

Newspapers

For two hundred years, until eclipsed by radio and then by television, local newspapers have been a major source of information about all aspects of local life. Doncaster, as an important place on the network of transport, commerce and social life for the locality of south-east Yorkshire and north-east Nottinghamshire was the place of publication of a number of newspapers.

Newspapers are a good source of information for family historians but remember to think about when they were produced. The very early newspapers (starting in 1786) were produced at a time when most ordinary people could not read, didn't have the leisure time to read or spare money to buy a newspaper. Therefore the newspapers were produced for the upper echelons of society and as such the information in the newspapers covered items such as society news from London and national and international news articles. The only local items were courts reports and this was probably because the officials of the courts were from the upper classes of society (the readership).

Local Papers held in Local Studies Library

Doncaster Chronicle: Jul 1838 - Aug 1963

Doncaster Evening Post: May 1925 - May 1983 (was Yorkshire Evening Post 1925-1970)

Doncaster Free Press: 1925 -1928 and 1967 - to date

Doncaster Gazette: 1794 - Jan 1981

Doncaster Star: May 1983 - to date

Doncaster Weekend Post: Feb 1981 - April 1983

South Yorkshire Times: July 1877 - to December 2016 when it ceased production (formerly the Mexborough and Swinton Times)

Yorkshire Journal: 1786 -1797

The newspapers are on microfilm, and to reserve a microfilm reader in the Local Studies Library, telephone 01302 734307

N.B. Please note Doncaster Archives and Local Studies services are not available at the moment due to the Coronavirus lockdown and relocation work. Please see the following website for details of our regular service <https://www.heritagedoncaster.org.uk/archives-local-studies/>

Some points to remember about what local newspapers provide for family historians.

- Court reports for Quarter Sessions (minor crimes) and Assize (when more serious crimes were referred from local Quarter Sessions to the Assize at York).

- Birth, marriage and death reports- deaths were reported from 19th century and birth and marriage were a later addition. Some were just one line birth, marriage death notices. For more prestigious events a more in-depth report was produced. If a society wedding then it could report those who attended and how they were related.
- Obituaries – really only available for people of note, those who were socially important or held a post of some note or responsibility or reached a grand age. A report of a funeral would often identify those who attended and list the family members who survived the deceased.
- Unusual and unexpected deaths, accidents (mining etc) and suicides are reported in Coroner Inquests, which are locally held at the Archives for the dates 1625-1700 & 1890-mid 1950s. They are closed for 75 years with discretionary access after the first 30 years via the local coroner. Therefore the reports in the newspapers are important to fill any gaps or access problems for unusual deaths and suicides.

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