

‘Til Death do us part: Exploring death in Wales by Beryl Evans

Funeral leaflets and Memorial cards

Very often found amongst family papers, in attics etc, they should not be discarded as they may hold important clues to relatives and lead to other resources mentioned below. Details include – full name of deceased and name they were known by if different, date of death, names of close relatives, where they lived at time of death, date and place of burial.

Death certificates

They are available from 1 July 1837 for England and Wales. Copies can only be bought from the local Registry Office where registration took place or from the General Register Office -

<https://www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate>

No burial can take place without a death certificate. Information on a certificate When and where died, names (as at death, this may be different to when born), age occupation (if the deceased is female the occupation of her father or male spouse might be given, whether they are alive or deceased), signature of the informant and relationship to the deceased.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/birth-marriage-death-england-and-wales/>

Burial registers

Form part of the parish church chest, after 1813 the registers were pre-printed and included the name of the deceased, where they lived, date of burial (not of death) and age. Nonconformists may be buried in the parish church if the chapel had no burial ground. Access to the registers can be found at the National Library of Wales, County Archive Offices or online through commercial subscription sites Findmypast and Ancestry.

Monumental inscriptions

Most Family History Societies have or are in the process of transcribing, indexing and making available monumental inscriptions. Many have been made available through commercial subscription sites, but I suggest contacting societies to see what is available

<http://www.fhswales.org.uk/>

Wills

Pre-1858

All original wills for Wales before 1858 are held at the National Library of Wales and have been digitised and made available to search and view free online

<https://www.library.wales/discover/library-resources/wills>

More information about Welsh wills and probate records can be found in the information leaflet -

https://www.library.wales/fileadmin/fileadmin/docs_gwefan/ymweld_a_ni/darll_en_yn_llgc/dar_taf_profef_150330D.pdf

Post-1858

More information regarding wills after 1858 can be found here -

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/wills-or-administrations-after-1858/>

The Calendar of Grants should be checked for details of anyone that left a will or administration, if found order a copy through the Government website -

<https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>

Newspapers

Again we all come across newspaper cuttings within our family papers many of which refer to obituaries and funeral reports, the connection may not always be evident therefore using the information to search various other sources is imperative. Newspapers contain a myriad of information that can be useful to family historians relating to death -

- Death Notices

- Obituaries

- Funeral reports

- Coroner's reports

- Disaster reports

- Accident reports

As well as a wealth of other historical information. There is a growing amount of newspapers now available to search and view online digitally. The National Library of Wales, County Archive Offices and Local study Libraries will have collections of newspapers in addition to what is available online, therefore check if you can't find online.

Welsh Newspapers (1804-1919)

<https://newspapers.library.wales/>

British Newspaper Archive

www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Further reading

Tracing Your Welsh Ancestors: A Guide for Family Historians, Beryl Evans (Pen & Sword, 2015)

Welsh Family History: A Guide to Research, ed John Rowlands (AFHSW, 1993)

Second Stages in Researching Welsh Ancestry, eds John & Sheila Rowlands (FFHS/UWA, 1999)

Wills and Other Probate Records, Karen Grannum and Nigel Taylor (TNA, 2004)

Words from Wills and other Probate Records, 1500-1800: A Glossary, Stuart A Raymond (FFHS, 2004)

Tracing Family History in Wales: How to read the inscriptions on Welsh gravestones, Gwen Awbery (Carreg Gwalch, 2010)

Websites

The National Library of Wales www.library.wales

The National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Association of Family History Societies of Wales <http://www.fhswales.org.uk/>

Archives Wales <https://archives.wales/>

Findmypast www.findmypast.co.uk

Ancestry www.ancestry.co.uk

Familysearch www.familysearch.org