Online Newspaper Archives

The Online Archive of British newspapers provides unlimited access to an Internet database of millions of pages of old newspapers, covering daily events from about 1750 onward in minute detail.

There are reports on every conceivable subject - from house sales to horse-racing, debts, deaths and inquests, building projects, farming, education, transport, crime and punishment ... the list is endless. Every aspect of the daily life of our local communities is recorded in the pages of the local newspapers - often with precise records of reported speech and a wealth of other tiny details.

With this enormous database now made available, both amateur and professional historians have access to an immensely powerful tool for research into social history.

It is possible, for example, to collect together ALL the newspaper reports for a specific community - and by combining them in chronological order in a single document, to create a searchable database that provides a detailed chronicle of the evolution of that community over a period of almost two centuries.

This website focuses upon the history of local communities in west Northamptonshire - and so, as a research project, data was gathered from the Online Newspaper Archive, in order to build up searchable records for three specific west Northamptonshire villages:

[Barby](#)
[Crick](#)
[Kilsby](#)

The results are impressive -- for each village a document was produced containing about 1000 individual reports and covering a period of almost 200 years, from the late 1700s to the mid-1900s.

The detailed files for each village may be downloaded by clicking on the above links.

The data from these reports, when combined with other data from census returns, parish registers etc., provides genealogists and historians with a new and powerful tool, which can enormously enhance their ability to interpret the social history of the last two centuries.

As an illustration of what can be achieved, some articles have already been written on different aspects of community history in these west Northamptonshire villages. They are merely an indication of what can be learned by the study of this new data source ...

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In the longer term, the intent is to use the data in the individual village files to produce comparative studies, showing the differing ways in which the three villages reacted to change and advance - for example, to the evolution of new farming practices, to the arrival of new forms of transport (toll roads, canals and railways), to new initiatives in education, to advances in the detection and punishment of crime, etc etc.

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