

HOW WE WORK WITH OUR CLIENTS, OR AN EXPLANATION OF OUR **TERMS OF BUSINESS**

Our fees are based on time spent

We charge **\$A100 an hour for all time spent** on your research, or any other tasks, such as writing reports, creating charts, etc. We have a Minimum Hours policy, which means our **Minimum fee** is five hours at \$100 per hour, **or \$500, plus expenses**. Because family history is detective work, we can never be certain how long it might take to find someone. So we can't quote you a firm price to research your family; **our fees are based on the time we spend on the task, not the results we get**. Most times we find what we are looking for, and our clients are delighted. But sometimes our clients' ancestors don't want to be found and many frustrating hours can be spent searching through records for an elusive ancestor. That time costs money...your money.

It's best to agree a budget at the beginning

One way to minimise the shock of big bills is to agree an initial budget at the onset. We like to work in 5 or 10 hour batches, so that gives us both a chance to assess how successful (or otherwise) we're likely to be with your research. We like to keep you informed of progress in any event, so frequent smaller bills suits us too.

Here's what takes time (and therefore we charge for)

- Creating and Maintaining Client Data Base (so that we can print out charts and reports and keep track of your research)
- Searching Civil Registration Indexes
- Ordering, receiving and analysing Certificates from those indexes
- Visiting repositories and looking through specific microfilms and microfiches
- Searching for Wills and probate records, online or at repositories
- Searching census records, parish registers and many other records online (mostly pay sites)
- Analysing data and planning next steps
- Meeting and discussing progress with clients
- Keeping client up-to-date by email and responding to queries
- Contacting, briefing and overseeing overseas agents to carry out research on your behalf
- Getting up to speed after a lengthy respite
- Designing, preparing and producing family charts
- Writing client reports

Expenses are extra, such as:

- Certificates (England and Wales, \$30 each, others at cost plus 25%)
- Wills and other documents obtained on your behalf
- Internet time and fees (we subscribe to many pay sites, and may charge clients a proportion based on usage. Some sites are pay-per-view)
- Photocopying and printing from outside sources
- Print-outs from our system: A4 copies (eg census downloads) \$0.50 each
- Charts: A3 print-outs \$2 each

We've published the above to avoid any possible misunderstanding with potential clients. Rest assured that our clients are usually delighted with the work we do! We've rarely had any bad debts!

Dr Lesley Silvester and Mike Murray
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