



Researching People and Places: A Guide to Findmypast and Family History Records

About Findmypast

Findmypast brings billions of British and Irish records together in one place, helping you uncover the everyday histories that shaped both family stories and communities. Censuses, parish records, newspapers, military files and travel documents all become stepping stones into real lives — showing where people lived, worked, gathered and built their stories, street by street.

With powerful search tools, a free family tree builder and helpful hints that nudge you toward new discoveries and deeper understanding, Findmypast acts like a research companion: revealing the local characters, forgotten moments and small triumphs that can bring your Heritage Open Days event to life.

Using Findmypast's extensive resources, you can research:

- An individual family or family line
- A surname
- A local history
- The history of a house
- A military history
- Individual topics using the newspaper archive

Getting started with family history

Start by writing down what you already know

Begin by bringing together any details already known about the individuals or families you're researching. This may include names, approximate dates, occupations, addresses, trade directories, oral histories, property records, or notes from previous research. These initial details form a working reference list and help guide your search through the records.

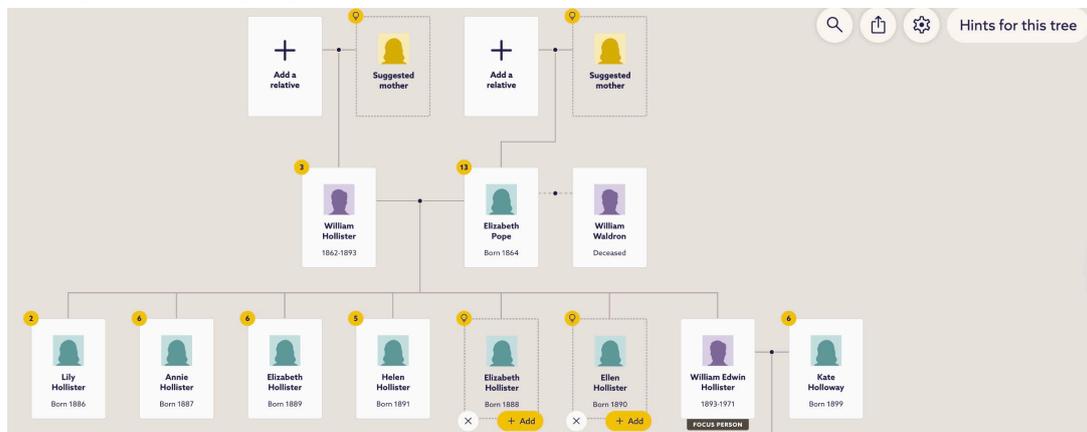
Ask around

Conversations with people in the know can unlock details you might not find in the records. Sit down with someone over a cup of tea and ask questions. Often, one story triggers another, and suddenly the past starts stitching itself together. Capture everything — even little anecdotes. Those small memories become your clues later.

How to build a family tree

Begin a simple family tree

Use Findmypast's easy-to-use tree builder to map the individuals connected to your research. A tree helps organise information, highlight missing details, and visualise relationships between people.

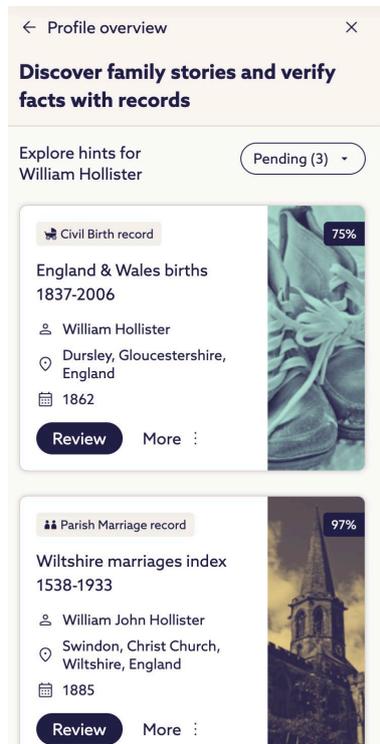


Add each confirmed name and link them using known dates and relationships. This structure acts as a research hub and prevents important connections from being lost.

Let hints guide your next discoveries

Once the basic tree is in place, the real magic begins. When you add people to your online tree, Findmypast automatically searches its records and other family trees for matches and

will send you hints — these are potential discoveries ranging from birth and marriage records to census entries and even whole household groups.

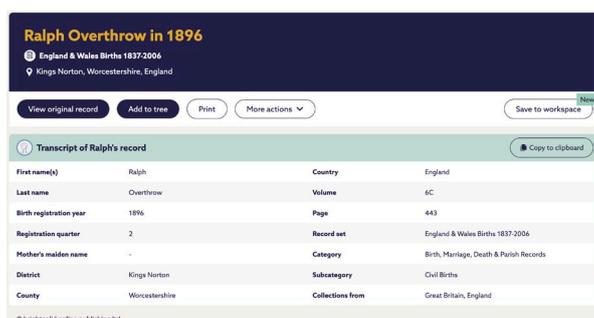


These hints help you verify information, fill in the blanks, and uncover new branches far more quickly than manual searching alone. The more detail you add, the richer and more frequent the hints become.

Essential records

Birth, marriage and death records

Birth, marriage and death (BMD) records are described as the building blocks of family history research because they reveal the essential facts that anchor every generation: when and where someone was born, the details of their marriage, and when they were ultimately laid to rest.



Example of a civil birth record transcription from 1896.

1908. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Wilmslow in the County of Cheshire

Column No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
105	June 13 th 1908	William Foote	29	Bachelor	Gardener	Morley Wilmslow	Benjamin Foote	Coachman
		Jane Worth	38	Spinster	—	Pear Tree Farm Morley Wilmslow	Samuel Worth (deceased)	Farmer

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church or after Canon by me, Ed Dodd Assistant - Curate.

This Marriage was solemnized between us, William Foote and Jane Worth in the Presence of us, Thomas Worth and Annie Worth

Example of a parish marriage record from *Cheshire Marriages & Banns, 1908*.

In England and Wales, these details were recorded either by the church or the government:

- Civil records, dating back to 1837, which includes birth, marriage and death
- Church, ecclesiastical or parish records, beginning in 1538, which includes baptism, marriage and burial

They give you the anchor points you need to begin mapping a family across time and place.

Census records

Census records, taken every ten years, open a window into day-to-day lives of people from the past. Historical censuses in Britain survive from 1841 to 1921 and record names, ages, addresses, occupations and household relationships — a complete snapshot of a household that helps you see what it looked like at a specific moment in time.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Please read the Instructions and Examples shown on the back, and then fill up the Schedule carefully and in Ink.

NAME and SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Household	AGE	SEX	MARRIAGE or CELEBRATION	BIRTHPLACE and NATIONALITY	Present Occupation	OCCUPATION and EMPLOYMENT		Place of Work	EDUCATION	REMARKS
							Employment	Employment			
1 John Ronald Reuel TOLKIEN	Head	29	M	Married	Born in the United Kingdom, of the County of Middlesex, in the Parish of St. Martin in the City of Westminster	Reader in English Language (Univ. teaching staff)	The University of Leeds	The University of Leeds	2		
2 EDITH MAY TOLKIEN	Wife	32	F	Married	Gloucestershire	Home Duties					
3 John Francis Reuel TOLKIEN	Son	3	M	Both alive	Gloucestershire						
4 Michael Hilary Reuel TOLKIEN	Son	7	M	Both alive	Cheshire						
5 May Jane ELIZABETH GROVE	visitor	57	F	Single	Lancashire	none					
6 Edith May POSTGATE	Servant	22	F	Single	Yorkshire	Cook	private				
7 Amy Dora Bertha LUCKETT	Servant	19	F	Single	Oxfordshire	housemaid	private				

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

J.R.R. Tolkien
(Head of Household, Manager of Establishment or other person responsible for making the return.)

The original census return for J.R.R. Tolkien and his family from 1921.

Once you've used BMDs to place someone in the right era and location, census records deepen the picture, showing how they lived and who they lived with.

A note on available records

Findmypast holds the following civil registration records in England and Wales:

- Births (1837-2006)
- Marriages (1837-2005)
- Deaths (1837-2007)

These are the General Register Office indexes only, not full certificates. Once you've found the index entry you need, you can order the full certificate from the General Register Office for a small fee.

If you find a corresponding parish record for a life event, they may have more detail than the civil indexes; it is worth identifying both.

Census availability

- Personal information from UK censuses is kept private for 100 years, as per the 1920 Census Act.
- The censuses currently available to the public are 1841–1921.
- The 1931 Census was destroyed in a fire during the Second World War.
- The 1941 Census was never taken because of the war.
- All later censuses remain closed until their 100-year release date.

The 1939 Register

- The 1939 Register is similar to a census but is *not* covered by the 1920 Census Act.
- It includes full dates of birth, so individuals who may still be alive must be redacted.
- Records are opened when:
 - the person is confirmed deceased (via a death certificate), or
 - they pass the 100-year threshold.
- Findmypast regularly opens additional records as the 100-year rule is met.

Other record privacy rules

- Many historical record sets also follow a 100-year privacy rule to protect the living.
- For example: *Women's Land Army Service Cards* are only available for women born before 1926.

Other records

Military Records

Military records document a person's service at multiple stages in their career — from enlistment to injury, honours, and discharge. These records allow you to build a detailed picture of their military experience, helping you understand where they served, what roles they held, and whether they were decorated for their actions.

W16357/5576 000a 2/16v G & S

Medal band
Depot Orders No. *1713*
Army Form B. 2413.

RECRUITING
JAMES
ORIGINAL
ENROLMENT PAPER

For men deemed to be enlisted in H.M. Regular Forces for General Service with the Colour or in the Reserve for the period of the War, under the provisions of the Military Service Act, 1916.

No. 19152 Name *James Robert Burthorpe* Corps _____ N. WARWICK REGT.

Questions to be put to the Reservist on Enrolment.

1. What is your Name? ...	1. <i>James Robert Burthorpe</i>
2. What is your full Address? ...	2. <i>10 Ambrose Road Selly Oak, Edgbaston</i>
3. Are you a British Subject? ...	3. <i>Yes</i>
4. What is your Age? ...	4. <i>24</i> Years <i>19</i> Months
5. What is your Trade or Calling? ...	5. <i>Signaller</i>
6. Are you Married? ...	6. <i>No</i>
7. Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military? If so, which?	7. <i>No</i>
8. Have you any preference for any particular branch of the service, if so, which?	8. <i>Exercise Book required</i>
9. Are you desirous of serving in the Royal Navy, if so, state your qualifications.	9. <i>No</i> <i>219 required</i>

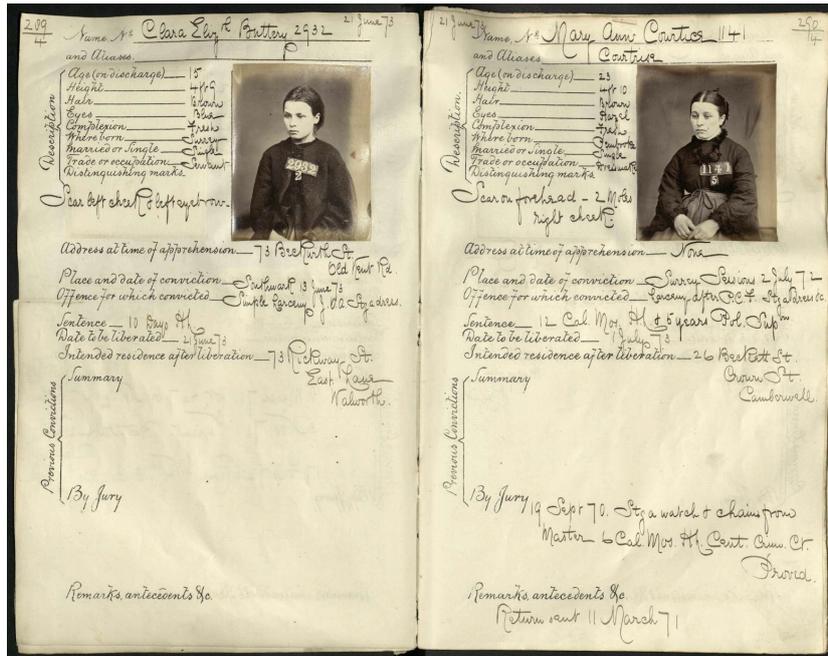
I, *James Robert Burthorpe* do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true.

James Robert Burthorpe SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.

Some of these are incredibly detail rich and help you map their military service and movements over several years. Records include those for the British Army, Royal Air Force, and Royal Navy.

Crime Records

These can open a hidden chapter of a person's life, helping you discover whether they ever found themselves on the wrong side of the law.



These records can aid you in following their path through the justice system — from the moment they stood trial to the sentence they received — revealing the circumstances, consequences and human stories behind each offence. You may even spot a 19th century mugshot.

School Records

School records offer a rare glimpse into a person's childhood, revealing the everyday details that shaped their early years. These collections can show when and where they went to school in England and Wales between 1870 and 1914, along with key information such as their birth date, admission year and the name of the school they attended.

Admission Number	Date of Admission or Re-Admission		Full Name of Child	Name of Parent or Guardian	Address	Whether exempt from Religious Instruction	Date of Birth			Name of Last School	Date of Last Attendance in this School		Cause of Leaving	Remarks	
	Day	Month					Year	Day	Month		Year				
241	15	6	08	Coupland, Annie	Annie	20, Neth St	no	31	5	01	St Thomas	23	2	09	St Pauls
242	-	-	-	Nayward, William Theo	Wm Theo	18, Key St	-	3	12	01	St Pauls	17	7	05	Seaward St.
243	-	-	-	Mathews, Beatrice E	Joseph	46, Key St	-	-	12	01	St Alkmund	8	7	10	Seaward St.
244	-	-	-	Locke, George Henry	George Henry	94, Nottingham Rd	-	31	10	02	St James' Rd.	17	2	09	left town
245	-	-	-	Locke, Lily	George Henry	94, Nottingham Rd	-	15	2	02	St James' Rd.	1	2	09	left town
246	22	6	-	Drighouse, Alice May	William Henry	335, Nottingham Rd	-	24	7	99	St James' N.S.	25	7	12	over age
247	-	-	-	Drighouse, Leslie Henry	William Henry	335, Nottingham Rd	-	30	2	03	St James' N.S.	28	2	15	left town

You might uncover their parents' names, their father's occupation, exam results, or notes on illnesses that kept them home.

Migration and Travel Records

Travel and migration records can trace movements in and out of the UK, showing when they left, where they were headed, and the homes they returned to or departed from. Outgoing

and incoming passenger lists help you uncover ages, occupations, marital status and last places of residence for travellers between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries.

000 4.50 T.D. 41758

Name of Ship **"BERENGARIA"** Date of Departure **18 November 1936** P.M. 21.

Steamship Line **CUNARD WHITE STAR LIMITED.** Where Bound **NEW YORK**

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF Southampton.

(1) Contract Ticket Number.	(2) Port at which Passengers have contracted to land.	(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(4) CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th.)	(5) AGES OF PASSENGERS								(6) Last Address in the United Kingdom.	(7) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers.	(8) Country of last Permanent Residence.*				(9) Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence.*
				Adults of 15 years and over.				Children 1 to 14						England.	Wales.	Scotland.	Northern Ireland.	
				Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.							
KP 112448	NEW YORK	GREENWOOD MAVIS	1st		10						260 Hillman Road Middletown, New Jersey 70 Pennsylvania St New York City	OVER-SEER	1	USA		USA		
112948	NEW YORK	OVERTHROW MARY	1st		53						London	Wife				USA		
114458	NEW YORK	LEES FANNY	1st		26						London	Wife				USA		
110795	NEW YORK	DODD JOHN	1st		14						49 Cecily Road London E1	Widower	1	USA		USA		
112506	NEW YORK	JUDD Elizabeth	1st		76						422 Trenchard Road London	Widow				USA		
226283	NEW YORK	FAERMAN MARIK	1st		37						Endleigh Hotel, London W	Merchant				Canada		
1	NEW YORK	LEAH	1st		32							Wife				USA		
1	NEW YORK	BETTY	1st					4				Wife				USA		
1	NEW YORK	SARAH	1st						12			Wife				USA		

Beyond Britain and Ireland, records like naturalisation papers, immigration files, and even passport applications in countries such as the United States — some complete with photographs — can reveal why your subject travelled, how they settled, and the new lives they forged abroad.

Electoral Registers

Electoral rolls are among the most valuable tools for tracing people in the 20th and 21st centuries, offering a yearly snapshot of who was eligible to vote and where they lived. Compiled annually since 1832, they list an individual's name, address and voting qualification, with coverage expanding over time as voting rights widened.

1911. The Knutsford Division of Cheshire. 5

Wilmslow Polling District (District X.)—Parish of Styal.

OCCUPATION ELECTORS (other than Lodgers).

DIVISION ONE.—Persons entitled to vote both as Parliamentary Electors and as County Electors.

No.	Name of each Elector at full length, the Surname being first.	Place of Abode.	Nature of Qualification.	Description of Qualifying Property.
X 79	Kinghorn Thomas	Farm fold, Styal, Handforth	dwelling house	Farm fold
X 80	Lea Charles	Shaw's fold, Styal, Handforth	dwelling house	Shaw's fold
X 81	Lowndes Alfred	Shaw's fold, Styal, Handforth	dwelling house	Shaw's fold
X 82	Lowndes John	Oversley, Styal, Handforth	dwelling house	Oversley

These records can help you confirm exactly where someone lived at a specific moment, track their movements between censuses, and even reveal multiple generations living at the same address.

Other records you might find useful

- Workhouse registers
- Rate books
- Directories
- Medical records
- Apprentice records
- Wills and probate
- Maps and land survey

A note on records

Most family history records are made up of a transcription (the key data extracted into digital format) and an original image (a scan of the primary document). In some instances, records are transcription only.

Robert Sprowson in 1901
 1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census
 Oak Cottages, Styl, Bucklow, Cheshire, England

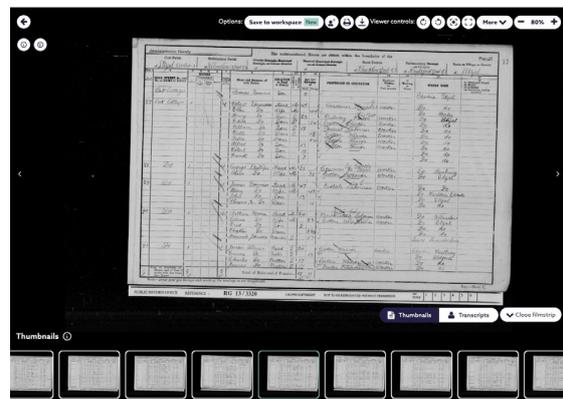
View original record Add to tree Print More actions Save to workspace Copy to clipboard

Household members (10 people)

First name(s)	Last name	Relationship	Marital status	Sex	Age	Birth year	Occupation	Birth place
Robert	Sprowson	Head	Married	Male	45	1856	Gardener (domestic)	Styl, Cheshire, England
Ellen	Sprowson	Wife	Married	Female	44	1857		Morley, Cheshire, England
Henry	Sprowson	Son	Single	Male	23	1878	Railway porter	Styl, Cheshire, England
Edith	Sprowson	Daughter	Single	Female	24	1877	Cotton winder	Styl, Cheshire, England
William	Sprowson	Son	Single	Male	19	1882	General labourer	Styl, Cheshire, England

Transcript of Robert's record

First name(s)	Robert	Parish	Styl
Last name	Sprowson	County	Cheshire
Relationship	Head	Country	England



Example of a census transcript and its corresponding original image.

Some records are PDFs, such as the one below from page 59 of the *Nottingham Date Book* from 1884.

Find my past Family tree Search Newspapers 1921 Census My research Help & more My Account

Collection Nottinghamshire Registers & Records Image

Nottinghamshire Registers & Records Image
 Publication The Nottingham Date Book, Published 1884
 Image number 59
 Image count 832
 County Nottinghamshire
 Country England
 Copyright copyright Anguline Research Archives
 Record set Nottinghamshire Registers & Records
 Category Directories & social history
 Subcategory Social history
 Collections from England, Great Britain

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TER NOTTINGHAM DATE-BOOK. 61

Three separate publications were issued this year. In the 1209
 fact, which sat of Wainwright, Lawrence Sprowson and Robert
 Johnson were returned as burgesses for the borough and Robert
 Jones and Abraham Ryle, as knights of the shire. In the second,
 Charles Fleming and James Gledhill, for the borough, and Peter
 Fox alone for the county. To the third with the borough made
 no return, the knights of the shire were Stephen de Vinton and
 Peter Fox.

Richard de Shalford, mayor. From some new unknown
 town, four bailiffs were this year chosen for the borough, viz :
 William de Boston, John de Boston, Thomas Laprove and
 Richard de Hunte.

May 14th—This year, the king, at the request and intercession
 of the citizens, of Peter de Marston, Just of Peace, just only returned
 to the burgesses of Nottingham the privilege of which they had
 been deprived during the space of more than two years, but the
 king granted to them a charter, by which they were secured in the
 possession of several additional immunities.

Queen Isabella, a most pious and virtuous woman, growing weary of her
 husband, Edward III, and the fact of Marston, who had found a
 way to her affection, acted in concert with her in accomplishing
 the murder of the aforesaid monarch. As it known in every
 school boy, they accomplished their object, so that they were
 enabled to live in unobscured safety at Nottingham Castle.

During this year young Henry Monmouth, by the aid of a
 band of dissolute Yorkshire, in finding a way through a hole in
 the castle wall to the tower of the aforesaid castle. Marston
 was seized, and in spite of the implorations of the Queen that she
 should let the "Queen's Merchant" should be open, he was carried off
 to Wykes and executed.

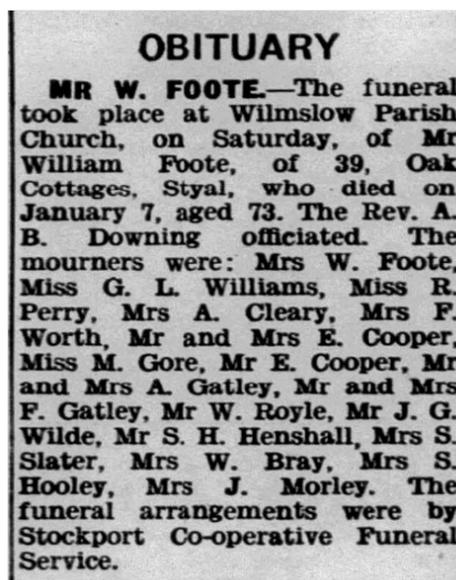
© Anguline Research Archives

Some of Findmypast's larger collections, such as *Crime, Prisons and Punishment*, can be browsed by series number also, allowing you to browse through an entire book of documents rather than searching by name. The series piece originates from the archive that provided the material, and you will commonly see The National Archives.

The screenshot shows the search interface for the 'England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment Browse, 1770-1935' collection. At the top, there is a title and a sub-header '1935'. Below this, a paragraph explains that users can explore thousands of crime records from The National Archives, with options to select series like criminal calendars, prisoner registers, or prison licenses. A 'Learn more' link and 'Useful links' are provided. On the right, there is a logo for 'The National Archives' and a button labeled 'All record sets'. The search area includes a 'Year' field with a 'Give or take' dropdown set to '-/+ 2yrs', an 'Archive reference' field with a 'Browse Archive reference' button, and a 'Series' field with a 'Browse Series' button. At the bottom, there is a search bar with the text 'Search England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment Browse, 1770-1935' and a 'Clear search' button.

Newspapers

Findmypast hosts the largest online collection of British and Irish newspapers, digitised in partnership with the British Library. This archive spans hundreds of years and includes national titles, regional papers, local newspapers, magazines and periodicals — over 100 million pages of news, stories, notices and images. These papers reveal details traditional records may miss: community news, advertisements, scandal, school prizes, court cases, obituaries, photographs and the everyday events that shaped your people's lives in the past.



Example of an obituary from a local Cheshire newspaper.

Whether a report of a ploughing competition, an unexpected court appearance, or a heartfelt obituary, historical newspapers add colour, personality and real-world context to a family tree. They're also a treasure trove for researching local history.

How to search on Findmypast

Start broad: run a simple search using just a name, or a name and location, then gradually narrow results by adding date ranges, places, occupations or relationships as needed. Be flexible with spellings and try variations, initials or nicknames, since names were often mis-recorded or printed incorrectly in older documents.

If a direct name search fails, switch to searching by address, occupation or associated people, which can often reveal the right record when a name doesn't appear as expected. Above all, treat the process as detective work—combining what you know, adjusting your approach, and using multiple record types to piece together the most complete and accurate picture of the person you're looking for.

Search all records

You can search all of Findmypast's records at once just by adding a name. This covers all available categories. You can include additional filters such as birth year and a location.

The screenshot shows the Findmypast search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Family tree', 'Search', 'Newspapers', '1921 Census', 'My research', 'Help & more', and 'My Account'. Below this is a search bar with 'Britain' and 'All Categories' selected. The main heading is 'Britain records in United Kingdom' with a sub-heading 'Discover your British ancestry today by searching through millions of records from England, Scotland and Wales.' Below this is a 'Who' section with 'First name(s)' (Robert) and 'Last name' (Sprowson) fields, and checkboxes for 'Name variants'. The 'When' section has 'Year' (YYYY), 'Year Of Birth' (1855), and 'Year Of Death' (YYYY) fields, each with a 'Give or take' dropdown set to '-/+ 2yrs'. The 'Where' section has a 'Where' dropdown (Britain) and a 'Search radius (miles)' slider set to 'Exact'. The 'Category' and 'Subcategory' sections have input fields. A 'View 102 Results' button is visible at the bottom right of the search area.

As you can include more filters as you go, such as making use of the search radius for location.

By specific record set

If you'd like to search by a specific record set, head to Findmypast's All Records page. Here, you can add keywords to find the set you want, e.g. Add 'Cheshire' to the filters to find collections for Cheshire. You can also search by keyword.

All Record Sets
Search more than 1000 years of historical record sets

e.g. census, pilot, second world war...

Filter by Clear All

Where
England

Chesh

Cheshire, England

Chesham, Buckinghamshire, England

Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, England

Birkenhead, Cheshire, England

Stockport, Cheshire, England

Wallasey, Cheshire, England

Warrington, (Cheshire, Lancashire), England

Tranmere, Cheshire, England

989 record sets

Record Set	Category	Subcategory	No. of Records
England & Wales, Electoral Registers 1910-1932	Census, Land & Surveys	Electoral Rolls	157,221,831
UK Electoral Registers & Companies House Directors	Census, Land & Surveys	Electoral Rolls	133,290,663
England & Wales Births 1837-2006	Birth, Marriage, Death & Parish Records	Civil Births	133,086,913
England & Wales Marriages 1837-2005	Birth, Marriage, Death & Parish Records	Civil Marriage & Divorce	95,652,984
England & Wales Deaths 1837-2007	Birth, Marriage, Death & Parish Records	Civil Deaths & Burials	87,447,274
British & Irish Roots Collection	Travel & Migration	Migration	63,023,466
England Births & Baptisms 1538-1975	Birth, Marriage, Death & Parish Records	Civil Births, Parish Baptisms	59,910,941
1939 Register	Census, Land & Surveys	Census	42,459,726
1921 Census Of England & Wales	Census, Land & Surveys	Census	38,521,385

Choose the one you want, and you'll find that the options for search criteria are much more specific to the record collection, allowing you to perform more detailed searches.

England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935

Unlock the secrets of your family's past with unparalleled access to over 5 million crime records spanning from 1770 to 1935 in England and Wales. Delve into the intriguing history of your ancestors, find out if they went to prison and uncover their encounters with the law. Track their journey through the justice system, from trials to sentencing, gaining invaluable insights into their lives behind bars. Explore a wealth of information that sheds light on their experiences and paints a vivid picture of their past. Start your journey of discovery today and reveal the hidden tales within your family tree.

Learn more Useful links

[All record sets](#)

Who: First name(s), Last name, Name variants

When: Year, Birth year, Give or take

Trial place, Trial county, Trial country, Court martial, Archive reference, Keyword search, Place

Search England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935

This is particularly handy when searching census records, as you can add in details like birthplace and other household members to narrow down your search. Each of these includes a section titled 'Useful links and resources' to enhance your research. Plus, scroll

down to learn more about the record set in question, including what details the set includes and the history behind it.

Category

Record sets on Findmypast are grouped together by category. This method is handy if you need a specific event, specific detail, or the name you're searching for is common.

There are eight categories of records on Findmypast:

- Birth, marriage and death
- Churches and religion
- Education and work
- Immigration and travel
- Military service and conflict
- Census, land, and substitutes
- Directories and social history
- Institutions and organisations

Each of those has several subcategories, so you can get even more granular with your research.

So, if you're after a birth record, choose Births, Marriages, Deaths and Parish, then choose Civil Births.

Address

Sometimes you might want to research a house's history. You can search British census records and the 1939 Register by address. Just add in the street, town, and chosen census year. Remember that many streets were renamed or renumbered over the years, and some may be simply known as a house name instead.

The screenshot shows the Findmypast website's search interface for census records by address. The page title is "Search census records by address" and it includes a sub-header: "Search censuses and the 1939 Register for free to look up a house's occupants in years gone by. With names, ages, occupations and family information, delve deeper to understand what their lives looked like in vivid detail." The interface is divided into two main sections: "Search help" and "Search".

Search help: Contains three expandable sections: "Search tips", "Missing a street or house?", and "Other ways to find addresses".

Search: Contains the following fields and options:

- Select:** A dropdown menu set to "All Censuses".
- Street name:** A text input field containing "Lordship, Drewstead or Elm" with a clear button (X).
- Spelling variants:** A checkbox labeled "Spelling variants" with an information icon (i).
- Location:** A text input field containing "Boston, Lincolnshire, or England" with a clear button (X).
- Search radius (miles):** A slider control with markers for "Exact", "5", "10", "20", "50", and "100".
- Search button:** A dark blue button with a magnifying glass icon and the text "Search".

In the top right corner, there is a logo for "THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES" with the text "in association with" above it.

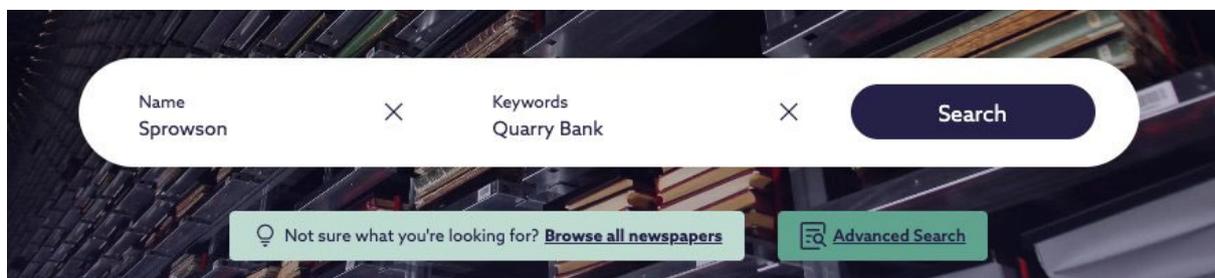
Another note: The 1939 Register was organised by street, district, and county, unlike census records which used street, town, and county.

Wildcards

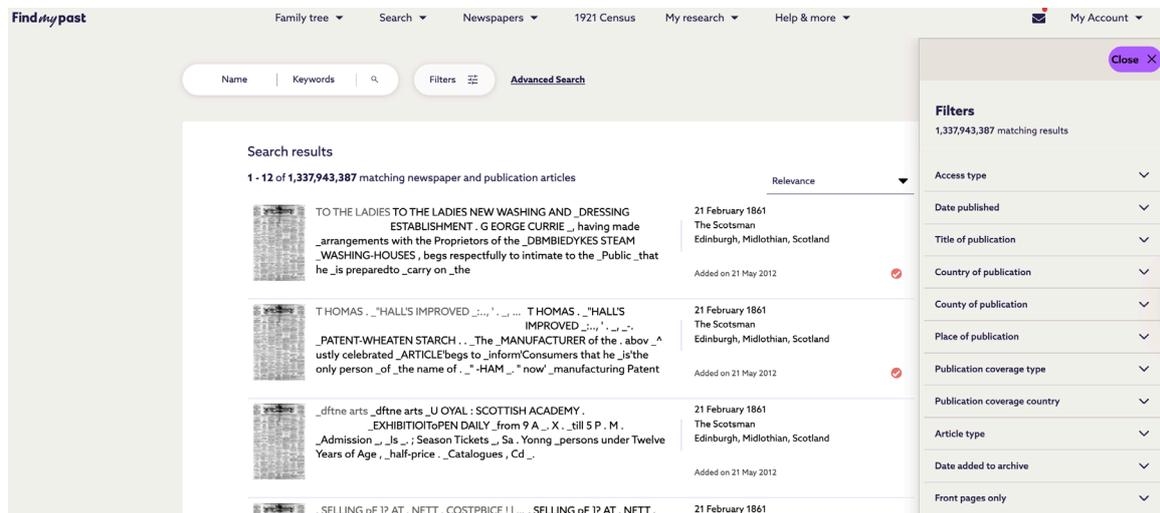
If you're struggling to find what you're looking for, try a wildcard. It's possible the name or keyword you're searching for has been misspelled or mistranscribed. Use an asterisk to replace one or several letters, eg. Sm*h, or a question mark to replace one letter, eg. Sm?th.

Searching newspapers

To get the best results, start with a broad search using a name, place, or keyword, then refine using filters such as publication date, title, county or country.

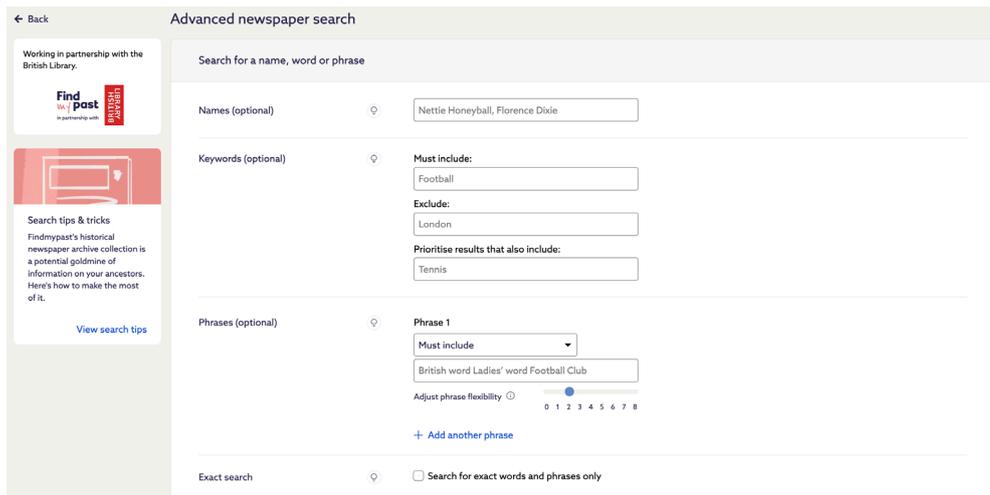


With millions of pages available, narrowing results is essential, and Findmypast offers filters for date ranges, front pages, local vs. national titles, and even newly added material.



Additional filters you can add to your newspaper search.

Using techniques such as phrase searching (quotation marks), wildcard searches, name variations, or adding/omitting keywords helps isolate the most relevant stories. Searching by event terms, occupations, addresses or local landmarks can also surface surprising clues.



The advanced newspaper search on Findmypast.

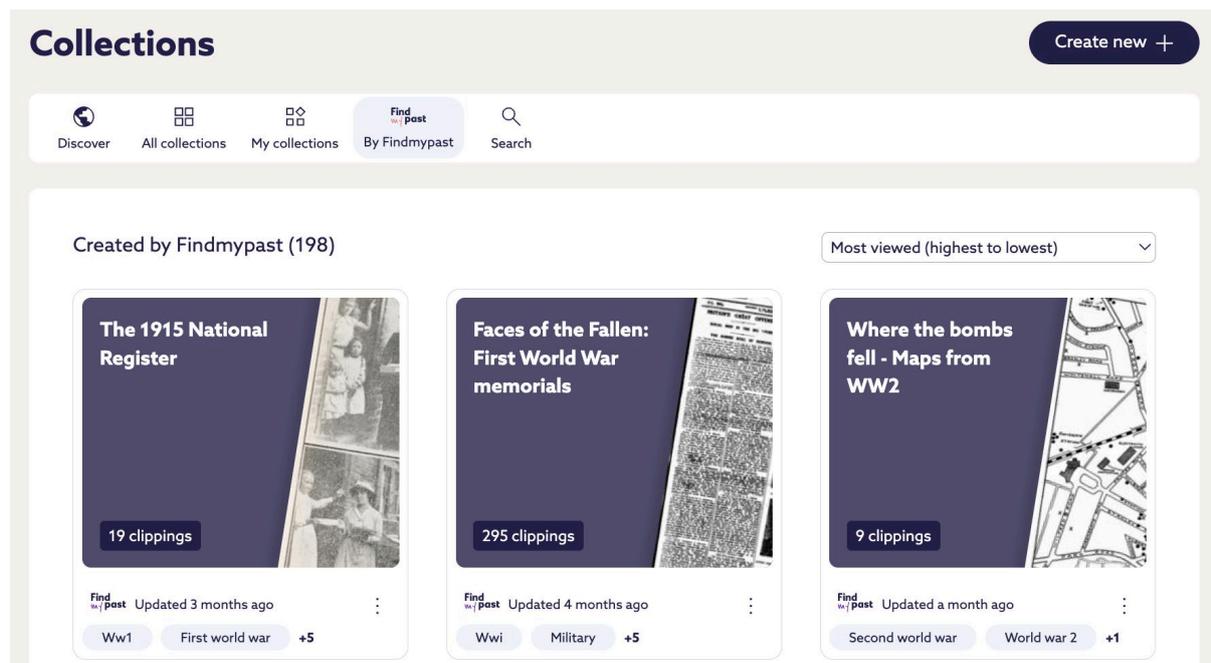
Over time, refining the search — and experimenting with spellings — is the key to uncovering the stories that bring the past to life.

Features

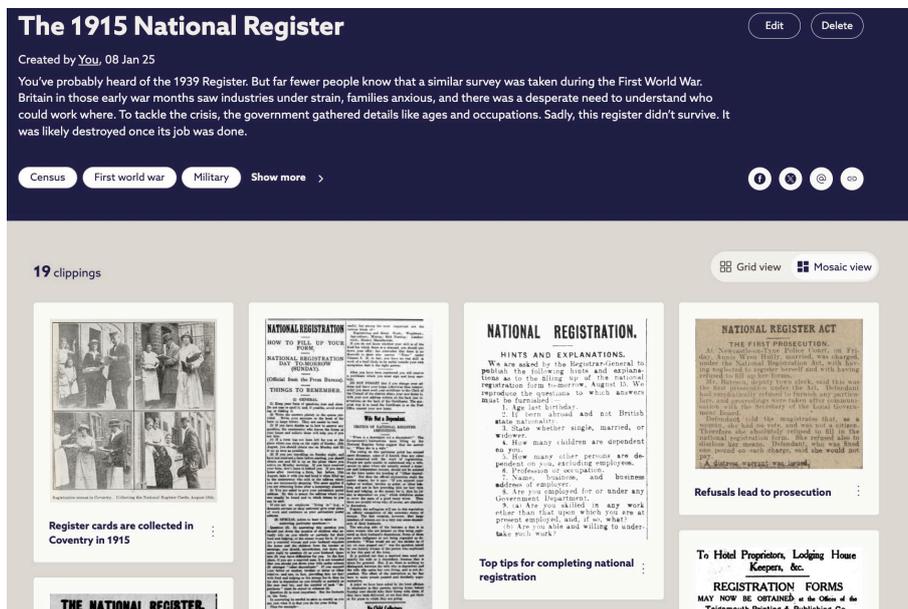
Findmypast has several handy features to enhance your research.

Collections

Once you've found the headlines, snippets, notices or photographs that matter, you can group them into personalised Collections, turning scattered finds into a coherent story.

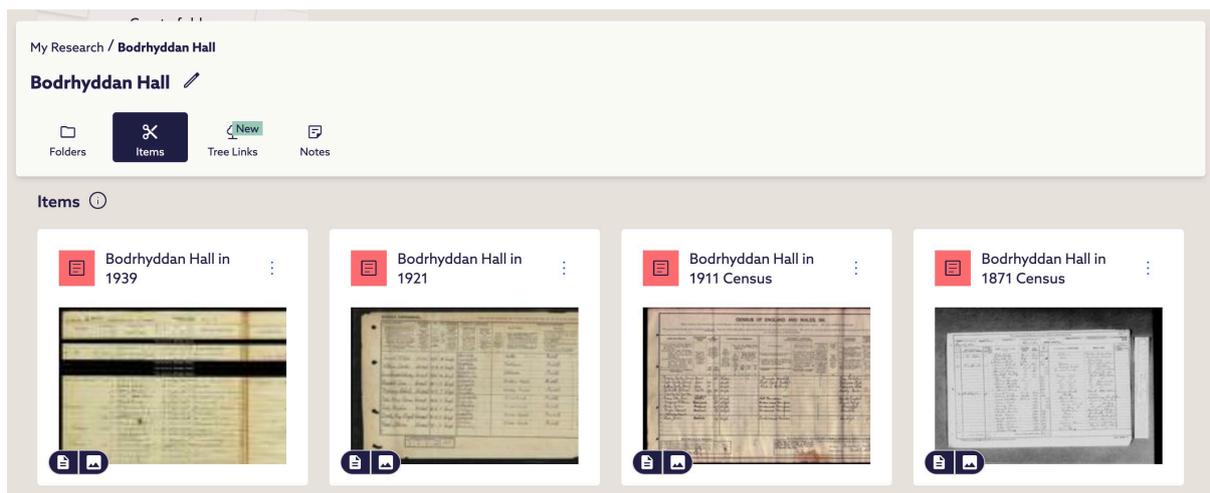


This makes it easier to trace themes across a lifetime, compare different sections of your research, or simply preserve the moments that help you understand the past in richer, more intimate detail.



Workspaces

Workspaces give researchers a place to organise their work in progress — a digital notebook built right into Findmypast. Instead of adding every discovery directly to a family tree, you can save record transcriptions, newspaper clippings and your own notes into dedicated folders and sub-folders while you're still piecing things together.

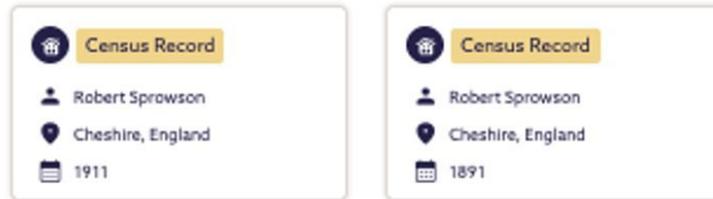


This makes it easy to track leads, compare possibilities and return to unfinished research without losing your place.

Other records featuring that name

When viewing a transcription, scroll down to see if the person you're researching appears in any other records. This can be a quick way to track a person through Findmypast's vast collection of resources.

Other records featuring that name (2 records)



Explore the local area

On transcriptions for census records, scroll down to find an interactive map. Here you can choose between a modern map, one from the mid 20th century (1937-1961), and one from 1888-1913. You can explore how the area changed over time. Plus, you see key events of a person's life mapped in the Explore section of a family tree.



On some census transcriptions, you can see how many others the same occupation or employer as the person you searched for, and you can delve into what the newspapers were saying during that year.

Ralph's employer

Cadbury Brother Knighton Salop

4 people worked here.

See who they were

Ralph's occupation

Chemist

148 people nearby had the same occupation.

See who they were

Take a look at what was happening in 1921

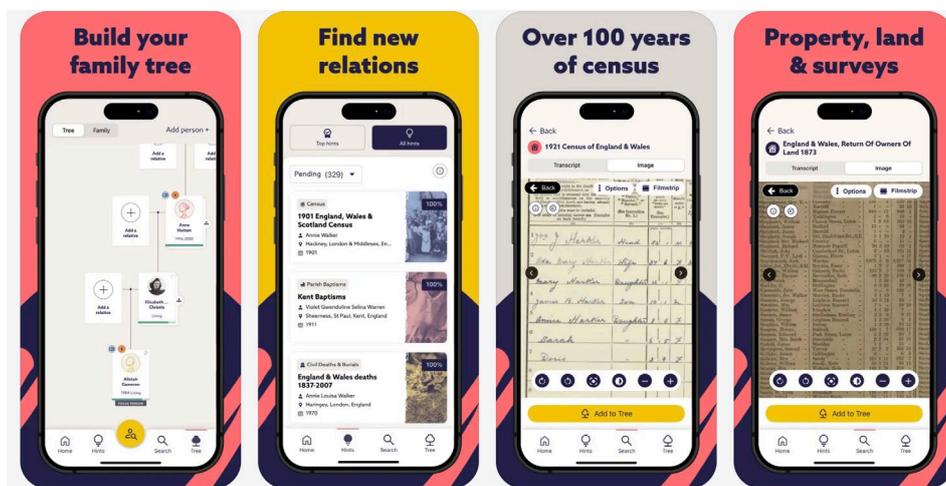
National Economy from a Woman's Point of View – Nancy Astor, the Vote, 13 October 1921



Open Newspaper

Mobile App

The Findmypast app gives you a simple, on-the-go way to build, edit and explore your research wherever you are. It lets you attach the records you discover — such as birth, marriage and death certificates, census returns, military documents, and even newspaper clippings — directly to the people in your tree, helping you keep everything organised as your research grows.



You can also personalise profiles with photographs of people, their lives and even their headstones, making your tree richer and more vivid. The app's portability means you can continue your research while travelling, visiting archives, or even speaking with others, ensuring every clue and discovery is captured while it's fresh.

Common genealogy terms and their meanings

- BMDs – Births, marriages and deaths
- GRO – General Register Office
- GEDCOM – The file format for family trees
- TNA – The National Archives (Kew)
- Pedigree – a diagram showing direct ancestors only
- 'Removed' – indicates a relation with a generation gap, eg. A 'first cousin once removed' is the cousin's child
- Index – searchable data extracted from records
- Transcript / transcription - a typed out version of a record's detail
- Brick wall – a point where you can't find further evidence to continue your research
- Maiden name – a woman's surname at birth

Other handy resources

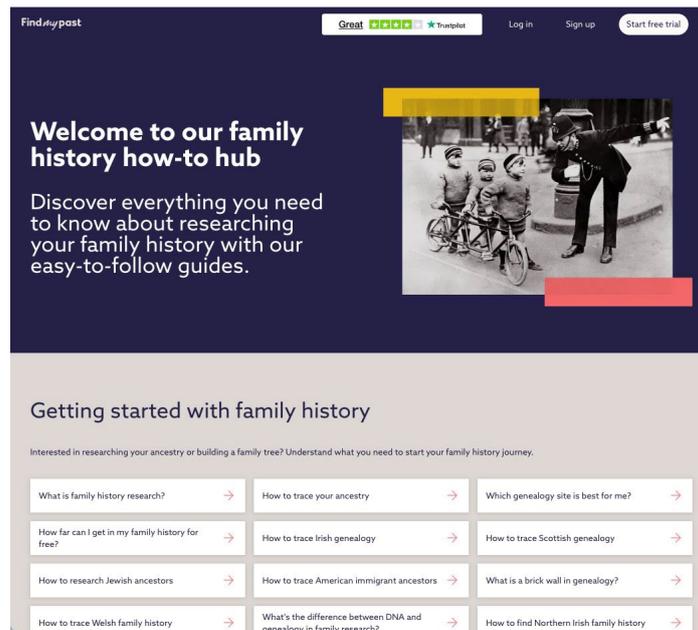
[The Findmypast Blog](#)

The Findmypast Blog is a lively hub filled with articles that support every stage of your research. It covers everything from beginner how-tos and research tips to deep-dives into historical events, expert advice, new record releases and stories uncovered by the Findmypast community. Sections like *Getting Started*, *Build Your Family Tree*, *Family Records*, *Help Hub*, *Discoveries* and *History Hub* offer practical guidance, news and inspiration. It's also the best place to keep up with fresh releases and features, showcased in the *What's New?* section, where record expansions and updates are highlighted as they go live.

[Guides](#)

The Findmypast Guides serve as a structured, easy-to-follow reference library designed to help you understand the records available on the site and how to use them effectively. Organised by topic — such as researching a family tree, searching newspapers, exploring local history, finding family in genealogical records, or learning how to interpret different types of sources — each guide breaks down key concepts and offers step-by-step advice.

They explain what different record collections contain, how to search them, and how to combine sources like censuses, parish registers, electoral rolls, newspapers and maps to build a fuller picture of your ancestors' lives. By pairing practical instructions with clear explanations, the Guides help turn curiosity into confident, productive research.



Family tree template

Findmypast has a handy, printable family tree template, perfect for just starting out with research, or for involving children or grandchildren in the fun.

Free passes to Findmypast

Get your research off to a flying start with a free 3-month subscription to findmypast.co.uk. 100 passes are available for Heritage Open Days organisers to explore billions of genealogy records and millions of newspapers dating back to the 1700s. Uncover the ups and downs of your relatives' daily lives, pinpoint the details of their milestone moments and learn where they lived, worked and travelled over time. Visit the 'Opportunities and top tips' tab on the Heritage Open Days [Everyday Histories theme page](#) for details on how to apply.