



Specific Research for Individual Names researched within Crime and Punishment Archives – How to Guide!

British Newspaper Archive

A note on the use of help guides:

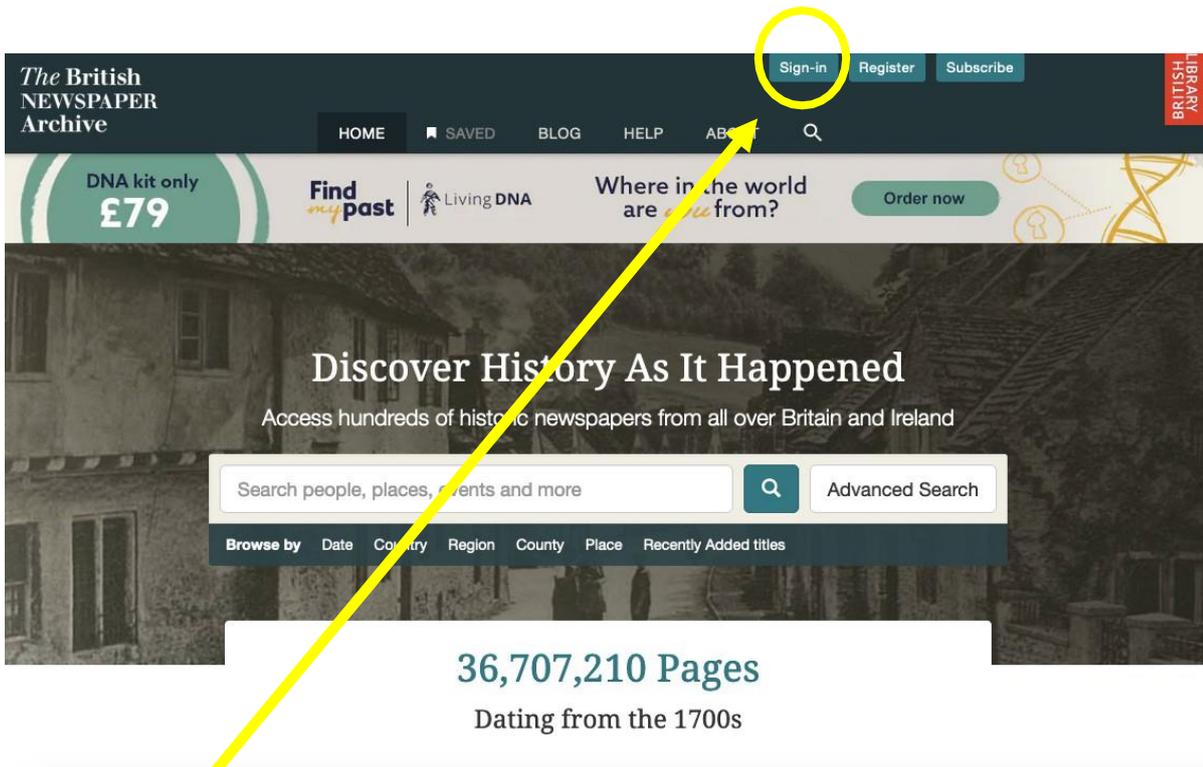
The help guides included in this toolkit are introductions to the one approach towards undertaking research within online criminal archives, the British Newspaper Archive, Find my Past, and Ancestry. The guides are in no way comprehensive of all approaches taken to research within these databases and are intended as a guide towards getting started.



Step 1: Select the individual you would like to research from your master list collated from research finds within local and national crime and punishment archive. For the purposes of this help guide, the fictitious case of John Smith, convicted in 1884 of gross indecency will be used to demonstrate the research process. As the case is fictitious, no results, (hopefully!) will be located.

Step 2: Decide how you want to record your research and finds. For specific individual names located from crime and punishment archives with a conviction of sex between men, we opted to utilize Microsoft Word to compile the information relating to a specific individual from the newspapers. This included both newspaper finds regarding their offence or generic ones about their lives. Once all biographies were completed, we then utilised Microsoft Onenote to store the compiled and confirmed biographies that had been looked over twice.

Step 3: Open the British Newspaper Archive (hereafter, BNA) and choose a subscription. If you are researching in Record Offices, confirm with the archivists that there is an available subscription for you to use.



Step 4: Sign in!

Step 5: Click 'Advanced Search' from the BNA Homepage

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/advanced>

Step 6: Fill in the 'use exact phrase' option box with the name of the will search for exactly that name...

Advanced search

Search Terms

Search all words

Search some words

Exclude words

Use exact phrase

Exact search (e.g. search for "fish" and not "fishing" or "fished")

Please note - the search system excludes common words and characters known as stop words. These include words such as, 'the', 'on', 'as' and 'how' as well as some single digits and letters.

Helpful Tip #1: The British Newspaper Archive uses Optical Character Resolution to scan the 100000s (probably even more!) of newspaper pages and titles for the exact term you've included... however, there are discrepancies

Step 7: Locating newspapers from the trial hearing: Scroll down the page to input the year the individual was charged, convicted or sentenced. Leave this open for the entire year and hit search!.

Publication

Publication Place All

Publication Title All

Publication Date

From 1 / January / 1884

To 31 / December / 1884

Data Added

From Day / Month / Year

To Day / Month / Year

Article Type

- Advertisement
- Article
- FamilyNotice
- Illustrated
- Miscellaneous
- Front page articles only

Public tags Search for articles with Public Tags e.g. Titanic

Sort results by Relevance

Search **Clear**

Step 8: the results page of your search will load. Should there be many returns, for example in the case of a

common name, use the 'Refine Search option'

Oh No... if there's no results found for a name you've researched, head back to advanced search section and choose 'search all words' / 'search some words' and so on to see whether you can locate them. If not, record that it was a 'nil return'.

The screenshot displays a search interface with the following elements:

- Your Search Filters:** A box showing a selected date range '1st Jan 1884 - 31st Dec 1884' and a 'Clear All' button.
- Search Bar:** Contains the text 'john smith' and a search icon. Below it are checkboxes for 'Keep filters' (checked) and 'Exact search' (unchecked). To the right, there is an 'Order by' dropdown menu set to 'Relevance' and a link for 'Advanced Search'.
- Refine Search Sidebar:** A vertical menu with categories: DATE, NEWSPAPER, COUNTRIES, REGIONS, COUNTIES, PLACE, RECENTLY ADDED, TYPE, and PUBLIC TAGS. A blue arrow points from this sidebar to the search filters section.
- Your results for: "john smith"**: A heading with a 'Save this Search' button. Below it are two search results:
 - DEATH OF MR JOHN SMITH, ADVOCATE.** The announcement of the death of Mr John Smith, President of the Society of Advocates in Aberdeen, which took place in Paris, at a late hour on Monday night, though not wholly unexpected, from the nature of the tidings ...
Published: Wednesday 07 May 1884
Newspaper: Aberdeen Free Press
County: Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Type: Article | Words: 2917 | Page: 4 | Tags: none
 - MARRIAGES AND DEATHS. MARRIAGES.** Lancaster On the 18th inst., at Christ Church, by the Rev. M. Ker-Cooper, ..
... MARRIAGES AND DEATHS. MARRIAGES. Lancaster On the 18th inst., at Christ Church, by the Rev. M. Ker-Cooper, Mr. John Smith, Alfred- street, to Miss Sarah Jane S warbrick, Bond-street. Lancaster On the 18th inst., at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church ...
Published: Saturday 25 October 1884
Newspaper: Lancaster Gazette
County: Lancashire, England
Type: Article | Words: 454 | Page: 5 | Tags: none

Options provided to refine search, the two most important for us was 'date' and 'counties'

Results for exact search with ""

Step 8a: if you get a large amount of returns for your search, refine your criteria using the options on the left hand side, the best two to start with are...

1. Date: should you know the specific month of the trial, you can limit the research returns based on month
2. Counties: if you are searching for specific finds within a county, for example, you are researching prosecutions in the County of Berkshire.

Refine Search	
▼ DATE	
1884	✕
January	1,042
February	928
March	909
April	962
May	1,129
June	866
July	981
August	945
September	930
October	906
November	1,049
December	1,018

Hit 'more counties' for the list of counties to choose from!

The screenshot shows a search interface with a 'Filter by Counties' panel on the right and a list of counties on the left. The 'Filter by Counties' panel includes a search box, a grid of letters for filtering, and a list of counties sorted alphabetically. The list of counties includes:

- Aberdeenshire, Scotland (833)
- Angus, Scotland (511)
- Antigua, Antigua (1)
- Antrim, Northern Ireland (154)
- Armagh, Northern Ireland (18)
- Ayrshire, Scotland (94)
- Banffshire, Scotland (98)
- Bedfordshire, England (48)
- Berkshire, England (101)
- Brecknockshire, Wales (25)

The left panel shows a list of months with counts, and a 'More Counties' button is visible below the list.

Step 9: Once you've located a corresponding newspaper return, click on the title of the newspaper.

The screenshot shows the search results for 'JOHN SMITH' on the British Newspaper Archive website. On the left, there is a sidebar with filters for months (February to December) and newspapers. The 'NEWSPAPER' filter is expanded, showing a list of newspapers with their respective article counts. The main content area displays three search results, each with a newspaper thumbnail, a title, a snippet of text, and publication details. A blue arrow points from the top right of the page towards the title 'JOHN SMITH' in the third result.

Month	Count
February	928
March	909
April	962
May	1,129
June	866
July	981
August	945
September	930
October	906
November	1,049
December	1,018

NEWSPAPER

Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer	315
Dundee Courier	252
Aberdeen Press and Journal	249
York Herald	249
Derby Daily Telegraph	230

[More Newspapers](#)

COUNTRIES

1. **MR JOHN SMITH, President of the Society of**
... DEATH OF MR **JOHN SMITH**, ADVOCATE. The announcement of the death of Mr **John Smith**, President of the Society of Advocates in Aberdeen, which took place in Paris, at a late hour on Monday night, though not wholly unexpected, from the nature of the tidings ...
Published: Wednesday 07 May 1884
Newspaper: Aberdeen Free Press
County: Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Type: Article | Words: 2917 | Page: 4 | Tags: none

2. **MARRIAGES AND DEATHS. MARRIAGES. Lancaster** On the 18th inst., at Christ Church, by the Rev. M. Ker-Cooper, ..
... MARRIAGES AND DEATHS. MARRIAGES. Lancaster On the 18th inst., at Christ Church, by the Rev. M. Ker-Cooper, Mr. **John Smith**, Alfred- street, to Miss Sarah Jane S warbrick, Bond-street. Lancaster On the 18th inst., at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church ...
Published: Saturday 25 October 1884
Newspaper: Lancaster Gazette
County: Lancashire, England
Type: Article | Words: 454 | Page: 5 | Tags: none

3. **JOHN SMITH**
... **JOHN SMITH**. What Hr. is Accordikc to Valors Authorities. * **John Smith** is visiting relatives in New York. — Urbana (Ill.) Gazette. **John Smith** slaughtered another beef —Aurora (Ill.) News. **John Smith**, of Ligonier, was in town last Sstur day.—Albion (Ind.) ...
Published: Saturday 17 May 1884
Newspaper: Dewsbury Reporter
County: Yorkshire, England
Type: Article | Words: 1190 | Page: 9 | Tags: none

4. **CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH***

Step 10: The newspaper return will open with functional options of zoom, view options (Fullscreen mode), highlighting the exact term

Do you have a comment about this article?

It may help others with their research. Or perhaps you have an interesting story relating to this page that you would like to share.

you've searched within blue and includes a transcription of the newspaper report using the OCR. This means that often there can be inconsistencies between the transcription and the actual report, so our advice would be to ensure you've checked the picture.

Step 11: Transcribe the information in the newspaper report, including noting the title of the paper, date and page number. Include this in the Onenote Biography file for the individual (for more instructions please see the general help sheet attached to the toolkit), including the URL link to the paper:

Helpful Tip #2: code your newspapers finds with the initial of the individual and the number, if you find multiple individuals with initials JS, use first letter of last name to decipher:
#JASI

Newspaper find #JS1

JOHN SMITH.

WHAT HE IS DOING ACCORDING TO VARIOUS AUTHORITIES.

John Smith is visiting relatives in New York. - Urbana (Ill.) Gazette.

John Smith slaughtered another beer yesterday. - Aurora (Ill.) News.

John Smith, of Ligonier, was in town last Saturday. - Albion (Ind.) Democrat.

John Smith was quartered at the hotel last Sunday. - Kankakee (Ill.) Gazette.

Saturday 17th May 1884, Dewsbury Reporter, page 9

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001541/18840517/167/0009>

Step 12: Return back to your search returns and continue to scroll through returns found for the individual. Repeat steps 9 to 11 conclusively until all the newspapers returned have been read through.

Helpful Tip #3: use the adjustable search options to vary your search returns and support finding those records!



▼ DATE	
1884	x
January	1,042
February	928
March	909
April	962
May	1,129
June	866
July	981
August	945
September	930
October	906
November	1,049
December	1,018
▼ NEWSPAPER	
Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer	315
Dundee Courier	252
Aberdeen Press and Journal	249
York Herald	249
Derby Daily Telegraph	230
More Newspapers	
▼ COUNTRIES	
England	8,038
Ireland	569
Scotland	2,688
Wales	328
▼ REGIONS	
Yorkshire and the Humber, England	1,833
East Midlands, England	1,228

Step 13: Head back to the original search we did for the individual, and let's remove the date constraints. The reason for this is to locate returns within the newspaper that may be in reference to the individual we are researching, throughout their life.

Use exact phrase

Exact search (e.g. search for "fish" and not "fishing" or "fished")

Please note - the search system excludes common words and characters known as stop words. These include words such as, 'the', 'on', 'as' and 'how' as well as some single digits and letters.

Publication

Publication Place

Publication Title

Publication Date

From / /

To / /

Data Added

Helpful Tip #4: Given the variance in names, some names may find many returns, adapting the search criteria may help.