



**SA Genealogy &
Heraldry
Society Inc**

**Library
201 Unley Road
Unley SA**

**FACT
SHEET**

Newspapers

This fact sheet will attempt to give details of the Newspaper databases of personal Notices being developed on the Society's computers in the Society Library, their contents and how to interpret them.

Newspaper Births

Even though the database only covers a few years to date, already many people have benefited from this database. Suppose you lost touch with your cousin years ago and you do not know her married name or her children and by chance you find her death notice. Among the string of names, which ones are sons, daughters, in-laws and grandchildren? The Newspaper Births database may have the answers.

Of course not all births are announced in *The Advertiser* or *Sunday Mail*. In 1997 there were 19 000 SA births registered and the SAGHS database recorded 9 519 entries from the birth notices. Included in the newspaper were many births interstate and overseas, such as Holland, Malaysia, Chile, Portugal, Austria, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Ghana. Some birth places are quite specific – *Feathers roundabout, in the car thanks to spoon drain, FMC car park or on front lawn.*

Few birth notices nowadays are as sparse as:

BLACK. To Jack & Jill a daughter on 7 Jan.

Most notices record the parents' names, child's name, date and place of birth, as well as names of brothers/sisters. The hospital may give an indication of the residence.

Jack, Jill & James announce the arrival of their daughter & sister

is quite straight forward. Some parents insert birth notices that confuse the transcribers.

Jack, Jill & James welcome the arrival of Jo.

We assume that Jack & Jill are the parents and James is big brother. But maybe not so.

Jack & Jill welcome Jo, a playmate for Suzi & Jake.

We would assume that Suzi and Jake are siblings. However in this case a volunteer knows the family and was able to inform us that Suzi and Jake are the family's golden retrievers! There are a few odd notices. On Handel's birthday, someone placed a birth notice for Georg Friedrich Handel.

To Jasper & Fanta, twins on 10 Feb, to Jasper & Millie, quins on 11 Feb. All seven babies doing fine. Mothers coping, father sleeping.

We think Jasper has four legs.

Chris & Sam welcome with love...

Christine or Christopher? Samuel or Samantha? We do try to list the given names as father's or mother's, even checking the Electoral Roll on occasion. With surnames it is quite difficult. Many notices do not include *nee* for the maiden name. A notice with *BLACK-BROWN* may not indicate a de facto relationship—it is just the modern style. Not knowing which surname is the mother's or father's, we have chosen to record the First Surname and the Second Surname, in the order as listed in the newspaper.

Useful information covering several generations is sometimes reported.

Mary & Tom welcome their 8th grandchild. Thank you Jack & Jill.

Perhaps Jack & Jill thank Nanna for her help, so we know that at least one grandmother is still alive in 1997. Anyone researching the Finlay family should check *The Advertiser* for 11 Oct 1991 as the name list covers eleven generations!

Hi. My name is Bradley and I arrived on 7 Jan. Mum & Dad are ecstatic.

Too bad for family historians that Bradley does not know his parents' names.

David would like to thank Mummy & Daddy for giving him a little brother to play with.

David went on to report the date, hospital, doctor and weight, but forgot the family surname!

Some parents make their announcements in unusual ways. They draw the Crows attention to a potential recruit. Others slant the announcement so that it sounds like the report of a Rugby game, the release of a new car or other events.

Jack & Jill are proud to announce their first joint project.

New release!

Following 9 months careful maturation a blend of Lithuanian & Australian root stock...

The SS Amanda Jane berthed on 7 Jan. Thanking the first mate.

Besides the basic information, additional information of interest to genealogists is flagged by Extra Information (Yes/No). This includes firstborn, parents' address and grandparents or other relatives named. The date of newspaper is recorded for researchers to check the birth notice.

This database so far contains 227 000 entries and when complete will cover the years from Sep 1977 onwards, since a generous volunteer donated copies of past newspapers to allow the transcription to be done at home. It is an ongoing project and we can look forward to a valuable database for posterity.

Newspaper Deaths

Death Notices from *The Advertiser* 1991–1996 have been indexed with the surname, given name and date of notice. The future Deaths database will include the surname and maiden name if applicable, given names, date of death, age and newspaper reference. The *Funeral* and *In Memoriam* Notices will be indexed together. These will give the surname and maiden name if applicable, given names, date of funeral or years since death and newspaper reference. Sometimes only a *Funeral* notice will report a death. Some *In Memoriam* notices recur each year with the list of grandchildren updated.

Country Newspapers

A few busy volunteers are extracting personal notices from country newspapers. These local papers have much more detailed information, particularly birthdays and anniversaries. So far a database of the Port Pirie Recorder 1961–1965 is on the Library Computer.

The names used in this article have been deliberately changed.

Adapted from an article by Maureen Leadbeater originally published in *The Genealogist* Feb 2001