

Exploring Victorian Bally-your-place

Here are a few simple steps to getting the information to create your own Victorian history about people in the place where you live.

This are only a small sample of the resources that are available. These are outlined to give you a starting point for your project.

ON-LINE SOURCES

A good place to start is to look at Samuel Lewis's topographical dictionary, which gives a guide to every town in the year 1837, the year Victoria became queen.

Go to www.libraryireland.com. In the search box in the top right hand corner type *topographical dictionary*. This will give you set of links to the book.

Note the alphabet near the top of the page, click on the initial letter of the name of your place, then scroll down until you find your town. Small towns don't always get much coverage.

STREET DIRECTORIES

PRONI is the public record office for Northern Ireland. This organisation looks after all the records belonging to the government in Northern Ireland. There are many things which are of interest to people exploring history.

Go to www.proni.gov.uk. Note the list of options on the left hand side of the page. Click *Search the archives*.

This will give you three options for online archives click on *Street Directories*.

On the right hand side of the screen is a box with *Search the directories*, click on it.

You will get a table asking for information. Click on *Choose a directory*.



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This will give you a box with an arrow on the side. There are a list of the directories available and the dates they were produced. Many like the *Belfast and Ulster* contain information on all the towns in Northern Ireland.

Pick a directory and then press continue. This will take you back to the table. You can search in different ways.

To find a town go to *locale* and press the arrow and scroll down to the town you want.

Click on 'Search' and this will give you page numbers in the directories that mention the town. Click on details beside the page numbers. This will give you a picture of the double page spread.

Using the controls on the right hand side of the screen you can go to the next page in the book or the next result found by your search.

Alternatively you could put in a key word, for example *chemist* and leave *locale* as *Any* - the search will find all references to chemists in the book.

You can save and print the pages as pictures.

THE 1901 CENSUS

This census is now available online. This gives us a fascinating glimpse of life at the end of the Victorian Period.

Go to www.census.nationalarchives.ie. This site contains the census records for the whole of Ireland from 1901 and 1911.

On the home page click on *Search* the census records for Ireland 1901 and 1911. This will give you an enquiry table, you can search for several things.

Choose which year you want 1911 or 1901.

Select your county.

In the box marked DED write the name of the town you are searching for.



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If you press search now you will get every person in the town, for example that is 7,792 for Coleraine.

You can write the name of a street and you will get all the people in that street.

Or you can write in a surname and check all the people of that name in the town.

You can also choose whether you are looking for only men or only women and what age the person is.

Click on one of the names in the table and you will get the table of information about that person and all the others who lived in the same house. Remember you often get several people of the same name in the same house.

Under the address is a tick box *Show all information* click this to get the full story.

You can copy and paste the information into a word processing document. Remember to change the page set-up to landscape.

It can often be interesting to check the same name or address in 1911, ten years later to see what the changes are.

NEWSPAPERS

Many local newspapers were established in the Victorian period. These can provide invaluable information about your area.

Most newspapers will have an archive of all their editions. In some cases these are accessible to the public. They may have been converted to microfiche files or if you are very lucky, may have been transferred to digital media.

Ask the newspaper or your local library for information.

MAPS

Your local library may be able to help with old maps or area of information as to where to find them.



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PHOTOGRAPHS

Old photographs of your area are very valuable in re-creating your Victorian past. Your local library or museum service may be able to help you in locating some good images.

Local History and Family History Societies may be a good place to try.

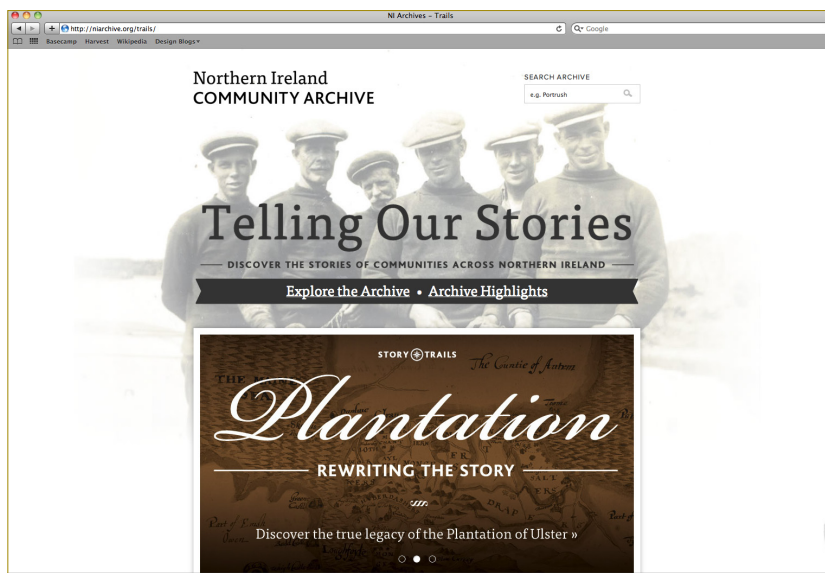
ASKING PEOPLE

Older members of your community may have photographs, objects or documents which could be useful to your project. They also have memories and stories which could be invaluable.

Why not speak to local sheltered housing establishments or community groups?

NIARCHIVE

www.niarchive.org is a unique website set up by Causeway Museum Service and Belfast City Council to share the materials gathered by community groups who are exploring their local history. You may find items of interest on the site. Perhaps you could become a contributor to the site and share your research with others.



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