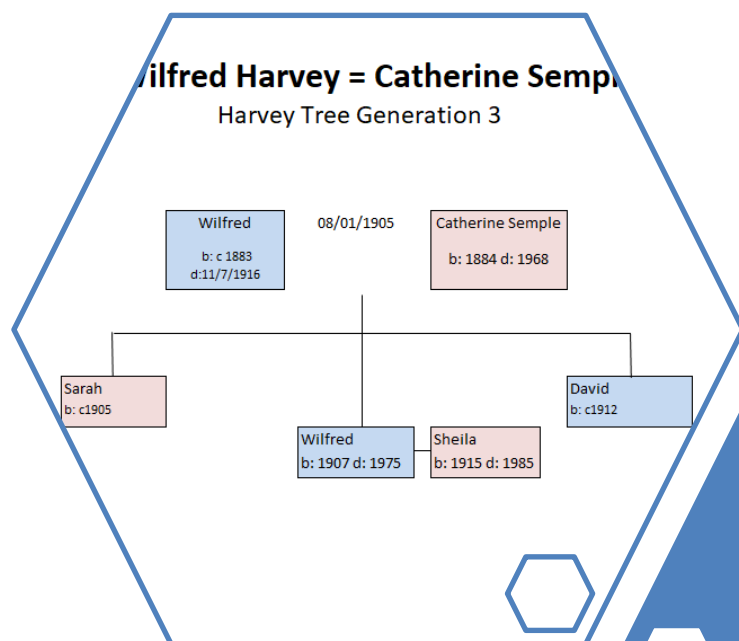


# Warrington U3A



## Hints, Tips and Information

## Introduction

The Warrington U3A Family History Group has put together this booklet to help old and new members alike<sup>1</sup>.

It contains some explanations about a variety of the resources we use on a regular basis and what they tell us, and suggests what type of information may be found in these sources.

The Family Historian usually finds themselves meeting most, if not all, of these documents, images, records and certificates during the time spent researching their family history. For a person new to family history, much of this can be confusing and difficult to interpret. Hopefully, the information in this booklet might cast some light on the 'what and why' of the information it could reveal.

Also listed are some of the key resources, including books and websites as well as suggestions for further research, from our members. It is not a comprehensive list, as the information online and in print increases on a regular basis and we are not seeking to replicate any of the many books available which do this very effectively.

We realise that the world of Family History changes apace and no publication, however modest, can keep up with all the advances and new resources. This booklet is designed to be available on the Warrington U3A website and available to download by anyone interested in Family History. This will enable the Family History Group to update it as and when necessary.

However, the starting point for any family history research should be with the resources that you may have already. These could include papers, diaries, old photographs, family address books, birthday books and many other surprising sources, even that sailing trophy your Great Grandfather won might hold a clue! These sources can often be used to validate evidence from other research, particularly from the internet.

If you have living relatives they can provide a really good source of family gossip and information, but remember – it might not all be true – it could be one of 'those' family tales. There are forms and proformas available on the internet that could be used to guide any chat you might have.

**WARNING!** Family History can be addictive.

Tina Lawton, Editor

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<sup>1</sup> Edition 4, 2026

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## BMD Certificates

- Birth, Marriage and Death certificates (often referred to as BMD)
- National Registration in England and Wales from Autumn 1837, although it wasn't mandatory until the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1874 came into force after 1<sup>st</sup> January 1875.
- Certificates available from the *General Register Office*, <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>, or Local Offices. B & D copy certificates can be ordered as PDFs on the GRO website (if you register), **but** these are not acceptable as legal documents, <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>.
- Registration in Scotland began in 1855
- Scottish Certificates from *Scotland's People*
- Registration in N Ireland (and Ireland) began 1864
- Registration in Guernsey began in 1840, Jersey 1842, Alderney 1850, Sark 1915
- Registration in the Isle of Man began 1849 but was not compulsory until 1878/1884

## Census Returns

- Taken every 10 years since 1801 in England, Wales, Scotland
- Early ones 1801 to 1831 taken by Overseers of the Poor and Church
- Many 1801 to 1831 lost or destroyed but a few are still available (*Findmypast* now has 1801 census for Liverpool, and there are transcriptions for others like Kent, Dartford (1821-1831) and various parishes in Derbyshire)
- Limited information on early ones before 1841
- 1841 first one taken by Registrar General
- Latest ones available currently are those for 1921
- 1931 Census was destroyed during WW2
- No Census taken in 1941

# England, Wales, Scotland Census Returns

**CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.**

*Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.*

*The contents of this Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.*

NAME AND SURNAMES	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards		RESIDENCE of early years	NATURALIZATION of early years	DEFECTS
			Married	Single	Personal Occupation	Industry or Service with which worker is connected			
Richard Henry De Bunge Head	Head	40	Married		Steel Business Clerk	059	0	0	0
Alice Sarah De Bunge Wife	Wife	37	Married		Steel Business Clerk	059	0	0	0
Frank Albert De Bunge Son	Son	16	Single		School	059	0	0	0
Clara Alice De Bunge Daughter	Daughter	12	Single		School	059	0	0	0
Robert De Bunge Son	Son	6	Single		School	059	0	0	0
George Phillip De Bunge Son	Son	22	Single		General Servant (Domestic)	059	0	0	0

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge of this dwelling)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

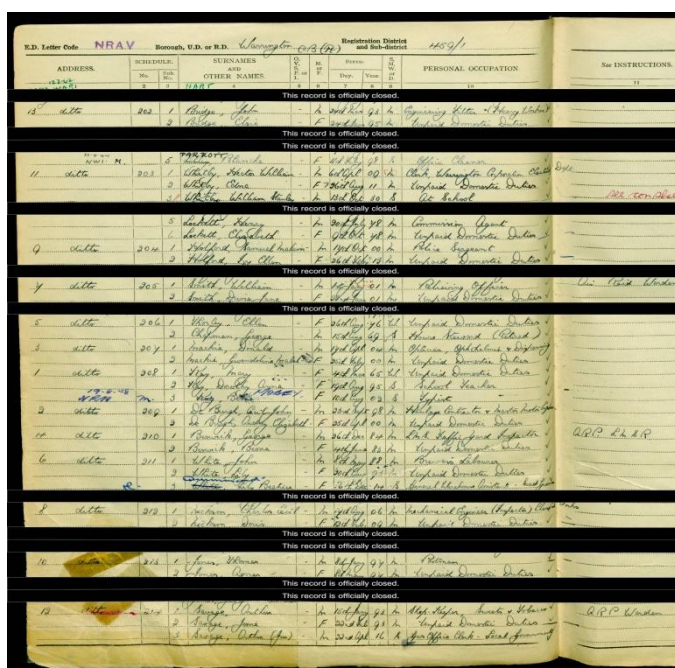
Signature: *Richard H. De Bunge*  
Post Address: *116 Harworth Street, Remington, Liverpool*

- 1801 Census was taken on 10 Mar 1801
- 1811 Census was taken on 27 May 1811
- 1831 Census was taken on 30 May 1831
- 1841 Census was taken on 6 Jun 1841. Some pieces may be missing from this Census. Information given is: residence, over 15 age rounded down to nearest five years, age under 15 was accurate, occupation, born in county or not
- 1851 Census was taken on 30 Mar 1851 additional information includes relationship to head of household, marital status, place of birth, blind, deaf or dumb
- 1861 Census taken on 7 Apr 1861 additional information economic status
- 1871 Census taken on 2 Apr 1871 additional information imbecile, idiot, lunatic
- 1881 Census taken 3 Apr 1881 additional information language spoken Scotland
- 1891 Census taken 5 Apr 1891 additional information language spoken Wales, employer, employee, rooms if under 5
- 1901 Census taken 31 Mar 1901 additional information number of rooms in dwelling, working on own account, working at home
- 1911 Census taken 2 Apr 1911 additional information:-
  - Census was signed by the Head of the Household for the first time.
  - industry or service to which worker is connected.
  - Number of years married.
  - How many children alive.
  - How many children have died.

- Nationality of person born abroad.
- Infirmity, totally deaf and dumb, totally blind, lunatic, imbecile, feeble minded.
- 1921 Census taken June 19th 1921, information included:
  - age; birthplace; occupation; residence (includes names of other household members; number of rooms); place of work; employer details; divorced as an option for marital status.
- Census returns can be found on film at County Record Offices, Local Archives, and some libraries, including the 1921 census. Further details on accessing the 1921 census can be found at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20s-people/the-1921-census/where-can-i-access-the-1921-census/>
- Digitised Census returns can be found online on sites such as *Ancestry*, *Findmypast*, *The Genealogist*
- Scottish Census at *The National Records for Scotland*. Scottish 1921 census available as 'pay per view' on Scotland's People: [https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhPGo-6n3\\_QIVQtTtCh03BwhdEAAYASAAEgKFI\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhPGo-6n3_QIVQtTtCh03BwhdEAAYASAAEgKFI_D_BwE)

## 1939 Register

- The 1939 Register was taken on 29 Sep 1939 to produce identity cards, conscription lists, labour resources etc.
- Information includes residence, date of birth, occupation, marital status
- Persons in the Armed Forces were not included unless they were home on leave
- Persons born less than a hundred years ago have been redacted
- Used later by National Health Service so very often the married name has been added later.
- Does not include Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Scotland, Northern Ireland.



## Irish Census

- Most Irish Census returns before 1901 did not survive for a number of reasons including a fire in 1921. A few may still be available.
- No Census taken in Ireland in 1921 due to civil conflict
- Irish Free State took a Census in Apr 1926
- A possible alternative to the Census is Griffiths Valuation published between 1847 and 1864 which covers the whole of Ireland

## Church/Parish Registers

- Parish Registers are records of baptisms, marriages, and burials made by the Church. Parish Registers are a valuable resource for researching your family tree because the census and official records of birth, marriage and death do not go back further than 1837. They can extend your research back to the time of King Henry VIII, with many records going back to the 1600s. (<https://www.parishregister.co.uk> )
- Church Registers originally introduced 5 Sep 1538
- Queen Elizabeth 1 reaffirmed them in 1597
- Some early registers and many from Civil War period missing
- Older registers have usually been deposited at County Record Offices.
- Some may still be in Churches including Roman Catholic and Non Conformist churches
- Church of England sent transcripts to bishop i.e. Bishops Transcripts
- Many C of E registers have been transcribed, filmed or digitally copied
- Non Conformist and Roman Catholic registers now becoming available in various formats.
- Note: Before 1837 all marriages were officially to take place in C of E church although other denominations did not always comply.
- Cheshire Parish Register Project: <https://cprdb.csc.liv.ac.uk>

## Memorial Inscriptions

- Memorial Inscriptions (M.I.s) found in burial grounds, war memorials and churches can provide information about individuals and families.
- Some have been transcribed by Family History societies or transcriptions and maps can also sometimes be found in churches.
- Details of graves can be found at <https://www.findagrave.com/> website





## Criminal Records

- Criminal records available online for earlier periods
- Types of record include the following:
  - Court session records
  - Prison logs
  - Transportation records
  - Appeal records
  - Australian convict records

## Immigration and Emigration Records

- Free Ellis Island Passenger Search database, home to 65 million records of passengers arriving to the Port of New York from 1820 to 1957: <https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger>
- Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation for more information about Immigration to USA: <https://www.statueofliberty.org/>
- Immigration records available online for Australia, Canada, USA
- Passenger lists from UK
- Online sources include *Ancestry* and *Findmypast*
- Information about records for pre-Ellis Island on Castle Garden site via Family Search blog: <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/ny-castle-garden-ellis-island/>

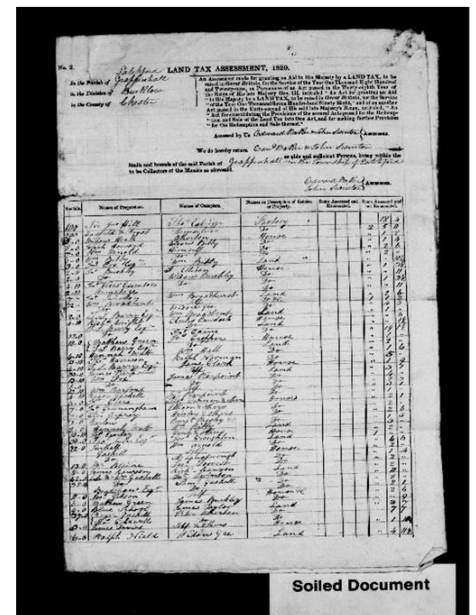
The image shows a historical document titled "NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS ENKARKED AT THE PORT OF NEW YORK". The document is a detailed table with columns for ship name, passenger name, last address, date of departure, profession, and other details. It includes handwritten notes and stamps, particularly in the "Remarks" and "Country of Birth" columns. The document is dated 19 11 and is a page from a larger record.

## Research Centres

- Local Archives such as
- Warrington Archives Museum St Warrington
- Local Libraries (which often have subscription services available for free e.g. *Ancestry* or *Findmypast*.)
- County Record Offices such as: Cheshire Record Office, Lancashire Record Office, Cheshire Family History Society Research Centre at Mobberley
- Cheshire Record Office is part of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, and the link to their site is <http://www.cheshirearchives.org.uk>
- FamilySearch Centre, Chorley

## Land Tax and Tithe Records

- Cheshire Tithe records are available at the *Cheshire Tithe Map* site (<https://maps.cheshireeast.gov.uk/tithemaps/>)
- Land Tax returns have sometimes been preserved at County Record Offices
- Cheshire land tax returns are available on *Findmypast*
- Tithe maps and plot details have been preserved at some County Record Offices
- Lancashire Tithe records are available at *The Genealogist*
- Welsh Tithe Maps are available at <https://places.library.wales>



## Family History Societies

- Many Family History Societies in UK
- Some have local research centres
- Many have online sites
- Publications such as Church BMD records, local resources
- Many have produced CD/DVD with Church records, maps

# Some Key Resources and places to search from Family History Members

## General

- [www.pinterest.co.uk](http://www.pinterest.co.uk) (a useful source of ideas for genealogy)
- [www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com)
- Online translation services eg: <https://translate.google.com/>
- <https://genealogy.nationalarchives.ie/> National Archives of Ireland
- Domesday Book, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/domesday-book/>
- <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk) (General Register Office)
- [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- Family Search Wiki: [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page). The Family History Research Wiki provides handbook reference information, and educational articles to help genealogists find and interpret records of their ancestors.
- A Vision of Britain from 1801 to now, Including maps, statistical trends and historical description. <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/>
- UK Genealogy Archives <https://ukga.org>
- [www.genuki.org.uk/](http://www.genuki.org.uk/)
- Internet archive (includes wayback machine): <https://archive.org>
- Guild of One Name-Studies: <https://one-name.org/>
- Cite- Builder (The Citation Generator for Genealogists): <https://cite-builder.com/>
- Jewish Genealogy, including burial registry and Holocaust database: <https://jewishgen.org/databases/>.
- History of Parliament, including MP's biographies: <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>.

## Adoption

- Adoptions from 1927: Adopted Children Register maintained by the GRO (to obtain your own adoption certificate you must be over 18 and apply to the GRO itself): <https://www.gov.uk/adoption-records>
- Set up by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering: [www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk](http://www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk)
- Subscription sites e.g.: *Ancestry* and *Findmypast*
- Former Children's Homes: <https://www.formerchildrenshomes.org.uk/>
- The Workhouse: <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/>

When searching for families of adopted people, or of adopted people in your family tree, if the adoption file is available, then a family tree can be constructed using family historian methods and usual resources. There is a helpful explanation on the “*who do you think you are magazine*” website:

<https://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com>

These further resources can be useful, and especially for more recent generations:

- Adoption contact register: <https://www.gov.uk/adoption-records/the-adoption-contact-register>
- 192.com: for people, businesses & places in UK. You can search for free for list of people. For further information subscription /fee required
- Companies house: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>. Official registrar of companies in the UK, they function in three separate countries: Northern Ireland, Scotland, and England and Wales.

Other sites include: *Findmypast*: electoral rolls, *Cyndi's List*: comprehensive, categorised & cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online. *General Register Office (GRO)*: <https://www.gov.uk/general-register-office>, *FreeBMD*: <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/>, *The Gazette*: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/>, *Land Registry*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry>

## Books and Newspapers

- Looking at Old Photographs: Their Dating and Interpretation, Robert Pols
- Pen and Sword Books e.g.: Tracing your Manchester and Salford Ancestors
- British Newspaper Archive: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> on *Findmypast*
- [www.llgc.org.uk/en/information-for/family-historians/newspapers/](http://www.llgc.org.uk/en/information-for/family-historians/newspapers/)
- Warrington Museum publication about parcels to WW1 POWs and their donors
- <https://www.library.wales/digitisation-projects/historical-newspapers-and-journals>
- Family History for the Older and Wiser, Susan Fifer, ISBN 978-0-47-068612-6
- [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) (owned by *Ancestry*, Fee payable)
- Society of Genealogists series of books “My Ancestor was a .....”. (e.g. Miner, Leather Worker, Agricultural Labourer): <https://sog.org.uk/>
- Since 1665 The Gazette has been the UK’s official public record and is now formally the combination of three publications: The London Gazette, The Belfast Gazette and The Edinburgh Gazette. These are the UK's official journals of record:  
<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/> . (use the "All notices" tab) - e.g. gives all army promotions,

war-time deaths of soldiers, changes of name by deed poll, change of name of company owners (on retirement, death, etc), notice of settlement of debt after a death.

## DNA

- Several companies offer DNA testing including *Ancestry*, *23andMe*, *FamilyTreeDNA*, and *Living DNA/ Findmypast*.
- The results of tests indicating ethnicity often change as the databases get bigger and more people are tested, so your ethnicity result can change over time.
- <https://dnainter.com>: shared cM (centimorgan) tool (links cM with possible relationships). The website also includes the WATO tool (What Are The Odds?) which helps you to decide where a DNA match fits in your tree.

## Family History Societies

- Federation of Family History Societies <http://www.ffhs.org.uk/>
- Family History Society of Cheshire: <https://www.fhsc.org.uk>

## Free to Access Sites

- [www.freecen.org.uk](http://www.freecen.org.uk) (Currently doesn't include the 1921 census)
- [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)
- [www.freereg.org.uk](http://www.freereg.org.uk)

## Geographical

- [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)
- [www.cumbriasmuseumofmilitarylife.org/](http://www.cumbriasmuseumofmilitarylife.org/)
- Whitehaven Archive and Local Studies Centre:  
[www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/archivecentres/whalsc.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/archivecentres/whalsc.asp)
- <http://maps.nls.uk>
- London Street Names: [www.maps.thehunthouse.com/](http://www.maps.thehunthouse.com/)

## Graves and Burials

- <http://www.deceasedonline.com/>
- [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)
- Manchester Burials: [www.burialrecords.manchester.gov.uk/](http://www.burialrecords.manchester.gov.uk/)
- [probatesearch.service.gov.uk](http://probatesearch.service.gov.uk)

- Headstone Inscriptions And Burial Records, Lancashire (Inscriptions On Graves Opened Before 1950): <https://cemsearch.co.uk/>
- <https://billiongraves.com/>
- Some information about Warrington Cemetery Records available at: <https://burialrecords.warrington.gov.uk/>, other records are held at the Crematorium, where you will have to book and pay at the office.
- <https://genealogy.tameside.gov.uk/enquiry> All burial records for Droylsden, Hyde and Mossley Cemeteries are currently online and they are working hard to make the remaining burial and cremation records available on the online service. Also a map showing all the plots within the graveyard.
- <https://www.newmillshistory.org.uk/> This is New Mills Derbyshire. Especially the 'Wills, Deeds and Graveyards' section as it has the most wonderful list of everybody in each grave in both 'St George's Road' and 'Mount Pleasant' Graveyards.

## Local (to Warrington)

- [www.wiganworld.co.uk](http://www.wiganworld.co.uk)
- [www.lan-opc.org.uk](http://www.lan-opc.org.uk)
- Robberies records (Warrington): <https://wmag.culturewarrington.org/local-history/resources/robberies-database/>
- Red Cross parcels to POWs WW1 (Warrington): <https://u3aresearch.uk/p/392/>

## Maps

- The National Library of Scotland: <https://maps.nls.uk/>
- Cheshire Digital Archive Maps <https://digitalarchives.co.uk/cheshire-os-25inch-3rd-ed-1904-1910/>
- [www.google.com/earth/](http://www.google.com/earth/)
- Google Street View Maps, [www.google.co.uk/maps/](http://www.google.co.uk/maps/)
- Goad's Fire Insurance Maps: <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20210615135211/http://www.bl.uk/onlin negallery/onlineex/firemaps/fireinsurancemaps.html>
- [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk) (subscription required)

## Occupations etc

- Pub history websites e.g.: [www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk)

- Archaic medical terms and illnesses <https://rmhh.co.uk/medical.html> or <https://www.thornber.net/medicine/html/medgloss.html>
- History of Policing in London [www.historybytheyard.co.uk](http://www.historybytheyard.co.uk)
- Telephone Directories, Company archives and Trade Directories (e.g.: <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16445coll4>)
- Trades websites and family history sections e.g. Railway, Post Office, Police
- For Cheshire Police: Warrington Police Museum. <https://cheshirepolicemuseum.org.uk/>
- Shopkeepers and retail: All the major well-known shops often have their own history information which might be useful e.g.: <https://sainsburyarchive.org.uk/>, <https://archive.marksandspencer.com/>, <https://johnlewismemorystore.org.uk/>, <https://housefraserarchive.ac.uk/>, <https://www.co-operativeheritage.coop/>.
- For mariner ancestors a useful starting place is The National Archive, which has helpful booklets and some resources both online and at the TNA: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/merchant-seamen-registers-1835-1857/>, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/research/tracing-your-family-history/merchant-navy-family-history/where-to-find-merchant-navy-records>
- Maritime Museums are an excellent place to start to find out about ships and shipping, and a list can be found at: <https://whichmuseum.com/place/england-4/t-maritime>
- **CLIP (Crew List Index Project):** - the main site for searching by ship name/number (1855-1950s): <https://www.crewlist.org.uk/>
- **Certificates of Competency (1845-1927):** Records for masters and mates are available on *Ancestry* and *The National Archive*. Many other records for mariners are held at *The National Archive*, such as
- **Note: Absence from Census:** Sailors at sea during census night were often listed on ship logs or not at all.
- Key Medical Registers: <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/33538/>, <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/blog/new/medical-registers-ucl>, <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/featuredarticles/2020/medical-ancestors-from-before-the-nhs-began-1262/>,
- Railway worker records for family historians are primarily found in [The National Archives \(TNA\)](#) (pre-1948), the Modern Records Centre (trade unions): <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/> , and online databases like *Ancestry* and *Findmypast*.

## Other Areas (UK)

- Durham Library Archive: <http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/>
- <https://manxnationalheritage.im/collections/library-and-archives/>
- Isle of Man iMuseum: [www.imuseum.im/](http://www.imuseum.im/)
- Cornwall Parish Clerks: [www.cornwall-opc-database.org/](http://www.cornwall-opc-database.org/)
- [www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/search-archives-online/will-calendars](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/search-archives-online/will-calendars)
- [www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni)
- [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)
- Benfleet Community Archive sent in by individuals with memories and photos, as distinct from the Benfleet and District Historical Society, which has more general information: <https://www.benfleethistory.org.uk/content/category/browse-articles>

## Other Countries

- National Library of Ireland: <https://www.nli.ie/>
- [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie)
- <http://www.rootsireland.ie/>
- Virtual Treasury of Ireland: <https://www.virtualltreasury.ie>
- Irish Genealogy Toolkit, for information and advice and a list of 10 free places to search: <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/>
- <https://www.emeraldancestors.com/>
- National Archives of Ireland: <https://nationalarchives.ie/>
- Valuation Office Records and information about genealogy in Ireland: <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/valuation-office-records/>
- Griffiths Primary Valuation of Ireland. "1825 Griffith was appointed by the British Government to carry out a boundary survey of Ireland. He was to mark the boundaries of every county, barony, civil parish, and townland in tandem with the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland. He completed the boundary work in 1844." Wikipedia 4/4/2023. <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>
- Irish Genealogy: <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/>
- Roots Ireland: <http://www.rootsireland.ie/> (subscription/fee)
- Irish Genealogical Research Society: <https://www.irishancestors.ie/> ((subscription/fee))
- Irish Ancestors: <https://johngrenham.com/> (a YouTube video is available to show how to use the site – search for John Grenham YouTube video, as well as other YouTube videos that might be useful or try: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVLZQdxdGfs>)

Canadian information and archives at the Library and Archives Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/library-archives.html>

- Ellis Island Foundation for immigrants to America: [www.libertyellisfoundation.org](http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org)
- <https://www.benjidog.co.uk/TheShipsList/>
- National Library of New Zealand: <https://natlib.govt.nz/researchers/guides/family-history>
- Families in British India Society, a treasure trove for ancestors in the East India company eg church records, sailings, cadetships, officers, etc: <https://www.fibis.org/>.
- For researching French ancestors (subscription site for detailed information):  
<https://en.geneanet.org/> .

## Photo Enhancing

- Software programs and Apps that can be used to enhance old photos. They may colorise them (although the results may be less than perfect) or they might remove some blemishes and sharpen the image. New programs are being released, but some current ones are:
- Remini, Photomyne, PS Express, Snapseed, Pixlr, Photoleap, EPIK, Adobe Lightroom

## Soldiers and War

- Guards Museum: <http://www.theguardsmuseum.com/>
- Great War Forum for discussion and research on all aspects of the Great War of 1914-1918:  
<https://www.greatwarforum.org/>
- <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>
- Government document about reserved occupations at the start of WW2:  
<https://www.1900s.org.uk/reserved-occupations.htm>
- Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum: <http://www.rwfmuseum.org.uk/>
- Fusilier Museum: <https://www.fusiliermuseum.com>
- Imperial War Museum Lives of the First World War: <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/>
- [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) (Commonwealth War Graves Commission)
- WW1 Trench Mapping: <https://maps.nls.uk/ww1/trenches/>
- Apple App from CWGC (soldiers remembered at the Thiepval Monument) to locate a soldier's name and read more than 900 personal soldiers' stories and explore interesting facts. Download from Apple's App Store
- Red Cross Historical Collections: <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/our-history/museum-and-archives/historical-collections>

- <https://www.stolpersteine-hamburg.de/en.php>, Long biographies of those who died in concentration camps in Hamburg (Google 'stolpersteine' for different cities).
- [Jewsfww.uk](http://Jewsfww.uk) British Jews in the First World War.

## Subscription Sites

- [www.lostcousins.com](http://www.lostcousins.com)
- [www.rootschat.com](http://www.rootschat.com)
- [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)
- [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)
- 1939 Register (via a *Findmypast* or *Ancestry* subscription). Further Information about the 1939 Register: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/1939-register/> The following information is taken from The National Archives website: *“You can search for and view open records on our partner site [Findmypast.co.uk](http://Findmypast.co.uk) (charges apply). A version of the 1939 Register is also available at [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk) (charges apply), and transcriptions without images are on [MyHeritage.com](http://MyHeritage.com) (charges apply). It is free to search for these records, but there is a charge to view full transcriptions and download images of documents. Please note that you can view these records online free of charge in the reading rooms at The National Archives in Kew.”*
- [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)
- [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)
- [www.forces-war-records.co.uk](http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk)

## Some Hints and Tips from Members

- Don't believe everything you read! E.g. On BMD records people sometimes registered a child late – up to 3 months – so check adjacent quarters (Q1: Jan – Mar, Q2: Apr – Jun, Q3: Jul – Sept, Q4: Oct – Dec).
- Don't confuse the church ceremony date (e.g. christening) with the actual birth date.
- On Wedding records, witnesses' names and details can provide valuable clues to relationships and family members.
- Newspaper archives (e.g. *Findmypast*) can be a great source of information about ancestors e.g. marriages, local news and happenings, council minutes, business affairs.
- Don't believe everything you read 2! Spelling mistakes in records abound, especially in an age when spelling was flexible and few people could read or write well. Always search using different spellings or wild cards if you hit a brick wall.
- Commercial sites such as Delcampe ([https://www.delcampe.net/en\\_GB/collectables/](https://www.delcampe.net/en_GB/collectables/)) and Ebay (<https://www.ebay.co.uk>) might have collectibles, such as postcards, that will give you additional, often visual, information.
- The YouTube (GB) site has many videos of historical interest that might provide some background, e.g. a talk on The Mayflower by The History Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/>)
- Online Family Trees on other sites e.g. *Ancestry* and *Family Search* can give you possible cousins or ancestors but take care copying them wholesale – they could be (and often are) wrong!
- Subscription Genealogy sites often have special offers, especially at Christmas, when DNA Tests and Subscriptions are reduced. They often have weekends of free access for special occasions as the 1914-1918 Commemorations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War.
- Read up on DNA testing before taking the plunge! Magazines (e.g. *Who Do You Think You Are*) or articles in newspapers and online often have comparisons or general information about the options, so worth doing your homework!
- Sometimes a search on Google might be fruitful: [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)
- Tips from other researchers or archivists e.g.; A middle name may relate to a maiden name or a mother's maiden name.
- Tracking the enumerator's route when collecting census data might provide additional detail about neighbours, relatives and location.

- The University of Strathclyde offers a free online Future Learn course, called *Genealogy - Researching Your Family Tree*. It covers creating a tree, research, DNA analysis, storing documentation and many useful tips. The course is run on a regular basis and lasts 6 weeks: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/genealogy>

- Keep your information organised as you research. Note down your sources and the date. Think about your audience – is it for your children/grandchildren or for yourself, for example? Ask your own living ancestors about their lives NOW! Record your own life, too.
- Back up your data regularly, including photos and other electronically available documents.
- It is well known that *Ancestry* is a subscription site, but the 1881 census database on *Ancestry* and *Findmypast* is free to view for this date. However, lots of other databases are also Free on *Ancestry*. So if you have not joined *Ancestry*, how do you find this data? Well here is a tip. Open *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>) and on the top line click on "Search" and a drop down menu will appear. The next to bottom item is "Card Catalogue", click on that. The catalogue page will open. On the left are two boxes in which you can type. In the "Keyword(s)" box type Free. Select search. At the time of typing they have 552 databases.

As well as the 1881 Census you will find "Web: Scotland, Sheriff Court Paternity Processes or Case Papers, 1752-1921", or "UK, D-Day War Diaries and Photographs, 1944", or "Cheshire, England, Extracted Church of England Parish Records 1564-1837" and many more. Many millions of records in total. The vast majority of these are British and Irish records.

In a similar way *Findmypast* has free records. To get to these, open up *Findmypast* (<https://www.findmypast.com/>) and scroll to the very bottom of the opening page in the left column of text, fifth from the top is "Free genealogy records". Further down is the "1881 Census".

- Some searching tips:
  - Make use of the "Card Catalogue" for searching *Ancestry* and *Findmypast*
  - Use *Family Search* – they have millions of records, but not all are indexed. Use the "full text search" on it to help.
  - *Family Search* only have limited time licences to have full details of some records, so be aware of that as you may need to use another site (possibly a payment site) to access all the information.
  - This also applies to some of the data on *Ancestry* and *Find My Past*, so always download the primary source documents onto your computer whenever possible.

## Using AI in Family History Research<sup>2</sup>

### AI Overview

AI tools accelerate family history research by transcribing handwritten documents, analysing records, translating foreign documents, and providing context for ancestor biographies. Effective methods include using chatbot AI (like ChatGPT or Google Gemini) to craft research plans, summarize complex records, and generate search ideas. Key applications include using MyHeritage for photo enhancement and FamilySearch for automated, AI-driven handwriting transcription.

This video explains how to use the AI research assistant on FamilySearch:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ai-developments-genealogy>

### Top Ways to Use AI for Genealogy

- **Transcribe Handwritten Documents:** AI can read old, difficult handwriting (e.g., German black letter) and convert it into text. Use tools like [Google Gemini Pro](#) for this purpose, providing clear instructions for the AI to preserve original text.
- **Create Research Plans:** Ask AI to generate a checklist of record types to search based on a specific location and time period, such as "Create a research plan to find birth records for [Name] in [Location] in 1855".
- **Analyse and Compare Records:** Copy and paste census or vital record data into chatbots to compare information across different years.
- **Translate Foreign Documents:** Use tools like Google Translate to understand records in other languages.
- **Enhance and Colorize Photos:** MyHeritage provides AI-powered tools that repair, colorize, and animate old, black-and-white family photos.
- **Write Biographies:** Use AI to synthesize scattered facts and narratives into a structured, written biography for an ancestor.

### Best Practices for AI Genealogy

- **Verify Everything:** AI can hallucinate, meaning it can generate false information. Always verify AI-provided facts against original, reputable records.
- **Be Specific in Prompts:** Use the C.R.A.F.T. method (Context, Role, Action, Format, Tone) for the best results, for example: "Act as an expert in Irish genealogy, summarize the following parish record for a family named Murphy...".
- **Combine Methods:** Use AI to complement, not replace, traditional genealogical research techniques.
- **Start with Known Facts:** Test the AI's accuracy by asking it questions about family history you have already confirmed.
- **Data Privacy:** Avoid inputting private information into public AI tools, especially about living individuals.

For more specific, actionable techniques, [How to use AI tools for family history research - The Gazette](#) and [How to use AI for genealogy - Family Tree](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from Google AI

## Our Comments!

- If you are keen to use AI in your research, there are many helpful YouTube videos that can help. A simple search will bring up several suggestions, but, as ever, always be aware of clicking on links and giving your personal details.
- Always check the suggestions or references given with other sources you may have. Verify everything as AI can 'invent' things that seem plausible.
- Remember that AI can't do it all for you! It can be a useful assistant, especially if you have come up against a brick wall, but you must be the person in charge.
- Always be aware of uploading or giving away personal information or photographs. Redact documents if possible, especially names or information about living persons, and blur details on photographs if necessary.
- If at first AI doesn't succeed – try, try, try again!! Rephrase the question. Try an alternative approach in the phraseology or information you give.
- AI may not always be able to transcribe written documents, especially if the writing is very ornate or not easily understood.
- AI doesn't always understand older terminology or historical context, such as old transport or objects no longer in use. One example of the latter is the French 'TSF (*Télégraphie Sans Fil*)'. We might remember the Wireless, and the important role it has played in history, but younger generations with mobile phones certainly won't know what it might be!
- Some really helpful information can be found at Family Search in the Roots Tech archive: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>. These will undoubtedly be updated as each yearly Roots Tech event showcases recent advances.
- AI can help you gather data, but you will need to be the final arbiter of what is right, including spellings etc, and what is not relevant.

Some useful websites for more info:

- <https://lineages.com/how-to-use-ai-in-your-family-history-work-a-beginners-guide/>
- <https://genealogy.org.nz/Ethics--Best-Practice-of-AI/11482/>
- <https://andrewredfern.com/continuum-ai-use-family-history/>
- <https://education.myheritage.com/article/ai-genealogy-harnessing-the-power-of-artificial-intelligence-for-family-history-research/>
- <https://www.transkribus.org/> : transcribes both handwritten and print documents
- <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-family-history-ai-show/id1749873836> : The Family History AI Show (Podcast), Steve Little & Mark Thompson

## Preservation of Historical Records *(from a talk by Philip Jeffs, Archivist, Warrington Library and Museum)*

### **Dos and Don'ts**

Some advice on the best ways to store your old documents and photographs. These are ideal suggestions, and not all of them will be practicable, but many are sensible and practical ways to make sure your records survive in the best condition possible.

Key factors in maintaining the integrity of historical records are:

- Temperature and humidity
- Abuse and mishandling
- Acidity e.g. bleach for paper whitening
- Light e.g. sunlight
- Pollution e.g. acid (rain) in the air
- Fire and water
- Infestation e.g. insects, mice, birds

Ideal conditions:

- Constant temperature between 13-18°
- Humidity between 45-60%
- Cool, dry and dark

Not:

- Cellars
- Attics
- Lofts

All are prone to fluctuations in heat which is bad for paper

**Don'ts:**

- Use self-adhesive photo albums (use dental floss to gently remove photos – freeze for 30-45 minutes if it's stubborn)
- Wrap anything in newspaper (acidic and low quality)
- Use ordinary white envelopes, colour binders, card, tissue, etc
- Use wooden boxes or metal trunks
- Use polythene or plastic bags, pvc or plastic envelopes

- Encapsulate (unless archival quality) or laminate
- Use acidic backing or mounts or wooden frames
- Use sellotape or any tape
- Use paperclips, rubber bands, pins and staples (use brass paperclips or fold in archival quality paper)

## **Dos**

- Always use archival quality of all materials
- Keep newspapers in the cool and dark
- Store documents flat
- Store large documents unfolded and flat. If that's not possible, roll and put inside an archival tube or tie with archival ribbon
- Store each item separately
- Store books flat. If damaged, store in special boxes or tied with archival white ribbon like a parcel
- Use polythene sleeves not plastic
- Keep in a dust free environment
- Use acid-free tissue paper and blotting paper to slow decay
- Keep out of direct sunlight
- Wash hands or use latex gloves when handling documents
- Use latex/cotton gloves when handling photographs or negatives
- Keep newspaper clippings separately in polyester sleeves
- Use dental floss to remove photos . Freeze for 30-45 minutes first if it's stubborn.
- Use 600dpi for scanning
- Use pencil to identify photographs
- Store photographs between 14-16°, 30-40% relative humidity
- Avoid exposure to anything containing sulphur dioxide e.g. cardboard, woodchip, etc
- Avoid plastic clips, rubber bands, and store individually in archival sleeves
- If items are infested or mouldy, place in sealed plastic bags and put in a freezer overnight. This will stabilise the item.

## Information about the free to use website of UKBMD and associated websites *(from a talk by Ian Hartas. Reproduced by kind permission from Ian and Sharon Hartas)*

UKBMD: [www.UKBMD.org.uk](http://www.UKBMD.org.uk)

### UK Births, Marriages, Deaths & Much More

A free to use website. Links to over a thousand sites which have online data to help with your genealogy research, with links to:

- Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, Burials, Censuses, Wills, Parish Registers, Monumental Inscriptions, One Name Studies, Online Parish Clerks, One Place Studies, DNA & more
- **Local BMD** – Local Birth, Marriage & Death Information. From the **original** Civil Registration Records. (Note: check the coverage pages for information). Includes a **Multi-Region Search** for searching multiple Local BMDs at the same time.
- **GRO BMD** – Links to websites which have GRO Birth, Marriage & Death Indexes. These are from the Government's secondary BMD indexes, such as FreeBMD
- **County** – Select the County from the drop down list and then press the County button for websites relevant to the county/region in the UK and Ireland. Included are websites which have transcribed records online, such as censuses, parish records, bishops' transcripts, war memorials, banns, one name studies, online parish clerks, monumental inscriptions and much more.
- **British Abroad** – Websites with data on British people who were born, married or died abroad.
- **Parish Register** – Websites with Parish Registers online. List can be limited to a single County.
- **ONS** – One Name Studies. Websites dedicated to a single name or group of names.
- **OPC** – Online Parish Clerks. These are a useful source of information for baptisms, marriages and burial records as well as other parish / area information.
- **OPS** – One Place Studies. Websites dedicated to a single place or area.
- **DNA Research** -- Websites for DNA Research and DNA projects for genealogy.
- **Register** – Subscribe to the announcement lists for the latest updates.
- **Contact Us** – If we have not listed your favourite site – let us know, so that others may benefit

- **Find us on Facebook** at [www.facebook.com/UKBMD](http://www.facebook.com/UKBMD)
- **Find us on Twitter** @LocalBMDProject

The links on the sites are updated frequently– so check back regularly.

NOTE: some of the websites that we link to charge for providing information.

**UKGDL:** [www.UKGDL.org.uk](http://www.UKGDL.org.uk)

## UK Genealogical Directories, Lists & More

Links to over a thousand sites which have online data to help with your family history research, including Trade Directories, Maps, Taxes and Tithes, Voter Lists, Ships' Passenger and Crew lists, Photographs, Canal Folk, Hospitals, Trades and Apprentices, School Lists & more

- **Miscellany** – Lists websites which provide information e.g. death causes, diseases, photographs/postcards of ships, military badges, old occupations and more.
- **Category** – Select the Category required from the drop down list and press the Category button to list the websites in each category, rather than by county. These include trade directories, maps, school records, criminals, newspapers, tax records, and ships' passenger & crew lists.
- **County** – Select the County required from the drop down list and press the County button to list websites for counties/regions in the UK and Ireland. This lists websites with information for the area e.g. trade directories, taxes, school records, newspapers, religious records, servants, ships' passenger & crew lists, institutions and much more.
- **British Abroad** – Lists websites which provide information about British people abroad, includes Australia, North America, South America, New Zealand, India, South Africa and more.
- **Occupations** – Lists websites that have information about specific occupations, including apprentices.

**UKMFH:** [www.UKMFH.org.uk](http://www.UKMFH.org.uk)

## UK Military Family History

Links to over a thousand sites which have online data to help with your military family history research, including information on topics such as the RAF, Navy, Army, Regiments, Squadrons, Ships, Aircraft, Service Records, WW1, WW2, Boer Wars, Napoleonic Wars, Crimean War, War

Memorials, Prisoners of War, Photographs, Diaries, Hospitals, Muster Rolls, Uniforms, Medals & more

- **Miscellany** – Lists websites which provide information e.g. military badges, glossaries, reference texts and more.
- **Category** – Select the Category required from the drop down list and press the Category button to list the sites in each category, rather than by county. The many categories include WW1, WW2, Ships, Army, Navy, RAF, Newspapers and more.
- **County** – Select the County from the drop down list and press the County button to list sites for counties/regions in the UK and Ireland. Included are websites which contain information such as service records, war memorials, regiment details, war diaries and much more.
- **Keywords** – As military history is a vast subject we have added keywords for each site. This should make finding websites relevant to your area of research easier. Examples of keywords are: Battle of the Somme, Gallipoli, HMS Victory, Cheshire Regiment & Pals Battalions.

## Your Notes