

A short guide to newspapers

- ◇ The **earliest** Shropshire newspaper was the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, which was first published in 1772. From 1794 it had a rival - the *Salopian Journal*. Both were county papers published in Shrewsbury but their political views were opposed. The early papers contain little local news or pieces of biographical interest. There are some reports of social activities and events likely to interest the papers' readers who were mainly gentry and professional people.
- ◇ From the **1850s** onwards, the smaller Shropshire towns started their own local papers, so the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* and the *Salopian Journal* came to be more concerned with Shrewsbury itself and the immediate surroundings. However, the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* and the *Wellington Journal* were both distributed widely in the county in the twentieth century and are worth consulting for reports of places some distance from these towns.
- ◇ Local papers had become much cheaper, lengthier and more popular **by 1900**. The amount of local information they contain by that date is most impressive when compared with their late twentieth century successors.
- ◇ Shropshire Archives' holdings include:-
 - * *Shrewsbury Chronicle* 1772 to date
 - * *Salopian Journal* (later called *Eddowes Shrewsbury Journal*) 1794-1888, with some gaps
 - * *Wellington Journal* 1901-1964
 - * *Ironbridge Weekly Journal and Borough of Wenlock Advertiser* 1869-1882
 - * *Shropshire Examiner* 1874-1877
 - * *Shropshire Star* 1964 to date

A full list is available on top of the microfilm cabinets.

- ◇ Many newspapers are on **microfilm** but some are **original copies** only – for example the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* post 1950 and the *Wellington Journal*. You can only see the original copies in the Search Room (with a **Reader's Ticket**).
- ◇ The *Wellington Journal*, 1914-1918 is available as **PDFs** onsite as the originals are very fragile. Volunteers are also indexing the war years of the paper which will then be searchable on our online catalogue.

- ◇ There are volumes of newscuttings, including eight volumes of cuttings edited by John Watton, dating back to the 1840s. Some can be consulted in the Searchroom (with a Reader's Ticket) but some are very fragile.

◆ INDEXES

- ◇ There are two indexes to newspapers held by Shropshire Archives which are of use to family historians. These are:

- * *Biographical index*

This is an index to the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* from 1892 to approx. 1980 arranged by surname. Any reported marriage, funeral, bankruptcy, suicide, presentation, coming-of-age or similar event has been indexed, but not the entries in the weekly births, marriages and deaths column. The index also contains references to reports in the newscuttings volumes. This index is on **microfiche**.

- * *Salopian Journal index*

There is an index for 1794-1843. It makes reference to many people and occupations before this was fully covered in trade directories. This index is on **microfiche**

- ◇ For **local history** we also have limited subject indexes on microfiche and also some **newscuttings packs** on various topics – from new supermarkets and the move of STFC from the Gay Meadow to the development of the flax mill and new theatre. Some are on the open shelves in the reading room but all should appear on our catalogue at www.shropshirearchives.org.uk/

◆ WEBSITES

There are several sites with searchable newspapers (not yet complete):

- www.Britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk
- www.findmypast.co.uk
- www.ancestry.co.uk

Access is free at Shropshire Archives and most libraries in the county.

◆ LIBRARIES

Local libraries often hold current and historic copies of the local newspapers for their area (for example in Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Oswestry, Whitchuch and Telford) Some libraries and local history groups have their own indexing projects for these.

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