

# A ROUGH GUIDE TO RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY TREE

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1. Start, if possible by **asking the eldest relations you have**, for any information they have, including any anecdotes.....these not only have a certain amount of truth *[don't count on it!]* but they are also what *'puts flesh on the bones'* of your family tree.

So much more interesting if you know the family think Uncle Fred ran off and had a second family or what Uncle Joe did in his spare time! Any names and dates are a useful guide, but don't take them as being 100% accurate.

*[In contacting a cousin, I was told that the family knew MY Grandad could not work as a carpenter after the war as he had lost an arm....he had lost two fingers! And it was mechanisation that took away his job. They had also failed to find any records for him as he was not registered under the name he was known by which was his middle name.]*

Ask to photocopy any certificates, documents, or old photographs. Ask who they are in the photos. Sadly there are too many photos of 'unknowns' – *write on the back of your photos NOW for the next generation!*



2. Draw your family tree on paper, so you can see where you are and what you already have. It helps to make sense of your research as you gain more information. *Even with a PC programme, I still find a traditional hand written chart easier to follow at times.*
3. **A BIRTH CERTIFICATE**, which gives you the date and place of birth, full name, mother's maiden name and father's name and occupation, and address. [You can also find out if mother had married before, as it says 'late *'name'* if she has and 'formerly *'name'* for a maiden name.]  
#Tip- if there is a **time** of birth, likely to be a twin!
4. **A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE**, which gives the bride's and groom's age *[if you are lucky, as sometimes it just says 'of age' meaning over 21yrs]*, the maiden name of the bride, and their addresses, and occupations at time of marriage as well as both father's names and occupations, [sometimes says deceased instead] and of course the date and place of marriage.
5. **DEATH CERTIFICATE**, gives you the date and place of death, age, occupation, address and the informant which is usually a relation, and gives the relationship and address. As well of course as the cause of death. For an explanation of cause of death in understandable English use

<http://www.antiquusmorbus.com/> this is **FREE**. More recent death certificates give the date and place of birth as well.

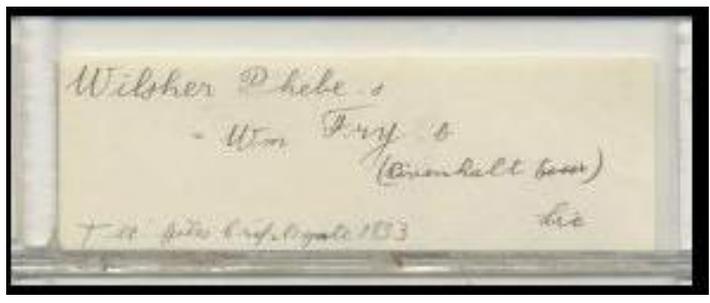
6. With certificates, you can work back through the family, verifying that the information you have is correct. *[Remember that mistakes are also made on certificates though!]*
7. To find the Reference Numbers to order certificates you need to look at the General Registers Office [GRO] index records...on- line <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com> **FREE** . *[click on 'Search']* If it is not listed then try <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> *[14 day free trial- remember to CANCEL before the end of the free trial or you are automatically charged for the continuing membership]* or <http://www.findmypast.co.uk> *[They now also offer a free trial]* both have the photocopies of the original books and can be the most accurate way of finding the number. <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> also often gives 'results for a search' like freebmd, to save you trawling through the original pages – also on <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>
8. **To BUY the CERTIFICATES on-line ONLY USE** <http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/> charges £9.25 per certificate, if you have the Reference Number. Other web-pages offer to supply the certificates but they actually buy from here and charge you more. You can also buy direct from the Local Register office that originally made out the certificate *[was cheaper, but not sure if it still is]* if you know where it was registered. <http://ukbmd.org.uk> **FREE** may help and you don't need the Reference Number *[found on freebmd for instance]* at the Register office.
9. Once you have got back far enough to know a relative that would be on the 1911 CENSUS a search for the entry will give you the names and ages and occupations plus the address of everyone in the family. Only on this census can you find the number of years the couple have been married, how many children they have had including how many have died.
10. If your ancestor was born before 1837 but has a sibling born after that date, buying their Birth Certificate will give you the mother's maiden name to continue working back.
11. The 1901 census is then able to find the parents again, perhaps elder children who had left the 'nest' by 1911, or if the parents were younger, perhaps you can find them with their parents and go back another generation, complete with their siblings!
12. Through the CENSUS 1911, 1901, 1891, 1881, 1871,1861,1851,1841 you can work your way back with this method. Confirming the right family with certificates where possible, and knowing the area and occupations you are looking for. # Note – in 1841 they rounded-down the age to a zero or five so 20 could be 20-24 and 25 could be 25-29. Also this census did not give the relationship of the household members and only gave Yes or No for 'Born in Area'. 1881 Census in **FREE transcription detail on all web-sites.**
13. Another way of finding your ancestors, especially if they were born before 1837 is if their Baptism or Marriage *[occasionally a death is listed]* on the <http://www.familysearch.org> **FREE** *[click on 'Search']* This is the IGI, *[International Genealogy Index run by the Church of the Latter Day Saints.]* This web-site has been changed recently. It is very helpful for the earlier dates [before 1837] when you can

possibly find a baptism listed. Burials are not as important for the Latter Day Saints so they do not list as many deaths on the site. However marriages can be found and also once you have found the parents, you can find all the children baptised in the family. It also lists the entries for all of the census, but only the one person is shown and there is a link to <http://www.findmypast.co.uk> for the full results – **pay to view!** Buy ‘credits for limited look-ups’ or subscription.[14day free trial]

*I have looked at the Parish Records on microfilm at ‘The Family History Centre’ at the Latter Day Saints Church in Pontefract. You have to order the microfilm from America and then use the machines at the Church to view them, all at a small charge. 01977-600308 to arrange a visit where they will help you order the right film. You can often find more information this way, especially if you hire a film not yet transcribed onto the web-site. They also have full use of Ancestry, Findmypast and more useful information that is not available on-line. They are also very helpful.*

14. Before 1837 **PARISH RECORDS** are needed. Some are on the <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> and some are on <http://www.findmypast.co.uk> If you can get to the place where they lived, search at their local church and graveyard. If they were local, the **LIBRARY** may have some records. #Ancestry is available at most Libraries offering worldwide information using their subscription.
15. The Library may also have **TRADE BOOKS** such as the **Kelly’s Directory** or **Pygotts Directory** which lists people by occupations and gives names and addresses. There is also the **Whites Directory** and the **Post Office Directory**.
16. A source of Marriages before 1837 is the **PALLOTS MARRIAGE INDEX** also available to search on <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> this gives the couple’s names and place and year of marriage.

A Sample Pallots Index Card



PHEBE WILSHER S [single] and  
 WM FRY b [bachelor]  
 'of Rivenhall, Essex'  
 Saint Giles Cripplegate, 1833  
 [Transcription as on the web-site]

17. Pre 1837 Marriages can sometimes be cross checked with **Pallots Index** and the **IGI**.
18. <http://lists5.rootsweb.com/index/intl/ENG/> is a site where you choose the county you are interested in and then subscribe –**FREE**– to their e-mail lists. You can send an e-mail asking a question about the research you want to do and will get replies from those who can help. I recommend you take time to ‘browse’ their e-mail archives to see how it works first. *[Again I have had good results, a lot of help and contacted new cousins from this source.]*
19. <http://www.lostcousins.com> **FREE** is a web-site where you can list all your relatives as listed on the 1881 [**FREE on all web-sites**] and 1841 census and also 1911 as well as Scottish Census.

If it matches any other entries on the site, they will put you in touch with your cousins; while protecting your e-mail address, it even tells you the likely relationship. Once you register with them **FREE**, they send very interesting e-magazines regularly <http://www.lostcousins.com/newsletters> to view **FREE** which gives tips about all sorts of things...from useful web-sites and tips for research, to how to save on the gas bill, special offers at Tesco etc. # I highly recommend using this site!

20. **WILLS** can give you the names of everyone in the family if you are lucky, or just the date of death and the main beneficiary, It varies. Wills indexes on <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> and <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>
21. **MILITARY RECORDS** can be found on <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> and also <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>.
22. Passenger Lists for **MIGRATION**, - **Ships Passenger Lists** on <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> and <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>.
23. <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> has a **LEARNING CENTRE** which gives better step by step guides on how to research your family.
24. All websites have a **Site Tour/ How to get started/ or using this site page** – usually found at the top of the page [and often on the far right]. All these guides are **FREE** so you can learn about a site before paying out a subscription.
25. <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> Has **FAMILY TREES** on-line, that just might connect to your own research and again, give you lots of instant information – and another cousin!
26. # **WARNING** –If you put your own Tree on-line then the site has ownership of it to pass on and publish etc. <http://www.lostcousins.com> have recently been giving out details and warnings about this.
27. <http://www.cyndislist.com/> **FREE** is the site to find a link to any genealogy web-site you might need for research. If there is a site that covers your needs – you'll find it listed here.
28. <http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk> Another subscription research site, - use the site guide **FREE** to see what is available and how to use this site before subscribing.
29. <http://www.google.co.uk/> Try putting the name you are looking for here! You CAN get results! Have you tried your own name?

Compiled by Di Sewell.

Checked all links, 28<sup>th</sup> Sep 2013.