



Wise words

#2: What advice would you give a newbie genealogist on how to store or file the mass of bits of paper and information genealogists gather?

Catriona Williamson: I failed miserably long before I had learned the lesson. I am still not sure what the answer is but I know it is one that includes definite "categories" and lots of flexibility.

Ruth Rye: As a minimum, I use lever arch folders with the information stored in copy safe pockets/sleeves. It is easy to take items out and to copy or scan them if need be. If clippings, such as death notices and photographs etc, are in the copy safe pockets/sleeves, and you have not stuck them on to anything, you don't get bleed through issues.

It is not as pretty as it could be with coloured folders, but it does the trick.

Sue Carter: I started out with lever arch files but changed to three or four ringed folders because the pockets stay in place better. The folders vary in size so can be adapted as the collection grows.

The downside of any great plan I have come up with is the mass of information now available with online searching, and the filing is not keeping up with the acquisitions. Then they start to burst out of their folders as new sections need to be added, such as in the UK, in Australia, went to NZ etc!

For old newspaper articles found online, (Papers Past in NZ and Trove from National Library Australia etc.), I have an Excel file on the computer to record them. You can create as many headings as you might need to be able to sort and find the articles. When the Excel file, if ever, catches up with all the printouts, it will be a success!

A collating assistant would be most helpful. (Seems the search is more fun than the organising of it all!!)

Robyn Mossman: I use lever arch files and plastic pockets for the BDM papers, and file boxes for the memorabilia. I number each item and maintain a source list in MS Word. By labelling the boxes, I can reference them as repositories in my genealogy programme.

Sue Carter: Good plan to have a source list.

Doreen Pennell: I have innumerable coloured folders, with the family name on them; later as the volume increases, I use subholders in the same colour as the "parent" folder.

For those branches with more paperwork, they go into lever arch folders with spring release pages, in plastic pockets and with coloured dividers, using much the same method as above.

However, I am being faced with a huge scanning job so I recommend scanning the data regularly. I started genealogy research well before computers, so I have a huge backlog.