Chapter II
Vol. II. Num. XIX.

The Exeter Mercury:

OR,

Weekly Intelligence

Being an IMPARTIAL ABSTRACT of all the News Papers of Note.

Containing the MATERIAL OCCURRENCES FOREIGN and DOMESTICK;

With a Particular Account of what BOOKS and PAMPHLETS are Publish'd in Great Britain, France, Holland, &c. Now publish'd every Tuesday and Friday.

From Friday November 25. to Tuesday November 29, 1715.

EXON:

Printed by Phillip Bishop at his Printing-Office in St. Peter's Church-yard, 1715.

Deliver'd to all Subscribers in this City at 13 s. a Year. Seal'd and Deliver'd to Country Subscribers at 15s. a Year, they paying Carriage. And at my own House Deliver'd at 3 Half-Pence each Paper.
Format and Press Time

Only persons who have seen and handled the original files of early newspapers can know how firm they are to the hand, how convenient in size, how comfortable to the eye—at least those printed before 1760, by which time the printers had begun to use smaller type in all their columns. Readers unaccustomed to eighteenth-century print will, on first looking at the Leeds Mercury or the Salisbury Journal, be puzzled to read that the first Post had brought Word of a smart Engagement in which some Prussians had surrendered to the Austrians; but they will soon recognize that what looks like f (and is here printed as f) is really the old tall s, for it lacks the serif near the top. It will be noticed, too, that many common nouns are printed with initial capitals, that italic type is used for names of persons and towns as well as for emphasis, and that some words—"compleat" and "Musick," for example—have an antiquated look because of the spelling. Once these slight peculiarities become familiar, one can read with the greatest ease a newspaper printed while Samuel Johnson was still a schoolboy. With few exceptions, newspapers two hundred and forty years old are much

Fig. 3.—Title page of an unstamped six-page newspaper printed on a sheet and a half and showing subscription rates. (By permission of the Keeper of Printed Books, Bodleian Library.)
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less frail than newspapers printed forty years ago with machine-made type on machine-made paper.

Some early eighteenth-century papers, regrettably, have not been preserved at all, not because the sturdy handmade paper has crumbled, but because all the copies were used to wrap fish or light fires or were put to more ignominious household uses. There are splendid files of the Northampton Mercury, the Gloucester Journal, the Birmingham Gazette, and a dozen other papers which continued to appear decade after decade, but many other papers have survived only in broken runs or odd issues, and at least twenty known to have existed have disappeared without a trace. Several bundles of early papers have been rescued only by the merest chance. For instance, some of the early issues of the Sussex Weekly Advertiser may now be examined at the Brighton Public Library only because a sharp-eyed journalist who saw a village butcher using those unique and irreplaceable sheets for wrapping chops was able to get them in exchange for ordinary wrapping paper; and the three earliest surviving issues of Adams's Weekly Courant (Chester), discovered some years ago to have been used in binding a volume of the parish register at Mottram in Longdendale, Cheshire, may still be seen at the Mottram Vicarage. There are twenty-one provincial papers of the period 1701-60 which have survived in only a single copy of each.

Regrettable though the disappearance of so many of these early newspapers is, it is a fact that tens of thousands of copies remain to show their distinctive features. They differ from present-day newspapers in size, in number of pages and columns, in having no headlines, in having (certainly after the end of April, 1725) a red stamp impressed on a corner, in having the news arranged in three batches—the latest news being printed at the end, not on the front page—and in having practically no pictures except (in some papers) a panoramic view of the city or simple rectangular wood-blocks flanking the
title. The blocks or “ear-pieces” usually depict a bringer of news, such as a ship in full sail, a rider with a horn, or a figure of Mercury. Occasionally there is a seated Britannia, a St. George and the dragon, or the city arms with the official motto or such a phrase as “Fama volat.” These blocks, like the elaborate “factotum” used in the first column of many papers, add to the attractiveness of the front page, for some of them exhibit considerable skill in the fashioning of the details. More attractive still are the panoramic “prospects” of the respective places of publication, used in at least fifteen papers, among them the Norwich Gazette, the Newcastle Courant, the Northampton Mercury, the Ipswich Gazette, Farley’s Bristol Newspaper, and the Derby Mercury.

By comparison with most twentieth-century newspapers, those published two hundred or two hundred and fifty years ago all seem small, though some were much smaller than others. Many of the twelve-page papers published between 1712 and 1725 had pages only a little broader than the pages of this book and not quite so tall. The four-page papers printed before August, 1712, and after April, 1725, had larger pages; and by the middle of the century, the pages of provincial newspapers were commonly 11 by 16½ or 17 inches—very little smaller than a page of the Times Literary Supplement. These differences in the dimensions of pages were brought about as a direct consequence of the Stamp Tax, which, of course, also affected the selling price.

Before the texts of the three Stamp Acts (1712, 1725, 1757) are examined to see how their provisions affected the size and shape of newspapers, it is useful to note that early newspapers were not printed on endless rolls of machine-made newsprint but on single sheets or half-sheets of paper in sizes that could be produced one by one on the paper-making frames. Until there was a tax on newspapers, the printers used either an unfolded half-sheet (two pages) or a whole sheet folded once to make
four pages, with two columns on each page. Of the fifteen provincial papers which began before the Stamp Act of 1712 was passed, seven or eight were printed on unfolded half-sheets with two columns to the page—the Bristol Post-Boy, Sam Farley’s Exeter Post-Man, Jos. Bliss’s Exeter Post-Boy, the Norwich Gazette in its earliest issues, the Nottingham Post, the Shrewsbury Collection of all the Material News, and the Leverpoole Courant. Another paper which used a half-sheet, but set so as to make four pages instead of two, was John White’s Newcastle Courant in 1711 and 1712. The Stamford-Post survives in only two issues, each printed on a single half-sheet. This paper deserves attention as the first provincial newspaper to have three columns to the page. The issue dated 7 April 1712 contained an announcement that thereafter the paper would fill a whole sheet, with the news on one half-sheet and a variety of entertaining pieces of prose and verse on the other half-sheet. Five other newspapers—and from 29 March 1707, the Norwich Gazette also—were printed on a whole sheet, folded once to make four pages, each with two columns. That is the format of the earliest provincial newspaper, the Norwich Post (at least from 3 May 1707), of the Norwich Post-Man, presumably of the Yarmouth Post and the Yarmouth Gazette (local editions of two Norwich papers), and of the Newcastle Gazette by 19 April 1712.

If one wishes to ascertain the size of the sheet used for printing these fifteen newspapers prior to the first day of August, 1712, when the tax brought about changes, one has only to measure surviving issues that have not been cropped in binding. The single half-sheets range from 7½ by 12½ inches to 8½ by 14 inches, so that the whole sheet before cutting must have measured 12½ to 14 inches in width by 15 or 16 or 17 inches in length. Roughly, then, the provincial newspapers printed before the 1712 Stamp Act came into effect were run through the presses on stock more or less equal in dimensions to
what has since the beginning of the eighteenth century been called "foolscap," which is $13\frac{1}{2}$ by 17 inches, or else they were printed on pieces of paper equal to half a foolscap sheet. The paper could have been obtained—and much of it probably was obtained—from the nearest paper mill.5

Readers of this book who are not bibliographers may see the question "How large is a sheet of paper?" as only an idle Alice-in-Wonderland conundrum; but it became a matter of vital concern to all who printed newspapers. Curiously, the question was apparently never faced squarely by the government; and when Parliament decided in 1712 to impose a tax on newspapers, the Act at no point defined "sheet" and "half-sheet." This is really incredibly stupid (or careless), for the statute (10 Anne, c. 19) stipulated that the rate of tax was a penny per "sheet" and a halfpenny per "half-sheet." No thought, apparently, was given to the possibility that a newspaper might be printed on a large half-sheet carrying a halfpenny stamp just as well as on a small whole sheet with a penny stamp. Failure to define the permitted dimensions cost the government much of the revenue that might have been derived from the tax. The Lords of the Treasury rejected the proposal submitted by Edmund Curll6 that Parliament should regulate the size of paper on which newspapers could be printed. The consequence of this inadvertency or neglect was that the size of the sheet used for newspapers was increased;7 newspapers grew larger and larger, but used only folded half-sheets bearing, until 1757, halfpenny stamps.8

It was suggested in Chapter I that the Stamp Act of 1712 did little permanently to discourage printers of provincial newspapers and that new papers soon took the place of any that were unable to continue publication because of the tax. The government may have hoped that newspapers would collapse under the burden of taxation; it may, on the other hand, have hoped that newspapers
would continue to be published and would, therefore, send substantial revenue to the Crown. Neither hope was fulfilled in 1712, for one very good reason: the shrewd English printers found a loophole in the law and enjoyed immunity from the tax for thirteen years.

It is expedient at this point to see precisely what the Stamp Act of 1712 required. With the usual particularity of language, the effort was made in section CI to set forth the details:

And be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, to and for the Use of her Majesty, her Heirs and Successors, for and upon all Books and Papers commonly called Pamphlets, and for and upon all News Papers, or Papers containing publick News, Intelligence or Occurrences, which shall, at any Time or Times within or during the Term last mentioned [i.e., 32 years beginning 1 August 1712], be printed in Great Britain, to be dispersed and made publick, and for and upon such Advertisements as are herein after mentioned, the respective Duties following; that is to say,

For every such Pamphlet or Paper contained in Half a Sheet, or any lesser Piece of Paper, so printed, the Sum of one Half-penny Sterling.

For every such Pamphlet or Paper (being larger than Half a Sheet, and not exceeding one whole Sheet) so printed, a Duty after the Rate of one Penny Sterling for every printed Copy thereof.

And for every such Pamphlet or Paper, being larger than one whole Sheet, and not exceeding six Sheets in Octavo, or in a lesser Page, or not exceeding twelve Sheets in Quarto, or in twenty Sheets in Folio, so printed, a Duty after the Rate of two Shillings Sterling for every Sheet of any kind of Paper which shall be contained in one printed Copy thereof.

The Act also imposed a tax of one shilling on every advertisement in “the London Gazette, or any other printed Paper, such Paper being dispersed or made pub­lick weekly, or oftener.” The penalty for infringement was set at ten pounds plus the costs of suit; and it was
directed that "Pamphlets containing more than one Sheet of Paper" should be registered within six days after printing (in London or Westminster) or fourteen days (elsewhere in Britain).

What did the printers do? John White's Newcastle Courant was unlike most other early provincial newspapers in having been published (from its beginning in August, 1711) three times a week, and, as was noted above, in being printed in four pages on a folded half-sheet. When the Stamp Act became operative on 1 August 1712, White continued for several weeks to publish his Courant in exactly the same format, but now used paper bearing a halfpenny stamp. Then it must have occurred to White that there was no need for him to collect an extra halfpenny for every copy of his Courant which he sold, nor did he need to have stamped paper transported all the way from London to Newcastle. With a degree of shrewdness which surpassed that of the country's legislators, White saw how to evade the tax. The act required half-sheet papers of news to be printed on paper bearing a half-penny stamp and whole-sheet papers to be printed on paper bearing a penny stamp, but nothing was said about newspapers filling a sheet and a half; they could be printed on unstamped paper and would be classed as pamphlets, chargeable only with the duty of two shillings for each sheet required for one copy, no matter how many sheets were printed in the whole impression. Instead of paying twenty shillings for the stamps on 480 half-sheets brought from London, White could buy paper wherever he wished to and stretch each issue to fill a sheet and half, registering the Courant as a pamphlet and paying only three shillings. That is precisely what he did. Until number 171 (1 September 1712)—perhaps longer—the Newcastle Courant was printed on stamped half-sheets; then, sometime between that issue and the next which is now extant—number 208 (26 November 1712)—White made the change. From that date until 1725, when the Stamp
Tax was reimposed with stricter terms, White’s *Newcastle Courant* appeared as a twelve-page single-column paper printed on a combined sheet and half-sheet of unstamped paper with a page approximately $5\frac{1}{2}$ by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. By 1720, it had become a weekly paper and the slightly larger paper gave pages $6\frac{1}{2}$ by 8 inches.

With the exception of some issues of the *Norwich Gazette*, of the *Newcastle Courant*, and perhaps of the *Worcester Post-Man*, no provincial newspaper published between the first Stamp Act (1712) and the second Stamp Act (1725) was printed on either a single sheet or a single half-sheet. During these intervening years, practically all provincial printers of newspapers used an unstamped sheet and an unstamped half-sheet for every copy of their papers. Many of them doubtless paid the duty of two shillings per sheet, and in fact several papers —Stephen Bryan’s *Worcester Post-Man* and William Cooke’s *Chester Weekly Journal*, for example—have on the title page a statement that the paper had been licensed and entered in the Stamp Office. So long as a sheet and a half were used in printing a single copy of a newspaper, the printer simply entered his paper as a pamphlet and handed over three shillings. The paper could be printed in six pages—four on the sheet, two more on the half-sheet—or in twelve pages—eight on the sheet, four more on the half-sheet—without affecting the classification. Until the government enacted a statute in 1725 putting a stop to this device for getting around the law, no fewer than twenty provincial newspapers appeared in twelve pages, most of them with a single column each. Ten others regularly appeared with six pages, usually with two columns to the page.

As before, if one wishes to estimate the average size of the sheet used in printing these six-page and twelve-page papers published between 1712 and 1725, it is easily done by measuring the pages of surviving copies which have not been cropped for binding. Henry Cross-grove
used an unusually large sheet—about 13 by 20 inches—for his six-page *Norwich Gazette* from the beginning of January, 1723, to the last issue in April, 1725, but the usual range in other papers was from 11 by 14 inches to 13½ by 16 or 17 inches. The figures for the twelve-page papers are not substantially different, though the extra fold meant a very small reading surface on each page. Most of the papers in this format had pages 6 or 6½ by 8 or 8½ inches, typical examples being the *Chester Weekly Journal*, which in 1724 had twelve pages 6¼ by 8 inches, uncropped, and the *Suffolk Mercury*, which in 1719 had pages 6½ by 8¼ inches, uncropped. On the average the sheets used in the twelve-page newspapers were about 13 by 17 inches.

The measurements thus far given are appropriate for papers printed before the end of April, 1725. Then, at last, the government recognized that many thousands of pounds in revenue were being lost annually because the printers had found a way of evading the tax demanded by the Act of 10 Anne, c. 19. The Act of 11 George 1, c. 8—“An Act for continuing the Duties upon Malt, . . . and for explaining a late Act in relation to Stamp-Duties on News-Papers”—deplored the misinterpretations of the Act of 1712, declared that newspapers printed on a sheet and a half-sheet would not for the future be taken as pamphlets, and provided that from and after 25 April 1725 the individual sheets and half-sheets of newspapers would be subject to the respective penny and halfpenny taxes, here specified again in detail, during the remainder of the term (thirty-two years) mentioned in the Act of 1712.¹⁰

The effect in town and country was immediate and spectacular. The six-page and twelve-page papers ceased over night to appear. Thereafter for many years English provincial newspapers were printed on a single half-sheet of stamped paper. In announcing the reduced number of pages and the increased selling price, the printers quoted
passages of the Act, forestalled some of the expected criticism of their customers by complaining—as Andrew Brice of Exeter did—of the "blushing Blood-colour'd Mark of the wholesome Severity lately stamp'd upon us," and promised not to reduce the amount and variety of substance in the new series of papers. Brice said that he would give his former Post-master a new name and that the Journal would thereafter consist of a half-sheet; "yet I have taken Care," he added, "to procure it so large, and the Print shall be so fine and curious, that it shall contain rather more than it has done ordinarily, in a Sheet and Half of this small Size."

It was the same story everywhere. In number 358 (5 April 1725) of the Northampton Mercury, Raikes and Dicey filled the verso of the title page with an announcement of their desire to alter the Mercury from a sheet and a half of small paper to one half-sheet of "very large Paper," promising to use "a good and legible Character" but assuring subscribers that the half-sheet would "contain as much Matter as the three half Sheets do now." Stephen Bryan began immediately to use a stamped half-sheet of moderate size for his Weekly Worcester-Journal, the four pages being 7½ by 10½ inches each with a printed area of 6 by 8¾ inches; but in number 828 (7 May 1725), he said he had "given Orders for the stamping of a Parcel of Paper of a prodigious Size." Bryan's large paper enabled him to increase the total printed area of the four pages from 195 square inches to 275. From number 831 (28 May 1725) onward, the page measured not less than 9 by 11¼ inches even after being cropped in the binding, with a typed area of 7¼ by 9¾ inches.

This sort of change confronted the readers of all provincial newspapers published on or after 25 April 1725, though it should be noticed that the printers of two papers, the Stamford Mercury and (until sometime between March, 1729, and August, 1730) the Suffolk Mercury, preferred to set the half-sheet in eight pages instead of the standard four. The size of the sheet was not
uniform all over the country; though from 1725 onward, no half-sheets smaller than 10½ by 17 inches were used. Generally speaking, there was a marked increase in the size of the half-sheet in the succeeding decades, as one perceives at a glance when standing in front of a case containing the bound volumes of such a paper as the Northampton Mercury, the Gloucester Journal, or the Weekly Worcester-Journal; and gradually the provincial papers advanced from two columns to three.11 Papers which in 1725 had used a half-sheet measuring 10½ by 17 inches were thirty years later printed on half-sheets measuring 16 or 17 by 22 inches. In other words, the size of the half-sheet doubled during the first thirty years the Stamp Tax was really in effect. New papers which began to appear during those thirty years adopted the current size of paper and later both widened and lengthened the columns. Thus Griffith Wright's Leeds Intelligencer began in 1754 with a printed surface of 9½ by 13¾ inches on each page; six years later, the printed surface of the page measured 9¾ by 14¹¹⁄₁₆ inches.

Statistics need not be numerous to indicate the universal increase in the size of the half-sheet after 1725. The changes in the dimensions of the Weekly Worcester-Journal in thirty-five years are typical, though some other papers were slower in enlarging their columns. By 1732, Stephen Bryan's "prodigious" half-sheets had grown to provide his readers with a page 9½ by 13 inches, each with a printed surface 8½ by 11 inches. From July, 1736, the pages were 1¾ inches taller, and the expansion continued. Readers of the Weekly Worcester-Journal in 1742 found the page 10¾ by 16 inches. By 1749, the page had become 1½ by 17 inches, with a printed surface of 9½ by 14½ inches, and these continued to be the dimensions until March, 1760, when the page became 1½ by 17 inches tall and the printed surface became quarter of an inch taller than before. All these figures are for uncropped pages.¹² The extra halfpenny which was added to the Stamp Tax in 1757 produced no marked change in size or format;
whatever resistance the public offered was entirely on the score of price.

Sometimes there was a purely accidental change in the size of paper. William Cooke assured readers of his Chester Weekly Journal in number 6 of Volume XXXI (10 May 1732) that the supply of paper just received from London was not according to specifications and that the change was only temporary:

Being disappointed of Paper in the usual Size, I am obliged to make use of this; but in a Fortnight or three Weeks it will be as large as before.

With number 8, two weeks later, the usual size was resumed. The size and the quality of paper which the printer preferred were doubtless specified in the orders which he sent periodically to London, but the warehouse-keepers were not always able to send what was required. Thomas Cotton, printer of the Kendal Weekly Courant, offered profuse apologies in number 22 (27 May 1732) because an inferior sort of paper had been sent to him: "... the Stationer at London, did either by Mistake or Imposition send me down this Paper, tho' my orders were for much Finer, ... I cannot Return it without more Loss than your Benevolence can wish or my Fortune afford...." It was over six months before Cotton's stock of thick, dark paper was used up.

Other printers were evidently less concerned about the quality of the paper. The printers of the twice-a-week Kentish Post regularly used coarse paper without apology. Joseph Bliss of Exeter found some of his readers objecting to the coarseness of the paper used for his Protestant Mercury in 1716 and decided to print two editions, one on coarse paper, one on fine, charging more for the latter:

"... By reason many Complaints have been made of the Badness of my Paper, which makes the Print appear the worse, and most Persons that buy my News being rather inclin'd to pay the price for better. ... This is therefore
to give Notice, That next Week I shall print on very Fine Paper, Price Single Three Half-Pence; but to those who take it Quarterly, at the rate of 10s. per Annum.

Thereafter, for nearly a year, Bliss's imprint clearly indicated the two prices: "Fine Paper, three Half-Pence; Coarse Paper, One Penny." Specimens of both have survived. Except when shipments of bad paper brought annoyance to printer and readers alike, most of the newspapers here being considered were printed on good stock, and most surviving copies are still firm and perfectly legible.

Legibility depends partly on the size and quality of the type. In general, the quality was good, and in many printing shops completely new fonts of type were purchased specifically for use in printing the newspaper. The Gloucester Journal introduced new types in 1724. In 1725, Henry Cross-grove brought about a general improvement in the appearance of his Norwich Gazette by using better types, better paper, and an engraving of the "New Prospect of the City nicely contracted for a Head-Piece"; and in 1742, Cross-grove acquired two new fonts of type. When John Gilfillan took over the proprietorship of the York Courant, of which he had for seven years been the printer, he announced in number 470 (10 September 1734) that in order to improve the paper he had sent for "a Set of curious Types." In the final "Nota Bene" of their proposals announcing the new Newcastle Journal in 1739, Isaac Thompson and William Cuthbert drew particular attention to the "compleat Set of new Types" which they had ordered from London. Earlier that same year, when William Craighton established his Ipswich Journal, he began with old types—perhaps taken over from John Bagnall, whose Ipswich Gazette, printed with blunt types on poor paper, had apparently ceased publication—but he told his readers that the paper would be printed in a neater manner as soon as new types could be procured. Other papers intro-
duced new types—usually smaller—in course of time. As is only to be expected, some papers were unattractive because the paper was coarse and the types old and battered; but it would be quite wrong to assume that the provincial newspapers were usually printed with inferior or second-hand types.

Most provincial printers had available for printing the regular columns of their newspapers at least three sizes of types, and some of them four, both roman and italic. The range of type size may be indicated—not very accurately—by noting that the most commonly used types occupied approximately seven lines to the inch, but on occasion—and more frequently after 1725—the smaller types were used, a common size after 1750 being nine and a half lines to the inch. In other words, the types most frequently encountered are approximately of the size known as pica, but one often finds small pica. Long primer and bourgeois were in most shops by the middle of the century and even brevier was used for long articles or advertisements of extraordinary length. Bold face was not used in the regular columns of news, but many shops had black letter and larger roman and italic in sufficient quantity to set advertisements and elaborate title pages in a considerable variety of type sizes. In shops where job printing was regularly done, such as John White’s in Newcastle, there would, of course, be several fonts of type in addition to those regularly used for the newspaper.

Partly to catch the eye or to give emphasis, partly to avoid running out of some letters of roman, the printers of provincial newspapers normally used italic type for the names of persons and places, and it is clear that some printers regularly used italic for matter set from manuscript. It must always be recognized that in the days of hand-set types a printer’s stock of types in any one font might be inadequate for use in the whole paper, and he would use two or three different fonts of roman and as much italic as he could in order to avoid running out of
a much-used character. Shortage of types may have been the reason why Jacob Ilive and John Akers used four sizes of type in printing their *Maidstone Journal* in 1737.

There were usually better reasons for having a variety of types in any one issue. In the first place, a change of type size gives relief to the eye. There is a bleak monotony in a sequence of closely printed pages, particularly if there are few captions to break up the columns. Many country newspapers make easy reading now—the *Reading Post* in 1732, for example, and the *York Gazetteer*—because of a good use of types. Again, one of the best ways of giving prominence to an item of news or a particular advertisement is to use larger type than in the surrounding matter. A notable instance is Henry Cross-grove's using of large type to announce on the second page of his *Norwich Gazette*, number 4 (28 December 1706), the suicide of a member of Parliament; another is an item of local news on the third page of Jos. Bliss's *Protestant Mercury*, number 13 (13 September 1717):

EXON. On Friday last, Ralph Edmunds was executed at Heavytree for shooting at and killing one Mr. William Ayres of Kentsbere. He confess'd, That he went with a Design to Pilfer; and that he aim'd his Piece directly at the said Ayres, with a Design to mischief him. About 6 the next Morning a Reprieve came for him, about 4 hours after Execution. . . .

Another reason for varying the type size is the psychological effectiveness, still operative in twentieth-century newspapers, of printing the first lines of a news story in large type and then reducing the size of type in one or two stages lower down in the column. Something like this was done in Orion Adams's *Weekly Journal; or, The Manchester Advertiser* in 1752, which usually had its first article in larger type than the remainder of the paper. In the same year, *Whitworth's Manchester Magazine* used
large type for the first page, smaller type on the second and third pages.

More often than not, however, the use of smaller type was dictated by a shortage of time or of space. The six-page papers using a separate half-sheet for the last third of their space could be issued as soon as that half-sheet was printed; and that could be done most quickly if only one side of the half-sheet was required. The result was that between 1712 and 1725 such a paper as the Worcester Post-Man often appeared with page five crowded and page six blank. The same sort of thing might happen in the setting up of a four-page paper. When press-time drew near, the second of the two unprinted pages might use larger type because too little matter had arrived to fill the space left for it (as in Norris's Taunton-Journal in 1725), or the last "copy" to be set might prove so extensive that smaller type was required to get all the matter into little room. A good instance of such crowding is in the Weekly Worcester Journal, number 1319 (4 October 1734), in which the printer found at the last minute that after putting into the first column of his fourth page seven short paragraphs from the latest post (the second and third columns being already filled with paid advertisements), he had less space than he required to print an especially interesting bit of news about the drowning of three "transports" en route (via Bristol) to the plantations in America. Bryan might have reduced the "copy" by one-quarter and it then would have gone into the available space, but he or his man used regular type for the first nineteen lines (151 words) and then used smaller type so that the remaining 88 words could be crowded into little space.

This crowding of local news, it is to be observed, was quite normal, though in four-page papers the usual spot for crowding was in the third column of the third page, and the whole passage, not just the last few lines, was commonly set in smaller type than the rest of the news.

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One soon becomes accustomed to looking there for news not taken from London papers.\textsuperscript{20}

One extraordinary use of ordinary type should be noticed before anything is said about captions and other uses of larger types: it is startling to find occasionally in the \textit{Salisbury Journal}—number 711 (2 September 1751), for example—and in several issues of \textit{Farleys Bristol Advertiser} in 1744 that news for which there was no room in the regular columns was printed in an outer margin at right angles to the regular lines. In \textit{Farleys Bristol Advertiser}, number 19 (14 April 1744), the third page has four additional paragraphs—a total of 178 words—set in shallow (five-line) columns of the usual width but printed side by side in the margin, at right angles to the regular columns. That was one way of drawing attention to late news; few readers could resist the temptation to see what could have deserved such special treatment.

Today, of course, one looks to the headlines to see what exciting news the paper contains; eighteenth-century newspapers had no headlines in the sense of short, eye-catching phrases giving the gist of the paragraphs below. There were captions to distinguish the London dispatches from foreign news and to set apart such divisions as “American News,” “Thursday Night’s Post,” “The Low Countries,” “Dartmouth, May 26th,” and “Country News,” but anything in the nature of a headline referring to a particular piece of news occurs very seldom. The prominence given by display types in advertisements is almost never found heading a paragraph of news. It is true that the account of a local fire in the \textit{Exeter Protestant Mercury}\textsuperscript{21} used capitals for the word “FIRE” in the first line of the report itself; and in the \textit{Norwich Gazette}, number 1107 (23 December 1727), a title standing at the head of two columns of fine print promised an exciting piece of reading for the Christmas season: “The Tryal of Mr. Savage, Mr. Gregory, and Mr. Merchant, for the Murder of Mr. Sinclair.” A descriptive caption in the
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*True British Courant* (Preston), number 11 (22 March 1745), is too long by thirty words to be called a headline, but it does use capital letters for the most important word: “A full and true Account of the late terrible HURRICANE that happen’d at Jamaica; brought in by two Ships from Boston in New-England, and from Charles-Town in South-Carolina, (now arrived at Liverpool).”

A heading spread across two columns in the *Leedes Intelligencer*, number 216 (22 August 1758), was set entirely in italics in order to report the local excitement aroused by a dispatch from London:

> On Sunday Evening, about Seven o’clock, arriv’d at Leedes, by an Express, to the excessive Joy of every True Briton, the following GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY, containing the Account of the Taking of Cape-Breton: On which Occasion the Bells were set a-ringing, and continu’d 'till late at Night. And Yesterday several Vollies were fired by the Gentlemen Independents, and the whole Day dedicated to Mirth and Jollity by all Ranks of People.

But how can a passage running to seventy-two words be called a headline?

A closer approach to what a twentieth-century editor might write as a heading for an item of news is to be seen in the *Gloucester Journal*, number 1629 (25 September 1753), which had in the third column of its first page a paragraph taken from the *London Evening Post*, number 4033 (18 September 1753). The editor of the *Gloucester Journal* slightly modified the text and decided to use italics for more of the words than were so distinguished in the original, but his chief alteration was to add a heading that gave a hint of his own opinion concerning an issue in which he knew his readers were interested:

> Somewhat to be LAUGHED at.

We hear, by a Letter from Nottingham, dated the 13th Instant, that Mr. Creswel, a Bookseller there, was, the Day before, summoned to appear before the worthy Magis-
trates of that Corporation, and rebuked for selling the *Leicester Journal*; in which, they say, are very severe Reflections on the Ministry for promoting the late *Jewish Naturalization-bill*, greatly tending to create Fears and Jealousies in his Majesty's *good* Subjects, and to promote *Sedition* and *Rebellion*, by persuading the People *they were in Danger of losing their Liberties*: When offering to *defend himself*, he was *threatened* to be sent to Gaol, unless he found securities for his good Behaviour. At last, however, he was discharged, on consideration that he sold no more of those Papers *reflecting* on the Jews, who are now to be incorporated amongst us, as they are a *good Sort of People*, and meet with great Encouragement from the above *very worthy Magistrates*.

Here the heading gave no hint of what the following paragraph was about, but Robert Raikes obviously felt that by using a label he would attract particular attention to what at first glance would otherwise have appeared to be a very ordinary piece of news.

It is much easier to find exciting local or national news for which there ought to have been a headline and was not. Things like the death of the Queen, the declaration of war, the execution of Dick Turpin, the murder of a townsman, the robbing of the mail, a disastrous flood, a sharp rise in the local incidence of smallpox—these and a hundred other events received no more typographical emphasis than the most ordinary biting of a man by a dog. The headline had not yet been invented.

Perhaps the absence of headlines simply indicates a difference in reading habits. In our century people allow themselves to be guided by the large-print labels devised by the newspaper editors; two centuries ago, the reader, especially if he lived in the country and waited seven days for his newspaper, was ready to read *all* the news, deciding for himself (after he had read it) what interested him most.

The freshness of a country newspaper's "intelligence" depended on four time-consuming operations: (1) getting the news from its source to the printer; (2) getting the
“advices” set up in type; (3) getting two sides of the paper printed; (4) getting the printed sheets into the readers’ hands. If the news came from abroad, the first of these operations sometimes took many weeks. It took four months for news of English victories in India to reach England, and ordinarily it was many weeks before events in North America were reported in English newspapers. News came more promptly from Lisbon, Vienna, Prague, and St. Petersburg, but nevertheless it took the couriers many days and nights of travel, even if they came “Post Haste” and even though the eleven days’ difference between English Old Style and Continental New Style seemed to reduce the time gap. If one forgets this difference in the calendar, it is really startling to find a dispatch dated at the Hague on 5 July 1712 printed in the Norwich Post of that very date. A still “ fresher” dispatch dated at the Hague on 7 July was printed in the Salisbury Journal of 6 July 1730. Adverse winds in the Channel might delay the ship many hours; and after the first ship bearing expected or unexpected news reached port, there was still much galloping over English roads before printers could set to work with types, composing sticks, ink balls, and blank sheets of paper.

One of the best accounts of quick conveyence of news to London was reported in Adams’s Weekly Courant (Chester), number 51 (14 November 1733), in which there is much about the preparations for the arrival of the Prince of Orange for his marriage with the Princess Royal. The Prince arrived at Greenwich about noon on Wednesday, 7 November, attended by Horatio Walpole, and was taken in one of the King’s barges to the Tower of London and thence to Somerset House; but there had, of course, been advance news about the progress of the Fubbs yacht as it moved into the estuary long before reaching Greenwich:

The Person who brought the first News of the Prince’s being seen off Margate, was one who keeps a publick House
there, who, upon seeing the Yatchts immediately took his Horse and rode to Canterbury, where he took Post Horses, and came to St. James’s at 11 o’Clock on Monday Night. Her Majesty ordered him twenty Guineas, and Sir Robert Walpole gave him Five. The Twenty he has since laid out on a Silver Tankard, on which his Majesty’s Arms are engrav’d.

For many a year this anonymous but enterprising publican must have pointed proudly at the well-polished trophy in his Margate house of cheer.

From Margate to London, by way of Canterbury, was a journey of about seventy-two miles, and the alert Margate man deserved his reward for a long, swift ride with news for his sovereign. News from the Orkneys would in the best of times have taken a whole week’s hard riding, even after it reached the northern mainland; but in 1746, when postal services were interrupted because of bad weather or rebels, a letter dated at Stromness on 27 January did not reach London until 1 March, though readers of the *Oxford Gazette: and Reading Mercury* saw it shortly afterwards, in their paper dated Monday, 3 March 1745 (i.e., 1746):

We have been for this Week or more under great Uneasiness, on account of a French Ship lying at Flotta Bay. By the surest Advices we have, she mounts 14 Nine-pounders, is full of Swivels, and has 130 Men, commanded by an Irishman, bound to Caithness, with Arms, Ammunition, and Officers. . . . As the Communication by the Post is now stopp’d, I am obliged to send this by Sea, by a New-England Ship.

By the time the transatlantic ship reached her southern port, the authorities could do nothing to relieve the anxiety in Stromness, but they may have been much interested in the message nevertheless.

Ships from New England had long enough crossings in those days without calling at places like Stromness in the Orkneys, and the time lag between events in North
America and news thereof in England's towns was often considerable. A voyage which usually took less than two months sometimes lasted some weeks longer. Readers of the *Western Flying Post*; or, *Sherborne and Yeovil Mercury*, number 358 (5 January 1756), saw among the "Fresh Advices from America" a brief report dated at Boston on 13 October: "Last Week the several Carpenters who went from hence to Oswego returned here, having, as we understand, compleated the building of the several armed Vessels, designed for the Security of the Lake Ontario, in about 28 Days from the cutting of the Trees." It took more than three times as long for the news to reach Dorset and Somerset readers as the men from Boston took to fell the trees and construct the ships. Advices from over the sea could hardly be "fresh."

That there were special London "correspondents" who were employed to transmit news to country editors is apparent (if there were no other evidence) from statements made by printers in Birmingham, Worcester, Stamford, Halifax, and other towns. When William Thompson, printer of the *Stamford Mercury*, died in 1732, a new *Mercury* was started by Francis Howgrave. In defending himself against charges of having treated Thompson's widow unfairly, Howgrave quoted (in number 6, 20 July 1732) a letter from John Hannis of Goose Alley in Sea-Coal Lane, near Snow Hill, London, "who used to send Mrs. Thompson's News." Ten years later, *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* regularly had a column or more headed "From our London Correspondent," the articles being variously dated from Exchange Alley, Dick's Temple-Bar, Bolt-Court Coffee-House, Fleet Street, and "From my own Chambers." The *Sherborne Mercury* sometimes had two or three columns with the heading "From our London Correspondent." In 1758, the proposals of the new *Union Journal*: or, *Halifax Advertiser* included the usual statement that the *Journal* would be collected from all the London papers, and then referred to "a peculiar Advan-
tage" in that a correspondent in London would supply the printer from time to time with "the earliest Intelligence, after the Evening Papers come from the Press."

Another "advantage" was possible: the news could be personally conveyed from London. Many printers arranged, presumably at considerable cost, for a special "express" (that is, a man on a horse) to bring the news over the shortest roads and trails. Direct conveyance of dispatches was not in every case satisfactory, as is apparent from a statement in Berrow's Worcester Journal, number 2072 (6 April 1749), addressed "To the Kind Encouragers of this Paper." Berrow said flatly that the special courier was less dependable than the regular post which arrived some hours later: "... we therefore intend, for the future, waiting the Arrival of our Intelligences [sic] by the ordinary Post; But tho' this will consequently delay the Publication some Hours, yet, we hope, our Readers will dispense with it, since they will have a greater Quantity and Variety of News, &c. ..." Unsatisfactory experience with special couriers convinced Berrow that the greater punctuality of the post would enable him to publish his paper with a minimum of irregularity.

It is not surprising that in a period distinguished for its bad roads and its highwaymen there were delays in the securing of news from London, whether it was the postboy or a private courier who was unpunctual. Bliss's Protestant Mercury (Exeter), number 4 (25 January 1717), was published on its usual day, Friday, but the sixth page lacked its usual Thursday night news; "the Post Boy being robb'd of his Mail, between London and Staines," said Bliss, "there was no News or Letters came in by last Night's Post." The serious illness of one of the postboys bringing mail from London delayed publication of the Western Flying Post; or, Sherborne and Yeovil Mercury, number 88 (8 October 1750). December and January were particularly hard months for the carriers
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of news. The *Gloucester Journal*, number 196 (4 January 1726), was late in being printed and distributed, the reason being the lateness in the arrival of the packet from London: "the Post Boy alledges, that he was nine Hours in coming about a Mile, occasioned by the great Rains and sudden Frost." At the end of the news in the same paper on 13 December 1726 was a prominent notice:

"... P.S. We hope our Readers will excuse our Messengers coming so late, by reason the Post did not come to Gloucester till after 4 this Evening: The Snow being very deep, several Distributors could not perform their Stages, especially to Burford, Farringdon, Wantage, Stow, &c.

Hazards of travel delayed both those who brought news to the printing office and those who later set out on their rounds with bundles of printed newspapers.

When storms, highwaymen, and sudden illness did not interfere, the local printers of newspapers would normally be able to keep to a fairly tight schedule as the established day of publication approached. Both the day of the week and the time set for publication on that day would depend on the usual time of the arrival of the post or of the special courier. Though some regions had a more frequent service, the mail started along most of the great roads from London every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday night. The time of arrival in the provincial towns would naturally depend on the distance over which the mailbags had to be brought. Andrew Brice, of Exeter, indicated with very helpful precision the times at which the news from London reached him. In *Brice's Weekly Journal*, number 243 (Friday, 31 October 1729), for instance, his first two and one-half columns are headed "Substance of the Advices we receiv'd on Saturday Night." That Saturday was 25 October, and the articles were dated "London, Oct. 23." There followed three columns headed "The Articles following came last Monday Night" (that is, 27 October); they were dated "London,
Oct. 26.” The third batch of news, dated “London, Oct. 28,” has the heading “Between 3 and 4 o’Clock this Morning we receiv’d these further Advices.”

Normal times of arrival of the London news are often indicated in notices of delay. Norris’s Taunton Journal had an announcement in the issue dated Friday, 9 December 1726, that “The London Post who was expected here last Night, came in this Day about Noon.” Obviously Norris usually had his final batch of news in his hands sometime Thursday night. On Saturday, 9 October 1731, Anne Ayscough of Nottingham declared that that day’s post, which usually arrived “about 8 or 9 o’Clock in the Morning,” had not come until nine o’clock that night.

On what principle did the publisher of a provincial newspaper decide which day was the most suitable for publication? It was certainly not the general practice to publish on the local market day, though that was done in some places. Nor was any one day of the week universally favoured. Saturday was the most popular, Monday being a close second. Friday was preferred in Exeter, Plymouth, Ludlow, Preston, Liverpool, and (while Stephen Bryan was the printer) Worcester; Tuesday was the day for the Leeds Mercury and the Leedes Intelligencer, for the earlier Newcastle Gazette, for most of the York and Manchester papers, for the Hereford Journal, the two Sheffield papers, the Doncaster Flying Post, and the papers in Warrington, Middlewich, and Halifax. Wednesday was undoubtedly the least popular, though William Cuthbert’s Newcastle Gazette and the Newcastle Intelligencer, which took its place in 1755, were both published on that day. One paper, Adams’s Weekly Courant in Chester, which for the first few years appeared on Wednesdays, eventually changed to Tuesday. On the other hand, another printer, William Cooke, moved his publishing day back to Wednesday after having brought out his Chester Weekly Journal on Thursdays for ten years. Cooke also chose Wednesday for publishing his
other newspapers, the *Industrious Bee* (1733-34) and the *Chester Weekly Tatler* (1734).  

The most clearly defined reason for selecting one day as better than the others appears in a Worcester newspaper of 1753. Remembering that the three-days' news sent into the country from Lombard Street on Tuesday nights would be greater in bulk than the two-days' accumulations that went out on Thursdays and Saturdays, one realizes that a printer might well decide to issue his paper on the day which brought him the largest assortment of dispatches. Such was Hervey Berrow's reasoning. In November, 1753, Richard Lewis tried to start a *New Worcester Journal* in opposition to Berrow's *Worcester Journal*, but he did not achieve any advantage either by his aggressive methods or by his bringing out the new paper on Wednesday, the day before Berrow's. The notice at the foot of the third page in number 234 (8 November 1753) of Berrow's paper and prominently spread across the front page of the following issue indicates that, whatever might be done elsewhere, the established Worcester printer recognized the expediency of publishing his paper as soon as the advices leaving London on Tuesday night were available:

... It may likewise be necessary to observe, That a News-Paper, publish'd in Worcester on a Wednesday, cannot obtain the News from those Papers that are publish'd in London on a Tuesday Night, and which arrive in Worcester on a Thursday Morning; whereas, this Journal, being publish'd on a Thursday, always contains the News of those London Papers.

Thursday was preferred also in Stamford and (until 1743) in Derby. Manchester's first paper, Roger Adams's *Manchester News-Letter*, was published on that day, as were also the papers in Maidstone, Eton, and Whitehaven.

It is natural to suppose that the day regularly specified in the date line was the normal day of publication, and
that only the non-arrival of news or of stamped paper would delay publication beyond that customary day; but careful examination reveals some anomalies not at first apparent. It can easily be seen that the Nottingham Weekly Courant, which year after year bore Thursday dates under its title, actually came from the press on Saturday. How otherwise could Anne Ayscough have possibly printed in her Weekly Courant dated Thursday, 29 July 1725, items of news from Jones's Letter and the London Evening Post of that same date? And how came it that these pieces, like similar paragraphs in most other issues, were placed under the caption “Saturday's Post”? This inconsistency is demonstrated in the issue of the Weekly Courant dated Thursday, 8 December 1726, in which there are blank spaces at the bottom of the two columns on the fourth page, with a note in place of the usual caption: “Saturday, Dec. 10. This Day's Post is not yet come in.” Anne Ayscough's readers looked for their Thursday paper on Saturday, and she could not keep them waiting; number 31 came out on time! It is perhaps being too utterly logical to insist that a Thursday paper should be published on Thursday.

For reasons not always made clear, some printers deliberately changed the regular day of publication. The Sherborne Mercury in its earliest years came out on Monday; by 1740, its day of publication had been altered to Tuesday; then, from 3 February 1746, the day was moved back to Monday, and that was the accepted day after the amalgamation with the Western Flying Post, or Yeovil Mercury in 1749. Although the Lancashire Journal apparently started on Thursday, it soon began to come out regularly on Monday; the surviving issues from number 66 to number 72 bear Tuesday dates, but thereafter the day of publication was again Monday. Sometimes the change was made at the particular request of readers. The Birmingham Journal had for over six months been appearing on Monday when, in number 28
(21 May 1733), the printer explained that certain encouragers of the paper had recommended altering the day of publication to Thursday. According to the only surviving issue of Edward Ward’s *Bristol Mercury*, number 24 (Thursday, 20 October 1748), Thursday was not the most acceptable day, for Ward’s city and country friends had repeatedly told him that the paper would circulate much farther and be of more service to the public if he published on Saturday. He said he would make the change at once.

The most frequent change was that from Saturday to Monday or vice versa. The lively and long lasting *Salisbury Journal*, which began on 27 November 1736, fluctuated between these two days. The first four issues appeared on Saturdays; but during the early weeks of 1737, the paper appeared as often with Monday dates as with Saturday dates. From the beginning of April, 1737, the day named in the date line was regularly Monday, but a notice in number 43 (Monday, 19 September 1737) makes it clear that Collins had developed the practice of publishing his paper before the day specified in the date line:

"... The publishing this Paper as usual, on Saturday Evening, being attended with many Inconveniences, the same will be published, after the last day of this Month, on every Tuesday Morning, so that the freshest Intelligence by Monday’s Post will by that means be inserted, and the same sooner and better conveyed to our Readers.

In spite of this declaration, the day of publication given in the date line did not change to Tuesday until early in 1739. With number 426 (17 March 1746), the day was moved back to Monday.

It is apparent from the many satirical observations in the *Salisbury Journal* and a dozen other papers that within the limits of a particular region the strongest point of rivalry was the question of whose news was the latest.
William Collins wrote scathingly in his Salisbury Journal of Monday, 22 May 1738, about the "stale Stuff" in the Gloucester Journal. Raikes and Dicey aggressively declared in an early issue of their Gloucester Journal—number 4 (30 April 1722)—that their paper included the latest news, and was not like some other newspapers in which all the news of the last post was kept over to the next week, with the result that the most material part of the news was a week old before it came out. This was a controversy which showed up in various parts of the country. Every surviving issue of the Sussex Weekly Advertiser in its first ten years carried at the top the confident assertion that readers would find in this Monday paper the news from Saturday's London Gazette, which could not otherwise reach them until two or three days later. The argument was stated with more particularity in Elizabeth Jopson's Coventry Mercury, number 924 (19 March 1759):

"*:* Some News-Writers having affirmed, in Favour of some Weekly Papers, published on a SATURDAY, that they contain as many Articles of early Intelligence as THIS which is published on a MONDAY; in order that the Publick may no longer be imposed upon, by false Assertions, we think it proper to inform them, that the Paragraphs of News, inserted in the last Post of such Papers, are all copied from those published in London on a FRIDAY; whereas our Monday Morning's Post, is taken from the London Gazette and other Papers published on a SATURDAY EVENING; so that THIS contains a NIGHT and DAY'S more Intelligence of important Events.

This is a much more explicit statement, and probably closer to the truth, than the emphatic claims advanced by some other printers.

No one was so absurdly insistent upon the freshness of his news as Robert Walker, whose reports in the London and Country Journal and other papers were either
long out of date or not dated at all. He and his partner, William Jackson, changed the day of publication of their *Oxford Flying Weekly Journal* from Saturday to Monday, they said, because they wished to include the news of Saturday's *London Gazette*. "Our Readers are desired to observe," they remarked in number 71 (11 January 1748), "that this Gazette News and our other early Advices cannot appear in the Northampton Mercury till the Week after." This hostility against the *Northampton Mercury*, which had for many years appeared on Monday, probably had its root in a vigorous attack leveled by the *Northampton Mercury* on 27 May 1745 against the *Cambridge Journal*, of which Walker (along with Thomas James) was a proprietor. The attack on the *Cambridge Journal* was apparently deserved, for in the issue of Saturday, 16 March 1745, and later issues was a statement that by means of the "great Expedition" used in procuring news, they were two days before the Northampton paper and "all Sunday's Post before the Ipswich Paper."

It is quite possible that Walker and his partner really did conduct their business with "Expedition" and engaged special messengers to gallop from London to Cambridge and to Oxford on Saturday, bringing news which would not ordinarily reach either town until the post arrived on Sunday. Walker could probably have had a G.P.O. "express" to either place for about a pound.26 He had assured readers of the *Cambridge Journal*, number 52 (Saturday, 14 September 1745), that "no Care, or Expense, no Diligence or Attention" would be spared to procure the earliest intelligence. But when he asserted, as he did repeatedly, that news printed in his Saturday paper actually contained extracts from "the London Evening Papers" which did not reach Cambridge until Sunday afternoon, he was obviously trying to convince his readers that he was referring to London papers published on Saturday. It was egregious deception. In their number 37
(Saturday, 1 June 1745), Walker and James declared that all persons living in Cambridge or coming to the market could be supplied with the Cambridge Journal “after Seven o’Clock every Saturday Morning”; and three months later the hour was announced as “after Six o’Clock every Saturday Morning.” It is small wonder that the Northampton Mercury and Charles Micklewright’s Oxford Gazette; and Reading Mercury poked fun at the fantastic claim to “great Expedition” in the printing of weekend news in the two university towns. There was not enough money in all England to pay for the conveying of a Saturday evening London paper to Cambridge (or even to Oxford) fast enough for Walker to print its news before seven o’clock that morning.

Every weekly newspaper contains what Collins of Salisbury called “stale Stuff,” for its earliest advices are at least a week old before they are in the hands of readers. “Freshest” means “as fresh as can be managed.” Walker was too ready to claim that his papers were miracles of promptitude. Most other printers made real efforts to gather the news without delay.

Delays in procuring the news were sometimes unavoidable; delays in getting the news into type and onto paper could be minimized if care, diligence, and attention were exercised during that time of most critical urgency in a newspaper office—the hour or two before blank paper begins to be fed into the moving press, whether it is a whirring modern giant, all wheels and rollers, or a simple flat-bed press worked by hand. That critical hour was sometimes four or five o’clock in the morning. We have observed Robert Walker’s claim to have his Cambridge paper ready for customers by six o’clock on Saturday mornings. Sam. Farley announced on the title page of his Salisbury Post Man, number 1 (27 September 1715), that if he could get two hundred regular subscribers his paper would be delivered to any private or public house in town every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday morning, “by
Eight of the Clock, during the Winter-Season, and by Six in the Summer.” Two months later, the same man, or another man of the same name, assured readers of Sam. Farley’s Bristol Post Man that his paper would be “constantly Publish’d every Saturday Morning, Two Hours after the London Post comes in.” Just over ten years later, Farley’s Bristol News-Paper, number 69 (27 August 1726), had an extended subtitle which included the phrase, “... and Publish’d every Saturday Morning soon after the London Post comes in.”

It must be kept in mind that the time of going to press depended entirely upon the arrival of the London news. There was no waiting for advertisements. The allowed interval between the deadline for the receiving of paid notices and the time of going to press varied from one paper to another and changed also with the developing efficiency of the shop, but most editors insisted on a gap of two or three days. This request was not unreasonable; the printer had to make up and print half or more of the paper well in advance. The reason why persons advertising in the Sherborne Mercury, published on Tuesday, had to have their notices at the printing office on the preceding Thursday was that the first side of the paper was set up and started through the press that day or on Friday. In 1737, the York Courant, likewise published on Tuesday, asked its advertisers to send in their notices on Saturday in the forenoon; by 1741, the same paper had shortened the interval, the note in number 835 (13 October 1741) urging that advertisements be sent in on Monday morning “by Ten o’Clock at farthest” or they could not possibly be inserted until the following week. Caesar Ward’s notice in the York Courant, number 1104 (9 December 1746), makes the arrangement perfectly clear. Advertisements carried over from the preceding issue and enough new ones to fill the available space would be made up with the other matter of page 4. That page, together with the first page, was printed on Saturday afternoon.
As the Number of Courants now printed is so very great, that we are oblig'd to go to Press with one Side of the Paper on Saturday; and 'tis frequent to order an Advertisement to be continued till forbid; our Correspondents are desir'd to send in their Orders of Discontinuance before that Day at Noon, otherwise their Advertisements cannot be taken out.

Ward also said that new advertisements could be received as late as Monday if they were put into the hands of Benjamin Lund in Tadcaster (was he the typesetter?) so that they and the latest news could be set together. The arrangement could hardly have been better.

With careful planning, then, the greater part of the type-setting would already have been done before the final post arrived, and half the printing would have been completed, too.

Accidents could happen in the printing office to delay the final putting to bed of the type for the second side. In the *Cambridge Journal*, number 309 (18 August 1750), there was a mournful note about pied type:

*•* We hope our Readers will excuse the Newsmen serving the Cambridge Journal so late this Week; it being occasion'd by a Misfortune happening just as the Paper was going to Press, whereby one whole Page of the Paper was broke to Pieces.

With two masters to serve—Robert Walker and Thomas James—some poor "devil" must have had both his ears boxed for being so awkward. But aside from such regrettable accidents and storms which delayed the news carriers after the paper was printed, the provincial purveyors of "freshest advices" in the reign of George II were usually able to get the news into their customers' hands before the reports were much more out of date than when the printers received them.

It is expedient now to consider the whole operation of a country printing office, or at least that part of the busi-
ness concerned with getting out the paper. There will remain many uncertainties, for there is little evidence about the ink used, about the number of men usually employed in a country printing office, about their wages and the length of their working day, about the number of sheets or half-sheets that could be printed off (one side) in an hour, about the number of printing presses, if indeed there were more than one, in particular printing shops, and about the matter of second, third, or fourth editions or impressions of a particular weekly number.

What went on in the shop of a country printer of news can only be conjectured, but the general practices are obvious enough. Once the preceding issue was off the press and the types had been distributed, the preparations could go forward for the next issue. In a well-conducted shop there would be an adequate supply of paper, for the printer would not have forgotten to order enough for his needs. The title-heading or separate title page would be all ready set in large types, sometimes with the characteristic “news-bringer” wood blocks—a ship, a mercury, a mounted postman—or a view of the city. If a factotum block was customarily used at the top of the first column, it was easy to insert the appropriate initial. The standard captions would be ready; if page numbers and running titles—such as “PILBOROUGH’S NEWS” or “Cross-grove’s News”—were used, these could be transferred from the previous setting of the type; the colophon would remain as already composed or be slightly altered if a new agent had to be named; the serial number and the date could be changed immediately from those of the week before; uncancelled advertisements could remain intact.

The procedure is best understood if one examines the standard layouts of representative papers. The pattern in a pre-1712, two-page, half-sheet weekly paper is illustrated by number 556 (Friday, 10 August 1711) of Sam. Farley’s Exeter Post-Man; Or, Weekly Intelligence, From
Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, &c. With General Occurrences both Foreign and Domestick. Flanking this five-line title are woodcuts, one showing a ship in full sail, the other showing a gate in a city wall. Under the date line, which contains the serial number as well, are two columns of badly printed news, introduced by the statement, “Since our last, we have receiv’d Three Mails from Holland, and Three from Flanders with the following Advices.” The first caption, “Geneva, August 3, N.S.,” is the only one on that page. The news, which on the front page is mostly foreign, continues on the second page, where there are short items dated “Falmouth, Aug. 6,” “Plymouth, Aug. 7,” “Bristol, Aug. 4,” and “London, August 7”; but most of the space on the second page is occupied by thirteen advertisements, each having the first line in type larger than that of the body. The only caption on the second page is the word “Advertisements.” The colophon is simply “Printed at my House near the New Inn.”

When the Stamp Act in 1712 drove printers to use a sheet and a half for each copy of their papers, there was plenty of space, and it was common for the first page of these six-page or twelve-page papers to be used exclusively for the title and the imprint. Long titles and wordy descriptive subtitles were preferred, and types of several sizes were used lavishly. In some of the papers the front page had a large oblong cut showing a panoramic view of the town, or had a pair of square woodcuts flanking the upper lines of the title. Display types in titles were most flamboyant in rival papers in the same town. From his printing office in St. Peter’s Churchyard, Exeter, Philip Bishop in 1715 sent out his six-page newspaper with a title of forty-two words and an ampersand:

The / Exeter Mercury: / or, Weekly Intelligence / of / News: / Being A Faithful / abstract of all the News Papers of Note. / Containing the Material Occurrences / Foreign and Domestick; / with a Particular Account of
what Books / and Pamphlets are Publish'd in Great / Britain, France, Holland, &c.

Using a similar pair of woodcuts to adorn the page and duplicating Bishop's large interlaced monogram for good measure, Jos. Bliss sent out his paper from "the NEW PRINTING-HOUSE near the London-Inn, without East-gate," with a title longer than Bishop's, but only because he added eleven defiant words after his ampersand: "... So that no other can pretend to have a better Collection." In substance these competing papers were similar, though Bliss used more prominent headings for the news of the three posts than Bishop did. Both used two columns to the page. Other six-page papers of the 1712-25 period were set in much the same fashion as these two Exeter papers, but some of them were in single columns and some used only part of the front page for the title. That was the layout of the Worcester Post Man after the Stamp Act of 1712. The full title (sixteen words), the two wood-blocks, and the date line filled only one-third of the front page.

From 1725 onward, as was indicated earlier in this chapter, all provincial newspapers were printed on the two sides of a single half-sheet, all but two of them—the Stamford Mercury for a time and the Suffolk Mercury—being set so as to be folded once into a four-page paper with two or three columns to the page.

Since in most towns the bulk of the news arrived with the post from London three times a week, a few pioneers in the printing of local papers believed that they should publish their papers three times a week, each issue offering only the news that came in the current batch. This was the practice of the first two Newcastle papers, both of them published on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. The New-castle Gazette, number 65, for example, printed news selected by J. Button or his printer, J. Saywell, from dispatches received in Newcastle between Saturday, 23
December, and Monday, 25 December 1710. As soon as Saywell reached the catchword in setting his first page, he printed as many copies of that page as he required, then turned the paper and printed his second page, which (unless Saywell was both compositor and pressman) would have been set in type while the first page was being run off.

If the paper came out once a week, the printer might make up his paper in one of two ways. He could fill the first third of the available space with items of news selected from the first batch, then fill another third with pieces from the second set of dispatches, and leave enough space to print selected parts of the last lot of advices when they arrived near the end of his week. That would produce a paper which in effect would be three successive bulletins of news issued at one time. The other way would be to let the selected items accumulate until all three posts had come in and then to rearrange the material so as to bring together all the foreign news, all the American news, all the country news, and so on, in the several recognized categories. This procedure might make an orderly grouping of items, but it would have one serious disadvantage: no part of the paper could be printed until the whole thing was ready for the press. The problem would be the same whether the printer used twelve, eight, six, four, or two pages. It is easy to see why almost all printers preferred to make up the paper with three separate sections of news; by this arrangement they could get ahead with the printing and bring out the paper with minimum delay after the final news arrived in the shop.

Yet there were two papers in which the whole week's news was presented in one lot rather than in three. One of these, the six-page Plymouth Weekly Journal, had a title filling the first page, with the verso blank, and only four pages of news and advertisements. The third page, headed "FOREIGN AFFAIRS," was set up and printed first, followed by page 4 (the other side of the half-
A second caption, "LONDON," with the date, was inserted at the appropriate place in the series of paragraphs, with no other interruption to the end of the sixth page. By 1724, the news was being set up in three batches, and a rigid allotment of space for each batch had been established. Invariably page 2 (now no longer blank) had "Sunday" as its first word, followed by foreign news and such captions as "PORT NEWS" and "LONDON." Page 4 regularly had at the head of its first column an ornamental band and some such statement as this: "Friday, Oct. 9. Arrived three Mails from Holland, two from Flanders, and one from France." 38

The principle that the setting of the news in a single batch was superior found most emphatic utterance in a special note under the date line of the four-page Oracle: Or, Bristol Weekly Miscellany, which began to appear in April, 1742: "Some of our Readers, accustomed to the vulgar Division of the News into Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays Posts, think it strange that we deviate from the common Practice." What follows was intended to "obviate this Popular Prejudice." The Oracle's manner of reducing every article under its proper general head was believed to be "less confused, more laborious and more useful," and was justified because the Oracle's foreign news was directly transmitted from abroad and could therefore be set up in type well in advance of the posts bringing the news via London. One might understand from this explanation that all reports from Germany were to be grouped together under one heading. That simple arrangement was apparently not feasible; instead, there are in number 3 (17 April 1742), not one, but several sections headed "GERMANY." These sections, separated by others headed "FRANCE and SPAIN," "LOW COUNTRIES," "ITALY," give the news from Newhauss, Vienna, Ratisbon, and Frankfort in chronological order it is true, but one must still search the columns before finding all the news from one area. The setting of news in
three batches would certainly have been less "laborious" for the readers.

Special circumstances may have made it seem reasonable for the proprietors of the *Oracle* in Bristol to depart from "the general Mode," but other printers uniformly preferred to dispense the news in three batches, even after the posts began to arrive more often than thrice weekly. And the principle which kept them doing that was nowhere so directly stated as in Henry Cross-grove’s *Norwich Gazette*, number 27 (10 May 1707), in answer to a question ostensibly submitted by a "Constant Per-user," who asked, "Why you constantly divide your News into three Days Intelligence, and not make it one continued Story?" Cross-grove’s reply is illuminating:

... the reason why I pursue that Method is this, because I would not impose upon my Customers, and in particular those that live in the Country; I do not therefore run it all together, to take the Advantage of picking a Saturday's Account out of the old Intelligence, but particularize each Day's Account, that the Buyers may be satisfied they have the Whole Week's News.

Cross-grove, like practically every other printer of news, continued the practice of setting it up in three batches, both before and after the change of design from six pages to four in 1725.37

It takes a twentieth-century reader a little time to accustom himself to look at the end of a paper for the latest news, but the eighteenth-century reader had no reason to look elsewhere for it. Philip Bishop, printer of the *Exeter Mercury*, used a special heading at the top of page 6 in the issues of late 1714 and early 1715: "By the last Nights Post we had the following Advices," and he drew particular attention to his plan of keeping that page exclusively for late news: "*•* N.B. The last Page of this Paper, in which has usually been inserted all that comes in the Thursday Nights Post . . . , shall for the
future be entirely reserv’d for the News of that Post.” Other printers refrained from making such a declaration, knowing that all readers would automatically turn to the end of the paper for the freshest advices. Certainly if anyone perused the six-page Worcester Post-Man, number 267 (Friday, 6 August 1714), only as far as page 4 he would see on that page that the ailing Queen Anne, after suffering “a Fit of Convulsions, others say the Appoplexy,” had been given “much Relief by Blisters”; only on page 5 of that same issue would the reader discover that the Queen had died on Sunday, 31 July.38

With two-page, four-page, and eight-page papers the printer had to decide which of the two sides to print first. The pages were, of course, set one at a time, column by column; in a four-page paper, the pages were printed two at a time, pages 1 and 4 first, unless it was the printer’s preference to put his latest news on page 4, in which case he ran off pages 2 and 3 first. Many four-page papers have freshly-set catchwords showing unmistakably the order in which the pages were set; and there are other signs indicating what was the customary order of printing in any one shop. In eight-page papers, four pages were printed at a time, pages 2, 7, 6, and 3 on one side, 8, 1, 4, and 5 on the other.

The standard threefold sequence of news groupings in four-page papers with the latest news on page 3 may be seen in the Oxford Gazette; and Reading Mercury, number 16, published on Monday, 3 March 1746: at the head of the first column stands the caption, “Wednesday’s Post”; two-thirds from the top of the first column of the second page is the caption, “Friday’s Post”; and the third page begins with the heading, “Sunday’s Post.” The Reading news comes in the third column of that third page, followed by the weekly list of bankrupts, prices of stocks, London bills of mortality, and prices of commodities on various markets. The fourth page is filled with advertisements. This being so, the printer would naturally first
work off the “outer” side of the paper, containing pages 1 and 4. Page 2 would be standing ready in type when the compositor received the material for his page 3. Then the types of pages 2 and 3 would be locked in the chase and the half-printed sheets would be put through the press a second time. This was the most common procedure. Other printers also set page 1 first, but preferred to hold it until page 4 could be set with the final batch of news or—as in the Salisbury Journal, the Derby Mercury, and the Ipswich Journal, for example—to insert on the fourth page a short section of late news from London, sometimes labelled “Postscript,” on the model of such London papers as the early Flying Post and the St. James’s Evening Post in the early months of 1735. In such cases, obviously, it was the “inner” side of the paper that went through the press first.

This keeping of limited space at the bottom of the last column to be set up in type makes one think of the common twentieth-century practice of reserving space on the first or last page for the inserting of special bulletins concerning sporting results, political crises, new rockets to the moon, or any other exciting development reported after the edition has been run off; but eighteenth-century provincial news printers did not do that. News, letters, and advertisements which came in after the printing of the second side of the sheet had begun were ordinarily held over until the next week’s issue. There were exceptions. One of these is seen in Norris’s Taunton Journal, a four-page paper which appeared on Tuesdays and Fridays. Norris had three fresh pages of news in the Tuesday issues but used as page 1 the last page of the preceding Friday’s issue. Friday’s paper reprinted (as pages 1 to 3) the previous Tuesday’s latest news, only the final page being new. Norris’s customers regularly got the whole week’s news whether they took the Tuesday or the Friday edition, but the Tuesday customers got three times as much “fresh” news as those who took the Friday edition.
years earlier, Jos. Bliss of Exeter had provided the same sort of twice-a-week news service, the subtitle of his Protestant Mercury indicating that “for the Convenience of those that will take the same but Once a Week, it is so order’d, that every Friday’s Paper will contain three Posts; or, the whole Week’s News.” The Protestant Mercury had six pages, not four, but the title filled page one in both editions, and in the Tuesday paper the second page was blank. The bulk of the week’s fresh news appeared in the last four pages of the Tuesday paper; the Friday paper reprinted everything that was in the Tuesday paper of that week, adding only a page at the end containing the news which had arrived by Thursday’s post. Philip Bishop’s Exeter Mercury for a time appeared in the same way on Tuesdays and Fridays. These three newspapers were, in effect, weekly papers published on Tuesdays, with an extra edition on Friday containing one additional page of late news.

If the word “extra” is to be reserved for supernumerary issues brought out unexpectedly to spread news too exciting to be held over for the next regular issue, it is appropriate to apply the term to extraordinary editions of two Liverpool newspapers in the period of the Seven Years’ War. As early as 1712, John White brought out a sheetful of news between numbers 96 and 97 of his Newcastle Courant, but this was rather by way of a continuation of the first of these than an “extra.” It was pointed out near the beginning of this chapter that in number 95 (8 March 1712) of his paper, White used eight pages instead of four because of developments at Utrecht. He decided not to do that in the issue of 10 March, preferring to print his usual four pages and announcing that additional pages would be published later: “The remainder of the News coming by this Post, together with the Specifick Demands of the States-General, delivered in at the Congress at Utrecht, which being very large, could not be comprized in this Paper, will be Published a few Hours after the
Publication of this Paper, in a *Supplement to the Newcastle Courant.*” The supplement has four pages, is dated 10 March 1712, and bears the same serial number (96) as the regular paper of that date.

Forty-six years later, both Robert Williamson and John Sadler occasionally printed “extraordinary” editions of their respective Liverpool papers between one regular Friday edition and the next. These extra editions were unnumbered, and were distributed free of charge to all the regular customers who could be reached. While the news carriers were still going their rounds distributing the issue of *Williamson’s Liverpool Advertiser* published on Friday, 18 August 1758, news of the surrender of Louisburg reached London and was announced in an “extraordinary” issue of the *London Gazette.* Williamson lost no time. On Monday, 21 August, he brought out his own *Liverpool Advertiser Extraordinary,* reprinting on one side of a leaf the full text of the exciting announcement. In the next regular issue (Friday, 25 August 1758) he explained that it had, of course, been impossible for him to send this special news to every one of his customers, “the Hawkers not being returned”; he therefore put the whole account of the Louisburg capitulation on the front page, with a note expressing the hope that those already served would excuse the repetition. He then found that by the time he had selected articles from Sunday’s and Tuesday’s posts there was room in the last column and a half of the third page (the fourth page being filled with advertisements) for only an extract of a letter received from New York by a local man, and details of Monday’s celebration in Liverpool—with the help of six barrels of ale. Readers were assured that advertisements and “Particulars” not inserted in that day’s paper “for Want of Room, on Account of the agreeable and welcome News” would be printed in the next regular issue. In the following months there were several other “extraordinary” issues of this paper and of John Sadler’s *Liverpool*
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*Chronicle*, a few being published even on Sunday.40 These special efforts by White and by Williamson and by Sadler to get important news into circulation as early as possible represent what has since become the primary impulse of the journalist.

Haste could cause errors, and some of the mishaps now detectable in extant copies make one feel very close to the original operation. Errors in typesetting could easily be made, particularly if the compositor was inexperienced or very young. “Thro’ Haste in my little Boy’s composing the Dissenter’s Address, an ugly Omission happened in His Majesty’s Answer, which those that have bought are desired to correct, and read thus. . . .” So wrote Jos. Bliss of Exeter in the *Protestant Mercury* dated 15 March 1717. Or the error could be in the arranging of the form. In the *Worcester Post*, number 755 (13 December 1723), Stephen Bryan, the printer, put a notice on page 5 asking his readers to be guided by the page numbers on the inside of the main sheet, pages 2 and 3 having unfortunately been printed in reverse order. Apparently the whole of the first sheet, both sides, had been run off before the error was noticed. Sometimes the pressman was at fault. The Hendon copy of the *Ipswich Journal*, number 378 (11 November 1727), has pages 2 and 3 upside down; so has the Newcastle Reference Library copy of the *Newcastle Courant*, number 604 (20 November 1736). The copy of the *York Courant*, number 1422 (16 January 1753), in the York Public Library has the second and third pages blank.

More exciting than these minor slips by the pressman are the several typographical flaws which were perceived too late to be corrected but were noted elsewhere in the same paper. If an error on page 2 or page 3 is mentioned on page 4, obviously page 4 was set up after the type for the inner surface of the half-sheet had been locked in the chase, and there are many examples of this kind of emendation. Of special interest are several references to such errors caught and corrected while the faulty page
was being run through the press. John White’s *Newcastle Courant*, number 499 (9 October 1714), has on page 12, just before the advertisements, “Erratum. In some of our last, Page 11. Line 14. for Matthew read Roger.” This clearly implied that the mistake was observed and corrected after some copies has been printed. The same is true of the *Weekly Worcester Journal*, number 1340 (28 February 1735), which has on the fourth page this note: “Pag. 2, Col. 3, Line 20, for that read the. Line 67, for Treasures read Measures. This happen’d only in some few Papers of this Impression.”

If printers were careful to point out errors perceived only after an issue had gone through the press, it is reasonable to assume that they normally made efforts to detect mistakes in typesetting before the half-sheets were given to the pressmen for the actual running off. One of the most interesting examples of proofreading and correcting of the press is to be seen by comparing the office copy of William Chase’s *Norwich Mercury*, dated 17 November 1750—it is in the British Museum—with a corrected copy in the Norwich Public Library. The first column on the fourth page in the British Museum copy has fourteen errors marked for correction. The proofreader’s eye saw (among other things) that a letter was missing from “threatned,” that two letters were transposed in “overboadr,” that “Southwaod” and “Fdge” had wrong letters, and that there was an unnecessary letter in “haveing.” The copy in Norwich shows that the alterations proposed by the proofreader were made, but several other flaws, not marked for correction, remained: a redundant “of,” a misspelled “partad,” several omissions, and six punctuation marks that were either missing or wrong. William Chase, or the man who read proof for him, could see that there was something wrong with the word “Intepredity” in the account of a fearless rescuer of a drowning man, but he could think of no other way to put it right than to insert another “r”; the typesetter obeyed his instructions and the word—bigger if
not better—now reads “Intrepredity.” A glance at these proofreader’s marks and at the corrections leaves one with a strong sense of ink-stained fingers fumbling with individual pieces of type in Chase’s printing shop in the Cockey Lane. The same sort of effort was probably made by the printers of other provincial newspapers.

Sometimes the changes were not typographical but substantial. On at least one occasion there were two differing editions of the *Gloucester Journal*, in one of which a later report was substituted for an erroneous early report which had appeared in the other edition. The *Gloucester Journal*, number 672 (11 March 1735), has in the place usually reserved for local news this declaration:

> * It having been inserted in some of our last Papers, that Sir Wm. Keyt and Wm. Bromley, Esq; were voted duly elected for Warwick; the Mistake was owing to the Thursday’s Post, with which those Papers were printed off, before that of Saturday arrived to contradict it, which brought Word, that the Petitioners, Thomas Archer and Henry Archer, Esqrs. were the Gentlemen voted duly chosen for the said Town.

This surely means that what some readers found in number 671 was not the same as what others found in their copies. Presumably Saturday’s post arrived before all the required copies of the *Gloucester Journal*, number 671, had been run off. It would not be expedient to incorporate all the fresh news that came in Saturday’s post, since that would be used in the next week’s paper, but a patent error could certainly be corrected if it meant only altering two lines of type in the third column of the front page.

There is evidence that one paper on several occasions had to be reprinted immediately because the sale proved greater than had been expected. *F. Farley’s Bristol Journal* and *Farleys Bristol Advertiser* (published on alternate Saturdays) apparently sold so well that the first impres-
sion was soon exhausted and more had to be printed. The *Journal*, number 71 (18 May 1745), had on the third page an announcement which began, “N.B. *The Demand for our Papers is so great, that last Saturday there were no less than THREE Impressions of that Day’s Paper. . . . ” On 5 October 1745, *Farley’s Bristol Advertiser*, number 84, had a similar notice: “N.B. This Paper is so universally receiv’d, that it had no less than three extraordinary Impressions last Saturday.” That seems to mean that after they had finished the normal run of his paper Farley’s pressmen went back to the press three more times. There is no knowing how many additional copies were run off in these extra impressions, and it is not clear why one extra running should not have served. The increased demand in October, 1745, might be attributed to the growing excitement over the Jacobite Rebellion, but similar claims were made long after the battle at Culloden. On 18 April 1747, Farley said there had been “no less than Three Impressions” on the preceding Saturday, and precisely three months later he used italics and capitals to shout forth his triumph: “N.B. This Paper had AGAIN Three Impressions last Saturday. . . . ” Unless several copies of one issue can be compared, there is no way of knowing the extent to which (if any) these “impressions” differed.

There are other aspects of this matter of multiple impressions which will bear looking into, but here it is enough to observe that there were several papers which may be said to have been printed in more than one “impression” or “edition,” though sometimes the variation was slight. *Henry’s Reading Journal* was also issued with the title *Henry’s Winchester Journal*; the *London and Country Journal* was issued with other titles; the *Salisbury Journal* was also issued with the title *Portsmouth and Gosport Gazette*; the *Public Advertiser (Sheffield)* seems to have appeared in several different “impressions,” each with precisely the same matter as the others but each
having a different agent (or perhaps proprietor) named under the title. (See item 131 in the Register.) Genuinely differing editions of the *York Courant* in 1741 are extant, with extensive variations in the substance on the "inner" side of the paper; but the involved relationships between the two editions cannot be discussed here. What matters is that before the reign of George II came to an end there were local newspapers all over England; and whether each came out in several impressions or only one, the total weekly output must have been tens of thousands. How they were put into the hands of waiting readers will be considered in the following chapter.

1. In a few instances diagrams and maps were attached to items of news concerning naval and military operations, usually to show the disposition of British and enemy forces at such places as Portobello, Carthagena, Chagre, Louisburg, Culloden. The *York Courant*, number 729 (2 October 1739), had on the front page "A Plan of the City of Belgrade, as it stood, when besieged by the Turks, in 1739, Drawn by the Hon. Brigadier General Douglas of York." Occasionally other subjects were illustrated: the *Norwich Gazette*, on 12 February 1737, had an illustration concerning the approaching eclipse of the sun; and the first issue of the *Western Flying-Post; or, Sherborne and Yeovil Mercury* (30 January 1749) had its front page filled with a sketch of the stupendous firework used in London to celebrate the Peace of Aix la Chapelle a few weeks earlier. Reference will be made in Chapter IV to the use of small cuts of houses, ships, and horses as a means of classifying advertisements.

2. Since no copies of the last two in this list have survived, I have taken the evidence of the nineteenth-century historians who saw copies of these papers which were then extant. See items 72 and 133 in the Register.

3. Because White wished his readers to have the text of an official communication concerning the proposed congress at Utrecht to discuss a general peace, the *Newcastle Courant*, number 95 (8 March 1712), was double the usual size, being a whole sheet printed in eight pages of the regular dimensions.

4. See item 134 in the Register.

8. I have examined thousands of provincial newspapers of the period 1700-1760 but have yet to see one bearing a penny stamp. When the tax was increased by a halfpenny in 1757, the additional amount was indicated by a band inscribed "HALFPENNY" attached to the lower part of the former design of the stamp, which still rather inconsistently had as its motto the words "semper eadem." For an excellent account of the mechanical process by which the half-sheets were stamped, see Sydney R. Turner, The Newspaper Tax Stamps of Great Britain: The First Issue, 1712-1757 ([Cheam]: Sydney R. Turner, [1936]).
9. The British Museum copy of the Ipswich Journal, number 19 (24 December 1720), has on the first of its six pages a written receipt, signed by John May, "for duty upon this Paper 3d. and for one advertisement one Shilling," but the duty on a sheet-and-a-half pamphlet would be three shillings; "3d." must be an error for "3sh."
10. In 1744, the year in which the term of thirty-two years mentioned in the Act of 1712 came to an end, nothing was done officially to continue the Stamp Tax, printers and government alike apparently assuming that once the tax was established it would remain in effect until altered by Act of Parliament. There was passed in 1743 an act—16 Geo. 2, c. 26—which included a section imposing a penalty on the vendors of unstamped newspapers, but the next formal legislation dealing with taxes on newspapers was the Act of 1757—30 Geo. 2, c. 19—which added a halfpenny to the tax assumed to be still in effect.
11. The printing of four columns to the page began in provincial newspapers about 1762.
12. Berrow's Worcester Journal continued to expand. By 1778, the pages, now in four columns, measured 11½ by 18¾ inches; and by 1813, the pages had five columns and measured 15½ by 21 inches.
13. Subsequent mishandling interferes with the legibility of some copies still extant, as is obvious in some issues of the York Courant in the York Minster Library, which are covered with clippings from later newspapers, and some issues of Adams's Weekly Courant in the Chester Public Library, which are badly stained with what appears to be the juice of red currants; some of the currants are still stuck to the paper.
14. Thomas Boddely announced in a prominent advertisement in his Bath Journal on 26 November 1750 that he had placed an order for "several new Fonts of Caslon's Types"; but it is clear that he intended to use these in printing books.
15. It was the smallest of the new types that Thompson and Cuthbert said they would use in their Newcastle Journal in 1739. The new types which the Weekly Worcester Journal began to use in 1742 were smaller than had been used before. The Norwich Mercury had used small but clear type in 1727; by 1743, the standard type was even smaller, and smaller still in 1751. By 1751, Adams's Weekly Courant was using smaller
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type than before. The York Courant used distressingly small type from 1754 on. In 1755, both the Newcastle Journal and the Newcastle Courant used very small type, much smaller than that being used in the Newcastle Intelligencer, obviously because they both had twice or three times as many advertisements as the Intelligencer.

16. A few of the earliest papers were carelessly set—the Manchester News-Letter, for example—and in some shops the types were dirty. In the only surviving issue of the Salisbury Post-Man, the printer asked his readers not to take notice of "the foulness of the Character," but he explained that the types had been damaged in transit and would take some time for cleaning.

17. In the second issue of his Newcastle Courant (4 August 1711), John White announced that his shop was "furnish'd with great Variety of Letters and Presses" and that he had "all requisite help and Assistance." He said he was prepared to print books, subpoenas, watch warrants, certificates for burying in woolen, "Pennances, &c."

18. In the Ipswich Journal, number 415 (27 July 1728), John Bag-nall's compositor used $u$ instead of $w$ on the last page.

19. Bryan was sometimes not in his shop while the compositor's work was being checked, and he often had to apologize for errors. In number 1430 (19 November 1736), for example, he inserted this note: "N.B. Our Readers are desir'd to to correct several literal Mistakes in the 2d and 3d Pages of this Paper, that happen'd yesterday in the Printer's Absence, and overlook'd by his Men."

20. One of the few instances of local news printed on the first page instead of on the third page of a four-page paper is to be seen in the Colchester Journal, number 334 (17 August 1739). There, after one and a quarter columns of foreign affairs, the first page has eight separate paragraphs under the prominent heading, "COLCHESTER, Aug. 17." See also note 39 in this chapter.

21. See below, p. 256, for reference to the use of large type for a caption in this paper.

22. Aris had declared in his first issue (16 November 1741) that he would spare no pains to make the paper agreeable, "having settled the best Correspondence I possibly could in London for that Purpose."

23. On the other hand, William Jackson, in 1753, drew special attention to the fact that his Oxford Journal, published on Saturdays, contained news headed "Saturday's Post [Received by an Express from London]." See above, p. 70, for claims made earlier by Jackson and his partner Robert Walker that Saturday's news from London reached them with "great Expedition."

24. The Gloucester Journal, number 999 (Tuesday, 23 June 1741), printed the postmaster-general's official announcement, dated at London, 10 June 1741, that the post would "pass and repass every Day in the Week, (Sundays excepted) between London, Norwich and Lynn, and between London and Yarmouth, and all the intermediate Towns in those Roads." A similar daily service was announced between London and
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Bristol, the route passing through Oxford, Abingdon, Cirencester, Gloucester, and Bath. A thrice-weekly service between Bristol and Salisbury was also announced to begin “at midsummer next.”

25. See below, pp. 108-9

26. Berrow alleged in his paper, on 15 November 1753, that Lewis had tried to obstruct the sale of *Berrow's Worcester Journal* by circulating a report in Bewdley, Kidderminster, and Stourbridge that Berrow's newsmen had left his service, and “at Pershore, Evesham, Campden, &c. a like Report was as industriously spread.”

27. It is possible that, like the *London and Country Journal*, this paper was issued in two parallel series. The earliest recorded issue, number 3 (Thursday, 20 July 1738), was reported by J. P. Earwaker in *Local Gleanings of Lancashire & Cheshire*, I (1876), 236-37, as having been used as stuffing in the binding of the first volume of the parish register at Mottram-in-Longdendale, Cheshire. The copy, badly cropped but otherwise in good condition, is still in the library of the Vicarage at Mottram.

28. According to *The Traveller's Pocket Book . . .* (1763), pages 219-20, the charge for a post rider on any of the post roads was “Three Pence British Money for each Horse-hire for every English Mile and Four-pence for the Guide of every Stage.”

29. Some derisive stanzas by “Philalethes” were printed in the *Oxford Gazette* in October, 1746, when the *Oxford Flying Weekly Journal* was still being published on Saturday. Under the title “Sunday’s Post on Saturday Morning” the versifier declared that in the view of learned men miracles no longer took place.

Say then, from whence their wondrous Skill
Does Walker and his Partner borrow,
That they To-day their Page can fill
With all the Tidings of To-morrow.

All that Walker and Jackson needed, said “Philalethes,” was credulity among their readers. The principle was simply this: *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur.*

30. In 1752, C. Micklewright said that notices sent in after Saturday noon would not appear in the following Monday’s *Oxford Gazette*, unless they concerned “Robberies, Losses, or other extraordinary Cases.”


32. Because a careless compositor noticed too late that he had neglected to change the initial in the factotum block of the *Salisbury
Journal, number 62 (3 April 1739), it was necessary to add this request to the fourth page: "In the first Word of the first column of this Paper for ROHN read JOHN."

33. In the Worcester Post-Man, number 335 (25 November 1715), one of the standard captions was inadvertently left in place when it should have been removed. Above the first line of news are these three lines:

From the News-Letter and other Intelligence.
Saturday's and Monday's Post.
The Foreign Mails bring us the following Advices.

But there is no foreign news in this issue of the paper.

34. One of these lists as to be sold or to be let for a term of years "the House that Sam. Farley, Printer now lives in."

35. The inserted half-sheet, which normally had the serial number of the issue at the top of the third page, is missing from many surviving issues of the Plymouth Weekly Journal.

36. Page 5 in number 136 (10 July 1724) of the Plymouth Weekly Journal has the usual catchword, "Friday's," but in the copy at the Plymouth Proprietary Library the sixth page is blank. Perhaps the final batch of mail arrived so late that the printer decided to go to press without it; or this particular half-sheet was missed in the printing of its second side.

37. As long as the Norwich Gazette had six pages, the second page invariably had at the bottom the catchword "Thursday" and the fourth page invariably had the catchword "Saturday." Obviously the fifth page was set last, for the sixth page (as well as the second column of the fifth page) was filled with advertisements, which could be set and printed before the last post arrived. When final press time came, then, Crossgrove had only to run off one side of one half-sheet.

38. In this and other issues of the Worcester Post-Man the fourth page regularly had the catchword "Thurs-." To save time, page 5 was set in smaller type than was used on the first four pages so that all the late news could be printed on that one side of the half-sheet.

39. A less common arrangement is seen in the Kentish Post, which for many years had its earliest news on the second and third pages, with a catchword connecting the two. The next dispatches to come from London went on page 1 and the latest of all on the fourth page, which also carried the Canterbury news. Advertisements were distributed on the first, third, and fourth pages, this distribution apparently being the one that was most convenient for a paper that appeared twice a week. If the fourth page was fully occupied by advertisements, the latest and the local news went on the first page.

40. For example, Williamson’s Liverpool Advertiser Extraordinary was published on Sunday, 21 October 1759.

41. The copy of number 671 at the Gloucester Public Library has the corrected statement: "Thomas and Henry Archer, Esqrs. Petitioners, are voted duly Elected for Warwick."