

Celebrating 35 Years

Genealogy group 2



General points to get you started:

1. Join a U3A Genealogy group
2. Ask your family members to see what they know. Don't leave it too late to ask elderly relatives and make sure you write it down, but be aware that recollections are not always accurate.
3. Just try typing in a name of your ancestor and press google search. You might be surprised what you find!
4. Don't take other people's family tree research as gospel – always try to check yourself. Use their information as a suggestion to research for yourself.
5. The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland by Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates and Peter McClure gives a detailed history of surnames and their meaning. You should find a copy at your library.
6. You can take a DNA test for genealogy through companies like ^[1]ancestry.co.uk/dna/ or ^[2]familytreedna.com/ to explore your ancestry, connect with relatives, and build family trees. Be prepared for unexpected results.

Useful and Specific websites

7. Useful websites to access census and many other records include
[3] www.ancestry.co.uk [4] www.findmypast.co.uk .
You can access these free at any library or you can take out a subscription for Ancestry or Find My Past. Both sites will give you a free trial and have special offers from time to time.
8. The Lost Cousins website is free to use with lots of useful hints. If you subscribe you will get emails with hints. [5] www.lostcousins.com
9. A useful website for researching family in other parts of the world is Geneanet
[6] <https://en.geneanet.org/> Basic searches are free or you can subscribe to premium membership to access more information.
10. Mormon records can be a starting point and have international information.
[7] <https://www.familysearch.org/>
11. Search Parish records for baptisms, marriages and burials – both online and at the church [8] www.freebmd.org.uk will provide the index reference numbers you need to order a certificate.
12. You can order a birth, death or marriage certificates here:
[9] [General Register Office - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/general-register-office) You can either download a certificate or have it sent to you. There will be a charge for this service.
13. [10] [The Genealogist](http://www.the-genealogist.co.uk) website is good for non-conformist records. Search Census, Births, Marriages, Deaths, Parish Records, Non-Conformist Records, Directories, Military Records, Wills & more!
14. Search the Surman index for non-conformist ministers
[11] www.dwl.ac.uk and [12] [Researching Family History - Methodist Heritage](http://www.researchingfamilyhistory.org.uk) for Methodists
15. Search [13] www.freecen.org.uk for census information, including for Scotland and Ireland.

History Centres and Places to Visit

16. Get in touch with family history societies local to the area your family came from.
17. Visit the area your ancestors were from. There you can look at gravestones and plaques/memorials inside churches and may find books or pamphlets which give information/recollections about the local area and families living there.
18. Visit the local family history centre. They will have a lot of archive material and people available to help.
19. Visit the National Archives at Kew. You can search some documents online and see the original documents by visiting.
You should book in advance if visiting. ^[14] [Discovery | The National Archives](#)
20. Visit the Imperial War Museum for information on all aspects of conflict in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. You can also search some of their archive online.
21. Visit military museums for information relating to specific regiments.
22. You can find information on your old toys from the Museum of Childhood (Young V&A)

Additional Search Sources

23. Town directories (e.g. Kelly's) will give street and trade information. Guilds may also have lists of members.
24. You could search the London metropolitan archives for London based ancestors.
[15] [The London Archives | Home](#)
25. You can use workhouse records to learn about conditions and search for relatives. Note that in census records, the inmates were sometimes just listed by their initials rather than the full name. [16] [Workhouse Records and Archives](#)
26. Historic maps will give an idea of the area where you ancestors lived
e.g. [17] www.alangodfrey.com/maps/ or [18] maps.nls.uk/
Charles Booth's poverty maps of London provide an insight into life in different areas of London [19] [Charles Booth's London](#)
27. Search newspapers for mentions of your ancestors
e.g. [20] www.britishnewspaperarchives.co.uk
You can access this free at a library or pay a subscription. Some newspaper articles are available on Find My Past.
28. The Commonwealth war graves commission provide information on those killed in conflict. [21] [The Commonwealth War Graves Commission | CWGC](#)
29. You can find out the meaning of old occupational terms from this website:
[22] [Family Tree Researcher: Dictionary of Old Occupations - Index](#)

Storage

30. You can purchase useful folders etc for storing information from various companies
e.g. ^[23] [My History - Family Tree Software & Genealogy Supplies Specialist](#). There are also software programmes which you can use to store your family tree information on your home computer
e.g. ^[24] [Family Historian – genealogy and family tree software](#)

More top tips!

31. If you can't find the person you're searching for, try different spellings of their name, or slight variations.
32. When possible, look at the original document rather than a transcription – transcription errors are surprisingly common.
33. Be careful of conflating sets of records of different people with similar names, places of birth etc. Check and recheck you have found the correct records for your family member.
34. Photographs are great sources of information. Firstly, it is fascinating to see what your ancestors looked like but you may also find photos of where they lived or worked or enjoying some pastime. The clothing and setting will give some indication of the time period when the photo was taken and military uniforms will help identify the regiment in which a family member served. Remember that not all inherited 'family' photos will necessarily be of family members.

Taking photos yourself of gravestones, family homes etc adds to the richness of your research and remember to label your photos to aid future genealogists!

35. Finally... Do recheck records for ancestors you have already searched for, as more records are uploaded all the time.

- [1] <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/dna/>
- [2] <https://www.familytreedna.com/>
- [3] www.ancestry.co.uk
- [4] www.findmypast.co.uk
- [5] www.lostcousins.com
- [6] <https://en.geneanet.org/>
- [7] <https://www.familysearch.org/>
- [8] www.freebmd.org.uk
- [9] <https://www.gov.uk/research-family-history>
- [10] <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>
- [11] <https://www.dwl.ac.uk/>
- [12] <https://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/research-and-resources/researching-family-history/>
- [13] <https://www.freecen.org.uk/>
- [14] <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- [15] <https://www.thelondonarchives.org/>
- [16] <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/records/>
- [17] <https://www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk/>
- [18] <https://maps.nls.uk/>
- [19] <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>
- [20] <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>
- [21] <https://www.cwgc.org/>
- [22] <https://www.familyresearcher.co.uk/glossary/Dictionary-of-Old-Occupations-Index.html>
- [23] <https://www.my-history.co.uk/>
- [24] <https://www.family-historian.co.uk/>

MORE INFORMATION

Newbury U3A

<https://newbury.u3asite.uk/>

Genealogy group 2

https://newbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/genealogy-2/

Monthly on Friday mornings 10:00 am-12:00 pm

2nd Friday monthly

Broadway House

**If you are interested in joining us, you can contact the Group Leader,
details on [the Genealogy 2 web page](#).**

**Alternatively, phone the Office on 01635 760346 or email
office@newburyu3a.com**

The latest flyer for this group can be found on

<https://newbury.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Genealogy-2-flyer.pdf>