

EDWARD LLOYD

Edward Lloyd was born in Thornton Heath, Surrey, on 16 February 1815, being baptised on 17 March 1815 at St. John the Baptist Church, Croydon, Surrey. His father, Thomas Hughes Lloyd, originally from North Wales, was a cloth factor at the time of Edward's birth, although as a businessman his career was riddled with bankruptcies.¹ He had two other sons – Thomas (born 1808), who became a surgeon; and William (born 1810), who became a shoemaker and, towards the end of his life (he died in 1853) a bookseller, possibly working for Edward. One of Thomas's sons, Charles Edward, became an insurance broker and was one of the executors of Edward Lloyd's will.

After a brief elementary education Edward Lloyd moved to London and found work in a solicitor's office, and studied shorthand at the Mechanics Institute in Chancery Lane. (He subsequently published *Lloyd's Stenography*, a self-teaching course in shorthand, in 1833). He then opened a bookshop and newsagents in Curtain Road, Shoreditch, and on 16 February 1834, in Clerkenwell, he married his first wife, Isabella McArthur, born on 1 May 1809 in Bermondsey, the daughter of Daniel McArthur, a slater, and his wife Frances. They went on to have three children – Edward John (born November 1834), who was later apprenticed to his father and worked for him until around 1880; Charles (born October 1840), who became a civil engineer; and Alfred (born August 1842), who died at the age of only 17 months. At some point after his marriage, Lloyd moved to 62 Broad Street, Bloomsbury, from where he published several of his early periodicals, although by 1841 he had moved to 231 Shoreditch High Street, where the census records his trade as "printer". He was living there with his wife, his son Charles and his wife's mother, Edward being at a small boarding school in Bethnal Green.

By this time Lloyd had become a well-established publisher. It is said that he published the *Weekly Penny Comic Magazine*, launched in August 1832 and edited by Thomas Prest, although he would only have been 17 at the time. He was, however, known to have been associated with the *Calendar of Horrors* (1835–36), again edited by Prest and published by George Drake from 12 Houghton Street, Strand. In 1835–36 he issued *The History and Lives of the Most Notorious Highwaymen, Footpads and Murderers* (in 60 weekly numbers), and he followed this with *The History of Pirates, Smugglers Etc. of All Nations* (in 71 numbers). At the same time, he began issuing plagiarisms of Dickens, spurred by the success of *The Pickwick Papers*, which had begun its serialisation in March 1836. His first parody, *The Posthumous Notes of the Pickwick Club* (also known as *The Penny Pickwick*) was written by Thomas Prest and began its serialisation in April 1837. This was followed by *The Sketch Book, by 'Bos'*, *The Memoirs of Nickelas Nickleberry*; *The Life and Adventures of Oliver Twiss, the Workhouse Boy*; *Martin Guzzlewit*; *Barnaby Budge* and *Master Humfries' Clock* – all written by Prest. In June 1837 Dickens and his publisher, Chapman & Hall, sued Lloyd

¹ See Nigel Lloyd, "The Family of Edward Lloyd (1815–1890)", *Annals of Genealogical Research*, Vol 9, No. 1 (2013) at <http://www.genlit.org/agr/viewarticle.php?id=49>. This is also a rich source of genealogical information on all of Lloyd's family.

and Prest for plagiarism (“fraudulent imitation”), but lost on the grounds that the copies were so poor and obviously different that no-one could mistake them for the originals.²

Despite the success of these cod–Dickensian works, Lloyd found himself in serious debt, and in January 1839 he assigned all his personal estate and effects to a firm of solicitors for the benefit of his creditors.³ In the same year he began issuing more “authentic” original works – *Victoria, or The Mysterious Stranger*, sold poorly, but *Ela the Outcast, or The Gypsy of Rosemary Dell*, written by Prest and published in 104 weekly numbers in 1839–40, from his premises at 30 Curtain Road, Shoreditch, was a great success, still being reprinted in 1856. This marked the beginnings of Lloyd’s first career as a publisher of penny bloods – he went on to publish over 200 serialised novels, issued in weekly parts, between 1839 and 1853. Amongst his most famous were *Varney the Vampyre, or The Feast of Blood* (1845–47), and *The String of Pearls, or The Sailor’s Gift* (1846–47), both written by James Malcolm Rymer, the latter introducing the character of Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

Many of these stories originally appeared as serials in the various weekly periodicals Lloyd launched from 1840 onwards. These began with the *Penny Sunday Times and Peoples’ Police Gazette* in April 1840, *Lloyd’s Penny Atlas* (1842–45), *Lloyd’s Penny Weekly Miscellany* (1843–46), and *Lloyd’s Entertaining Journal* (1844–47). In 1886, the journalist Thomas Frost provided an insight into Lloyd’s methods, when he described his experiences trying to sell a story he had written especially for the cheap periodical market:

When I had completed my story, I made a neat little parcel of the manuscript, and proceeded to Salisbury square, where I presented myself at Mr Lloyd’s counter, and stated my business. I was ushered at once into a room, in which sat a stout gentleman of sleek exterior and urbane manners – not the publisher, I found, but his manager. “Have you written anything before?” inquired this gentleman, as he opened the parcel, and glanced at the title of my tale. “Only short stories in a provincial publication,” I replied. “We are rather chary of undertaking the first productions of young authors,” said he, cursorily looking over the manuscript. “We have so many brought to us which are really such trash, that even the machine–boys would not read them, if we were guilty of the folly of printing them.... You see, our publications circulate amongst a class so different in education and social position to the readers of three–volume novels, that we sometimes distrust our own judgement, and place the manuscript in the hands of an illiterate person – a servant or machine–boy, for instance. If they pronounce favourably upon it, we think it will do.”⁴

² *Times*, 9 June 1837, p 7.

³ *London Gazette*, 15 February 1839, p 306.

⁴ Thomas Frost, *Forty Years Recollections*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington (London), 1880, pp 89–90.

In 1842 Herbert Ingram launched the *Illustrated London News*, with its average of two illustrations (woodcuts) on every page, and Lloyd, recognising the impact of illustrations and their positive effect on sales, responded in September 1842 with the one penny *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper*. Despite its title, this carried little in the way of news, focussing on fiction and snippets of gossip, humour etc, and therefore, by Lloyd's way of thinking, should not have been liable for the one penny newspaper tax. But the Stamp Office thought differently, and Lloyd was obliged to re-launch it in November 1842 priced at twopence. In 1843 it became *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*; in 1849 its title changed to *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*; in 1918 it became *Lloyd's Sunday News*; in 1923 it became the *Sunday News*; and in 1931 it was merged with the *Sunday Graphic*, owned by Allied Newspapers. As such, it was one of the most successful newspapers of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, as well as being the first cheap Sunday newspaper aimed at working class readers. In 1848 its circulation was 33,000; five years later, after the appointment of Douglas Jerrold as editor, this had increased to 90,000; and following the abolition of stamp and paper duties its circulation rose to 170,000 by 1861. Lloyd then dropped its price back to one penny, and saw its circulation rise inexorably, to 500,000 copies a week in 1872 and to just over 600,000 copies in 1879. This came at a cost, with Lloyd spending what was then considered a huge sum on advertising, but it was this paper, more than anything else, which laid the ground for Lloyd's fortune.⁵

The success of *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper* enabled Lloyd to move to larger premises at 12 Salisbury Square, off Fleet Street, in September 1843, where he remained for the rest of his career and which gave rise to the term "Salisbury Square School", a reference to the penny bloods which flooded from his presses.⁶ Lloyd went on to launch several new titles, including *Lloyd's Family Portfolio* (1845), *Lloyd's Monthly Volume of Amusement and Entertaining Literature* (1845–47), the *Peoples' Periodical and Family Library* (1846–47), *Lloyd's Weekly Volume of Amusing and Entertaining Literature* (1847), and *Lloyd's Weekly Miscellany* (1849–50). Some of these were edited by James Malcolm Rymer, who, along with Thomas Prest, had become a mainstay of Lloyd's fictional output.

Despite all this activity, or perhaps because of it, Lloyd found himself almost bankrupt again in February 1848, when he once more assigned all his stock in trade, personal estate and effects over to his solicitors for the benefit of his creditors, James Barry, a wholesale stationer, and Samuel Sharwood, a type-founder.⁷ This marked the beginning of the end of Lloyd as a publisher of cheap sensational fiction and his conversion to a serious newspaper baron. By 1851 he was employing 150 men, and by 1854 had stopped issuing penny bloods, focussing all his energies on his *Weekly Newspaper*. In 1856 he introduced Hoe's rotary steam press into Britain, and the web press in 1873. He also established two paper mills, one in Bow, London in 1861 and one in Sittingbourne, Kent, and to supply these he leased land in Algeria to grow esparto

⁵ See Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington (London), 1882, pp 192–194.

⁶ Other addresses which Lloyd used during the early part of his career included 44 Holywell Street; 44 Wych Street; Crown Court, Fleet Street; and 1 Shoe Lane.

⁷ *London Gazette*, 3 March 1848, p 895.

grass. So successful were these ventures that he found himself supplying paper to other publishers.⁸

In the meantime, Lloyd's private life had become rather complex. In 1844 he appears to have separated from his wife and was conducting an affair with a Mary Harvey, with whom he had a son, Frederick, born in Forest Hill, Kent, on 20 February 1845. Frederick later became the manager of his father's paper mill in Sittingbourne, and in 1900 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and a year later he became the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire. He died in 1904.

In 1851 Edward was living at 128 Acton Vale, a West London suburb, with a third woman, Maria, described as his wife although they were not married. She was actually Maria Martins, born in Honing, Norfolk on 27 August 1829, the daughter of John Martins, a farmer, and his wife Elizabeth. Edward and Maria went on to have 15 children between 1853 and 1872, 11 of them born before they eventually married in Rochford, Essex, in April 1867, three weeks after Edward's first wife, Isabella, had died in March 1867. Amongst their children (eight boys and seven girls) were Frank, born in Acton Vale in September 1854; Herbert, born in Walthamstow in 1857; Arthur, born in Walthamstow in 1861; and Harry, born in Walthamstow in 1862 – all of whom went on to work in their father's business, with Frank taking over as chairman and managing director on his father's death.

In 1857 Lloyd bought The Winns, Clay Street, Walthamstow, a substantial property built in the 1760s which had once been the home of the designer William Morris. (It is now the William Morris Gallery, having been given to Walthamstow Urban District Council by Frank Lloyd in 1898, with the surrounding area now known as Lloyd Park). Lloyd was now sufficiently well-off to afford six servants – a footman, groom, cook, nurse, kitchenmaid and housemaid. By 1871, his domestic staff had increased to eight, with the addition of a coachman and a nurserymaid. His eldest son Edward had been working for him since he was 15 or 16; Frank Lloyd had entered the family business straight from school in the early 1870s, working firstly in the paper mill at Bow and then at Sittingbourne, where he became manager – he lived for 35 years at Coombe House, Croydon; Herbert, who suffered from tuberculosis in his early life and lived abroad for a while, became the Head of the Wholesale Stationery Department of Lloyd's firm; Arthur became a director of the firm; and Harry also joined the firm, taking a leading role in running it alongside Frank after Edward Lloyd senior's death in 1890.

In 1876 Lloyd purchased the *Clerkenwell News*, a local newspaper founded in 1855, for £30,000, and spent £150,000 converting it into the *Daily Chronicle*, a London-wide daily newspaper. From an original circulation of 8,000 it soon increased to 140,000, and by 1914 it was one of the best-selling papers of its time.

In the 1881 census Edward Lloyd was described as a “newspaper proprietor, printer and publisher employing 250 men; paper maker employing 200 men; farmer 90 acres employing 9 men and 3 boys”. This latter enterprise was presumably related to the estate surrounding the house in Clay Street, which extended to 100 acres – in the same

⁸ The mill at Sittingbourne, which became the largest in the world, was bought by Allied Newspapers in 1927, and subsequently sold to Bowaters in 1937. At its peak it employed over 3,000 workers. It closed in 2007.

census his sons Herbert, Ernest and Arthur were described as “farmer’s sons”, so were presumably employed to help run the estate.

In 1880, Lloyd acquired nos. 13, 15 and 17 Delahay Street, Westminster, converting nos. 15 and 17 into one property, which became the family home, The Winns being left empty and eventually falling into disrepair. At some point he also acquired The Woodlands, Caterham, Surrey (now a nursing home). He died of heart disease at his home at 17 Delahay Street on 8 April 1890, and he was buried in Highgate Cemetery, with a memorial window to Lloyd being unveiled in St. Margaret’s Church, Westminster, on 14 June 1891.⁹ His will, which he drew up in January 1890 with a small codicil added the following month, was administered by his wife, his son Frank and his nephew Charles Edward, who was living at 12 Kings Road, Brownswood Park, Hornsey. His estate was valued at £565, 240 (£52 million in today’s terms). His properties were left to his trustees, with his wife being granted occupation of 17 Delahay Street and The Woodlands (which was later occupied by Harry Lloyd, who had taken over as proprietor of the *Daily Chronicle*, for over 40 years until his death in 1942), and with the right to receive the rent and profits from no. 13 Delahay Street. He gave instructions for (unspecified) properties in Walthamstow to be sold, with the resulting income to be invested in order to provide annuities for his wife and all of his children. He also left small legacies to some of his employees, in particular £1 for every year of service of all his employees who had worked for him for 20 years or more. There were also cash gifts to his wife, nephews and children.

Shortly before his death he converted his whole business into a limited liability company, with capital of £250,000 in shares of £100 each, the subscribers all being members of the Lloyd family. Frank Lloyd was designated as Edward’s successor on his death. The firm continued its publishing and paper-making activities, and in 1906 it launched its first children’s periodical, the monthly *Young Citizen*, a rather staid publication which lasted for four years. Rather more successful was *Lloyd’s Children’s Storyteller*, which ran for 162 issues between 1916 and 1922. A short-lived *Lloyd’s News War Library* ran for just 2 numbers in 1914, although the company had rather more success with its *Lloyd’s News War Novels* (re-titled *Lloyd’s New Home Novels* in 1918) which ran to 226 numbers between 1916 and 1923.

In 1918 a group of businessmen closely associated with war-time Prime Minister David Lloyd George formed United Newspapers Ltd., which purchased the *Daily Chronicle* and *Lloyd’s Sunday News*. The Lloyd name lived on, however, in a series of “pocket libraries”, including the *Lloyd’s Girls’ Home Library* (1918–22), *Lloyd’s Saturday Stories* (1921–22), and four series aimed at boys – *Lloyd’s Boys’ Adventure Series*, *Lloyd’s Detective Series*, *Lloyd’s School Yarns* and *Lloyd’s Sports Library* (1921–22). Lloyd’s name also lived on in United Newspaper’s *Lloyd’s Magazine*, launched in 1917 as a continuation of earlier titles, and which had a brief life as a popular fiction magazine, publishing stories by the likes of Edgar Wallace, Sax Rohmer, Joseph

⁹ This contains an epitaph written by Sir Edwin Arnold:

*A master printer of the Press. He spake
By mouth of many thousand tongues. He swayed
The pens which break the sceptres. Good Lord, make
Thy strong ones faithful and thy bold afraid.*

Conrad and William Le Queux. It folded in 1923, the last periodical to carry the Lloyd name.

Edward Lloyd did not begin his career as a Bohemian, like some of his contemporaries, although he was certainly associated with the fringes of Bohemian society in the 1840s and 1850s, relying on its hack writers to furnish him with the penny blood serials which initially made his name. In this respect he was astute if also ruthless. Despite the high sales of his penny bloods, profit margins were tight. Writers were typically paid at the rate of one penny per line – not just by Lloyd but by most other publishers of similar material – and to ensure he got the most out of his writers Lloyd made them use specially-lined paper, to control the number of lines to a page. This did not stop writers from stretching out their stories by using short paragraphs, repetition, staccato dialogue and other padding – which was not only an effective way of filling a page or extending a thin plot, but was also helpful for readers with poor literacy. The publisher William Tinsley recalled a conversation with the author Edward Peron Hingston, who had been writing for Lloyd:

....he found out by accidents that he was giving too much writing for the money he received. He saw that his brother authors wrote as much conversation as possible, and made their lines very short; whereas Hingston had filled in all solid matter, and by so doing was giving half as much work again for the money as any of the other authors. "I did not do it again," said Hingston.¹⁰

Lloyd later increased his rate to 10 shillings per eight-page instalment.¹¹

As well as his plagiarisms of Dickens and other authors, Lloyd was also not averse to outright piracy to turn a small profit, as evidenced by the impoverished writer Hannah Maria Jones in an application to the Royal Literary Fund in December 1842.¹² Jones, born in June 1801, had been one of the mainstays of the Minerva Press, founded by William Lane in 1790 to publish cheap Gothic and romantic fiction, much of it written by women. Jones became particularly well-known for her gipsy novels, such as *The Gipsy Mother* (1835), *The Gipsy Girl* (1836) and *The Gipsy Thief* (1840) – many of her works sold in excess of 20,000 copies in one penny and sixpenny parts. She was, however, never well-paid, and even in the early 1850s, towards the end of her career (she died in 1854) she was still earning one shilling per page, and was regularly reduced to pawning or selling her clothes, books and other possessions. Between 1825 and 1833 she made four successful applications to the RLF (being granted a total of £40), and six later unsuccessful applications, on one occasion (1846) being turned down on the spurious grounds that she was not married to the man she was living with (John Lowndes). She made one final application in 1852, with the complaint:

We are now without Bread, without Clothes – the publisher Lloyd

¹⁰ William Tinsley, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. (London), 1900, Vol. 11, p 180.

¹¹ Frost, oip cit, p 85.

¹² BL Loan 96 RLF 1/553.

having “run us off the Road” his system being to obtain an old work from the Minerva Press rechristen the same and send it forth to the world as New Work.

Lloyd slowly went on to become an influential establishment figure, disowning his past (in much the same way as Edwin J. Brett was to do in the 1860s), and taking up Liberal, if not Radical, causes. He actively campaigned for the abolition of taxes on newspapers, and was responsible for importing into Britain vital innovations in printing and paper-making. He was a member of the Reform Club, and one of the promoters of the National Liberal Club, in which he later bought a thousand £5 shares. But, despite his fame as a newspaper baron, his real legacy was perhaps the promotion of cheap sensational literature for the masses – he was by no means the first publisher of such material, but he was certainly the most successful.

There is no evidence that Lloyd was particularly philanthropic – as his will showed, the bulk of his fortune was left to his family, although that is not to say that he did not give financial help to people he knew in need privately or anonymously. He did not appear to have been associated in any way with the Royal Literary Fund, although Thomas Catling (who succeeded Blanchard Jerrold as editor of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* in 1884 and who had worked for Lloyd since 1866) did write to the RLF on the company's behalf in support of a handful of applicants. Edward Lloyd's family was active in and around St. Margaret's Church, Westminster. If any member of the Lloyd family was a true philanthropist it was Frank Lloyd, who, in the early 1920s, built a new village at Kemsley, north of Sittingbourne, to house the employees of a new paper-making facility.

Ironically, Edward Lloyd may not have acquired his wealth and reputation were it not for a slice of good fortune, as recounted by Joseph Hatton, the journalist and editor of the *Sunday Times*. He described meeting Lloyd – “a hale, hearty, middle-aged, florid-complexioned, white-haired gentleman” – in his office in Salisbury Court (which was off Salisbury Square), and after mentioning the Hoe printing press asked Lloyd if he had ever been to America:

“No; I had once made up my mind to go, and had fixed upon the ship,” Mr Lloyd answered – “the *Arctic*, I think she was called. Douglas Jerrold was against my going, and persuaded me all he could not to venture upon it. . . . The object of my going was to see Hoe, and arrange for two machines on certain revised terms, so that if one broke down, I should have another to fall back upon. Just before the time for sailing I received a letter from Hoe telling me I could have just all I wanted. In consequence of that letter, I did not go. The ship I was booked for went to the bottom.”¹³

¹³ Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London, being a Series of Sketches of Famous Pens and Papers of the Day*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington (London), 1882, p 191.