

YOUR
FAMILY
HISTORIAN

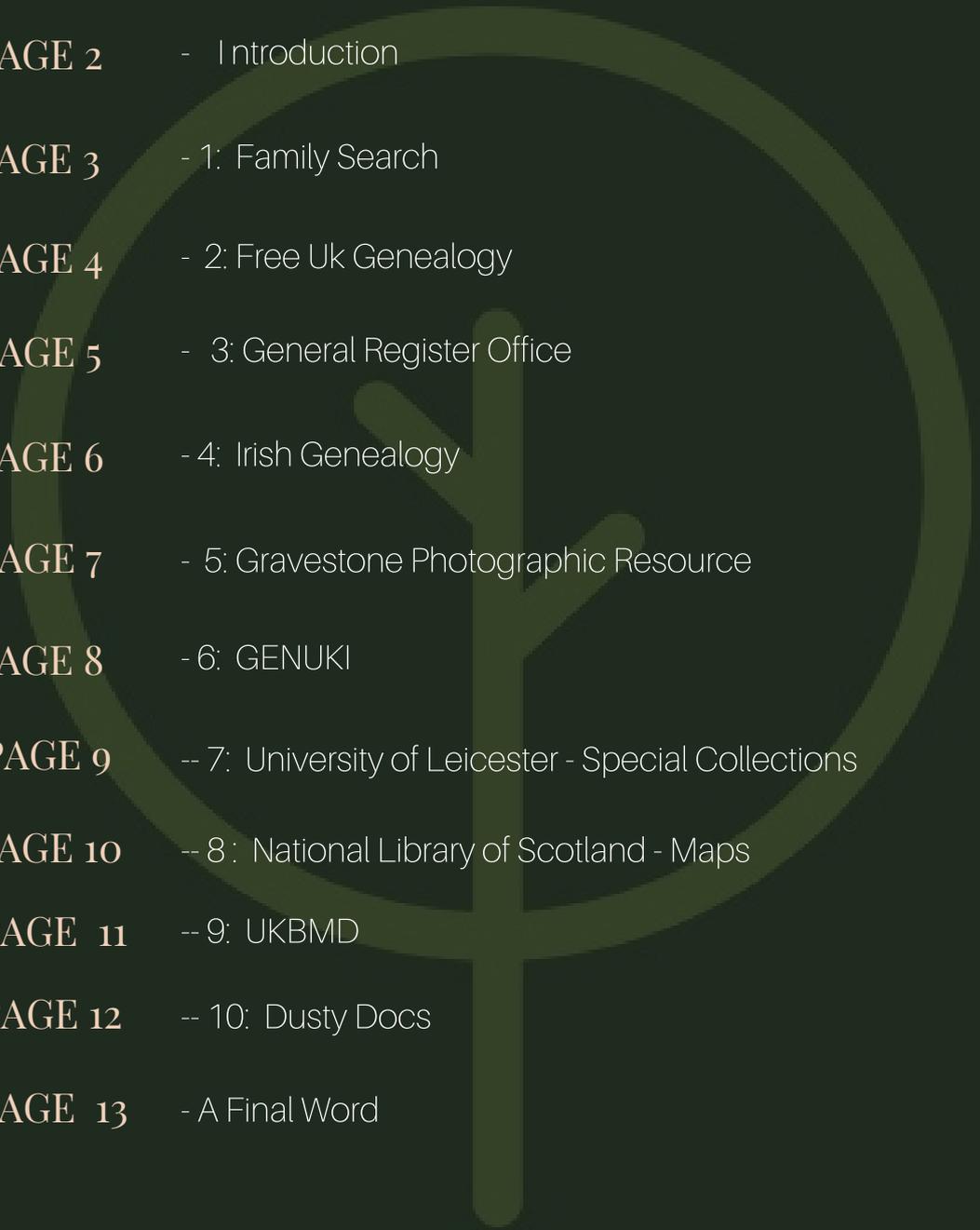
The 10 Best Free Family History Websites



A GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION



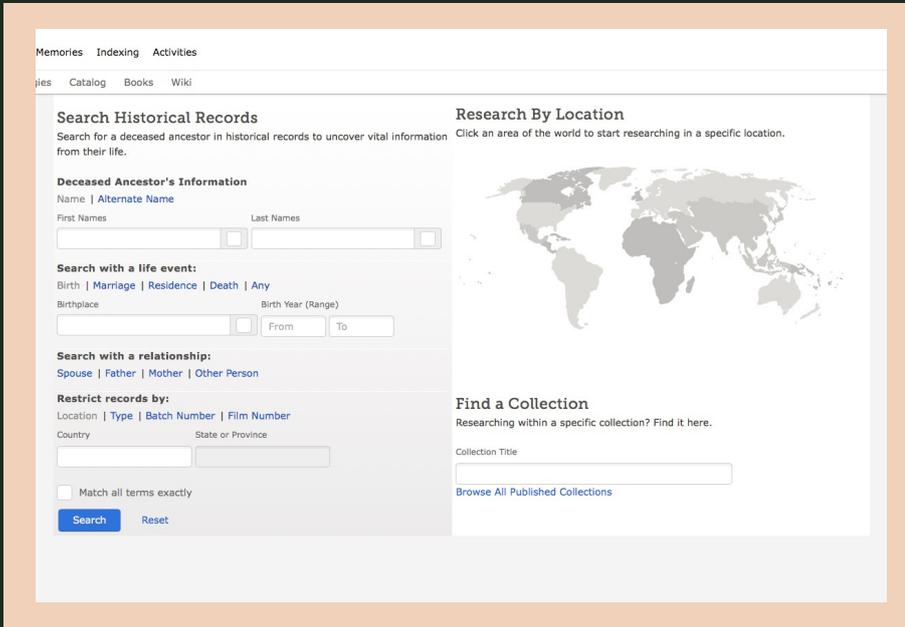
Andy Robson,
Professional Genealogist

There has never been a better time to research your Family History, with a wealth of material now available on-line. In this Guide I'm going to cover the 10 free websites which I use routinely in my own research and which, I hope, you will find useful in your own.

Good Hunting!

Andy

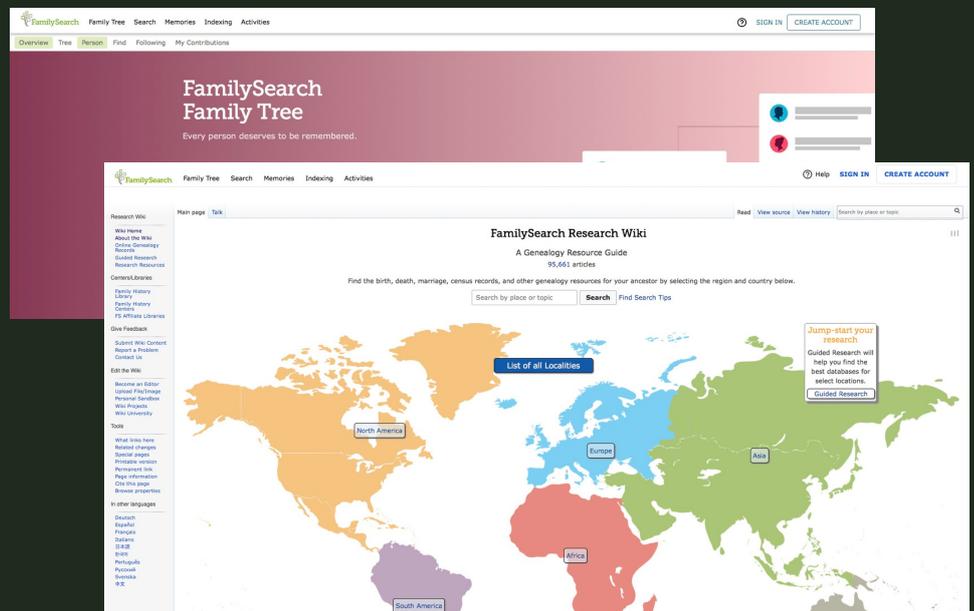
1.



Family Search is a site maintained by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints. It is a non-profit educational institution dedicated to gathering, preserving and sharing genealogical information throughout the world.

3.2 billion digital images on Family Search

In addition there is a Wiki section with background information, articles and tutorial resources. You can also build your own family tree on the site and link into the world's largest online family tree.



<https://www.familysearch.org/en/>

2.



FreeUKGenealogy

Human transcription of family history data

Free UK Genealogy provides free, online access to family history records. Volunteers have worked to create high-quality transcriptions of public records from various sources.

There are three project websites to search – Free BMD, FreeCEN and FreeREG.

**Search
FreeBMD**

**274,500,000 births,
marriages and deaths**

FreeBMD provides free access to birth, marriage and death records. This resource is ideal for those beginning research into their ancestry. The central recording of births, marriages and deaths was started in 1837 and is one of the most significant resources for genealogical research. The transcribing of records is carried out by teams of dedicated volunteers and the database contains index information for the period 1837-1992.

FreeCEN offers a free, online database of the 19th century UK census returns. Census data can provide the full name, exact age, relationship to head of household, sex, occupation, parish and county of birth, medical disabilities and employment status of an individual. Later census years have more information. This is a continuous process as they are adding to their record set.

**Search
FreeCEN**

**39,000,000 individuals from
census data, from 1841 to 1891**

**Search
FreeREG**

**49,000,000 records
from parish registers**

FreeREG provides transcripts of baptisms, marriages and burials registers of the Church of England and other organisations. The recording of church registers began in England and Wales in 1538; this is separate and distinct from the civil registration process that began in 1837.

www.freeukgenealogy.org.uk

3. General Register Office

Official information on births, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales

The General Register Office (GRO) which holds all civil records of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales has provided a search facility to make it easier for people to order copies of these certificates. It is a work in progress so only birth and deaths are included at present and only for certain date ranges.

However so good is the search engine that people use it without having any intention of ordering certificates. The certificates can also be ordered as online PDFs rather than paper copies which makes them cheaper and quicker to obtain.

The big advantage of this site is that the search results of births provides the mothers' maiden names and full middle names. For deaths it provides the age at death. Other online sites do not provide this information for all records.

The screenshot shows the website header with the HM Passport Office logo and the General Register Office title. The main heading is 'Online ordering service - Register or Login'. A blue box contains a welcome message and information about the service. A list of navigation links is on the right, and a section titled 'To use this service you will need:' lists requirements for using the service.

HM Passport Office | **General Register Office**
Official information on births, adoptions, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths in England and Wales

Online ordering service - Register or Login

Welcome to the General Register Office for England and Wales online ordering service.

The General Register Office holds a central copy of all birth, adoption, marriage, civil partnership and death registrations for England and Wales. This service allows you to search our historical birth and death indexes and order copies of registrations in a variety of formats including certificates and PDFs via the government's own official website.

Local Register Offices also hold records of events registered in their area. For events other than adoptions that were registered within the last 6 months (for marriages this period is extended to 18 months), applications for certificates should be made to the **Register Office** in the district where the birth, death or marriage took place.

To use this service you will need:

- An e-mail address
- Full name and postal address
- Details of the registration you are applying for - e.g. birth, adoption, marriage, civil partnership or death

- ▶ Register / Login
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions
- ▶ Contact us
- ▶ View GRO information on GOV.UK
- ▶ Births & Adoptions
- ▶ Marriage & Civil Partnership
- ▶ Death
- ▶ Family History Records
- ▶ Cookie Policy
- ▶ Apply online for a UK Passport

www.gro.gov.uk



This website is dedicated to Irish genealogy and is home to the on-line historic Indexes of the Civil Registers (GRO) of Births, Marriages, Civil Partnerships and Deaths and to Church Records of Baptism, Marriage and Burial for all religious denominations.

Civil Records available online include:

- Birth register records – 1864 to 1920;
- Marriage register records – 1845 to 1945;
- Death register records – 1871 to 1970.

Church Records: The site has a large volume of pre 20th Century Church records of Baptism, Marriage and Burial. These include:

- All Roman Catholic baptism, marriage and burial registers for Dublin City,
- All surviving Church of Ireland baptism, marriage and burial registers for Dublin City,

Welcome to www.irishgenealogy.ie

www.irishgenealogy.ie is a website that allows users the opportunity to search a wide range of record sources in their search of their Irish Ancestry. The website is home to the on-line historic Indexes of the Civil Registers (GRO) of Births, Marriages, Civil Partnerships and Deaths and to Church Records of Baptism, Marriage and Burial from a number of counties.

The website also operates as a search portal that allows users to search the following record sources as well:

www.irishgenealogy.ie is a website operated by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media

5.

GPR



Gravestone Photographic Resource

Gravestone Photographic Resource (GPR) is a free, searchable international directory of grave, war, tomb and other death memorials. It now has over 1,188,902 names from English grave monuments and 1,699,158 worldwide.

Grave monument photographs are a valuable resource for family historians. They often contain information not available anywhere else. The relationships given on grave monuments often resolve research dead ends.

The site also helps you find the location of a specific grave within a cemetery and the exact date of death (or burial).



Grave monument directories are available for the following countries ([show all countries](#)):



[Australia](#)

(493)



[Canada](#)

(54)



[England](#)

(4336)



[France](#)

(87)



[Ireland](#)

(106)



[New Zealand](#)

(62)



[Scotland](#)

(242)



[United States](#)

(56)



[Wales](#)

(133)

The numbers above show the number of cemeteries and other monuments for each country.

www.gravestonephotos.com



GENUKI plays host to a huge array of Genealogical resources for the UK and Ireland. It is organised on the basis of historic counties and subject areas. It is essentially a vast encyclopaedia with links leading to dedicated pages on other sites. It also has a growing set of specially produced information pages (> 115,000). Definitely a site to bookmark on your computer!

The service is run and maintained as a charity by volunteers.

<https://www.genuki.org.uk/>

University of Leicester - Special Collections

The University of Leicester Archives & Special Collections Department has become the repository for a huge number of on-line Gazetteers and Directories. These date from the 1760's to the 1920's and there is at least one directory for every county in England and Wales. The collection is searchable by name, place, occupation or can be browsed by county.



This digital collection provides a primary source of information for family historians about trade and industry including:

- descriptions of cities, parishes, towns and villages
- geographical, historical and statistical details
- information about local facilities, institutions and associations
- listings for private residents, traders, trades and professions
- details of important people
- advertisements

<https://le.ac.uk/library/special-collections/explore/historical-directories>

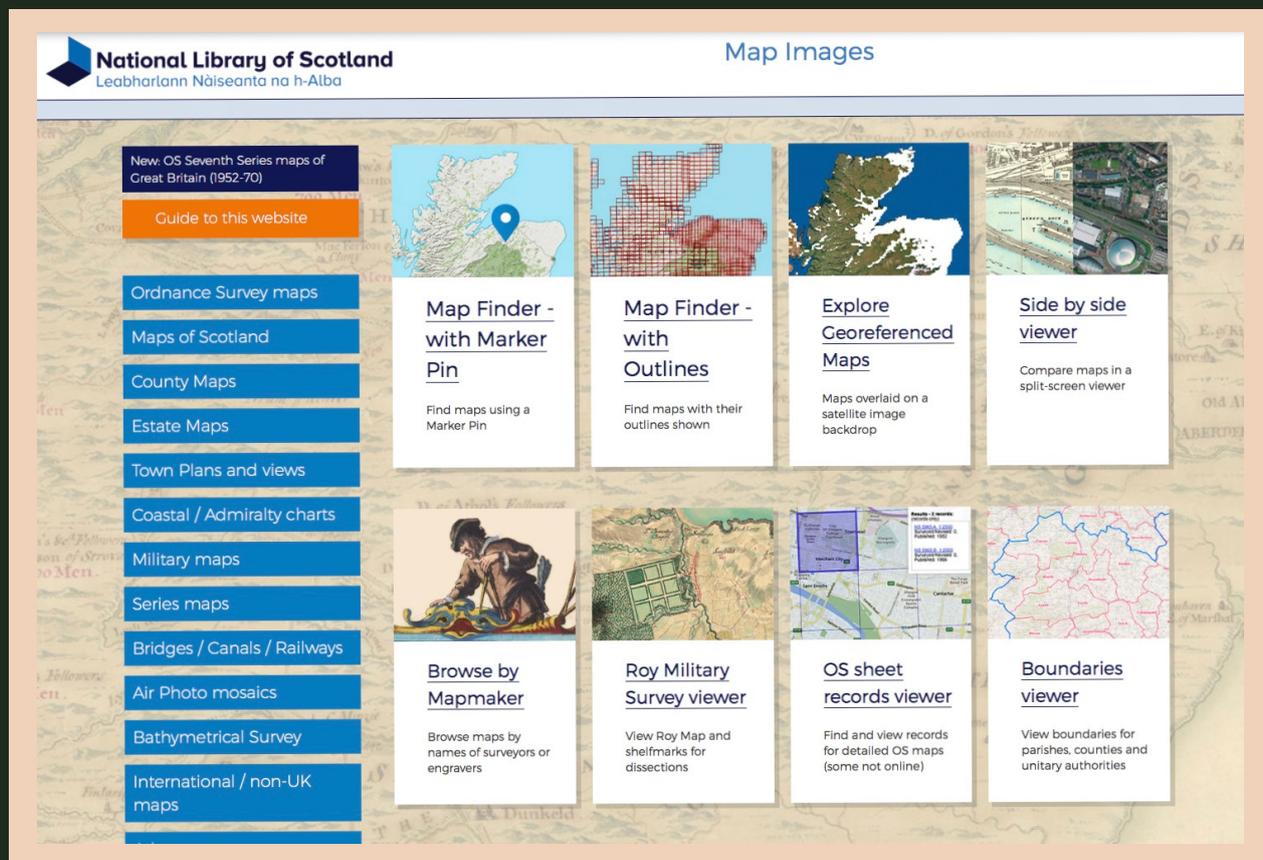
National Library of Scotland

The National Library of Scotland has become the repository for a wide range of historic maps for Great Britain from the 16th century onwards.

Categories include Ordnance Survey Maps, County Maps, Estate Maps, Town Plans and Views, Coastal Charts and Military Maps.

Recent additions include:

- Ordnance Survey One-Inch Seventh Series maps (896 sheets), covering all of Great Britain, 1952–1970.
- County maps of Northern England 1760s–1840
- Estate maps of Scotland, 1760s–1950s
- German naval charts of British waters, 1938–1945



The screenshot shows the 'Map Images' section of the National Library of Scotland website. The header includes the library's name in English and Gaelic, and the title 'Map Images'. A left-hand navigation menu lists various map categories: Ordnance Survey maps, Maps of Scotland, County Maps, Estate Maps, Town Plans and views, Coastal / Admiralty charts, Military maps, Series maps, Bridges / Canals / Railways, Air Photo mosaics, Bathymetrical Survey, and International / non-UK maps. The main content area features eight interactive map viewer options, each with a representative image and a brief description:

- Map Finder - with Marker Pin**: Find maps using a Marker Pin
- Map Finder - with Outlines**: Find maps with their outlines shown
- Explore Georeferenced Maps**: Maps overlaid on a satellite image backdrop
- Side by side viewer**: Compare maps in a split-screen viewer
- Browse by Mapmaker**: Browse maps by names of surveyors or engravers
- Roy Military Survey viewer**: View Roy Map and shelfmarks for dissections
- OS sheet records viewer**: Find and view records for detailed OS maps (some not online)
- Boundaries viewer**: View boundaries for parishes, counties and unitary authorities

<https://maps.nls.uk/>

9. **UK BMD** Births, Marriages, Deaths and Censuses on the Internet

UK BMD

This site provides 2,766 links to websites that offer on-line transcriptions of UK births, marriages, deaths and censuses.

There are also a range of other indexes and transcriptions for most counties. These may include parish records, wills, monumental inscriptions etc.

What's on this site ?

From the menu buttons on the top left you can access:

- **Local BMD** - these are the indexes created from the original registration entries held by the local registrars. Civil registration from its start is covered. More and more counties are putting their indexes on-line, so it is advisable to start looking here first. The Local BMD sites using the UKBMD software can be searched in one go, using the multi-region UKBMD-Search.
- **GRO BMD** - these indexes are the General Register Office's secondary indexes.
- **County** - To list all the known BMD websites for a particular county (or country), use this option, remembering to first select a county from the drop-down list. Sites listed cover parish register, burial records and other transcripts. **Note:** the counties refer to the pre-1974 UK counties. For information about the county boundary changes see the **Local Government Changes page within GENUKI**.
- **Census** - Sites offering on-line transcriptions for various UK censuses, throughout the years.
- **Parish Register** - Sites with parish register and Bishops' Transcripts data on-line.
- **ONS** - One Name Study sites that have BMD indexes, census and/or parish records on-line.
- **OPC** - Online Parish Clerks. A growing useful resource for help.
- **OPS** - One Place Study sites that have BMD indexes, census and/or parish records on-line.
- **DNA** - Information about the growing use of DNA within genealogy and links to relevant websites.
- **British Abroad** - Many people who considered themselves to be British have BMD events registered abroad. The links on this page will help you find these sites.
- **National** - Sites offering data covering the whole of the country.
- **Certificates** - Links to various websites where you can buy copy certificates online.
- **Tutorials** - A series of online tutorials detailing how to get the best from the Local BMD websites.
- **FAQ** - Answers to Frequently Asked Questions. If you have a question this page may already have the answer.
- **Statistics** - Counts and updates dates for the Local BMD sites. Updated daily.
- **Contact** - information about how to contact us and provide feedback - especially if you can provide information about sites not listed here.
- **About Us** - brief history about who we are and how we came to be here.
- **Register** - subscribe to the UKBMD Mailing list for BMD updates announcements.
- **Misc** - Miscellaneous general interest items to help genealogists in their research.
- **Site Map** - a complete listing of all the pages within this site

<https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/>

Dustydocs

Dustydocs is a 'web-linking' site to free genealogical websites containing Parish Records in the British Isles and BMD records in Australia and New Zealand.



The screenshot shows the Dustydocs website interface. At the top left is the Dustydocs logo. To its right is a navigation menu with links for Home, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Channel, Isle of Man, Australia, and New Zealand. Below the navigation is a blue banner with the text "English Parish Registers Online" and a dropdown menu labeled "Choose a Country". Underneath is a section titled "Links to Free websites in The British Isles containing Parish Records" with a search box for "Search for a Town or Parish". To the right of the search box is a small image of a building with the caption "The Belfast Poor House". Below the search box is a map of the United Kingdom and Ireland, with callouts for Scotland, Isle of Man, Ireland, Wales, England, and Channel Islands. On the left side of the page is a "Guides" section with a list of links: WikiTree, FamilySearch, RootsWeb's WorldConnect Project, Map Counties of Great Britain, Certificate Exchange BMD's, What are Parish Registers?, Surname Distribution Map, The Family History Guide, Surname Database, Family Tree Chart, Research Guides, Old Occupations, Old Diseases, Cyndi's List, Genealogy Pox, One Place Studies, and Chapman County Codes.

<http://www.dustydocs.com>

A Final Word

I hope you have found this guide useful and it has encouraged you to embark on the great journey of Family History Research.

If you would like support we offer online 1-2-1 tuition and are happy to provide a fresh pair of eyes if you get stuck or want to talk through a problem you've encountered. We are happy to arrange a free consultation.

Details of our services can be viewed by clicking the button below

[Services](#)

Good Hunting!



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