

Newsletter

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On behalf of the committee, could we wish all our members a very
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Editorial

During the week between Christmas Day and New Years Day there was a whole day of "Who Do You Think You Are" on the television. The program often shows you ways of researching family history information that you have perhaps not thought of or did not know. But what annoys is how easy the subject gets help. They handle ancient documents and books that you and I would have no chance of handling. They also meet people to help them that we will only read about. My only hope is that after the program and viewers have been encouraged to research their family history that they don't get discouraged and give up. We are lucky as the people in our local Records Offices are the most helpful people you could find. They will often sit with you and try to explain how to search for ancestor on the internet if you don't have a computer of your own. There is now so much information being offered on the internet that it has become an invaluable tool to the family historian.

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Rebuilding Jerusalem-Bethesda Chapel Reborn

Bethesda Chapel in Albion Street Hanley is one of the most significant historic buildings in Stoke on Trent. On Saturday 23rd January 2010 there will be an exhibition in the Potteries Museum, Hanley which explores the fascinating history of this former Methodist New Connexion chapel. The exhibition will have many unique and before unseen items on show such as the only remaining intact comfort parcel sent from Bethesda to "Our Boys" fighting in France during WWI. The Bethesda WWI and WWII Rolls of Honour are scheduled to be on show which give the name and WWI regiment all the members of the chapel who went to war.

Starting with the origins of Bethesda and the Methodist New Connexion, through its hay-day when congregations of 3000 people listened to influential speakers such as William Booth before he formed the Salvation Army, Gipsy Smith the famous evangelist and Gladys Aylward, the Chinese Missionary, to Phase One restoration. Future plans will be on show and the public will be asked for their thought on Bethesda's future. There will also be free talks on Methodism in the Potteries; from Wesley to Bethesda, the History of Bethesda and Repairing Bethesda and its Restoration.

Researching Adopted Persons in England & Wales

Adoption was first legalised over eighty years ago. There was no formal adoption process prior to 1927, when 'adoption' was primarily a private arrangement. It is, therefore, unlikely that documentary evidence, if there was any, can be located. The General Register Office (GRO) holds the Adopted Children's Register, which records legal adoptions through a court in England or Wales under the Adoptions Acts since 1927. For events registered in Scotland or Northern Ireland you should contact the relevant General Register Office.

The Register is not open to public search or inspection; however, adopted persons aged 18 and over can apply for their original birth registration form. If you were adopted before 1975 you will need to attend an informal meeting with an adoption advisor. If you were adopted after 1975 you may request a meeting with an adoption advisor or receive the information directly.

A comprehensive booklet, *Services for adopted adults who want to trace birth relatives* **Adoption** outlining the procedures can be obtained by writing to:

DfES Publications

P O Box 5050

Sherwood Park

Annesley

Nottingham

NG15 ODJ

Telephone: 0845 60 222 60

Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Please quote reference: 2033-2005POS-EN

All forms relating to applications can be downloaded in English or Welsh from www.direct.gov.uk alternatively telephone 0151 471 4830

Trying to make contact

In 1991 the Government created the Adoption Contact Register which puts adopted people and their birth relatives in touch with each other, if that is what they both wish. If you are 18 or over you may choose to be entered on the Contact Register, likewise birth relatives of an adopted person can also apply to be entered on the Contact Register. The current fee is £15.

Further details and forms are available on the website www.direct.gov.uk

Adoption Search Reunion

www.adoptionsearchreunion.org.uk

The website is intended to be the first port of call for anyone thinking about searching for or making contact with birth and adopted relations or researching an adoption that took place in the UK

The Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA)

There are members of AGRA who specialise in the research of adopted persons.

For details please visit www.agra.org.uk

or write to:

Joint Secretary

29 Badgers Close

Horsham

West Sussex. RH12 5RU

Barnardo's Family History Service

If you have a relative you believe was in the care of Barnardo's during their childhood, the Barnardo's Family History service may have records and images that will help you in researching your family history. The oldest records available date from the 1870's.

A basic search of records to determine whether or not your relative was a 'Barnardo's boy or girl' and if there is a record of their time with Barnardo's is available for a non-refundable fee of £15.

An enquiry form can be downloaded from www.barnardos.org.uk and should be sent with payment to:

Barnardo's Family History Service

Cottage 4

Barnardo's

Tanners Lane

Barkingside

Essex. IG6 1QG

It should be noted that Barnardo's did not operate an Adoption Agency until 1947. For further enquiries regarding adoption records please contact the service at the above address or send an email to:

familyhistoryservice@barnardos.org.uk

With kind permission of The Federation of Family History Societies

First Steps in Family History

Where do I start?

Start with yourself, add your family, your parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc., in fact, any relatives you can remember. Question older relatives, who can be invaluable in providing knowledge of ancestors you may not know of or have forgotten.

I've recorded everything my relatives told me. Where do I go next?

In England and Wales people have been able to register births, marriages and deaths since 1 July 1837. Certificates of events occurring from this date can be obtained from local Register Offices or the Registrar General (www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificate). You can search the General Register Office (GRO) indexes to these registrations at some local libraries and record offices who have copies in microform. Several commercial companies provide online digitised images of the index page for free or for a fee (see our [Useful Websites](#) page).

What information can I expect to obtain from a certificate?

A birth certificate usually names both parents, including the mother's maiden surname. Knowing both parents' full names, you can search the indexes for a reference to their marriage. A marriage certificate usually supplies the names of the fathers of both parties. Simple steps like these can take your line well back into the nineteenth century.

But this information only applies to England and Wales. My ancestry is Scottish and Irish. What do I do?

Civil Registration began in Scotland in 1855 and in Ireland in 1864. Certificates can be obtained from New Register House, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH1 3YT (for Scotland) and from the General Register Office, Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon, for Ireland. Registrations for Northern Ireland Northern Ireland from 1922 are at Oxford House, 49-55 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4HL. Before commencing this part of your research, however, you are strongly advised to read the relevant chapter in one of the many books available.

To date my family history consists, mainly, of names and dates; how do I find out more about my ancestors' families?

A census is taken every ten years and the records become available for public scrutiny when they are 100 years old. We can therefore see those returns for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911 which has been released early. Details such as age, occupation and place of birth may be found on the census returns for 1851 and after. The 1841 census omits place of birth and relationships.

Where can I search the census returns?

A complete set for England and Wales is housed at The National Archives, Kew. Additionally, those pertaining to your area may be found at your local record office, library or family history society. Census indexes are also available online from commercial firms and images may be downloaded for a fee, or free in your local library (excludes 1911 census).

I have traced my line back to the mid-1800s, using the GRO Indexes. How do I get further back?

Now, you will be largely dependent on the church (or parish) registers. These registers were introduced in 1538 and contain baptisms and burials (as distinct from births and deaths) and, of course, marriages. Although many early registers have been lost over the years, a surprising number still exist.

Where do I find parish registers?

Today, very few registers, other than those which are still in use, are held at churches. Many of the registers have been filmed and copies are widely available; ask at the relevant county record office or local studies library, or your nearest Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) Family History Centre. In addition to the registers, from 1598 parish priests had to send to their bishop an 'annual return', a copy of the register, known as a Bishops' Transcript. Those that still exist can be very useful in supplying entries omitted from the register or replacing a missing register.?

I've heard of the IGI, what is this?

The IGI, or International Genealogical Index, is an index to about 800 million births, baptisms and marriages from around the world. The index is produced by the LDS, and is available in many libraries and record offices, and in the Church's own Family History Centres. It can also be found online at www.familysearch.org

I have heard that wills can be useful - how do I go about using them?

Wills and administrations, proved in England and Wales from 1858 are available at the Principal Registry of the Family Division, First Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP. Indexes can also be found at several record offices and libraries elsewhere. Before 1858 there was no national probate registry and research is more complicated as a result.

What else can I expect to find out about my family?

There are many other sources which you can search, far too many to list here. There are a number of useful books and magazines that may help, so ask at your local library. Many local family history societies publish a selection of modestly priced books and CDs to help you with both your research and the location of source material. A comprehensive range is available from GENfair: visit the online catalogue on the www.genfair.co.uk

How do I find out if there are any family history classes in my area?

Try the Workers' Educational Association and your Local Education Authority, both of which arrange adult classes. If none is available then why not ask if classes in this subject can be arranged. See also our page on [Genealogy Courses](#).

What are family history societies?

They are groups of family historians who have an interest in a particular geographical area, such as a county, or live in that area. There are also special interest societies, for example a specific surname. You should definitely join your local society.

What benefits can I expect for my Membership?

Most societies hold regular meetings - go along to these and join in their activities. You may also find it useful to become a member of those societies covering the areas in which your ancestors once lived. All societies produce journals and these will describe local records and history. Many societies run very informative websites. Their Members might be able to help with particular 'local research' problems, for example by visiting the churchyard to read your grandfather's gravestone for you! Belonging to a family history society will also enable you to contact others who are tracing the same surname that you are, in the area where your ancestor lived.

Supposing there is someone already researching the same family as me, how do I find them?

Many family history societies publish directories of Members' Interests. You can also purchase international directories, such as the Genealogical Research Directory, or search the internet, and there are a number of books available advising you how to do this.



I wonder if global warming was thought about in 1924 when this postcard was sent through the post?