

British Library Newspapers: Literary Serialization in the 19th-Century Provincial Press

Graham Law, Waseda University, Tokyo

In *Communication as Culture*, James W. Carey advocates “a ritual view of communication” valuing the “representation of shared beliefs” which draw groups of people together “in fellowship and commonality”, as opposed to the “transmission view” that, focused on “the act of imparting information ... for the purpose of control”, dominates our perception of modern media (Carey, p. 15). In doing so, he finds support in the apparently perverse example of “the role of the newspaper in social life”, explaining that, from a ritual perspective, “news is not information but drama. It does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; ... it invites our participation on the basis of our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it.” (Carey, p. 17). From its origins in the *corantos* (literally, runners or messengers) of the early seventeenth century through to its digital, mobile manifestations in the early twenty-first, the newspaper has always served a variety of social functions and included a considerably wider range of material than is

suggested by the standard definition of news found in the OED -- a “report or account of recent ... events or occurrences” (“news” n. 2). But the growing prevalence and popularity during the nineteenth century of instalment fiction in British provincial journals offers a particularly telling instance of Carey’s point. Benedict Anderson, in his analysis of the origins and spread of nationalism in *Imagined Communities*, draws particular attention to the novel and the newspaper as the “two forms of imagining which ... provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (Anderson, pp. 24-25), situating these new forms of communication within the development of “print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways” (Anderson, p. 36). Yet the serial fiction encountered in the columns of the Victorian provincial press suggests that this new identification with an imagined national community still often

had to compete with affiliations more local in character. The aims of this essay are thus two. First, to sketch the socio-economic underpinnings of the emergence of the weekly “news miscellany”, the provincial press format in which Victorian serial fiction particularly flourished. And second, to offer an illustrated overview of the main forms of serial fiction found there, touching at the same time on sources of supply and modes of affiliation.

At the end of the eighteenth century, newspapers in Britain were luxury goods available only to the wealthy few. There were then around 150 distinct titles in print nationwide, the large majority local weekly journals, and even the highest subscriptions for metropolitan dailies like *The Morning Post* and *The Times* fell short of 5,000 (Altick, p. 392). But by the start of the twentieth century, newspapers had been largely transformed into cheap commodities available to the masses. There were by then nearly 2,500 separate titles (Mitchell's, 1901), with the circulation of the halfpenny *Daily Mail* rather over half a million (Altick, pp. 395-6). The general causes underlying this remarkable expansion were of course the developments in “print capitalism” cited by Anderson, that is, the steady transformation from a mode of production based on many small, local firms in private family hands to one controlled by a handful of huge joint-stock, mass-market companies. This process, naturally, went hand in hand with rapid technological advances affecting press production and distribution, with the gradual arterialization of the flow of information through the creation of agencies and syndicates, as well as with steep demographic rises in population and literacy (Law, “Distribution”). However, the pattern of growth over the century had been far from uniform, with several stutters during the opening quarter and an acceleration much more rapid in the second half. Indeed, at mid-century, with the British population already reaching 27 million, there were still only around 560 newspaper titles available (Mitchell's, 1851), less than a quarter of the total in America with its 23 million people (Coggeshall, p. 122). Aggregate sales of daily papers then amounted to little more than 60,000 copies, representing only one for roughly 400 persons (“Report from the Select Committee”, p. 420). The reasons for this marked unevenness were less technological and commercial than legal and fiscal. The most obdurate restraints on growth were the trio of “taxes on knowledge”, as the heavy duties on printing paper, press advertisements, and published news itself, were known to their numerous opponents. The motives behind these imposts

were not only financial (raising revenue for military and other government expenditure), but also political (restricting the formation and spread of critical public opinion), so that the campaign against them was supported by political radicals as well as economic liberals. First imposed early in the eighteenth century, these taxes rose to a peak during the Napoleonic Wars, before being significantly reduced in the wake of the 1832 Reform Act and finally abolished by 1861, when the organization of the press became free of fiscal distortion for the first time since the reign of Queen Anne (Law, “Distribution”).

The most immediate effects of the abolition of the newspaper stamp in 1855, the first tax to go, were seen in the provincial press, where there was an explosion of new newspapers. Between 1854 and 1856, while the number of journals appearing in the metropolis increased by less than 10%, from 139 to 151, titles published elsewhere in Great Britain jumped by over 40% from 473 to 629 (Collet, II pp. 32-33). Daily penny newspapers were established for the first time in cities in the provinces, whether entirely new organs such as the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* and *Liverpool Daily Post* (both 1855), or converted from established weekly papers like the *Glasgow Herald* (1859) and *Sheffield Independent* (1861). There were thus at least 50 dailies outside London by 1865 (Mitchell's, 1866). Most urban centres of any importance soon had at least a couple of competing newspaper proprietors of different political persuasions (Lee, Ch. 5), while around one hundred towns that had never had a newspaper before gained one in the five years following the abolition of the stamp (Jones, pp. 23-4). Amongst this profusion of new country newspapers, perhaps the most prevalent and distinctive was the penny weekly news miscellany, which normally appeared at the weekend and often, though by no means always, as a special Saturday supplement or companion to an existing daily. It contained not only a summary of the week's local and national news, but also a variety of instructive and entertainment matter, and often reached a wide geographical and social readership. The new format emerged first in the outlying provinces where metropolitan literary periodicals hardly penetrated -- a notable pioneer was the *People's Journal*, a companion to the *Dundee Advertiser*. Throughout the second half of the century, such news miscellanies remained the most comprehensive print resource for many members of the communities they served, and today represent one of the most detailed records of developments in local society and regional culture (Law and Patten, pp. 155-58).

Despite the fact that the stamp duty offered a major economic disincentive to its inclusion, throughout much of the eighteenth century popular weekly newspapers both metropolitan and provincial still seemed keen to carry fiction in instalments (Wiles, pp. 25-74). Though the practice seems to have lapsed completely while the tax was at its prohibitive peak of fourpence from 1797 to 1836, thereafter, in a manner deriving from the French *feuilleton*, a number of middle-class weekly papers in London like *The Sunday Times* and *Illustrated London News*, experimented with the incorporation of literary material (Law, “Nothing but a Newspaper”). During the period when newspapers still had to pay the penny stamp tax, however, serial fiction remained very thin on the ground in provincial journals. Among the occasional exceptions we might note:

- the historical romances “The Mysterious Monk” and “The Mosstroopers” by the young Perthshire antiquarian Robert Scott Fittis, appearing serially in the *Perth and Dundee Saturday Journal* from 16 July 1842 and 20 January 1844 respectively (Millar)
- the full-length novel “Sunshine and Shadow”, with a powerful political message by radical leader Thomas Martin Wheeler, in the Chartist weekly the (Leeds) *Northern Star* from 31 March 1849 to 5 January 1850 (see Fig. 1a.)
- a lengthy run of shorter serial stories, typically with illustrations but without signature, beginning with “Broadfields Manor”, appearing simultaneously from June 1854 in at least a dozen country journals, from the *Alnwick Mercury* in the northeast to the *Crediton Advertiser* in the southwest, which appeared only monthly, thus avoiding payment of the newspaper stamp (see Fig. 1b.)

However, with the removal of the taxes on knowledge and the emergence of the weekly news miscellany (see Fig. 2a-d.), the British newspaper press exhibited a mushroom growth in the supply of serial fiction, clearly indicating the strength of pent-up demand. The surge appeared first in Scotland and soon in northern and western England and Wales, though it then steadily reached back towards the home counties and the metropolis itself. Steady sources of supply soon required the development of various modes of syndication, that is, the distribution of identical material simultaneously to a number of independent journals, typically owned by different proprietors and with discrete catchment areas. Such syndicates were initially local, informal and small-scale, but by the mid-1870s they were highly systematic and nationwide or even

international in scope. The two most successful agencies, which also provided non-fiction features such as poetry and puzzles, or columns aimed at women and children, were Cassell’s General Press in the metropolis, best known for their partly printed sheets, and Tillotson’s Fiction Bureau of Bolton, Lancashire, specializing in material in stereotype (Law, *Serializing Fiction*, pp. 64-122). The financial rewards offered by such syndicating agencies soon attracted established authors with metropolitan reputations like Mary Braddon and Wilkie Collins to the provincial journals: “Literature has taken a curious phase in England so far as fiction is concerned. The largest prices are now got from country newspapers who form syndicates, and each subscribe their portion towards the novel ...”, the German publisher Tauchnitz was informed in 1878 by popular novelist James Payn (cited in Law, *Serializing Fiction*, p. 161).

Yet Tillotson’s regular clients also included many smaller country journals who could not afford the substantial sums required to obtain serials rights to the latest novel from the likes of Braddon or Collins. These tended to be concentrated beyond the Trent, and preferred to purchase cheaper stories with a general northern flavour. In the early days, Tillotson’s thus marketed a number of serials set in the Bolton area by anonymous local writers, and in the 1880s they were offering fiction by Lancastrians who had established national reputations, including the veteran Mancunian author Isabella (Mrs G. Linnaeus) Banks. From around 1890, the Fiction Bureau began to contract with a number of reliable regional authors of limited fame to produce a given amount of fiction per year at a pre-determined salary. These included Dora Russell, a Northumbrian sensationalist, and J. Monk Foster, a former miner from Lancashire writing local industrial serials (Law, *Serializing Fiction*, pp. 64-91). Thus provincial writers with local themes remained perennially popular, and a number learned to turn the mechanisms of syndication to their own account.

In the years immediately following the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, however, the demand for popular fiction in provincial newspapers was largely met on an *ad hoc* basis by authors with strong links to the regional community and/or direct involvement in the local press, with amateur fiction competitions among readers occasionally used to unearth new talent (Law, *Serializing Fiction*, pp. 45-47). Such local authors tended to work within the genres of either historical romance or contemporary social realism. Fig. 3 provides a set of

representative examples, all biographical in form, but deriving in turn from Sheffield in South Yorkshire, Aberdeen in the north of Scotland, and Cardiff in South Wales:

- “Wadsley Jack” (*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, from 2 December 1865) is an unsigned dramatic monologue in broad dialect, representing the “Travels and Humours of a Flat-back Cutler” from Wadsley, a north-western suburb of Sheffield, and in fact by Reuben Hallam (1818-1908), a carver with local fame as an organist, singer and orator. The sequel “Wadsley Jack’s Married Life” was serialised in the columns of the same Conservative paper the following year, while the original narrative appeared with the author’s name as a volume from local publisher Edward Weston in 1881.
- “Judith Lee” (*Sheffield Independent*, from 6 January 1866) is a tragic tale of “Old Sheffield” centring on the daughter of an evil factory owner, told in standard, formal English from the viewpoint of an aging resident. It was in fact written by R.E. Leader (1839-1922), local antiquarian, Liberal party stalwart, as well as proprietor/editor of the Liberal *Independent*, which recommended such historical fiction as a way of “varying the contents ... and affording a change from our constant record of present events” (Unsigned, “Judith Lee”). The novel was reprinted locally the same year as a slim volume from Leader & Sons.
- “Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk” (*Aberdeen Free Press*, 28 September 1869 - 20 December 1870, intermittently) is a grimly humorous third-person narrative laced with dialogue in broad dialect, concerning changing agricultural life in Aberdeenshire a quarter of a century earlier. Unsigned, it was in fact written by William Alexander (1826-94), who issued a series of powerfully naturalistic tales and novels in the Aberdeen press from the early 1850s to the late 1870s, reflecting a “lifelong interest in the shaping power of heredity and the environment on human character” (Donaldson, p. 103). *Johnny Gibb* itself was republished as a volume in Aberdeen by Walker & Smith in 1871.
- “Gwendoline Margrave” (*Cardiff Weekly Mail*, from 22 July 1871), is a well-researched, fictionalized account of the “Rebecca Riots”, the series of protests in the early 1840s by farmers dressed in female attire against deteriorating social conditions in rural South Wales, traditionally associated with the introduction of the turnpike system. The novel is signed “Carl Morganwg”, pen-name of John Charles Manning (1827-1907), author of *The Death of Saul; and Other Eisteddfod Prize Poems and Miscellaneous Verses* (1877), a native of Staffordshire

who made his career as a journalist in South Wales. Like his other works of newspaper fiction such as “Frozen Hearts” in the *Cardiff Times* from late 1886, “Gwendoline Margrave” was apparently never reprinted in book form.

Despite the range of narrative themes and styles, within the columns of the news miscellany each of these local stories functions not as a diversion from the quotidian socio-political concerns of the press, but rather, in Carey’s words, serves to portray “an arena of dramatic forces and action” inviting readers to participate by “assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it”.

Two of the most prolific and popular provincial newspaper novelists of the later nineteenth century, each responsible for over fifty lengthy serial novels over several decades, were David Pae (1828-84), whose life was spent in southern Scotland, and James Skipp Borlase (1839-1902), who hailed from Cornwall but travelled far and wide. Otherwise remarkably different in values and temperament, both preferred melodramatic historical romances with a good deal of local colour, and exhibited much enterprise in distributing their fiction by means of what we must call self-syndication. This can be said to take place when authors take the initiative to sell serial rights to their own work to a number of independent newspapers with discrete circulations either in parallel or in series. Beginning with *Lucy, the Factory Girl* in 1858, Pae’s latest offerings were shared by newspaper editors in Edinburgh and Glasgow, soon to be followed by the brothers John and William Leng, proprietors respectively of the *People’s Journal* in Dundee and the *Telegraph* in Sheffield; by 1870 the author was broadcasting printed publicity and each of his new novels was being serialized in around a dozen major weeklies all over Scotland, Ulster, and northern England (Pae, pp. 345-48). Unlike that of William Alexander, Pae’s fiction was not restricted in setting to a single local community, nor written to any significant extent in dialect. His *mise-en-scène* ranges not only all over Scotland, from Edinburgh to Glasgow and from the Highlands to Tweedside, but shifts on occasion to the north of Ireland or the Lancashire cotton towns; many seem to have been composed with a specific local readership in mind, though this does not seem to have affected their popularity further afield.

Since a fair amount of scholarly attention has already been paid to Pae (Donaldson, pp. 77-100, especially), here I will here focus more on Borlase, who served the later part of

his literary apprenticeship in the Australian colonies in the mid-1860s. Having already contributed to popular London story papers like the *Family Herald*, in Victoria and Tasmania he seems to have worked for journals of a similar character. On his return to Britain he regularly wrote adventure stories for boys in children's annuals and weeklies (Unsigned. "Some Interesting Notes"), though far more of his writing seems to have found its way into provincial newspapers by one means or another. In the 1870s, to the *Leaders of Sheffield* he sold Australian stories such as *Tales of the Bush* and *The Adventures of a Mounted Trooper*, which seem to have already appeared in colonial periodicals (Sussex). In the 1880s for the Leng Syndicate at the *Sheffield Telegraph*, he wrote exotic romances, several set in Czarist Russia like *Both Princess and Police Spy* and *Nina the Nihilist*. When demand from the major syndicators began to wane, he was the first of several authors to place ads in the trade paper *The Journalist* offering to all-comers lists of his wares (Law, "Imagined Local Communities", pp. 192-97), which by then included military tales such as *Love Among the Bombshells* ("A Tale of the Bombardment of Alexandria", in the Middlesbrough *Weekly Gazette* from March 1883). But for our purposes, his most interesting works are those historical romances with local settings which he produced to order for major provincial city journals from the early 1880s onwards.

Fig. 4a-d shows publicity for four distinct historical romances published by Borlase over the decade from 1881 to 1890, each set in and around the city hosting the weekly miscellany which serialized the story -- respectively Dundee, Leicester, Worcester and Northampton. There every announcement makes an explicit appeal to the local affiliation of the story and local identity of the readership. And this represents merely the tip of the iceberg: each of the papers concerned carried at least one other similar local narrative during the decade in question, while the same pattern of publication can be found in papers like the *Derby & Chesterfield Reporter*, *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, (*Cardiff Weekly Mail*, and *Liverpool Weekly Post*, with the sequence extending into the mid-1890s. Altogether, close to twenty of Borlase's localized historical romances have been traced, with doubtless others still to come to light. The Cornishman was clearly a resourceful writer, for there seems no evidence of any intimate link with the regions concerned. Late in his life, Borlase wrote that his talent as a writer revealed "not a spark of true genius but merely a power of mechanical construction" (Borlase). The term "mechanical" seems fitting. A fair number of Borlase's local serials start off with a striking scene on a well-known bridge over the local river,

and more than one involves a rescue from drowning either suicidal or homicidal. "The Nevilles of Nottingham" in the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* from late 1886, for example, bears more than a passing resemblance to "The Lily of Leicester" in the Leicester Chronicle from Christmas 1885, while "The White Witch" in the *Worcestershire Chronicle* and "The Crone's Curse" in the *Northampton Mercury* are fundamentally the same story. In contrast to work by the likes of Hallam or Alexander, Borlase's customized local melodramas thus undoubtedly lack complexity and authenticity in the portrayal of "an arena of dramatic forces and action", to use Carey's terms. Nevertheless, they still offer compelling evidence that, despite the increasing availability of more exotic fruits of the literary imagination in the later Victorian decades, the taste for local and regional fiction was by no means eradicated.

Whether Carey's "ritual view of communication" and Anderson's "imagined community" represent the most fruitful concepts to apply to the serial fiction found in British nineteenth-century provincial newspapers must be a matter for debate, but what is indisputable is that a lot of research remains to be done in this field. There are a number of outstanding studies of particular papers, such as Edward Cass's work on the *Cotton Factory Times*, and of particular regions in particular periods -- notably William Donaldson on Victorian Scotland, which employs, as a working definition of popular literature, material "written specifically for publication in newspapers" (Donaldson, p. 154). Yet, with the most up-to-date bibliography of regional fiction concerned only with work in volume form (Snell), and thus entirely overlooking the local newspaper serial along with virtually the entire oeuvre of authors such as Pae and Borlase, there are bound to be many gaps. Large-scale digital archives such as Gale's *British Library Newspapers* clearly offer a golden opportunity to redress the balance.

Citation

Graham Law, 'British Library Newspapers: Literary Serialization in the 19th-Century Provincial Press', *British Library Newspapers*. Detroit: Gale Cengage Learning, 2017.

Bibliography

Altick, Richard D. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 1991.

Borlase, James Skipp. ALS to George Redway, 1 January 1898, National Library of Australia, MSS 7661.

Carey, James W. *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Rev. ed. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Cass, Edward Fletcher. "The Cotton Factory Times, 1885-1927: A Family Newspaper and the Lancashire Cotton Community." Ph.D. Thesis, Edge Hill University College, University of Lancaster. September, 1996.

Coggeshall, W.T. *The Newspaper Record*. Philadelphia: Lay & Bro., 1856.

Collet, Collet Dobson. *History of the Taxes on Knowledge*. 2 vols. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899.

Donaldson, William. *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986.

Jones, Aled. *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power, and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996.

Law, Graham. "Distribution", in *Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, eds. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, London/New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 42-59.

Law, Graham. "Imagined Local Communities: Three Victorian Newspaper Novelists", in *Printing Places: Locations of Book Production and Distribution since 1500*, ed. John Hinks & Catherine Armstrong. London: British Library / Newcastle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2005, pp. 185-203

Law, Graham. "Nothing but a Newspaper": Serializing Fiction in the Press in the 1840s", in *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers*, ed. Laurel Brake & Julie F. Codell. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 29-49.

Law, Graham. *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.

Law, Graham, and Robert L. Patten. "The Serial Revolution", in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume VI 1830-1914*. Cambridge: CUP, 2009, pp. 144-171.

Lee, Alan J. *The Origins of the Popular Press in England 1855-1914*. London: Croom Helm, 1976.

Millar, A.H. "Robert Scott Fittis (Biographical)", in Robert Scott Fittis, *The Mossrooper: A Legend of the Scottish Border*. Perth: Wood & Son, 1906, pp. v-xv.

Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory, 1851, 1857, 1866, 1901.

"news, n." OED Online. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 10 August 2016.

Pae, David. *Lucy, the Factory Girl; or, The Secrets of the Tontine Close*, ed. Graham Law. Hastings, Sussex: Sensation Press, 2001.

Report from the Select Committee on Newspaper Stamps. House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1851 (558).

Snell, K.D.M. *The Bibliography of Regional Fiction in Britain and Ireland, 1800-2000*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002.

Sussex, Lucy, with John Burrows. "Whodunit?": Literary Forensics and the Crime Writing of James Skipp Borlase and Mary Fortune", in *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 21:2 (2nd Quarter, 1997), pp. 73-105.

Unsigned. "Death of Carl Morganwg", (Cardiff) *Evening Express* (31 May 1907), p. 4.

Unsigned, "Judith Lee: A Tale of 'Old Sheffield'", *Sheffield Independent* (6 January 1866), p. 9.

Unsigned. "The Late Mr David Pae, Novelist and Editor of *People's Friend*", *People's Journal* (17 May 1884), p. 3.

Unsigned. "Some Interesting Notes about Mr James Skipp Borlase", *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* (11 November 1887) p. 2.

Wiles, R.M. *Freshest Advices: Early Provincial Newspapers in England*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1965.

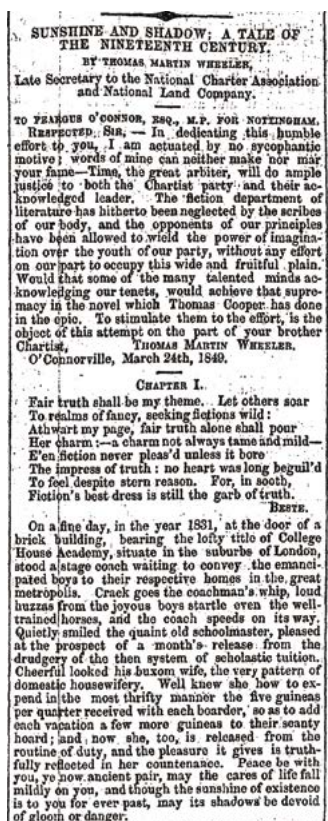


Figure 1a. Opening of Wheeler, "Sunshine and Shadow", (Leeds) Northern Star, Saturday 31 March 1849 (BLN Part I)

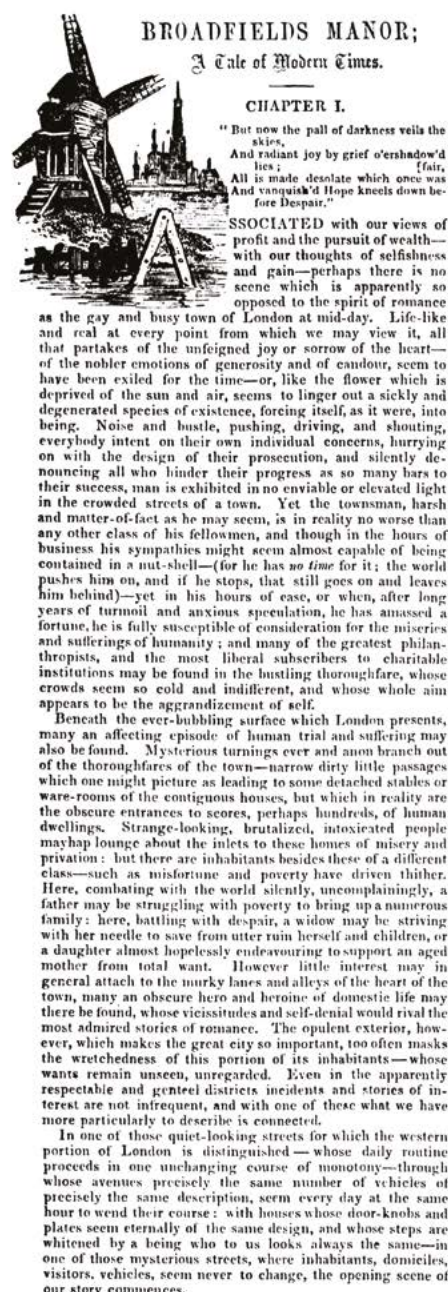
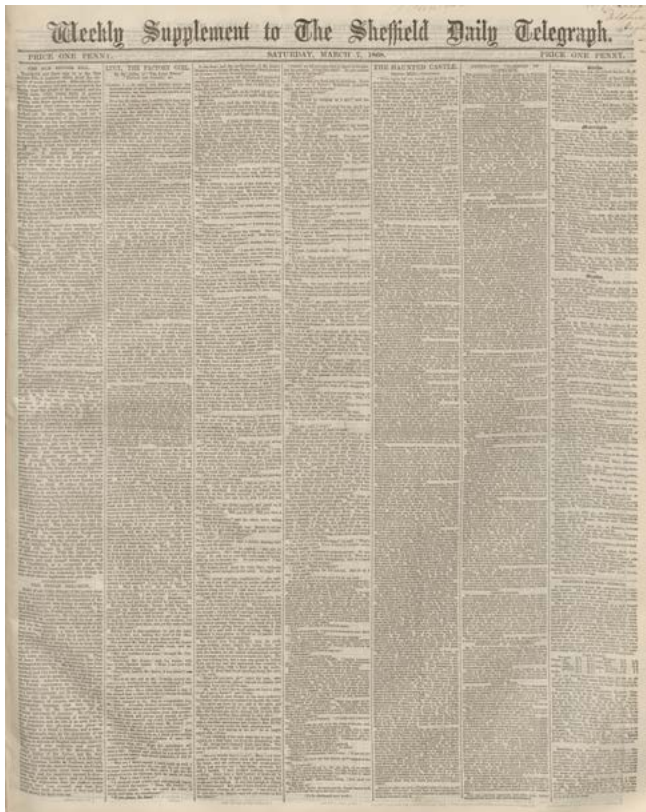
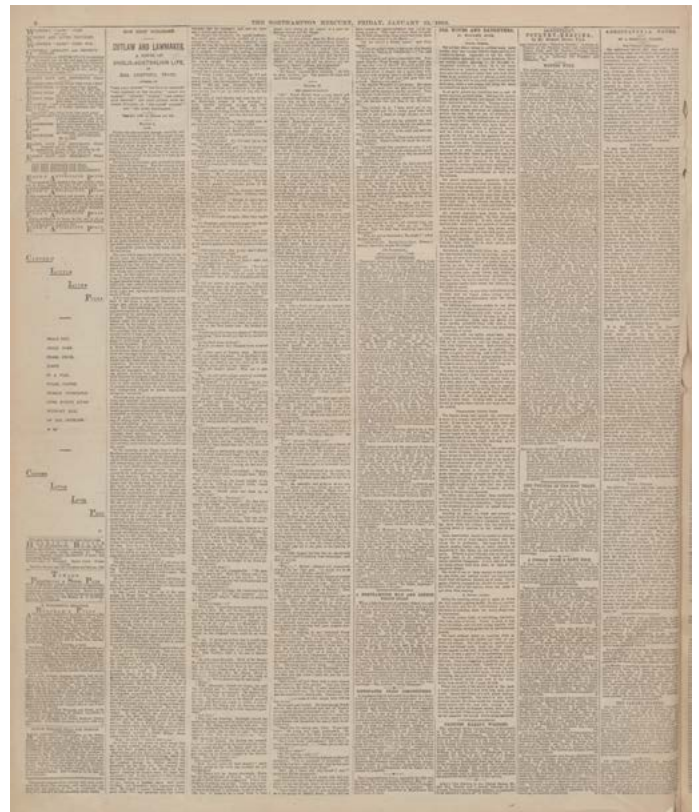


Figure 1b. Opening of Unsigned, "Broadfields Manor", Alnwick Mercury, Thursday 1 June 1852 (BLN Part V)

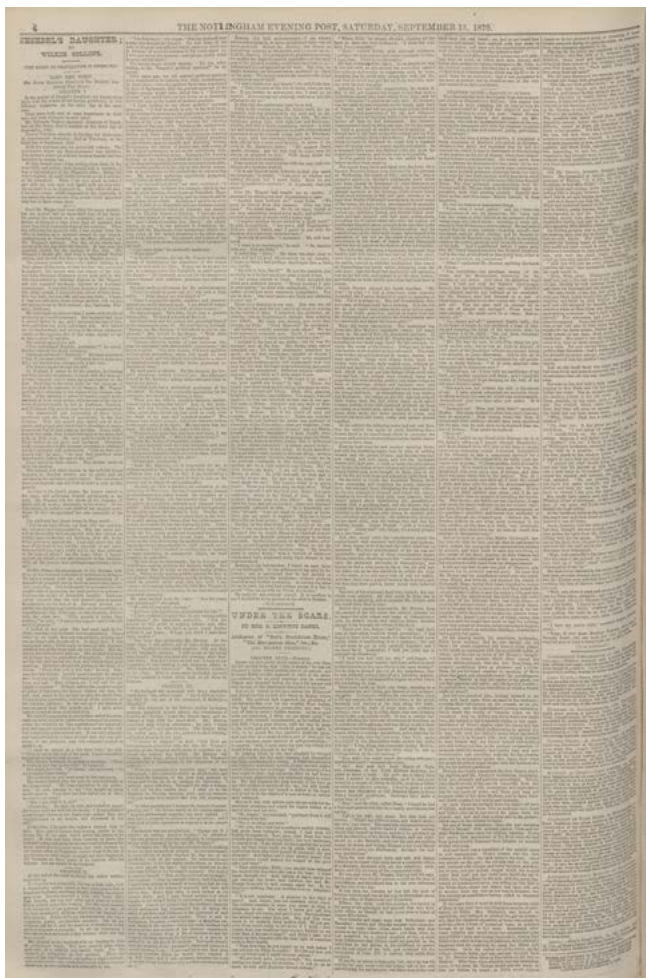
Fig. 2. Main Serial Fiction Page in Four Weekly News Miscellanies, 1860s-1890s



2a. Weekly Supplement, The Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday 7 March 1868 (BLN Part III)



2c. The Northampton Mercury, Friday 13 January 1893 (BLN Part III)



2b. The Nottingham Evening Post, Saturday 13 September 1879 (BLN Part IV)



2d. The Hull Packet and East Riding Times, Friday 9 March 1883 (BLN Part I)

Fig. 3. Examples of Local Serial Fiction in the 19th-century Provincial Press in the decade after the Abolition of the Taxes on Knowledge

WADSLEY JACK;
Or, **THE TRAVELS AND HUMOURS OF A**
FLATBACK CUTLER.

"Rahad Legs to Wadsley went,
Fal, la!, la!, la!
With berrin' cakes he wor' sont,
Fal, la!, la!, la!"

INTRODUCTION.

Nah, owd lad, haw ar ta—midlin? Wot, tha't gooin' to read this, ar' ta. Well, for thie encouragement, I'll just tell thee 't course I mean to persue. I don't want thee to be afoead at it 'il be beyond thie comprehenshun; soa, to set thie mind at rest, I beg to tell thee 'at incomprehensible stuf 'il be avoided; but I might as wheel tell thee twoathree subjects I'm not bahn to trouble t' contents o' thie cranium with. I reckon tha has a cranium o' sum sort, an' summt in it. Wot! does ta say tha wer' born at pancake-day, an' got a substitoot for brains? Then th'art a reight un for me, an' we shall be able to travel together vary noicely. Well, tha's a head, tha says. Then that's equal to a pin, at ony rate; an' if thie head were put on t' same way, tha kno's whot it is to be flattened. Nah, as tha seems to have rather a queer head, we'd better not mak' it queerer wi' queer subjects. Soa, moind thee, I shall not trouble thee wi' a system of philosophy 'at proves 'at nowt niver wor, nor niver will be, nor couldn't live if it wor, 'an if it worn't wouldn't be reight, nor sich loike stuf 'at's only caiklated to crack thie brain-box. Nah, though we live on a globe (if it wor to burst, I wonder where we should slutter to,) I shall not prove to thee 'at it 'ud a been better rahnd, nor as it is, soa as it wouldn't a been bak'd wi' sich a crust; nor I'm not gooin' to interfere wi' them chaps wot says 'at when 't first it wor set i' moation, it took a recilinear coarse—that is, roll'd streight ferrard like a wicket-ball, but when it

3a. Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday 2 December 1865 (BLN Part III)

JUDITH LEE:
A TALE OF OLD SHEFFIELD.

[THE most enthusiastic politician sometimes wearies of politics, and the most indefatigable "Constant Reader" occasionally, especially in uneventful times, finds his newspaper a tax instead of a delight. By way of varying the contents of the *Independent*, and affording a change from our constant record of present events, we propose for a short time to carry our readers backwards in the history of our town, and to place before them a narrative which we hope may enable them to realise to some extent the kind of place Sheffield was in the days of our forefathers. We do not aspire to be mere tale-tellers, but if possible to be chroniclers of the state of the town some hundred or two of years ago. This purpose will be best achieved under the guise of fiction, and we now therefore give the First Part of "JUDITH LEE," a tale of old Sheffield.]

PROLOGUE.

I AM an old man now, but my sluggish blood still curdles in my veins, and my weary heart still beats faster when I remember the circumstances under which I heard the story of Judith Lee. It is many, many years ago—I care not to count how many—but the horror is frequently still present with me, fresh and vivid and frightful. Tragedies without number have occurred since then, but the fearfulest and cruellest deeds of which the basest of men are capable have left little impress on me, and I have read of them or heard of them without a shudder. But for long years Judith Lee haunted me. Asleep, she visited me in my dreams; awake, she dogged my footsteps; she availed herself of my every ailment to pursue and torture me. Does my gentle reader hold me to be a foolish old man whose nerves are unstrung—a monomaniac perhaps? I do not hope to make him feel as I have felt. It is well for him I cannot. It is well for him that I am too feeble in body and mind, and too deficient in eloquence "to tell the tale as 'twas told to me." But could I place him where I heard it, could I call up from the dead him who was then the narrator, could I conjure from the heavens the elemental war that raged about our heads—for that perhaps more than the tale itself, unworded me, and made me tremble—then my scornful reader might also remember to the last day of his life, Judith Lee.

3b. Sheffield Independent, Saturday 6 January 1866 (BLN Part II)

JOHNNY GIBB OF GUSHETNEUK, IN THE PARISH OF FYKETHILLIN; WITH CERTAIN GLIMPSSES OF THE PARISH POLITICS ABOUT A.D. 1841.

CHAPTER I.—JOHNNY GIBB PREPARES TO SET OUT FOR THE WELLS.

"Heely, heely, Tam, ye glaiket stirk—ye hima on the hin' shelvin o' the cart. Fat hae ye been halverin' at, min. That cauff saik 'll be tint owre the back door afore we win a mile fae hame. See't yer bellyban' be ticht aneuch noo. Woo lae! Man, ye been makin' a hantle mair adee about blackin that graith' o' yours, an' kaimin' the mear's tail, nor balancin' yer cart, an' gettin' the things packit in till'."

"Sang that's nae vera easy deen, I can tell ye, wi' sic a mengyin o' them. Faur'll aw pit the puckle giss to the mear'!"

"Oo fat's the eese o' that lang stomp ahin', aw wud like to ken? Lay that bit back across; and syne tak' the an' pleuch ryn there, an' wup it ticht atween the stays; we canna hae the beast's moust' tselch't amo' their feet. Foo muckle corn pat ye in?"

"Four lippies—gwood misour—will that dee'?"

"We're la! it be deen. Is their trock a' in noo, I won'er'?"

"Nyod, seerly it is."

It was in the latter part of June, 1839, and Johnny Gibb was preparing to set out on his annual journey to "the Wells at Maeshoff." He was at the moment of the reader's introduction to him employed, with the assistance of his servant man, Tam Moorison, in "yokin'" the cart, preparatory to starting *en route*. The time was 4:30 A.M. Johnny Gibb was the tackman of Gushetneuk, a two horse "haulin'" on the property of Sir Simon Frial of Glenwick; and he and his wife had spent the greater part of a very industrious lifetime on the place.

3c. Aberdeen Free Press, Tuesday 28 September 1869 (BLN Archive). This publication is not available in the Gale archive

NOTICE.

A NEW SERIAL STORY
(To be continued weekly)
COMMENCED IN THE
"WEEKLY MAIL,"
SATURDAY, JULY 22,
entitled
G W E N D O L I N E:
A TALE OF THE
REBECCA RIOTS IN WALES,
BY CARL MORGANWG.

The Story will be Descriptive of the
DISTURBED STATE OF WALES THIRTY YEARS AGO,
and will embrace
GRAPHIC DELINEATIONS OF WELSH LIFE AND
CHARACTER,
Including the most
ROMANTIC INCIDENTS OF THE REBECCA RIOTS,
And Episodes in the
LIVES OF THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN THEM,
From the
DESTRUCTION OF THE WATER-STREET GATE AT
OARMARTHEN
To the
TRIAL OF REBECCA AND HER DAUGHTERS AT
CARDIFF.

ORDER THE WEEKLY MAIL OF ALL NEWSAGENTS.
PRICE TWOPENCE.

3d. Western Mail (Cardiff), Friday 28 July 1871 (BLN Part I)

Fig. 4. Announcements of the Appearance of Localised Serial Stories by J.S. Borlase in Four Provincial Newspapers, 1881-1890

NEXT WEEK.

—

THE LASS O' GOWRIE.

—

We have much pleasure in announcing that we have arranged with the Popular Novelist, JAMES SKIPP BORLASE, Author of "Princess and Police Spy; or, By Order of the Czar;" "Major M'Dragon's Wars;" "Love Stronger than Death;" "The Mystery of Ilawara," and other romances well known to Scottish readers, To write, specially for the *Weekly News*, a

LOCAL STORY,

founded on the well known song, "The Lass o' Gowrie." This New Story will be entitled—

THE LASS O' GOWRIE,

OR

**A HUSBAND FOR AN HOUR ;
A TALE OF LOVE, LAW, AND LUCRE.**

The scenes of the Story will be laid in Dundee and Perth and the far-famed Carse o' Gowrie, and numerous thrilling incidents, legends, and historical events connected with the district will be made use of in the Tale.

During the summer, in connection with the Story, the Author visited Scotland, and in the course of his tour spent several weeks in Dundee in order to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the neighbourhood. During his stay here he was fortunate in meeting some old inhabitants, who supplied him with rare and interesting information never before published, and this Mr BORLASE intends to utilise in his new work, which, we have every reason to anticipate, will be by far the greatest of his many brilliant successes.

The Story will deal with a most interesting period—a period not as yet worked out by the ordinary novelist, and with a succession of the most startling and sensational events permeated after a while by a deep and terrible mystery.

—

THE OPENING CHAPTERS
OF MR BORLASE'S
NEW TALE,
THE LASS O' GOWRIE,
WILL APPEAR IN THE
WEEKLY NEWS
ON SATURDAY, 8TH OCTOBER.

4a. Dundee Courier, Friday 30 September 1881 (BLN Part IV)

—

THE STORY ENTITLED

"FORCE & FRAUD,"

OR

"THE LUDDITES IN LEICESTER,"

WILL BE COMMENCED IN THE

"CHRONICLE & MERCURY"

OF SEPTEMBER 15TH

—

THE TALE IS FROM THE PEN OF

MR. J. S. BORLASE,

THE BRILLIANT & SUCCESSFUL NOVELIST.

It will recount many startling incidents in connection with the Crusade of the Luddites against machinery, the stealthy movements of resurrectionists, midnight murders, &c., &c., &c.

ALL THE SCENES OF THIS EXCITING AND
THRILLING NARRATIVE WILL BE
LAID IN LEICESTER.
OR ITS IMMEDIATE VICINITY.

The chapters abound with startling and dramatic situations, which render the story one of the most fascinating and enthralling ever published in a newspaper, and admirably adapted to wile away the long evenings of the approaching winter.

4b. Leicester Chronicle, Thursday 30 August 1884 (BLN Part II)

THE WORCESTERSHIRE

CHRONICLE

SATURDAY NEXT,
OCTOBER 1st.

THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF
A LOCAL SERIAL
will appear,
**"THE WHITE WITCH
OF
WORCESTER,"**
A
TALE OF THE BARONS' WARS.

—

This Story graphically describes
WORCESTER
AS IT WAS IN THE
13TH CENTURY.

—

The Story is written by
JAMES S. BORLASE,
Author of "Princess and Police Spy; or, By Order of the Czar;" "Nina the Nihilist; or, Death in the Palace;" "The Black Hand;" "Darkness Death;" "Riches to Ruin;" "The Quisnary of the Guard;" "Sword and Lance," &c.

—

WITH EACH NUMBER
AN ENGRAVED SUPPLEMENT
On fine-toned paper illustrating
**"The White Witch of Worcester
ON HER WAY
To the Stake at the High Cross,"**
WILL BE PRESENTED.

4c. Worcestershire Chronicle, Saturday 24 September 1887 (BLN Part V)

12

On Monday, Jan. 20, 1890,

A LOCAL HISTORICAL ROMANCE
OF THE STIRRING PERIOD OF
THE BARONS' WARS
Will be commenced in the NORTHAMPTON
DAILY REPORTER.

—

The Story will be entitled "THE
CRONE'S CURSE
Doomed to Fire and Faggot;

And will be written by
JAMES SKIPP BORLASE,

Author of "Princess and Police Spy, or, By Order of the Czar;" "Nina the Nihilist, or Death in the Palace;" "The Crime of the Red King's Ball;" "Queen of the Harem;" "The Calves of the Desert," and other serials of these species.

—

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STORIES,
"Shrouded in Mystery, or The Old House under Castle Hill;" "The Devil's Dykes;" and "The Black Witch of Northampton," which made him a special favourite with our readers.

54d. Northampton Mercury, Saturday 11 January 1890 (BLN Part III)