



Genealogy – getting started

1. This short guide will get you started on your journey towards tracing your ancestors

Today there are many opportunities and avenues for uncovering your family history. Thousands of records are available, and TV shows and websites portray the ease and speed of family history research. But where do you begin? It can be confusing and not that easy in practice?

1a. Principles

- Prove links from one generation to the next
- Spelling of names may not always have stayed the same
- Seek out advice
- Sift through family legends for the truth

1b. Start here

- Write down everything you currently know; start with yourself
- Gather paperwork that relates to this information; official and personal
- Follow the same process with parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts if possible
- Identify gaps, don't worry about these – you will start to fill them later

use this as a basis for research, and your first draft of a Family Tree

2. Vital Records

Collect vital records documenting birth, marriage and death. Remember these records weren't made with the family historian in mind, so it may not be easy to find an individual.

2a. Civil registration

Records every birth, marriage and death that occurs in the UK.

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- 1837 onwards England and Wales, (1855 Scotland and 1864 Ireland)
- Prior to 1984 indexes organised into quarterly volumes; events recorded by date of registration (not birth) and could be up to six weeks later or more
- Aim to have the minimum information:
 - forename and surname
 - approximate date of event
 - where the event occurred
- Apply for a copy of the certificate, which can tell you further information, i.e. addresses on birth and death

2b. Your Grandparents

Identify the date of your Grandparents marriage and begin your search, their marriage certificate will tell you:

- where they lived
- ages
- grandfathers occupation
- address of grandmother before married
- names and occupations of both fathers

From ages find birth certificates. From the birth certificates find the marriage of parents, and so generation by generation you move back in time.

2c. Where to find Civil Registration records

- indexes online or at your local library or Register Office
- available from pay per view sites, or www.freebmd.org.uk
- Certificates available from Registrar General (www.gro.gov.uk) or local Register Office

3. What to do/not do

Do

- always work backwards from yourself
- always backup information with documentary proof
- be honest and methodical; keep proper records of your findings with sources
- be patient
- note down all dates/events you are certain of
- ask as many people in your family for their recollections; more than once

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Don't

- assume anything
- rely on internet sources
- believe everything you hear
- try to come forward with research
- despair if you can't find out much; try again

for further inspiration see my [blog](#)

4. Need further advice or inspiration?

Consider the following:

- <https://myfamilygenealogy.co.uk/guidance/> for my monthly newsletter
- [Sign up](#) for my on-line beginners course
- Subscribe to my [YouTube](#) channel
- Subscribe to my [Subscription Newsletter](#)
- Request a [talk](#) for your group or check out my [blogs](#)
- Follow me on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)

If you find you haven't the time or energy to research your family history try one of my [research packages](#)



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