



Newspapers

Using them to add to your family history

Once you have built your Family Tree and delved into Parish records and worked through Wills you may find that you want to know more about your relatives; one fantastic resource which is rapidly becoming easy to access are national & regional newspapers, more and more of which are available online.

Newspapers have not changed greatly over the last 200 years so what you expect to find in papers today you will find in papers from 1916, 1816 and (occasionally) even 1716. Expect to find family events, births, marriages, deaths and funerals; expect to find court cases, sporting fixtures, concerts, local societies and much more. Look out for advertisements and be prepared for some family skeletons to fall out of the cupboard.

You will need access to one of the sites below, some of which are available in public libraries and then you search for a name or an event taking place in a range of years. Usually it is best to limit the search to a county but do not forget that papers needed to fill their pages so you may well find a report in an obscure regional paper or even in a paper on the other side of the world. If a search fails at first try using different terms.

Resources

British Library - (<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>) a subscription site with excellent search terms highlighted in results and ability to access digitized text

West Sussex Record Office - free download Mini-Guide No. 8 Newspapers in West Sussex available from
https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/2507/mini_guide8_newspapers.pdf

Findmypast - subscription includes all the British Library newspapers but search is more restrictive, no highlight of search terms and no ability to access digitized text

The Times via a subscription gives ability to access digitized text in their archive

The Times Digital Archive 1785 to 2011 - free using West Sussex Library card or at The Keep, no access to digitized text

<http://trove.nla.gov.au> Australian newspapers online, searchable, free

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast> New Zealand papers online, searchable, free

<https://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=4723> Welsh newspapers online, searchable, free

Local events may turn up in non-local newspapers so, if searching for a Sussex incident do not avoid looking at an entry because it is in a non-Sussex newspaper.

Using what you find

When you start to find newspaper articles it is tempting to cut out the image and paste it into a Word document but sooner or later you will have the same problem that you would have with scrap books, the files become unwieldy and are difficult to search; a better approach is to digitize the article and store the resulting text as a PDF or Word document which your browser can easily find.

As mentioned above some archives give access to their digitized files - in which case, after a certain amount of tidying up, you are home and dry.

If you do not have access to the digitized version my recommendation is to cut out the text using the Snipping tool.

Snipping Tool (search for snip from Start menu, bottom left of screen), gives ability to copy anything on the screen, and save it as a JPEG or paste into a document.

Once you have the text in a JPEG or PDF you can then use a free OCR service to create the digital text

<http://www.onlineocr.net/>

gives the ability to convert text via OCR to digitized data to use in Word, etc.

Do not forget that someone else may have researched the same name before you - it is always worth doing a few searches to check this out.