

Finding your UK Ancestors Online - Workshop overview

1. Before you start hunting...

Learn some basic UK geography and facts about places
Understand the broad sweep of UK history AND local history

www.genuki.org.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/history/

2. Getting in touch with others who can help (or are related):

eg **Facebook**, or contact sites, e.g. **lost cousins** <http://lostcousins.com/>, **genes reunited** www.genesreunited.co.uk/

Country specific records:	England	Wales	Scotland	Ireland
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3. The 'Vital Records' - birth, marriage and death records. Essential building blocks for the family tree (see page 3 for more)

Civil Registration began	1 July 1837	1 July 1837	1855	1864 (Prot marriages 1845)
Indexes available online at	www.freebmd.org.uk (to about 1960s) www.findmypast.co.uk www.ancestry.com.au	www.freebmd.org.uk (to about 1960s) www.findmypast.co.uk www.ancestry.com.au	www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk	www.irishgenealogy.ie www.familysearch.org www.ancestry.com.au https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk

4. The Census – 10 year snapshots: find ages, place of birth, relationships (after 1851), neighbours (see page 4 for more)

Years available online	1841-1911	1841-1911	1841-1911	1901, 1911
Census records available online at	www.findmypast.co.uk www.ancestry.com.au www.freecen.org.uk (transcripts, incomplete)	www.findmypast.co.uk www.ancestry.com.au www.freecen.org.uk (transcripts, incomplete)	www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk www.ancestry.com.au (transcripts, not images, not 1911) www.freecen.org.uk (transcripts, incomplete)	www.census.nationalarchives.ie/ www.ancestry.com.au

5. Church records – find baptisms, marriages, burials, some back to the 16th century (see page 5 for specific county sites)

Parish registers began	1538	1538	1554	Not many before 1800
Some established church registers online at	www.freereg.org.uk www.familysearch.org www.findmypast.co.uk www.ancestry.com.au	www.freereg.org.uk www.familysearch.org www.findmypast.co.uk www.ancestry.com.au	www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk www.freereg.org.uk www.familysearch.org www.ancestry.com.au	www.rootsireland.ie www.familysearch.org www.ancestry.com.au www.irishgenealogy.ie
Non-conformist registers at	www.bmdregisters.co.uk/ (free search, pay per view)	www.bmdregisters.co.uk/ (free search, pay per view)	Catholic registers at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk	Some Catholic registers at www.rootsireland.ie www.ancestry.com.au

Finding your UK Ancestors Online - Ordering certificates

Birth, marriage and death indexes usually don't give enough information to trace the next generation, so you'll need to order the certificate. Each certificate will give information to help you search the indexes for the next one.

The usual sequence is

Birth Certificate (gives place of birth, both parents' name and father's occupation)

Parent's Marriage certificate (gives ages, occupations, residences of both parties and both father's names and occupations)

Parent's Birth certificate ... etc

In England, Wales and Ireland, death certificates are usually not very helpful for tracing ancestors. Scottish death certificates have much better information...

CHECK THE WEBSITES FOR ACCESS RESTRICTIONS... THEY VARY FROM PLACE TO PLACE!

Country	Online index website	Certificates available from
England and Wales	<p>www.ancestry.co.uk (pay site, complete indexes 1837 to 2005; fully searchable)</p> <p>www.findmypast.co.uk (pay site, complete indexes 1837 to 2006; fully searchable)</p> <p>www.freebmd.org.uk (free site, incomplete, indexed and fully searchable to 1960s)</p> <p>www.gro.gov.uk</p>	<p>Order certificate online, https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/default.asp certificate posted to you £11.00 (£7 for a PDF copy online)</p> <p>NOTE: GRO also have a historical index for births (1837-1918) and deaths (1837-1957)...includes mother's maiden name on birth indexes and ages on death indexes, which is an advantage.</p> <p>Some local governments offer a search and ordering service. Check local registry offices at www.ukbmd.org.uk/</p>
Scotland (different system)	<p>www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk (Pay site – fully searchable; searches free)</p>	<p>Instant download of image (if available) for 6 credits – approx £1.50 If image not available, order through website (cost is £12)</p>
Ireland (note that The Republic of Eire separated from Northern Ireland in 1922)	<p>www.irishgenalogy.ie Free site: and free downloads of images from the register (certificates) within specific date limits.</p> <p>www.ancestry.com.au</p> <p>https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk</p>	<p>To obtain a certificate outside the online period, you'll need to get someone to access the indexes which are NOT online. Record information from the indexes (year, quarter, name, reg district, vol., page) and apply to: General Register Office, Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon (you can fax) 4 Euros for photocopies</p> <p>For Northern Ireland AFTER 1921, you can search and order certificates online at https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk - you need to buy credits</p>

Finding your UK Ancestors Online - Census Records

Censuses were taken every ten years, commencing in 1801. The purpose of the census was to compile statistical information about localities which could be aggregated to get an overview of the nation.

The 1841 census was the first to contain names and information about individuals, but there were some shortcomings: ages (of adults) were usually rounded down to the next five years, place of birth were limited to 'within this county Y/N - or foreigner', no relationships were specified for those within a household. From 1851 the census has become much more useful as a genealogical tool. The England and Wales censuses are available online from 1841 to 1911 - eight censuses over a 70-year period. The Scottish censuses are also available from 1841 to 1911. Only two Irish censuses are available, 1901 and 1911, but they are freely searchable online. The earlier Irish censuses have been destroyed, as have Australia's.

Note: some so-called "census substitutes" are also available, such as electoral rolls for various areas of the UK, Valuation Rolls (Scotland). Griffith's Valuation (Ireland), and the 1939 Register for England and Wales

When was the census held and what's in it?

Year	Date	Consists of..	Comments
1841	6 June	Enumerators' schedule	Ages rounded down, no place of birth, no relationships
1851	30 March	Enumerators' schedule	Ages, place of birth (County, place), relationship to head of household added. Occupation frequently changed by census supervisor to standardised form, e.g. Ag Lab.
1861	7 April	Enumerators' schedule	
1871	2 April	Enumerators' schedule	
1881	3 April	Enumerators' schedule	
1891	5 April	Enumerators' schedule	
1901	31 March	Enumerators' schedule (Ireland – householders schedule)	Householder's schedule is signed by head of house
1911	2 April	Householder's schedule - Ireland, England and Wales. Enumerators' schedule in Scotland.	Added information about length of marriage and number of children
1939 – not really a census	29 Sept	Address, occupants, date of birth, occupations. Entry blocked out if born less than 100 years ago and no death registered	Basis for issuing National Identity Cards and ration books. Also NHS. Kept updated until 1980s. Women's surname changes recorded at marriage.

What if you can't find someone in the census who should be there?

- think about spelling, writing and mistranscriptions
- try wild cards (* and ?)
- enter everything you know **but not the surname** and look down the list
- maybe the name was reversed – search for the first name as a surname
- try an address search on www.findmypast.com
- look for someone else in the household
- consider – do I have the right information?
- leave it and go on with something else; try later
- and – some records are incomplete, and sometimes our ancestors just don't want to be found!

Finding your UK Ancestors Online - Church Records

From early times churches were the recorder of village and parish life, and from the 1500s formal records of baptisms, marriages and burials were kept in the parish churches. Many of these have survived and have been transcribed, some have been indexed and, more recently, digitised. Finding one of your ancestors in an extant parish register is a sublime moment for the genealogist.

Even if your parish register is not available on the internet, don't despair – one day it might be. Keep looking!

Key resources for UK parish records (PRs):

Note: check back frequently – the three major sites are continually adding to their collections.

www.familysearch.org	www.ancestry.co.uk	www.findmypast.co.uk	www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk	www.rootsireland.ie
A free site, run by the LDS church. Contains the IGI, which is a huge collection of parish register transcriptions. To find which parishes are in the IGI, go to Hugh Wallis's website (search Google for Hugh Wallis IGI)	A pay site, subscription or pay per view. Growing collection of indexed PR images by county or region. Also contains many PR transcripts across various counties.	A pay site, subscription or pay per view. Growing collection of indexed PR images by county or region. Also contains many PR transcripts across various counties.	Pay by credits. The official Scottish site for BDMs, census records and the OPRs (Old Parochial Registers) - note that these are the Church of Scotland and Catholic registers only.	Pay by credits. Site run by the Irish Family History Foundation. Most counties now have transcripts of their records available through this site. Note that records prior to 1800 are scarce in Ireland.
Major PR collections (2015)	Major PR collections (2015)	Major PR collections (2015)	Major PR collections (2015)	Major PR collections (2015)
Bristol Cheshire Cornwall Derbyshire Dorset Devon Essex Norfolk Warwickshire Sussex Isle of Man Scotland - OPRs IGI (extracted records)	Birmingham Dorset Lancashire Liverpool London (LMA collection) Manchester Shropshire Staffordshire Surrey Warwickshire West Yorkshire Wiltshire Yorkshire	Berkshire, Cambridgeshire Canterbury Cheshire Cornwall Derbyshire Devon Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire Kent, Nottingham Northumberland & Durham Plymouth Shropshire, Somerset Staffordshire, Suffolk Thames & Medway Westminster Wiltshire Wales - extensive coverage Yorkshire	OPRs Catholic registers	Contains 20 million records from most Irish counties, but records from the following counties are NOT available: <i>Cork (South)</i> <i>Dublin City</i> <i>Kerry</i> Note: For Kerry and Dublin city, try www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/church-records

Finding your UK Ancestors Online - Some key BMD dates

The records you will find in the UK have varied over the years. Initial church records tended to be quite sparse, with baptisms frequently just listing the name of the child and the father. Similarly, early marriages only listed the bride and groom. Some church incumbents added more information of their own volition. Parliaments added laws and regulations to specify what information was to be recorded and eventually even specified the various forms that were to be filled in. This table of key dates will help in working out just what you're likely to find in a British 'Vital record' over the centuries.

No.	From	To	Subject	Detail
1	1538		Parish Registration	Official parish registration introduced. Loose sheets of paper were used, most of which have not survived
2	1551	1854	Scotland Parish Registration	Parish registration introduced in Scotland for births and marriages
3	1597		Bound Registers	By an Act of Parliament, bound registers were made mandatory for baptisms, marriages and burials. Duplicate sets had to be lodged with the bishops each year (Bishops' Transcripts)
4	1653	1660	Elected Parish Register	Registration transferred to an elected Parish Register (Registrar) - during the English Civil War many Registers were not compiled
5	1660		Restoration of church registration	End of the Interregnum and responsibility for compiling and maintaining registers returned to the previous system
6	1753		Hardwicke's Marriage Act	Specified that couples had to marry in a parish in which one of them lived; banns had to be called or a license issued in advance. Marriages had to take place in a licensed building which was invariably Church of England except for Jews and Quakers. Non-conformists and Roman Catholics had to register with their parish church. Effective 1754
7	1812		Rose's Act	Standardised the format of registers into three separate books for baptisms, marriages and deaths. Effective 1 January 1813
8	1837		Civil Registration - England/Wales	A voluntary system of civil registration introduced and marriages could take place at a registrar's office. Effective 1 July 1837
9	1845	1922	Ireland Civil registration	Civil registration of non Roman Catholic marriages introduced
10	1854		Scotland Civil Registration	Act of Parliament passed enabling civil registration. This Act made registration compulsory and also abolished the previous Scottish system. Initially contained details of birth places and previous marriages but these were quickly dropped, although birth places were re-introduced in 1972. Effective 1 January 1855
11	1864	1922	Ireland Civil Registration	Registration of all births, marriages and deaths introduced
12	1866		Amendment to death details	Age at death to be included in the death indexes. Effective March 1866
13	1874		Amendment to birth and death registration	Registration of births and deaths made mandatory
14	1911		Amendment to birth details	Mother's maiden name added to birth indexes. Effective September 1911
15	1912		Amendment to Spouse's Surname	Spouse's (woman's) surname added to the index of marriage registrations. Effective March 1912
16	1922		Separation of Ireland	Following the creation of the Republic of Ireland, the Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland records were separately compiled.
17	1927		Still births and adoptions	Registration of still births and adoptions introduced
18	1929		Marriage age	Minimum age for marriage increased to 16 years
19	1969		Amendment to death details	Date of birth added to death certificates (if known)
20	2005		Civil Partnerships	Recognition and registration of Civil Partnerships introduced