

THE TIMES

VOL. 3 - No. 3

THE HERITAGE of FLEET STREET

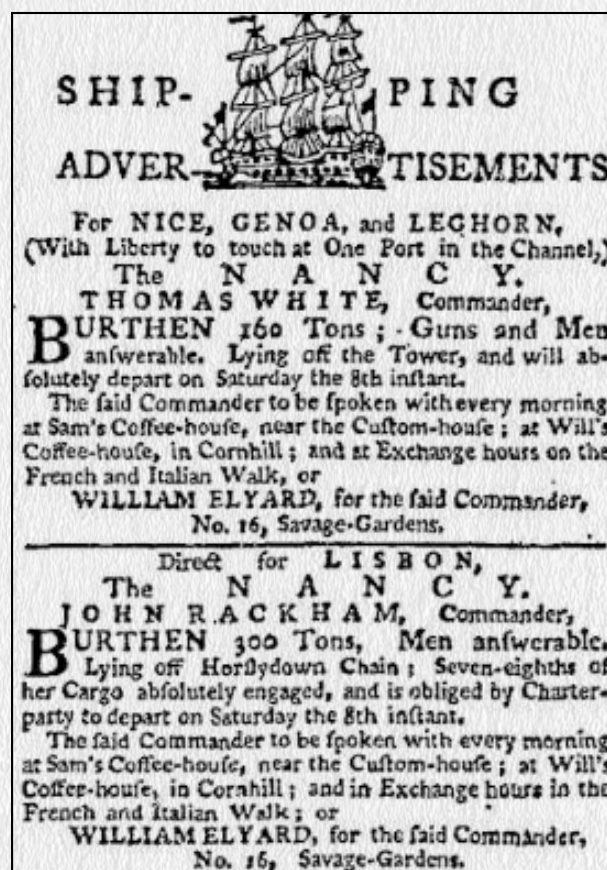
LONDON 2021



The Times is the oldest UK national newspaper in existence. Often referred to as ‘the paper of record’, it was first published as The Daily Universal Register on January 1, 1785. When its proprietor John Walter changed the name on January 1, 1788 it became the first newspaper in the world to use the word Times in its title.

In the first issue, Walter set out his manifesto in a front page address to the public: “A Newspaper,” he wrote, “conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the times, and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence; it ought not to be engrossed by any particular object; but, like a well-covered table, it should contain something suited to every palate”.

The Times from the start has been in the vanguard of technological progress in the industry. John Walter founded the paper as a means of advertising the innovative Logographic typesetting to which he had acquired the patent in 1784; the new process used pre-cast type of complete words or parts of words instead of typesetting solely by individual letters. When the Koenig & Bauer steam printing press was introduced in November 1814, The Times became the first newspaper anywhere to be printed mechanically. The Walter Press, designed in house in the 1860s was the first stereo printing press and the forerunner of the modern printing press. In 1932 The Times started using Times New Roman, the first typeface to be designed by a newspaper for its own use. In 1969 it became the first newspaper in the world to use a computer to generate editorial content and to justify individual lines of type for setting. In 2020 it became the first British newspaper to launch a radio station broadcast on multiple platforms when it launched Times Radio.



*From the front page of the first issue on
15 April 1912*

Editorially, The Times has been at the forefront too. In May 1803 The Times secured the right of journalists to gain admittance to the gallery in Parliament, the genesis of the Press Gallery. It also established the first professional foreign correspondent in 1807 when it sent Henry Crabb Robinson to Altona, while William Howard Russell's reports from the Crimean War earned him the status of the “first and greatest of war correspondents”. By 1861, the reputation of The Times was such that it led President Lincoln to say, “The London Times is one of the greatest powers in the world - in fact, I don't know anything which has more power except perhaps the Mississippi.”

The Times Law Reports have a special standing in law, being the only reports

published in a newspaper which can be cited in court, as they are written and edited by barristers and thus form a branch of the law. The Times is famous for its crossword and for its letters column, an important platform for the airing of views on serious as well as light-hearted issues. Organisations such as the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded (later the British Red Cross) and the Diabetes Association, as well as services such as the 999 emergency number, were established through publication of letters in The Times.

The paper has a long history of scoops. The Times was first to report the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson. In the 20th century it secured the exclusive syndication rights to the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb and broke the news of the successful ascent of Mount Everest in time for the Coronation in 1953. More recently Andrew Norfolk's investigation into child exploitation and grooming in Rotherham culminated in a massive increase in prosecutions and helped to bring about a national action plan on child sexual exploitation, giving scores of vulnerable young girls greater protection from grooming.

