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NEWS CHRONICLE CENTENARY

Commentary by MISS MONICA DICKENS

The News Chronicle celebrated its hundredth birthday with a dinner to as varied a collection of celebrities as I have ever seen. Mr. Lawrence Cadbury, the paper's Chairman, was host and first speaker,

"I am very glad to see so many distinguished guests here tonight and on behalf of your hosts may I bid you a hearty welcome to our Centenary celebrations. Some of those invited have had to refuse. For instance, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw writes:- "Am tee near my own centenary to join you." The birth of the "Daily News" was first announced in "Punch" in December 1845. The advertisement read - New morning paper to commence at the opening of Parliament, price 5d. The Daily News. The great Charles Dickens was the first editor."

Speaking as a Liberal Leader, Lady Bonham Carter said,

"It is just a century ago this newspaper was born, and no child was ever born under luckier stars. Its cradle was the Crystal Palace - the Palace of Truth - its godfather was Mr. Punch, the nurse in whose arms it was dandled and rocked was Charles Dickens. Truth, Laughter and Humanity; what a dower for any child! And what a year to be born in!"

As my grandfather was the first editor, my uncle Philip Dickens was there - and so was I.

Another Dickens descendant was my Uncle Gerald. This was a banquet Mr. Pickwick would have enjoyed - here's the house in Doughty Street where he was created. Now it's the home of the Dickens Fellowship. When Dickens was a journalist, he often lunched at the Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street. You find it mentioned in "The Tale of Two Cities." St. Andrews Church, mentioned in "Oliver Twist," hasn't changed much since the days of Bill Sykes and Fagin.

The old George Inn at Southwark is another Dickens landmark. A hundred years ago, Charles Dickens edited the paper. Today his chair is filled by Gerald Barry,

"So far as the Press is concerned the next hundred years is likely to see tremendous developments on the purely mechanical side. There is said to be at this moment a number of remarkable inventions waiting development, and it may well be that long before 2046 your newspaper will be delivered to you, fully printed and illustrated, in a continuous series of editions throughout the day by means of a simple contrivance fitting in your drawing-room, instead of being delivered once a day through the letter-box."