the circulation area of the two surviving Wrexham newspapers was based on the Wrexham locality.

Appendices giving statistical data and information on those involved in the Wrexham press trade are included.
Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank:

The Department of Information and Library Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth for a two-year departmental studentship.

Philip Jones, Gwilym Huws, and Rheinallt Llwyd for supervision and reading draft copies.

The staffs of the British Library Newspaper Library, Denbighshire Record Office, Flintshire Record Office, the National Library of Wales, Shropshire Records and Research, Wrexham County Museum, and Wrexham Library for assistance.

Caroline Buckley, Lynsey Davies, Rhiannon Devine, Wendy Devine, Rachel Oakes, and Jeremy Smith for proof-reading.

Tina Bruch, Wendy Shaw, Robin Staff, and Corina Thum for advice and assistance.

Jenni Brockie, Susan Davies, Allan Lloyd, Miles Roberts, and Suzie Wright for miscellaneous assistance.
Abbreviations

DRO – Denbighshire Record Office
FRO – Flintshire Record Office
MRC – Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick
NLW – National Library of Wales
PA – Press Association
PRO – Public Record Office
WCM – Wrexham County Museum
WAlb – Wrexham Albion
WFP – Wrexham Free Press
WG – Wrexham Guardian
WMAd – Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser
WRec – Wrexham Recorder
WReg – Wrexham Registrar
WTel – Wrexham Telegraph
WWAd – Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser
Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction 1

1. Preface 1.
2. Methodology 1
3. Sources 6
3.1 Primary Sources 6
3.2 Secondary Sources 7
4. Exclusions 8
5. Conclusion 8

Chapter 2 – Literature Review 9

Chapter 3 – History of the British Provincial Press 18

1. The Provincial Press until 1855 18
2. The Press after the Repeal of Stamp Duty 29
3. The Welsh Press 36
4. Conclusion 40

Chapter 4 – A Brief Introduction to the Area Studied 41

1. The Region 41
2. The Locality 45
3. What is a Regional Newspaper? 46
4. Introduction to north Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire 48
4.1 Wrexham 48
4.2 Denbighshire 50
4.3. Flintshire 50
4.4 Merionethshire 51
4.5 Caernarvonshire 52
Chapter 7 - Newspaper Distribution

1. Methods of Distribution 135
2. Newspaper Agents 141
2.1. Methodology 141
2.2 Agent Distribution 143
2.2.1. Wrexham Recorder and Wrexham Registrar 143
2.2.2. Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser 144
2.2.3. Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser 147
2.2.4. Wrexham Albion 162
2.2.5. Wrexham Telegraph 162
2.2.6. Wrexham Guardian 170
2.2.7. Wrexham Free Press 183
2.3. Railway Station Agents 188
3. Conclusion 190

Chapter 8 - “District News” Coverage

1. Local News Reporting 192
2. Methodology 197
3. ‘District News’ 201
3.1. Change by Decade 201
3.1.1. Wrexham Recorder, Wrexham Registrar, and Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser 201
3.1.2. Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser 201
3.1.3. Wrexham Albion 208
3.1.4. Wrexham Telegraph 208
3.1.5. Wrexham Guardian 209
3.1.6. Wrexham Free Press 215
3.2. Locations by County 215
3.2.1. Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser 215
3.2.2. Wrexham Telegraph 221
3.2.3. Wrexham Guardian 223
3.6.9. Conclusion
3.7. Wrexham Guardian
3.7.1. Number of Advertisements
3.7.2. Advertisements as a Percentage of Newspaper Content
3.7.3. Physical Layout
3.7.4. Supplements
3.7.5. Advertising Deadlines
3.7.6. Advertising Disputes
3.7.7. Advertising Rates
3.7.8. Advertisements
3.7.9. Conclusion
3.8. Wrexham Free Press
3.8.1. Number of Advertisements
3.8.2. Percentage of Newspaper devoted to Advertising
3.8.3. Physical Layout
3.8.4. Supplements
3.8.5. Advertising Deadlines
3.8.6. Advertising Disputes
3.8.7. Advertising Rates
3.8.8. Advertisements
3.8.9. Conclusion
4. Conclusion

Chapter 11 - Conclusion

1. Methodology
2. Further Study
3. The Regional Circulation of each Wrexham Newspaper
3.1. Wrexham Recorder
3.2. Wrexham Registrar
3.3. Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser
3.4. Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser
3.5. Wrexham Albion
3.6. Wrexham Telegraph 371
3.7. Wrexham Guardian 374
3.8. Wrexham Free Press 377
4. Conclusion 378

Bibliography 380

Appendix 1 – Wrexham Newspapers included in this Study 399
and Location of Newspapers Consulted

Appendix 2 – A List of Some People Associated 400
with Wrexham Newspapers

Appendix 3 – Newspaper Distribution 412

Appendix 4 – “District” News Coverage 471

Appendix 5 – News Content 508
Figures and Tables

Table 1: Stamp Duty, 1712-1855 20
Table 2: Advertising Duty, 1712-1853 21
Figure 1: The pre-1974 counties of North Wales 44
Figure 2: The Main Railway Lines in the Wrexham Area by 1900 57
Table 3: Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser Publishing Establishments 72
Table 4: Wrexham Telegraph Publishing Establishments 85
Table 5: Occupation of North Wales Constitutional Press Company Shareholders 92
Table 6: Wrexham Guardian Publishing Establishments 97
Table 7: Location of North Wales Constitutional Press Company Shareholders 99
Table 8: Occupation of Wrexham Free Press Company Shareholders 107
Table 9: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents (Advertiser) 144
Table 10: Distance of Locations with Agents from Wrexham 144
Figure 3: Geographical Distribution of Advertiser Agents in December 1850 146
Table 11: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents 148
Table 12: Geographical Distribution of Agents 149
Table 13: Advertiser Agencies 150
Table 14: Distance of Locations with Agents and Agencies from Wrexham 156
Figure 4: Geographical Distribution of Advertiser Agents in 1854 158
Figure 5: Geographical Distribution of Advertiser Agents in 1870 159
Figure 6: Geographical Distribution of Advertiser Agents in 1886 160
Figure 7: Geographical Distribution of Advertiser Agents in 1900 161
Table 15: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents (Telegraph) 162
Table 16: Geographical Distribution of Agents 162
Table 17: Distance of Locations with Agents from Wrexham 166
Figure 8: Geographical Distribution of Telegraph Agents in 1857 168
Figure 9: Geographical Distribution of Telegraph Agents in 1863 168
Table 18: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents (Guardian) 171
Table 19: Geographical Distribution of Agents 172
Table 20: Agencies 173
Table 21: Distance of Locations with Agents from Wrexham 178
Figure 28: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1880 289
Figure 29: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1880 289
Figure 30: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1890 290
Figure 31: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1890 290
Figure 32: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1900 291
Figure 33: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1900 292
Figure 34: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1910 293
Figure 35: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1910 293
Table 32: Advertising Rates, 1854 299
Table 33: Advertising Rates, 1868 300
Table 34: Advertising Rates, 1900 301
Table 35: Advertising Rates, 1871 301
Table 36: Advertising Rates, 1872 303
Table 37: Geographical Distribution of Advertisements 305
      in Sample Issues, 1855-1910
Table 38: Distribution of Election Advertisements, 1867-1910 309
Table 39: Number of Advertisements in Sample Issues, 1854 (Albion) 312
Figure 36: Number of Advertisements, 1854 312
Table 40: Advertising as a Percentage of Newspaper Content 313
      in Sample Issues, 1854
Figure 37: Advertising as a Percentage of the Newspaper, 1854 313
Figure 38: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1854 314
Figure 39: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1854 314
Table 41: Geographical Distribution of Advertisements 315
      in Sample Issues, 1854
Table 42: Number of Advertisements in Sample Issues, 1855-1865 (Telegraph) 316
Figure 40: Number of Advertisements, 1855-1865 316
Table 43: Advertisements as a Percentage of Newspaper Content 318
      in Sample Issues, 1855-1865
Figure 41: Advertising as a Percentage of the Newspaper, 1855-1865 318
Figure 42: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1855 319
Figure 43: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1855 319
Figure 44: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, March and July 1865 320
Figure 45: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, March and July 1865 320

Figure 46: A Variety of Local Entertainments, Commercial, Local Government, Professional Service, and Auction Advertisements Closely Printed on Page 4 of the Telegraph, 1865 321

Figure 47: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, December 1865 322

Figure 48: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, December 1865 322

Table 44: Advertising Rates, 1859 324

Table 45: Advertising Rates, 1863 324

Table 46: Geographical Distribution of Advertisements in Sample Issues, 1855-1865 327

Table 47: Distribution of Election Advertisements, 1857-1865 329

Table 48: Number of Advertisements in Sample Issues, 1870-1910 (Guardian) 331

Figure 49: Number of Advertisements, 1870-1910 331

Table 49: Advertisements as a Percentage of Newspaper Content in Sample Issues, 1870-1910 333

Figure 50: Advertisements as a Percentage of the Newspaper, 1870-1910 333

Figure 51: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1870 334

Figure 52: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1870 334

Figure 53: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1880 335

Figure 54: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1880 335

Figure 55: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1890 336

Figure 56: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1890 336

Figure 57: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1900 337

Figure 58: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1900 337

Figure 59: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, 1910 337

Figure 60: Average Percentage of Page devoted to Advertising, 1910 338

Table 50: Prepaid Advertisements, 1870 340

Table 51: Advertising Rates for Prepaid Advertisements, 1874 341

Table 52: Advertising Rates, 1879 342

Table 53: Advertising Rates, 1890 342

Table 54: Advertising Rates, 1892 343

Table 55: Advertising Rates, 1904 344
Table 56: Advertising Rates, 1872 345
Table 57: Advertising Rates, 1877 346
Table 58: Geographical Distribution of Advertisements 348
in Sample Issues, 1870-1910
Table 59: Distribution of Election Advertisements, 1874-1910 351
Table 60: Number of Advertisements in Sample Issues, 1870 (Free Press) 354
Figure 61: Number of Advertisements, 1870 354
Table 61: Advertisements as a Percentage of Newspaper Content 355
in the Sample Issues, 1870
Figure 62: Advertisements as a Percentage of the Newspaper, 1870 355
Figure 63: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, March and July 1870 356
Figure 64: Average Percentage of each Page devoted to Advertising, March and July 1870 356
Figure 65: Total Number of Advertisements by Page, December 1870 356
Figure 66: Percentage of each Page devoted to Advertising, December 1870 357
Table 62: Advertising Rates, 1870 358
Table 63: Advertising Rates, 1873 359
Table 64: Advertising Rates, 1873 360
Table 65: Advertising Rates, 1873 360
Table 66: Geographical Distribution of Advertisements 362
in Sample Issues, 1870-1910
Figure 67: Map of North Wales with Number Representing 466 each Settlement that at one time possessed a Wrexham Newspaper Agent
Figure 68: Map of North Wales with Number Representing 467 each Settlement that at one time possessed a Wrexham Newspaper Agency
Chapter 1 - Introduction

By the end of the eighteenth century the provincial press was a firmly established part of local life, sometimes controlling large circulation and extensive spheres of influence.¹

1. Preface

The aim of this work is to provide a detailed study of the Wrexham press between 1848 and 1914 and in particular to discover if any Wrexham title could claim regional² circulation and status. Wrexham was one of the earliest Welsh towns to possess a newspaper with its first title appearing in 1848 and its first weekly newspaper in 1854. From 1855 Wrexham could claim two rival newspapers (except between the cessation of the Telegraph in March 1867 and the start of the Guardian in September 1869) and for a brief period in the early 1870s three newspapers served the town. The Wrexham press grew from small beginnings to becoming one of the most important newspaper centres in north Wales. Throughout the late nineteenth century Wrexham sought to be recognised as the pre-eminent settlement in north Wales and the extent to which its newspapers were similarly acknowledged is the underlying theme of this work.

2. Methodology

Whereas previous newspaper studies have tended to dwell on the political aspects of provincial newspapers, this work will attempt to explore various aspects of the Wrexham press. Firstly, the history of the newspapers themselves: the reasons behind their creation, their proprietorship and editorial staff, political views, commercial strategies, and the reasons given for their success or failure. Secondly, this study of the Wrexham press will be firmly rooted within a wider context of the newspaper industry of north Wales and the border counties as a whole, from which a more balanced assessment of the relative merits, aims, and achievements of the Wrexham press will emerge. Lastly, through an examination of distribution processes, newspaper content, and advertising, an attempt will be made to ascertain the geographical circulation area of each newspaper and also to learn more about certain aspects of the Wrexham press

² The meaning of 'regional' in the context of this study is discussed in Chapter 4.
at this time such as local news reporting, changing newspaper content, and newspaper
distribution methods. The time span chosen, 1848 to 1914, allows a study of the early
beginnings of the press in a small provincial town and permits a brief glimpse at the
provincial newspaper in the era before the repeal of stamp duty. 1914 was chosen for
the conclusion of the study firstly because it is a date that heralded an important
turning point in world history and also because the coming of the First World War
would change all aspects of British society, including the press.

Aspects of the Wrexham press that will not be covered in this study include the
development of the Wrexham book and printing trades, and the discussion of
newspaper production and printing. The Wrexham book and print trades are a separate
study in themselves and for the purposes of this work, with the exception of references
to printers who also acted as newspaper proprietors, will not be referred to as the main
thrust is to comment on the spread of newspaper publishing. A detailed discussion on
newspaper production is not possible as the newspapers themselves did not comment
on this aspect unless it was to promote the arrival of a new, improved press at the
printing works and information from other sources has seemingly not survived.

The methodologies used in this study will be explained in detail in the relevant
chapters. In brief, six main criteria have been used to attempt to ascertain the extent of
each newspaper’s geographical circulation.

1. Comments made by the newspaper itself about its circulation area together with
other factors such as its title and the location of secondary (‘publishing') offices. Naturally, exaggeration would have been common but such comments
do, at least, indicate where titles aspired to circulate and whether they wished
to be a regional or a local newspaper. A change in title to encompass more
counties or the establishment of additional publishing offices indicates a desire
to expand a newspaper’s geographical circulation area. The opposite, a
reduction in the number of publishing offices or the appearance of fewer
counties in the title, is indicative of falling sales in the areas concerned.

This term is further discussed in Chapter 4.
2. Lists and locations of agents who sold the newspaper in each town can give an indication of each title's area of circulation. Unfortunately, there is no surviving data to show how many newspapers each agent sold. The mere existence of an agent willing to sell a Wrexham title does not necessarily indicate a large circulation in the area for the title concerned, although it shows that the newspaper was being bought and sold in that location. A geographical expansion in agents does suggest that there were newsagents, shopkeepers or other tradesmen who believed that they could sell sufficient copies of the Wrexham title in question in their area whereas the loss of an agent in a settlement implies that the newspaper was not selling in enough numbers to justify its continued retention.

3. Most Wrexham newspapers had a 'District News' section and an analysis of the locations would indicate what each title considered to be the geographical extent of its 'district' and how this changed over time. This method can reveal whether the 'district' was regional or local in nature [see Chapter 4 for further explanation of these terms] and to what extent, if any, each newspaper's 'district' changed from regional to local or vice versa. In addition, the consistent appearance of reports from a particular area indicates the presence of a news reporter, either a permanent staff journalist or perhaps an interested local, who regularly contributed articles. Occasionally a newspaper would advertise a reporter's presence in particular areas, which shows either that the newspaper had significant circulation in that area or that it was seeking to expand its circulation. In contrast, the irregular appearance of reports from certain settlements suggests that circulation in that area was not sufficient to justify regular news coverage or that the newspaper was having difficulty recruiting a regular local correspondent. When placed within county boundaries, conclusions can be drawn as to whether the majority of news came from a particular county or counties and, within each county, whether news reports came from certain settlements or from towns and villages throughout the entire county.
4. In addition to the ‘district news’ section, Wrexham newspapers also published local news throughout the remainder of the newspaper and an analysis of this would further indicate circulation areas and any alterations over time. As this news has been analysed on a county basis (with Wrexham news counted separately) it supports the district news section in offering a broad, county-wide perspective of geographical circulation. However it does not show if newspaper reports came predominantly from a certain areas of a county.

5. Feather, in his study of the provincial book trade in the eighteenth century, claimed that examining the geographical origin of its advertisements could check a newspaper’s geographical circulation claims. Accordingly an analysis of the geographical source of the advertisements in each Wrexham newspaper should indicate that title’s circulation area, be it regional or not. However whilst this method adds more evidence to the study it does have its weaknesses. Firstly, Wrexham newspapers contained a large number of advertisements for mail-order products and for national-brand goods with the companies concerned based predominantly in London. The number of such advertisements increased over time, thereby reducing the number of local advertisements. Secondly, advertisements may have been placed to attract Wrexham customers, and not because the Wrexham title had a wide geographical circulation. For example, Chester businesses may have advertised in Wrexham newspapers to attract customers from Wrexham and not because the Wrexham title was read widely in the city. Thirdly, businesses in smaller settlements may not have found it necessary to advertise their products and services in the press. Nevertheless, the majority of advertisements were placed by local and regional businesses and people, and the appearance of a significant number of advertisements from a certain place does indicate that the newspaper concerned circulated in that area. Additionally, a large number of

---

advertisements from a particular location could indicate that the newspaper in question had a significant circulation in the locality.

6. The geographical circulation area of Wrexham newspapers was naturally affected by the existence of rival titles. In this study they are used as an indicator of where the expansion of a Wrexham newspaper could have been blocked, rather than to show where Wrexham newspapers circulated. The claimed circulation areas for rival newspapers have been examined and possible geographical areas of competition mentioned. Political status and the language of a rival newspaper were important factors in seeking to establish the potential threat posed to the circulation area of a Wrexham newspaper. For example, a Conservative newspaper would have fewer potential rivals than a Liberal counterpart, and a Welsh-language newspaper would be less of a threat to the English-language Wrexham press than one delivering news in English.

The presumption should not be made that all Wrexham newspaper wished to attain regional status. Whilst some did aspire to such, others may have preferred to focus on serving the community of Wrexham and the surrounding area and may not have wished to expand their geographical circulation area. Neither should a reduction in a newspaper’s circulation area be seen as a failure. Newspaper proprietors may have taken a deliberate decision to concentrate on being a local, as opposed to a regional, newspaper, for example a Conservative newspaper may have decided to focus its efforts on a particular constituency to assist the party. In the absence of records, a newspaper’s motives regarding its geographical circulation can only be speculated.
3. Sources

3.1. Primary Sources

The newspapers themselves provide most of the information for the study, as very little information otherwise exists. Wrexham's first weekly newspaper, the *Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser* and its predecessors the *Wrexham Registrar* and the *Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser*, are the subject of a very brief history handwritten by one of the proprietor's daughters. Unfortunately it offers very little information on the newspaper's early years as the author's father was not involved with the newspaper at this point and, although the newspaper was later controlled by a limited company, these business records have seemingly not survived. There are no records for the *Wrexham Recorder*, *Wrexham Albion* and the *Wrexham Telegraph* beyond the newspapers themselves. The *Albion* does not even appear in Newsplan Wales / Cymru report. Early business records for the *Wrexham Free Press* and the *Wrexham Guardian*, both of which were established by limited companies, exist but such records are brief and document only the early years of each newspaper. In addition there is a small incomplete archive of directors' correspondence relating to the *Guardian*'s early years, and reports of visits by the Provincial Typographical Association to the *Free Press* and the *Guardian* in response to industrial difficulties.

Various bibliographies were used to ensure that the locations of all Wrexham newspapers were discovered. The two main newspaper bibliographies used were the catalogue of the British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale (now available online) and Newsplan Wales / Cymru report which lists the holdings of Welsh newspapers. The Denbighshire and Flintshire Public Record Offices and Wrexham Library were contacted to discover if they held any Wrexham newspapers that did not

---

5 WCM, Notes on History of Wrexham Advertiser compiled by Elizabeth Rodern Croom-Johnson, c.1939.
6 PRO BT/31/1508/4705.
7 PRO BT/31/1552/4989.
8 FRO D/KT/22.
9 MRC MSS 39A/TA/7/DEP1, p.318-25.
appear in the two main bibliographies. The records of the Public Record Office\textsuperscript{12} were searched to ascertain if the business records of Wrexham newspapers had survived, as were the records held at Wrexham County Museum, the Flintshire Record Office, and the Denbighshire Record Office. The main difficulty was gaining access to the Wrexham titles held at the British Newspaper Library. Unfortunately some issues were in a poor condition and therefore not available for use until they had been microfilmed. This difficulty will only be eradicated when all newspapers are microfilmed and made widely available throughout the country.

3.2. Secondary Sources

In contrast a wide variety of bibliographical tools were used to locate secondary sources. \textit{The Bibliography of Wales},\textsuperscript{13} an online database of books, journal articles, and book reviews relating to Wales, together with the catalogue of the National Library of Wales\textsuperscript{14} was used to locate not only information on Welsh newspapers but also on associated subjects such as the Welsh book trade, the Welsh language, and settlements in north Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire. Library catalogues of major research institutions such as COPAC\textsuperscript{15} and databases such as OCLC's ArticleFirst\textsuperscript{16} were used to identify works on British newspaper history. In turn, the bibliographies of these works brought to light additional important primary and secondary sources. This method was especially useful in locating the documents of the North Wales Constitutional Newspaper Limited, held in the Gredlington archive at the Flintshire Record Office and Provincial Typographical Association reports on Wrexham newspapers held at the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, both sources being mentioned in the book \textit{Press, Politics and Society} by Aled Jones.

\textsuperscript{15} COPAC. Available: http://www.copac.ac.uk/
\textsuperscript{16} OCLC FirstSearch. Available: http://www.oclc.org/firstsearch
4. Exclusions

Some newspapers printed and published in Wrexham between 1848 and 1914 have been excluded from this study. Despite their lack of news material and their monthly appearance, it was deemed important to include both the Recorder and the Registrar in this study as they were the pioneers in their field, in particular the Registrar as it was a direct forerunner of Wrexham’s first weekly. One Wrexham newspaper that unfortunately had to be excluded because no issues have survived is the Wrexham Lantern which commenced in or around 1882. Other newspapers excluded from this study are Wrexham’s temperance newspapers – the Good Templar Advocate and General Intelligencer [1873] and the Wrexham Temperance Messenger [1873], and two predominately advertising newspapers, the Wrexham Trader [1914-1918] and the Wrexham Journal and Advertising Medium.17 The two short-lived temperance newspapers were excluded because, despite being Wrexham-based, they were the organs of a specific body and were essentially single-issue journals. The two advertising journals were excluded because of their concentration upon advertising. A monthly newspaper, the Illustrated Wrexham Argus and North Wales Athlete [1884-1916], although containing local news and sports reports, was excluded because it was predominantly a general interest monthly periodical.

5. Conclusion

Consequently this study aspires to encapsulate several features of the Wrexham press and discuss any aspects which concur or deviate from principles established by other studies both nationally or within Wales. As the only study devoted to newspapers in this important Welsh town, it also hopes to give some insight into the commercial, social, and political life of Wrexham from the mid-Victorian era to the eve of the First World War.

17 The exact date of commencement of this newspaper is unknown because two-thirds of its issues did not survive, but its estimated date of commencement is 1908. It ended in 1917.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

A study of the Wrexham newspaper press between 1848 and 1914 is of necessity a work of an interdisciplinary nature. Although at first sight it may appear that the necessary literature falls either within the category of newspaper history or Wrexham history; to adequately discuss the nature of Wrexham newspapers and, in particular, to seek to discover their geographical circulation area involves works from the fields of geography, railway history and language studies amongst others. Whereas previous studies of the provincial press have tended to concentrate on only one aspect, be it politics or distribution, the breadth of this study has led to the inclusion of works on subjects not usually associated with press histories.

There are relatively few major works on the subject of newspaper history, especially in relation to the provincial press. Provincial newspapers have long been the ‘poor relation’ of the British press and have often relied upon the efforts of local historians to document their progress. Consequently, nationally, studies of provincial newspapers are uneven at best. Within Wales the task of recording provincial newspaper history is made more difficult by the existence of two languages. Many studies concentrate upon the years prior to the abolition of the Stamp Act and there are very few commentaries on the newspapers of the Edwardian era. Thus it can be seen that although recent years have seen more attempts to record newspaper history, much more is needed especially in provincial areas and after 1855.

The two main studies of the provincial press are The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760 by Cranfield (1964) and Freshest Advices: early provincial newspapers in England by Wiles (1965). Despite their detailed coverage of several key aspects of the newspaper press, including news content, politics, legal restrictions, circulation, methods of distribution, advertising and finance, these studies concentrate upon the early years of the English provincial newspaper, in particular the early eighteenth century. Feather’s study of the eighteenth century English book trade (1985) only briefly comments on newspapers but offers useful insights into the relationship between newspapers, bookselling, and printing, in particular in the areas of newspaper distribution and ownership. A later study by Cranfield, The Press and Society: from Caxton to Northcliffe (1978), limits discussion of the provincial press to
the pre-1855 era. Although these works might appear to be of limited use to a study of newspapers over a century later, the less developed nature of Welsh society and the Welsh press meant that there were several significant similarities between the press in early and mid eighteenth century England and early and mid nineteenth century Wales, and the extent to which aspects of the early English press were repeated in early Welsh newspapers over a century later is commented upon in several parts of the study.

The sole comprehensive study of the national newspaper press specifically devoted to the Victorian era, during which the first Wrexham newspapers were established, is Brown’s *Victorian News and Newspapers* (1985). This work offers a detailed commentary on several important aspects of the Victorian press including distribution, the role of journalists, news content, and circulation. However, reflecting the growing importance of newspapers as a political tool, the work concentrates upon this aspect of the press and comments upon numerous links between the political figures of the era and newspapers. In addition, coverage of the provincial press is limited. Lee’s *The Origins of the Popular Press in England 1855-1914* (1976) focuses primarily on the national press and its links with the political establishment, but also discusses the campaign for the repeal of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ and makes several useful, general remarks upon the provincial press. A collection of essays gathered together as *Newspaper History From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, edited by Boyce, Curran, and Wingate (1978), offers a brief national newspaper history and essays on several aspects of the press. It is regrettable that no attempt was made to discuss the provincial press, and as such, seemingly undervalues the contribution that newspapers outside London have made to British press history.

The important relationship between the press and politics is reflected in the works of Aspinall and Koss. Aspinall’s *Politics and the Press c.1870-1850* (1949) concentrates upon the era prior to the repeal of the Stamp Act when government policy affected not only the price of the newspapers but also the legal restrictions placed upon the press. His book was particularly attentive to government attempts to influence newspapers, either overtly or covertly through means of subsidies, although such methods concentrated primarily upon the London press. Koss, in his two-volume *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (1981-84), used predominantly political records
to detail the relationship between politicians and the press in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and describes various Conservative and Liberal attempts to dominate the national and provincial newspaper markets. Barker's recent study of *Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695-1855* (2000) is a survey of the national press at the time and whilst relying heavily upon other works, does contain a number of references to provincial newspapers. Amongst the papers devoted to one important aspect of the Victorian press – New Journalism – Wiener's paper 'How New was the New Journalism?' (1988) offers an analysis of the changes in late Victorian journalism in the areas of typography and make up, content, and commercialism.

There are two useful studies which, although not directly related to press history, place the press within the social framework of the time. Altick's *The English Common Reader: a social history of the mass reading public, 1800-1900* (1998) is a seminal work in this field. It discusses the role of reading in the nineteenth century amongst various social groups, the impact of various factors such as the introduction of a cheap press and how increasing use of the railways developed the reading habit amongst travellers. Newspaper distribution was a very important feature of the Victorian press industry and the role of W.H. Smith and the development of the railway bookstall is described by Wilson in *First with the News: a history of W.H. Smith 1792-1972* (1985).

Advertising history is an area not directly related to press history but requires examination because of the important role it played in newspaper content and finances. There are several useful and detailed studies of advertising in general in nineteenth century Britain. Nevett's *Advertising in Britain: a history* (1982) comments on most types of press advertising and discusses the importance of advertising for newspapers, whilst Russell's *Advertising and Advertisements* (1924), dwells on newspaper advertising from the advertiser's viewpoint. Elliott's *A History of English Advertising* (1962) offers little of interest to this study as it concentrates on press advertisements of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when newspapers and advertisements still suffered from the 'taxes on knowledge.' The same era was also covered in articles on advertising and London newspapers by Walker *Advertising in London Newspapers, 1650-1750* (1973) and Asquith...

There are several studies on advertising in specific provincial newspapers. Tudor’s ‘Retail Trade Advertising in the Leicester Journal and the Leicester Chronicle’ discusses types of advertisements found in the Leicester newspapers of this time under the heading of food and drink, fashion, household products, and national brands. It is regrettable that this study is brief and lacks the necessary numerical data to allow an in-depth comparison with Wrexham press advertising, as there are few studies of advertising in the nineteenth century British provincial press.

The majority of the small number of Welsh newspaper studies concentrate upon either the press in the south of the country or the Welsh-language press. The main work in this area is Press, Politics and Society: a history of journalism in Wales by Aled Jones (1993) which attempts to cover the history of the Welsh press from the early eighteenth century through to the 1980s. Unfortunately the book concentrates upon the press in South Wales, and offers little information on the Victorian and Edwardian press in north-east Wales. Several theses have been produced on the Welsh press but these again reflect the prevalent national bias towards the south and the Welsh-language. R.D. Rees analysed South Wales Newspapers prior to the Repeal of the Stamp Act (1954) in which he discussed aspects such as distribution, advertising, and news content, whilst Cayford examined one South Wales newspaper – the Western Mail – in detail (1992).
Although there are no studies on the Wrexham press, several works discuss the press and printing trades in north Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire, and comment briefly upon the situation in Wrexham. R. Maldwyn Thomas included some useful information on the press in north Wales in his thesis *Y Wasg Gyfnodol yn nhref Caernarfon hyd 1875, gyda sylw arbennig i agraффwyр a chyhoeddwyр* [The Periodical Press in the town of Caernarvon until 1875, with special reference to printers and publishers] (1978) and Robbie Thomas in *The Advertizer Family: a history of North Wales Newspapers Limited* (1988) commented on the Oswestry Advertizer’s rivalry with Wrexham newspapers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as it sought to expand its circulation into north-east of Wales. Close to Wales, Herbert Hughes produced a history of the *Chester Chronicle* (1975), a newspaper he once edited, concentrating upon the newspaper’s personalities, politics, and early struggle for survival, but unfortunately giving little information on the newspaper’s circulation in north Wales. Two important works relating to printing in Wales and Chester were produced by Ifano Jones and Nuttall. Jones’s work *A History of Printing and Printers in Wales to 1810, and of Successive and Related Printers to 1912, a History of Printing and Printers in Monmouthshire to 1923* (1925) has been criticised for its errors but remains the standard reference work on Welsh printing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This, together with Nuttall’s *A History of Printing in Chester from 1688 to 1965* (1969) places the development of printing in Wrexham and the surrounding area in a regional and national context. Unfortunately the British Book Trade Index\(^1\) ends too early to be of any use. Press directories, especially Mitchell’s, provided important information for Wrexham, north Wales, and border area newspapers, in addition to information on Victorian and Edwardian press advertising. Consequently, it can be seen that there is a significant gap relating to north Wales in the history of the Welsh newspaper press which this study hopes to partially fill.

---

\(^1\) The British Book Trade Index is a database which includes brief biographical and trade details of those involved in the English and Welsh book trades before 1852. In addition to booksellers, publishers and printers it includes those employed in allied trades such as stationers and papermakers.
Not only is there a gap in the study of newspapers in north Wales but also there are relatively few studies of the provincial Victorian press. Theses such as Burton’s *The Early Newspaper Press in Berkshire 1723-1855* (1954) and Murphy’s study of *Cambridge Newspapers and Opinion 1780-1850* (1977) focus on the establishment of newspapers in the Stamp Act era and, in the case of Murphy’s work, concentrate on the political role of such newspapers. Nevertheless there are some interesting studies of the Victorian press in certain English towns. Stedman’s study, *Vox Populi: the Norfolk Newspaper Press from 1760-1900* (1971) is very detailed but focuses upon the history of the newspapers themselves with little analysis of each newspaper’s geographical circulation or news content. Gibb and Beckwith’s study of the *Yorkshire Post* (1954) was commissioned by that newspaper and is therefore unlikely to be free from bias, and again limits itself to a straightforward account of the newspaper’s history, whilst Briggs discussed the political role of newspapers in Birmingham and their reaction to the stamp duty in addition to commenting on some personalities in the Birmingham press in *Press and Public in Early Nineteenth-Century Birmingham* (1949). Ferdinand’s work *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (1997) discusses the *Salisbury Journal*, its proprietor Benjamin Collins, and eighteenth century journalism in south-east England. It comments on the *Journal*’s rivals, readership, advertising, content, and distribution network; a subject further illuminated by her article ‘Local Distribution Networks in 18th-century England’ (1990). This article analysed the changing circulation areas of these newspapers in the eighteenth century based on the locations of their agents. A similar analysis of the circulation areas of Wrexham newspapers was undertaken for this work and it is regrettable that there are not more studies of this nature.

There is a cluster of newspaper studies from the north of England, specifically Manchester and the Newcastle area. Read’s key work *Press and People 1870-1860: opinion in three English cities* (1961) contrasted and compared newspapers in Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield between 1790 and 1850, commenting on the political opinions and local influence at a time when these northern cities were rising in political importance and undergoing great political upheaval with Chartism, the 1832 Reform Act, and the Anti-Corn Law League. Manchester appears to have been a fruitful source for newspaper studies as Lee produced one of the few studies of a newspaper’s finances and management based on the *Manchester City News* (1973),
the scarcity of surviving newspaper business records making such analyses unusual. The *Manchester Guardian* was one of the main provincial newspapers and is the subject of a well researched book by Ayerst (1971), which comments upon the newspaper’s brief attempt to become the daily morning newspaper for north Wales. The north-east of England and its newspapers have been the source of several works, most noticeably by Milne. In *Survival of the Fittest: Sunderland Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century* (1982), he describes several factors such as price and advertising base which determined a newspaper’s success or failure, but it is for his study of *Newspapers of Northumberland and Durham from the Mid Nineteenth Century to the Early Twentieth Century* (1974) that he is acknowledged as one of the most important provincial newspaper scholars. This book is recognised as one of the major works in the history of the provincial press and is a comprehensive study of Northumberland and Durham newspapers of the time. It focuses primarily upon each newspaper’s political stance on certain issues and tends to allow the personalities involved in these newspapers to overshadow the newspapers themselves. However, this is understandable when such figures as W.T. Stead and Samuel Story, M.P. were involved in the Newcastle newspaper press at this time.

Although content analysis is a widely used qualitative technique in the social sciences, it had rarely been used in newspaper studies. The main exponent of this method has been Berridge who used it in her study of *Popular Journalism and Working Class Attitudes, 1854-86, a study of Reynold’s Newspaper, Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper and the Weekly Times* (1976). Her article on ‘Content Analysis and Historical Research on Newspapers’ (1986) thoroughly discusses the principles of this technique in relation to newspapers and it is unfortunate that there are not more examples of content analysis amongst the provincial press.

Various works were used to place newspaper changes within the context of British and Welsh society. Within Britain, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* by Pelling (1979), *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915* by Shannon (1976), and *The Rise of Respectable Society: a social history of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* by Thompson (1988) cover the period concerned, and *A History of Wales* by John Davies (1990), *Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922* by Kenneth O. Morgan (1980), and *Explorations and Explanations: essays in the social history of Victorian Wales* by
Ieuan Gwynedd Jones (1981) comment upon the major political and social changes taking place in Wales during the Victorian era. The Welsh language was an important social issue within Wales and, of course, the language a newspaper was written in, to a large extent, dictated its circulation area in nineteenth and early twentieth century Wales. The main study of the language divide in the north-east is Pryce's 'Language Areas in North-East Wales c.1800-1911' (1998) which shows how the language boundaries changed over time, and David Llewelyn Jones produced a similar language study for Montgomeryshire (1998). Carter's The Towns of Wales: a study in urban geography (1966) provides information as to the relative importance of each of north Wales' towns. Dodd's The Industrial Revolution in North Wales (1990 reprint) provides a useful industrial background to the area. Rees's thesis 'The Social and Economic Structure of North-East Wales, 1759-1890' (1971) provides a useful similar introduction to the economy and industry of north-east Wales, but Irish's thesis on 'Spatial Patterns in the Small Town in the Nineteenth Century: a case study of Wrexham' (1988) offers little new information on the geographical development of the town.

Wrexham is extremely fortunate in having possessed several outstanding local historians. Palmer produced several nineteenth century works, most notably the History of the Town of Wrexham, its Houses, Streets, and Old Families (1997 reprint), detailing the history of the town and the surrounding area. In the twentieth century, his work was supplemented by Dodd who edited A History of Wrexham, Denbighshire (1957), a collection of essays on various aspects of the town including its religious and educational history. Lerry, himself a former Wrexham newspaper editor, not only contributed to Dodd's volume but also provided useful biographical information on several individuals involved in the Wrexham newspaper trade in his work on Wrexham Mayors (date not given). Within Denbighshire, articles on Denbighshire politics by Frank Price Jones (1961), Jane Morgan (1974) and W. Geraint Morgan (1971) help place the elections and political matters discussed in Wrexham newspapers in a regional and historical context.

Good communication links for distributing and sending news reports to the newspapers cannot be underestimated and the importance of these links is documented in The Victorian Railway by Simmons (1991). Dodd's 'The Roads of
North Wales, 1750-1850' (1925) details the state of affairs prior to the coming of the railway and several books describe the development of railways throughout north Wales and the borders. The main works on local railways are *The Chester and Holyhead Railway* (1972) and *North and Mid Wales* (part of the Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain series) (1991) both by Baughan, *The Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway: including the Buckley Railway* by Boyd (1991), and Holt's study of railways in the north-west (1986). These, although primarily written for railway enthusiasts, contain much of value for the local historian.

It is clear that much still needs to be done before Britain can claim to have a comprehensive history of its provincial newspapers. It can only be hoped that the substantial microfilming programme currently being undertaken as part of the Newsplan project brings more attention to the provincial press and facilitates access to these newspapers. Many works concentrate upon the political aspects of the press, understandably so, as great emphasis is placed upon political history, but this does mean that certain features of the press such as advertising and content have not received the study they deserve. Nationally, a comprehensive study of the Victorian provincial press would be a great benefit to press historians, and within Wales a comparative history of the Welsh and English-language presses would be particularly beneficial. Whilst this study can, at best, only contribute a small amount of knowledge to British press history, it aims to act as a stimulus for further works, especially in north Wales and the border area.
Chapter 3 - Brief History of Provincial Newspapers

The provincial newspaper press in England and Wales did not commence until the early eighteenth century. This lateness in comparison to the London press was primarily attributable to the lack of urban centres and a legislative restraint which restricted printing to only four centres until 1695. In 1712 the government introduced a financial charge on newspapers called stamp duty which, as intended, made provincial and London newspapers expensive for all but the well-off. Each subsequent rise in stamp duty caused a reduction in the number of newspapers. Government and opposition involvement in the press was initially restricted to financial subsidies for supportive newspapers and legal restrictions against other newspapers. Despite this, the provincial press grew and flourished, and political parties recognised its importance and influence by attempting to establish politically supportive newspapers. The earliest newspaper published in Wales commenced over a century after its English provincial counterparts, and the dual language nature of the country caused difficulties for both Welsh and English language newspapers. In Wrexham, the late development of Welsh newspapers meant that the area was, until the mid-nineteenth century, predominantly served by newspapers from Chester, Shrewsbury, Manchester, and Liverpool.

1. The Provincial Press until 1855

The lapse of the 1662 Licensing Act, which had restricted printing to London, Oxford, Cambridge, and York, in 1695 paved the way for the creation of newspapers outside these four cities. Printers began to move to provincial towns and cities and at least three provincial newspapers had been established by 1704. Difficulties relating to the survival of these early newspapers make it difficult to state with certainty the identity of the first provincial newspaper but it was probably the *Norwich Post* in 1701, followed by the *Bristol Post Boy* in 1701 or 1702, and *Sam. Farley's Exeter Post-Man* in 1704. These newspapers were all located in older established cities some distance from London but as the century progressed, industrial cities such as Newcastle and

---

Manchester expanded in size and began to establish their own newspapers. However Cranfield has argued that the existence of a newspaper in a particular town meant only that there was a printer ambitious enough to risk his money on a commercial speculation, and was not an indication of the town's importance or its standard of literacy.

In addition to urban growth and the ending of the Licensing Act, several other factors led to the expansion of both weekly provincial and daily London newspapers. The ending of the Licensing Act in 1695 occurred in a period of 'party rage' which was exacerbated by fiercely contested triennial elections. Beginning in the early eighteenth century with Robert Harley, politicians attempted to use the press to support their views and attack those of their opponents. Secondly, almost continuous war against France since 1689 led to a demand for foreign news, supplied by newspapers. Finally, the growth of trade led to an increased demand for advertising with newspapers carrying commercial, as well as official advertisements and public notices.

Concerned by the potential power of newspapers, the government took action to limit the influence of the press, especially the hostile press, and confine circulation to the upper and middle-classes, by introducing the 'taxes on knowledge': stamp duty, advertising duty, and paper duty. In 1712 Parliament passed the Stamp Act which placed a tax on newspapers known as stamp duty. The charge was a penny per sheet but the Act was poorly drafted and offered newspapers a loophole, namely, that no rate was stated for newspapers printed on one and a half sheets. Newspapers adopted this format and successfully argued that they were pamphlets and were therefore taxed at three shillings per edition as opposed to one and a half pence per issue. However this did not prevent several pre-1712 provincial newspapers from ceasing publication, but despite this, growth resumed, and by 1723 'some' twenty four provincial

---

2 The first Newcastle newspaper was the *Newcastle Gazette*, established in 1710, and the first Manchester newspaper was the *Manchester News-letter*, established in 1719 [Donald Read, *Press and People, 1790-1850: opinions in three English cities* (London: Edward Arnold, 1961), p.59].


4 Attempts by politicians to control the press are discussed later.


newspapers were regularly published. The loophole in the 1712 Act was closed by the 1725 Stamp Act and the number of newspapers again fell.

Table 1: Stamp Duty, 1712-1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Stamp Duty (per sheet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>1 ½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>3 ½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>abolished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stamp duty peaked at four pence at the end of the Napoleonic War, having risen over the past century. As a result of the proliferation of unstamped newspapers in the 1830s, duty fell by three-quarters in 1836 to one penny and this concession spurred on the campaign to abolish the duty which was led by the Newspaper Stamp Abolition Committee, established in 1849 (later the Association for the Promotion of the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge). Stamp duty was especially harsh on provincial newspapers as the stamped paper had to come from London and, to prevent running out of paper, provincial newspapers in distant areas or with poor communications links were obliged to keep an excessively large supply in stock. This took up storage space and caused financial problems.

A second ‘tax on knowledge’ was advertising duty which commenced at the same time as stamp duty. It was abolished two years earlier in 1853, after peaking at three shillings and six pence per advertisement in 1815.

8 Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.41.
Read described eighteenth century provincial newspapers as ‘advertising sheets’ and since advertising provided much of a newspaper’s profits taxing this source of revenue led to a consequent reduction in the number of advertisements and in profits. In addition, advertising duty was a flat rate applied regardless of an advertisement’s length and this discouraged the placing of small advertisements. The abolition of paper duty in 1861 marked the end of the ‘taxes on knowledge’.

Despite the crippling stamp duty, the number of provincial newspapers slowly increased. Numbers rose from around twenty five in 1735 to thirty five by 1760 and over fifty by the early 1780s. By 1830 there were over a hundred and fifty provincial newspapers in England alone. However the provincial press displayed a high casualty rate – the ‘taxes on knowledge’ meant that newspapers were usually only marginally profitable – and most nineteenth century provincial newspaper proprietors were printers whose first concern was their printing business. Some one hundred and thirty newspapers were launched outside London between 1701 and 1760 but only around half of them existed for at least five years. In addition these newspapers were not evenly spread throughout the country; some cities possessed several newspapers whilst others had none at all, for example, Bristol suffered from excessive competition with

---

10 Wiles, p.103.
nine newspapers being established between 1701 and 1760, whilst Leicester did not have its own newspaper until after 1750.

Politicians were quick to recognise both the benefits and potential problems of newspapers. After the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, possibly the first politician to see the press as a 'propaganda machine' was Robert Harley [1661-1724], 'prime minister in all but title' from 1704 to 1708 and 1710 to 1714. When he left office he could claim to have established the employment of a ministerial propagandist 'on a more or less permanent footing' (Defoe and Swift amongst others acting in this capacity for him), created an unofficial press organ (Defoe's Review), and set up a system for disseminating propaganda. Political parties used covert political subsidies (the government having access to secret service funds controlled by the Secretary of the Treasury), and established their own newspapers to promote their views. For example, Walpole's ministry established its own newspapers (the Daily Courant being written by government employees), offered covert subsidies to friendly newspapers (often in the form of official advertisements), bought opposition newspapers such as the London Journal, and offered financial incentives to opposition journalists in order to persuade them to cease their attacks. Such methods continued after Walpole, for example, in 1784 Pitt the Younger gave the Morning Herald and four other London newspapers £100 each. Covert subsides were a powerful political weapon in the eighteenth century and there are several examples of foreign governments subsidising English newspapers. This system ceased during the early nineteenth century as it was expensive and newspapers known to receive subsidies were less influential. These

14 Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.179.
16 Downie, p.80.
17 In 1743 the Committee of Secrecy discovered that over £50,000 of secret service money had been paid to pamphleteers and Treasury newspapers in the last year of Walpole's Ministry [A. Aspinall, Politics and the Press, c.1780-1830 (London: Home and Van Thal, 1949), p.67].
19 Aspinall, p.68.
20 Aspinall, p.102-6.
methods were used primarily to control the London press but could also be used against the larger provincial newspapers. Governments tended to confine their subsidies to London newspapers and left local dignitaries to shape the provincial press.\textsuperscript{22}

If newspapers declined to cooperate with the government or promoted what it considered to be subversive views, the administration had several powers at its disposal. From 1726 the Comptroller of the Post Office sent copies of all provincial newspapers to the Treasury Solicitor who reported libels of the King or government to the Secretaries of State.\textsuperscript{23} Until Lord Campbell's Libel Act of 1843, a newspaper committed libel if it published a statement which reflected negatively upon an individual or institution's character, the truth or otherwise of the statement being irrelevant. In cases of press libel, until 1825, the Attorney General could proceed with a special jury composed mainly of civil servants and magistrates, who were usually less favourable to the defendant.\textsuperscript{24} If recourse to the law was ineffective the government could harass those associated with opposition newspapers by using their powers of search and arrest, or even physical intimidation.\textsuperscript{25} As Cranfield explained, the fear of prosecution often caused newspapers to engage in self-censorship.\textsuperscript{26}

As already mentioned, foreign news was one of the main forces behind the growth of the press in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and as such it regularly appeared in newspapers. During wartime, foreign news was naturally of great interest, especially if the UK was involved in the conflict. Cranfield added that major wars always acted as a stimulus to the setting up of new newspapers whilst the absence of a war acted as a deterrent.\textsuperscript{27} The provincial press tended to rely upon London newspapers for foreign news. Wiles added that provincial printers could buy continental newspapers and arrange for certain articles to be translated and then

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Aspinall, p.350.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Cranfield, \textit{The Development of the Provincial Newspaper}, p.143.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Aspinall, p.40.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Downie gives the example of John Tutchen who was threatened by the Duke of Marlborough with physical violence (p.13).
\item \textsuperscript{26} Cranfield, \textit{The Development of the Provincial Newspaper}, p.151.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Cranfield, \textit{The Development of the Provincial Newspaper}, p.66.
\end{itemize}

23
published but this would depend on gaining access to European newspapers (the ease of which would vary greatly throughout the country) and having staff with linguistic skills.

In contrast, early London newspapers, and consequently the provincial press, carried very little Parliamentary news as the reporting of Parliamentary debates was prohibited until 1771 when the House of Commons abandoned its right to prevent publication. In addition, political news was generally avoided in the early provincial press because of repressive measures such as the libel laws (although governments of this time tended to ignore the provincial press) and the threat that supporting a political party would lead to the establishment of a rival newspaper advocating the opposing party.

Surprisingly, many early provincial newspapers carried very little local news, primarily because proprietors were concerned with offending local dignitaries. Consequently court reports, which were a popular part of the limited local news coverage, tended to concentrate on the crimes of the working class. Manuscript letters from local residents detailing foreign news were especially interesting to readers but editorial work generally consisted of cutting and pasting articles from London or other provincial newspapers. Feature articles, including poems and stories, were a popular component of these weeklies, and often offered a local aspect as many of the contributors were readers of the newspaper. Until the introduction of steam-powered printing in the 1830s newspaper appearance depended upon the arrival of the London post. Older news was printed firstly on the outer pages whilst more recent news appeared on the inner pages. Consequently, it was not unusual for a newspaper to contain directly contradictory comments, especially about foreign affairs. These

---

31 Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, p.81.
33 An early issue of the *Wrexham Advertiser* contained an article taken directly from the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*. WMAd, "Financial and Parliamentary Reform", March 1850, p.4.
34 Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, p.102. See also Wiles, p.303-37 for more information.
production difficulties meant that the eighteenth century provincial press was a weekly one.\textsuperscript{35}

The nature of the provincial press altered in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the establishment of several provincial newspapers which sought to form and influence public opinion, not merely to reflect it, and for the press to become the 'Fourth Estate'. The 1770s saw the creation of a Parliamentary reform movement\textsuperscript{36} and attempts by Nonconformists to repeal the Test and Corporations Acts.\textsuperscript{37} These, together with the French Revolution, polarised British politics. Ultra-Tories, supporting the Church and the King, began to establish local political societies and this, together with local newspapers now refusing to print Radical propaganda, caused Radicals and Reformers to establish their own newspapers. Several of the most prominent provincial newspapers established at this time were founded by Nonconformist Reformers or Radicals\textsuperscript{38} such as the Sheffield Register, established in 1787, and the Cambridge Intelligencer (the first 'political' newspaper\textsuperscript{39}), founded in 1793. These newspapers promoted the Radical/Reformist cause by printing excerpts from the works of Tom Paine, original articles and editorials, and reports of local Radical meetings.\textsuperscript{40} Circulation had reached over 2,000 for the Register by 1794\textsuperscript{41} and 2,700 by 1797 for the Intelligencer.\textsuperscript{42} The government responded to the threat posed by these newspapers by indicting the Register's owner, Joseph Gales, for conspiracy in 1794 (he fled abroad and the newspaper ended) and imprisoning Benjamin Flower, owner of the Intelligencer, for libel in 1799.\textsuperscript{43} Other Radical newspapers faced government suppression including the Manchester Herald (five ex-officio

\textsuperscript{35} Hannah Barker, Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695-1855 (Harlow: Longman, 2000), p.44.


\textsuperscript{38} The founder of the Sheffield Register was a 'radical reformer in politics' [Read, Press and People, p.69] and the owner of the Cambridge Intelligencer, Benjamin Flower, supported 'the cause of reform' [Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.187].

\textsuperscript{39} Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.187.

\textsuperscript{40} Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.187 and Read, Press and People, p.69.

\textsuperscript{41} Sheffield Register 2 May 1794. Quoted in Read, Press and People, p.70.

\textsuperscript{42} Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.188.

\textsuperscript{43} Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.188
informations were laid against its editors in 1793, who also left the country). The government also sought to end these newspapers by the introduction of repressive legislation, for example an 1798 Act required the names and address of the printer and publisher to be placed on each copy of a newspaper and that one copy be delivered to the Commissioner of Stamps within six days of publication, and a year later another Act stated that every printing press had to be registered. Whilst government repression caused many Radical and Reformist newspapers to cease in the late eighteenth century, the beginning of the next century saw the founding of more Reformist newspapers, many later becoming Liberal party organs.

The end of the Napoleonic War in 1815 ushered in another period of Radicalism, not only for the press, but also for society as a whole. Population figures rose, food prices fluctuated, and the price of wheat during the nineteenth century peaked in 1810-1819. Furthermore Evans has pointed out that much of this population was young and therefore more attracted to protest movements. The Tory party was in government under Lord Liverpool and sought to protect the wishes of the landed class and the Church of England against encroachment from the commercial class, many of whom owed their wealth to the Industrial Revolution, and Nonconformists who favoured Parliamentary reform. Thompson described 1815 to 1819 as 'the heroic age of popular Radicalism' as government authority was challenged through movements such as the protest meetings at Spa Fields in 1816, the 'March of the Blanketeers' in 1817, and the Peterloo massacre in 1819.

Like the Reformist and Radical press of the late eighteenth century the post-1815 Reformist and Radical press aimed to influence and reflect public opinion and some newspapers were established to promote their political views, rather than as

---

44 An ex-officio information for libel was used by the Attorney-General to permit him to expedite the trial of a journalist by not having a preliminary hearing in front of a Grand Jury [Aspinall, p.40].
45 Read, Press and People, p.72.
46 Aspinall, p.38.
47 Aspinall, p.39.
49 Eric J. Evans, p.4-5.
Many of these Reformist and Radical newspapers were located in the northern manufacturing towns and established by middle class, Nonconformist reformers. Possibly the earliest Radical newspaper of the nineteenth century was the *Leeds Mercury* which was purchased by Edwards Baines in 1801 with money lent by eleven local reformers, seven of whom were 'probably' Unitarians. He made full use of editorials, leading articles and promoted the cause of reform through reporting reform speeches at local meetings. Circulation rose from around seven hundred and fifty a week in 1801 to nearly 2,000 by 1806, and to over 5,000 by 1829. A second important Reformist newspaper was the *Manchester Guardian*, established in 1821 by middle class Radicals. The founders did not support demonstrations such as that at Peterloo organised by working class Radicals, but sought to achieve change through discussion. However these two titles became less radical as the political and economic situation calmed throughout the 1820s, partly due to the government's repressive measures after Peterloo such as the Six Acts and partly due to economic improvements.

Whilst these titles did support political and economic reform they were established by the middle-class and reflected their views, as opposed to those of working-class Radicals who sought universal suffrage. William Cobbett ('generally regarded by the Tories as the incarnation of the devil') founded the *Weekly Political Register* in 1802, followed by T.J. Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, and William Hone's *The Reformist Register and Weekly Commentary*. These newspapers could be read aloud in Radical meetings and therefore made available to both the literate and the illiterate. They condemned repressive legislation such as the Seditious Meetings Acts [1817] (which prevented societies from holding meetings without the approval of magistrates) and the

---

52 Read, *Press and People*, p.76.
56 Read, *Press and People*, p.79.
suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1817, and advocated Parliamentary reform. The government responded to these attacks, prosecuting seventy five Radical newspapers in 1819, more than half of which were published in the provinces, and introducing measures such as the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act, and forcing printers and publishers of provincial newspapers to provide a recognizance of £200 (£300 in London, Edinburgh, or Dublin). Several Radical newspapers promptly ceased.

The Radical press was mainly silent during the 1820s but returned to the political arena in the 1830s with the ‘War of the Unstamped’. This began in November 1830 when Richard Carlile, a Radical journalist, published the Prompter without a stamp. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment, fined £200, and had to produce £1000 security for good behaviour. Other Radical newspapers followed his example and ‘1831 was to witness a sudden eruption of cheap and unstamped newspapers, all illegal, and all advocating not the moderate reform now being discussed in Parliament [the 1832 Reform Act], but an extreme – even violent – transformation of the whole political, legal and social structure’. The unstamped press was not limited to London, Cranfield stated that the Poor Man’s Guardian, the leading unstamped newspaper, was a template for unstamped newspapers in Bradford, Leeds, and Manchester. Once again the government resorted to repression, in particular arresting those who sold and distributed unstamped newspapers, but it was the reduction in stamp duty to a penny in 1836 that ended the unstamped press. The unstamped press was replaced as the organ of the working-class radicals by the Chartist press, in particular the Northern Star, first published in Leeds in 1837. Several middle-class reformist newspapers

---

61 Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.106.
65 Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.126-7. The fine was never paid, the security was never given, and he was released after eight months.
69 Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.194.
opposed Chartism, including the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Manchester Times*,\(^7^0\) preferring instead to concentrate on promoting free trade and the repeal of the Corn Laws.\(^7^1\)

In less than half a century the political nature of the provincial press had significantly altered. Flower had established the first overtly political newspaper in 1793 and by the 1830s 'provincial newspapers had now completely abandoned any pretence to neutrality, and were devoting more and more space to politics, both national and local'.\(^7^2\) Working-class Radical newspapers generally petered out after the failure of Chartism and middle-class reformist newspapers such as the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Manchester Guardian* came to support the Liberal party, reflecting the views of the predominately Nonconformist owners. The provincial press was to remain overwhelmingly Liberal until both it and the Liberal party were divided by issues such as Irish Home Rule in 1886.

2. The Press after the Repeal of Stamp Duty

The position of the provincial and London press changed radically with the abolition of the various 'taxes on knowledge' from 1853 onwards: advertising duty was abolished in 1853, stamp duty in 1855, and paper duty in 1861. Newspapers could now offer their lowest price to readers, usually the 'popular penny' and this led to a dramatic expansion in readership and the number of newspapers. The years after 1855 saw the rise of the provincial morning daily with major cities including Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Edinburgh, having at least two by the 1880s.\(^7^3\) However from the 1880s the daily morning press in England was eclipsed by the rise of the daily evening press. Evening newspapers tended to be a compilation of telegraph news, in particular sporting information.\(^7^4\) As the halfpenny evening market expanded the

\(^{7^0}\) Cranfield, *The Press and Society*, p.197.


number of penny morning newspapers fell. Attempts were made to revitalise the morning market by the introduction of halfpenny morning dailies, starting with the *Northern Echo* in 1870, but by 1910 morning dailies were outnumbered by the evening press. Nevertheless, the English press remained numerically dominated by the weekly, as only large settlements could support a daily newspaper. Weeklies also remained the dominant newspaper type in Wales whose daily press was restricted to the south.

There were several reasons for the continued success of provincial newspapers, both daily and weekly, after 1855. Firstly, in addition to national and foreign news coverage, they provided local and regional news. Secondly they were able, crucially, to attract local, regional, and national advertising. After 1853, advertising became an increasingly important source of revenue for provincial newspapers, especially the smaller weeklies. Asquith estimated that after 1855 advertising contributed over half a newspaper's income and took up an increasingly large percentage of the newspaper. Despite the power of advertising, newspapers initially accepted it reluctantly and were loath to admit that advertisements (or the lack of them) usually determined a newspaper’s success or failure. Consequently advertisements were not allowed to break columns or to include illustrations or different types of lettering until the 'New Journalism' of the 1880s. Thirdly, in the second half of the nineteenth century several technical advances in printing greatly aided newspaper production. The larger and more prosperous newspapers, starting with the *Times* in 1866, moved from Hoe four- or six-feeders to web-fed rotaries. Wood pulp (newsprint) began to be used from 1868 to save on paper costs, and the mechanisation of the presses allowed newspapers to employ fewer skilled staff.

86 (p.174) commented that by the 1890s no newly established newspaper wanting wide circulation could afford to neglect sporting news.

75 Lee, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1780-1855' p.122.
76 Asquith, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1780-1855', p.119.
78 Woods and Bishop, p.96.
Provincial newspapers benefited from other technological developments in the late nineteenth century in the area of newsgathering. Railways were initially used to send copies of London newspapers, containing the latest national and foreign news, to the provinces but they were superseded by the electric telegraph. The advent of the telegraph in 1845, when the first message was transmitted to the *Morning Chronicle*, allowed the provincial press to speedily and cheaply receive foreign and national news. By 1854 the Intelligence Department of the Electric and International Telegraph Company was delivering political news, stock market information, and sports results to a hundred and twenty provincial newspapers. International submarine telegraph cables began to link the world: a permanent trans-Atlantic link was established in 1866, in 1872 the Madras-Australia link was established, and by 1880 nine telegraph cables crossed the Atlantic. In 1851 Julius Reuter, a naturalised German, established his international news agency in London, using this new technology. Although Reuter telegrams appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, *Manchester Courier*, and *Liverpool Mercury* between May 1853 and 1855, Reuter’s business was primarily focused on the continent and the company did not secure subscriptions from leading London newspapers until late 1858 and early 1859. Within the UK, the Press Association (PA) was created in 1865 by provincial newspaper proprietors to ensure than no one newspaper or group of newspapers gained control of the telegraph system. Unfortunately the PA could not function as the telegraph companies refused to transfer existing contracts to it. The PA actually came into operation three years later courtesy of the 1868 Telegraph Act which nationalised the telegraph system. Under the Act telegrams were charged at one shilling for seventy-five words (9 am–6 pm) or a hundred words (6 pm–9 am) regardless of distance and ‘special wires’ could be rented at £500 a year. These low rates meant that the amount of news sent by telegraph

---

81 Kieve, p.71.
83 Kieve, p.116.
86 Kieve, p.216.
88 Kieve, p.217.
increased significantly. Nationalisation actually acted as a covert subsidy for the press as the Post Office ran the service at a loss.

Another important change in the press in the nineteenth century, both national and provincial, was the arrival of ‘New Journalism’ in the 1880s. ‘New Journalism’ was pioneered by W.T. Stead at the Pall Mall Gazette which he began to edit in 1883. It emphasised novelty, variety, and sensationalism (as shown by features for women, sports columns, exposés, and illustrations) at the expense of more traditional news items such as Parliamentary reports whilst foreign news became more concise.

Like covert subsidies, government repression of the press was rare after the War of the Unstamped. Fox’s Libel Act [1792] established jury, instead of judge, trial for libel and Campbell’s Libel Act [1843] allowed the defendant to plead truth, providing it was in the public interest, as a defence. Even if the government could successfully prosecute a libel case, the libel would receive publicity and the newspaper’s sales would usually rise. In 1869 the security system introduced in 1819 ended and registration became optional. The Newspaper Libel and Registration Act [1881] required the agreement of the Director of Public Prosecutions for the prosecution of a newspaper proprietor or other ‘responsible person’ for criminal libel and the Libel Law Amendment Act [1888] permitted the prosecution of newspaper owners for criminal libel only on the orders of a judge in chambers, the defendant having the right to oppose the application. The expansion in newspaper numbers after 1855 made any form of legal repression difficult.

The press had long been an important political instrument, both locally and nationally, and its importance greatly increased after the significant rise in the electorate following

---

89 Kieve, p.217.
90 Kieve, p.218.
the 1867 Reform Act. The provincial press reported both local and national political news, especially at election time, and towards the end of the nineteenth century included news from a wide range of elected bodies such as the newly established School Boards and County Councils. Most early eighteenth century provincial newspapers claimed to be neutral but by the Victorian era the optimum factor in the survival of a newspaper was ‘undoubtedly to adopt the political standpoint of the majority party, and a weaker but still beneficial factor before the 1890s was to have a recognised political stance’. 95 Milne added that ‘political content was so integral to a Victorian newspapers that absence of an editorial line was unlikely to command respect, allegiance, or assistance in time of trouble’. 96

In 1855 most provincial newspapers were Liberal, but the Conservatives made strenuous efforts to increase their influence in the provinces, especially after 1867. Concern over this lack of provincial newspaper support was reflected at the first conference of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations in November 1867, when one of the stated aims of the Association was ‘to increase and multiply the influence of the Conservative press throughout the United Kingdom.’ 97 However it appears that Conservative efforts to improve their position in the provincial press were generally unsuccessful: Charles Peabody, editor of the Yorkshire Post, suggested that the dearth of Conservative journalists in the provinces was a result of that party’s neglect and its failure to recognise the importance of such newspapers. 98 Koss noted that since Conservative Central Office had very little money for the establishment of Conservative newspapers outside London it relied upon provincial supporters, such as the Duke of Buccleuch who contributed £2,500 to the Glasgow News, to establish such newspapers, 99 thus leaving them to bear the financial burdens, and the frequent financial losses.

Whilst the Conservatives were endeavouring to build up a network of supportive newspapers after 1855, by the 1880s the Liberals were slowly seeing their dominance of the provincial press eroded. As the Liberal party itself dived over issues such as the Bulgarian Atrocities in 1878 and later, more seriously, Irish Home Rule, the Liberal provincial press followed its example. The Liberals were to lose more support in the provinces in the late nineteenth century as a result of the party's opposition to imperialism, for example, the *Manchester Guardian* saw its circulation fall sharply because of its support for the Boers during the 1889 to 1902 war. Despite the great national interest in Irish Home Rule and other political issues, Lee argued that the 1880s saw a decline in the institution of the 'party newspaper' as changes in the structure and nature of the press in relation to politics undermined the political impact of newspapers.

Whereas party support could provide initial finance, a newspaper could survive only if it was sufficiently informative and entertaining enough to be bought by large numbers of people. As Brown commented:

> party backing was not in itself a recipe for commercial success. In all cases the paper gained a start in life through political funding, but established itself more slowly, with a general growth in its reading public, and especially through normal journalistic processes - by finding a share of the market, by developing specialities, or by particular journalistic successes.

The telegraph allowed the provincial press to receive not only a larger quantity of news than before but also a greater variety of information. Naturally local news was the largest section of many provincial newspapers but foreign news was particularly important in wartime. Provincial newspapers did not have war correspondents but

---

99 Koss, I, p.178.
may, if they were fortunate, have received newsletters from locals “caught up” in events overseas. Likewise national political news was popular at election times and during events such as the Irish Home Rule crisis. The increasing involvement of all sections of society in playing and watching sport led to a significant rise in the quantity of sports reporting. Sporting news was especially popular in the daily evening provincial press as these newspapers could offer the latest sporting results. Newspapers, particularly those controlled by Nonconformists were initially reluctant to include sporting news because of its association with gambling but eventually acceded to reader demand. In contrast there were few feature-type articles as this market was now catered for by the periodical. In 1871 the Conservatives established the Central Press Agency to aid provincial newspapers by supplying leading articles, parliamentary reports, London letters, women’s columns and other feature articles for a fee, the Liberals following in 1873 with the Liberal Press Agency.

By the beginning of the twentieth century a national newspaper press was rising to challenge the provincial newspapers. In the mid-1850s the only ‘national’ newspaper was the Times, but improved rail communications allowed London newspapers to expand their circulation into the provinces. The Daily Mail, established in 1896, had a printing and distribution office in Manchester which allowed it to compete with daily morning newspapers in the north of England. As national newspapers began to expand further into the provinces, the number of provincial newspapers began to fall; the number of morning provincial newspapers in England fell from seventy in 1900 to forty two in 1914, provincial evening newspapers fell from a hundred and one to seventy seven. Not only were provincial newspapers losing readers to the national press but also, crucially, advertising. Branded consumer goods needed to be nationally marketed to the largest possible audience, thereby depriving the provincial press of an important part of its advertising income. According to Lee, the grounds for the decline

---

106 Brown, p.244.
107 Brown, p.245.
109 Brown, p.106.
111 Brown, p.20.
in the number of provincial newspapers were prepared by 1914, and the provincial press was to suffer 'dramatic consequences'\(^{112}\) after 1918.

3. The Welsh Press

The history of the Welsh press differs from that of England because of the dual language nature of the country.\(^{113}\) Although Thomas Jones, a native of Corwen residing in Shrewsbury, may have produced the first Welsh-language newspaper in 1705 [See Chapter 6],\(^{114}\) the first known newspaper to have been published in Wales was the Swansea-based English-language *Cambrian* in 1804. The late arrival of the Welsh press in comparison to England can be explained by poorer communications, a sparse, predominately rural population, and, of course, the existence of two languages-Welsh being the language of the majority of the population. Poor communications meant not only that it was difficult to gather local news, but also that the arrival of London newspapers, containing the latest national and foreign news, may have been delayed, thus delaying the production of the newspaper. Similar delays could also affect the supply of stamped paper and therefore Welsh newspaper printers were obliged to keep excess supplies. Large towns near the border, which usually had a larger number of English-speakers than elsewhere in Wales, were served by English newspapers, for example Bristol,\(^{115}\) Gloucester, and Hereford newspapers circulated in Cardiff and Swansea,\(^{116}\) with Shrewsbury and Chester newspaper fulfilling a similar role for towns in north and mid Wales.

The *Cambrian* was followed in 1808 by the *North Wales Gazette* (later the *North Wales Chronicle*) in Bangor, and the first Welsh-language newspaper, *Seren Gomer*

---


\(^{113}\) In this study, a Welsh newspaper is defined as one published in Wales, the terms 'English-language' and 'Welsh-language' will be used to differentiate between newspapers of different languages.

\(^{114}\) Wiles, p.16.


[Star of Gomer] appeared in 1814. Like the Cambrian, Seren Gomer was published in Swansea, but unlike the English-language newspaper, it sought to be a national newspaper, circulating throughout Wales.117 Unfortunately the newspaper ceased in August 1815 (although it reappeared as a fortnightly and later a monthly in 1818). Beti Jones blamed stamp duty and distribution problems for its failure118 whilst Rees pointed to its inability to attract English-language advertising.119 This could be an early indication that it was the English-language press that was to be dominant in Wales. The first Welsh-language newspaper to run for a significant time (four years) was Y Newyddiadur Hanesydd [The Historian's Newspaper] (later Chronicle yr Oes [Chronicle of the Ages]) which ran from 1836 to 1840 and was published in Mold.

Although several Welsh-language newspapers were established after the reduction in stamp duty in 1836, few of them lasted for any significant length of time. Two noticeable exceptions were Yr Amserau [The Times],120 established in 1843 and Yr Herald Cymraeg [The Welsh Herald], established in 1855 - just before the abolition of stamp duty. Yr Herald Cymraeg was based in Caernarvon whilst Yr Amserau was initially published in Liverpool, a city with a 'substantial' Welsh immigrant population.121 It was initially a fortnightly newspaper but became a weekly in 1848 when publication was transferred to the Isle of Man where stamp duty did not apply.122 The sojourn in the Isle of Man was temporary and publication had returned to Liverpool by October. Yr Amserau failed to adapt to the post 1855 environment123 and by 1857 Yr Herald Cymraeg was the most popular Welsh-language newspaper with a circulation of over 9,000 in 1857.124 It was sold in 1859 to Thomas Gee, who merged his newspaper Baner Cymru [Banner of Wales] with Yr Amserau to establish

117 Beti Jones, p.37.
118 Beti Jones, p.37.
121 Philip Henry Jones, Yr Amserau, p.86.
122 Philip Henry Jones, Yr Amserau, p.91-2.
123 Philip Henry Jones, Yr Amserau, p.98.
Baner ac Amserau Cymru [Banner and Times of Wales] ‘which became the leading Welsh-language organ of radical Nonconformity for the remainder of the century’. 125

The English-language press was dominant in Wales. Between 1804 and 1855 forty two newspapers appeared in south Wales, 126 seven in the Welsh-language, thirty three in the English-language, and two were bi-lingual. Bi-lingual newspapers were very rare in Wales as they could cover only a limited amount of news and they were expensive to produce. 127 Twenty five of these newspapers were weeklies with only the very short-lived Swansea-based Telegraphic Dispatch [July 1854] being produced more frequently at three times a week. The fortnightly Gwron Cymraeg [Welsh Hero] [1852-1856], based in Carmarthen and Aberdare, was the longest surviving pre-1855 Welsh-language newspaper in the south. 128 The daily Welsh press was limited to the south, specifically to English-language newspapers in Cardiff and Swansea. Swansea again produced a Welsh press “first” with the arrival of the Cambrian Daily Leader in 1861 and by 1893 Swansea had a second morning daily, the South Wales Daily Post; both priced at a halfpenny by 1900. 129 Cardiff also had two daily newspapers; the Western Mail, established in 1869, and the South Wales Daily News, founded in 1872. The Western Mail sought to become the main English-language newspaper in Wales but its influence never reached as far as north Wales 130 where the Liverpool Daily Post was the preferred morning daily [See Chapter 6]. The daily evening press was again limited to the south, two halfpenny evening newspapers were established in Cardiff in the 1880s; the South Wales Echo in 1884 and the Evening Express in 1887. 131

The Liberal party politics dominated the Welsh press even more so than in England. One of the earliest overtly political newspapers in south Wales 132 was the Welshman [1832-1984], established by the Carmarthen Reform Party, a group of local tradesmen.

---

125 Philip Henry Jones, Yr Amserau, p.99.
126 Defined as the counties of Breconshire, Glamorgan, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire, and Pembrokeshire.
127 Beti Jones, Newsplan, p.37.
and professionals, which became a Liberal newspaper in 1845. Aled Jones described Welsh Conservatives as relying on Conservative printers and journalists to establish Conservative newspapers rather than the party taking a direct role. The Conservative press in the south was fortunate to have the financial support of the third Marquess of Bute [1847-1900], one of the largest landowners in Wales - his most significant involvement being with the morning daily the Western Mail. The Liberal press held sway over much of Wales because of the party's dominance; in the 1880 general election the Liberal party won twenty nine of the thirty three seats, and, in 1906 thirty two of the thirty four seats - two being won by Labour. This dominance did not prevent probably the most famous Welshman of the era, David Lloyd George, from seeking to establish more Welsh Liberal newspapers, partly to offset the establishment of a chain of Conservative newspapers in both languages in the early 1890s. Welsh Liberal newspapers did not undergo the "split" that affected the English Liberal press in the 1880s as most Welsh Liberals favoured 'Home Rule All Round'. The 1902 Education Act and the campaign for Welsh disestablishment ensured that the Welsh press remained focused on political issues in the first decade of the twentieth century, although Aled Jones detected a move away from Liberal politics towards socialism and the infant Labour party.

Manders commented that

The period from repeal to 1914 may be regarded as the great provincial newspaper. Whatever their political complexion, they were set on providing as full a service to their readers as possible. The thoroughness

---

132 See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the political affiliations of the north Wales press.
136 See Aled Gruffydd Jones, Press, Politics and Society, p.134-7 for more information.
and depth of their coverage, particularly of local news, was greater than it had ever been or would be again.¹³⁹

4. Conclusion

By 1914 provincial newspapers had developed into important organs for the communication of ideas and news, both to their readers, and, from their readers to government, and were an important service for the millions who lived outside London. They had faced repression and government attempts to control them, primarily by the ‘taxes on knowledge’, and became increasingly important political and commercial organs after 1855. Towards the end of the nineteenth century their influence began to wane, with improved railway links - which enabled London newspapers to reach the provinces more quickly - and the rise of the national press, as personified by the Daily Mail. After 1918 the provincial press was relegated to a very much secondary role.

1. The Region

As this study aims to ascertain to what extent, if any, Wrexham newspapers achieved regional status, firstly, the "region" itself needs to be defined. Both geographers and local historians agree that it is difficult to define what exactly constitutes a "region." It can be linked to an administrative area, cross national boundaries and be based upon physical characteristics, or alternatively be based upon local sentiment. In addition, the term "region" may only apply temporarily to a given area as its defining characteristics - social, linguistic, and physical - can alter over time.

Studying regions as defined administrative units is far simpler as the areas have already been delineated and the collection and presentation of statistical information is usually based upon these administrative areas. However local government reorganisation can cause problems if an administrative area undergoes change in its geographical limits. Within Wales, for example, the Acts of Union (1536 and 1543) not only divided Wales into thirteen counties but also defined the England-Wales border. This border was neither based upon the ancient border of Offa’s Dyke nor upon language as Welsh-speaking areas such as Oswestry were excluded from Wales and several eastern border lordships were incorporated into Shropshire and Herefordshire. In 1979, the counties were merged to create eight new counties, one of which, Dyfed, was made up of the linguistically contrasting counties of predominantly Welsh-speaking Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, as well as south Pembrokeshire, the county known as “Little England beyond Wales”. In 1996, the Welsh county structure was again altered, this time to create twenty-two counties. As an administrative unit ‘north Wales’ does not exist. The closest an official body comes to recognising north Wales as a regional entity is the Welsh Assembly but what it considers to be north Wales (the pre-1979 counties of Denbighshire, Flintshire, Anglesey, and most of Caernarvonshire) bears no comparison to present or prior county structures. This constant change makes the study of regions (if based upon the county structure) within Wales extremely difficult, for example, the town of Conwy

---

was located in the counties of Denbighshire, Clwyd, and Glan Conwy respectively within the twentieth century.

Regions can also be defined by physical characteristics such as a mountain range, a river, or a sea. The Mediterranean and Pacific Rim are two established regions which cross national and linguistic boundaries. In north Wales it would be possible to produce regions based upon the Vale of Clwyd, the river Dee, or the Clwydian mountain range. A region can also be delineated by man-made communications such as canals, roads, and rail. As Marshall pointed out, when studying economic history, goods, capital, and people regularly cross county boundaries. This was aptly demonstrated by Court's study of Midland industries in which the region was partially defined by the importance of the river Severn in its communications.

Finally, Royle suggested that regions can be defined by a bottom-up approach. He believed that what constitutes a region is not a fixed concept, but a feeling, a sentimental attachment to territory shared by like-minded people, beyond the local administrative unit but possibly not—or not always—extending so far as the boundaries of a more distant administrative unit. It is an imagined community no less than the nation is, although frequently it lacks the confirmation of a government and boundaries defended if necessary by force, characteristic of the nation-state.

This approach was anticipated by Dodd in his study of The Industrial Revolution in North Wales, because as Evans commented 'he seems to have taken his territory for granted; it was his own bro and its coherence seems not to have been an issue for him'. In his work on The Industrial Revolution in North Wales Dodd delineated north

---

2 Rail and road links in north Wales are discussed in section five.
3 J.D. Marshall, 'Regional Identity?: the origins and problems of regional history in Britain', in Essays in Regional and Local History: in honour of Eric M. Sigsworth, ed. by Philip Swan and David Foster (Beverley: Hutton Press, 1992), pp. 11-26 (p.13).
5 Bro is Welsh for region. As mentioned in the literature review, A.H. Dodd was a well-known Wrexham local historian. He was born into a prominent Wrexham family, taught history at the University College of North Wales at Bangor, and was President of the Denbighshire Historical Society.
Wales to be the five northern counties of Denbighshire, Flintshire, Caernarvonshire, Merionethshire, and Montgomeryshire, together with Anglesey. This basis was also used in the late nineteenth century in deciding which towns could apply to be the home of the new university college of north Wales. However, if local sentiments are to be considered, then the English town of Oswestry would be studied as a part of Wales as its inhabitants have long held closer ties to Wales than England.  

Additionally, a case could also be made for considering Liverpool or Bristol as part of Wales as these cities have long had important connections with the north and south of the country.

Perhaps the most appropriate approach is a combination of the three methods. Unfortunately, such an attempt can only be made more difficult by the cross-border and dual language nature of the area. Using the bottom-up approach, information from the newspapers themselves provides information as to what they considered to be ‘north Wales’ at a given time, for example, the North Wales Guardian consistently claimed to circulate in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Caernarvonshire, Montgomeryshire, and Merionethshire; the counties this newspaper considered the counties to constitute ‘north Wales’. The Guardian was the only Wrexham newspaper to claim to circulate in Montgomeryshire. Nevertheless, together with Anglesey, it constitutes part of ‘north Wales’ for this study, thus concurring with Dodd’s conclusion that Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire made up ‘north Wales.’

---


As already mentioned, regions can cross administrative boundaries and in attempting to become regional titles, Wrexham newspapers sought to circulate outside north Wales. Cheshire and Shropshire had long had close links with north Wales, and Chester and Shrewsbury played early roles in the development of the Welsh book and printing trades. Wrexham newspapers did claim to circulate in Shropshire and Cheshire and although it is unlikely that their circulation reached beyond the borders into east Cheshire and south Shropshire, only the Telegraph specifically stated that it circulated only in parts of these counties, in west Cheshire and north Shropshire, respectively. The historically close connections between Shropshire, Cheshire, and north Wales have already been mentioned, and although these links were mainly with north Shropshire and west Cheshire, the failure of most Wrexham newspapers to limit their circulation statements to these areas means that all of Shropshire and Cheshire, together with north Wales, need to be considered as part of the ‘region’ for this study.

Although this region, defined as the six north Wales counties Cheshire and Shropshire, was divided by language and crossed a border, it has long been
recognised as such even dating back to the Act of Union when Flintshire was placed
under the administrative control of the Chester Circuit of the Great Assize. More
importantly for this study, Wrexham newspapers considered this to be their region for
circulation purposes.

2. The Locality
A discussion of regionalism is further complicated by the concept of locality. This
involves a smaller area than a region and can often be related to an administrative area
such as a town, borough, or county. In newspaper terms, this is the area where the
circulation of Wrexham newspapers was at it highest. Several Wrexham newspapers
claimed to be the ‘county’ newspaper for Denbighshire and Flintshire and this could
suggest that they considered this area, close to Wrexham, to be the main base for their
newspaper operations, especially after the 1860s when north-east Wales could claim a
comprehensive railway system.

Denbighshire and Flintshire can be taken as a locality because they shared not only
the same geographical area but were linguistically distinct from the rest of north
Wales. Unlike the predominantly Welsh-speaking counties of Anglesey,
Caernarvonshire, and Merionethshire, the linguistic basis of Denbighshire and
Flintshire was more complex.9 Pryce described north-east Wales in the Victorian era
as a ‘region of marked territorial contrast’10 and an area of ‘cultural transition’
between England and Wales.11 The border area was predominantly English-speaking
whilst the western parts of Denbighshire and Flintshire remained overwhelmingly
Welsh-speaking. Between these two areas was a bilingual zone which included the
towns of Denbigh and Ruthin and most of the coastline,12 a zone which retreated
westwards over time as younger generations became increasingly anglicised. In

9 For more information on linguistic division in north-east Wales see: W.T.R. Pryce, ‘Approaches to
the linguistic geography of northeast Wales, 1750-1846’, National Library of Wales Journal, 17 (1971-
1972), 343-363; ‘Welsh and English in Wales, 1750-1971: a spatial analysis based in linguistic
affiliation of parochial communities’, Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, 28 (1978), 1-36;
‘Language areas in north-east Wales c.1800-1911’, in Language and Community in the Nineteenth
Century Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century, ed. by Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff:
University of Wales Press, 1998), pp.21-61; ‘Industrialization, urbanization and the maintenance of
culture areas: north-east Wales in the mid-nineteenth century’, Welsh History Review, 7 (1975-1975),
307-340; and J. Goronwy Edwards, ‘Flintshire One Hundred Years Ago’, Journal of the Flintshire


addition, migrants to Denbighshire and Flintshire came predominantly from Cheshire and Lancashire. Montgomeryshire was even more anglicised than Denbighshire and Flintshire, but unlike these two counties it had few large urban settlements and its main industry, flannel, had been in depression from the mid nineteenth century as a result of increased competition from English mills.

Considering the linguistic and industrial differences within Denbighshire and Flintshire, it is possible to further refine the description of Wrexham’s locality. Coal, based upon the north Wales coalfield stretching from Chirk and Ruabon in south Denbighshire to the Point of Air in north Flintshire, was the main industry in the eastern parts of these counties, whereas farming predominated in the west of the two counties. The western parts of Denbighshire and Flintshire, in addition to their linguistic differences from the eastern parts of the two counties, were also relatively sparsely populated areas with poor communications. Therefore the eastern parts of both Denbighshire and Flintshire can be considered as part of Wrexham’s locality. Eastern Merionethshire, around the town of Corwen, could also be seen as part of the locality as Corwen was located relatively near to Wrexham and was significantly more anglicised than the rest of Merionethshire and acted as railway junction for three lines to Llangollen, Bala, and Ruthin. It is unlikely that Wrexham would have considered Cheshire and Shropshire to be part of its locality despite a common language. Wrexham played a subordinate role to the two main settlements of these counties, Chester and Shrewsbury, Chester in particular. However, Wrexham’s newspapers may have considered the border area and places such as Oswestry to be within their locality. Cheshire and Shropshire newspapers would also have considered the border area to be within their locality, leading to intense local competition in this area. Consequently, it could be argued that Wrexham’s immediate locality was based upon the north-east Wales coalfield with the possible inclusion of the immediate English border area.

3. What is a Regional Newspaper?

Having defined the region in which Wrexham newspapers aimed to circulate, it is now necessary to discuss what makes a newspaper ‘regional’. There is no consensus

---

as to what constitutes a regional newspaper, such tags as 'regional' or 'national' (in the context of Wales) being seemingly applied by the newspapers themselves as a form of publicity. Several tests can be used to determine the regional circulation of a newspaper, such as the number of issues sold in each settlement or county or calculating the number of people per agent in each county. Unfortunately, Wrexham newspapers of that time did not produce individual circulation figures for each area and such figures, had they been available, may well have been inaccurate. Such calculations are inappropriate as they fail to take into consideration other factors such as the existence of rival titles and language variations, which were in themselves pivotal factors in determining the circulation area of Welsh newspapers. As it would be difficult, if not impossible, to apply strict rules, broad principles must be applied in order to discover if a newspaper had a regional circulation. This involves examining:

1. The circulation area claimed by each newspaper. This shows the maximum circulation area (regional, local, or otherwise) that each newspaper aspired to achieve [Chapter 5].

2. The establishment of agents in the principal settlements of the region. Whilst it is to be expected that Wrexham newspaper agents would be concentrated in the north-east of Wales, the existence of agents selling newspapers in locations such as Bangor, Caernarvon, and Shrewsbury does show that the title concerned had regional sales, although possibly limited in number. The monoglot Welsh language nature of much of north-west Wales, together with poor communications, suggests that most English-language newspapers would have enjoyed only limited sales in this area, and therefore it is expected that Wrexham newspaper agents in these areas would have been concentrated in the larger, more anglicised settlements [Chapter 7].

3. The consistent inclusion of news from all parts of north Wales and the border area. Wrexham newspapers would be expected to contain a large quantity of Wrexham news, but the amount of local and regional news, both in the 'District'¹⁴

---

¹³ Pryce, 'Welsh and English in Wales', p.16
¹⁴ The changing concept of 'District' News where the district could be either a region or a locality is discussed in Chapter 1.
News section and throughout the newspaper as a whole can also indicate the limits of geographical circulation. A regional newspaper would regularly contain news from the principal settlements of north Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire. An analysis of the regional news of each title could also reveal which settlements had newspaper reporters or correspondents [Chapters 8 and 9].

4. The regional distribution of advertising is useful but less helpful than it could be in attempting to discover the extent to which a Wrexham newspaper can be considered regional. It was often the case that certain types of advertisements were inserted in a particular newspaper because of its perceived readership and not because of its circulation area and additionally numerous advertisements were placed by national or mail-order concerns, rather than by local people or businesses. However the inclusion of election (political) advertisements can offer a more precise indication of a newspaper's regional circulation than other types of advertisements [Chapter 10].

Newspapers which were unable to gain or did not desire a regional circulation may instead have attained the status of a local, Wrexham area newspaper rather than a regional newspaper.

4. Introduction to North Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire

4.1. Wrexham

Wrexham was the largest town in north-east Wales, and by the later nineteenth century had become the largest town in north Wales. A population of 5,831 was recorded in the 1841 census, lower than that of both Bangor and Caernarvon but its population grew steadily throughout the century, reaching 10,978 in 1881 and 18,377 in 1911, twice that of Caernarvon, and thus cementing its role as the prime town in north Wales.¹⁵ Wrexham had been an established market and assize town since the Middle Ages and by 1800 had established itself as the main town of north-east Wales. Carter stated that Wrexham was the most important town in north Wales due to its

---

social, commercial, administrative amenities, and industrial position. He described the town as

A nodal point where routes for north and south meet; not only was it the local capital of the eastern lowlands but a major routes centre [...] This nodal position was slowly exploited as it became the focus on which all routes which penetrated the north east were based. By 1830 the industrial development of the North Wales coalfield had confirmed Wrexham in its supremacy. The town ... was so situated on the coalfield that it became the centre of the growing industrial movement. 16

Despite this, Wrexham’s administrative importance was not recognised until September 1857 when the town gained its Charter of Incorporation and with it control over its own affairs. However, Wrexham’s influence over north Wales had long been weak due to its lack of local economic concentration and the proximity of Chester and Liverpool, 17 and to a lesser extent, Oswestry, which may have acted to limit the expansion of Wrexham’s influence south into Montgomeryshire.

Much of the area surrounding Wrexham was involved in the coal, iron, and lead industries Wrexham thus acted as an important commercial and transport centre for nearby villages and towns. Within the town itself, leather and brewing were important Victorian industries. The leather industry began to increase in size from the late eighteenth century and production was concentrated upon special grades of leather needed for the rollers of spinning machinery. At the same time the brewing industry increased in size, and by 1850 there was ten to twelve large breweries in the town, serving nearly sixty public houses. 18

Wrexham had long been recognised as a town where the English language was dominant. In 1770 Craddock described the people of Wrexham as ‘so perfectly Englished [...] in their language, manners, customs, that it bears no resemblance to the

---

17 Carter, p.122.
generality of Welsh towns'. Although anglicised, Wrexham was an important commercial, economic, and industrial centre for both English and Welsh-speaking north-east Wales and became a centre for Welsh Methodism and Welsh cultural movements. Despite these factors, Wrexham remained a predominantly English-speaking town as by 1891 over half of the town's population were monoglot English speakers compared to only one in five monoglot Welsh speakers.

4.2. Denbighshire

According to the 1851 census, Denbighshire had the fifth largest population amongst the Welsh counties behind Carmarthenshire, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, and Pembrokeshire, making it the most populous county in north Wales. Its population rose steadily from 88,478 in 1841 to 117,872 in 1891 and 144,783 in 1911, an increase of 56,305 over seventy years. Denbighshire was one of the Welsh counties least affected by emigration to other parts of Wales, the United Kingdom, or overseas. Emigration peaked at 7,456 between 1881-90 at the height of the Tithe War and the Welsh land crisis before falling to 3,354 between 1901-1910. Denbighshire contained several well-populated towns. Wrexham was the main town in a county that also contained the market towns of Denbigh and Ruthin, in addition to the seaside resorts of Abergele and Colwyn Bay whose population rose dramatically from 2,418 in 1881 to 12,630 thirty years later as it benefited from the Victorian bathing boom.

4.3. Flintshire

Flintshire was smaller in both size and population than its neighbour but like Denbighshire its population rose from 1841 onwards, suffering only one brief decline. In 1841, 66,919 people resided in Flintshire and this figure rose to 80,537 in 1881. There was a slight fall to 77,277 in 1891, which in part can be attributed to increasing emigration, peaking at 7,456 between 1881 and 1891. This was probably due to the

---

22 John Williams, I, p.71.
23 John Williams, I, p.62.
24 John Williams, I, p.71.
Tithe War and land problems within Wales. Population figures after this date displayed positive growth and reached 92,705 by 1911.25

Despite its industrial wealth based upon the north Wales coalfield, Flintshire never underwent the explosion in population growth experienced by the south Wales coalfield. However it did contain several significant towns, both tourist and industrial. The population of the two main county towns, Flint and Mold, rose from 2,860 and 3,557 in 1841 to 5,472 and 4,873 by 1911 respectively.26 Holywell, on the north Wales coalfield, was the main industrial town in the county with a population of 5,335 in 1861.27 The second half of the nineteenth century saw a rapid growth in the coastal resorts towns along the Chester-Holyhead Railway, with Rhyl’s population increasing from 6,029 in 1881 to 9,005 in 191128 and this was swelled by seasonal visitors and holidaymakers.

4.4. Merionethshire

Although Merionethshire covered a larger area than Flintshire, it had a smaller population. Its 1851 population of 38,845 was one of the smallest amongst the Welsh counties. The population peaked at 52,038 in 1881 and then began to fall steadily to 49,212 in 1891 and 45,565 in 1911.29 Rural depopulation was widespread in the second half of the nineteenth century, with some inhabitants leaving the county and others congregating around the important quarrying town of Ffestiniog. The population of Ffestiniog rose from 3,460 in 1851 to 11,435 in 190130 making the Merionethshire slate settlement one of the largest towns in north Wales. The county’s other towns; Bala, Corwen, Dolgellau, Barmouth and Aberdovey were much smaller although seasonal visitors would have increased the population of Barmouth and Aberdovey. Being a mountainous, mostly rural and sparsely-populated county, Merionethshire was slow to develop towns of any size.

25 John Williams, I, p.16.
26 John Williams, I, p.62.
27 Slater 's Royal National Commercial Directory ... (Manchester: Isaac Slater, 1868), p.57.
28 John Williams, I, p.63.
29 John Williams, I, p.41.
30 John Williams, I, p.64.
4.5. Caernarvonshire
Between 1841 and 1871 and from 1901 to 1911, Caernarvonshire was the second most populous north Wales county behind Denbighshire but in the intervening years its population was larger than that of its eastern neighbour. Its population rose from 81,093 in 1841 to 106,121 in 1871 and to 125,649 in 1901, despite large numbers of emigrants. Caernarvonshire had more emigrants than any other north Wales counties because the skills of its quarrymen and miners were much in demand, particularly in the United States. The number of emigrants rose from 2,532 in 1841, peaking at 8,459 in 1881 before falling to 4,893 in 1901. Much of this emigration was offset by immigration, most notably from Anglesey.

Caernarvonshire contained several large towns including Bangor, Caernarvon, and Llandudno and in 1841 the former two were largest towns in north Wales. The growth of the slate industry led to the rapid growth of settlements such as Bethesda in the quarry area and the development of ports to ship this material overseas. Bangor, the ecclesiastical city, had a population of 7,232 in 1841, nearly 2,000 less than that of the castle town, Caernarvon. By 1881, despite populations of 8,247 (Bangor) and 10,258 (Caernarvon). Wrexham's population was larger than both. Between 1881 and 1911 the population of Bangor slowly continued to rise reaching 11,029 in 1911 whilst Caernarvon's fell to 9,119. Tourism was an important secondary industry and the advert of the railway in 1848 attracted holidaymakers from the lower middle and working classes to the resorts. This led to a growth in the population of such seaside resorts as the Victorian town of Llandudno, whose population rose from 4,839 in 1881 to over double that in 1911.

4.6. Anglesey
Although Anglesey was the smallest north Wales county in size it had a large population. It experienced rapid population growth between 1841 and 1851, with its population rising from 50,891 to 57,327. This was probably due to the building of the Chester-Holyhead railway which opened in 1848. Its population declined to 54,609 in

---

31 John Williams, I, p.10.
32 John Williams, I, p.69.
33 John Williams, I, p.62.
34 John Williams, I, p.62.
35 John Williams, I, p.62.
1861 and 51,040 in 1871 as a result of economic migration, mainly to Caernarvonshire, then remaining around 50,000-51,000 until 1911. Its main settlement was Holyhead, the railway terminus and arrival point for the Irish mail steamers. The town’s population rose from just under 4,000 in 1841 to 8,680 in 1881 and 10,636, in 1911, making it one of the largest towns in north Wales.

4.7. Montgomeryshire

The rural county of Montgomeryshire, adjacent to the English border suffered severe rural depopulation in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its population fell from 67,335 in 1851 to 53,146 in 1911 partially caused by the decline in the flannel trade from the mid-nineteenth century as the arrival of the railway led to direct competition with the more technologically advanced English industry. The depopulation in the county was reflected in its largest town, Welshpool, whose population rose from 6,185 in 1841 to 7,107 in 1881, before falling to less than six thousand by 1911.

4.8. Cheshire

Cheshire was a county of contrasts, from the Tudor elegance of Chester to the manufacturing industries of Birkenhead and Stockport, and the important rail links emanating from Crewe. Its population more than doubled in the sixty years between 1851 and 1911 from 455,725 to 954,919, some of whom may have been immigrants from north Wales. The rapid growth of the commercial centres of Birkenhead, Crewe, and Stockport led to their populations outstripping that of the county city, Chester, whose population increased slowly from 27,766 in 1851 to 38,309 in 1901. The silting of the river Dee led to transport problems and consequently the arrival of the railway in 1840 with the opening of the Crewe–Chester–Birkenhead link was important for the city’s economy. Despite this, its main industry, the linen trade,

36 John Williams, I, p.8.
37 John Williams, I, p.62.
38 John Williams, I, p.41.
39 John Williams, I, p.65.
41 1851 census, I, p.65.
continued to decline but tourism began to increase from the 1870s onwards and it became an important commercial market especially in relation in north-east Wales.

4.9. Shropshire

Fewer industrial towns meant that Shropshire’s population grew far more slowly than that of Cheshire. Its 1851 population of 229,341 increased by less than 17,000 by 1911, although certain towns exhibited significant growth. The main Shropshire settlements were Ellesmere, Oswestry, Whitchurch, and Shrewsbury. In 1801 Oswestry was the smallest of these with a population of 2,673, but seventy years later it had risen to 7,306 – an increase of 173% - the largest in Shropshire. This growth may be attributed to the development of rail links to Welshpool, Ellesmere, and Whitchurch from the early 1860s. The populations of Whitchurch and Shrewsbury grew at a slower rate to record populations of 6,264 and 23,406 respectively in 1871 but the population of Ellesmere increased only slightly throughout the nineteenth century to 5,913 in 1871. Shrewsbury’s economic importance was enhanced by its role as an important railway junction, a role not afforded to either Whitchurch or Ellesmere. By the end of the eighteenth century Shropshire was the leading iron producing area in Britain but this industry declined from the 1870s. The important coal mining industry was concentrated upon the Coalbrookdale coalfield near the border village of St. Martins. Like Chester, Shrewsbury became an increasingly important commercial centre, especially for much of the mid-Wales border area.

43 1851 census, II part VI, p.2 and 1911 census, II, p.256.
44 Abstract of the Answers and Replies made Persuand to an Act ..., 1802, p.294. [1801 census].
47 1871 census, II, p.297.
49 1871 census, II, p.296.
5. Development of Railways in Wrexham and the Surrounding Areas

By the 1870s north-east Wales was criss-crossed by railway lines. Christiansen summarised the situation when he stated that the Wrexham area

once had so many lines belonging to competing companies that Railway Clearing House maps of Lancashire and District needed enlarged sections to show them all.\(^{50}\)

Before the coming of the railway to Wrexham and the surrounding area, the coach was the main method of transportation. In the eighteenth century, north Wales roads were generally very poor and often impassable during harsh weather, but from mid-century the situation around Wrexham began to improve. Turnpike trusts, believed to be the first in Wales, were established for the Shrewsbury–Wrexham road in 1752,\(^{51}\) an example followed throughout Denbighshire and Flintshire so that by 1840 between then they had eighteen turnpike trusts covering nearly three hundred miles of road.\(^{52}\) As the impetus behind much of the road improvement in north-east Wales was improved links with English markets, the standard of roads in north-west Wales was poorer. In the 1820s coaches left Wrexham daily for Chester, Hereford, Oswestry, Welshpool and Shrewsbury\(^{53}\) and by 1840 three coaches were leaving for Liverpool each day.\(^{54}\) Additionally, Wrexham daily offered carrier services to Chester, weekly to services Liverpool, Ellesmere, Llangollen, Bala, Dolgellau, and Llanrwst and thrice weekly services to Mold and Oswestry.\(^{55}\) Thus it can be seen that even before the coming of the railway Wrexham was an important communications centre and possessed relatively well developed road links.

Before the creation of Wrexham’s first newspaper there were already lines between Rhosrobin, Minera, and Brymbo (North Wales Mineral Railway) serving the local mines and quarries, and the Shrewsbury - Chester line which ran through Ruabon and

\(^{50}\) Christiansen, p.19.
\(^{52}\) Dodd, ‘The Roads of Wales’, p.136.
Wrexham. In the same year that the *Wrexham Recorder* and the *Wrexham Registrar* were first published, the Chester-Holyhead railway, running along the north Wales coast, was opened. This line connected the towns of Bangor, Flint, Holywell, and Rhyl, amongst others, to the important city of Chester and consequently to the remainder of the British rail network.

After 1848 the number of railway schemes rose dramatically, so that by the early 1870s most of the towns and many of the larger villages of north-east Wales and the border area were located on a railway line. The 1850s saw the opening of railway routes connecting Bangor and Caernarvon (1852), and Rhyl and Denbigh (1858), but it was during the 1860s that railways began to proliferate. In 1861 the Vale of Llangollen Railway (via Acrefair and Trevor) opened, reaching Corwen in 1865. The Denbigh–Ruthin-Corwen Railway, authorised in 1860, reached Ruthin in 1862 and Corwen two years later, and was linked with the Vale of Clwyd line to the coast in 1868 and the Mold-Denbigh line a year later. In Merionethshire, the Corwen-Bala and the Bala-Dolgellau Railways opened in 1868; a year earlier had witnessed the opening of the Mawddwy Railway terminating at Dinas Mawddwy. In 1862 the Wrexham-Minera Railway opened and four years later was extended north to the mines in the Flintshire village of Coed Talon. Possibly the most important railway development of the decade however was the opening of the Wrexham, Mold & Connah’s Quay Railway in January 1866. This provided a railway from Wrexham to the port of Connah’s Quay in Flintshire via the industrial villages of Gwersyllt, Caergwrle, Hope, Cefnybedd, and Buckley. This line connected Wrexham, albeit in a roundabout fashion, with west Denbighshire, and the towns of Denbigh, Ruthin, Mold, St. Asaph, and Rhuddlan. Wrexham had been connected by rail with Chester and Shrewsbury since 1846, and from Chester connections could be made to Birmingham and other English cities as well as to Holyhead and the growing north Wales coastal resorts.\(^{56}\)

Figure 2: The Main Railway Lines in the Wrexham Area by 1900

The Cheshire and Shropshire railway systems were not as extensive as those of north-east Wales, probably because the lack of coal, slate, and other raw materials in these counties led to less demand for industrial transportation. The Shrewsbury, Oswestry, and Chester Railway was authorised in 1845 and merged with the North Wales Mineral Railway to form the Shrewsbury & Chester Railway. The railway’s Chester–Ruabon section opened amidst much celebration in November 1846 and two years later the whole line opened with a branch line to Oswestry. Along the Shropshire border, the Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway, connecting together these three towns and several smaller villages including Frankton, Whittington, and Welshampton, was authorised in 1861, with the Whitchurch–Ellesmere section opening in 1863 and the Oswestry section a year later.\(^57\)

6. Conclusion
This chapter has not only attempted to define the 'region' in which Wrexham newspapers attempted to circulate, but also the methods used to ascertain if these newspapers were regional in circulation. Brief background information on the region and its vitally important communications networks is also given. Wrexham newspapers viewed the six counties of north Wales together with Cheshire and Shropshire as their area of circulation and further chapters will attempt to discover if they did indeed circulate throughout this region or if their circulation was simply limited to certain areas or even to the Wrexham locality. The availability and development of communication and telecommunication links, especially railways but also telegraph and telephone lines which usually followed the railways, also had an crucial impact upon newspaper circulation and its development over time.
Chapter 5 - History of Wrexham Newspapers, 1848-1914

This history of each Wrexham title will now be given, focusing on its establishment, proprietors, editors, geographical circulation, sales, and political and religious viewpoints.

1. Wrexham Recorder [March 1848–January 1849]

Wrexham’s first newspaper was a monthly two penny, the Wrexham Recorder, which commenced publication in March 1848 and ran for eleven issues to January 1849. Physically it resembled a periodical and by being published monthly avoided stamp duty and other legal complications.1

Its status as a monthly prevented the Recorder from commenting on the latest national and international news. It tended to concentrate on essays, especially on local history, supplemented by a few letters, local notices, poetry, a little local news (rather more in later issues), and some short miscellaneous articles. Since there were no advertisements (possibly to avoid advertising duty), profits were dependent on sales. The first issue stated its intention to ‘record the events which transpire in and around the town, and become a vehicle of amusement and instruction to the inhabitant’.2 The Recorder referred to itself as a periodical rather than a newspaper, and was more successful in achieving its second aim than its first.

Despite the May 1848 issue containing a congratulatory letter stating

> I feared from some of the expressions in your prospectus, you might render it a vehicle for complaints and invectives against men and measures, conveyed in a language tending to raise dissentions and strife in the small community in which we move, but I find myself

---

1 ‘An Act to subject certain Publications to the Duties of Stamps upon Newspapers’ (1819) defined a newspaper as ‘all pamphlets and papers containing any public news, intelligence or occurrences, or any remarks or observations thereon [...] published periodically [...] at intervals not exceeding twenty six days between the publication of any two [...] numbers...where [the pamphlets or papers] [...] shall not exceed two sheets or shall be published for sale for a less sum than sixpence’. 60 Geo III. Cap IX. As it was published monthly and tended to report little local or national news the Wrexham Recorder could claim exemption from stamp duty.

2 WRec, March 1848, p.13. The quotation appears in a letter which refers to the newspaper’s prospectus, which has not survived.
agreeably disappointed, and approve of the moderate tone in which the few subjects have been treated.\textsuperscript{3}

The *Recorder* lasted for less than a year. In its January 1849 issue the newspaper claimed that ‘our experiment in commencing this little periodical has fully answered our most sanguine anticipations, and we look back upon our labours with unmixed satisfaction’,\textsuperscript{4} and gave no indication that this would be the last issue to appear. The only indication of financial difficulty was a rise in price to threepence, possibly because it was losing its market share to the *Wrexham Registrar*.

**Proprietor**

The *Recorder* was printed and published by its proprietor, Richard Hughes,\textsuperscript{5} at his General Printing Office in Church Street, Wrexham. Richard Hughes was the founder of the printing and publishing firm of Hughes & Son, which became one of the major publishers of Welsh-language books and music.

**Politics**

In its short life the *Recorder* had little opportunity to influence local affairs and initiate campaigns but it did focus attention on the notoriously poor sanitary conditions in Wrexham.\textsuperscript{6} In its first issue there was an article on the sanitary reforms which were needed in Wrexham and in its third issue, an article from a correspondent focused attention on the Eagles Meadow Ditch, allegedly the cause of many of Wrexham’s sanitary problems. In June 1848 the *Recorder* published a letter to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, the owner of the ditch, from the inhabitants of Wrexham requesting that something be done about the nuisance,\textsuperscript{7} as well as publishing other articles on sanitary problems. The question of sanitary reform did not die with the *Recorder* but was taken up by another Wrexham newspaper, the *Wrexham Advertiser*.

Despite its brief existence, the role of the *Recorder* in the history of Wrexham newspapers should not be underestimated. It was the pioneer in its field and it is

---

\textsuperscript{3} *WRec*, May 1848, p.14.

\textsuperscript{4} ‘Retrospect’, *WRec*, January 1849, p.1.

\textsuperscript{5} See Appendix 2 for further information on the individuals involved in the Wrexham newspaper trade.


\textsuperscript{7} *WRec*, June 1848, p.10.
possible that its establishment encouraged the founding of the rival Registrar, the first in a line of important Wrexham newspapers. The Recorder’s publication in English by a predominantly Welsh-language printing and publishing firm reflected Wrexham society and culture in the early Victorian era. It is regrettable that the newspaper did not give any information as to its numerical and geographical circulation and expand upon its political views. Its cheaper local rival, the Registrar, might have caused its demise.

2. Wrexham Registrar [August 1848–December 1849]

1848 also saw the founding of Wrexham’s second newspaper, the Wrexham Registrar and People’s Friend (Wrexham Registrar) by local printers William and George Bayley. The Registrar underwent several title changes and two temporary breaks in publication but continued in one form or another until 1958 when it was incorporated into the Wrexham Leader. Without the Registrar and its success, Wrexham may have been deprived of its most important newspaper series.

The first issue, published in August 1848, was very similar in format to the Recorder and consisted of sixteen double column pages. The pages were continuously numbered and contained very few advertisements. It was cheaper than its rival, at one penny, and ran for a total of seventeen issues. Its aims were set out in the first issue:

Our pages will be devoted mainly [...] to local affairs and local improvements. We shall endeavour to give all the aid and impulse we can to these reforms, SANITARY, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS, which we are glad to see going on amongst us [...] We shall not, however, confine ourselves to local affairs, but shall endeavour both by original articles and judicious selections from the literature of the day, to furnish useful entertainment and instruction in the various branches of useful knowledge. 8

The Registrar predominantly contained essays, and articles on local history but also included local, domestic, and foreign news. One correspondent suggested publishing the newspaper on the fifteenth of each month, instead of the first (which would lessen rivalry with the Recorder, which was also published on the first of each month). The

---

8 WReg, August 1848, p.2.
reply, 'we are quite prepared to issue our periodical every fortnight', was a sign that the proprietors wished to eventually produce a weekly newspaper. Readers were encouraged to send in their own contributions, for example, in the June 1849 issue, readers were requested to send in 'sketches of eminent men of the locality' which would form a series of articles. The second issue introduced a semi-editorial column which gave a brief résumé of the major events at home and overseas during the last month, often with some comment.

Public response to the Registrar was apparently positive, with the correspondence column always including more letters than that of its main rival. In September 1848 the newspaper commented that:

> the success attendant upon the issuing of our first number […] We assure [the public] that our success has far exceeded our most sanguine expectations, both as to demand for the first number (which has not yet ceased) as well as the very numerous and highly respectable communication bestowed upon our first efforts, by persons of all classes and creeds.

The first issue of 1849 contained similar congratulatory sentiments 'we entered upon our work […] in the conviction that Wrexham required, and would support a periodical like the Registrar, devoted to social, political and religious improvements and our convictions and expectations have been more than realised'. The March 1849 issue brought a change of title and size, the title was shortened to the Wrexham Registrar and its size reduced to twelve pages. Perhaps the termination of its local rival meant that the Registrar no longer felt the need to publish a sixteen page newspaper when it could publish just twelve pages and still charge one penny.

---

9 *WReg*, August 1848, p.16.
10 *WReg*, June 1849, p.2.
11 *WReg*, September 1848, p.10
12 *WReg*, January 1849, p.9
Proprietors
The Registrar was printed and published by its proprietors, William and George Bayley at their General Printing Office in Hope Street, Wrexham. They were helped by their brother Charles George, a china dealer and newsagent in Oswestry, who, like George, had been apprenticed to the printer Richard Hughes, founder of the Wrexham Recorder. Provincial newspapers of this time had low initial capital requirements and were often started and run as family businesses. William Bayley founded his printing press in Wrexham around 1838 but by 1846 it was mainly run by George Bayley.

Politics and Religion
In its first issue the Registrar published its manifesto:

We, therefore, at once and frankly avow, that we are the advocates of a LIBERAL, ONWARD, REFORMING POLICY. Let it be understood, however, that we do not swear allegiance to any political chief or party [...] In fine, we shall be the advocates of those Reforms which spring from extended education, intelligence, civilisation and religion.14

The Registrar often stated its opinion forcefully, thus in the September and October issues of 1849, it attacked the Austrian Empire and promoted the Magyar cause,15 and in April 1849 the Church of England was strongly criticised.16

Rivals
Wrexham Recorder
The only comment upon its rival was a letter in the February 1849 issue, critical of the Recorder17 but by this date its rival had ceased to exist so its attack was immaterial.

The final issue of the Wrexham Registrar, published in December 1849, stressed that this was not to be the end of George Bayley’s newspaper publishing career. A notice stated that ‘it is not our intention, however, finally to discontinue our editorial

---
13 The WWAd, 28 May 1932, p.8 stated that William and George were brothers, and this is supported by the difference in their ages, George born c.1821 and William born c.1806 but Ifano Jones, A History of Printing and Printers in Wales to 1810, ... (Cardiff: William Lewis, 1925), p.125-6 stated that they were father and son.
14 WReg, August 1848, p.2.
15 WReg, September 1849, p.6-7; and October 1849, p.6-8.
16 WReg, April 1849, p.9.
17 WReg, February 1849, p.15-16.
functions, but beg to solicit the same kindness and support from our correspondents and readers to the *Wrexham Advertiser* as had been afforded to the *Registrar*.\(^{18}\) It appears that George Bayley had decided that the Wrexham press would be further developed by the replacement of the *Register* with the *Advertiser*, a broadsheet newspaper containing advertising. Perhaps the *Registrar*’s main contribution to the Wrexham newspaper industry was to launch the career of George Bayley.

3. *Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser* [January 1850–September 1852]

In January 1850 George Bayley launched a successor to the *Wrexham Registrar* – the *Wrexham Advertiser, and Register of Literary, Railway, Local and General Information*. It was a four page\(^{19}\) penny monthly broadsheet, published on the first of each month with each sheet divided into three columns. It was unstamped and this fact was to cause difficulties.

Like the *Registrar* it included local, foreign and domestic news, Wrexham court cases, useful local information such as railway timetables, essays, historical information, poems and book reviews. But unlike its predecessor, and as its name suggests, it contained advertisements. However, by its third issue, the *Wrexham Advertiser* encountered a problem that was to trouble it for several years. The editorial in this issue apologised for its late appearance and offered the following explanation:

> we have [...] been in communication with the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue, who have decided that unless it is stamped, we must omit ... the local and public intelligence [...] This being the case, we must in our future numbers conform to the requirement of the Commissioners [...] In order to render the present number free from liability to the stamp duty, we have had to expunge a considerable quantity of matter which had been set up in type, thus rendering it impossible for the *Advertiser* to appear on 1st March.\(^{20}\)

The newspaper proceeded to attack the stamp, advertising, and paper duties and hoped that they would soon be abolished so that Wrexham would be able to enjoy a weekly newspaper. Although the amount of local and national news was reduced in subsequent issues, a considerable amount of such information continued to appear.

---

\(^{18}\) *WReg*, December 1849, p.16.

\(^{19}\) Pages one and four had three columns, and pages two and three, four columns.

\(^{20}\) *WMAd*, March 1850, p.4.
In December 1850 the Advertiser announced that it would take the first step towards its owner's dream of a weekly newspaper for Wrexham and consequently, from January 1851, it would be published fortnightly on the first and fifteenth of each month. However, the Wrexham Advertiser survived for only four months as a fortnightly. No issue was published on 15 May and the next issue on the second of June promised an explanation in the July issue as to why the Wrexham Advertiser had ceased fortnightly publication but no explanation was forthcoming. However, it is likely that it was once again connected with stamp duty. In January 1852 the newspaper blamed the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue and newspaper regulations and accused them of attempting to suppress all monthly periodicals 'partaking of the character of newspaper'. Without warning the Wrexham Advertiser ceased publication after thirty-seven issues in September 1852.

Circulation
From January 1851 the Advertiser claimed a 'guaranteed' circulation of 1,000 a month rising to 1,500 a month by September 1852.

Politics
The Wrexham Advertiser began its first major campaign in July 1850 with a flurry of protest letters on the problem that the Recorder had highlighted some two years earlier, namely sanitation and sanitary reform. It also saw the beginning of published correspondence between R. Humphrey Jones, a local solicitor and the Revd. George Cunliffe concerning a Report to the General Board of Health on Wrexham. The non-conformist Wrexham Advertiser took great pleasure in attacking Cunliffe and once termed him a 'hypocrite'. It campaigned against the Health of Towns Act and instead promoted a Local Improvement Bill for Wrexham and condemned the unnamed persons who opposed such a Bill.

21 WMAd, December 1850, p.4
22 WMAd, June 1851, p.4.
23 The 1819 Act went on to state that monthly periodicals had to be published on the first day of each month or within two days of the first day of each month so the Wrexham Advertiser was breaking the law by being published on the fifteenth of each month.
24 WMAd, January 1852, p.2.
25 Roberts, p.59 states that this report and the needed to improve sanitary conditions were the main forces behind Wrexham’s desire to achieve chartered status for the town.
26 WMAd, August 1850, p.2.
The monthly *Advertiser* was the first Wrexham newspaper to adopt a newspaper-like format, be produced in broadsheet form, and to include advertisements regularly. It printed more local, national, and foreign news than either of its two predecessors and set new standards for Wrexham newspapers. In addition by publishing fortnightly, albeit only briefly, the *Advertiser* signalled its owner's ambition of a weekly newspaper, and offers a case study of stamp duty and the Welsh press and the efforts made by the authorities to ensure that this tax was paid.


The weekly version of the *Advertiser* was essentially a continuation of the monthly *Advertiser*, with a gap of a year and a half between the two newspapers. Weekly publication gave the newspaper a greater opportunity to serve the local community by reporting news and political opinion. However the newspaper was now more expensive as it had to be stamped, and this may have led to initial sales being lower than that of the monthly version.

The first issue of the weekly version of the *Advertiser* was scheduled to appear on 4 March 1854, but following ‘some miscalculations’ it did not make its first appearance until a week later. It was priced at three pence, two pence more than its monthly predecessor. A third of this price was stamp duty which the newspaper was obliged to pay as a weekly publication. Stamp duty caused another difficulty as the *Advertiser* stated that each issue had to be sent from Wrexham to Somerset House to be stamped. The four page weekly was published on Saturday mornings with a second edition in the afternoon. In its first issue George Bayley stated that the main reason behind the establishment of the newspaper was the increasing importance of Denbighshire and Flintshire, and that they deserved a local newspaper to record events and to express local opinions. Within a few years of its establishment, the newspaper had made several noticeable changes. Firstly, its price was reduced to twopence after the abolition of stamp duty in 1855. This led to an increase in circulation in early 1857 and the newspaper purchased a new steam printing machine

---

27 *Our Birthday*, *WWAd*, 13 March 1858, p.4.
28 *Our Birthday*, *WWAd*, 13 March 1858, p.4.
29 Each page had seven columns, with a double column of advertising on the first page.
which produced a thousand copies an hour.\textsuperscript{31} As a consequence of mechanisation, in July 1861 it doubled its size to eight pages,\textsuperscript{32} enabling it to include more advertisements and also reflecting its increasing circulation.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1856 the \textit{Advertiser} faced its first important challenge when it was involved in a libel case which came to trial at Chester in 1857. The background to the case was complex but began with an article published in the newspaper in May 1856 which accused the Vicar of Ruabon of breaking into an old chest in the parish church and removing some of the documents for an unspecified reason.\textsuperscript{34} When the newspaper discovered that some of this information, supplied by a reader, was only partially correct, it inserted two retractions. A month later an anonymous letter appeared in its Conservative rival, the \textit{Telegraph}, urging the Vicar to sue for libel. When he did so, he employed John Lewis, the then-proprietor of the \textit{Telegraph} as his solicitor. The \textit{Advertiser} suggested that Lewis himself either wrote the letter, or, at least, sanctioned its insertion, and described him as a ‘Snap, Gammon and Quirk adviser [...] [who] is scarcely satisfied with the pound of flesh fairly meted out’.\textsuperscript{35} Lewis promptly sued for £100, but the jury awarded only £10.\textsuperscript{36} Bayley’s supporters collected £191 to defray the £10 award and the costs of the case.\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{Advertiser} believed that Lewis took action in retaliation for its publicising of Daniel Jones’s libel case against the \textit{Telegraph}\textsuperscript{38} [See section 6].

Following the death of George Bayley (the newspaper’s founder, proprietor, and editor\textsuperscript{39}) in January 1863, the newspaper came under the control of his widow Selina, his brother Charles George, and the new editor, George Bradley. As Charles George lived in Oswestry, Bradley was presumably largely responsible for the daily running of the newspaper. Circulation increased after Bayley’s death, supposedly because of

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{WWAd}, 11 March 1854, p.1.  
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{WWAd}, 3 January 1857, p.4.  
\textsuperscript{32} Each page had six columns, rising to seven in 1870.  
\textsuperscript{33} ‘Enlargement of the “Denbighshire Advertiser”, \textit{WWAd}, 8 July 1861, p.8.  
\textsuperscript{34} ‘Ruabon – Clerical Sacrilege’, \textit{WWAd}, 17 May 1856, p.4.  
\textsuperscript{37} ‘Presentation to Mr. George Bayley, Proprietor of the Wrexham and Denbigh Advertiser’, \textit{WWAd}, 9 January 1858, p.4.  
\textsuperscript{39} Former member of staff Richard Richards questioned the extent of his editorial capacity. See section 6.
sympathy for his family. In May 1863 the newspaper admitted that demand was greater than supply and consequently it had decided to purchase a new printing machine.\(^{40}\) The new editor claimed that the *Advertiser* was the most popular newspaper in the district, was ‘becoming more and more appreciated in public estimation’ and ‘attractive to every person of taste’.\(^{41}\)

Several other changes were also made around this time. The newspaper offices moved from Hope Street to Bank Street in 1857, and then to the Music Hall in Henblas Street in 1868, premises which the *Advertiser* claimed were more suitable for newspaper publishing, being more centrally located and therefore easier to find.\(^{42}\) A fourteen year lease was taken on the building and, when it expired, Bradley, Charles George Bayley, and Harry Croom-Johnson, Bradley’s son-in-law, took shares in the property.\(^{43}\) From December 1863 the newspaper issued a monthly supplement consisting of local railway timetables, a trade directory, and a diary of local events which it suggested readers place in a conspicuous place for easy reference.\(^{44}\) Its local rival, the *Telegraph*, made no attempt to issue a similar supplement of its own.

The *Advertiser* attempted to increase its revenue by launching several associated ventures. In 1871 it created an *Advertiser* offshoot entitled *The North Wales and Border News–The Wrexham Penny Paper*. Half the price of its parent, it was published on Thursday mornings from its offices in Henblas Street, Wrexham, and claimed to contain ‘all the important news of North Wales, together with the Markets and Latest General and Foreign Intelligence, in English and Welsh’.\(^{45}\) Since no copies of this newspaper have apparently survived it is difficult to state how it differed from the *Advertiser* and the precise nature of its intended market. The title suggests that, although it would circulate throughout North Wales and the border area, Wrexham would be its main market. Although the advertisement stated that the newspaper would contain articles in both English and Welsh, it is unlikely that the newspaper was fully bi-lingual, despite its claim to be ‘the only bi-lingual newspaper

\(^{40}\) 'To Our Readers', *WWAd*, 16 May 1863, p.8.
\(^{41}\) *WWAd*, 5 December 1863, p.4.
\(^{42}\) *WWAd*, 3 October 1868, p.4.
\(^{43}\) WCM, Notes on History of Wrexham Advertiser compiled by Elizabeth Rodern Croom Johnson, c.1938.
\(^{44}\) *WWAd*, 5 December 1863, p.4.
\(^{45}\) *WWAd*, 4 November 1871, p.8.
in the Kingdom. Most articles would have been in English as English was increasingly becoming the dominant language in north-east Wales, and the phrase 'Border News' implies that it was to circulate over the border. It is possible that this newspaper was to act as a brief news-sheet (its price of one penny suggests that it would have been smaller than the Advertiser) giving readers the latest news, which would be expanded upon in the Advertiser.

A further venture in July 1874 was the monthly Wrexham Advertiser Railway, Coach and Steam Packet Guide, price one penny. No copies of this guide appear to have survived and there is no indication of its lifespan. Consequently it seems that the Advertiser was less successful with its associated products than with the newspaper itself.

In April 1895, ten years after the Guardian [see section 7] had done so, the Advertiser reduced its price to a penny, therefore putting an end to the former’s claim to be the only penny newspaper in the county. The proprietors recognised that this reduction would lead to a temporary loss in profits, but hoped that it would also lead to an increase in sales until 'the Advertiser has taken a leading position in North Wales and the border' a sentiment which suggests that the newspaper had yet to achieve such status. In 1899 the Advertiser became connected to the national telephone exchange at Wrexham thus allowing reporters and advertisers to contact the newspaper more quickly. The newspaper was enlarged in February 1904 to give it more space for advertisements and news reports and this led to the introduction of a new column in September, the 'London Letter' being especially written for the newspaper and focusing on the action of Welsh MPs and important Welsh issues.

In 1907 a new editor, James Wright, brought several changes to the newspaper. One of the first changes he made was to alter the day of publication of the first edition

---

46 *WWAd*, 4 November 1871, p.8.
48 ‘Ourselves’, *WWAd*, 16 March 1895, p.4.
49 *WWAd*, 25 March 1899, p.5.
from Friday to Thursday, the second edition remaining on Saturday.\textsuperscript{52} This change lasted less than a year as, despite a rise in circulation, the newspaper had received requests from both subscribers and advertisers to revert to the original day of publication.\textsuperscript{53} In 1909 the Advertiser announced that it was to produce a Mold edition.\textsuperscript{54} In March 1914 the newspaper expanded to twelve pages with the price remaining at one penny and announced that it was buying a new web printing machine.\textsuperscript{55} It claimed that the main reason for this change was a desire to be of greater service to the public by publishing an increasing amount of information from social, political, educational, religious, and industrial organisations.\textsuperscript{56} The Advertiser remained at this size until September 1914 when it was reduced to its previous size of eight pages, probably because of incipient wartime paper shortages.

Editors

It is difficult to trace the line of editors of the Advertiser as they were rarely specifically mentioned in the newspaper. The first editor of the newspaper was its founder, George Bayley, although his former employee, Richard Richards, maintained that he was editor only in name [see section 6]. George Bradley became editor when Bayley died in 1863 and may have continued in this post until his own death aged sixty-four in 1890. After Bradley's death, William Charles Bayley, son of George, became editor for over three years,\textsuperscript{57} before emigrating to South Africa. From late June 1894 to early November 1895 the newspaper was printed, published, and probably edited by Frederic Bowser Mason, about whom very little is known.\textsuperscript{58} From 1895 until his death in 1902, the newspaper was printed and published by Charles George Bayley, and no information was given as to the editor until John Rice Jones took the post in 1897.\textsuperscript{59} He had been connected with the newspaper for fifteen years and Hughes Jones commented that under him the newspaper gained a considerable reputation\textsuperscript{60} before he retired in 1907.\textsuperscript{61} He was replaced by James Wright\textsuperscript{62} who remained editor until 1927.

\textsuperscript{52} 'Important Notice', \textit{WWAd}, 9 November 1907, p.4.
\textsuperscript{53} 'Important Notice to Readers and Advertisers', \textit{WWAd}, 31 October 1908, p.5.
\textsuperscript{54} 'Our New Departure', \textit{WWAd}, 2 January 1909, p.3.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{WWAd}, 12 March 1914, p.8.
\textsuperscript{56} 'The Enlargement of the "Wrexham Advertiser"', \textit{WWAd}, 13 June 1914, p.7.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{WWAd}, 8 February 1891, p.8.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{WWAd}, 30 June 1894, p.8.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{WWAd}, 2 February 1907, p.5.
Bayley & Bradley

When George Bradley, Charles George Bayley, and Selina Bayley became proprietors of the newspaper in 1863, they decided to establish the firm of Bayley & Bradley to carry out the printing of the newspaper. Little is known about this company as no records have survived; the only surviving information being a brief handwritten history of the newspaper by Bradley’s daughter, Elizabeth Rodem Croom-Johnson. This history refers to an agreement drawn up in December 1892 between Selina Bayley, Charles George Bayley, Edward Bremner-Smith and his wife, Alice (Bradley’s daughter), Mary Bradley, Ashton Bradley, George Herbert Bradley, Louisa Bradley, Harry Croom-Johnson and his wife Elizabeth (Bradley’s daughter). These names appear to suggest that control of the newspaper was moving away from George Bayley’s descendants towards the sons and daughters of George Bradley.

This ‘agreement’ mentioned by Elizabeth Rodem Croom-Johnston almost certainly referred to the company’s articles of incorporation as in January 1893 Bayley & Bradley was incorporated as a limited company with Charles George Bayley as managing director. Bayley was joined as managing director by Harry Croom-Johnson in 1898, and when Bayley died, he became the sole managing director. J. Morrison was appointed joint managing director in 1914, and he may have been the son of George Bayley’s daughter Ada, who married a David Morrison.

Publishing Establishments

Several Wrexham newspapers had ‘publishing establishments’ but the exact relationship between these publishing establishments and the main office was never mentioned. Their description as ‘publishing’ rather than ‘printing’ establishments suggests that actual printing of the newspapers did not take place in these offices. Many of these publishing establishments were located at the premises of agents involved in the bookselling or printing trades. This implies that the activities of a

---

61 ‘Presentation’, WWAd, 9 February 1907, p.5.
62 WWAd, 30 March 1907, p.8.
63 No company documentation for Bayley & Bradley was found in the Public Record Office.
64 Croom-Johnson, c.1938.
65 For example, in 1872 the Guardian’s publishing establishments in Mold, Dolgellau, and Caernarvon were located at the premises of their agents Messrs. Pring & Price, Booksellers; Owen Rees, Printer; and R. Newton, Bookseller [WG, 24 August 1872, p.8 and 12 October 1872, p.8], and in 1897 the
publishing establishment could be carried out alongside those of a bookselling or printing firm. Therefore their role may have been limited to sales, gathering news, receiving advertisements, and acting as distribution centres.\textsuperscript{66} Perhaps all that separated them from agents was a larger news-gathering role and acting as a distribution centre.

Table 3: Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser Publishing Establishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing Establishment</th>
<th>Date Opened</th>
<th>Date Ceased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flint</td>
<td>January 1865</td>
<td>February 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswestry</td>
<td>January 1865</td>
<td>February 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1897</td>
<td>February 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 1907</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corwen</td>
<td>January 1868</td>
<td>February 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>January 1868</td>
<td>February 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1897</td>
<td>March 1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mold</td>
<td>January 1868</td>
<td>February 1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1897</td>
<td>March 1906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Advertiser had a total of five publishing establishments, the first two opening in early 1865 in Oswestry and Flint. Oswestry was an obvious choice because of the presence of Charles George Bayley in the town. Flint may have been chosen in an attempt to improve circulation outside the Wrexham area in west Flintshire and west Denbighshire. These establishments must have been a success as three further offices were opened in 1868 in Corwen, Chester, and Mold. Thus, the Advertiser appears to have been expanding, or seeking to expand, the geographical limits of its circulation. However, the existence of these publishing establishments does not mean that the Advertiser had a large circulation in Cheshire, Shropshire, and Merionethshire. Chester, Corwen, and Oswestry were important settlements in their respective

\textit{Advertiser}'s publishing establishment in Chester was located at the newsagents business of Messrs E. Aston & Co. [\textit{WWAd}, 3 July 1897, p.8]. The offices of Messrs. Pring and Price acted as the Advertiser's, Guardian's, and Free Press's publishing establishments in Mold, which suggests such establishments were predominantly distribution centres and their involvement with a particular newspaper was a commercial rather than a political or ideological decision.\textsuperscript{66}

The \textit{Telegraph} stated that its publishing office in Chester 'received advertisements'. \textit{WT}, 16 July

\textsuperscript{66}
counties, but were also located close to Wrexham and therefore their existence may suggest that the *Advertiser*’s circulation was focused on west Cheshire, north Shropshire, and east Merionethshire and not throughout the counties, as the newspaper would no doubt have wanted its readers to believe. Of the two Flintshire establishments, Flint, whose office remained open after the creation of a second Flintshire office in Mold, may have served the coastal area and Mold the inland area.

All of these offices closed in February 1891, possibly in response to the newspaper adopting new policies after Bradley’s death, but publishing establishments were re-established in Oswestry, Mold, and Chester in July 1897, possibly on the advice of the new editor, John Rice Jones. The establishments in Mold and Chester ceased in March 1906 with only Oswestry remaining. This suggests a contraction in the area of geographical circulation. The absence of publishing establishments in north-west Wales implies that circulation in this area was never high enough to justify setting up such offices in Caernarvonshire, Montgomeryshire, or Anglesey.

Sales

Initial sales of the *Advertiser*, 550 copies a week, were approximately a third less than those of the monthly *Advertiser*, but growth was rapid after the abolition of stamp duty. Circulation reached 1,100 in 1856 and the newspaper claimed that its sales were greater than that those of the longest established newspapers in the Principality and attributed its success to the desire for a local and independent newspaper. By 1858 the weekly *Advertiser* had exceeded the sales of the monthly *Advertiser* with sales of 1,700 copies a week and 8,500 readers, although it did not state how it had calculated the number of readers. By 1863, the newspaper had reached weekly sales of nearly 3,000, a target which had been reached temporarily five years early when the issue reporting the fire at Wynnstay had sold over 3,000 copies and demand had exceeded supply. Sales continued to increase and reached 6,000 issues a week by 1878. The newspaper ceased giving any circulation figures after that date and did

---

1864, p.4.

67 ‘Notice to the Public’, *WWAd*, 19 April 1856, p.3.

68 ‘To Our Readers’, *WWAd*, 8 March 1856, p.4.

69 ‘Our Birthday’, *WWAd*, 6 March 1858, p.4.

70 *WWAd*, 5 December 1863, p.4.

71 ‘To Subscribers’, *WWAd*, 20 March 1858, p.4.

not resume the practice after its price reduction in 1895 even though this should have led to an increase in sales. One of the Advertiser’s few circulation comments after 1895 was that it had the largest circulation of any newspaper in the ‘district’.

Geographical Circulation

The Advertiser stated that it was initially established to respond to the perceived need for a newspaper for Denbighshire and Flintshire, but also aspired to circulate within the surrounding Welsh and English areas. Its initial circulation was limited to Wrexham and the surrounding area but three years later the Advertiser claimed that it had subscribers in ‘nearly every town in North Wales, and the adjoining English counties’ but regrettably did not state the number of subscribers in each locality.

There is further evidence of the newspaper’s geographical expansion from its own columns. In 1870 it stated that

we have energetically pushed [...] into every town, village, and parish in Denbighshire and Flintshire, and the leading towns in Merionethshire, while in the adjacent parts of Shropshire, with the towns of Oswestry and Ellesmere, and the border portion of Cheshire, we have a very considerable circulation.

This statement further supports the argument that the Advertiser’s circulation in England was limited to the border areas. It also suggests that the main concentration was on Denbighshire and Flintshire, as the newspaper had ‘pushed [...] into every town, village, and parish in Denbighshire and Flintshire’ yet in Merionethshire it concentrated only on ‘the leading towns’. This could be explained by Merionethshire’s greater distance from Wrexham, its predominantly monoglot Welsh-speaking inhabitants, and the fact that it had a smaller population than either Denbighshire or Flintshire. A month later the Advertiser claimed that its circulation

---

Directory.

73 A letter in the correspondence columns of the Telegraph made reference to the Advertiser possessing Cefn-y-bedd and Brymbo supporters which may indicate that these were areas in which its circulation was particularly strong. ‘The Advertiser and the Denbighshire Militia’, WT, 18 July 1861, p.4.
74 A Few Words to Our Readers’, WWAd, 3 January 1857, p.4.
75 WWAd, 2 July 1870, p.4.
76 According to the 1891 census 45,856 people of Merionethshire’s population of 61,903 spoke Welsh only. John Williams, I, p.81.
77 According to John Williams, I, pp.14, 16, and 19, in 1871 the populations of Denbighshire,
in Denbighshire and Flintshire was more than double that of any other newspaper and that it was the ‘most extensively circulated Newspaper’ published in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Shropshire, Cheshire, and Merionethshire, although it did not produce any figures to support these claims. Circulation in distant areas may have increased from December 1871 as a result of the reduction in the rate of newspaper postage, which enabled readers, paying in advance, to receive the Advertiser by post for eight shillings and eight pence a year, instead of thirteen shillings.

Another clue to the growing circulation of the Advertiser can be found in a statement made in January 1875, that Liverpool and Manchester subscribers should receive their copy by first delivery on Saturday. This demonstrates that the Advertiser had subscribers in cities some distance from Wrexham, although subscribers were probably immigrants from North Wales.

The Advertiser went through multiple changes of title, each of which may reflect different stages in its geographical growth. It was initially titled the Wrexham and Denbigh Weekly Advertiser and Cheshire, Shropshire, Flintshire and North Wales Register and although it described itself as a ‘new weekly newspaper for Cheshire, Shropshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire and North Wales’, the prominence given to Denbigh and Wrexham in its initial title suggests that its circulation was concentrated in those two towns. The main title was soon widened to Wrexham and Denbighshire Weekly Advertiser, suggesting that the newspaper sought to expand its circulation throughout the county. In December 1858 Flintshire was dropped from the title, and in February 1863 the title became the Wrexham Advertiser and Denbighshire, Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales Register, though a month later Shropshire ceased to be included in the title. By 1864 the title had reverted to including both Shropshire and Flintshire and in July 1870 Merionethshire was added, implying that circulation had increased in Merionethshire or that the newspaper had decided to expand into that county. Neither Caernarvonshire nor Montgomeryshire were ever included in the newspaper’s title. From September 1880 it became the shorter and

---

Flintshire, and Merionethshire were 105,102; 76,312; and 46,598 respectively.

79 WWAd, 6 August 1870, p.8.
80 WWAd, 23 January 1875, p.4.
81 WWAd, 11 March 1854, p.1.
82 The Weekly was dropped in August 1857.
simpler Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales News which encompassed all the north Wales counties, but not the border area. The exclusion of Cheshire and Shropshire from the title may have been primarily in response to an increasing focus on Wales but could also have been due to a desire for a shorter sub-title and recognition that it could not challenge Chester and Shrewsbury newspapers, nor attempt to circulate widely within the border counties. This constant change of counties in its title suggests that Advertiser was unsure as to its circulation area and the areas into which it wanted to expand. The decision to produce a Mold edition in 1909 may have been an acceptance that the Advertiser could no longer function adequately as a Denbighshire and Flintshire newspaper and would essentially have to divide itself into a Wrexham edition and a separate Flintshire edition in order to compete with rival newspapers.

An indication that the Advertiser looked to Wrexham to provide the majority of its readers was its support for county and national institutions to be located in Wrexham. For example, in 1882 it supported Wrexham’s claim to be the home of the university college of north Wales. This is significant as Rhyl and Denbigh, also in the north-east, were also bidding for the honour, and the newspaper was either being loyal to its home town or was more concerned about losing readers in Wrexham than in Rhyl or Denbigh. It commented that ‘whatever may be said in favor [sic] of the towns moving in the matter, can be said in favor [sic] of Wrexham with the additional facts of more central position and superior facilities’. 83 The Advertiser further supported several other claims by Wrexham for increased importance in the area: in November 1906 Denbighshire County Council was rebuked for choosing to place the county education offices in Ruthin, rather than Wrexham 84 and in 1901 it supported Wrexham’s claim to be an assize town. 85

Rivals

Wrexham Telegraph

In late 1856 the Advertiser commenced its long-running feud with the Conservative Telegraph by claiming that Wrexham solicitor John Lewis was the Telegraph’s

83 WWAd, 30 September 1882, p.4.
84 ‘Why in Ruthin?’, WWAd, 3 November 1906, p.5.
85 ‘Wrexham as an Assize Town’, WWAd, 2 July 1910, p.5.
hitherto unknown proprietor when it published that newspaper's declaration of ownership.\textsuperscript{86} Three years later it cast doubt upon the success of the Telegraph when it stated that not only was it 'struggling between life and death' but that its reports were frequently incorrect.\textsuperscript{87}

In 1860 the Advertiser scathingly referred to the Telegraph as 'weak in intellect, in brain, in common sense, and in style'\textsuperscript{88} and claimed to have received letters from unnamed local clergymen disavowing it as a Church of England newspaper.\textsuperscript{89} Furthermore, the Advertiser implied that the Telegraph was financially supported by the Conservative party. The only evidence that local Conservatives financed the Telegraph was an anonymous letter from 'A Liberal Conservative' which stated that 'many gentlemen' had subscribed to establish a local Conservative newspaper,\textsuperscript{90} almost certainly the Telegraph.

In 1864 the Advertiser and the Telegraph became engaged in dispute over each other's circulation. The Advertiser reiterated that it had the highest circulation of all north Wales newspapers and challenged the Telegraph\textsuperscript{91} to submit its books to a third party and the Advertiser would do the same. It would also allow the third party to see the newspapers being printed for a month and meet agents in order to establish the number of unsold copies. The third party would then judge which newspaper had the highest circulation, with the loser paying all expenses and donating £5 to the Denbigh Lunatic Asylum.\textsuperscript{92} There is no evidence that this challenge was ever accepted.

**Shrewsbury Chronicle and Chester Courant**

In late 1868 the Shrewsbury Chronicle and the Chester Courant published newspaper sales figures for newspapers published in north Wales, Shropshire, and Cheshire based on the number of stamps issued to each newspaper. By this time newspapers bought stamps only for postage and unlike pre-1855 stamps, the number purchased

\textsuperscript{86} 'Editorial Amenities', WWAd, 13 December 1856, p. 4. This point is further commented upon in the discussion of the Telegraph's ownership in section 6.

\textsuperscript{87} 'A Long-Eared Editor', WWAd, 17 September 1859, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{88} 'Last Words', WWAd, 30 June 1860, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{89} WWAd, 2 June 1860, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{90} 'Prostitution of the Press', WWAd, 2 September 1860, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{91} The Telegraph was not directly named but statements made by the Advertiser strongly point to the Telegraph.

\textsuperscript{92} 'Local Newspapers and their Circulation', WWAd, 24 December 1864, p. 4.
did not accurately indicate sales. The *Advertiser* was not on the list. It immediately attacked the statistics as incomplete, incorrect and out of date.\(^{93}\) It was important for the *Advertiser* to act quickly to condemn the figures, as advertisers might have ceased to advertise in the *Advertiser* if they believed it to have low sales figures.

**Wrexham Guardian**

In 1878, with the aid of Watkin Williams, the Liberal MP for the Denbigh Boroughs, the *Advertiser* was able to reveal the names of the financial supporters of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company, the body which owned the *Guardian*. The *Advertiser* published a printed circular dated 24 January 1878 which it had received from Williams, written by local Conservatives Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and George Kenyon, appealing for money for the *Guardian*, and listing the names of those who had financially supported the newspaper over the past eight years.\(^{94}\) The *Advertiser* must have been pleased to publicise Williams’s view that the *Guardian* had ‘failed to secure legitimate public support to even exist as a commercial enterprise’ and that a newspaper existing by private financial support rather than commercial success was ‘a dishonour and a disgrace to North Wales, and one which ought to be discountenanced and condemned by all honourable and straightforward men’.\(^{95}\) The *Advertiser* added that, in its opinion, it was ‘politically immoral’ for a newspaper, financially supported by a political party, to pass itself off as one advocating and responding to public opinion.\(^{96}\) It stated that

> while professing to reflect public sympathies, and to float by means of popular support, merely represent [sic] the politics of a few subscribers, who unless they are either fanatics or fools, must expect a private advantage from the dissemination of such politics […] It is the false pretence of being afloat upon public support while only floating upon a few private, which must rob, and does rob, a pensioned print of any – the slightest title, to respectability or weight.

It was of the opinion that a subsidised newspaper was not read by the educated classes because they knew that it was subsidised, but it did express concern that the views of such a print would be believed by those who did not know that it was subsidised,

\(^{93}\) 'Circulation of Local and District Newspapers', *WWAd*, 2 January 1869, p.5.

\(^{94}\) 'The Hon. George Kenyon and the Press', *WWAd*, 23 May 1878, p.3.

\(^{95}\) 'Mr Watkin Williams and the Tory Press of Denbighshire', *WWAd*, 4 May 1878, p.3

\(^{96}\) *WWAd*, 23 November 1872, p.4.
namely the poor and uneducated.\textsuperscript{97} Therefore the \textit{Advertiser} could argue that it was assisting the public, by making them aware of the financial status of the \textit{Guardian}, and its implication that the newspaper would be unable to survive without its subsidy from its wealthy Conservative backers was obviously aimed at hastening the \textit{Guardian}'s demise.

\textbf{Politics}

Although it did not initially state that it was a Liberal newspaper, the \textit{Advertiser}'s comment that it would 'be the firm and unflinching advocates of Progress in our political, social, religious systems' and that it would support 'any measure, which in our opinion, is calculated to promote the welfare of the people'\textsuperscript{98} indicates its support for the Liberal party. By March 1856 it was 'profess[ing] Independent Liberalism' but still maintained that it did not support a particular party.\textsuperscript{99} However, by the time of the 1857 general election, the \textit{Advertiser} had revealed itself to be a Liberal newspaper and stated that it would support the Liberal candidate in the Denbigh Boroughs.\textsuperscript{100} After the death of Bayley in 1863, the new proprietors assured readers that 'in politics we shall continue to be what we always have been, the local exponent of the Liberal party',\textsuperscript{101} both Bradley and Charles George Bayley being Liberal Mayors of Wrexham and Oswestry respectively.

The \textit{Advertiser} was also a keen supporter of Gladstonian Liberalism. The \textit{Advertiser} was a great admirer and supporter of Gladstone and this admiration may have been heightened by his Flintshire connection. Within a year of Disraeli taking office in 1875 it stated that 'no government in the present age has committed such a series of blunders',\textsuperscript{102} comparing it unfavourably with Gladstone's previous administration. Gladstone's stance on the Eastern Question and the Bulgarian atrocities was strongly supported by the \textit{Advertiser}. This issue caused a schism within the Liberal party and several Liberal provincial press owners such as Joseph Corwen (Russophobic Radical Liberal MP for Newcastle and proprietor of the \textit{Newcastle Daily Chronicle}) opposed Gladstone's views in Parliament and all but demanded the resignation of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{97} \textit{WWAd}, 20 July 1872, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{98} \textit{WWAd}, 11 March 1854, p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{99} 'To Our Readers', \textit{WWAd}, 8 March 1856, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{100} 'Election Amenities and Conservative Consistency', \textit{WWAd}, 28 March 1857, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{101} 'To Our Readers', \textit{WWAd}, 21 November 1863, p.4.
\end{itemize}
Chronicle's editor, James Annand, for his pro-Bulgarian editorials. The Advertiser experienced no such crisis, supporting Gladstone and describing the Turkish Empire as 'the detested domain of the barbaric Moslem [...] a standing reproach and menace to the Christian states'. Its admiration of Gladstone was such that upon his death in 1898, it had the temerity to rebuke Queen Victoria for not showing sufficient sorrow.

In early 1908 the newspaper found its support for the Liberal party questioned by Edward George Hemmerde, the Liberal MP for East Denbighshire, when it supported the adoption of a miners' candidate for East Denbighshire. The Advertiser maintained that it was still the local Liberal newspaper but it does appear that, under its new editor, James Wright, the newspaper was becoming increasingly supportive of the infant Labour party as in 1912 it described itself as 'the leading Liberal and Labour paper in the Principality'. This alteration in its politics may have been prompted by the example of the Liberal MP for the Denbigh Boroughs between 1906 and 1910, Clement Edwards, who described himself as a Liberal and Labour MP and eventually set up his own party, the National Democratic Party, in 1918.

Religion
Despite a protestation of impartiality in 1856, the Advertiser took a strongly Nonconformist line. In 1859 it protested against the appointment of a Scotsman, who did not speak Welsh, as the Bishop of Bangor and proposed the disestablishment of the Church of England, not only in Wales, but throughout Britain and Ireland as it would benefit the Church and give it the power of self-government. It opposed the tithe, yet it offered only limited coverage of the Tithe War in north-east Wales and instead preferred to campaign for disestablishment.

102 WWAd, 31 July 1875, p.4.
104 'The Queen and Mr. Gladstone', WWAd, 4 June 1898, p.5.
105 'Mr. E.G. Hemmerde, K.C., M.P., and Ourselves', WWAd, 29 February 1908, p.5.
106 'A Miners' Candidate for East Denbighshire', WWAd, 1 February 1908, p.5.
107 'Mr. E.G. Hemmerde, K.C., M.P., and Ourselves', WWAd, 29 February 1908, p.5.
108 WWAd, 24 August 1912, p.4.
109 'To Our Readers', WWAd, 8 March 1856, p.4.
110 'The New Bishop of Bangor', WWAd, 28 May 1859, p.4.
As Wrexham’s longest established newspaper prior to 1914, a study of the *Advertiser* reflects a changing Wales and a changing Britain; socially, economically, politically, and culturally. Despite changes in society, the *Advertiser* remained loyal to the Liberal party, although it appears to have been developing leanings towards the infant Labour party. Its expansion in circulation and its establishment of publishing offices elsewhere in north-east Wales and the border area strongly suggests that it was a successful and thriving newspaper, although there is evidence of a contraction in its area of influence in the early twentieth century. It is unfortunate that the newspaper did not give more detailed circulation and sales information as this may explain why no attempt was made to establish a daily or twice-weekly *Advertiser*. Whereas George Bayley was willing to take the risk of weekly publication, the syndicate that took control on his death may have been less willing to risk daily publication. Nevertheless the *Advertiser* did show that it was possible to establish a prosperous weekly English-language newspaper in Wrexham.

5. Wrexham Albion [September–December 1854]

It is impossible to give a detailed history of the *Albion* for three main reasons. Firstly, it only ran for four issues and the first of these, which may have provided important information, has not survived, secondly, its brief existence meant that it did not appear in any trade directories, and finally the three surviving issues give very little information as to its origins, and political and religious viewpoints. It was a four-page A3 size newspaper, produced monthly, and priced at one penny. It was published in the middle of each month, and being published at monthly intervals, it avoided paying stamp duty. The name of the newspaper’s proprietor was not given, but it was printed and published by James Lindop at the Old Post Office on Church Street.

It seems highly probable that the *Albion* was the direct forerunner of the *Telegraph*. Both newspapers had the same printer and publisher in James Lindop, and the three surviving issues of the *Albion* each carry an advertisement for the *Telegraph*. According to an advertisement in its second issue, the first number of the *Telegraph* was due to be published on Wednesday 1 November 1854 but it was not actually

---

111 ‘The “Advertiser” and the “Whole Hog”’, *WWAd*, 3 September 1859, p.4.
published until two months later. It is possible that the first issue of the Albion was so successful that its owner decided to convert it into a weekly newspaper but this would have been a risk on the strength of one issue. Alternatively, the role of the Albion may have been to discover if there was a market for a second Wrexham newspaper, and a Conservative one, but, if so, why a monthly would be used to do so is unclear. Unfortunately no references were made to the newspaper's political and religious beliefs.

6. Wrexham Telegraph (Wrexhamite)[January 1855–February 1867]
The Telegraph was the first Conservative newspaper published in Wrexham. It ran for twelve years and was owned by a series of proprietors. The newspaper was not founded as a commercial speculation and may therefore have been established to act as a political organ.

Proprietors
The first issue of the Telegraph was published on the second Thursday of January 1855, two months later than originally intended, under the title of the Wrexhamite and was priced at two pence. In its first issue, the Telegraph explained that its columns shall be devoted to the discussion of every subject that affects the social and moral welfare of the community. Particular attention shall be paid to matters affecting the Agricultural and Mining interests, whilst the welfare of the town of Wrexham and its neighbourhood, in every aspect, shall be a primary object and [...] a devotion to matters of Ecclesiastical and Local character is designed to be the principle feature of the undertaking.

No information was given about ownership, the first issue merely stating that the newspaper was printed and published by James Lindop. Mitchell's Press Directory for 1856 gave Lindop as the newspaper's proprietor, but, as the Advertiser revealed, its actual owner was Wrexham solicitor and future Conservative Mayor,

112 WAIb, 18 October 1854, p.1.
113 Although the newspaper was first called the Wrexhamite, for the purposes of this study it will be referred to as the Telegraph as this was its name for most of its existence.
114 WT, 11 January 1855, p.1.
115 According to the Albion its first issue was due to be published in 1 November 1854. WAIb, 18 October 1854, p.4.
116 WT, 11 January 1855, p.4.
John Lewis. Unfortunately the newspaper never explained why it felt it necessary
to hide details relating to its ownership, although Lewis may have felt that newspaper
proprietorship was not a suitable occupation for a solicitor and aspiring local
politician. If Lewis established the newspaper to promote his political ambitions, this
would explain why he sold it in April 1858, having failed to be elected to Wrexham’s
first town council. No explanation for the sale was offered by the Telegraph, but one
possibility was that Lewis wished to distance himself from the newspaper as his
association with it had led to his involvement in a libel case with the Advertiser [See
section 4].

Another possibility is that the newspaper was experiencing grave financial
difficulties. Shortly after its creation the Telegraph announced that its price would fall
to a penny as a consequence of the abolition of the Stamp Act. However such a
reduction did not take place, possibly because the newspaper could ill afford the
reduction in revenue. On its first anniversary the Telegraph’s optimistic tone in
commenting upon its progress to date as ‘we have now the assurance that the crisis of
our fate is over, and that we shall not merely live, but make ourselves heard’
represented an attempt to persuade readers that its difficulties were over.

The last issue of 1855 announced that the newspaper would be enlarged to three times
its size (later downgraded to twice) and would change its day of publication to
Friday. It also altered its format from a four page broadsheet to a small folio of
sixteen pages. A final change was the appointment of an unnamed new editor,
described as ‘a gentleman connected with the London daily press’, although the
newspaper was still published by Lindop. As a result of this change, all the
newspaper’s general articles and news would be prepared in London. It is clear that

118 The notes of the Wrexham Printers’ Society however state that the Telegraph was owned by a
private company of which John Lewis was the principal. S. Bickley, History of the Wrexham Printers’
Society from 1818 to 1893, NLW Facs 695.
119 WT, 22 February 1855, p.25.
121 ‘Enlargement of “the Wrexhamite” and Change of Day of Publication’, WT, 27 December 1855,
p.207.
122 Each page had five columns.
123 Each page had three columns.
supplying partly-printed news sheets to provincial newspapers originated in 1850. Upon receipt of
the newspaper's new format was not popular, as a year later the Telegraph reverted to its original broadsheet form. In addition the day of publication reverted to Thursday, possibly because publishing on a Friday placed it in direct competition with the Advertiser whereas publishing on an earlier day may have given it an advantage over its rival. 1856 also saw the newspaper became embroiled in a libel case when Daniel Jones, a Wrexham cheese merchant, commenced an action against Lewis and Lindop. The Telegraph had published a small poem which Jones considered to reflect negatively upon his character. Lewis paid twenty shillings in damages plus costs and offered an apology.125

In April 1857 the newspaper was sold to a Wrexham printer, Railton Potter. As a consequence of the sale, the newspaper's office moved from Lindop's printing office in Hope Street, to Potter's in the High Street.126 There may also have been a change of editor about this time.127 Within a few months, at the end of 1858, Potter, claiming increasing pressure from his printing business, sold the newspaper to another printer, Charles Griffiths. The new owner promised that all attempts to improve the newspaper would be made and to aid such improvement, the newspaper would be printed in Wrexham 'under his own personal superintendence [sic]' .128 There was a change in the newspaper's editorship in 1859 when the Advertiser's former reporter, Richard Richards, replaced Williams.129 With the change in ownership came another change in location from High Street to Griffiths' General Printing Office at Bryn-y-ffynon, and then to Henblas Street in 1861, and High Street in January 1863. There was a further change of editor in January 1863 but the name of the new editor was not given. The newspaper also took the opportunity to attack readers who had not paid their subscriptions.130 Doing so publicly suggests that the Telegraph was in debt itself

---

125 `Action for Libel', WWAd, 8 August 1857, p.90-1. 126 `The Wrexham Telegraph under New Management', WT, 30 April 1857, p.1. 127 `St. David's Day Dinner at Mr. Lovatt's, the Old Swan Inn', WT, 4 March 1858, p.4 refers to Mr. Williams as the newspaper's editor. 128 `To the Supporters and Readers of the Wrexham Telegraph', WT, 30 December 1858, p.4. 129 `Testimonial to Mr. Richard Richards, editor of the "Wrexham Telegraph"', WT, 22 December 1859, p.1. 130 'Our Position', WT, 1 January 1863, p.2.
and required money. If so, this explains why the newspaper was sold in April 1863 to William Bellingham. 131

Bellingham made three important changes. The first change was the day of publication to Saturday, the second being an increase in size from four to eight pages, and the third was the newspaper’s title from the Wrexham Telegraph to the Denbighshire and Flintshire Telegraph, North Shropshire and West Cheshire Reporter. From 1865 three editions of the Telegraph were published: on Wednesday morning, Thursday morning (special market edition for Wrexham only), and a Saturday edition published on Friday night and Saturday morning. This thrice-weekly newspaper was the closest Wrexham came to daily newspaper publication. Each issue was priced at one penny for four pages, the Saturday edition being expanded to eight pages from November 1866. Naturally much of the news in the Wednesday edition was repeated in the Thursday and Saturday editions, and the existence of a special edition for Wrexham shows that, despite the newspaper’s change in title, it still recognised the importance of Wrexham. In addition, the office was moved in April 1866 from Lambpit Street to Hope Chambers, Hope Street. The newspaper ceased in early 1867 but Bellingham gave no reason, merely stating ‘the reasons for its discontinuance being of a private and personal nature need not be publicly explained’. 132 The fact that the newspaper was not sold to another proprietor supports the belief that it was a commercial failure.

Publishing Establishments

Table 4: Wrexham Telegraph Publishing Establishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing Establishments</th>
<th>Date Opened</th>
<th>Date Ceased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mold</td>
<td>October 1863</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswestry</td>
<td>October 1863</td>
<td>January 1865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>October 1863</td>
<td>January 1865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

131 ‘To the Reader’, WT, 16 April 1863, p.2.
The change in the newspaper's title to the more regional *Denbighshire and Flintshire Telegraph, North Shropshire and West Cheshire Reporter* in 1863 led to the establishment of publishing offices in Mold, Oswestry, and Chester. As a result the *Telegraph* had a publishing establishment or main office in each of the four counties in its title and sub-title. The Oswestry and Cheshire publishing establishments existed for just over a year whilst the Mold establishment continued until the newspaper ended. This strongly suggests that whilst there was sufficient circulation in Flintshire to justify the continued existence of a publishing establishment, this was not so for Shropshire or Cheshire.

Sales
When it discussed sales, the *Telegraph* generally avoided giving figures. In January 1857 the newspaper claimed that sales had risen threefold since August, but neither the current figure nor the figure for August was given. Consequently it is difficult to estimate sales figures as the newspaper may have had especially low figures and a threefold increase would not have been especially large. The newspaper then claimed another threefold rise in sales between August 1857 and February 1858.

It was not until Griffiths became proprietor in 1859 that the newspaper produced some statistical figures. It claimed an increase of 250 copies a week in Denbighshire and Flintshire and the adjoining area during the last quarter and by July the newspaper stated that its weekly circulation was over 1,000 copies. If these statements are correct, then prior to August 1856 the newspaper's weekly circulation was less than 100. This calls into question the accuracy of such statements as it is unlikely that the newspaper would have survived with such low initial sales, or alternatively, that *Telegraph* sales fluctuated greatly. In 1864 the *Telegraph* "guaranteed" that it had the largest sales figures of any newspaper in Denbighshire or Flintshire, a statement which was difficult to disprove as it failed to supply figures to substantiate its claim.

---

134 'To Our Readers', *WT*, 12 February 1858, p.4.
135 'To Our Readers', *WT*, 17 March 1859, p.4.
136 'To Subscribers and Advertisers', *WT*, 7 July 1859, p.4.
137 *WT*, 23 January 1864, p.4.
Geographical Circulation

The Telegraph did not comment upon the geographical area of its circulation until it had been established for nearly two years. In October 1856 it described itself as 'the recognised county newspaper' and that it possessed an 'extensive circulation' in Denbighshire and Flintshire.138 Two months later it claimed to circulate in 'Wrexham, Ruabon, Ellesmere, Oswestry, Llangollen, Ruthin, Denbigh, Llanrwst, Abergele, St. Asaph, Holywell, Flint, Mold, Chester, Liverpool, &c, &c,'139: all the main settlements of north-east Wales and the border area. From 1857 it placed this claim, together with Corwen, Rhyl, and Whitchurch, below its title and by 1858 it claimed 'an extensive and increasing circulation in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Cheshire and Shropshire'.140 By 1860, the circulation area had expanded to include Montgomeryshire and 'the Provincial Towns of England'.141 This last claim was so clearly an exaggeration that it was later dropped.142 By 1864 the Telegraph claimed it gave equal significance to reports from towns in north-east Wales as it gave to those from Wrexham,143 and claimed to circulate in the north-western counties of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire.144 This shows that its aim was to circulate widely throughout north Wales, or at least persuade advertisers that it did, even if its local news content retained a strong Wrexham bias.

The frequent changes in title reflect the changing limits of geographical circulation and the different aims of its owners. Not all of the areas in which the Telegraph claimed to circulate were mentioned in the title.

January 1855–December 1856 The Wrexhamite

January 1857–May 1857 The Wrexham Telegraph and Denbighshire and Flintshire Reporter with which is incorporated the Wrexhamite

---

138 'To Advertisers and Correspondents', WT, 31 October 1856, p.1.
139 WT, 12 December 1856, p.1.
143 'To Our Readers and the Public', WT, 2 January 1864, p.4.
144 WT, 31 December 1864, almanack.
May 1857–September 1863 The Wrexham Telegraph and Denbighshire and Flintshire Reporter

October 1863– Denbighshire and Flintshire Telegraph, North Shropshire and West Cheshire Reporter

The title 'Wrexhamite' strongly suggests that the newspaper's initial circulation was centred on Wrexham. When the newspaper's title was altered in January 1857 one of the reasons stated was that 'it has been repeatedly objected to us that such a name is too local, and since we aspire to, and are gradually becoming a newspaper for this and the surrounding counties' and that it intended to become 'the recognised Journal of North Wales'. The alteration in the title to the Denbighshire and Flintshire Telegraph, North Shropshire and West Cheshire Reporter and the omission of Wrexham from the title reflects the establishment of publishing offices in Oswestry and Chester and the newspaper's desire to be seen as a regional rather than a Wrexham newspaper. That none of the other counties in which the Telegraph claimed to circulate, namely Merionethshire, Caernarvonshire, and Montgomeryshire were included in the newspaper's sub-title possibly implies that circulation in these counties was not particularly high, and limiting its Cheshire and Shropshire sub-titles to the west and north of each county suggests that circulation in these counties was restricted to the border area.

Rivals

Wrexham Advertiser

As one of the first Conservative newspapers in north-east Wales, the Telegraph enjoyed mutual animosity with the Liberal Wrexham Advertiser. Within a few weeks of its launch it attacked its rival for claiming to be the only weekly newspaper in Denbighshire, followed a month later by claims that the Advertiser was making an unnecessary fuss when its reporter was excluded from the courts. In contrast, when the Telegraph's own representative was excluded from Town Council meetings in 1857 the Liberals were promptly blamed. The rivalry intensified when the

145 WT, 12 December 1856, p.1.
146 'Our Own Past and Future', WT, 1 January 1857, p.4.
147 'To Correspondents', WT, 8 March 1855, p.33.
148 'Much Ado About Nothing', WT, 5 April 1855, p.49.
149 'Liberals in Office', WT, 19 November 1857, p.4.
Advertiser named John Lewis as the proprietor of the Telegraph, a fact which the Telegraph claimed was already well known. In its tirade, it described its rival as personally assailing every one whose views were not in unison with its own, including the heads of all the county families, the professional men and tradesmen of the town [...] attacks upon the Church and the Conservative party and its members hereabouts [...] Thus was presented a perfect system of unscrupulous and unprincipled turgiversation. It appeared quite palpable that a Press tyranny was being established in the town to be used for party and private purposes.150

In August 1857, Lewis announced that he was planning to sue Bayley for libel in relation to statements made in the Advertiser concerning the Vicar of Ruabon151 [See section 4]. The ongoing dispute between the two newspapers did not terminate with the libel trial. In February 1858 the Telegraph accused the Advertiser of plagiarising its mining news (although the Advertiser was not the only newspaper to be so accused).152 The Telegraph also attempted to humiliate its rival in the affair of its ex-editor Richard Richards. After the Advertiser had dismissed Richards (whom it described as a reporter), he wrote to the Telegraph stating that he had, in fact, been its editor and that his duties generally consisted of merely cutting and pasting news from other newspapers including the Telegraph.153 This letter may have led to Richards securing the position of Telegraph editor. The attacks continued throughout 1859 and 1860, perhaps inspired by Richards who sought to humiliate his previous employer. In June 1861 it published an anonymous letter accusing the Advertiser of deliberately mis-stating facts in an attempt to damage the Conservative party in the Town Council154 and a month later another anonymous letter writer described the Advertiser as an ‘organised hypocrisy [...] a weak, pliant sapling’ that lacked the courage to express its own views for fear of losing readers and advertisements.155

151 WT, 13 August 1857, p.4.
152 WT, 25 February 1858, p.4.
154 ‘How to ‘Do’ an Opponent a la the Wrexham Advertiser’, 6 June 1861, p.4.
Politics

Despite the Conservatism of its first proprietor, the newspaper initially described its politics as 'Liberal-Conservatism', although by June it had become 'Conservative'. The newspaper openly stated that it had been established to disseminate its political views and also to influence public opinion by commenting on local news and events. It claimed that it would advocate the views of 'the influential section of the community' yet it would not become 'a mere instrument [sic] of a party', and it was to be within the reach of all classes, not only those listed as its supporters. When the newspaper changed hands in 1859 no reference was made to its political principles but the newspaper's content assured Conservatives that it still retained its loyalty to Conservatism. However Bellingham did state that he was prepared to criticise the Conservative party and the Church of England if he deemed it necessary.

The Telegraph took an active role in both local and national politics. During the 1857 election campaign it described the Liberals as 'designing, shallow, unscrupulous and fanatic'. Wrexham voters also came under attack for their ingratitude in failing to vote for those who supported the town's incorporation. This attack on voters and Liberals may have been prompted by the failure of Lewis to be elected to the Town Council. In its last issue the newspaper stressed its 'steady support' for the Conservatives and it claimed success in keeping the Denbigh Boroughs parliamentary seat Conservative.

Religion

As a Conservative newspaper, it supported the Church of England, condemning the Advertiser for 'an obvious bias towards the principles and interests of dissenters', but the fact that it urged JPs to discharge Nonconformists and Roman Catholics from paying Church rates was unusual. In its support of the Church, it condemned those

---

156 It is interesting to note that although the newspaper was Conservative, its first printer, publisher, and possibly editor, James Lindop, was a Liberal and in 1857 voted in the Denbigh Boroughs election for the Liberal candidate. 'Death of Mr. James Lindop', WWAd, 3 February 1883, p.8.
157 'The Newspaper Press', WT, 5 April 1855, p.49.
158 WT, 11 January 1855, p.4
159 'To Our Readers and the Public', WT, 2 January 1864, p.4.
161 'The Last Issue of the “Telegraph”', WT, 16 February 1867, p.4.
162 WT, 11 January 1855, p.1.
163 'Wrexham Church Rate', WT, 25 October 1855, p.171.
who believed that knowledge of the language of the majority of the people was a prerequisite for a Welsh Bishop, arguing that 'we are at a loss to conceive why ignorance of a declining language should be seen as a mortal sin in a Welsh Bishop'.\footnote{Welsh Bishops', *WT*, 11 June 1857, p.4.} This suggests that it considered it more important to support the Church of England than to promote Wales and its language.

As the first Conservative newspaper in Wrexham, the *Telegraph* showed that it was possible to establish a Conservative newspaper in north Wales and was therefore an important predecessor for the *Guardian*. Although both newspapers supported the same party, the *Telegraph* was less confrontational in its attitude towards Liberals and even employed supporters of the party amongst its staff. If a newspaper's title was an accurate reflection of its geographical circulation area, then the *Telegraph* expanded its circulation from Wrexham into Denbighshire and Flintshire and then into north Shropshire and west Cheshire. It is especially regrettable that Bellingham declined to give any reasons for the cessation of the *Telegraph*, its abrupt ending suggesting that its statements of expanding geographical and numerical circulation were masking serious financial problems.


On 4 September 1869, the first issue of the eight page\footnote{The *Guardian* had six columns until 1887 when it increased to seven.} *Wrexham Guardian* was published from the Guardian Office, Bank Place, Wrexham. Its early years were insecure and the newspaper came close to cessation on several occasions as it suffered from substantial debts and its early survival was only made possible by a generous subsidy from its wealthy political backers. In addition, it suffered from a lack of internal stability as editors, managers and publishers changed with alarming frequency. In 1879 the newspaper gained a new owner and changed its name to the more geographically ambitious *North Wales Guardian* and this ushered in an era of stability and success.
Proprietors

The origins of the newspaper remain somewhat unclear. It was owned by the North Wales Constitutional Press Company Limited, but this company was not incorporated under the Companies Act until May 1870. The newspaper was founded as a Conservative response to the Liberal victory in the 1868 general election and 'to battle, to some extent, with the many Liberal organs in that part of the Principality'. The shareholders included some of the wealthiest Conservatives in north Wales, for example, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, the Hon. George Kenyon, Edmund Peel, Thomas Lloyd Fitzhugh, and Lord Edmund Hill-Trevor, three of whom (Sir Watkin, Kenyon, and Lord Edmund) were present or future MPs.

Table 5: Occupation of North Wales Constitutional Press Company Shareholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>27 (45.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>7 (11.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>5 (8.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>4 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Trade</td>
<td>4 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>3 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>2 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baronet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colliery Proprietor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Agent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coachbuilder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

166 The company could, of course, have been established earlier and not incorporated until May 1870.
In 1873, the North Wales Constitutional Press Company was declared bankrupt.\footnote{Aled Gruffydd Jones, *Press, Politics and Society: a history of journalism in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), p.126.} However in July it was able to secure a loan of £1,000\footnote{Letter from William Lee Brookes dated 6 August 1874 referring to a loan of £1000 from himself to the Company on 13 July 1873. FRO D/KT/22. This loan was later repaid by Kenyon.} and that year’s AGM passed a special resolution to increase the company’s capital to £8,000 by issuing an additional 5,000 shares,\footnote{Special Resolution of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company Ltd. Passed on 9 August 1873. PRO BT31/1552/4989.} which were unfortunately not bought.\footnote{Summary of Capital and Shares of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company Limited made up to the seventh day of December 1876. PRO BT31/1552/4989} It appears that the newspaper was surviving solely by a regular subsidy of approximately £1,000 a year from local Conservatives. Despite this, by April 1874 the company owed the bank £1,830\footnote{Letter from Wm. Trevor Parkins to George Kenyon. 20 April 1874. FRO D/KT/22.} and the owner of the *North Wales Chronicle* had made an offer for the *Wrexham Guardian*.\footnote{Letter from Evan Morris to John Jones. 29 May 1874. FRO D/KT/22.} A meeting was held in July to consider winding up the company and selling the newspaper\footnote{Letter from Evan Morris to Shareholders. 2 July 1874. FRO D/KT/22.} but William Lee Brookes, a solicitor and Kenyon’s election agent, loaned the company £1,000 (with interest at five per cent a year)\footnote{Agreement between North Wales Constitutional Press Company Ltd and William Lee Brookes. 30} which secured its short-term survival. Despite these financial difficulties, or maybe because of them, in April 1873 the Company founded another newspaper, the *Rhyl Guardian*, which duplicated much of the content found in its Wrexham counterpart.

In the final months of its existence under the control of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company, the *Guardian* was involved in an unwelcome libel case. In November 1877, proceedings were initiated against the newspaper and William Garratt Jones, its printer and publisher. The newspaper had published an anonymous letter which referred to an inquest held by the Coroner for Denbighshire, Dr. Evan Pierce, a notoriously prickly character, in the Denbigh Infirmary. The letter accused Dr. Pierce of animosity against the infirmary and its staff and of relying on the opinion of his friend who had not treated the deceased. Garratt Jones offered an apology and paid costs (but stated that he believed the letter was true when he published it) and the case was dismissed. The *Guardian* could, however, take some comfort from the words of Lord Chief Justice Mellor who believed that this was ‘one
of those charges that a strong-minded man might have looked down upon with contempt'.

Since the Guardian continued to be beset by financial difficulties in 1878 Sir Watkin and Kenyon sent a printed circular to local Conservatives appealing for financial assistance. The Guardian now had a bank debt of £1,500; £500 would be required as working capital and the newspaper would need a subsidy of £300 a year. The printed circular detailed private donations that the company had received from its supporters and shareholders; Sir Watkin alone having given £2,870. Sir Watkin and Kenyon believed that the newspaper would be self-supporting within five years and stressed the importance of maintaining a Conservative newspaper in North Wales to fight the Radical press. However, this appeal was unsuccessful and in August 1878 the newspaper, plant, and company were sold to the company secretary, Evan Morris, for £600 before being sold on to Frederick Edward Roe, a newspaper proprietor from Dover.

Roe commenced his ownership of the Guardian with a dispute with its printers. He reduced wages from thirty five to twenty six shillings a week, decreased the number of staff, and complained that they did not do enough work. As a result of this cost-cutting measure he was able to reduce the price of the Guardian to a penny in 1885, thereby making it cheaper than its local rival the Advertiser.

The Guardian was not the only Welsh newspaper owned by Roe. He also owned the Rhyl Guardian (established in 1873), both newspapers sharing the same publishing office in Rhyl. He was the founding proprietor of the Shropshire and

---

176 Alleged Libel on a Denbighshire Coroner - Proceedings Against the "Wrexham Guardian", WG, 17 November 1877, p.4.
177 Printed Circular from George Kenyon and Sir Watkin Williams Wynn. 24 January 1878. FRO D/KT/22.
179 19 August 1878. FRO D/KT/22.
Montgomeryshire Post\textsuperscript{182} (established in 1880) and from 1882 was the owner of Y Dywysogaeth, (established in 1870) the Welsh-language Church of England newspaper, and moved its publication from Rhyl to Wrexham.\textsuperscript{183} The three English-language newspapers collaborated on advertising [See Chapter 10] and on the collection of regional and national news.

In August 1887 an announcement appeared in the Guardian stating that from 10 September it would be under new management. The prospectus stated that the Guardian would

emphatically be a Welsh paper in its tone and sympathies. The greatest attention will be paid to all matters relating to the Principality, its history, its antiquities, its interests, its industries. Careful and especial regard will be had to the numerous economical questions which have a vital bearing upon the prosperity of the people of Wales.

The newspaper would also contain a weekly summary of ‘articles of interest’ taken from Welsh newspapers, Welsh-language material, a weekly letter from South Wales, and a London letter written by ‘a gentleman thoroughly well acquainted with Welsh subjects’.\textsuperscript{184} It appears that the new proprietors were eager to emphasise the “Welsh” nature of the newspaper from the beginning.\textsuperscript{185} No mention was made of the inclusion of material relating to Cheshire or Shropshire.

Shortly before the change of ownership, the day of publication had been altered from a Thursday to a Friday, and by 1891 the Guardian had three editions: the first on Friday morning, the second at midday, and the third on Saturday morning. The name of the new proprietor was never given but it was probably Evan Morris (later Sir Evan Morris) the former company secretary of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company, since when the newspaper was next sold in February 1894 the sale was by the executors of his estate.\textsuperscript{186} In 1874, Morris had written to Kenyon offering to manage the Guardian himself\textsuperscript{187} and had bought it in 1878 before selling it to Roe.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textsuperscript{182} Mitchell's Press Directory (1881), p.90. & \\
\textsuperscript{183} Mitchell's Press Directory (1883) p.127. & \\
\textsuperscript{184} 'Important Announcement', WG, 25 August 1887, p.4. & \\
\textsuperscript{185} The “Welsh” nature of the Guardian’s content is discussed in the News Content Chapter. & \\
\textsuperscript{186} However, there was no publishing statement that the newspaper was being printed and published for ‘the proprietor’ until November 1890. Morris died in April 1890 and presumably since his executors & \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
In February 1894 the newspaper again changed hands, the title and the plant being sold to Messrs. Jarman & Co., and the newspaper came under the 'personal supervision'\textsuperscript{188} of Sydney Gardnor Jarman, a future Conservative Mayor of Wrexham. Jarman also owned the \textit{Rhyl Guardian} and the \textit{Vale of Conway Guardian}.	extsuperscript{189} The price was reduced to a halfpenny in April 1914\textsuperscript{190} and when World War I broke out the newspaper immediately reduced its size to four pages.\textsuperscript{191}

Editors

The financial difficulties of the \textit{Guardian} led to a rapid turnover of editors who usually fulfilled the multiple roles of printer, publisher, and manager.\textsuperscript{192} The first nine years saw seven different people at the helm of the \textit{Guardian}: John Ramsden, John Vaughan, George William Spencer, Alfred Lloyd Row, Herman Behrens, William Garratt Jones, and John Hamlyn Lakeman. A measure of stability was achieved in June 1874 when William Garratt Jones took over and remained editor until the newspaper was sold in 1878. Naturally, each editor brought with him his own distinctive editorial style and such frequent changes must have been disconcerting for the readers.

When the \textit{Guardian} was sold in 1887, Frederick William Brodie became the new editor and manager.\textsuperscript{193} By 1890 the \textit{Guardian} had new editors and managers in Joseph Henry White and Griffith Parry Edwards. White left in 1890, and when Edwards died suddenly in the \textit{Guardian} office of a heart attack in February 1893 he was replaced by George Herbert Wykes, who remained less than a year, before giving way to Jarman.

\textsuperscript{187} Letter. E. Morris to J. Jones, 29 May 1874. FRO D/KT/22.
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{WG}, 2 February 1894, p.5.
\textsuperscript{189} No copies of this newspaper appear to have survived.
\textsuperscript{190} \textit{WG}, 3 April 1914.
\textsuperscript{191} \textit{WG}, 14 August 1914.
\textsuperscript{192} For example, G.P. Edwards' obituary described him as the manager and editor of the newspaper in addition to being the printer and publisher. 'Sudden Death of the Editor of the “Guardian”', \textit{WG}, 17 February 1893, p.5 .
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{WG}, 17 February 1893, p.8.
Publishing Establishments

The *Guardian* began publication at Bank Place, and a year later moved to 26 Hope Street where it remained until it moved into specially prepared offices in Argyle Street in early 1880. The new offices contained a Dawson's Improved Two Feeder Wharfedale machine which was described as the 'newest and best machine for the printing of a weekly newspaper', capable of producing 3,000 copies an hour.

**Table 6: Wrexham Guardian Publishing Establishments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date Opened</th>
<th>Date Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mold</td>
<td>August 1872</td>
<td>December 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caernarvon</td>
<td>October 1872</td>
<td>January 1876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolgellau</td>
<td>October 1872</td>
<td>April 1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhyl</td>
<td>August 1874</td>
<td>March 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 1894</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbigh</td>
<td>January 1876</td>
<td>December 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corwen</td>
<td>January 1890</td>
<td>December 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bala</td>
<td>November 1890</td>
<td>December 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llanrwst</td>
<td>September 1894</td>
<td>November 1895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The newspaper also possessed several 'publishing offices' throughout north Wales. The first publishing office was established in August 1872 in Mold, followed by one in Dolgellau which operated between October 1872 and April 1877, and one in Caernarvon which opened in October 1872 and closed in January 1876. Publication in Rhyl began in August 1874, sharing premises with the *Rhyl Guardian*, and by January 1876 Rhyl possessed a fully-fledged *Guardian* office, by which time it had been joined by another office in Denbigh.

---

194 The information relating to publishing establishments was taken from the newspaper itself. An 1886 advertisement [*Wrexham Directory 1886* (Hawarden: Clwyd Record Office, 1981 reprint), p.33] stated that the *Guardian* had branch offices in Denbigh and Rhyl, and also in Oswestry and Newtown, the latter two offices never being mentioned in the newspaper. The *Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post* had offices in Oswestry and Newtown. It appears that the *Guardian* never shared offices with the *Post*, but did so with the *Rhyl Guardian*.

That lack of expansion in the number of publishing offices between the late 1870s and late 1880s suggests the *Guardian* was concentrating upon consolidating its position after its transfer to a new owner.196 In 1890 the newspaper established its second publishing office in Merionethshire, this time in Corwen,197 which was joined by an office in Bala in November. However both of these offices were short-lived as by December 1890 the *Guardian* had no publishing establishments.198 This coincided with an expansion in the number of agents [See Chapter 7] and if the main function of a publishing establishment was to distribute newspapers, this role could have been taken over by agents. The relatively short existence of the publishing establishments in Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire, compared to the longevity of those in Mold, Rhyl, and Denbigh, strongly suggests that circulation was strongest in north-east Wales and that attempts to circulate widely throughout north-west Wales had failed.

In 1894 the *Guardian* re-established its publishing office in Rhyl and also established one in Llanrwst for the first time.199 The location of these offices suggests that they were the local offices for Jarman’s two other *Guardians* – the *Rhyl Guardian* and the *Vale of Conway Guardian*200 - and that, although they may have distributed the *Guardian* and collected news, their prime functions were associated with the two other newspapers. In 1887 the *Guardian* established a London office at 15 Wine Office Court, Fleet Street,201 but it never had a publishing establishment in Cheshire or Shropshire which implies that it had a limited circulation in these counties.

**Sales**

It was not until 1890 that the *Guardian* gave any indication of its sales. However an analysis of surviving financial records for October to December 1873 reveals an

---

196 Mitchell’s Press Directory for 1882 (p.224), 1883 (p.230), 1884 (p.235), 1885 (p.243), 1886 (p.241), and 1887 (p.233) stated that the *Guardian* also had publishing offices in Oswestry and Welshpool. The newspaper made no reference to these offices, and therefore it is probable that they were offices for the *Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post* and were included in the directory so as to make it appear that the *Guardian* had a wider geographical circulation than it possessed.

197 WG, 4 January 1890, p.2 and p.8.

198 Mitchell’s Press Directory for 1891 (p.296) and 1892 (p.296) make reference to publishing establishments in Denbigh, Mold, and Rhyl but it appears that Mitchell’s was relying on out-of-date information as this was not mentioned in the newspaper itself.

199 WG, 14 September 1894, p.8.

200 This title was found in Mitchell’s Press Directory and was apparently part of a newspaper syndicate with the *Wrexham Guardian* and the *Rhyl Guardian* but no issues appear to have survived.

201 ‘London Office of the “North Wales Guardian” and the “Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post”’, WG, 17 February 1887, p.5.
average sale of 1,856 issues a week, with figures ranging from 1,595 to 1,995 issues a week. This figure was over three thousand less than that of its rival the Wrexham Advertiser. In 1885 the Guardian claimed that its circulation had risen by over a thousand issues a week as a result of the price reduction to one penny and in 1890 it stated that its circulation was 4,139 issues a week, and if this was correct, prior to the price reduction its sales were approximately 3,000 copies a week. It also claimed that each copy was read by at least five people and the newspaper was read by over 20,000 people a week. No information was given as to how the Guardian derived these figures of five people reading each issue. Four years later, in 1894, the Guardian stated that it had an average sale of 5,124 a week in December 1893 and 5,100 in January 1894. Despite this increase, Guardian sales were still lower than the Advertiser's 1878 figure of 6,000. In a press directory of 1893, the Guardian was stated as having a circulation of 10,000, which was clearly an exaggeration and probably designed to attract more advertisers.

Geographical Circulation

Statements made by the Guardian provide a broad outline of the newspaper's circulation area and of changes over time. The Guardian's entry in Mitchell's Press Directory for 1870 states that the newspaper 'circulates in Wrexham and in the counties of Denbighshire and Flintshire', which suggests that, despite its sub-title, the newspaper was concentrating on establishing itself in those two counties before expanding into Shropshire, Cheshire and Merionethshire. In addition there was a significant correlation between the place of residence of North Wales Constitutional Newspaper Company shareholders and the areas in which the Guardian claimed to circulate.

---

202 Dr. Granville in a/c with the Constitutional Association (the Wrexham Guardian). From October 13 to December 1873. FRO D/KT/22.
204 WG, 25 January 1890, p.5.
205 'The Circulation of the Guardian - Important to Advertisers', WG, 9 February 1894, p.4. The title shows that this information was explicitly aimed at advertisers.
Table 7: Location of North Wales Constitutional Press Company Shareholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrexham</td>
<td>14 (23.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire</td>
<td>27 (45.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flintshire</td>
<td>10 (16.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire</td>
<td>4 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>4 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A year later, however, its claimed areas of circulation had expanded dramatically and it was now not only ‘the recognised county paper for Denbighshire and Flintshire’ but it also had ‘a large circulation throughout the whole of North Wales, as well as the adjacent counties of Cheshire and Shropshire, and amongst the natives of the Principality, in Liverpool, Manchester and other important towns of the North’.  

By 1873 it had abandoned its claims to be read by Welsh natives in northern English towns but still maintained that it circulated ‘in Wrexham and the Counties of Denbighshire, Flintshire, Carnarvonshire [sic], Montgomeryshire, Merionethshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire’. In 1887 it appointed a ‘special reporter’ for Denbigh and Ruthin, possibly to cover the Tithe War [1886-1892] and to increase sales in these towns. North Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire remained its proclaimed areas of circulation until 1901 when it dropped Montgomeryshire from the list.

A newspaper’s title is another indication of the extent of its geographical circulation. The Guardian altered its title only twice, in 1879 from the Wrexham Guardian and General Advertiser for North Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire to the North Wales Guardian and General Advertiser for North Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire, and in 1887 to the North Wales Guardian: General Advertiser for North Wales and the Border Counties. All three titles cover the same geographical area of north Wales,

---

210 The Guardian had a publishing office in Denbigh between 1876 and 1890 so the appointment of a reporter suggests that the Denbigh publishing office was, for reasons unknown, unable to supply enough news for the Guardian.
211 WG, 20 January 1887, p.6.
Cheshire, and Shropshire but the change of title from *Wrexham Guardian* to *North Wales Guardian* implies less concentration upon Wrexham. However, the title change coincided with new ownership and may have been the result of a desire to re-brand the newspaper and give it a new start with a new name.

**Rivals**

**Oswestry Advertiser**

Within two months of its first appearance, the *Guardian* attacked the *Oswestry Advertiser* for failing to provide sufficiently accurate information in its reporting of an annual stag hunt dinner.\(^{213}\) The *Oswestry Advertiser*’s retort to this was met with a complaint from the *Wrexham Guardian* that it either ‘sinks into a sullen silence or else ... indulges in lofty and unintelligible language’ when criticised.\(^{214}\) In the same month, the *Oswestry Advertiser*’s lapse in publishing a forged letter supposedly from Sir Watkin Williams Wynn stating that he intended to address his constituents next month, allowed the *Guardian* to accuse the Liberal newspaper of credulity, and disseminating a false report.\(^{215}\) After this episode, no further comment was made upon the Oswestry newspaper. Attacks upon this Liberal rival may have been continued by the *Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post* which had a more direct local rivalry with the *Oswestry Advertiser*.

**Wrexham Advertiser**

In contrast, the *Wrexham Advertiser* survived unscathed for nearly a year before it was accused of a ‘pitiable bit of whining’ when it lost the county advertisements for Flintshire to the *Guardian*. It was also charged with editorial boastfulness and exaggeration, and of fabricating correspondents’ letters.\(^{216}\) This was merely the beginning of an intense rivalry between two newspapers of contrasting political and religious viewpoints, which were both seeking regional influence and circulation.

The first dispute between the two newspapers occurred in 1871. Rather bizarrely the *Guardian* wished to buy a report of a Masonic banquet from the *Advertiser* but quickly changed its mind when it discovered the price. The *Advertiser* accused the

\(^{213}\) *WG*, 13 November 1869, p.4.
\(^{214}\) *WG*, 20 November 1869, p.5.
\(^{215}\) *WG*, 27 November 1869, p.4.
Guardian of refusing to pay its ‘fair and legitimate price’, whereas the Guardian stated that the price asked was ‘on the contrary, a most exorbitant, indeed most absurd price for such a report [...] he [the editor of the Advertiser] endeavoured to extort from us for a report of one evening’s proceedings more than he pays the man who did it for a month’s work [sic]’. Naturally the Guardian blamed Radical trickery.217

This rivalry continued throughout the years. An 1880 editorial stated that the Wrexham Advertiser had ‘never borne a very good name for judicious and well-conducted journalism’218 and in 1883 it was accused of ‘sneaking’ into a private Conservative meeting and then publishing a report of the event.219 Anonymous letters, allegedly from satisfied readers, were occasionally included. These congratulated the Guardian for offering a welcome alternative to the Liberal newspapers of North Wales, one correspondent thanking the Conservatives for founding a Wrexham newspaper which offered an alternative to the ‘one-sided reports and general unfairness that characterised the pages of your Radical contemporary in Wrexham’.220

After the winding-up of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company and the sale of the newspaper such attacks declined in frequency, possibly because the new owner was running the newspaper as a commercial rather than a political enterprise. When attacks were published, it was usually because the Guardian believed that itself or the Conservative party had been misrepresented in some way. In 1885 it condemned the Advertiser, for falsely stating that Wrexham’s Conservatives were planning to establish an Orangeman’s Association,221 and also in December 1891 for stating that Kenyon would be opposed as the Conservative candidate for the Denbigh Boroughs at the next election.222

Carnarvon Herald

It is perhaps surprising that in January 1877 reporters from the Wrexham Guardian, Wrexham Advertiser and the Chester Chronicle joined forces to complain about the

216 WG, 29 October 1870, p.4.
217 WG, 1 April 1871, p.4.
218 WG, 24 July 1880, p.4.
219 WG, 3 November 1883, p.5.
221 WG, 3 September 1885, p.5.
222 ‘Gross Misrepresentation’, WG, 18 December 1891, p.5.
tactics of the *Carnarvon Herald* and its reporters. A reporter for the *Carnarvon Herald* was accused of taking the only copy of a list of bridal presents and immediately sending it to his editor, depriving his fellow reporters of its contents whilst knowing that they wished to see the list.\(^223\) That such a trivial incident caused such a reaction suggests keen competition amongst the newspapers of North Wales and that survival and success were more important than politics.

Two years later the *Carnarvon Herald* again angered the *Guardian*. A report in the *Carnarvon Herald* stated the only reason that the *Guardian* was found in the major hotels of north Wales was that it was given to them free of charge.\(^224\) It is possible that some of these 'major hotels' were located in places such as Llandudno, Bangor, Holyhead and Caernarvon which were all within the *Carnarvon Herald*’s main catchment area, thus making competitive rivalry the reason behind the statement. Roe promptly wrote a letter of protest to Evans, the editor of the *Carnarvon Herald*, stating that the statement was untrue and designed to cause financial damage to himself and his newspaper. He further took the opportunity to emphasise the advantages of his newspaper:

> As to the circulation of the paper, I may say that I doubt not it will compare with any circulating in North Wales, whilst as to the class of people among whom it goes (no insignificant matter to advertisers) I doubt whether any other paper in the district can in any way compare.\(^225\)

The *Carnarvon Herald* consequently issued a correction.\(^226\)

### Politics

In many ways the *Guardian* owed its existence to politics and especially to the poor Conservative electoral performance in 1868 when the party won only ten of the thirty-three Welsh seats. An editorial in the first issue set out the political principles of the *Guardian* with the slogan ‘For God, Queen and the People’, and advocated the preservation of the status quo in both politics and religion:

\(^{223}\) ‘Sharp Practice at Denbigh’, *WG*, 6 January 1877, p.5.
\(^{225}\) ‘The “Guardian” and its Contemporaries’, *WG*, 27 December 1879, p.5.
From thorough conviction and by long experience we are thoroughly convinced that the liberties we enjoy are best secured by our well balanced and good old Constitution in Church and State; that our Constitution to which those who decry it are indebted from their power of abusing it; that Constitution in all the world the only one which can tolerate the opposition of its enemies, from its consciousness of inward strength and virtue, enough to defeat, in the long run their crude and mistaken designs.227

The Guardian initially proclaimed itself to be a Conservative newspaper and ‘the recognised organ of the constitutional party in North Wales’,228 however a year later stated that it was ‘the organ of the Liberal-Conservatives, but in all matters takes a thoroughly independent course’.229 This change in emphasis may have been in response to poor circulation and a recognition that it needed to appeal to others apart from loyal Conservatives to gain commercial success.

The Guardian’s strong support for the Conservative party and Conservative politicians was frequently reflected in the newspaper’s content and editorials. Gladstone and his politics were regularly attacked, but most venom was directed at the radical Liberal MPs for the Denbigh Boroughs and Denbighshire; Watkin Williams (Denbigh Boroughs 1868-1880) was accused of failing to fulfil the promises made in his election addresses and George Osborne Morgan (Denbighshire 1868-1885, East Denbighshire 1885-1906) was called a ‘garrulous malingerer’.230 Local Conservative politicians were lauded: George Kenyon (who contested the Denbigh Boroughs in 1874 and 1880, MP for the Denbigh Boroughs 1885-1895 and 1900-1906) was ‘a gentleman ... of very high personal character’231 and Sir Watkin Williams Wynn (MP for Denbighshire 1841-1885), was ‘throughout the county regarded by all classes with such universal respect’.232 Election coverage focused primarily upon Conservative candidates in Denbighshire and Flintshire and various

227 WG, 4 September 1869, p.4.
230 WG, 20 August 1886, p.5.
232 WG, 30 March 1872, p.5.
excuses were offered for the failure of certain Conservatives to win the seats they were contesting including apathy\textsuperscript{233} and the swing of the pendulum.\textsuperscript{234}

The \textit{Guardian} was particularly opposed to the legislative programme of the 1906 Liberal government, believing that it would lead to anarchy and revolution.\textsuperscript{235} It believed that the Minimum Wages Bill would lead to labour agitation and set a dangerous precedent,\textsuperscript{236} the Plural Voting Bill was introduced to punish rich voters for remaining loyal to the Conservative party,\textsuperscript{237} the Coal Mines Bill, which introduced an eight hour day for miners, would lead to more expensive coal,\textsuperscript{238} and the National Insurance Bill was described by the \textit{Guardian} as ‘extremely incomplete and unfinished’.\textsuperscript{239} Therefore it is not surprising that it applauded the House of Lords for rejecting much of the Liberal legislation and suggested that its actions alone were saving the nation from revolution.

\textbf{Religion}

The \textit{Guardian} strongly advocated the claims of the Church of England and stated ‘it will defend the Established Church against the attacks which are now being made upon her’.\textsuperscript{240} Nonconformity was regularly condemned and this condemnation grew as the campaign for Welsh disestablishment gathered pace. The newspaper defined disestablishment as

taking from the Protestant Church of England - for England and Wales must be taken together - endowments to the value of £4,200,000 a year, not one penny of which has ever been paid out of the rates in any way whatsoever, but which has been given in past ages [...] for the support of the National religion in a National Church [...] Is it justice then, because a man chooses to give his property for the support of the National Church that that property should be confiscated or misapplied by the enemies of religion, or sectarian bigots?\textsuperscript{241}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{233} \textit{WG}, 8 July 1886, p.5 referring to the defeat of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn in East Denbighshire.
  \item \textsuperscript{234} \textit{WG}, 26 January 1906, p.5 referring to the defeat of Kenyon in the Denbigh Boroughs.
  \item \textsuperscript{235} See for example, \textit{WG}, 20 March 1908, p.5; ‘The Education Bill – Mr. Birrell Explains his New Scheme’, 3 April 1906, p.3; ‘The Church at Bay’, 27 April 1906, p.5; 18 May 1906, p.5; and 9 November 1906, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{236} \textit{WG}, 22 March 1912, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{237} \textit{WG}, 18 May 1906, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{238} \textit{WG}, 26 June 1908, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{239} ‘Current topics’, \textit{WG}, 2 June 1911, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{240} ‘To our readers’, \textit{WG}, 3 September 1870, p.4.
  \item \textsuperscript{241} \textit{WG}, 4 April 1884, p.4.
\end{itemize}
The *Guardian* fought a desperate rearguard action against Welsh disestablishment arguing, unsuccessfully, that the Church would suffer severe financial difficulties as a result.

The *Guardian* is an example of a newspaper which endured difficult early years but eventually became a success. Its change of fortunes coincided with the replacement of the proprietary company with private individual ownership, thus implying that individual ownership was more successful than company ownership, and that a newspaper established solely as a political concern were often troubled and unsuccessful. The *Guardian* and its proprietors were also associated with at least three other Conservative newspapers in the area and it is possible that the establishment of the *Guardian* in 1869 may have been the beginning of a plan to establish a syndicate of Conservative newspapers across north Wales. The existence of the *Guardian* showed that it was possible for Wrexham to support two newspapers of different political persuasions, and it provided a rival for the *Advertiser*, thus challenging that newspaper’s dominance of the Wrexham press.

8. *Wrexham Free Press* [February 1870–February 1873]

As the ‘Free’ in its title indicates, the *Free Press* was not created to promote a political viewpoint. Like the *Guardian* it was established by a company but outlived it. The *Free Press* was unique amongst Wrexham newspapers in that it metamorphosed into a temperance newspaper that aimed to circulate throughout Wales and England.

**Proprietors**

The *Free Press* was a short-lived, four page, penny newspaper, published on Saturdays, which commenced in February 1870 and terminated three years later. It was expanded to eight pages in October 1870 due to supposed pressure on space, but there was no simultaneous price rise. It was established by the Wrexham Free

---

242 A detailed study of this particular title is impossible as there are no surviving issues for 1872.
243 Each page had six columns.
244 Expanded to eight pages from 1 October 1870. ‘Enlargement of the Wrexham Free Press’, *WFP*, 1 October 1870, p.2.
Press Newspaper Company which had been incorporated in January 1870 as a limited company.\textsuperscript{245} In its first issue the \textit{Free Press} stated that the Company had been formed for the purpose of supplying Wrexham and the surrounding neighbourhood with a cheap newspaper, giving full and faithful reports of all public proceedings, and securing to tradesmen, auctioneers, and others the insertion of advertisements in more reasonable terms than has hitherto been done in Wrexham.\textsuperscript{246}

The latter half of this statement implies that one of the main reasons for the establishment of the \textit{Free Press} was to provide a vehicle of cheap advertising for Wrexham tradesmen and professionals. Unlike the shareholders in the North Wales Constitutional Press Limited, shareholders in the Wrexham Free Press Newspaper Company were mainly Wrexham tradesmen.

\textit{Table 8: Occupation of Wrexham Free Press Company Shareholders}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Shareholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>13 (38.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Trade</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collier</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister of Religion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieving Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironfounder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Mason</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireworker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{245} Memorandum of Association. PRO BT/31/1508/4705.
\textsuperscript{246} \textit{WFP}, 12 February 1870, p.1.
The largest group of shareholders were members of the retail trade and included five chemists, three shopkeepers, two paperhangers (one was whom was Gomer Jones, the newspaper's printer and publisher until June 1871), a grocer, a stationer, and a merchant. Although William Bayley, co-founder of the Wrexham Registrar, was a shareholder, there is no evidence that he played a particular role. Only two shareholders described themselves as 'gentlemen' and only one shareholder was a minister of religion, in this case a Baptist Minister. Four shareholders were involved in the alcohol trade, two as brewers, one as a publican, and the other as an innkeeper. Although the majority of the shareholders appeared to come from the lower middle classes, the company did have three shareholders from the professional middle classes, namely an auctioneer, an accountant, and an architect. The seven largest shareholders were from more prosperous backgrounds, and included an architect, an ironfounder, an auctioneer, and a 'gentleman'.

Although no information was given in the newspaper itself, the Wrexham Free Press Newspaper Company was officially wound up in September 1871, having stated that it could not continue its business due to its liabilities and it was sold for 'a three months bill' by the liquidator. This liquidation led to a series of disputes in the courts. In September a defaulting shareholder was forced to pay the £3 he owed to the company and two workmen successfully brought an action against the company's liquidator for a week's wages. One of the company's shareholders, Hugh Davies, became the temporary proprietor until the newspaper was sold to a new company in October 1871. The new owners were not named, although there were rumours, later denied, that Thomas Gee, of Y Faner, was involved with the new company.

In February 1873 an editorial announced that the Free Press would be converted into a temperance newspaper under the title of the Good Templar Advocate and General Intelligencer. The Free Press appeared an unlikely supporter of temperance, and

---

247 'The Free Press, its secretary and its liquidators', WWAd, 14 October 1871, p.4.
248 'A defaulting shareholder - The 'Free Press' Co v William Davies, Innkeeper, Adwy', WWAd, 2 September 1871, p.5.
249 'The Free Press, its secretary and its liquidators', WWAd, 14 October 1871, p.4.
251 WWAd, 4 November 1871, p.6.
252 WFP, 15 February 1873, p.4.
placing a temperance newspaper in Wrexham, a town well-known for its brewing industry, seemed a futile gesture. Four of the company shareholders were involved in the alcohol trade, one of whom, Peter Walker, held fifty shares. In its early statements to readers, no mention had been made of promoting the temperance cause and, indeed, the newspaper appeared to have abhorred newspapers which promoted the views of a clique as much as those promoting the views of a political party. Despite this, there are indications that the Free Press was sympathetic to the temperance cause. In 1871 it published editorials attacking the Licensing Bill and supporting the Permissive Bill and several members of its staff had links with the temperance movement. When it announced that it was becoming a temperance publication the Free Press commented that its promotion of the temperance cause had resulted in the loss of support from some sixty publican subscribers which suggests that it had been promoting temperance for some time before February 1873. However this support for temperance did not prevent the Free Press from continuing to publish alcohol advertisements.

The Good Templar Advocate and General Intelligencer was not a success. It may have been a successor to the Wrexham Temperance Messenger which ran for only one issue in January 1873. The newspaper’s new owners, the International Order of Good Templars, ‘a pseudo-Masonic organization [sic] of extreme temperance zealots’ which arrived in Wales in 1871, were clearly expecting the new

---

253 Although Wrexham was famed for its breweries, there was a strong temperance community in the town. The auxiliary sections of the British and Foreign Temperance Society established in Wrexham in August 1833 and Ruabon in January 1834 were amongst the first in Wales [W.R. Lambert, Drink and Sobriety in Victorian Wales c.1820-c.1895 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), p.60]. Wrexham was an important centre of financial support for the temperance cause in Wales in the 1860s [Lambert, p.181] and the North Wales Temperance Electoral Association was founded in Wrexham in March 1868 [Lambert, p.173].


257 Printer and publisher, Gomer Jones, ran a temperance hotel [Slater’s Royal National Commercial Directory ... (Manchester: Isaac Slater, 1868), p.147] and his replacement, W.H. Tilston, later managed the temperance newspaper, Templar of Wales [Worrall’s Directory of North Wales, 1874 ... (Oldham: John Worrall, 1874), p.142]. Editor William Lester was a long-time temperance supporter. In addition, Lester and Tilston were members of the UK Alliance, an organisation which advocated prohibition.


259 For example, an advertisement for ‘Wrexham Ales’ WFP, 8 February 1873, p.1.


261 Lambert, p.89.
newspaper to be a success. The newspaper would ‘undoubtedly have the largest circulation of any paper in Wales as it would be received by over three hundred Good Templar Lodges, who would take at least six thousand copies’. Despite these claims, the Intelligencer was a failure, changing its name to the Templar of Wales in May 1873 before ceasing in September that year. Brewing, it appeared, had more supporters in Wrexham than the Good Templars.

Printers, Publishers, and Editors

The first printer and publisher of the Free Press was the Wrexham painter Gomer Jones who was also a shareholder in the company. It is unclear as to why a painter was chosen as opposed to one of the printers amongst the company’s shareholders. No mention was made as to whether Jones was also the editor but by October he had been replaced by W.H. Tilston.

In June 1871 Alfred Raphael Gassion became the printer, publisher, sub-editor, reporter, and, as he claimed, de facto editor, of the newspaper and almost immediately commenced a feud with the newspaper’s printers. He claimed that the printers, who were members of the Provincial Typographical Association, had ‘thwarted him in several ways’. Gassion had attempted unsuccessfully to move the start of the printers’ working day back to 6 am instead of 8 am and had employed printers who were not members of the Provincial Typographical Association, thus causing the Association’s printers to walk out. Gassion left the company when it was sold in October 1871 and claimed that he had been urged by Hugh Davies, the temporary proprietor, to get rid of the members of the Association in order to pay lower wages. Gassion was replaced in November 1871 by David Hamer. Gassion and Hamer had a tempestuous relationship: Gassion accused Hamer of threatening language and saying that he would ‘kick him out of the window’, and consequently Hamer was bound over to keep the peace for six months on his own recognisance of

262 Lambert, p.103.
264 WFP, Saturday 12 February 1870, p.4.
265 WFP, Saturday 22 October 1870, p.4.
267 MRC MSS 39A/TA/7/DEP/1 Provincial Typographical Association. 2 and 3 October 1871, p.318-325.
£5.\textsuperscript{269} It also appeared that Hamer also had difficulties in producing the newspaper as he stated that ‘he had about forty men against him in the town, he’d “licked” them all and brought the paper out in spite of them’.\textsuperscript{270} Sometime in 1872 James Jones became the new printer and publisher and the newspaper’s editor at this time was William Lester, who, as ‘the veteran temperance advocate of Wrexham’\textsuperscript{271} may have been instrumental in the newspaper’s conversion into a temperance newspaper.

**Publishing Establishments**

By January 1873 the *Free Press* possessed publishing establishments in Mold and Holywell\textsuperscript{272} which gave it a base in each of the three towns mentioned in its title, the *Wrexham Free Press, Mold and Holywell Journal*.

**Sales**

The only comment on sales in the newspaper itself came in 1873 when it claimed to have a circulation of 4,000, only 1,000 less than that of the market leader, the *Advertiser*.\textsuperscript{273} In February 1873 it announced that sales had more than doubled as a result of the working class becoming subscribers and saving the money that they would otherwise have spent on alcohol\textsuperscript{274} but declined to give any further information.

**Geographical Circulation**

When the *Free Press* was established it was clear from its title that both its content and circulation were going to concentrate primarily upon Wrexham. In addition, if the newspaper was established to advertise the wares of its shareholders then, naturally, they would have concentrated on advertising their goods and services to the local population, especially as chemists and other similar professions did not usually attract clients from outside the locality. The Wrexham Free Press Newspaper Company stated that it aimed to ‘supply Wrexham and the surrounding neighbourhood’,\textsuperscript{275} and therefore it aimed to circulate predominantly in Wrexham and the local area, and did

\textsuperscript{271} Lambert, p.194.
\textsuperscript{272} The exact date of establishment is unknown as the 1872 issues have not survived.
\textsuperscript{274} ‘To Our Readers’, *WFP*, 22 February 1873, p.2.
\textsuperscript{275} *WFP*, 12 February 1870, p.1.
not, in the early days, aspire to cover Denbighshire and Flintshire, let alone the region of north Wales and the border.

An analysis of the geographical residence of the Wrexham Free Press Company's shareholders reflects this initial concentration on Wrexham. All of the company's shareholders were located in Denbighshire, the majority of them in Wrexham. Those that did not reside in the town were located in the surrounding villages, the most remote shareholder being situated in Rossett, approximately seven miles from Wrexham. This suggests that the Wrexham Free Press Newspaper Company was either unable to persuade people outside of the locality to invest in the company, or the company concentrated upon Wrexham and did not want any shareholders from outside Wrexham. It is possible that the shareholders also acted as part-time reporters for the newspaper, and if so, could only cover events taking place in or near to Wrexham.

In September 1871, the Free Press changed its subtitle to the North Wales Advertiser\textsuperscript{276} which reflected a more regional character, although, unlike the Wrexham Advertiser and the Wrexham Guardian, it did not include either Cheshire or Shropshire in its sub-title. In 1872 the title was changed to the Wrexham Free Press, Mold and Holywell Journal as the newspaper may have decided to expand to local towns without a local press that were a reasonable distance from Wrexham, yet not too distant, and where it could create local publishing establishments before attempting to expand throughout North Wales. This geographical expansion was reflected in the statements in Mitchell's Press Directory: in 1872 it stated that the Free Press 'circulates in Wrexham and the district',\textsuperscript{277} whereas, a year later, the renamed newspaper 'circulates in Wrexham, Mold and Holywell: and also in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Cheshire and generally throughout North and South Wales',\textsuperscript{278} this last claim very unlikely to be true. This expansion in geographical circulation area continued when the Free Press became a temperance newspaper as the Good Templar Advocate was intended to circulate throughout Wales and parts of England, not just Wrexham and north-east Wales.

\textsuperscript{276} WFP, 30 September 1871, p.1.
\textsuperscript{277} Mitchell's Press Directory (1872), p.105.
\textsuperscript{278} Mitchell's Press Directory (1873), p.107.
Rivals

In its first issue, the Free Press stated its disapproval of party newspapers, but did not specifically mention its local rivals, the Liberal Advertiser and the Conservative Guardian. The newspaper was, no doubt, attempting to adhere to its stated belief of ‘exclud[ing] everything personal and invective’ from its pages. Despite this sentiment, both newspapers were attacked, but because of their alleged inferiority to the Free Press rather than their political views: in April 1871 the Free Press claimed that the Wrexham Guardian’s news was a fortnight behind its own and that it was published ‘a few hours’ earlier than the Wrexham Advertiser.

Politics

Although the Free Press claimed to be politically neutral, this neutrality existed for only six months. In September 1870, it announced that

in self-defence, as well as in defence of the people’s rights and privileges, it has been fully determined to fight the battle of freedom under the banner of ADVANCED LIBERALISM - but not that of Liberalism, for we can hold and hope to prove that the people’s cause can be advocated with the greatest advantage in broad and enduring principles, without that excited appeal to popular passion and clamour - that ephemeral effervescence of feeling on party prejudices.

The newspaper may have eschewed adopting a political stance prior to this statement because of the varying political affiliations of the shareholders but the use of the phrase ‘in self-defence’ suggests that this decision may have been forced upon it. However, the newspaper clearly stated that it was now advocating ‘advanced Liberalism’ and not the Liberal party per se, and therefore allowing itself to stay

279 ‘To Our Readers’, WFP, 12 February 1870, p.2.
280 ‘Happy Dreams’, WFP, 1 April 1871, p.4.
281 WFP, 15 July 1871, p.4.
282 ‘Enlargement of the Wrexham Free Press and declaration of its policy and politics’, WFP, 3 September 1870, p.2
283 For example, company Chair, William Rowland, Director Patrick McDermott, and shareholder Peter Walker were Conservative whilst W.H. Tilston, was Liberal.
284 Milne commented that before the 1890s a Sunderland newspaper was more likely to be successful if it supported the most popular political party in the area and that ‘a weaker, but still beneficial factor was to have a recognized [sic] political stance of some other kind’. [Maurice Milne, ‘Survival of the Fittest?: Sunderland newspapers in the nineteenth century’, in The Victorian Periodical Press: samplings and soundings, ed. by Joanne Shatock, and Michael Wolff (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp.193-223 (p.214). The Free Press may have discovered that survival depended upon it adopting some political stance.
faithful to its early wishes to be independent of party. In fact, the newspaper's 1873 entry in *Mitchell's Press Directory* stated that 'it does not adopt the views of any sect or party', although it should also be noted that the 1872 entry described the newspaper's political affiliation as Liberal. Despite this shift in political affiliation, *The Wrexham Free Press* showed that it was not bound to the Liberal party by supporting the Conservative candidates in the 1870 Wrexham municipal elections, although it should be remembered that local town council elections were less dominated by politics and more by personalities than their national equivalents. It should also be recognised that the *Free Press* did not cover a general election campaign and it is therefore unknown as to whether it would have supported the Conservatives nationally.

**Religion**

The newspaper was a strong opponent of the Church of England, possibly reflecting its 'advanced Liberalism'. The Anglican clergy were accused of attempting to mar the educational progress of the people of Wales by not supporting the university college at Aberystwyth, and of bigotry relating to burials in churchyards. In February 1871 an editorial described the 'undue representation given to the Established Church party' on School Boards as 'evil' because it allowed the Church of England to argue that its power and influence was greater than it actually was. The newspaper's solution to this problem was the same as that advocated by many Liberal newspapers in Wales — disestablishment.

The *Free Press* poses several difficulties for a study of Wrexham newspapers. Its existence strongly suggests that there may have been sufficient readers to justify the existence of a daily newspaper in Wrexham as the town was able to support three newspapers (although it appears that the *Guardian* was initially supported more by the Conservative party than the people of Wrexham) for three years. Its metamorphosis into a temperance newspaper was an extremely interesting occurrence and its statement that its circulation had risen as result of its adoption of the temperance

---

288 'University College for Wales', *WFP*, 28 January 1871, p.4.
289 'Mr. Osborne Morgan's Burials Bill', *WFP*, 4 March 1871, p.7.
cause poses the question as to why the *Free Press* was unable to successfully transform itself into a temperance propaganda tool. It is unfortunate that more information as to the proprietorship of the newspaper after the disbanding of the Wrexham Free Press Company is not available. Perhaps the main conclusions to be drawn from the *Free Press* are that Wrexham newspapers organised by a company and temperance newspapers were unsuccessful in Wrexham.

9. Conclusion

Wrexham newspapers offer a varied sample in terms of time, longevity, political and religious views, and success or failure. Further discussion of each title's news content, district news content, advertising content, and distribution methods will aim to pinpoint further each newspaper's area of circulation and how this changed over time.

---

Chapter 6 - Rival Newspapers

Claiming, as several of them did, to circulate throughout north Wales, Cheshire, Shropshire, and sometimes even further afield, Wrexham newspapers had to compete for influence and circulation over an extensive area with a large number of newspapers espousing different political, religious, and social views. Improving communication links helped to support the production of newspapers after 1855 in towns that had never enjoyed a local press and the growth and development of such newspapers within north Wales and the border area understandably altered the circulation area of Wrexham newspapers. The weekly Wrexham press also faced the rise of the provincial daily, both morning and evening, which may have restricted their circulation and area of influence, although Black maintained that the greater threat was from the ‘increased density of the provincial network’.1 Within Wales itself, Wrexham newspapers faced competition from Welsh-language newspapers, but its main rivals were the English-language press as all Wrexham newspapers were in that language.

1. Chester and east Cheshire

Chester had a long and distinguished printing history and could claim to be one of the earliest provincial printing centres. There are two examples of printing in Chester before 1695, when the Licensing Act restricted such activity to London, Cambridge, and Oxford: a handbill printed by William Thorpe or Thropp in c.16752 and a book, The Academy of Armory, published in 1683.3 Commercial letterpress printing in Chester commenced in 1712, possibly in 1711, and the first representative of this trade in the city, Edward Ince, published at least three books in the Welsh-language.4 Ince was an early example of the close printing links between Chester and north Wales as the less-developed north Wales looked to its English neighbour to supply its printing needs. Chester printer William Coddington may have had a printing office in Mold in the 1790s as a book published in that town and bearing his name as printer has survived, but perhaps Chester’s greatest contribution to the Welsh printing

---

2 Thomas Hughes, ‘On Chester Literature, its Authors and publishers, during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *Journals of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society for the County, City, and Neighbourhood of Chester*, 2 (1856-57), 21-30 (p.27).
4 Nuttall, p.15-16.
industry was W.C. Jones. Jones (b.1772) was ‘noted for his Welsh-language printing’ and included Thomas Gee amongst his apprentices. These cross border links were to continue with newspaper publishing.

Some of the earliest provincial newspapers were established in Chester, the first being the Chester Weekly Journal [1721-1735?]. The city also boasted two other newspapers established in the eighteenth century; Adams Weekly Journal [1732? -1779?] (later the Chester Courant) [1801?-1981] and the Chester Chronicle first published in 1775. As north Wales was bereft of newspapers at that time, Chester newspapers circulated widely within the north of the Principality. In 1775 the Chronicle claimed that it was regularly sent by coach and carrier to distant Caernarvon and Anglesey, and E.M. Jones, of Wrexham, commented that in the 1840s, before the establishment of the Wrexham Recorder,

Newspapers [...] were scarce and costly. My father took the ‘Chester Chronicle,’ and it cost five-pence a week [...] The paper was too dear for tradesmen to buy, and it used to be passed around amongst several of my father’s friends. 6

Williams also commented that the Chronicle was read aloud in the predominantly Welsh-speaking settlement of Rhosllannerchrugog by one of the village’s few English speakers. 7 In fact, the circulation of the Chronicle within north-east Wales was sufficiently large to justify a Flint and Denbigh edition of the newspaper by 1885. 8

Many of the Chester newspapers included ‘north Wales’ in their sub-titles to show that they circulated over the border, for example, the Chester Courant and Advertiser for North Wales, the Cheshire Observer and General Advertiser for Cheshire and North Wales [1854-], and the Chester Chronicle and Cheshire and North Wales General Advertiser. It is possible that Chester newspapers played the same role for English-language north Wales newspapers as did Bristol in relation to south Wales

---


7 J. Rhosydd Williams, Hanes Rhosllannerchrugog (Rhosllannerchrugog: Pwyllgor Lleol Eisteddfod Genedleathol, 1945), p.28. Unfortunately Williams does not give a date for this activity which may have taken place before or after the first publication of Wrexham newspapers.

with the success of the Bristol press delaying the establishment of newspapers in south Wales.\(^9\)

Nevertheless it is clear from statements made in press directories that most Cheshire newspapers considered north Wales to be very much a secondary and less important market than the English counties. The *Chester Record* [1857-1946] was one of the few Chester newspapers to specifically state that it circulated in Wrexham, in addition to Flint and Ruthin.\(^10\) The *Chester Courant* was another, claiming to circulate in ‘Bangor, Carnarvon, St. Asaph, Beaumaris, Denbigh, Ruthin, Wrexham, Mold, Conway’.\(^11\) In the 1870s the *Courant* had an especially close link with the *Wrexham Guardian*: the first printer, publisher, and editor of the *Guardian* was John Ramsden, *Courant* editor, and the owner of the *Courant* from 1877 to 1890.

It is possible that the *Guardian*, whilst under the control of Ramsden, co-ordinated its activities with the Chester newspaper. This situation may have altered dramatically after Ramsden ceased to be the *Guardian*’s editor as friction between the two Conservative and Anglican newspapers may have arisen as the circulation areas of each would have overlapped to some extent. Finally, it is noticeable that, despite its large population,\(^12\) Chester never had a daily newspaper, either morning or evening, and this could explain why no attempt was made to establish a daily newspaper in Wrexham.

---

\(^9\) Black, p.57.
\(^12\) The *Printer’s Register* stated that a population of at least 50,000 was necessary to support a daily newspaper, although Scarborough (pop.35,000) was a noticeable exception with two evening newspapers in the 1880s. Quoted in Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p.46. Chester’s population was 27,766 in 1851 and 38,309 in 1901 [*Census of Great Britain, 1851: population tables*, 2 vols (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1852), II part VIII, p.64 and *Census of England and Wales, 1901: County of Chester*, (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1902), p.9].
2. Shrewsbury and east Shropshire

Shrewsbury was another important centre of Welsh publishing in England and Wicklam suggested that knowledge of printing spread into Wrexham and north Wales primarily from that town.\(^{13}\) This link was pioneered by Corwen-born Thomas Jones (b.1648).\(^{14}\) He moved to Shrewsbury in 1695 after the lapse of the Licensing Act and printed several Welsh-language books and almanacs in the town which were distributed throughout Wales. Jones may have produced the first Welsh-language newspaper in the town, as there are references in his almanac to his newspapers. If such a newspaper was produced in the late 1690s it could have been the first British provincial newspaper, but no copies have survived to prove its existence.\(^{15}\)

Shropshire, and Shrewsbury in particular, offered a plethora of newspapers to the inhabitants of the county. The oldest newspaper in Shropshire was the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, founded in 1772. Four other Shrewsbury newspapers were established in the nineteenth century, but three of these titles were short-lived,\(^{16}\) which points to the dominance of the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*. *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal* [1843-1891] and the *Shropshire Conservative* [1840-1861] made no specific claim to circulate within Denbighshire or Flintshire, even prior to 1848\(^ {17}\) whilst the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* claimed the very broad circulation area of 'Shropshire, the principality of Wales and the adjoining counties Chester, Stafford, Warwick, Worcester and Hereford'.\(^ {18}\) The *Shrewsbury Register* [1855-1859] may have been sold in Wrexham as it stated that it had readers in 'parts of North Wales',\(^ {19}\) but no mention was made of circulation within Wales by the *Shrewsbury Free Press* [1865-1875]\(^ {20}\) nor the *Shrewsbury Weekly Observer* (established in 1861).\(^ {21}\) In addition, there were a large number of county-wide newspapers based in Shrewsbury, some of which aspired to circulate within north Wales, as shown by their sub-titles, for example, the *Shropshire and North Wales Standard* [July-September 1839], the *Shropshire Conservative and


\(^{14}\) For more information on Thomas Jones see Geraint H. Jenkins, *Thomas Jones yr Almanacwir* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1980).


\(^{16}\) The exception was *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal* (1843-1891).


\(^{20}\) Mitchell's Press Directory (1866), p.73.
General Advertiser for North Wales, and the Shropshire Evening News and North and Mid Wales Advertiser [1882?–1890]. However, none of these sub-titles mention specific Welsh counties which may suggest that their circulation within Wales, however large or small, was scattered across the north and not concentrated in one particular area.

Two newspapers linked Shropshire directly with the neighbouring Welsh county of Montgomeryshire, namely, the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post [1881-1893], established by the Wrexham Guardian's owner Frederick Roe, and the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Times [1863-1866]. The creation of the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post suggests that the Wrexham Guardian had limited circulation in Shropshire and Montgomeryshire as it is unlikely that the Post would have otherwise been established. The Post maintained what it called 'head offices' in Oswestry and Welshpool, giving it a base in each of the counties it claimed to represent and, by placing its Shropshire office in Oswestry, lessened potential competition with the Shrewsbury press.

Wrexham newspapers, especially the Advertiser, had a close rivalry with Oswestry newspapers, particularly the Oswestry Advertiser which was founded in 1849. Its first issue was published three days after the opening of the Gobowen-Oswestry branch of the Chester-Shrewsbury railway and the continued expansion of the railway network in north Wales and the border area was to significantly aid its growth. The Oswestry Advertiser was initially a free newspaper with a guaranteed circulation of 1,000 copies and limited to a ten miles radius of Oswestry. From July 1851 it was priced at a penny but this did not affect circulation as by January 1852 this had risen to 1,500 copies and was being sold in both Wrexham and Shrewsbury although its customer base was still concentrated in the Oswestry area. It was possible that the Oswestry Advertiser was able to substantially increase its Wrexham circulation between 1852 and March 1854 when the town did not have a newspaper as by 1858 it claimed to circulate throughout 'Oswestry, Ellesmere [...] Wem, Shrewsbury, Welshpool,

23 Robbie Thomas, p.13.
Wrexham and Llangollen24 thus impinging into the southern circulation area of Wrexham newspapers. In the 1850s and 1860s it successfully saw off two rivals; firstly the Oswestry Herald and Railway Guide, Charles George Bayley being unable to replicate the success of his brother's newspaper in Oswestry and the Conservative Oswestry Herald. By 1863 the newspaper had delineated its area of influence by claiming that it circulated 'in north-east Shropshire in the east; Montgomeryshire on the south; Denbighshire on the north; and Flintshire on the west; and in the chief towns and villages':25 a similar area to that claimed by the Advertiser and the Guardian, and by 1870 it claimed readers in Merionethshire and distant Cardiganshire.26

This rivalry between Wrexham newspapers and the Oswestry Advertiser would have become more intense when the Oswestry newspaper began publication in Wrexham.27 In 1886 it added and Border Counties Herald to its title to reflect the increased importance of its circulation in that area and launched a Wrexham edition. The success of this edition can be gauged by its plan to launch a new weekly, the Wrexham Leader in 1914, a plan delayed by World War I to 1920. In the early twentieth century it claimed not only to circulate 'throughout the Wrexham district' but also 'as far south as Ludlow and as far west as the coast and up to Chester,'28 with publishing offices in Wrexham, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, and Welshpool.29

Another newspaper published in Oswestry, the Shropshire Advertising Circular [1869], is especially interesting as it was free of charge. It contained foreign and local news, timetables, miscellanies, and advertisements30 but the title and price suggest that the newspaper was predominantly an advertising circular. It claimed to circulate in Shropshire, Denbighshire, and Montgomeryshire and therefore could have been a threat to Wrexham newspapers as it could have taken some of their advertising, but, to their probable relief, it had a very short life span.

3. Caernarvonshire

Possibly because of the greater distance from Cheshire and Shropshire, the earliest north Wales newspapers were published in Caernarvonshire. It is surprising that these early newspapers were in English and not in Welsh, the main language of the majority of the population, but this could be explained by the higher literacy levels amongst the urban elite English speakers and also that stamp duty made newspapers too expensive for many of the rural labourers and those employed in the slate or mining industries. However there were still some areas of the county where a newspaper could not be purchased at the turn of the nineteenth century. The first north Wales newspaper was the *North Wales Gazette*, published in Bangor in 1808 by a member of the Broster printing family of Chester, which became the *North Wales Chronicle* in 1827 and was priced at seven pence for four pages. Six English-language newspapers were produced in the county before 1848 and seven prior to 1855. The number of newspapers rose after 1855 and the large number of both English and Welsh-language newspapers in the county meant that it was possible to buy a weekly newspaper each day except Sunday and Monday.

Bangor and Caernarvon were the two main press locations: Bangor was the home of the Tory and Anglican *North Wales Gazette*, whereas Caernarvon produced the reformist *Carnarvon Herald* [1831-]. When stamp duty was reduced to one penny in 1836, the *Herald* took the opportunity to expand the geographical limits of its circulation; it changed its title to the more regional *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald* and announced that this new title had more extensive and influential support in Denbighshire and Flintshire, but did not give any circulation figures to justify such a claim. Prior to 1847 it claimed to ‘circulate throughout the whole of North Wales and has a fair circulation in Aberystwyth and the bordering English towns’, and was

---

32 Writing to a friend in 1896, George Gissing commented that in Nevin, London newspapers had to be specially ordered and it was impossible to buy any other newspapers. Gwyn Neale, *All the Days were Glorious: George Gissing in North Wales* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1994), p. 28.
33 Ifano Jones, p.190.
therefore a strong rival of Wrexham newspapers as it attempted to circulate throughout north Wales. The *Herald* produced several local editions including the *Rhyl Record* (later the *Rhyl Visitor* [1857-1868]), the *Llandudno Register* [1857-1921], and the *Beaumaris Visitor* [1857-1867], the first three initially being printed only during the summer and aimed at visitors. It was also the sister newspaper of the popular Welsh language weekly *Yr Herald Cymraeg*. In July 1890 Frederick Coplestone took control of the *Herald* and may have brought it into an informal collaboration with the *Chester Chronicle* which he edited and co-owned.

The *Herald*’s main English-language rival in north-west Wales, the *North Wales Chronicle*, has been described as ‘the most important Tory newspaper in North Wales’. Despite its importance in Tory circles, its circulation prior to the abolition of the stamp Act was significantly smaller than that of the *Herald*, with an average weekly sale of only 346-347 copies in 1848, compared to 1,127-1,128 for its rival. However, the *Chronicle*’s circulation did fluctuate, reaching over eight hundred in 1854, but less than seven hundred a year later. In 1855 the *Chronicle* launched an offshoot for the Llandudno area, the *Original Llandudno Directory and List of Visitors*, which was published only during the summer and was primarily, as its title stated, a visitors list. Its failure to launch a local edition in north-east Wales to challenge the newly established *Wrexham Advertiser* may have been due to the fact that priced at three and a half pence in 1858 it was almost twice the price of the Wrexham newspaper. In 1860 the *Chronicle* was sold to John Kenmuir Douglas, whose brother, Kenmuir Whitworth Douglas, owned *Llais y Wlad* [1874-1884], and then in 1885 to the North Wales Chronicle Company. The shareholders of the North Wales Chronicle Company included some of the most important Conservative politicians, landowners, and commercial figures in north Wales, including the quarry owner, Lord Penrhyn.

---

43 *Llais y Wlad* was established by the Penrhyn family to counteract the Liberal *Yr Herald Cymraeg* during the 1874 general election. Thomas, ‘O Fewn Trwch Blewyn i Lansio Papur Dyddiol’, p.18.
4. Denbighshire

The Wrexham Registrar was the first newspaper to be published in Denbighshire and a Denbighshire newspaper was not published outside Wrexham until 1853. The short-lived Denbigh Journal and the four Wrexham newspapers; the Registrar, Recorder, and Advertiser (monthly and weekly) were the only newspapers founded in Denbighshire prior to the abolition of stamp duty. The short life of the Denbigh Journal [July 1853-March 1854] may suggest that prior to 1855 Wrexham was the only town able to maintain a newspaper. There was no immediate rise in the number of English-language newspapers after 1855, the first newly-created newspapers after that date were the Abergale and Pensarn Visitor [1861-1936], the Llangollen Advertiser [1860-1920] and the Llangollen, Corwen and Bala Advertiser [1860-1861]. The latter newspaper only lasted a year, but the former must have been a strong rival to Wrexham’s newspapers, with Llangollen situated near to Wrexham.

There were no newspapers published in Ruthin prior to the 1960s and the English-language press in Denbigh was sporadic and short-lived until the founding of the North Wales Times [1895-1957]. This late arrival was probably a strong rival of Wrexham newspapers, not only because it claimed to circulate ‘in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire and North Wales generally’ but also because its proprietor was Thomas Gee, who also owned the successful Welsh-language Baner ac Amserau Cymru [1857-1992] (established as Baner Cymru). The coastal resort of Colwyn Bay produced a total of ten newspapers between the 1880s and 1914, many of which were, no doubt, aimed at the seasonal tourist trade, and this could explain their brief existence with only the Conway and North Wales Weekly News [1883-] existing for more than a few decades. A potentially serious rival to Wrexham newspapers was the bi-lingual Rhos Herald [1894-1966]. This newspaper claimed to circulate in ‘Rhos, Ponkey [sic], Johnstown, Street Isaaf [sic], Penycae, Cefn, Garth, Llangollen, Wrexham’ and to be ‘the household paper of the district’. Most of these towns and villages were mining locations where the Advertiser would have expected a strong readership.

---


5. Flintshire

Despite its small population, Flintshire had a surprisingly large number of English-language newspapers, many of which were located in Rhyl. Flintshire did not produce its first English-language newspaper until 1855, the year stamp duty was abolished. From that date the number of Flintshire newspapers rose steadily with a small dip in the last decade of the nineteenth century, reflecting the agricultural depression then affecting the county. Number rose again as the twentieth century commenced. Between 1855 and 1914 fifteen English-language newspapers were founded in Rhyl, the largest number in Flintshire, including the Rhyl Record [1855-1886] which commenced primarily as a list of visitors, the Rhyl Visitor [1857-1868], the Rhyl Journal [1866-1985], the Rhyl Advertiser [1878-1921], and the Rhyl Guardian, sister newspaper to the Wrexham Guardian. Rhyl also established several newspapers for specific markets, for example, the Rhyl and District Property Mart [1898-1901], the Rhyl Evangelist [July-December 1876], and the short-lived attempt at a daily evening newspaper in July 1884, the Rhyl Evening Journal. In contrast, few newspapers were published in the industrial hinterland and only the short-lived Flint County Chronicle [1865-1867] could claim to be a truly county wide newspaper, being published in Connah’s Quay, Mold, and Flint. Its brief life span suggests that it was difficult to establish a Flintshire newspaper outside Rhyl. Mold did not produce a successful newspaper until the twentieth century, the first English-language newspapers were published in Holywell in 1883 and Prestatyn in 1897, and with the exception of the Flint County Chronicle, no pre-World War I newspapers were published in either Connah’s Quay or Flint.

6. Merionethshire

Merionethshire had a less developed press than Denbighshire, Flintshire, or Caernarvonshire, and its first English-language newspaper was not published until five years after the abolition of stamp duty. With some exceptions, English-language newspapers in Merionethshire tended to be short lived. This suggests that there were not enough English-language speakers or commercial advertisers to support English-language newspapers in the county. The lack of Merionethshire newspapers provided an opportunity for the Wrexham press to expand their circulation areas.
Merionethshire's first English-language newspaper, the *Merioneth Herald*, was founded in 1860 by John Askew Roberts, the proprietor of the *Oswestry Advertiser*, to promote Liberalism in the county. Thomas described it as 'a four-page paper made up mostly of general news from the *Oswestry Advertiser* but with some local reports from its sole staff journalist and included a Welsh column'. Despite its reliance upon another newspaper for much of its content, the influence and circulation of the newspaper spread. In 1861 it claimed to circulate in 'Bala, Dolgelly [sic], Barmouth, Corwen, and other places in the district' and as the rail network expanded, so did its circulation. In 1869 it was renamed the *Cambrian News*, sold to a new proprietor, and its offices were transferred to Aberystwyth. Prior to its sale, Roberts had successful newspapers to both the south and west of Wrexham and may therefore have prevented Wrexham newspapers expanding beyond Denbighshire, Flintshire, and Cheshire.

7. Montgomeryshire

Possibly because of its south-western location in the county, further from Shropshire and the border, some of the earliest Montgomeryshire newspapers were established in the market town of Llanidloes. The first Montgomeryshire newspaper, the *Montgomeryshire Herald* [June-October 1835], was founded in that town and that newspaper’s brief existence may have discouraged the production of others. It was not until four years after the abolition of stamp duty that the next newspapers were established in Llanidloes; the *Llanidloes and Newtown Telegraph* [1859? -1869] (later the *Mid Wales Telegraph* [1869-1884]) and the *Radnorshire Observer* [1859? -1876]. The first Montgomeryshire newspaper to be published outside of Llanidloes was the *Newtown and Welshpool Express* [1860-1969] which claimed to circulate in 'Newtown, Welshpool, Llanidloes, Montgomery, Machynlleth, the Principality, Shropshire and the neighbouring English counties' and would therefore only have competed with Wrexham newspapers in the area around Welshpool and in Shropshire. In addition, the weakness of the Montgomeryshire press was reflected in the need to

---

46 Although its proprietor and printer was based in Oswestry, the newspaper did have a Bala publisher in Robert Parry [*Mitchell’s Press Directory* (1861), p.85].
47 Robbie Thomas, p.17.
partly print early Montgomeryshire newspapers in London with the *Newtown and Welshpool Press* not being wholly printed in Newtown until 1864.\(^{50}\)

As with Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire newspapers tended to be short-lived, the one noticeable exception being the *Montgomeryshire Express* founded in 1877. As all the county's newspapers established prior to 1914 were in English, this, together with census reports showing the increasing dominance of the English language,\(^{51}\) suggests that the main reasons for the lack of a successful press in Montgomeryshire were the diffuse rural population and competition from newspapers in north-east Wales and nearby Shropshire.

8. Liverpool and Manchester

Neither north Wales, Shropshire, nor Cheshire possessed a daily morning newspaper, and consequently the region depended upon the press in the neighbouring cities of Manchester and Liverpool to fulfil this deficit. Ayerst commented that

North Wales was to some extent a No Man's Land for morning newspapers. It was inaccessible to daily papers published in South Wales; it was too sparsely populated to support a great regional paper of its own.\(^{52}\)

The *Manchester Guardian* had a national reputation for its business reports and in 1893 established a north Wales edition which sold around 2,000 copies a day but made losses until 1896. It did, however, attract articles from major north Wales figures of the time including Lloyd George and Osborne Morgan.\(^{53}\) Despite this, the Liverpool press dominated the north Wales daily newspaper market.

Liverpool possessed a large Welsh population and, as shown by the agent listings of certain Wrexham newspapers, Wrexham newspapers were sold in the city. Consequently it was natural that Liverpool newspapers should seek to circulate within

---

\(^{50}\) R. Williams, 'Montgomeryshire Newspapers', *Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire*, 5 (1872) 393-94 (p.393-4).

\(^{51}\) By 1891 nearly 90% of the population of Welshpool were monoglot English speakers. David Llewelyn Jones, 'The Welsh Language in Montgomeryshire c1800-1914', in *Language and Community in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), pp. 63-99 (p.94).


\(^{53}\) Ayerst, p.290-1.
north Wales. In 1817 Charles Broster, the founder of the *North Wales Gazette* acknowledged the widespread circulation of the *Liverpool Mercury* [1811-1904] in Denbighshire and Flintshire by placing an advertisement in it, requesting the inhabitants of these two counties to patronise his newspaper with their advertisements. From 1855 several Liverpool newspapers claimed to circulate within Wales, including the *Liverpool Mail* [1836-1881], the *Liverpool Daily Post* [1855-], the *Liverpool Daily Courier* [1808-1929], the *Liverpool Journal* [1830-1884], the *Liverpool Mercury*, the *Liverpool Weekly Post* [1878-1940], and the *Liverpool Evening Express* [1870-1958] although not all of them expressly claimed to circulate within Denbighshire and Flintshire. These newspapers included a mix of both weeklies and dailies, and the *Liverpool Daily Post*, owned by the Liberal MP Lord Russell of Liverpool, became the main daily newspaper in north Wales. The *Daily Post* offered extensive commercial and shipping news and was renowned for its war coverage, being one of the earliest provincial newspapers to employ its own war correspondents. By 1900 Liverpool had six daily newspapers (four morning and two evening) whereas there were none in north Wales, Chester, or Shrewsbury.

Although Liverpool was a large city, it would have been difficult for it to support six daily newspapers and therefore it was natural that the newspapers would seek to expand their circulation into north Wales. By 1907 several Liverpool newspapers had branch offices in Wrexham: the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo group, owners of the morning *Liverpool Daily Post*, the evening daily the *Liverpool Echo*, and the *Liverpool Weekly Post*, had offices in Chester Street, whilst rival newspapers owned by C. Tinling & Co, the morning *Liverpool Daily Courier*, the daily *Liverpool Evening Express*, and the *Liverpool Weekly Courier*, had an office in Vicarage Hill. These two newspaper groups represented the Liberal and Conservative parties respectively. The *Liverpool Daily Post* may already have had experience of

---

55 By 1907 the *Liverpool Daily Post* was arriving in Wrexham by special train at breakfast time. *The Wrexham and District Directory, August 1907* (Birmingham: Bennett & Co, 1907), p.ix. [Henceforth *The Wrexham and District Directory, August 1907*]
57 *The Wrexham and District Directory, August 1907*, p.69.
59 *The Wrexham and District Directory, August 1907*, p.69.
involvement in Chester newspapers as in 1863 the *Chester Observer* was owned by
Frederick Whitty, the son of the proprietor and editor of the *Daily Post*, and Nuttall
stated that the Chester newspaper was 'probably' financed by the Liverpool one.\(^6\)
The existence of these newspapers within Wrexham itself would have meant that it
would have been almost impossible for local newspapers to establish a daily morning
or evening newspaper, and Wrexham newspapers themselves may have seen a
reduction in their geographical area of circulation if these Wrexham-based Liverpool
newspapers were publishing local or north Wales editions from their offices. There
is, however, no evidence that this was taking place.

9. Politics

Newspapers and politics had long been intrinsically linked in England but the
importance of this relationship was seemingly not recognised in Wales until the
1860s. Ieuan Gwynedd Jones described the abolition of the 'taxes on knowledge' as

the great turning point in Welsh political life – the availability of a
great variety of newspapers reflecting all kinds of political attitudes
and allegiances, and in Welsh and English, circulating widely
throughout the country.\(^6\)

He added that, due to their scarcity, Conservative newspapers were 'exceptional' in
the Principality as most nineteenth century Welsh newspapers were radical\(^6\) but this
statement was not particularly true of the English-language north Wales press. North
Wales Conservatives may have been able to claim only seven newspapers as their
own in the second half of the nineteenth century - the *Wrexham Guardian*, the *Rhyl
Guardian*, the *Wrexham Telegraph*, the *North Wales Gazette* (later the *North Wales
Chronicle*), the *Mid Wales Telegraph and Observer*, the *Shropshire and
Montgomeryshire Post*, and the *Vale of Conway Guardian*\(^6\) but these newspapers
were scattered throughout north Wales and Welsh Conservatives in the north were
probably able to purchase at least one of them. Jones referred to an eighth

\(^{60}\) Nuttall, p.49-50.
\(^{61}\) Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, *Explorations and Explanations: essays in the social history of Victorian
\(^{62}\) Beti Jones, p.39.
\(^{63}\) This title was found in *Mitchell's Press Directory* (1895), p.303 and was apparently part of a
newspaper syndicate with the *Wrexham Guardian* and the *Rhyl Guardian* but no issues appear to have
survived.
Conservative newspaper, the *North Wales Advertiser and Vale of Clwyd Gazette* founded by W.M. Martin after he felt 'the want of a medium to represent that Clerical, Landed and Commercial Interests of the Counties of Flint, Denbigh, Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire in a truly Conservative spirit'; but this title does not appear in any newspaper directories of the time, nor in Newsplan. The relatively small number of Conservative newspapers may in fact have been a benefit as they were not generally in competition with each other for readers and advertisers due to their geographical dispersion.

The Conservative press within north Wales was seemingly fortunate in that it attracted financial support from local Conservatives, but this support may have alienated potential readers who objected to this unfair advantage. Support for the north Wales Conservative press from leading local Conservatives undermines Jones's statement that 'it was not the Conservative party itself that was responsible for creating a supportive press in Wales, but rather the work of printers and journalists who also happened to be Conservatives'. The *Wrexham Guardian* was established and financially supported by Conservatives throughout north Wales and the border (although it became successful under individual ownership) and it was suspected that in its early years the *North Wales Gazette* was keep solvent only by covert subsidies from local Conservatives and Anglicans. However there is no evidence that the north Wales Conservative press received any financial assistance from Conservative Central Office, or that the national Conservative party made any effort to establish supportive newspapers in north Wales.

If it is true that most of the English-language Welsh press was radical in nature, it is surprising that few newspapers openly declared their political affiliation to the Liberal party or radicalism. In the six north Wales counties, only fourteen newspapers before 1900 declared themselves to be supporters of the Liberal party. However this figure included some of the most important newspapers in north Wales such as the

---

64 Jones Press, Politics and Society, p.126.
65 Jones, Press, Politics and Society, p.126.
Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald, the Mold and Denbigh Chronicle, the Llandudno Advertiser, and the North Wales Times.

Over twenty five pre-1900 north Wales newspapers declared themselves to be 'independent' or 'neutral' and several others failed to give any indication of their political views in newspaper directories. One Conservative critic of political newspapers, writing in 1886, commented that 'although there are still a few newspapers that do not profess to have any political creed, their pretended neutrality is really a cloak for mild Radicalism'. It is possible that many of these neutral/independent newspapers did in fact support one political party, but described their politics as neutral/independent in the national newspaper directories so as not to lose advertising, whereas readers themselves would be aware of the newspaper's affiliation. A greater examination of the newspapers themselves would be required to discover if this statement is true, although Milne emphasised that Victorian newspapers needed to support a political viewpoint in order to survive.

Several neutral/independent newspapers chose to alter their political opinions. The Llanidloes and Newtown Telegraph, not only changed its title to the Mid Wales Telegraph (later the Llanidloes Telegraph) in 1869 but also its political viewpoint from neutral to Conservative. Likewise, the Holyhead Weekly Mail took the opportunity of a change in title to the Holyhead Mail in 1885 to announce that it had ceased to be a neutral newspaper and now supported the Liberal party, possibly to express its support for Irish Home Rule and Gladstone. Such shifts may have been


68 An example of this was the Oswestry Advertiser. Until the 1870s it claimed, in press directories, to be neutral, but in reality it was almost certainly a Liberal newspaper from its conception. Samuel Roberts, the newspaper's first proprietor and publisher, is recorded as having covered his printing premises in blue in order to show his support for the Whig candidate in the 1832 North Shropshire election [Robbie Thomas, p.6] and, not only was the Oswestry Advertiser's Merionethshire offshoot, the Merioneth Herald, created to promote Liberalism in the county, but the newspaper's editor, John Gibson, was a Liberal who supported disestablishment [Aled Jones, 'Sir John Gibson and the Cambrian News', Ceredigion, 12 (1994) 57-83 (p.66)].

made as a result of changes in ownership or a genuine change in the political beliefs of the proprietor, or perhaps a recognition that an alteration of political affiliation would lead to success or greater profits.

The pre-1900 provincial press in Shrewsbury was different from that of north Wales in that it had more Conservative newspapers (five, including the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post) than Liberal newspapers (three, including the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Times) and three that declared themselves neutral. However, the Liberals could claim the established Shrewsbury Chronicle as their own, whilst the Conservatives had to rely on Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal, established seventy years later. The borough seat was predominantly Liberal until 1885 and afterwards Conservative whereas the county seats were usually Conservative, and therefore Conservative newspapers outnumbering Liberal ones reflected the politics of the area, especially after 1885. However, the Liberals would have derived some comfort from the decision of the Shrewsbury Free Press and the Oswestry Advertiser to become Liberal, which they both did in the 1870s, and it appears that press support in Shrewsbury for each party, in terms of numbers of newspapers, was approximately equal.

In mid-Victorian Chester, possibly reflecting the influence of the dominant Grosvenor family which was Liberal until the 1886 Home Rule crisis, Liberal newspapers outnumbered Conservative ones. Until 1885 the city usually sent Liberals to Parliament but from that date returned Conservatives, with the exception of 1906-1910, although it does not appear that this change in fortunes altered the political structure of the Chester press. The sole Conservative newspaper in the city was the Chester Courant, Chester's second oldest newspaper, and the dominant Liberal argued that by the end of the nineteenth century many surviving provincial newspapers did not wish to be party newspapers for fear of alienating readers.


71 Despite the change in political allegiance by the Oswestry Advertiser this did not help the Liberals in the Shropshire (Oswestry) seat as from 1885 it returned Conservatives, with the exception of 1904-1906.

72 Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1885, p.86-7 and Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results 1885-1918, p.96.
newspaper was its main rival, the *Chester Chronicle*. The *Courant* described its mission as

> to give earnest and independent support to every movement for the preservation of Church and State, to champion [...] the great cause of popular freedom and constitutional progress. 73

There were two other Liberal newspapers, the *Chester Record* [1857-1868] and the *Chester County Gazette* [1861-1863], but both had short lives, and were probably overshadowed by their more illustrious Liberal counterpart. The city could also claim a neutral newspaper, the *Chester Guardian*, whilst the *Cheshire Observer* embraced several political philosophies during its existence. 74 Thus there was a newspaper for each political hue.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that Wrexham newspapers faced a large number of political and commercial rivals as they sought to achieve pre-eminence amongst the newspapers of north Wales. The Welsh-language press in the north has not been discussed but it is clear that such newspapers could have been rivals of Wrexham newspapers, not so much in the anglicized east of the Principality, but in the western part where the Welsh language remained the dominant language into the twentieth century. Wrexham newspapers also competed with Cheshire and Shropshire newspapers that were seeking to maintain the circulation that they had built up before Welsh newspapers began to be published, and following the repeal of the Stamp Act, Liverpool began to develop a daily press that filled an important gap in the north Wales newspaper market and may possibly have prevented the establishment of a daily English-language newspaper in north Wales and the border area. Once settlements, especially in Denbighshire and Flintshire, created their own newspapers local customers and possibly some advertisers would have preferred to purchase and advertise in the local newspaper as opposed to a Wrexham title which offered less

---


coverage of their locality. This pattern was reflected a century earlier with the *Salisbury Journal* and Ferdinand commented that

the same story might be told of other carefully managed provincial newspapers – an expansive, but diluted [circulation area in the early years] when competition was not so fierce; and then a gradual reshaping as a natural catchment area was defined.\(^7\)

Therefore the existence of rivals was as important to a newspaper's success as good financial management, its political views, and effective news coverage.

---

Chapter 7 - Newspaper Distribution

Provincial press historians have stated that the success of a provincial newspaper depended to a significant extent upon the development of a reliable delivery service to customers.¹ It is unfortunate that the major studies of the provincial press by Cranfield and Wiles concentrate on distribution methods used in the eighteenth century, and this poses the question as to what extent these methods were still in existence in the late nineteenth century and whether they can be applied to the present study. However, as already shown, Welsh provincial newspapers were established over a hundred years after their first English counterparts and therefore it is possible that Wrexham newspapers used some of the distribution methods discussed in those works. An analysis of the distribution network of Wrexham newspapers and its geographical extent should give a strong indication of each title’s circulation area over time.

1. Methods of Distribution

Newspaper distribution is intrinsically linked with geographical circulation and if a newspaper was unable to establish a strong distribution network this would have seriously restricted its circulation and profits. Barker maintained that provincial newspapers were heavily reliant upon sales outside their town of publication² and consequently newspapers were constantly attempting to expand the limits of their area of circulation, but the larger and more rural the area, the greater the distribution difficulties. In the early years of the Wrexham press newspaper circulation was small and probably confined to Wrexham and its neighbourhood, and it was when Wrexham newspapers sought regional status that the question of distribution arose. Within Wales, language posed an additional problem, as it may have been difficult for the English-language press to persuade monoglot Welsh speakers to sell English-language newspapers.

² Hannah Barker, Newspapers, Politics, and English Society (Harlow: Longman, 2000), p.41. Looney suggested that over half of all provincial newspapers were sold outside their town of publication. J.J.
When discussing distribution methods it is important to remember that many copies, possibly the majority, were distributed within the town of publication. Consequently one of the most common methods of obtaining a newspaper would have been to purchase a copy at the newspaper office or from newsagents within the town itself. Ayerst estimated that between 1830 and 1845 the number of copies of the *Manchester Guardian* sold ‘over the counter’ at the newspaper’s office declined, probably as a result of expanded geographical circulation\(^3\) and this phenomenon could have been repeated with Wrexham newspapers. Most newspapers were published on market day when the town would be busier than usual with more potential customers in the locality. Some newspapers adopted the early English newspaper practice of employing “hawkers”, a forerunner of the present day street newspaper seller, to “hawk” the newspaper through the streets.\(^4\) This method may have been widely used on Wrexham’s market days and the Wrexham market edition of the *Telegraph* may have been distributed mainly in this fashion. In September 1896 the *Advertiser* contained a notice wanting boys to sell the newspaper on a Saturday morning with instructions for candidates to apply at the newspapers offices.\(^5\) It appears that these boys would have been acting as hawkers and selling the newspaper to passing customers in the streets of Wrexham.\(^6\) However it is not specifically mentioned that these boys would be working in Wrexham and they may have hawked the newspaper in other towns and villages.\(^7\)

In the eighteenth century hawkers (or newsmen) were employed to travel to neighbouring towns and villages to hawk the newspaper there, and to deliver copies to subscribers. Some of these newsmen covered extremely large routes, for example, one newsman delivered the *Manchester Mercury* to Bolton, Wigan, Preston, and Kendal –

---


\(^4\) Cranfield, *Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, p.190-1.

\(^5\) *WWAd*, 19 September 1896, p.8.

\(^6\) This is supported by evidence that boys sold newspapers on the streets on other provincial towns, for example, Sir John Gibson, proprietor and editor of the Aberystwyth-based *Cambrian News* sold newspapers on the streets as a boy in his home town of Lancaster in the 1850s [Aled Jones, ‘Sir John Gibson and the Cambrian News’, *Ceredigion*, 12:2 (1994), 57-83 (p.59)].

a distance of approximately eighty miles,\(^8\) and the *Salopian Journal* employed five newsmen to deliver copies to towns up to fifty miles away,\(^9\) although deliveries would have been difficult in the winter. Newsmen often sold other goods in addition to newspapers, notably patent medicines. As circulation increased, delivery routes became longer. Newsmen were eventually superseded by railways, which were quicker, could carry more newspapers, and could further expand a newspaper's geographical circulation area. The extent to which newsmen were used by Wrexham newspapers is unknown although, as railways were common throughout much of north Wales by the 1870s, demand for their services may have been limited to the 1850s and 1860s.

The coming of rail to north Wales also greatly improved the postal system and subscribers in distant towns or villages outside the newspaper's main catchment area and those in rural isolated areas may have received their newspaper by post. Ayerst noted that from the 1830s, postal distribution of the *Manchester Guardian*, together with sales by agents in nearby towns, replaced newsmen.\(^10\) Prior to 1855 stamped newspapers, weighing up to six ounces could be sent through the post free of charge, and when stamp duty was abolished newspapers weighting up to four ounces (six ounces in 1858) could be sent by post for a penny. Newspapers were then able to send copies to distant subscribers for an extra penny per issue; the *Advertiser* and *Guardian* both charged thirteen shillings in advance, as opposed to the usual price of eight shillings and eight pence for postal delivery in 1866 and 1869 respectively.\(^11\) Thus postal delivery was only available to those who were willing to pay extra for the convenience. There is evidence that the postal system was still used extensively by Wrexham newspapers to distribute issues to subscribers as late as 1885. The 23 May 1885 issue of the *Advertiser* contained a notice stating that 'several copies' of the wrong issue had been sent to postal subscribers and those affected by the mistake were asked to contact the office.\(^12\) The postal system did have its flaws, as the *Advertiser* was to discover both in 1872 and 1875. In both years the *Advertiser* stated that it had

\(^8\) Cranfield, *Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760*, p.193.
\(^9\) Minutes and Account Book of the *Salopian Journal*. Shropshire Records and Research Unit MS 1923.
\(^10\) Ayerst, p.83
\(^11\) *WWA*, 19 May 1866, p.8 and *WG*, 4 September 1869, p.4.
\(^12\) *WWA*, 23 May 1885, p.5.
received complaints from subscribers concerning the late delivery of the newspaper which, having been posted early Friday night, should have arrived by first post on Saturday but was failing to reach all subscribers in the Mold area by this time. The newspaper promised an investigation clearly realising that frequent repetition of this delay might cause readers to change their subscriptions to another newspaper. Despite these problems, the postal system did help Wrexham newspapers to reach more readers.

Cranfield commented that in order to achieve financial success, newspapers had to establish a readership outside the local area, but could not charge for delivery, as they did with postal delivery, because this would increase the price of the newspaper, and consequently make it uncompetitive with local rivals. The solution to this problem was to set up a network of agents who would sell the newspaper, accept advertisements, and possibly supply local news. These agents often worked in a related profession such as newsagent or bookseller. As well as selling the newspaper in their place of business, agents might also organise deliveries to nearby settlements without an agent, or to subscribers within their own town or village. Wrexham newspapers may have wished to expand into certain areas but a lack of applicants in some areas may have been forced them to revise their expectations.

As two leading newspaper historians have noted, the existence of an agent in a particular location did not necessarily mean that the newspaper sold many copies in that area. Wiles argued that lists of towns and counties with agents did not constitute convincing evidence of a large circulation in the area as many newspapers indulged in bluffing and window-dressing. In addition if a newspaper attempted to circulate over a large area and acquire a large number of geographically dispersed agents this would have placed a large strain the newspaper’s resources. As with postal delivery,

13 'Post Office Delays', WWAd, 6 July 1872, p.4 and WWAd, 23 January 1875 p.4.
14 Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, p.190
15 Ferdinand stated that agents gained commission on the advertisements they accepted, were given discounts on newspapers, and were paid to supply local intelligence [Ferdinand, ‘Local Distribution Networks in 18th-century England’, p.135].
17 Wiles, p.113.
distribution problems could arise, leading to disgruntled customers switching to another newspaper.

Aled Jones maintained that commercial distribution through agents became the dominant newspaper distribution method in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as a consequence of the rise of the urban and industrial society in Wales. He also argued that a newspaper's proprietors and its agents could have a fraught financial relationship, with agents demanding discounts, credit, or a sale or return policy. Unfortunately there is little information as to the relationship between the proprietors of Wrexham's newspapers and their agents, but it is possible that the proliferation of rival newspapers led to agents being able to extort more concessions from the Wrexham newspaper owners.

The impetus behind the establishment of agents in places some distance from the newspaper's publishing office was almost certainly the development of the railway network in north Wales from the late 1840s, an occurrence described by Jones as 'the single most important contribution to the growth of a mass newspaper market'. Preston, in a study of a Newcastle newspaper, pointed out that railways allowed a quicker and more efficient distribution network to be created, especially in rural areas, as newspapers could quickly be sent in bulk to newsagents in towns and villages with a railway station, including those some distance from the town of publication, and then be sent, probably by road, to agents in nearby smaller settlements, and to postal subscribers. This improvement in speed was been shown by the reduction in travel times: in 1806 it took eight and a half hours to travel from Chester to Shrewsbury by road, whereas by train the journey took only two hours in 1870. The importance of

---

20 The only information given in the newspapers relating to the relationship between Wrexham newspapers and their agents appears in the *WG*, 15 February 1890, p.5. The newspaper stated that it had received reports of agents delivering newspapers other than the *Guardian* when the *Guardian* had been ordered, and appealed to its readers for more information.
railways to newspapers success was reflected in the involvement of several newspaper proprietors in the promotion of railway schemes and the support given by newspapers to rail developments.\textsuperscript{23}

Wrexham newspapers were especially fortunate in that Wrexham was an important nodal point in the north Wales railway network. The rise in the circulation of the Aberystwyth-based \textit{Cambrian News} from the 1870s was credited to the extension of the railway network, which enabled the newspaper to develop new markets for sales and advertisements,\textsuperscript{24} and yet Aberystwyth could not claim access to a railway network as expansive as that enjoyed by Wrexham newspapers. In 1866 both the \textit{Advertiser} and the \textit{Telegraph} informed its readers that it had made an arrangement with Great Western Railways whereby single copies of the newspaper could be sent to railway stations to be collected. The \textit{Advertiser} charged halfpence for the service\textsuperscript{25} and the \textit{Telegraph} charged three shillings a quarter for Wednesday and Saturday editions.\textsuperscript{26}

This was a clear attempt to improve the newspaper's circulation in distant areas by seeking to undercut the postal rate for newspapers. The growth of the railway network within north Wales and the border area gave Wrexham newspapers the opportunity to expand outside the immediate locality and to aspire to be regional, as opposed to local, newspapers.

As well as benefiting Wrexham's newspapers by assisting them to expand the geographical area of their circulation, railways and the development of agents brought new problems and challenges. Firstly, late-running trains caused newspapers to arrive

\textsuperscript{23} For example, Evan Morris, secretary of the North Wales Constitutional Press Company and later owner of the \textit{Guardian}, was the solicitor for the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway in the 1880s [James I.C. Boyd, \textit{The Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway: including the Buckley railway}, Oakwood Library of Railway History, LXXXIII (Oxford: Oakwood, 1991), p.182-3.] Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, shareholder in the North Wales Constitutional Press Company, was the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oswestry and Newtown Railway in 1856 [NLW, Glan Paith MS 366. Minutes of Proceedings] and a member of the Board of the Great Western Railway, but opposed the Whitchurch, Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway Junction in 1862 due to his position on the GWR [Boyd, p.97]. The \textit{Advertiser} supported the development of the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway ['Our Rival Local Railways', \textit{WWAd}, 25 March 1865, p.4; 'Defeat of the Railway Bill', \textit{WWAd}, 27 June 1863, p.4 and 'Whitchurch, Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway Junction', \textit{WWAd}, 18 January 1862, p.8].

\textsuperscript{24} Aled Jones, 'Sir John Gibson and the \textit{Cambrian News}', p.63.

\textsuperscript{25} 'Notice', \textit{WWAd}, 13 January 1866, p.2.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{WT}, 3 January 1866, p.2.
late in distant towns and villages. In 1876 the Advertiser stated that it had frequently received complaints of late delivery from its agents and this was seriously affecting newspaper sales.\textsuperscript{27} Secondly, the expanding railway network brought Wrexham’s newspapers into close competition, not only with newspapers in other parts of north Wales which were endeavouring to expand into Wrexham, but also with national or major regional newspapers such as the Daily Mail and the Liverpool Daily Post, who were using the railway system to distribute their newspapers. Both of these factors could have led to the loss of readers, and therefore the railways and their expansion brought both opportunities and threats for Wrexham’s newspapers.

Despite the arrival of railways and its widespread use in newspaper distribution, some newspapers were still distributed by hand, in a reversion to the older process. The listings of several Wrexham newspapers state that in some areas, especially smaller settlements, the newspaper was distributed by ‘messengers’ instead of named agents. The exact role of these messengers is unclear but it appears that there were two different types of messengers used by Wrexham newspapers: the Telegraph and the Free Press appeared to use messengers in places where they were unable to obtain an agent, possibly because of their low circulation, whilst for Advertiser and Guardian, messengers seem to have replaced agents in certain locations towards the end of the century. These messengers may have been young boys who delivered the newspaper, as the Guardian stated that that the newspaper was distributed by ‘numerous boys’.\textsuperscript{28} Such messengers may have been a forerunner of the modern paper-round and a late nineteenth century equivalent of the newsman.

2. Newspaper Agents

2.1. Methodology

The main method of distributing Wrexham newspapers outside the town itself and through the towns and villages of north Wales and the border area was the use of agents. As Stedman explained, the location of each newspaper’s agents provides an

\textsuperscript{26} WT, 3 January 1866, p.2.
\textsuperscript{27} WVWAd, 18 March 1876, p.4.
\textsuperscript{28} WG, 18 July 189, p.1.
approximate indication of the circulation area of each newspaper.\textsuperscript{29} The locations of a newspaper's agents naturally changed over time as its geographical catchment area expanded or contracted. However, as Cranfield has pointed out, the fact that a newspaper had an agent in a certain town did not mean that it sold many copies there.\textsuperscript{30} In some cases agents may have acted primarily as a recipient of advertisements or a newspaper may have established agents in certain locations for promotional purposes rather than in the expectation of large sales.\textsuperscript{31} Without newspaper records it is difficult to ascertain whether each newspaper's areas of circulation were the result of conscious decisions by the newspaper's owners or not. Wrexham newspapers did advertise for agents but they may also have attempted to procure agents in some areas and have been rejected.

Since places had multiple agents, the following tables (information for which was gathered from the agent listings from each newspaper, a selection of which can be seen in Appendix 3) relate both to the location of agents and the total number. Sometimes the names of agents in Wrexham were given but usually the listing stated that all newsagents and booksellers in Wrexham sold the newspaper. When the names of individual Wrexham agents have been given they have been counted but where no names were given Wrexham agents have been excluded from the agent totals, but not from the number of locations with agents figures. The geographical location of the agents is examined twice; firstly to ascertain if each newspaper had agents in each county it claimed to circulate in, and, secondly due to the geographical nature of the Welsh counties with Flintshire divided and Merionethshire stretching from east to west, to discover if each newspaper's circulation area was connected to distance from Wrexham rather than on a county basis.


\textsuperscript{30} Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, p.203. For example, the Norwich Mercury claimed to circulate throughout Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, and Lincolnshire but Stedman maintained that it is unlikely that it circulated extensively beyond Norfolk [Stedman, p.105].

\textsuperscript{31} However Ferdinand argued that agents would have sold at least a few copies of the newspaper [Ferdinand, 'Local Distribution Networks in 18\textsuperscript{th}-century England', p.136].
Each newspaper had several examples of one agent acting for two nearby locations. This allowed the newspaper to claim greater geographical circulation and attract readers from the location without an agent, yet only have to supply and deal with one agent as opposed to two. Such agents, although few in number, have been termed agencies and classified separately. Due to directories frequently not covering smaller villages it is often difficult to state which location the agency was situated in. In many cases these agencies were eventually replaced by messengers which may suggest that circulation within the two settlements was insufficient to justify the use of an agency. Messengers used by some newspapers have also been counted as agents, unless they represented the newspapers in two settlements and have been designated as agencies.

2.2 Agent Distribution
The distribution of agents selling each Wrexham newspaper will now be discussed in detail.

2.2.1. The Wrexham Recorder [1848-1849] and the Wrexham Registrar [1848-1849]
Neither of these two short-lived newspapers ever published an agent list. This suggests that their circulation areas were limited to Wrexham although they may have taken advantage of the newly built North Wales Mineral Railway and the Chester & Shrewsbury Railway to circulate in the surrounding industrial settlements.
2.2.2. Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser [1850-1852]

Table 9: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire</th>
<th>Shropshire</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1850</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1850</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The geographical distribution of agents appears to disprove the Advertiser’s claim to circulate throughout Denbighshire and Flintshire, as, with two exceptions, all of its agents were located in Denbighshire. In addition, the Denbighshire agents were located either in Wrexham or in one of the surrounding villages, thus suggesting that its circulation was very much localised to its town of publication. In its first agent listing of August 1850 the Advertiser had seven agents, all bar one in Denbighshire and that agent was located in Maelor Saesneg, the east Flintshire enclave separated from the remainder of the county. The second and final agent listing appeared in December later that year and in the intervening months the newspaper had gained three additional agents in Oswestry (pop.9,35732), Minera, and Wrexham (the newspaper may have simply forgotten to state the name of its Wrexham agent in the August list as it is extremely unlikely that it did not have an agent in the town). Regrettably no further agent listings were given so it is not known whether the number and geographical distribution of agents expanded over time.

Table 10: Distance of Locations with Agents from Wrexham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Wrexham</th>
<th>August 1850</th>
<th>December 1850</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 miles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 miles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only were all except two of the Advertiser's agents in 1850 situated in Denbighshire but they were all located in the eastern part of the county and, with the exception of Oswestry whose presence in the agent listing can be explained by a family link, within ten miles of Wrexham. Whist this shows that the Advertiser did not have the wide geographical circulation within Denbighshire and Flintshire that it claimed, distribution to these nearby settlements would have been relatively quick and easy. The proprietors may not have wished to expand the geographical circulation limits outside the Wrexham area because of distribution difficulties as widespread rail developments in north-east Wales was not to commence for another decade and the cost of using mail coaches or newsmen to send the newspapers to agents in distant locations would have been high.
2.2.3. *The Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser* [1854-1936]

The first listing of agents in the *Wrexham Advertiser* is to be found in December 1854 but the next did not appear until May 1866, when the newspaper had fifty six named agents in thirty-six places throughout Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, as well as in London and Liverpool. It is noticeable that in the 1870s and 1880s Flintshire, despite its smaller population, had nearly as many locations with agents as Denbighshire. This suggests that the *Advertiser* placed as much emphasis on proving its claim to be the county newspaper for Flintshire, as it placed upon its claim to be Denbighshire's county newspaper.
**Table 11: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire</th>
<th>Merionethshire</th>
<th>Cheshire</th>
<th>Shropshire</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>S. Wales</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12: Geographical Distribution of Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire</th>
<th>Merionethshire</th>
<th>Cheshire</th>
<th>Shropshire</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>S. Wales</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>26*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes four named Wrexham agents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Denbighshire + Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire + Flintshire</th>
<th>Denbighshire + Cheshire</th>
<th>Flintshire + Cheshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of locations with agents steadily rose to a peak of fifty three in 1886 before falling to forty eight in 1900. The total number of agents also peaked in 1895 at eighty, but by 1900 had fallen to seventy two. In addition between 1878 and 1900 the newspaper also possessed at least five agencies, located in Denbighshire, Flintshire, and Cheshire. These peaks in the 1880s and 1890s and the subsequent falls, although not drastic, may be evidence of falling circulation in certain areas, especially as from 1886 the newspaper replaced its agents in some of the smaller villages with messengers and by 1900 ten of the seventy two agents were actually messengers. This reduction in the area of geographical circulation may have been caused by the arrival of the national Daily Mail and the continued expansion into north Wales of the Liverpool daily press as such newspapers may have led to Advertiser readers deciding to purchase daily newspapers as opposed to a weekly newspaper, or more probably, losing readers to the newly established newspapers in several north Wales towns [See Chapter 6], a phenomenon which has been documented as taking place elsewhere with the Northampton Mercury.33

Wrexham

From 1868, the Advertiser never listed the names of its Wrexham agents, preferring instead to state that the newspaper was sold by ‘all booksellers’ in the town, so the actual number of agents is higher than the figures listed in the tables because Wrexham agents are necessarily excluded. However, in the May 1866 issue it did give the names of four Wrexham agents, and three of them had been involved in newspaper publishing: William Bayley - brother of George and part proprietor of the Advertiser's forerunner the Wrexham Recorder, Hughes & Son - Richard Hughes had been the publisher and proprietor of the Wrexham Register, Potter & Snape - Railton Potter was the publisher of the Wrexham Telegraph between April 1857 and December 1858, the only agent without a link to newspaper publishing was Jeremiah Davies, a hairdresser.

Denbighshire

The majority of Advertiser agents between 1854 and 1900 were located in Denbighshire. The number of places with agents steadily increased from eight in 1854 to twenty six in 1900 and the total number of Denbighshire agents rose from twenty two in 1866 to thirty four in 1895 (excluding those in Wrexham and agencies). Therefore it is clear that that some places had more than one agent. Wrexham, of course, had several agents, as did some of the nearby settlements, for example, Brymbo (pop. 3,53934) had three agents in 1866, and Rhosllannerchrugog and Ruabon (pop. 15,15035) both had two agents. The towns of Denbigh and Ruthin did not have multiple agents until May 1878, which suggests that at this time the Advertiser was attempting to expand its circulation area westwards and gain more readers in these two towns.

Between 1854 and 1900, forty settlements in Denbighshire had, at some time or another, possessed an Advertiser agent or agency. These places ranged in size from Wrexham to small villages such as Lavister, near Rossett. Noticeable omissions were the west Denbighshire settlements of Llanrwst (pop. 3,76736) and Cerrigydrudion (pop. 1,20237), possibly because Cerrigydrudion was not on a railway line (although it was located on the Holyhead to Shrewsbury road used by the mail coaches) whilst Llanrwst shared a railway station with the Caernarvonshire spa town of Trefriw. However, with these two exceptions, west Denbighshire was devoid of any major settlements and therefore it would have been difficult to establish a large circulation in this distant part of the county. There was also an early absence from the lists of the Anglicised seaside resorts of Abergele (until 1879) and Colwyn Bay (until 1898), both located on the Chester–Holyhead Railway, especially as their populations would have been swelled in the summer by visitors and holidaymakers.38 It appears that the

---

34 in 1871. In 1861 its population was 2,432. The rise was due to the extension and opening of new mines. Both figures relate to the township of Brymbo. Census of England and Wales, 1871: the preliminary report; and table of the population and houses enumerated in England and Wales and in the islands of the British seas on 3rd April 1871 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1871), p.554 [Henceforth 1871 census].

35 in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of Ruabon which included Cefn Mawr, Penycae, and Rhosllannerchrugog. 1871 census, p.553.

36 in 1871. This figure relates to the township of Llanrwst. 1871 census, p.555.

37 in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of Cerrigydrudion. 1871 census, p.555.

38 See Chapter 4 for a greater discussion of the Anglicised population of the northern resort towns.
Advertiser had a long standing commitment to towns where it had agents, and once it had gained an agent in a town it attempted to maintain its presence, for example, fifteen of the eighteen places with agents in May 1866 still had an Advertiser agent thirty four years later.

Flintshire

In contrast with Denbighshire, where the number of places with agents and the total number of agents increased steadily from 1854 to 1900, in Flintshire, the numbers peaked at twenty locations in 1882 and twenty five agents in 1886, before falling to fourteen places and eighteen agents in 1900, the latter being the lowest since 1866. This suggests that the Advertiser could have been losing customers to a rival Flintshire or Chester newspaper, possibly the Flint and Denbigh edition of the Chester Chronicle. In the first listing in 1854, two of the three Flintshire agents were located close to Wrexham in Overton and Bangor-on-Dee, whilst the other was situated in Holywell. Reasons as to why the newspaper had an agent in Holywell as opposed to closer settlements such as Mold and Hawarden are unknown. From these beginnings, the Advertiser expanded throughout Flintshire but by 1900 had ceased to have agents in Connah’s Quay, Flint, St. Asaph, and Holywell, all of which were large settlements located on a railway line, which, again, points to a loss of influence and readers to another newspaper or newspapers.

Merionethshire

In contrast with Denbighshire and Flintshire, the highest number of Advertiser agents in Merionethshire was three. From 1866 to 1900 the newspaper had agents in Corwen and Bala, and one in Dolgellau from 1868 to 1878. The newspaper never had agents in the towns of Dinas Mawddwy, Towyn, or Barmouth, nor in Merionethshire’s largest town, Blaenau Ffestiniog, probably because of the town’s large monolingual Welsh speaking population which led to it producing only Welsh-language newspapers. Corwen was the only Merionethshire town with multiple agents, as well as a printing establishment probably because of its close proximity to Wrexham and its increasingly anglicised population.
The inclusion of a Bala agent in 1866 is interesting because Bala was not connected by railway to Corwen, and hence to north-east Wales until 1868 and therefore the Advertiser presumably had to transport the newspapers from Corwen to Bala by road. The establishment of an agent in Dolgellau was probably due to the opening of the Bala – Dolgellau Railway in 1868. Both Bala and Corwen were located in the eastern part of Merionethshire closer to the border with Denbighshire, whereas Dolgellau was located close to the west Wales coast and this may explain why the Advertiser maintained an agent in Corwen and Bala from 1866 to 1900 but possessed an agent in Dolgellau for only ten years.

Cheshire

The number of locations with Advertiser agents and the total number of agents in Cheshire was far lower than comparable figures for the less heavily populated counties of Denbighshire and Flintshire, and this is a pattern repeated several times amongst Wrexham newspapers. Chester remained the main location for Advertiser agents in the county and the city could claim no less than five agents for the newspaper by 1895. It is possible that the newspaper’s multiple agents in Chester may have acted more as advertising, rather than newspaper agents, as it is unlikely that people in Chester would have purchased a Wrexham newspaper instead of a Chester one, although people from Wrexham living or working in Chester may have been eager purchasers.

Outside the city the only Advertiser agents were located in the small border villages of Malpas, Farndon, and Threapwood (latter two later becoming agencies). The Advertiser never had agents in the border villages of Pulford, Eccleston, Dodleston, and Lower Kinnerton, all of which were approximately seven to nine miles from Wrexham, neither did it have agents in the towns of Nantwich, or Crewe, a major railway terminus. There were agencies for the border settlements of Farndon (shared with Holt) and briefly Threapwood (pop. 32639) (shared with Worthenbury). Worthenbury (pop. 48140) soon gained its own agent which may imply that circulation

39 in 1871. This figure relates to the township of Threapwood. 1871 census, p.553.
40 in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of Worthenbury. 1871 census, p.553.
in Threapwood was insufficient for the *Advertiser* to retain a presence there. The fact that two of the Cheshire locations where the *Advertiser* had a presence were served by agencies shows that Chester newspapers probably dominated the border rural area between Wrexham and Chester.

**Shropshire**

Unlike Cheshire, where the *Advertiser* had several agents in the largest city, Chester, the newspaper never had an agent in Shrewsbury, and the small number of agents it did possess in Shropshire were located in border towns such as Ellesmere and small villages. In 1866 only two places in Shropshire had an *Advertiser* agent and from 1878 Oswestry was the only Shropshire location with an agent.

It is surprising that Ellesmere and Whittington did not retain an agent for longer as both locations were connected to Wrexham by rail. It is possible that the newspaper had decided to concentrate its agents in north-east Wales and only maintained agents in Oswestry because one of the two Oswestry agents was Charles George Bayley, brother of George and a part proprietor of the newspaper.⁴¹ Alternatively, the small number of Shropshire agents may suggest that the newspaper failed to achieve a large circulation in the county partly because of the dominance of Shrewsbury and Oswestry newspapers along the border but also because Shropshire (Oswestry being an exception) did not have strong links with Wales and its population did not want, or feel it necessary to know, about events in the Principality, which may have been perceived as somewhat of a “foreign” country.⁴²

**Further Afield**

The *Advertiser* had a permanent presence in Liverpool and London between 1866 and 1900 through its multiple agents. Whilst it is possible that its agents in Liverpool functioned primarily as newsagents, considering that large numbers of people from North Wales had moved there, its agents in London probably acted primarily as advertising agents, although ‘an agency in London was almost obligatory for a

---

⁴¹ The other Oswestry agent (until 1898) was located at the Railway Station (See section 2.3).
The Advertiser also had agents in Birkenhead, Manchester, Tyldesley (near Manchester), Birmingham, and Swansea during the 1880s and 1890s, and it is possible that they sold Advertisers, and also accepted advertisements, as several were advertising agents. The Advertiser was not alone in possessing an agent in a location geographically distant from its area of circulation and in a town where there would be seemingly little desire for such newspapers as, for example, in 1830 the East Anglian had an agent in Edinburgh. There is evidence that the Advertiser circulated in Manchester before it established an agent there in 1886, a notice in January 1875 stated that 'Liverpool and Manchester subscribers should receive their copy by first delivery on Saturday'. As the newspaper did not have an agent in the city at this time subscribers would have received their copy by post. The fact that the newspaper mentioned its Manchester subscribers suggests that there were a large number of subscribers in Manchester, and possibly, as the number grew, the newspaper deemed it necessary to have an agent in the city.

Distance from Wrexham

Table 14: Distance of Locations with Agents and Agencies from Wrexham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Wrexham</th>
<th>1854</th>
<th>1866</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1886</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 miles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 miles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 miles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures show that the Advertiser was able to obtain a significant number of agents outside the Wrexham area but the majority of its agents were located within ten miles of Wrexham. Approximately one third of the agents from 1866 to 1900 were located within five miles of Wrexham and approximately one fifth were over fifteen miles.

---

44 Stedman, p.163.
45 WWAd, 23 January 1875, p.4.
46 Each agency location was counted once.
from the town. In 1886 nearly one in four locations with agents were located over sixteen miles from Wrexham, but from 1886 this figure began to fall as the newspaper began to establish more agents within a ten miles radius of Wrexham. Six of the fifteen locations over sixteen miles from Wrexham in 1886 were within Denbighshire and Flintshire which suggests that the Advertiser had not expanded to any great extent outside these two counties but it may suggest that, at this time, the newspaper was seeking to expand into the more distant areas of north-east Wales. If so, it failed because by 1900 the majority of locations with agents were located within ten miles of Wrexham. It is possible that the rise in the number of Caernarvonshire newspapers caused the fall in the number of agents over sixteen miles from Wrexham between 1886 and 1900 as they may have attracted readers in the west Denbighshire settlements.

**Conclusion**

The figures clearly show that with regard to numbers of agents and numbers of locations with agents the Advertiser went from strength to strength until the end of the nineteenth century when it began to lose agents in some locations, probably as a result of an increasing number of rivals as new newspapers were established. Geographically, the newspaper established agents throughout north-east Wales and the border area, in addition to agents in Manchester, Liverpool, and London. It appears that the Advertiser never aspired to circulate in either Caernarvonshire or Montgomeryshire, as it had no agents in either county. The majority of Advertiser agents were located in or near to a railway town and this suggests that the Advertiser, like its rival, the Guardian, made extensive use of the railway system to distribute its newspapers outside Wrexham. It is interesting to note that in April 1901 the newspaper appealed for agents in areas where it was not already represented. This may suggest that, despite the recent fall in the number of places with agents, the newspaper was still seeking to expand its geographical circulation area.

---

47 *WWAd*, 6 April 1901, p.2.
Figure 6: Geographical Distribution of Advertiser Agents in 1886
2.2.4. Wrexham Albion [1854]
This newspaper never published a list of its agents, possibly because of its short existence.

2.2.5. The Wrexham Telegraph [1855-1867]
As the Telegraph only listed its agents between 1857 and 1861, the geographical circulation of the newspaper throughout the entire span of its existence cannot be discussed and consequently one can only speculate whether a falling number of agents and a decreasing geographical catchment area were responsible for the newspaper's demise in 1867.

Table 15: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1863</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flintshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Geographical Distribution of Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1863</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flintshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The agent listing of 1857 gives the names of seventeen agents in fifteen locations in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Shropshire, Chester, London, and Manchester. Four years later the number of agents had increased to twenty three but the number of places with
Telegraph agents had risen by only three. Furthermore the newspaper failed to establish agents in either Merionethshire or Caernarvonshire. Included in the figures were messengers who, according to the newspaper, were ‘despatched every Thursday morning at 6 am’ to five nearby villages. The agent list of 20 February 1862 and subsequent lists do not give any information concerning messengers and it is possible that the system had ceased.

Denbighshire

The majority of the Telegraph’s agents were located in Denbighshire, particularly in the east near Wrexham. In 1857 nine of the fifteen locations with agents and ten of the seventeen agents were located in Denbighshire, and by 1861 these figures had risen to eleven of the seventeen locations with agents and twelve of the twenty three agents. Messenger, not agents, served six of these Denbighshire locations. The small increase in the number of locations with agents between 1857 and 1861 was due to the addition of agents in Llangollen (pop. 5,987) and Ruthin. By 1863 the number of Denbighshire locations with agents had fallen to only four, primarily due to the loss of the messengers, and agents in Denbigh and Holt. The listing makes no mention of agents replacing messengers, although an earlier listing of 23 May 1863 included an agent from Brymbo which was previously served by a messenger. The withdrawal of messengers from Rhosllannerchrugog, Cefn Mawr, Minera (pop. 1,454), Brymbo, and Gwersyllt (pop. 1,891) may have been due to poor sales as a Conservative newspaper would have found it difficult to establish itself in such working class Liberal mining areas. If the listings are to be believed, the newspaper never had an agent in Wrexham. It is probable that this exclusion was a mere oversight, and that the newspaper presumed that readers would be aware that it was sold in Wrexham. The Telegraph had agents in both Ruthin and Denbigh, the two other principal towns of Denbighshire from 1857, and one in Llangollen from May 1860. The only other

48 WT, 14 May 1857, p.4.
49 in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of Llangollen. 1871 census, p.555.
50 in 1871. This figures relates to the township of Minera. 1871 census, p.554.
51 in 1871. A substantial rise from the 1356 recorded in 1861 due to the opening of new coal mines and the extension of existing ones. This figure relates to the township. 1871 census, p.553.
locations in the county to possess an agent were Holt (pop. 1,056\(^{52}\)) (1857-1863) and Ruabon (from May 1860). Only Ruthin could claim more than one agent.

In the 1857 and 1861 listings messengers were used to distribute newspapers to the nearby villages of Rhosllannerchrugog, Cefn Mawr, Minera, Brymbo, Ruabon, and Gwersyllt. This suggests that either the Telegraph had been unable to establish agents in these villages, or that the newspaper had decided to use messengers, instead of agents, to distribute its newspaper in these six villages. Their use questions the extent to which the newspaper circulated in those settlements, especially after the service was withdrawn. It is possible that these messengers would not have been used had north Wales possessed a wider rail system at that time.

Flintshire

Until 1863 the Telegraph was only able to secure two agents in Flintshire, in Mold and Overton, but by 1863 the newspaper had secured six agents in Flintshire, the four new additions being St. Asaph (pop. 3,413\(^{53}\)), Flint (pop. 4,006\(^{54}\)), Holywell (pop. 9,983\(^{55}\)), and Rhyl. Flintshire overtook Denbighshire as the county with the largest number of Telegraph agents, and now possessed agents in the county’s main towns. It is surprising that an attempt was not made earlier to establish agents along the Chester–Holyhead Railway, in towns such Holywell, Rhyl, and Prestatyn, especially as the only Flintshire newspaper, the Rhyl Record, was ‘chiefly devoted to a list of fashionable arrivals and departures,’\(^{56}\) although by 1860 it also included ‘local news’.\(^{57}\) The increase in the number of agents suggests that the newspaper was attempting to increase its circulation in Flintshire as it now possessed an agent in each of the county’s major towns. No messengers were used in Flintshire.

\(^{51}\) in 1871. This figure relates to the township of Holt. 1871 census, p.553.
\(^{52}\) in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of St. Asaph. 1871 census, p.554.
\(^{53}\) in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of Flint. 1871 census, p.553.
\(^{54}\) in 1871. This figure relates to the parish of Holywell and includes Ysceifiog and Nannerch. 1871 census, p.553.
\(^{56}\) Mitchell’s Press Directory (1860), p.82.
Cheshire
Between 1857 and 1863 the *Telegraph* always retained an agent in Chester, and in October 1861 the city gained an additional agent located at the Railway Bookstall. It is possible that the Chester agent in the city concentrated on selling to customers from north Wales visiting the city or living in the city and the surrounding area, whilst the agent at the Railway Station focused on railway customers travelling to Wrexham or elsewhere in north Wales by train and wanting to read the latest local news. The consequence of having an agent in a Railway Station meant that the *Telegraph* could easily travel outside its main catchment area. In 1863 the *Telegraph* altered part of its sub-title from ‘Cheshire’ to ‘West Cheshire’ although it did not gain additional agents in Cheshire, either in the county as a whole or the western part.

Shropshire
From May 1857 to October 1861 the *Telegraph* had a total of three agents in Shropshire; two in Ellesmere and one in Oswestry, and in 1863 it still had three agents in the county, but with two in Oswestry, and only one in Ellesmere. Despite the existence of a Chester – Shrewsbury rail link from 1846, the *Telegraph* never had an agent in Shrewsbury. Both Ellesmere and Oswestry were located near to the border, locations reflected in the newspaper’s sub-title of ‘North Shropshire’ from 1863.

Further Afield
Between 1857 and 1861 the *Telegraph* had agents in the English cities of Manchester and London and gained a second London agent in November 1860. The London agents may have acted as advertising agents, but it is also possible that they sold a number of *Telegraphs* to the London Welsh community due to the relative scarcity of Welsh newspapers, especially Conservative Welsh newspapers at that time. The *Telegraph* was the only Wrexham newspaper to have an agent in Manchester until the *Advertiser* in 1886. It is possible that the Manchester agent acted more as an advertising agent than as a seller of *Telegraphs* although the newspaper may have been bought by Welsh immigrants to the city. By 1863 the *Telegraph* no longer possessed an agent in either London or Manchester. It is possible that this was due to
poor circulation, or possibly a decision made by the newspaper's new owner. The lack of agents in London or Manchester may have led to problems in gaining national advertising for the newspaper.

Distance from Wrexham

Table 17: Distance of Locations with Agents from Wrexham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Wrexham</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1863</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 miles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 miles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 miles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The geographical distance of agents from Wrexham significantly altered between 1857 and 1863. In 1857, the largest number of agents were located between five miles of Wrexham, and between eleven and fifteen miles of the town. The first group represented the messengers serving Brymbo, Ruabon, Minera, and other villages, whilst the second group reflected the Telegraph's agents in the towns of Oswestry, Mold, Chester, and Ruthin. This lack of agents near to Wrexham to sell the newspaper would have caused difficulties as the Telegraph would have expected its circulation to be highest in the Wrexham area, whereas circulating in Ruthin, Chester, and Mold would have brought the newspaper into competition with other newspapers both in north Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire. Six years later the Telegraph possessed only one agent within five miles of Wrexham, with nine (75%) being situated over ten miles away. The Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay railway, the Vale of Clwyd railway, the Ruthin–Corwen, and the Mold–Denbigh lines had yet to be established and the newspaper would have been forced to transport issues to St. Asaph, Ellesmere, Oswestry, and Ruthin by road.

This lack of agents in the Wrexham area must have troubled the newspaper and could be explained by the Liberalism of some of the mining villages. However, if the
Telegraph aspired to be a 'Denbighshire' as opposed to a 'Wrexham' newspaper, it was important that it should establish itself in the towns of Denbigh, Ruthin, and Llangollen, as well as in Wrexham and the surrounding area.

Conclusion

Telegraph agents and messengers were located predominantly in the eastern part of Denbighshire and along the border. At this time the rail network in north Wales was limited to the Chester-Shrewsbury, Chester-Holyhead line, and the North Wales Mineral Railway. Rail links to west Denbighshire and the Vale of Clwyd were not established until the 1860s and consequently it would have been difficult and time-consuming to despatch newspapers to the towns and villages of west Denbighshire. Nevertheless the Telegraph did increase its coverage of settlements in west Denbighshire and west Flintshire in 1863 but seemingly at the expense of places near to Wrexham. Finally, the newspaper's failure to significantly increase its number of agents and number of locations with agents suggests that its circulation was not expanding rapidly, if at all.
Figure 8: Geographical Distribution of Telegraph Agents in 1857
Figure 9: Geographical Distribution of Telegraph Agents in 1863
2.2.6. Wrexham Guardian [1869-1954]

The lists of Guardian agents can be split into pre-1890 and post-1890 phases. After January 1875 no Guardian agent lists were published until 1890 and none were published after August 1890.
Table 18: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire</th>
<th>Caernarvonshire</th>
<th>Merionethshire</th>
<th>Anglesey</th>
<th>Cheshire</th>
<th>Shropshire</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>S. Wales</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ap. 1873</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 June</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ap. 1890</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1890</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19: Geographical Distribution of Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire</th>
<th>Caernarvonshire</th>
<th>Merionethshire</th>
<th>Anglesey</th>
<th>Cheshire</th>
<th>Shropshire</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>S. Wales</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ap. 1873</td>
<td>23*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1873</td>
<td>26**</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>27***</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ap. 1890</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1890</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes six named Wrexham agents
** Includes seven named Wrexham agents
*** Includes seven named Wrexham agents
Table 20: Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denbighshire + Denbighshire</th>
<th>Flintshire + Flintshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1890</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1890</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list of April 1890 included nearly twice as many locations with agents and total number of agents than the January 1875 list and it is possible that this increase was connected with the Guardian’s change of ownership in 1878. There is a noticeable change in the geographical location of the agents between 1869 and 1890: in the early years of the Guardian it appeared that it was attempting to gain agents in all the major towns of north Wales and therefore to circulate throughout the six north Wales counties and the English agents were limited to Shropshire and Cheshire. By 1890, despite the increase in the number of places with agents, the figures had fallen in Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire to three and one respectively, and the newspaper no longer had an agent in Holyhead. However, possibly to compensate for the reduction in Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire agents, the Guardian obtained agents in Birkenhead, Birmingham, Liverpool, London, and Bridgend. There were no agent listings after 1890, although the Guardian continued to advertise for new agents.58

Denbighshire

When the Guardian was first published it had agents, unfortunately not listed by name, in seventeen locations throughout Denbighshire. Wrexham is excluded from this list, but it is difficult to accept that the newspaper would not have had at least one agent in the town. These seventeen locations were scattered throughout Denbighshire. This suggests that from the beginning the Guardian aimed to circulate throughout Denbighshire, instead of initially concentrating on towns and villages near Wrexham, and expanding only when it had built up a secure circulation basis. The Guardian almost certainly utilised the newly built Denbigh–Ruthin–Corwen Railway to distribute issues to the Denbigh and Ruthin areas. Elsewhere within Denbighshire

58 WG, 18 November 1898, p.5.
agents were located in villages along the railway line to Minera and the railway lines south of Wrexham to Ruabon and Llangollen.

Until 1890, the number of places with *Guardian* agents did not show a consistent increase, falling to twelve in August 1871 before rising slightly to fifteen in 1875. By 1871, the *Guardian* had ceased to have agents in Abergele, Cerrigydrudion, Llanrwst, and Llansilin, all of which were over fifteen miles from Wrexham, in addition to Coedpoeth and Brymbo, both of which were nearby settlements. It is possible that the *Guardian* had overstretched itself by establishing agents in these distant places before it had developed its circulation and reputation in the Wrexham area, especially as Cerrigydrudion and Llansilin\(^{59}\) were not located on a railway line, and the seeming lack of success in Brymbo and Coedpoeth could be because a Conservative newspaper would not have appealed to working class miners.

In contrast the total number of agents in Denbighshire rose from fifteen in 1871 to twenty two in 1875. The rise was small - an addition of only seven agents over four and a half years - suggesting that the *Guardian* was slow to extend and increase its circulation, even within Denbighshire. Prior to 1890 only four places in Denbighshire had multiple *Guardian* agents, namely Cefn Mawr, Denbigh, Ruabon, and Ruthin. The multiple agents in Ruthin and Denbigh can be explained by their size and importance but also by their support for the Conservative party. In the 1868 Denbigh Boroughs election, the Conservative candidate took 337 votes in Denbigh, 172 in Ruthin, and 338 in Wrexham, whilst the Liberal victor gained 347, 249, and 657 in each borough respectively.\(^{60}\) Denbigh and Ruthin were more Conservative than Wrexham and there may have been great demand for a Conservative newspaper.

By 1890 the number of Denbighshire *Guardian* agents had increased dramatically from twenty (excluding those in Wrexham) in 1875 to fifty two and the number of places with agents rose to thirty seven. Twenty one of the locations with agents had

---

\(^{59}\) Wiener suggested that newspapers were sent by agents in large settlements to agents in smaller settlements and this may have occurred here as the Llansilin agent could have been supplied with issues from Oswestry which had a railway station and was located within five miles of Llansilin (Joel Wiener, *The War of the Unstamped: the movement to repeal the British newspaper tax, 1830-1836* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p.187).

never previously possessed a *Guardian* agent and the majority of these new agents were located in the industrial settlements surrounding Wrexham such as Bersham and Gwersyllt. Some of these agents were located in villages on a railway line, and those that were not were often relatively near to a railway station which would have made distributing the newspaper to such agents easier and quicker.

**Flintshire**

With its smaller population and fewer large settlements, it was perhaps natural to expect Flintshire to have fewer agents and fewer locations with agents than Denbighshire. It had had thirteen locations with agents compared to Denbighshire's seventeen in 1869. As with Denbighshire, it suffered an early fall in the number of locations with agents, but their number did increase between 1875 and 1890, although not as spectacularly as those of Denbighshire.

Consequently it is not surprising that prior to 1890 only three Flintshire towns had multiple agents, namely Rhyl (from October 1872), Caergwrle (from 1873), and St. Asaph (from 1873). Simultaneously with the large increase in the number of locations with agents and the total number of agents by 1890, the number of Flintshire towns with multiple agents rose to nine with multiple agents in large towns, such as Mold, as well as villages such as Buckley and Rhydymwyn.

**Merionethshire**

In contrast with Denbighshire and Flintshire, the number of places with *Guardian* agents in Merionethshire and their total number increased consistently until 1875. When the newspaper was first published, the sole Merionethshire agent was in Corwen which by 1868 was the junction of three railway lines: the Ruthin–Corwen, Llangollen–Corwen, and the Corwen–Bala lines and located around seventeen miles from Wrexham. The number of places with agents peaked at seven in 1873 before falling to five in 1875, although Dolgellau was the only place with more than one agent. All seven places were located on a railway line. From 1890 Bala, Corwen, and Dolgellau were the only Merionethshire towns with a *Guardian* agent.
Unlike the *Advertiser*, whose Merionethshire agents (with the exception of Dolgellau), were located in the eastern half of the county, near to the border with Denbighshire, the *Guardian* had agents throughout the county, including agents in Barmouth, Towyn, and Aberdovey, all of which were located on the west coast of Wales. Undoubtedly distribution to such places was greatly aided by railway developments and it is unlikely that the *Guardian* would have possessed agents on the west Wales coast were it not for the railway system. The establishment of these agents strongly suggests that in the early and mid-1870s the *Guardian* was making a concerted effort to increase its circulation in west Merionethshire.

### Caernarvonshire and Anglesey

Whereas the *Advertiser* never had a single agent in Caernarvonshire or Anglesey, between 1872 and 1890 the *Guardian* had agents in nine locations throughout the two counties. Caernarvonshire gained six agents in five locations in 1872 and the number of places with agents increased to eight in 1873 before decreasing to five agents in four locations in 1875. The newspaper had multiple agents in Caernarvon, Conway, and Penmaenmawr. However from 1890 the sole *Guardian* agent in Caernarvonshire was located in the small town of Trefriw, which suggests that the newspaper’s circulation in Caernarvonshire had fallen to levels that did not justify more than one agent in the county. The sole Anglesey agent was located in Holyhead, the terminus of the north Wales coastal rail link from Chester. As with Merionethshire, the increase in agent numbers in the early and mid 1870s suggests an attempt to widen the *Guardian*’s geographical circulation area and the reduction by 1890, that the newspaper had been unable to gain sufficient readers in north-west Wales.

All of the *Guardian*’s Caernarvonshire agents with two exceptions were located in towns along the Chester–Holyhead Railway, the exceptions being Trefriw which was located on the southern line to Blaenau Ffestiniog, and Caernarvon on the Bangor–Caernarvon line. Railways must therefore have played a major role in the *Guardian* distribution network throughout Caernarvonshire. Most of the main towns in Denbighshire and Flintshire located on the Chester–Holyhead route also had a *Guardian* agent and consequently distribution of the newspaper would have been
easier and quicker as many agents and locations over a wide area could be supplied by one railway line.

**Cheshire**

When the newspaper was first published in 1869, its sole Cheshire agent was located in the border village of Farndon whereas from August 1871 its Cheshire agents were mainly located in Chester. The only other *Guardian* agents in Cheshire were located in the border villages of Farndon and Malpas neither of which was located on a railway line but their close proximity to Wrexham may have meant that sending newspapers by road was not unduly difficult. The total number of Cheshire *Guardian* agents peaked at five in 1873, and although by 1890 the number had only fallen to four, all four agents were located in Chester.

**Shropshire**

The first listing of *Guardian* agents in 1869 showed that there were two *Guardian* agents in Shropshire, one in Ellesmere, and the other in Oswestry. The number of Shropshire locations with *Guardian* agents fluctuated between one and two and the total number of agents peaked at three in August 1890. Only three Shropshire towns, namely, Ellesmere, Oswestry, and Shrewsbury possessed a *Guardian* agent. All three of these towns were linked by rail with Wrexham along the Shrewsbury–Chester Railway, the Oswestry–Ellesmere & Whitchurch Railway, and the Wrexham–Ellesmere Railway. Oswestry had an agent from 1869 and Shrewsbury had two agents in the August 1890 list. One of these agents was located at the train station and its main clientele for Wrexham newspapers was probably commuters from north-east Wales. The failure of the *Guardian* in not gaining more agents in Shropshire could have been due to a lack of interest in Welsh news and the existence of several prominent Shrewsbury newspapers. Much of the Shropshire border area was sparsely populated with small agricultural settlements and this may partly explain the lack of agents.
Further Afield

The *Guardian* did not establish agents outside Wales and the border counties until April 1890 when it gained agents in Birkenhead, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bridgend, and London. It is possible that the *Guardian* initially suffered poor advertising revenue from not having agents in London who could accept national newspaper advertisements. Birmingham, Birkenhead, and Liverpool were all connected to Wrexham by rail, and additionally Liverpool and Birkenhead had large Welsh populations. The *Guardian* was the sole Wrexham newspaper to establish an agent in south Wales, but it is difficult to imagine people in south Wales wishing to read a north Wales newspaper.

Distance from Wrexham

*Table 21: Distance of Locations with Agents from Wrexham*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Wrexham</th>
<th>1869</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>Ap. 1890</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 miles</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 miles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 miles</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows how the geographical distance distribution of the locations with *Guardian* agents changed between 1869 and 1890 and how the newspaper attempted to expand its distribution network throughout north Wales and the border area. In 1869 and 1871 the numbers in each distance category were approximately equal but by 1875 the largest category by far was locations over sixteen miles from Wrexham and the smallest category was the locations in the Wrexham area. These figures can be explained by the increase in the number of agents in Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire, and adds weight to the supposition that the *Guardian* was attempting to expand the area of its circulation at this time. However, by 1890 the distance categories had returned to approximately equal figures, primarily due to the influx of agents in the industrial villages surrounding Wrexham. The sixteen miles and over category is somewhat misleading because the previous figure consisted mainly of
locations in Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire whereas by 1890 the number of locations with agents in these two counties had fallen and the Guardian had gained agents in Birmingham, Birkenhead, Liverpool, London, and Bridgend. The figures suggest that the Guardian was attempting to circulate over a wide geographical area, and not just within Wrexham and the surrounding area.

Conclusion
Uniquely among Wrexham's newspapers the Guardian established agents throughout all north Wales and the border area, possessing agents in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Caernarvonshire, Anglesey, Cheshire, and Shropshire. When the newspaper was first published in 1869 its agents were concentrated primarily in Denbighshire and Flintshire, but from 1875 to 1890 it appears that there was a concerted attempt to expand circulation in to north-west and west Wales. It appears that this attempt to expand into Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire failed, or was abandoned, possibly by the newspaper's new owner, as the number of agents in those two counties fell and the numbers in Denbighshire and Flintshire rose. There does not appear to have been an equivalent attempt to expand circulation eastwards into Cheshire and Shropshire.
2.2.7. The Wrexham Free Press [1870-1873]

Despite existing for three years, the Free Press only published agent lists between February and May 1870.

**Table 22: Geographical Distribution of Locations with Agents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Feb. 1870</th>
<th>May 1870</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flintshire</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merionethshire</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 23: Geographical Distribution of Agents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Feb. 1870</th>
<th>May 1870</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flintshire</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merionethshire</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 24: Geographical Distribution of Agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Denbighshire + Denbighshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1870</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1870</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One of which was served by three agents

Between February and May 1870 the newspaper had a turnover of agents. Whilst this could have been a result of agents quickly realising that the newspaper was not selling and consequently ceasing their connection with it, it could also have been a result of printing errors, for example, Joshua Roberts of Rhosymedre appeared in the agent listings of 9 April and 28 May but not that of 7 May. In February the list contained a total of thirty two agents in twenty locations and three months later the last listing gave the names of thirty eight agents in twenty seven places, an increase of six agents and seven locations. The Free Press agents were all located in either Flintshire or Denbighshire, although by May it did possess two Merionethshire agents. The
newspaper never had an English agent, neither in Cheshire nor Shropshire, nor in London which may have had a detrimental effect on advertising.

**Denbighshire**
The tables clearly demonstrate that the *Free Press* network of agents was primarily concentrated upon Denbighshire. In February 1870 sixteen of the twenty four *Free Press* agents were located in Denbighshire and three months later these figures had risen to twenty agents out of thirty one. The Denbighshire agents were generally located in the industrial villages surrounding Wrexham, such as Brymbo, Moss, Ruabon, and Bwlchgwyn, the newspaper never had an agent in Denbigh, nor did it have an agent in Ruthin until its last listing. By 1870 the Vale of Clwyd Railway, the Mold-Denbigh Railway, and the Ruthin-Corwen Railway had all been completed yet it appears that the newspaper failed to capitalise on these developments. Therefore it seems that the *Free Press* was unable to expand outside the Wrexham area into west Denbighshire, or alternatively, possibly wished to concentrate on developing its circulation in the populous Wrexham and east Denbighshire area.

**Flintshire**
The overall increase in the number of agents and the locations with agents between February and May 1870 was primarily due to the increase in Denbighshire agents because in Flintshire the total number of agents rose only slightly from eight to nine and the number of locations with agents rose by only two from six to eight. In this short period of time the number of agents in Buckley fell from three to one and Caergwrle was the only Flintshire settlement to gain an agent between these two dates.

Flintshire's agents, like those of Denbighshire, were also primarily located in villages, namely Buckley, Coed Talon, Leeswood, Bangor-on-Dee, together with agents in Mold and Holywell. The newspaper never had agents in the seaside resorts of Rhyl and Prestayn, nor the industrial towns in Connah's Quay or Queensferry. The newspaper failed to take advantage of the Chester–Holyhead Railway running along the north Wales coast, as only one agent, in Holywell, was located along the line and by failing to establish agents in Hope, Hawarden, and Connah's Quay, the newspaper
also failed to take full advantage of the new Wrexham, Mold & Connah’s Quay Railway.

Merionethshire

The *Free Press* did not have an agent outside Denbighshire and Flintshire until the final listing in May when it included two agents from Merionethshire, one each in Bala and Dolgellau. It is interesting to note that the *Free Press* did not have an agent in Corwen, which was closer to Wrexham than either Bala or Dolgellau, in the more Anglisized eastern part of Merionethshire, and located at a junction of two railway lines. This suggests that the *Free Press* was unable to acquire an agent in the town, as opposed to a conscious decision to exclude Corwen from the *Free Press* geographical catchment area.

Distance from Wrexham

*Table 25: Distance of Locations with Agents and Agencies from Wrexham*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Wrexham</th>
<th>Feb. 1870</th>
<th>May 1870</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 miles</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 miles</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 miles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 miles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the *Free Press* agents were located within five miles of Wrexham; nine of the eighteen locations with agents in February were located within five miles of Wrexham and a further six were located between six to ten miles from the town. This suggests that deliberately or otherwise, the circulation area of the *Free Press* was concentrated in and around Wrexham.

Conclusion

As a result of the limited number of agent listings for this title and its short time span it is difficult to trace the geographical expansion of the newspaper. It is especially unfortunate that no issues for the newspaper for 1872 have survived because they
may, considering the newspaper's change of title to the Wrexham Free Press, Mold
and Holywell Journal have contained agent listings significantly different from those
of 1870. The listings for 1870 show that Free Press agents were based in east
Denbighshire, although there may have been an attempt to expand the geographical
limits to the newspaper's circulation westwards into Merionethshire. By concentrating
on establishing agents in north-east Wales the Free Press was reflecting its 1870 title
of the Wrexham Free Press and General Advertiser.
2.3. Railway Station Agents

Reading in stagecoaches, either inside or out, had been especially difficult but the better facilities offered by first and second class railway carriages established a new market for reading material. The first railway bookstall was opened in Fenchurch Street station in 1841 by Horace Marshall & Son but the name that became synonymous with railway bookstalls was that of W.H. Smith & Son. W.H. Smith, which gained its first tender to operate railway bookstall in August 1848, not only improved the quality of reading material sold, but rapid expansion in the 1850s meant that ‘as travelers [sic] passed through city stations and country transfer points, they never failed to see the familiar W.H. Smith stalls’. W.H. Smith’s railway bookstall business rapidly expanded from thirty-five bookstalls nationally in 1851 to 290 in 1870, 450 in 1880 and 615 in 1894. However this success led to difficulties as railway companies began to believe that their rental charges for the bookstalls were too low. Consequently from the early 1900s W.H. Smith began to examine expanding its shops in urban areas as an alternative to its railway bookstalls. This examination was fortuitous as the company lost its railway bookstall contracts on the London and North Western, and the Great Western lines in December 1905 and this decision led to the company gaining a presence in many urban high streets.

W.H. Smith & Son opened bookstalls in Welsh railway stations from the 1860s, beginning with Neath railway station in December 1861. In December 1863 W.H. Smith acquired the contract for the selling of newspapers and books on GWR stations. GWR lines in north Wales included the Ruabon-Llangollen, Corwen-Llangollen, Bala-Dolgellau, and Chester-Shrewsbury. By 1890 the company had railway bookstalls in Corwen, Denbigh, Dolgellau, Ruabon, Rhosllannerchrugog, and Rhyl, amongst others, and may have begun to expand into urban areas.

---

62 Altick, p.301.
64 Charles Wilson, p.208, 236.
65 Charles Wilson, p.120.
66 The Advertiser listing for 9 July 1900 included two Messrs. Smith & Son agents in Colwyn Bay and Rhyl, presumed to be newsagents, located in the town centre, as opposed to railway bookstalls.
Both the *Advertiser* and the *Guardian* used W. H. Smith railway station bookstalls as agents for their newspapers. Although north-east Wales possessed a well developed railway system it was not until the late 1870s that the *Advertiser* firstly acquired agents in railway bookstalls (with the exception of Chester where the *Advertiser* had been sold at the railway bookstall since 1866). In contrast the *Guardian* began using railway bookstalls to distribute their newspapers in the early 1870s shortly after its establishment and used them over a wide geographical area. It used railway bookstalls in Bangor, Caernarvon, Llandudno Junction, and Holyhead to distribute the newspaper throughout Caernarvonshire, whereas the *Advertiser* did not.

Whereas some of the railway bookstalls acted as sole agents for the newspaper in that town or city, the majority of the bookstalls were located in towns and cities of multiple agents. The towns and cities in which the railway bookstall acted as the sole agent for a Wrexham title were generally located some distance from Wrexham in places such as Abergele, Birkenhead, Colwyn Bay, Bangor, Holyhead, Dolgellau, Llandudno Junction, and Shrewsbury. It is possible that Wrexham's newspapers wished to maintain a presence in such places, possibly to enhance its image to advertisers, rather than because the newspaper had a large circulation in that area. Railway bookstalls were used as agents due to their lower distribution costs as the newspapers did not have to be sent from the railway station to agents in the town or city. Additionally, if Wrexham newspapers achieved regional status they would have attracted readership from throughout north Wales and such readers, especially commuters may have purchased their copies at the local railway station. According to Wilson

> Now - for first - and second - class passengers [...] reading was not only possible: it was almost indispensable to the business man and the educated traveller. For the one, time was money; hours of travel could profitably be spent bringing the traveller up to date with the latest news of markets, commodities, prices, the Funds, etc. For the other a newspaper [...] whiled away the tedium of a long journey. 68

The towns in which the railway bookstall acted as one of several agents were predominantly located in north-east Wales. These towns, namely, Oswestry, Rhyl, and

---

67 Includes Liverpool and London, where the agents were not located in the railway station.
Denbigh, were important in terms of circulation to Wrexham newspapers, and consequently the newspapers would probably have preferred to have an agent located in the town centre within easy reach of potential customers, instead of possessing just one agent located at the railway station which may have been located some distance from the town centre. A combination therefore of town and railway station agents would have been ideal for selling newspapers.

Railway bookstalls brought several benefits to Wrexham newspapers but also introduced a new threat to their influence and circulation. Railway bookstalls increased the number of outlets selling newspapers and were ideally placed to attract commuter customers, and later, when W.H. Smith expanded into town centres, consumers in the urban settlements. In addition Wilson commented that W.H. Smith railway bookstalls often acted as wholesalers to newsagents in the locality. However railways, whilst improving a newspaper’s distribution network, also brought competition from national and other local and regional titles, and these newspapers were often found being sold side-by-side with Wrexham newspapers in the railway bookstalls.

3. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to discuss possible distribution methods used by Wrexham newspapers. An analysis of the newspapers themselves indicates that sale through agents was probably the main method used although the postal service and possibly home delivery were also used. It appears that the Guardian, but not the Advertiser, attempted to expand its geographical circulation into north-west Wales but was unsuccessful. However by the turn of the century the location of their agents suggests that the circulation areas of both newspapers were increasingly limited to locations in Denbighshire and Flintshire although the Guardian had some agents in rural west Denbighshire whilst the Advertiser did not. The Guardian’s attempted expansion in Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire may have been as a result of a belief that there was a market for a Conservative English-language newspaper. The concentration of Guardian and Advertiser agents in Denbighshire and Flintshire

68 Charles Wilson, p.91-92.
69 Charles Wilson, p.112.
towards the end of the nineteenth century does indicate that the sphere of influence of Wrexham’s newspapers was being eroded by the establishment of new titles and Wrexham’s failure to establish itself as the home of an English-language north Wales weekly may have contributed to the *Liverpool Daily Post* becoming the recognised daily newspaper for north Wales.
Chapter 8 – ‘District News’ Coverage

1. Local News Reporting

Early provincial newspapers offered only limited coverage of local news, instead concentrating upon reprinting foreign and London news from London newspapers. Improved transportation and communication links led to provincial newspapers developing a network of local news correspondents and reporters which generated to increasing quantities of local news. Rees commented that early south Wales newspapers had very little local news until the arrival of the railways made the collection of such news quicker and easier.1 Towards the end of the century the arrival of the “national” newspaper press in the provinces, in the form of the Daily Mail and the Daily Express, led to provincial weeklies almost exclusively reporting local and regional news as they no longer had a role to fulfil in supplying national or international news to their readers. Until the early twentieth century Wrexham newspapers sought to supply local, regional, national, and international news to their readers. Unfortunately, with few exceptions, Wrexham newspapers failed to name the authors of each article, and therefore the amount of local news supplied by editors, reporters, correspondents, and agents can only be estimated.

Wiles stated that local news in provincial newspapers came from personal reports from the editor or his staff and unsolicited news sent in by readers, local correspondents, special correspondents, or travelling townsmen,2 and, although he was discussing the eighteenth century, these collection methods were also used in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. As articles were generally unsigned, it is impossible to state with any certainty which reports were received from which type of reporter or correspondent. News from some of the larger towns may have been written by one of the newspaper’s own reporters or its editor: Richard Richards, who claimed to have been the editor of the Advertiser, [See Chapter 4] stated that he was sometimes obliged to go to Ruthin, Chirk, Oswestry, and other towns to report meetings.3 An announcement in 1863 by

---

the new owner of the Telegraph that the newspaper had appointed or would soon appoint reporters in every town and village in Denbighshire and Flintshire\(^4\) shows the increasingly important role of local news reporting although it is unlikely that this aim was achieved. In 1892 the Guardian offered to send reporters to various public gatherings, but, in an attempt to increase advertising, stated that preference would be given to events advertised in the newspaper.\(^5\) Of course, the number of reporting staff used by a newspaper depended upon its area of circulation and finances.

Readers of the newspaper were another fruitful source of local news as reports of events, notices of forthcoming events, and various types of announcements may have been sent in by readers for publicity reasons or personal vanity. Such a system may have been very popular with Wrexham newspapers when they were seeking to establish their regional circulation because, as the Guardian explained, it was difficult to obtain news from such a large area.\(^6\) Whilst some newspapers were forced to appeal directly to readers for news items, for example, the Guardian asked readers to send in notes and queries for its local history column\(^7\) and the Telegraph offered to pay for reports of local events,\(^8\) others claimed to be overwhelmed with news reports. In October 1879, for example, the Advertiser stated that as it received so many such reports that in future they would only be published if the event was advertised in the newspaper, or if the printing was carried out at the Advertiser office.\(^9\) The “penny-a-line payment” scheme\(^10\) would have encouraged readers to send in long news articles although this was eventually superseded by the telegraph and the sub-editor.\(^11\) News may also have been sent to the newspaper by local townspeople who worked in neighbouring towns. Special correspondents may have been used to report large and

\(^{4}\) WT, 16 May 1863, p.1.  
\(^{5}\) WG, 2 December 1892, p.5.  
\(^{6}\) 'Business Notes', WG, 14 September 1878, p.4.  
\(^{7}\) WG, 11 January 1873, p.6. It appears that readers did not heed this request as the column only lasted four months.  
\(^{8}\) 'To Correspondents', WT, 6 June, p.4.  
\(^{9}\) 'To Correspondents', WWAd, 11 October 1879, p.4.  
\(^{10}\) Between October and December 1873 the Guardian is recorded as having spent £20 on paying contributors. Dr. Granville in a/c with the Constitutional Association (the Wrexham Guardian). From October 13 to December 1873. FRO D/KT/22.  
unique events taking place in the area such as parliamentary election campaigns,\textsuperscript{12} weddings,\textsuperscript{13} and the National Eisteddfod.\textsuperscript{14} Consequently local press reports came from a wide variety of different sources, with some possessing a greater degree of professional expertise than others.

However, much of the local news probably came from local correspondents in the towns and villages of north Wales and the border area. In September 1870 the Guardian made reference to its ‘large and efficient Staff of [...] District Correspondents’\textsuperscript{15} and the Advertiser claimed to possess ‘correspondents in every town, village and hamlet in the district’,\textsuperscript{16} although it did not state which areas constituted the ‘district’. Despite the Guardian’s appeal in its first issue to members of the Constitutional Association to send news from their area\textsuperscript{17} most correspondents were probably agents who sold the newspaper such as Thomas Baker, agent and regular supplier of reports for the eighteenth century Hampshire Chronicle.\textsuperscript{18} Rees suggested that early south Wales newspapers encouraged readers to send their reports to the local agent who would check the details so as to avoid the newspaper publishing hoaxes, which could have led not only to embarrassment on behalf of the newspaper but possibly also to legal action. Of course, not all agents were willing or able to act as correspondents, especially those whose full-time occupation was wholly unconnected with newspapers. If a village did not have a correspondent or there was not one in a nearby village then it is unlikely that its news would regularly appear in the district news section, regardless of the extent of that newspaper’s circulation in the village. Additionally, having a frequent correspondent was no guarantee of a location’s news being published in the district news column as news from settlements with many

\textsuperscript{12} The Guardian is recorded as having hired ‘two gentlemen from London’ for the 1874 general election. Dr. Granville. In account with the North Wales Constitutional Association. From 1 Jan – 28 March 1874. FRO D/KT/22.
\textsuperscript{13} For example, ‘Marriage of Mr. J.H. Birch, Marchwiel Old Hall’, WG, 5 March 1870, p.8 constituted over twenty per cent of the district news in that issue. Marchwiel news was infrequently reported in the sample district news columns and therefore it is likely that the Guardian sent a special correspondent or reporter to cover this event.
\textsuperscript{14} For example, ‘The National Eisteddfod of Wales - Meetings at Denbigh (from our own Reporter)’ WG, 26 August 1882, p.7 and p.8.
\textsuperscript{15} ‘To Our Readers’, WG, 3 September 1870, p.4.
\textsuperscript{16} WWAd, 6 August 1870, p.8.
\textsuperscript{17} ‘To Correspondents’, WG, 4 September 1869, p.4.
\textsuperscript{18} C.Y. Ferdinand, Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p.73.
potential readers such as Mold or Ruthin would usually have been included in preference to news from a hamlet with few inhabitants. Unfortunately, with very few exceptions, it is not known which settlements possessed a correspondent or reporter and which did not, although the identity of the correspondent/reporter may have been well-known in the area. Consequently only inferences, based on the district news columns in the sample issues, as to which settlements had a correspondent or a reporter can be made.

One method of obtaining regular and detailed news from a certain location, which Wiles failed to mention, was to adopt the early provincial practice of taking it from another newspaper, either local, regional, or London (national). In the mid nineteenth century Wrexham newspapers made frequent use of this practice and in 1858 a dispute erupted between the Advertiser and Telegraph centred upon the Telegraph’s accusation that the Advertiser (as well as other newspapers) had been taking news directly from its columns and failing to acknowledge the source. The extent of the use of this technique was shown when a disgruntled former employee of the Advertiser stated that part of his job involved

\[\text{cut[ting] out every paragraph from the [Chester] Courant (not a week old) relating to the Principality, and to insert it in the Advertiser, [...] re-writ[ing] everything interesting to the neighbourhood from the columns of the Oswestry Advertiser, ditto from the Wrexham Telegraph should the information not have been obtained before.}\]

There is also evidence that Wrexham newspapers sold reports to each other. In April 1871 the Guardian complained that the Advertiser was charging an excessive price for a report of a Masonic banquet. The fact that a newspaper was willing to pay a rival for such a report suggests that it was important for the Guardian to publish this report and also that it was unable to send a reporter to cover the banquet possibly because its reporter was not a Mason and could not therefore gain entry. However the nature of such sharing meant that the news could have been read earlier in another newspaper, and consequently it would have been difficult to persuade readers in a certain area to

\[\text{WT, 25 February 1858, p.4.}\]
\[\text{Correspondence ‘A Reporter’, WT, 25 March 1858, p.4.}\]
\[\text{WG, 1 April 1871, p.4.}\]
read a Wrexham newspaper if all of that area's news had been published earlier and in greater detail in another newspaper.

Most of this local news would have been sent to the newspaper office by letter and therefore, until faster methods of communication were adopted, Wrexham newspapers often failed to report the "latest" local news. Such news may have been included in a second edition, although the non-survival of different editions of the same issue produces only speculation on this point. One solution to the problem was the telegram, and in 1877 the Guardian asked its correspondents to send late news by telegram and the newspaper would bear the cost.\(^{22}\) Presumably correspondents were expected to be as brief as possible in their reports in order to reduce the cost of the telegram and if the newspaper paid its correspondents by the line or word such brevity may have reduced the newspaper's reporting bill. Towards the end of the century, the telephone became an established mode of communication\(^{23}\) and in 1899 the Advertiser announced its connection to the telephone exchange,\(^{24}\) so presumably correspondents were now able to telephone their reports to the newspaper office.

Local news in Wrexham newspapers covered a variety of topics, the most popular being reports of meetings and personal announcements of deaths, marriages, illnesses, or personal achievements or appointments. Court reports from the larger towns were extremely popular and often covered the drunken exploits of the working class. For example, in 1880 the Denbigh Borough Court reports included cases of a sister accusing her brother of assault,\(^{25}\) a miscellany of drunks, and a story of a landlord summoning his tenant for assault, and the tenant summoning his landlord for hitting him on the head with a shovel and his landlord's wife for throwing hot water over him.\(^{26}\) Another violent crime was reported from the Ruabon Petty Sessions in 1870 when a man was charged with assaulting another man and cutting his tongue.\(^{27}\) Reports of various local governmental bodies such as the Highway Board, the Town Council, Local Boards, and, after 1870, School Boards were not regularly inserted but

---

\(^{22}\) *WG*, 10 March 1877, p.4.

\(^{23}\) The telephone was invented in 1876.

\(^{24}\) *WWAd*, 25 March 1899, p.5.

\(^{25}\) *WWAd*, 4 December 1880, p.6.

\(^{26}\) *WWAd*, 3 July 1880, p.6.
when such reports were found in the newspapers they were usually reported at length. The summer months saw the inclusion of several reports of society outings and trips and the celebration of local festivals such as the Church Schools Festival in Brymbo in 1880,\(^\text{28}\) and reports of local St. David’s Day celebrations were a popular part of the March sample issues. There were regular reports of religious services, but such reports were usually brief, presumably so as to avoid showing religious bias by favouring one denomination. Social events were often covered including musical evening and lectures such as that given by the author of ‘Buy your own Cherries’ in Denbigh in December 1880.\(^\text{29}\) Towards the end of the century coverage of sporting events increased, although almost all local sporting coverage was to be found elsewhere in the newspaper [See Chapter 9].

2. Methodology

One method of determining the geographical circulation area of a newspaper is to analyse its local news content as, wishing to meet its readers demands, most of the local news would come from the main settlements and areas in which it circulated. This can be done by analysing each newspaper’s content to discover from which areas most local news came and also by a separate analysis of the ‘District News’ section. Most Wrexham titles had a separate section headed ‘District News’ or ‘District Intelligence’ and an analysis of this would pinpoint the circulation area (or district) of each newspaper with greater accuracy, and it would also show whether each newspaper’s claimed areas of circulation corresponded with the settlements supplying district news. Such an analysis would show which settlements were having their news reported, how often, and in what quantity, and which were therefore considered to be part of the ‘district’ in which the newspaper circulated.

It was felt that the most appropriate methodology was to measure the column centimetres devoted to each city, town, village, or hamlet in the district news section in three sample issues a year at ten-year intervals. Wrexham news did not appear in the district news section but was reported elsewhere in the newspaper, and is therefore

\(^{27}\) WG, 5 March 1870, p.8.
\(^{28}\) ‘Church Schools Festival’, WG, 3 July 1880, p.6.
\(^{29}\) WWAd, 4 December 1880, p.6.
excluded from this analysis. The months of March, July and December were chosen as they covered all the seasons. The years 1855, 1865, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1910 were chosen for the *Advertiser* analysis, so as to allow comparison with the *Telegraph* (1865), the *Guardian* (1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1910) and the *Free Press* (1870). The three remaining Wrexham newspapers, the *Recorder*, the *Registrar*, and the *Albion*, did not contain district news sections, neither did the *Telegraph* in 1855. As the amount of space devoted to each location was the sole criterion under consideration and as this could be measured statistically, no value judgements were required. Consequently, the number of different news items found under the heading of each settlement was not considered to be significant. In cases where news was classified under the combined headings of two settlements no attempt was made to ascertain which news came from which location.

Each settlement’s news as a percentage of the district news in that issue was calculated and then the data was placed into the appropriate county table, the county tables for Denbighshire and Flintshire being further sub-divided into broad geographical areas.\(^{30}\) This was done to test each newspaper’s claim to be a ‘Denbighshire’ or a ‘Flintshire’-wide newspaper. This subdivision was not imposed on another counties as not as many settlements appeared in the district news sections. Analysis occurred at ten-yearly intervals in an attempt to identify possible changes over time. The variation in the size of the district news section and potential implications of changes are discussed in the next chapter.

Within Denbighshire the settlements were subdivided into four geographical categories: those to the west of Wrexham, those to the south, those to the east, and those in the distant west. The settlements to the west were the industrial mining villages to the north-west and west of Wrexham, close to the Flintshire border and included Brymbo, Bwlchgwyn, Minera, and Gwersyllt. Bersham, despite being located slightly to the south-west of Wrexham was included in this group because of its close proximity to the nearby mining settlement of Coedpoeth. The main settlements to the south were those near to the railway line running between Wrexham

---

\(^{30}\) These tables can be seen in Appendix 4.
and Shrewsbury such as Chirk, Cefn Mawr and Ruabon. The population of the latter two villages, together with that of Rhosllannerchrugog and Penycaen, were counted together in the census and several of these settlements shared a district reporter from 1904. This grouping also included settlements located in the south-west of the county such as Llangollen. Although, due to its eastern border location, there were few settlements to the east of Wrexham, they constitute a separate, albeit small, category. The final category of settlements in the distant north west encompasses the remainder of Denbighshire. This is a large geographical category but includes relatively few population centres and could otherwise be described as Denbighshire settlements outside the Wrexham hinterland.

For Flintshire, the settlements were divided by their location in the west or east of the county with a separate category for Maelor Saesneg, a small part of Flintshire located near Wrexham and cut off from the rest of the county. The division of Flintshire into east and west is not as arbitrary as it may appear and follows the county’s division into the industrial eastern coalfield and the coastal resorts of the west. In addition many of the eastern settlements were located on or near to the Wrexham, Mold, & Connah’s Quay railway line. Although Maelor Saesneg had relatively few settlements its geographical isolation from Flintshire and its proximity to Wrexham meant that it did not fall into either of the two Flintshire groupings and was therefore given its own separate category.

The analysis of the settlements which were found in the district news section of the sample issues should point to the area that each newspaper considered to be its ‘district’, namely from where it regularly received and published news (either from an agent, reporter, or correspondent). However inclusion of a settlement’s news may not have meant that a Wrexham newspaper enjoyed a large circulation in that location or area. If a Wrexham newspaper wished to be considered as a ‘county’ newspaper, then it was obliged to include news from each of the county’s main settlements. In addition, news from some settlements may have been included merely to fill up space or because a significant local event was taking place and not because the newspaper enjoyed a large circulation in the area. Consequently only settlements whose news
appeared regularly in the sample issues can be assumed to have been part of the newspaper's 'district'.

A district news analysis can also identify core and peripheral areas, and satellite settlements, together with changes over time. Smaller settlements may have acted as satellites for a large settlement. The possibility of agents in a town, distributing newspapers to agents or messengers in nearby villages has already been commented upon and it is possible that news from a certain location was regularly included, not because that location looked to Wrexham as its main supplier of news, but because its nearest major settlement looked to Wrexham's newspapers to supply its needs. For example, news relating to the restoration of a church in Llanfwrog\(^3\) was included under the heading of Ruthin, its nearest large settlement and not its own, which not only suggests that the news was sent by the Ruthin correspondent but also that Llanfwrog acted as a satellite settlement for Ruthin. Such a news supply would probably have ceased when a local newspaper was established. Likewise there may have been certain settlements close to Wrexham that looked to other locations to fulfil their newspaper requirements, villages on the Denbighshire/Cheshire border being an example. In addition, news could also have arrived via a newspaper syndicate, for example, a correspondent in Rhuddlan may have passed reports to the Rhyl Guardian as it was the local newspaper, and the Rhyl Guardian could have consequently passed such news to its sister newspaper in Wrexham.

Despite the difficulties commented upon in using an analysis of a newspaper's district news columns to determine the district in which it circulated, a study would, added to other evidence, show the main readership areas of each Wrexham newspaper and how they changed over time.

\(^3\) 'Llanfwrog Church Restoration', WG, 2 July 1870, p.5.
3. ‘District News’
The district news sections of each newspaper will now be analysed, firstly by decade and then by county.

3.1. Change by Decade

3.1.1. *Wrexham Recorder* [1848-1849], *Wrexham Registrar* [1848-1849], and the *Wrexham (Monthly) Advertiser* [1850-1852]
None of these newspapers contained any district news. Firstly, their monthly status would have restricted the amount of “news” that they could have contained, secondly the lack of good links in north Wales would have made it difficult to establish a network of news correspondents and to send news to the office, and thirdly the intended circulation area may have been limited to the Wrexham locality. These reasons, and possibly others, precluded the inclusion of a district news section in these three newspapers.

3.1.2 *Wrexham (Weekly) Advertiser* [1854-1936]
District News in the Advertiser appeared under that heading and then under the headings of individual towns and villages. The amount of district news in the Wrexham edition decreased after the decision to establish a Mold and district edition of the newspaper in 1909. District news was then scattered throughout the newspaper as opposed to being located predominantly on two pages as previously.

1855
The three sample issues reported news from only seven settlements in Denbighshire: the two towns of Denbigh and Ruthin, three settlements in the south of Wrexham (Cefn Mawr, Chirk, and Ruabon), and one each to the east (Holt) and the west (Brymbo). News from Ruabon appeared in all three sample issues and provided between a third and two-thirds of district news coverage, and included such items as a

---

32 No copies of this edition appear to have survived thus making comparison with the Wrexham edition impossible.
letter from a local sailor to his parents in the village during the Crimean War. This large amount of Ruabon news suggests that the newspaper had a large circulation in the village, but its importance may have been exaggerated if such a large quantity of news was only included because Ruabon was one of the few settlements to possess a correspondent. The Advertiser had only been in existence since 1854 and may not have established a widespread reporting network. The lack of news from the mining villages to the west of Wrexham implies a lack of correspondents in this area. Brymbo, whose news appeared in the December sample issue, did not have an agent which poses the question as to whom supplied the news. The industrious Ruabon correspondent may have sent news from the southern villages of Cefn Mawr and Chirk although both of these settlements had their own agents who may have supplied news.

Elsewhere, Oswestry provided a large amount of district news, probably supplied by Charles George Bayley. There was relatively little district news from Flintshire or Shropshire and no district news from Cheshire despite the newspaper having a Chester agent. Some settlements with an agent, such as Llangollen and Holywell, did not see their news appear in the sample issues which may suggest that the agent was prepared only to sell the newspaper and not to supply news. It appears that, at this early stage in the newspaper's development, it was concentrating on building up the circulation in the Wrexham area that it had inherited from the monthly Advertiser before seeking to expand further afield.

1865
Forty locations were mentioned in the three district news sample sections in 1865 and two-thirds of these were in Denbighshire and Flintshire, fifteen in Denbighshire and eleven in Flintshire. Elsewhere news came from Bala, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Corwen, and Dolgellau in Merionethshire, and Chester, Crewe, Farndon, and Malpas in Cheshire, but from only two Shropshire locations, Oswestry and Whitchurch. Bala, Corwen, Chester, and Oswestry each had an agent in 1866 and the agent in Holt could

---

33 This shows that manuscript letters, widely used to report foreign news by early newspapers, were still an important source of foreign news as they could connect a local person with an important international event.
have supplied Farndon news. There was very little news coverage of settlements in north-west Wales with only small quantities of Bangor and Holyhead news appearing in the newspaper. Naturally the Advertiser's failure to establish agents in Caernarvonshire or Anglesey must have inhibited its news gathering from these counties and possibly forced it to rely on other newspapers for information. This lack of agents would have limited sales and consequently there would have been little demand for Caernarvonshire and Anglesey news reports. This suggests that the Advertiser, even at a time of relatively few north Wales newspapers, concentrated upon covering news from Denbighshire and Flintshire, and news of other counties was limited to the main settlements.

Only Llangollen, Oswestry, and Ruthin news was included in all three of the sample issues examined. This could imply that these settlements were considered important for circulation reasons or alternatively, that the newspaper's agents in these locations were willing to supply news. Llangollen and Ruthin were important Denbighshire towns, and Charles George Bayley, part proprietor of the Advertiser and Oswestry resident, could have brought news on one of his frequent visits to Wrexham. A third of the Flintshire news was from Mold, which suggests that its agent or correspondent supplied detailed reports and that it was considered important to establish a large circulation in the town. Noticeable absentees from the sample district news columns were the well-populated Denbighshire settlements of Denbigh and Rhosllannerchrugog, neither possessing agents until 1866.

1870

News from only twenty-seven settlements was included in the three sample issues but together they represented six counties. Over half of the locations were situated in Denbighshire, and a fifth in Flintshire, thus confirming the continuing dominance of news from north-east Wales. Elsewhere, reports from Merionethshire were limited to the three towns of Bala, Corwen, and Dolgellau; in Cheshire, to the city of Chester; and in Shropshire to the border towns of Ellesmere, and Oswestry. By 1870, the Advertiser appears to have decided to concentrate on circulating throughout Denbighshire and Flintshire, eastern Merionethshire and the border area. This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that the only report from outside this area...
was a brief report encompassing Caernarvonshire as a whole, and could easily have been culled from a Caernarvonshire newspaper.

Although news from Merionethshire was limited to its eastern settlements, and in Shropshire to its border towns, reports from these places consistently appeared in the district news section. News from Ellesmere and Oswestry appeared in all three sample issues, as did Corwen news, while news from Bala and Dolgellau was found in two of the three sample issues. Ellesmere had an agent, as did Whitchurch but its news was not found in any 1870 samples. Despite the establishment of a printing office in 1868, Chester news was only included in the December sample issue. This could suggest that the office was established primarily for prestige or perhaps to gain advertising, rather than gather news. Amongst the Denbighshire and Flintshire towns, Llangollen, Ruabon, and Mold news was included in all three sample issues, and Chirk, Northop, and Rhosllannerchrugog in two, all of these settlements having an agent. There was little coverage of the industrial villages near Wrexham such as Brymbo, Coedpoeth, and Caergwrle despite agents being located in Bwlchgwyn, Brymbo, Caergwrle, Coedpoeth (Penygelli), and Minera. Denbigh and Ruthin news was only included in one sample issue and there was no news from the seaside resorts of Rhyl, Prestayn, Colwyn Bay, or Abergele. Only Rhyl amongst the latter four towns possessed an agent. The Advertiser appears to have enjoyed only limited circulation in these seaside settlements possibly due to their distance from Wrexham and the existence of local rivals, particularly in Rhyl.

1880

Despite the newspaper's sub-title the three sample issues show that the district news section was increasingly restricted to news from Denbighshire and Flintshire. Over sixty per cent of the news came from Denbighshire locations, over half of which was from Denbigh itself, and over a quarter from Flintshire. The increase in the amount of Denbigh news in the sample issues, much of it being court reports, may have been a result of the establishment of a Guardian office and reporter in Denbigh from 1879 and a desire not to lose readers to its rival. The number of locations found in the

---

34 Denbighshire, Flintshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Merionethshire and North Wales Advertiser changed to North Wales News on 25 September 1880.
sample issues decreased to only twenty: over half were in Denbighshire and over a quarter in Flintshire and of the three settlements not situated in north-east Wales, one each was in Shropshire, Merionethshire, and Cheshire.

The continued absence of news from Caernarvonshire and Anglesey and the fall in the amount of Merionethshire news suggests that the Advertiser, despite the change in its sub-title, no longer aspired to be a north Wales-wide newspaper. Improved rail links had not enabled the newspaper to establish itself in Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire and instead Caernarvonshire's newspapers were now seeking to expand their circulation into the heartland of Wrexham newspapers in the north-east of the Principality [See Chapter 6]. Coverage of Cheshire and Shropshire was limited to the border settlements of Pulford (which did not have an agent) and Oswestry. The sole Merionethshire news in the sample issues came from Corwen, suggesting that the Advertiser's area of circulation within the county was limited to the eastern anglicised area. Dolgellau ceased to have an agent in 1878 and this would explain the absence of news from that town, but there was still one in Bala.

1880 saw increased coverage of the industrial villages surrounding Wrexham. Coedpoeth and Minera news appeared in all three sample issues, Brymbo and Broughton news, and Hope and Caergwrle news twice each. Five of these six villages had agents. However, the amount of news from these villages was small and this may explain why news from two nearby villages was often found under a joint heading. In contrast with previous years, Denbigh news was included in large quantities in all of the sample issues, as was news from Llangollen, Mold, and Oswestry. Mold news, which constituted nearly half of the district news column in the December sample issue, included a concert, a Local Board meeting, and court reports. Once again the district news columns of the sample issues did not contain any news from the north Wales seaside resorts, or from the Flintshire towns of Holywell and Flint despite both having agents.

1890
In contrast to previous years the total number of locations from the three sample issues of 1890 rose significantly to forty eight. Half of these settlements were in
Denbighshire, predominantly in the east, and over a third in Flintshire. The sample issues contained news from three Cheshire border villages, but not from Chester itself despite multiple agents and a printing establishment in the city, while the only Shropshire news was again from Oswestry. The district news sections contained news from Bala and Corwen in Merionethshire but in such small quantities that it is unlikely that the newspaper enjoyed significant sales in the two towns. The Advertiser continued to focus its district news coverage upon north-east Wales and the border.

The 1890 sample issues continued to show increased coverage of the industrial settlements surrounding Wrexham, namely Brymbo and Broughton, Coedpoeth and Minera, Holt and Farndon, Hope and Caergwrle, Cefn Mawr and Rhosymedre, Penycae, Rhosllannerchrugog, Ruabon, Chirk, and Buckley, whilst continuing to offer regular and detailed coverage from Denbigh, Mold, and Ruthin. Coverage of other north-east Wales towns was uneven; news from Holywell, Llangollen, and St. Asaph appearing irregularly despite each town having an agent. The limited amount of news from Holywell and Llangollen could have been due to the presence of rival newspapers whilst the lack of news from St. Asaph could have been because of its status as an Anglican ecclesiastical city and it was situated some distance from Wrexham.

1900

Denbighshire’s dominance of the district news column was almost complete by 1900. The amount of Flintshire news had fallen significantly and outside north-east Wales, news from only five places appeared in the sample district news sections, one each in Cheshire, Shropshire, and Caernarvonshire and the first and only appearance of Montgomeryshire news in the sample issues. The Caernarvonshire news appears to have been a one-off from Bangor and Cheshire’s sole news came from the border village of Farndon. Oswestry continued to be Shropshire’s sole representative although the quantity of Oswestry news had been steadily falling since the 1880s which may have been a response to falling circulation in the town.

The sample issues for 1900 are noticeable for the almost complete absence of news from the main towns of Denbighshire and Flintshire. There were no news reports from
Ruthin or Denbigh, despite the existence of multiple agents in both towns, and only one report each from Llangollen and Mold. This, coupled with the long-standing absence of news from Flint, Holywell and the seaside resorts, suggests that the Advertiser’s circulation, possibly in response to the establishment of newspapers in these areas, was now focused on the Wrexham area. Consequently it was seeking to attract more local readers by reporting news from villages surrounding Wrexham, noticeably, Holt and Farndon, Rhosllannerchrugog, Ruabon, Cefn Mawr, Acrefair, and Coedpoeth.

1910

If the district news section reflected geographical circulation, then by 1910 the Advertiser was a local Wrexham newspaper with news from nearby villages including Acrefair, Brymbo, Coedpoeth, Cefn Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog, and Ruabon constituting over ninety per cent of the three sample columns. Such news was usually made up of several brief news reports as opposed to one large report. The lack of Flintshire news was probably due to the existence of a Mold edition of the newspaper, with only news from Flintshire settlements in the south near the border with Denbighshire appearing in the district news columns. No news was reported from Merionethshire or Shropshire. The only Cheshire news came from Farndon, whose news was reported together with that of the Denbighshire village of Holt.

As in 1900, news appeared frequently from the villages near to Wrexham. Gwersyllt news was included in all three sample issues whereas its news had only previously been found in the December sample issues of 1890 and 1900. Likewise the villages of Acrefair, Johnstown, Ponciau, and Rhostyllen were mentioned in all three issues, only Acrefair and Rhostyllen having briefly appeared in the district news section of sample issues in earlier years. The frequency of news reports from these villages could be explained by the appointment in 1904 of a district reporter for ‘Rhos, Johnstown, Ponkey [sic], Penycae, and the district’, reflecting the growing status of these villages, both for industrial and circulation reasons. The suggestion that circulation

35 ‘Our New Departure’, WWAd, 2 January 1909, p.3.
was focused upon these villages is further supported by the complete absence of news from Denbigh, Mold, and Ruthin from the sample issues.

Conclusion

The content of the *Advertiser's* district news columns consistently reflected a Denbighshire and Flintshire dominance. The sample issues from the 1860s and 1870s did include several forays into news reporting from Merionethshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire which may suggest that the newspaper was seeking to expand into these areas. If so, later sample issues suggest that this expansion met with limited success. The rarity of news from Caernarvonshire and Anglesey implies that the *Advertiser*, despite having the sub-title *North Wales News* from 1880, did not aspire to be a regional newspaper or had failed to gain sufficient agents and correspondents in the north-west. By 1910 the district news columns were limited to news from the Wrexham area and it appeared that the *Advertiser* had become a local Wrexham newspaper with the Mold edition presumably circulating throughout much of Flintshire and possibly west Denbighshire.

3.1.3. Wrexham Albion [1854]

The *Albion* did not have a district news section and this implies that its circulation was limited to Wrexham.

3.1.4. Wrexham Telegraph [1855-1867]

1855

Like its predecessor, the *Albion*, the *Telegraph* did not contain any district news columns in 1855, thus suggesting that its circulation was concentrated in Wrexham and that it was uninterested in or unable to supply news from outside the town.

1865

By 1865 the *Telegraph* was offering brief district news reports. This lack of depth in local news reporting, coupled with the scarcity of agents, implies that the newspaper was having difficulty developing a local news reporting network. The district news columns from the three sample issues showed a bias towards news from Flintshire,
with reports from Mold, St. Asaph, and Flint appearing in two of the three sample issues. Denbigh was the only settlement whose news appeared in all three samples and, any newspaper aspiring to attain 'county' status had to include news from the county town. There was little news from elsewhere in Denbighshire, with only news from Brymbo and Ruthin being reported in the samples. These results undermine the newspaper's claim to offer equal coverage of every town in Denbighshire and Flintshire. However it could claim to have gained some success in attempting to identify itself 'as much with Mold, or Denbigh, or Ruthin and the other considerable places as with Wrexham'. Despite the newspaper's title and the establishment of a publishing office in Chester in 1864, the newspaper's district news columns did not contain any news from the city, but did include news from Whitchurch and Threapwood, neither location having a Telegraph agent.

Conclusion
Unfortunately the lack of a district news section in 1855 makes comparison with the district news columns from the 1865 sample issues impossible. However it can be concluded that the Telegraph's local news reporting altered from initially being concentrated on Wrexham to expanding to include news from a small number of locations in Denbighshire and Flintshire. It also appears that the newspaper made little effort to reflect its north Shropshire and west Cheshire sub-title in its district news columns.

3.1.5. Wrexham Guardian [1869-1954]
From its first issue, the Guardian offered regular reports of 'District Intelligence' or 'District News'. From April 1873 the heading of 'County News' was introduced and news was then subdivided by county. The reason for this change may have been to enable readers to find their local news more quickly or to emphasise the more regional nature of the newspaper. Shortly before the newspaper's change of title in 1879, news from west Denbighshire and Flintshire came under the heading of 'Vale of Clwyd

---

37 'To Our Readers and the Public', WT, 2 January 1864, p.4.
38 'To Our Readers and the Public', WT, 2 January 1864, p.4.
39 WT, 16 July 1864, p.4.
Guardian’,40 and news from Rhyl under ‘Rhyl Guardian’.41 The ‘Vale of Clwyd Guardian’ was published weekly at Denbigh, and the short-lived ‘Rhyl Guardian’ was published weekly at Rhyl. As there was no newspaper entitled the ‘Vale of Clwyd Guardian’ it was not, unlike ‘Rhyl Guardian’ a reference to news taken from another newspaper. Therefore, it appears, that this was merely a heading under which to group news from several towns together, and that ‘publication’ in Denbigh was limited to news gathering. The Denbigh publishing establishment (opened January 1876) had its own reporter from May 1879,42 and from November 1882, the reporter’s duties expanded to include reporting news from Ruthin and district.43 It appears that from the 1880s the Guardian shared much of its district news (and possibly local reports and correspondents) with its Rhyl namesake, especially from the Vale of Clwyd and Flintshire. This makes it more difficult to accurately define the circulation areas of the Guardian.

1870

The district news columns for the 1870 sample issues contained news from throughout north Wales, Cheshire, and Shropshire. Nearly half of the places appearing in the sample issues were located outside Denbighshire and Flintshire, and the regional diversity of the district news section was further demonstrated by the approximately equal coverage given to Flintshire, Cheshire, and Shropshire. News came from eleven locations in England: five in Cheshire, (Chester, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, and Malpas) and six in Shropshire, including the county town of Shrewsbury. This was despite the newspaper’s only English agents being situated in Ellesmere, Farndon, and Oswestry. This strongly suggests that the Guardian received some of its district intelligence from sources other than its agents: the editor, Ramsden, could have included news gathered by reporters and correspondents of the Chester Courant which he published to fill the columns. In north-west Wales, the sample issues contained brief news from Towyn and Dolgellau in Merionethshire, Bangor and Conway in Caernarvonshire, and Carno, Llanidloes, and Machynlleth in Montgomeryshire, despite none of these places having a Guardian agent.

40 Initially ‘Denbigh Guardian’, WG, 7 September 1878, p.6 but this heading only lasted one week.
41 WG, 14 September 1878, p.6 and WG, 7 September 1878, p.7.
42 WG, 10 May 1879, p.6.
Consequently the 1870 district news sections showed a newspaper which circulated in north-east Wales and the border and possibly the main settlements of north-west Wales.

The sample issues suggest that the *Guardian* had sacrificed regular reporting from certain settlements to regional diversity as only Chester and Oswestry news was included in all three sample issues. In Denbighshire, news appeared frequently from Ruabon and Denbigh whilst Hawarden was the only Flintshire settlement to have its news in more than one sample issue. The lack of regular news from places such as Ruthin, Mold, and Rhyl, despite each town possessing an agent, may suggest that news coverage of north-east Wales was being cut to make way for news from north-west Wales and the border counties. Whitchurch, Conway, Ellesmere, and Shrewsbury news appeared in two sample issues. News from Montgomeryshire settlements was irregular and brief and this suggests that coverage of this county was *ad hoc*, especially as there were no *Guardian* agents in Montgomeryshire. In October 1870 the *Guardian* advertised for correspondents ‘in every town and village in North Wales, Shropshire, and Cheshire, where the paper is not at present represented’; 44 suggesting that the newspaper was attempting to improve its coverage of regional news, and consequently its circulation.

1880

There was a significant difference between the district news columns of 1870 and 1880 in terms of locations and the quantity of news from each county. The 1870 sample issues contained news from seven counties, compared to five in 1880. More significantly over sixty per cent of the locations were in Denbighshire, and over seventy per cent of the sample district news came from that county. This is surprising as in 1879 the newspaper’s changed its title to the *North Wales Guardian* and thus the district news sections would have been expected to include news from throughout north Wales and not almost exclusively from Denbighshire and Flintshire. The only news from outside Denbighshire and Flintshire in the sample issues came from Corwen and Llanuwchllyn in Merionethshire, Oswestry in Shropshire, and Welshpool

43 WG, 11 November 1882, p.6.
44 ‘Wanted’, WG, 22 October 1870, p.4.
in Montgomeryshire, and none from Caernarvonshire or Cheshire. By 1875 the Guardian had agents in Bala, Bangor, Caernarvon, Chester, Dinas Mawddwy, Dolgellau, Holyhead, Malpas, and Shrewsbury and the absence of news from these settlements implies that these agents were not being used as regular correspondents.

In contrast to the 1870 sample issues, news from the main towns of north-east Wales, namely, Denbigh, Ruthin, and Mold, was included in all three sample issues and news from Llangollen, Rhyl, St. Asaph, Hope, Ruabon, Brymbo and Broughton appeared in two of the three issues. All of these settlements except Hope had a Guardian agent. In addition much of the total Denbighshire coverage was devoted to news from Denbigh which may imply that the Guardian was endeavouring to increase its circulation in the town and surrounding area.

1890

The number of towns included in the sample district news columns for 1890 was nearly three times that of 1880 although the actual amount of space devoted to the district news section remained approximately the same. This may suggest that the Guardian and its new owner were sacrificing detailed reports for quantity. News was reported from more locations in Merionethshire, Caernarvonshire, Cheshire, and Shropshire than in 1880 despite the newspaper having fewer agents in these counties than previously. The district news columns were still dominated by Denbighshire and Flintshire news with nearly half of the settlements located in Denbighshire and a third in Flintshire. 1890 saw the first appearance of several Denbighshire and Flintshire settlements in the sample issues, such as Buckley, Connah’s Quay, Gresford, and Overton all of which had an agent in 1890, suggesting that the Guardian was focusing on increasing its circulation in the Wrexham area.

In addition, the number of towns and villages whose news appeared in more than one issue rose. News was regularly reported from the main towns of Denbighshire and Flintshire and even from some of the villages such as Chirk and Buckley, although in much smaller quantities. Despite news from several locations outside north-east Wales being published, only Bala, Ellesmere, and the small village of Trefriw had
their news published in more than one sample issue, which suggests that the *Guardian* had failed to establish a regional network of correspondents.

1900

With the exception of the December sample issue, the district news sections were substantially smaller than those of the previous decade and consequently the number of locations whose news appeared fell by around a third. News from Denbighshire and Flintshire was increasingly dominant with news being reported from only three places outside these two counties, one each in Merionethshire (Corwen), Cheshire (Chester), Caernarvonshire (Llandudno). The largest quantity of local news came from Mold, far ahead of Denbigh and Llangollen whilst the amount of space devoted to villages in the Wrexham area, such as Rossett and Ruabon, continued to increase.

The most frequently appearing locations remained the main towns of north-east Wales such as Ruthin and Denbigh, along with several of the larger villages, such as Rhosllannerchrugog and Ruabon. News from Chester appeared twice and this was the first time that Chester news had appeared in more than one of the sample issues since 1870. This could suggest that the *Guardian* had undergone a resurgence of interest in the city and county but the lack of news from the Chester border villages implies that this was not so.

1910

1910 saw the smallest ever district news sections in any of the sample issues and this pressure on space may have forced the *Guardian* to decide which area's news was most important in order to maintain and improve sales. If so, the newspaper's market was east Denbighshire and Flintshire with no news from a settlement outside this area appearing in any of the sample issues and Denbighshire locations outnumbering Flintshire locations, three to one.

The district news columns were dominated by news from the villages surrounding Wrexham, namely Ruabon, Rhosllannerchrugog, Rhostyllen, Bangor-on-Dee, Hope and Caergwrle, Gwersyllt, and Overton. News from these villages had appeared in other sample issues, regularly in the case of Ruabon, but previously they had been
overshadowed by news from Denbigh, Mold, and Ruthin. Denbigh was the only news reported in the sample issues from outside the Wrexham area. The reduction in the size of the district news section could have been due to the lack of news from Denbigh, Mold, and Ruthin, each of which had supplied large amount of news previously.

Conclusion

The district news columns of the Guardian altered from an initial regional focus to concentrating on news from the Wrexham area by 1910. Cheshire and Shropshire locations were represented in the 1870 and 1890 sample issues but appeared infrequently in other decades. After a fall in the amount of news from outside Denbighshire and Flintshire between 1870 and 1880, the 1890 sample issues saw an attempt to expand the district news column to include more news from Caernarvonshire, Merionethshire, Cheshire, and Shropshire, possibly supported by the newspaper's agents in these counties, but this expansion appears to have been only temporary and strongly suggests that the Guardian had failed to establish sufficient readership in these areas. In addition, the lack of regular news from the main settlements in these counties suggests that the Guardian had been unable to develop a network of regional correspondents. The presence of the Guardian in a newspaper syndicate further complicates geographical circulation as the four newspapers (Wrexham Guardian, Rhyl Guardian, Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post, and Y Dywsogaeth) might have shared their district news with one another. After Jarman purchased the Wrexham Guardian and the Rhyl Guardian in 1895 Shropshire news ceased to appear in the sample issues which implies that the Post had been supplying Shropshire news. Although it is consequently difficult to define the circulation area of the Guardian with certainty, it appears to have attempted to expand into north-west Wales but failed, for reasons unknown, to successfully do so.
3.1.6. Wrexham Free Press [1870-1873]

1870

The district news sections of the sample issues indicate that Free Press circulation was based predominantly upon the Wrexham area. News from Rhos, Llangollen, Mold, and Chester was included in all three sample issues and Oswestry, Gresford, Buckley, Ruabon, Rossett, and Ellesmere news was found in two of the three issues. All of these locations except Chester and Ellesmere had a Free Press agent who may have supplied the news.

The district news column in the December issue showed signs of an attempt to expand the geographical circulation of the newspaper by the inclusion of news from Conway in west Denbighshire, Holywell in west Flintshire, Whitchurch, in Shropshire, and Llanrhaider. The appearance of Mold news suggests the existence of a regular correspondent which would explain why the town was chosen to join Wrexham in the Free Press title heading a year later. By 1870 Wrexham could claim rail connections with many towns and villages in the north of the Principality and the border areas and therefore it does appear that the main obstacle to expanding geographical circulation was its own ambition and the existence of rival newspapers.

3.2. Locations by County

3.2.1. Wrexham Advertiser [1854-1936]

Denbighshire

Although the Advertiser claimed to circulate throughout all of Denbighshire the district news columns of the sample issues show that it did not report news from all areas of the county equally. Amongst the predominantly mining villages, to the west of Wrexham, only news from Brymbo was regularly found in the sample issues and although the amount of news from this village varied, it did show a generally increasing trend. From the 1880s to the beginning of the twentieth century Brymbo
news was usually included with that of Broughton and the only other western settlements to have their news regularly included in the sample issues, Coedpoeth and Minera, were also conjoined in the 1880s and 1890s. This joining of settlements suggests that one reporter or correspondent sent news from both nearby locations and that these settlements were sufficiently important in terms of circulation to justify a correspondent. The amount of news from these industrial villages increased from 1900 onwards.

The pattern for the settlements to the south was more complex and may suggest that one correspondent supplied news from several nearby settlements but with each location’s news being given separately in the district news column. For example, it is possible that one correspondent sent news from Cefn Mawr and Rhosymedre (which were conjoined between the 1870s and 1890s) and nearby Chirk as these settlements saw their news reported in the sample issues at approximately the same time. The correspondent in Rhosllannerchrugog, whose news appeared in every sample issue from the 1890s, may also have been supplying the news from nearby Penycae. Ruabon appears to have possessed a diligent correspondent as its news appeared in all except two sample issues. The large amount of news from these settlements is perhaps not surprising as Ruabon’s population (including that of Cefn Mawr, Penycae, and Rhosllannerchrugog) in 1871 was 15,150 which was larger than that of many north Wales towns. The correspondent in Llangollen could also have supplied the news from Trevor, Vrondeg, and Vroncysyllte, but if so, did so only infrequently. Evidence that one correspondent could represent several settlements was show by the appointment of J. Glyn Humphreys in January 1904 as agent for Rhosllannerchrugog, Johnstown, Ponciau, Penycae, and district, which explains the appearance of news from Acrefair, Johnstown, Penycae, Rhostyllen, and Ponciau in all of the 1910 sample issues as news from these locations had previously appeared only infrequently or not at all.

45 Presumably nearby Pentre Broughton, but not Broughton in Flintshire.
46 These spellings of Frondeg and Froncysyllte are used because these were the versions used in the newspapers.
Wrexham's border location meant that there were relatively few Denbighshire settlements to the east of the town. Of those whose news made its way into the Advertiser's district news columns, Holt was often conjoined with Farndon in Cheshire, and Gresford and Rossett may have shared a correspondent from the 1890s onwards.

Most Denbighshire locations in the sample issues were within ten miles of Wrexham, with the exception of the three settlements in the distant north east: Denbigh, Ruthin, and Llanarmon-yn-iâl. Naturally for any newspaper wishing to describe itself as 'Denbighshire', regular reports from Denbigh and Ruthin would have been essential, and the lack of such reports in the 1900 and 1910 sample issues suggests that the Advertiser had ceased to circulate widely in the two towns, probably because of rival newspapers. The relatively large quantity of news from these two towns in earlier sample issues does imply several correspondents or one (unnamed) full time reporter.

An analysis of the sample issues for 1855 shows that despite the newspaper's title being the Wrexham and Denbigh Advertiser, there was relatively little news from Denbigh, thus suggesting that the town was playing a subordinate role to that of Wrexham, and the removal of Denbigh from the newspaper's title could have been because coverage of that town's affairs was not sufficient to justify its inclusion in the title. The news from the small village of Llanarmon-yn-iâl could have been supplied by the Ruthin correspondent or taken from other newspapers as its appearance was not repeated in any of the other sample issues.

A study of the content of the Advertiser's district news columns shows that, far from publishing news from all parts of Denbighshire, the district news section was increasingly dominated by news from settlements near to Wrexham, especially to the south. The general lack of news from central and western Denbighshire can partly be explained by a lack of rail transportation and agents but also by an absence of sufficiently large settlements, apart from Denbigh and Ruthin.
Flintshire

In contrast, Flintshire news was more geographically spread with most parts of the county being represented. In the east of the county only Mold news regularly appeared in the sample issues, with news from Caergwrle and Hope included from the 1880s onwards. News from other settlements in the area was generally irregular although it is possible that the Mold agent also supplied news from nearby Northop between the 1870s and 1890s. No west Flintshire settlements were found in any sample issues from December 1900, probably due to the establishment of a Mold edition in 1909 but the continuing appearance of eastern settlements may show that villages relatively close to Wrexham were considered to fall under the jurisdiction of the Wrexham, rather than the Mold, edition.

There were fewer settlements in the west of the county and, with one exception, it was unlikely that any of these locations were close enough to share a correspondent. The exception was the two towns of Rhyl and Rhuddlan but due to a general lack of news from either town in the sample issues it is possible that neither possessed an Advertiser correspondent. News from St. Asaph was included only infrequently and may have been sent from the newspaper's Denbigh correspondent as the two towns were situated within five miles of each other. In fact, the general lack of consistent news from any west Flintshire settlement questions whether the newspaper had any correspondents in that part of the county. The absence of a correspondent, and consequently west Flintshire news, could be explained by the existence of several newspapers in Rhyl which may have dominated the local newspaper market.

Maelor Saesneg, the part of Flintshire to the east of Wrexham, cut off from the rest of the county, was closest to Wrexham and may therefore be expected to have contained at least one correspondent to supply news from its major settlements of Bangor-on-Dee, Overton, and Hanmer. However it appears that if the newspaper did have a correspondent in this part of Flintshire they were located in Overton as this settlement's news appeared most often in the sample issues, and did not appear to have supplied news from nearby villages.
Although news from throughout Flintshire appeared in the sample district news columns, the majority of Flintshire news came from settlements situated along the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay rail link. This was to be expected as this was the most densely populated and highly industrialised part of the county. News from other parts of the county did not appear frequently and this may suggest a difficulty in obtaining correspondents. The launching of the Mold edition may have been an acknowledgement that the Advertiser lacked sufficient Flintshire news, especially from the west of the country.

Merionethshire

The sample issues contained news from a total of four Merionethshire towns: Bala, Corwen, Dolgellau, and Blaenau Ffestiniog but no news from Barmouth or any settlement in the west of the county. News from Merionethshire's largest town, Blaenau Ffestiniog, only appeared in one issue and then in a very small quantity, so it may be presumed that its inclusion was a one-off. If the Advertiser had a wide circulation throughout Merionethshire it would presumably have regularly included news from the county's largest town. Consequently it appears that the Advertiser circulated only in eastern Merionethshire, predominantly in the anglicised Corwen area, and not throughout the county as a whole. There was no news from Merionethshire in the twentieth century, possibly a result of falling circulation in the county.

Caernarvonshire and Anglesey

News from Caernarvonshire and Anglesey towns was very rare; news from Bangor was only reported three times in July and December 1865 and March 1900, and news from Caernarvon and Holyhead once each in July 1865. With the exception of Bangor in July 1865, the news from these towns was extremely small. This suggests that the Advertiser had a very limited circulation in Caernarvonshire and that in the 1860s an effort may have been made to expand the newspaper's circulation westwards and attract readers by including Caernarvonshire and Anglesey news. However it appears that this expansion attempt failed as no further Caernarvonshire news appeared in any of the sample issues, except for a brief news report under the general county heading in 1870 and Bangor news in March 1900.
Montgomeryshire

Montgomeryshire news appeared only briefly in the December 1900 sample issues. These reports may have been taken from another newspaper and used as “fillers” because the Advertiser never possessed a Montgomeryshire agent.

Cheshire

News reports from six Cheshire towns were found in the district news section of the sample issues. News from Broxton, Crewe and Malpas was only reported in one sample issue of 1865 and in small quantities, and news from the border village of Pulford appeared infrequently. Chester news was reported in limited quantities in the 1860s and 1870s. Considering Wrexham's close proximity to Cheshire, this lack of news, more predominant from the 1890s onwards, suggests that the Advertiser's circulation in the county was small. The sole exception to this apparent lack of interest in Cheshire news was the village of Farndon. Its news was regularly reported from the 1890s, together with that of nearby Holt. It is possible that Farndon news was included so frequently because the Advertiser had a correspondent in Holt and could publish news from both villages together.

Shropshire

Ellesmere, Oswestry, and Whitchurch were the only Shropshire towns to see their news appear in the sample district news columns. Oswestry was one of the most regularly reported towns, its news being included in each sample issue from March 1865 to December 1900 with only two exceptions. However from the 1880s the amount of Oswestry news began to fall, possibly due to the Advertiser’s increasing concentration upon news from the Wrexham area from the 1890s, and seems to have ended with the death of Charles George Bayley in 1902. News reports from Ellesmere and Whitchurch were brief and limited to the 1860s and 1870s. The fact that news reports from only three Shropshire towns were found in the sample issues, and only in the early years from two of those towns, suggests that the Advertiser never aspired to expand beyond the Shropshire border area as it could have culled local news from the Shrewsbury Chronicle to improve its coverage of Shropshire affairs but did not do so.
3.2.2. Wrexham Telegraph [1855-1867]

Denbighshire

It appears that the Telegraph had few reporters or correspondents in Denbighshire. It regularly reported news from Denbigh, but the 1863 listing does not record a Telegraph agent in the town. The newspaper had an agent in nearby Ruthin, but news from this town did not appear regularly. The Denbigh news could have been taken from other newspapers as the sample issues included reports of a lecture at the reading room, a cattle and wool fair, and a leaving presentation. The Telegraph did not appear to have an agent in Brymbo but two of the sample issues included news from this village. None of the sample issues included news from any of the surrounding settlements which suggests that if the newspaper did have a correspondent in Brymbo they were not sending in news from nearby villages. Despite having agents in 1863 in Llangollen and Ruabon, no news from any of the settlements to the south of Wrexham appeared in the sample issues.

Flintshire

The 1865 sample issues included news from some of the major settlements in both east and west Flintshire, but, with the exception of Mold and Caergwrle, none from the area along the Wrexham, Mold & Connah’s Quay railway line. This is surprising as the railway would have brought more people and prosperity to the area and in gaining regular correspondents from the area, the Telegraph would have been poised to increase its circulation in this part of the north Wales coalfield when the railway opened in 1866. In addition, the Telegraph had an agent in Mold, in the east of the county, who could have supplied news from these settlements. In the west of the county, the sample issues included news from Bagillt and St. Asaph. The newspaper had an agent in St. Asaph, and the news from Bagillt could have been sent from either of its agents in Flint or Holywell, although the Holywell agent does not appear to have regularly supplied news. News from Rhyl did not appear in the sample issues which implies that the agent was unwilling to send news to the Telegraph, or perhaps that,

---

47 WT, 4 March 1865, p.4.
48 WT, 1 July 1865, p.4.
49 WT, 6 December 1865, p.2.
due to the existence of several Rhyl newspapers, the Wrexham newspaper did not have a large circulation in that town and therefore did not consider it worthwhile to include Rhyl news in its columns. The sample issues included one example of news from Maelor Saesneg, from Bangor-on-Dee. This news may have come from the newspaper's agent in Overton, but if so, this again poses the question as to why an agent would seemingly report news from a nearby settlement but not from their own.

**Cheshire**

Despite the *Telegraph* having an agent in Chester itself and at the railway bookstall, the sole Cheshire news in the sample district news columns came from Threapwood and may have been sent by the same individual who supplied the news from nearby Bangor-on-Dee. The Chester agent at the railway bookstall was probably too busy to supply local news to one of the newspapers he sold and the other Chester agent was W.H. Smith & Son, who would not have supplied local news. In the absence of other Cheshire agents the newspaper may have been forced to rely on occasional reports from agents in areas near to Cheshire. However this lack of Cheshire news, especially from the western part of the county, does question the newspaper's claim to its west Cheshire sub-title.

**Shropshire**

None of the *Telegraph*'s three Shropshire agents, one in Ellesmere and two in Oswestry, supplied news for any of the sample issues and the only Shropshire news came from the town of Whitchurch. This news, a meeting of the Whitchurch and Malpas Farmers Club,\(^50\) could have been attended by members from Wrexham who could have written the report for the newspaper or the newspaper could have sent a reporter to cover the meeting. Alternatively, the meeting took place on the twenty-third of February, and therefore it is possible that this meeting was reported in another newspaper and the *Telegraph* report, published in the fourth of March issue, taken unacknowledged. Once again, the lack of Shropshire news questions the extent to which the *Telegraph* could justify its north Shropshire sub-title.

---

\(^50\) *WT*, 4 March 1865, p.4.
3.2.3. *Wrexham Guardian* [1869-1954]

**Denbighshire**

As with the *Advertiser*, to the west of Wrexham, Brymbo (conjoined probably with Pentre Broughton in the 1880s and 1890s) was the only settlement to regularly appear in the district news columns of the *Guardian*’s sample issues. Despite Coedpoeth and Minera being linked in the district news section at the turn of the century, news from these settlements was not especially frequent. This lack of news from settlements just to the west of Wrexham suggests that Brymbo was the only location in that area to have a correspondent. If so, it was well-situated to supply news from Southsea, Summerhill, Gwersyllt, Coedpoeth and Minera, but again if this did occur, such reporting happened only sporadically. Most of these settlements were working class mining villages and strongly Nonconformist so the *Guardian*’s lack of news coverage and correspondents in these areas could be explained by the small potential market.

In contrast, news from settlements south of Wrexham appeared more frequently in the district news columns and several of these settlements, namely Chirk, Llangollen, Ruabon, Rhosllannerchrugog, and, from the 1890s, Cefn and Rhosymedre saw their news appear regularly in the *Guardian*. Chirk, Cefn and Rhosymedre, and Ruabon, as already mentioned, were situated close to each other and their news could have been sent from one correspondent, possibly located in Ruabon as its news appeared most frequently. Despite its position as a working class, mining, and predominately Welsh-speaking village, news from Rhosllannerchrugog began to appear regularly in the sample issues from the 1890s, possibly in response to the newspaper’s desire to expand its circulation both geographically and socially. Rhosllannerchrugog’s correspondent could also have reported news from nearby Pontcysyllte, whose news begin to appear at the end of the century. Similarly the correspondent in Llangollen could have supplied the one piece of Vroncysyllte news found in the sample issues. News from Rhostyllen, which appeared regularly from the turn of the century, might have been sent by the newly established agent.

To the east of Wrexham it appears that from the 1890s one correspondent covered both settlements of Gresford and Rossett as news appeared frequently from both
villages. However this correspondent seemed unwilling to expand their area of reporting to Holt as there was no news from this border village, nor was Holt news combined with that of Farndon and sent from a Cheshire correspondent.

In contrast to the *Advertiser*, the *Guardian* offered news from more settlements in the distant west of the county, but most of the news from this area came from Denbigh and Ruthin. The inclusion of news from Llanddoget and Llanrwst in the 1890 sample issues reflects the close proximity of the two settlements and their brief appearance suggests that the newspaper found it difficult to establish itself in that area. News from Abergele and Bryneglwys may have been supplied by correspondents in Rhyl and Corwen, but seemingly only infrequently. The *Guardian* may have attempted to increase its news coverage in west Denbighshire but failed to achieve its aim because of a lack of correspondents or the poor communications in rural west Denbighshire which made a regular news supply difficult.

If judged by its district news coverage, the *Guardian* had a better claim than the *Advertiser* to describe itself as a Denbighshire newspaper. Its coverage of nearby settlements to the west of Wrexham was less thorough than that of its rival but this could be explained by a potentially smaller readership in that area. The sample issues did include news from several settlements in the far west of Denbighshire, but such coverage was irregular and infrequent and suggests that it had difficulty in establishing correspondents in that area, although the *Guardian* does appear to have made a greater effort than the *Advertiser* to develop readership there. Overall the *Guardian* appears to have attempted to provide its readers with news from throughout Denbighshire, but mainly from the populous settlements to the south of Wrexham.

**Flintshire**

The *Guardian*'s circulation in east Flintshire seems to have been concentrated upon the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay railway line although with only news from the village of Hope being reported in the 1910 sample issues, it appears that the *Guardian*'s influence in this part of the county declined in the early twentieth century. A correspondent based in Flint could have supplied news from both that town and nearby Connah's Quay and one situated in either Buckley or Hawarden could have
supplied news from both these villages and from Penyffordd. News from Hope and Caergwrle (which were conjoined at the turn of the century), Flint, and Mold appeared regularly in the district news columns and the Mold correspondent could have also sent in news reports from Nerquis and Northop, although if this happened, it occurred infrequently. As Llanfynydd and Tryddyn shared an agent their news was also probably sent in by one correspondent, possibly the same one who had supplied news from Hope and Caergwrle.

As with the Advertiser, news from west Flintshire appeared less frequently than that of east Flintshire. The usually simultaneous appearance of news from Bagillt and Holywell in the same sample issues strongly implies that these two nearby settlements shared a correspondent. From 1873 the Guardian would have received news from its sister newspaper in Rhyl. This news may have been used to persuade readers and advertisers that the Guardian had a regional circulation.

In Maelor Saesneg the Guardian supplied news from more settlements than the Advertiser but although the quantity of news from this area did increase substantially over time, it probably still only possessed one correspondent covering this small area. As all of the news from this part of Flintshire appeared in the sample issues from 1890 onwards, this implies that the newspaper gained a correspondent in that area at this time. This may have been a response to attempts to expand the geographical limits of its circulation, although the Guardian could have established a correspondent earlier, as this area was close to Wrexham.

In Flintshire, the majority of the Guardian's news came from the industrial populous settlements in the east of the county. These locations were closer to Wrexham than those in the west and the relative lack of news from west Flintshire does make it appear that it, like the Advertiser, had been unable to establish itself in west Flintshire, possibly due to transport difficulties, but more probably because that area fell under the catchment of the Rhyl Guardian.
Merionethshire

News from only four Merionethshire locations appeared in the sample issues: Bala, Corwen, Dolgellau, and Llanuwchllyn. News from Dolgellau was limited to the 1870 sample issues which suggests that coverage of the town was limited to the Guardian's short-lived attempt to expand its circulation throughout north Wales, and news from Bala was limited to the 1890 sample issues, which may suggest a brief attempt to build up circulation in Bala towards the end of the century. Corwen news was reported regularly, albeit in small quantities, until the July 1900 sample issue. It is not surprising that Merionethshire news was limited to Corwen; the county as a whole contained few large settlements and was dominated by monoglot Welsh-speakers with anglicised Corwen being a noticeable exception. It is surprising that news from the small village of Llanuwchllyn, near Bala, was regularly included in the 1890 sample issues, whilst there was no news from the larger settlements. It appears that either Llanuwchllyn or its news had suddenly become interesting. There were no news reports from the western towns of Aberdovery or Barmouth in any of the sample issues despite the Guardian possessing agents there between 1872 and 1890 and 1872 and 1875.

Caernarvonshire

Considering that the Guardian aspired to circulate throughout north Wales, its coverage of Caernarvonshire news was extremely limited and irregular. The news in the 1870 sample issues came from the two towns of Bangor and Conway, not from the larger settlement of Caernarvon. This lack of Caernarvon news could have been due to the dominating presence of the Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald despite the existence of a Guardian agent in the town. In the 1890 sample issues there was some news from the village of Trefriw but after this date, with one exception, no Caernarvonshire news was found in any of the sample issues, thus signalling the Guardian's seeming lack of interest in Caernarvonshire affairs.

Montgomeryshire

News from Montgomeryshire appeared between the 1870s and the turn of the century, and the seven pieces of Montgomeryshire news in the sample issues came from six different locations. This suggests that the Guardian had yet to define a circulation...
policy for Montgomeryshire and appears to have included Montgomeryshire news only when the event was of great interest or possibly when a brief news report was needed to fill space. Consequently, it is unlikely that the Guardian either had a correspondent in the county or significant circulation, the county probably being served by the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post rather than the Guardian.

Cheshire
The pattern for Cheshire news was one of regular and lengthy news reports from Chester in the 1870 and 1900 sample issues but few between those dates, and very little news from the remainder of the county. The large amount of Chester news in the 1870 sample district news columns, and its subsequent absence suggests that the Guardian was attempting to establish a large circulation in Chester, and possibly within the county, but that this attempt either failed or was withdrawn, possibly after the departure of Ramsden as editor. It is interesting that there was very little coverage of the border villages, especially in the 1870 issues, because if the newspaper was attempting to establish itself as a Cheshire newspaper it should have offered far greater coverage of the county as a whole.

Shropshire
News from Shropshire was concentrated upon the two towns of Ellesmere and Oswestry, both located near Wrexham, on the border. News from Oswestry was found in all of the 1870 sample issues but had petered out by 1900 whilst Ellesmere news was only found in the sample issues of 1870 and 1890. Whitchurch and Shrewsbury news was included in the 1870 sample issues, with the Shrewsbury news, concerning an election petition, being taken from the Birmingham Gazette. As such news was taken from another newspaper, this suggests that the Guardian lacked a correspondent in the town. By 1890 the Guardian and the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Post had ceased to be in the same syndicate. If the Guardian was being supplied with Shropshire news by the Post, this arrangement would have ended and consequently the Guardian may have been unable to gain local correspondents of its own or decided that its circulation in the county was too small to justify regular news reports.
3.2.4. Wrexham Free Press [1870-1873]

Denbighshire

The Free Press’s coverage of Denbighshire was heavily biased towards settlements to the south of Wrexham. Most of its news came from the southern settlements, especially Rhosllannerchrugog, Llangollen, and Ruabon. News from Rhosllannerchrugog and Ponciau could have been sent by the same correspondent, as could the news from Chirk and Ruabon. Pentre Broughton was the only village in the west to have its news included in the sample issues. The Free Press seems to have possessed a correspondent in either Gresford or Rossett or both as news from these two areas appeared regularly. None of the sample issues included news from either Denbigh or Ruthin, as would have been expected for a Denbighshire newspaper, but instead contained news from Conway on the coast and Llanrhaidr DC, near Denbigh. This clearly demonstrates that the newspaper’s correspondents and possibly also its circulation were situated in the south of Denbighshire.

Flintshire

News from five Flintshire settlements appeared in the three sample issues, none of these in Maelor Saesneg. The inclusion of news from Holywell in the December sample issue and the appearance of Mold news in all three sample issues may have been a sign that the newspaper was planning to alter its title to include both of these towns, although (with the exception of July 1870) the amount of news from these two towns was small. The Mold correspondent may also have supplied news from Buckley. Coverage of Flintshire was based upon news from Mold with little coverage of other areas of Flintshire.

Caernarvonshire

The December 1870 sample issue contained news from Aber but this was probably a one-off event and taken from another newspaper as the Free Press never demonstrated any inclination to expand into Caernarvonshire.
Cheshire

Chester was the only Cheshire location to appear in the district news section and its news was included in all three sample issues. It is surprising that the newspaper failed to publish news from border locations such as Farndon and Pulford, but it may have lacked a reporter or correspondent in these areas, whereas Chester news could be taken directly from one of the Chester newspapers. The inclusion of such news may not necessarily mean that the Free Press had a large circulation in Chester but that Chester news was included primarily for the benefit of north Wales readers who wished to know that was occurring in the neighbouring city.

Shropshire

Shropshire was represented in the Free Press' district news columns by news from Oswestry, Ellesmere, and Whitchurch. All of these towns had an agent and their appearance might imply that the newspaper was seeking to expand into eastern Shropshire.

4. Conclusion

An analysis of the district news section of each newspaper can help to define the geographical circulation area of each title and changes over time. Early Wrexham newspapers, namely the Recorder, Registrar, the monthly Advertiser, Albion, and early issues of the Telegraph did not have a district news column and therefore it is difficult to comment on the geographical extent of their circulation. The weekly Advertiser offered less geographical diversity in its district news columns, concentrating on the Wrexham area, Denbigh, Ruthin, east Flintshire, east Merionethshire, and the border area, than the Guardian although the latter's coverage of north-west Wales was largely superficial. The initial district news coverage of the Free Press was concentrated, as the newspaper's title implies, on the Wrexham area although more Flintshire news could have appeared when the title was changed in 1872. The district news section of the Guardian is complicated by its membership of a newspaper syndicate and further research of the newspapers involved could indicate to what extent local and regional news was shared between the newspapers.