

find my past

# THE MUST-HAVE GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR **BRITISH & IRISH** ANCESTORS



EXCLUSIVE RECORDS • EXPERT TIPS • ESSENTIAL READING



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# FINDMYPAST

**FOR BRITISH AND IRISH FAMILY HISTORY  
YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE.**

For more than a decade now, we've been proud to help bring the past to life for millions of members across the globe. Our mission is to help you learn all you can about your British and Irish roots. Whether you're trying to solve a family mystery, locate missing ancestors or grow your family tree as far back as possible, we're your essential partners.

We're a British company, you see, and as well as partnering with prestigious institutions such as the British Library and the National Archives, our team includes some of the country's leading genealogical experts. These experts aren't just knowledgeable about family history, they're as passionate about it as you are.

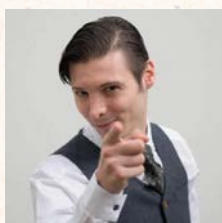
Record preservation and digitisation is, of course, our purpose, but it's only half the story when it comes to discovering where, and who, you came from. That's why we're dedicated to sharing our expert knowledge (and passion) to help you achieve your goals. Because of our strength in British and Irish records, the stories of your ancestors are more likely to be hiding in our records than any other family history website's. We've written this guide to help you find them.

**The Findmypast team**

MEET THE

# EXPERTS

Everyone at Findmypast is passionate about family history, but these four are all bona-fide experts eager to share their knowledge and help you succeed.



**MYKO CLELLAND**

@DapperHistorian

When TV or radio programmes need an expert to talk about genealogy, Myko is their go-to guy. You might have seen him giving a presentation at a family history society or maybe perusing the records of your local archive office, but we're proud to say this British history expert calls our London office home.



**BRIAN DONOVAN**

@BrianEneclann

Our Head of Irish Data is one of the leading voices in Irish genealogy – and not just because he's so chatty. We're proud owners of the largest collection of Irish family history records anywhere, and Brian's to thank for that. In fact, if it wasn't for Brian we might not have been the world's first website to bring previously inaccessible records from the Catholic Church online. Thanks, Brian!



**PAUL NIXON**

@OldSoldierSahib

Paul has been researching British military history for over 35 years. As a teenager, he travelled around his local old people's homes looking for First World War veterans to interview. Today, as well as working in the licensing team at Findmypast to bring you all of the great records on the site, he also publishes a number of military blogs.



**ESTELLE CALFE**

@Pootle

Estelle's enthusiasm for genealogy is infectious, so when new employees start at Findmypast she's the one who explains what family history is all about and shows them how to use the website. Plus, what Estelle doesn't know about searching the website isn't worth knowing, which makes a lot of sense when you realise she helped lead the team that built it.

# 5 REASONS

## FINDMYPAST IS THE #1 CHOICE FOR BRITISH & IRISH FAMILY RESEARCH

The key record sets that make Findmypast the best choice for exploring your ancestry (and what you can expect to discover in them).

1

Our UK parish record collection is the largest of its kind online and offers a wealth of useful detail all the way back to the reign of Henry VIII. These are the essential family tree building blocks you need to take your research back further.

2

The 1939 Register offers unique insight into England and Wales on the eve of war, and you won't find it anywhere else online. You not only get detailed transcripts and original images, you can also enjoy newspaper clippings, wartime statistics and 3-view historical maps.

3

Our historical British and Irish newspaper archive is growing all the time. Use it to get an idea of the world your ancestors lived in and add the kind of colour and detail to their stories you can't get elsewhere.

4

Irish ancestors? You're more likely to discover them on Findmypast than anywhere else. With the world's largest online record collection, your Irish eyes will be smiling when you start to delve into our offerings.

5

Our unique British & Irish crime, prison and punishment records include physical descriptions, court statements, next of kin information and even mugshots, so you might even be able to stare your lawbreaking ancestors in the face.

1

NO ONE DOES

# PARISH RECORDS

BETTER



Where? Search > Birth, marriage, death & parish records

Having problems finding an ancestor in the census? Taken before civil registration records even existed, parish records are the most valuable resource for advanced genealogists. Baptism, banns, marriage, and burial records are recorded, along with various happenings in the community, making them a rich source of potential information. Oh, and we just so happen to hold twice as many British and Irish parish records as any other family history website, with new and exclusive additions almost every week.

## ESTELLE'S EXPERT ADVICE

### Identify the Parish

There are nearly 12,000 parishes in the UK, so be sure to learn everything you can about the area your ancestors lived in. Was it a parish in its own right or a township or hamlet in another parish?

### Search for Two People at Once

Include the name of your ancestor's spouse when searching for a marriage record. You can also search by spouse's first name or maiden name, which will significantly narrow down your results.

### Can't Search? Browse

A number of collections give you the option to browse through registers in their entirety. This can be useful if the record you're searching for has been mis-transcribed, is missing pages, or is too faint/damaged to be easily read.

### Know the Area

Make sure to research everything you can about the location. Perhaps you'll learn the parish closest to your ancestors was up a steep hill and they can instead be found in a parish located farther away, but on a flatter route, for example.



## DID YOU KNOW...

Thomas Cromwell introduced parish records to England in 1538 to keep tabs on the country's population. His ultimate motivation, however, was that it made it easier to implement taxation...

WE'RE HOME TO THE

# 1939 REGISTER

[Where? Search > 1939 Register](#)

With the 1931 census destroyed by fire and no census taken in 1941, the 1939 Register is one of the most important British documents of the 20th century. It has unique features that make it particularly useful to genealogists. Taken at the outbreak of World War 2, it contains the personal details of 41 million civilians in England and Wales. Only available online through Findmypast, we worked with our friends at the National Archives in Kew to scan and preserve these historically significant records back in 2014.

## MYKO'S EXPERT ADVICE

### Brush Up On Your Social History

The 1939 Register not only includes original records but maps, statistics, photographs and newspaper clippings too, letting you see what your family's area was like at the time and how it's changed since.

### Let Other Household Members Help

Each record contains the information of everyone in the household, so if the person you're searching for has a common name, but was living with someone with a more distinct name, you can add them to the search to refine your results.

### View Full Birth Dates (and Use Them Elsewhere)

Unlike census records, the 1939 Register recorded full birth dates. This allows you to pinpoint the exact person you're searching for and more easily find them in other record sets.

### Use TNA References

If you already have a National Archives reference number for a record on the 1939 Register, you can jump straight to it in our advanced search by entering the piece and item number.



## DID YOU KNOW...

The information recorded in the 1939 Register not only helped toward the war effort, it was also used in the founding of the NHS.

3

## WE HAVE THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION OF **BRITISH MILITARY** SERVICE & PENSION RECORDS



Where? Search > Military, armed forces & conflict

We're home to over 27 million British and Irish military records covering both World Wars as well as a range of other national and international conflicts dating from 1760 to the 20th century. Service records are particularly fascinating sources of information that can be dozens of pages long, with detailed descriptions of everything from physical traits to heroic acts, injuries suffered and even wayward behaviour. You'd best have a hankie to hand, though - even the luckiest soldiers' records can make for emotional reading.

### PAUL'S EXPERT ADVICE

#### Be Prepared

Start with as much information as possible. This should typically include your ancestor's full name, known regiment/s served with and, if possible, regimental number (assuming he was not an officer).

#### Go Offline

Despite Findmypast having a substantial British military collection online, don't rule out traditional sources such as the National Archives, local archives and military museums. We have millions of records but there are millions more that survive in archives and may never be made available online.

#### Do Background Reading

Make the most of the internet. While there's a wide variety of records available, there is also a lot of useful information to be found on military-interest forums, dedicated websites and blogs.

#### Search Service Records First

Once you have the details you need to get started, try and find a service record for your ancestor. These multiple page documents will often record their entire military career.



### DID YOU KNOW...

Findmypast user Andrew Tatham set himself a task of identifying all 46 men in a World War 1 photograph. He struggled until he joined Findmypast and used our military records to identify them all. He even wrote a best-selling book, *A Group Photograph*, about his experience.



# NEWSPAPERS

TO FILL RESEARCH GAPS

[Where? Search > Newspapers & periodicals](#)

We've partnered with the British Newspaper Archive and the British Library to bring you the world's biggest archive of British and Irish newspapers, with over 750 titles covering every county in Great Britain and Ireland. Each page has been completely digitised and fully indexed, so you can search every word within an article. Your ancestors don't even need to have been famous to appear in print. They'll get a mention for anything from fighting to taking part in community events and, thanks to the popularity of family notices, even being born, marrying and dying were deemed newsworthy - a boon when tracking down elusive ancestors.

## MYKO'S EXPERT ADVICE

### Narrow Your Search

With more than 120 million searchable newspaper pages, adding specific information - your ancestor's profession, for example - and filtering the results will give you a better chance of finding what you're looking for.

### Account for Errors

People make mistakes. To allow for human error during the digitisation process or a mistake by the journalist who wrote the article, try alternative name spellings and wildcard searches (replacing a letter you are unsure of with \* - see page 26 for more info on this).

### Learn the Lingo

Sometimes, you will need to search using language of the time. For example, if you were looking for a "suicide", you might also need to consider the euphemisms of the day, such as "did away with himself".

### Save a Scan

You can download PDF versions of any pages you want to keep. You can even add clippings to your family tree on Findmypast, adding colour while extending your ancestor's five minutes of fame.



## DID YOU KNOW...

Our newspaper archive dates back to the 1700s. It currently contains over 20 million newspaper pages, and that number increases every single week.

5

WE HAVE MORE

# IRISH RECORDS

THAN ANYONE ELSE



[Where? Search](#) > [A-Z of record sets](#) > [Ireland](#)

A number of factors make Irish family research a challenge. For starters, civil registration started later than the UK and then a fire in 1922 destroyed the majority of accumulated records. This can make it tough to find ancestors from the Emerald Isle. It's not impossible, however, and with a much larger collection than Ancestry, if you're going to be successful with Irish family history, you're far more likely to be successful with us. So while tracing ancestors in Ireland can be a challenge, it does make it all the more rewarding.

**Continue on for your guide to the peculiarities of Irish genealogy and how to find your ancestors because, rather than despite, of them.**





# THE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL IRISH GENEALOGY RESEARCH

## **UNDERSTANDING THE RECORDS**

.....

Tracing Irish ancestors is tough if you aren't familiar with the record sets and how to get the most from them. Read on to learn everything you need to know, and then some.

# CENSUS

 [Where? Search > Ireland > Census, land & surveys > Census](#)


The only fully surviving census records of Ireland (published to date) are from 1901 and 1911. You can search them on Findmypast by name, location, birth year, other household members and more criteria, which should quickly narrow down your search to the record you're looking for. These records will provide plenty of facts about your ancestors including their occupation, level of education, and where they were born. Always check these first when starting to look for Irish family.

## KEY RECORD SETS TO SEARCH

- Ireland Census 1901
- Ireland Census 1911
- Ireland Census 1821-1851



## BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (BMDS)

 [Where? Search > Ireland > Birth, Marriage, Death & Parish Records](#)

Civil registration began in Ireland in 1864 (1845 for non-Catholic marriages). To find a civil birth, marriage or death record, and make the best use of your time, search the 21 million indexes online at Findmypast. They'll tell you all the information you need to order a copy of your ancestor's certificate from Ireland's General Register Office.

## KEY RECORD SETS TO SEARCH

- Irish Births 1864-1958
- Irish Marriages 1845-1958
- Irish Deaths 1864-1958

# LAND & SUBSTITUTE RECORDS

 [Where? Search > Ireland > Census, land & surveys > Land & estates](#)

With so few 19th-century Irish census records surviving, you'll need to look at substitute sources to pinpoint your ancestors. Griffith's Valuation is perhaps the most important Irish land record available for the 19th century. It lists approximately 80% of householders in Ireland from 1847 to 1864 and includes over 2.9 million records. Information found on Griffith's Valuation includes location, occupier's name, landlord's name and property description, including size and value. We have the most complete versions of both the survey and its accompanying maps and town plans.

A Findmypast membership also grants you exclusive access to the Landed Estate Court Rentals 1850-1855. This source comprises the records of all the large estates bankrupted in the Great Famine and for the next generation (1849-82). There are over 8,000 estates, with more than 500,000 tenant holdings in this record set.

National, regional and local directories are also a great census substitute when tracing your Irish ancestors, especially if they practised a trade, owned land or ran a business. Findmypast has the largest online collection of historical Irish directories.

You'll also find a range of other exclusive collections to help you plug the gaps in your family tree, including government records, workhouse registers and electoral rolls.

## KEY RECORD SETS TO SEARCH

- Griffith's Valuation 1847-1864
- Landed Estates Court Rentals 1850-1885
- Ireland, Poverty Relief Loans 1821-1874

# PARISH RECORDS

 [Where? Search > Ireland > Birth, marriage death & parish records](#)

There are over 10 million Irish Roman Catholic Parish Registers on Findmypast and you don't even need a paid subscription to search them. These records are key to taking your Irish family history research back further, as many date back to the 18th century. Like BMDs, parish records will normally reveal your ancestor's name, age and where they were living. Knowing which parish your family came from in Ireland is important for getting the most from these records.

Cross-referencing with land records can help as they sometimes include the parish name. For non-Catholic church records, there is a range of niche resources on Findmypast as well as other websites and offline archives.

## KEY RECORD SETS TO SEARCH

- Ireland Roman Catholic Parish Baptisms
- Ireland Roman Catholic Parish Marriages
- Ireland Roman Catholic Parish Burials



LEGAL &

# CRIMINAL RECORDS



[Where? Search > Ireland > Institutions & organisations](#)

The Irish Prison Registers 1790-1924 are a treasure trove of information for family history research. There are over 3.5 million names included and they cover all prisons in the modern-day Republic of Ireland. From a genealogical point of view, the wonderful thing about prison records is the depth of information provided. Details from next of kin information to physical descriptions, such as scars and tattoos, are often included.

Irish court records are just as captivating. We have more than 22 million Petty Sessions Registers, which are one of the great untapped resources of Irish research. A window on Ireland's past, they provide detailed identifying information (names, occupations, addresses) as well as the chance to read often salacious descriptions of your ancestors' transgressions (usually in the form of drunken fighting).

**KEY** find my past  
**RECORD SETS**  
**TO SEARCH**

- Irish Prison Registers 1790-1924
- Ireland, Petty Sessions Court Registers



## **BRIAN'S TOP TIP**

Prison and court records for Northern Ireland are held separately from those for the Republic of Ireland, either in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland or in individual court houses and prisons.

# IRISH NEWSPAPERS

 [Where? Search > Newspapers & periodicals > Irish newspapers](#)

Findmypast's Irish Newspaper Collection includes titles for every county on the island and is constantly growing with brand new titles and additional articles for existing ones. The kind of information you can expect to find in historical Irish newspapers includes:

- News reports, including details of crimes and misdemeanours
- Family notices such as births, marriages, deaths and elopements
- Letters to the Editor
- Obituaries that may include unique information
- Advertisements of a family business
- Photographs and illustrations

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## MIGRATION & TRAVEL RECORDS

 [Where? Search > Ireland > Travel & migration](#)

The Great Famine (1845-51) reduced the Irish population by a quarter, and was the start of mass emigration from Ireland. With movement on such a scale, passenger lists and travel records are vitally important resources for Irish family history. From these records, you can find out where your ancestors went, the ship they travelled on and who they travelled with.

**KEY** findmypast  
**RECORD SETS  
TO SEARCH**

- Passenger Lists Leaving UK 1890-1960
- Irish Famine Immigrants, 1846-1851
- New York Passenger Lists & Arrivals



# MILITARY RECORDS



[Where? Search > Ireland > Military, armed forces & conflict](#)

The 'fighting Irish' have been involved in some of history's most pivotal conflicts, both on Irish soil and abroad. The amazing stories of these brave individuals can be told through the records they left behind. British Army Service Records are where you'll find the majority of Irish soldiers in our records. Ireland's tumultuous history of rebellions and unrest has also resulted in some fascinating records for locating your rebel relatives.

## KEY *find my past* RECORD SETS TO SEARCH

- British Army Service Records
- Easter Rising & Ireland Under Martial Law 1916-1921
- Ireland's Memorial Record: World War 1: 1914-1918



## BRIAN'S TOP TIP

An estimated 175,000 Irishmen fought in the American Civil War (1861-65), so be sure to also search US military records for your Irish ancestors.

**12 EXCLUSIVE RECORD COLLECTIONS:**

# YOUR ANCESTORS

**COULD BE HIDING HERE!**

Finding ancestors can be a tricky business, so the more avenues you have to search for them, the better. We're proud to be the only family history website dedicated to scanning, digitising, indexing and releasing new records every single week.

Over time, we've built up an unrivalled collection of British and Irish record sets you won't find elsewhere, all of which increase your chances of discovering your ancestors and learning about their lives. These are just some of the best sets you mightn't have heard of, but should definitely investigate. Search for them in our A-Z of record sets and see what else you can find while you're there.

## EXCLUSIVE BRITISH COLLECTIONS

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### 1. England & Wales Electoral Registers

Covering 1832-1932, this is the single largest record set we have, with approximately 220 million voter names. We brought this collection online in partnership with our friends at the British Library and Explore York Libraries & Archives. Electoral registers were compiled annually, meaning it's likely you'll uncover multiple records for your ancestor.



#### MYKO'S TOP TIP

In some registers, the first name was abbreviated. If you can't find your ancestor by their first name, try an abbreviated spelling. For example, William could be listed as W or Wm.

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### 2. National Schools Admission Registers & Log Books



#### DID YOU KNOW...

Schools were far less sentimental about their pupils in the 19th century. In one admission register, the stated reason for a pupil leaving is simply 'Dead'.

Discover ancestors at school in England and Wales between 1870 and 1914 to find their birth date, admission year and the school they attended. You may also be able to discover their parents' names, father's occupation, exam results and any illnesses that led to absence from school.

### 3. Prisoners of War

Comprising an array of record sets held at the National Archives, this diverse and varied collection spans the years 1715-1945. They tell your ancestors' stories of capture, escape and prisoner exchanges between warring nations. You'll find detailed testimonies about the conditions of the prison camps and discover what life was like for prisoners of war across the centuries.



#### PAUL'S TOP TIP

Use name variants. Many of these records were created in foreign countries and it's quite likely they spelt your ancestor's name differently.

### 4. Crime, Prison & Punishment



#### ESTELLE'S TOP TIP

We have three record sets with criminal mugshots:

1. Home Office and Prison Commission: male licences 1853-1887 (Series PCOM 3)
2. Home Office and Prison Commission: female licences (Series PCOM 4)
3. Metropolitan Police: criminal record office, habitual criminals' registers and miscellaneous papers (Series MEPO 6).

Search them using the 'series' filter on the Crime, Prisons & Punishment search page. Even if you don't have any criminal ancestors, these fantastic pictures are well worth a look.

This fascinating collection doesn't just provide you with a unique opportunity to discover the black sheep in your family. It also shows the evolution of the criminal justice system in the 19th century as the country dealt with the impact of industrialisation, urbanisation and population growth. Covering 1770-1935, this collection has over 5 million records, and even includes mugshots.



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## 5. British in India

Carefully indexed records of births, marriages, divorces and deaths make up this detailed collection. Spanning from 1664-1961, it includes records of the East India Company and military personnel, as well as other professions such as surgeons that travelled to the sub-continent.



### DID YOU KNOW...

Female relatives of officers of the Bengal Army, Madras Army and Bombay Army are also included, along with British civil servants, chaplains, merchants, plantation owners and labourers.



### DID YOU KNOW...

Our apprenticeship records are responsible for making Amanda Holden cry on *Who Do You Think You Are?* as she read the details of her ancestor's tough time in servitude. Sorry, Amanda!

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## 6. Apprenticeship Records

These records contain the name of the apprentice, in most cases the name of the apprentice's parent or guardian (usually the father, though sometimes the mother if the father was dead), the apprentice's home town, his father's trade, the name of the master to whom he was indentured, the master's trade, the place where the master lived, and the value of the premium paid to the master for taking on the apprentice.

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## 7. Britain, Directories & Almanacs

If your ancestor ran a business or was of prominence in his or her local community, you might find them in these trade directories, county guides, almanacs and general directories, which list tradesmen, people who held office, business owners and local civil servants.



### ESTELLE'S TOP TIP

All search results will bring you to the page on which your search word has been found and not to an individual transcript. You can then read through the page to find your result.

## EXCLUSIVE IRISH COLLECTIONS

### 8. Ireland Dog Licence Registers

Unless you're a dog-lover, there's a strong chance you'd bypass this one, but that would be a mistake. You see, this collection isn't for tracing pedigree lines. Listing the dog owner's name and address, it's one of the pre-1922 sets not lost in the Four Courts fire that can be used to locate Irish ancestors. And yes, if you are a dog-lover, you'll be pleased to hear you also get to discover the colour, sex and breed of your ancestor's dog.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

Dog licences were introduced into Irish law in 1865 and the first licences were issued the following year. It cost 2 shillings per dog with an extra 6 pence in administration costs.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

The Irish Reproductive Loan Fund was a micro credit scheme set up in 1824 to provide small loans to the 'industrious poor'.

### 9. Ireland, Poverty Relief Loans

An excellent resource for the Irish family historian, this collection has the names of individuals often missing from official government records. Many of the records are loan application forms, which include the name of the borrower and two names of guarantors, who were often close family members or neighbours. Other details recorded include occupation, notes of health, family circumstances and whether the borrower emigrated.

### 10. Ireland National School Registers

These registers, from schools that have since closed down, give a fascinating insight into the multid denominational early school system. They let you see how your ancestors did in school, how good their attendance was, and what their parents or guardians did for a living.



#### PAUL'S TOP TIP

The amount of information varies from school to school, but you should be able to see your ancestor's religious denomination. This can then be used to inform your parish record searches, and down the rabbit hole you go!

## 11. Dublin Workhouses Admission & Discharge Registers



### BRIAN'S TOP TIP

Search 'The History of the Workhouse with Peter Higginbotham' on YouTube to watch a fascinating webinar we did with the social historian and workhouse expert.

High levels of poverty in 19th century Ireland meant hundreds of thousands of Irish people passed through the workhouses. This was especially true during the years of the Great Famine in the 1840s when crowds of desperate, starving people came to Dublin from all over the country.

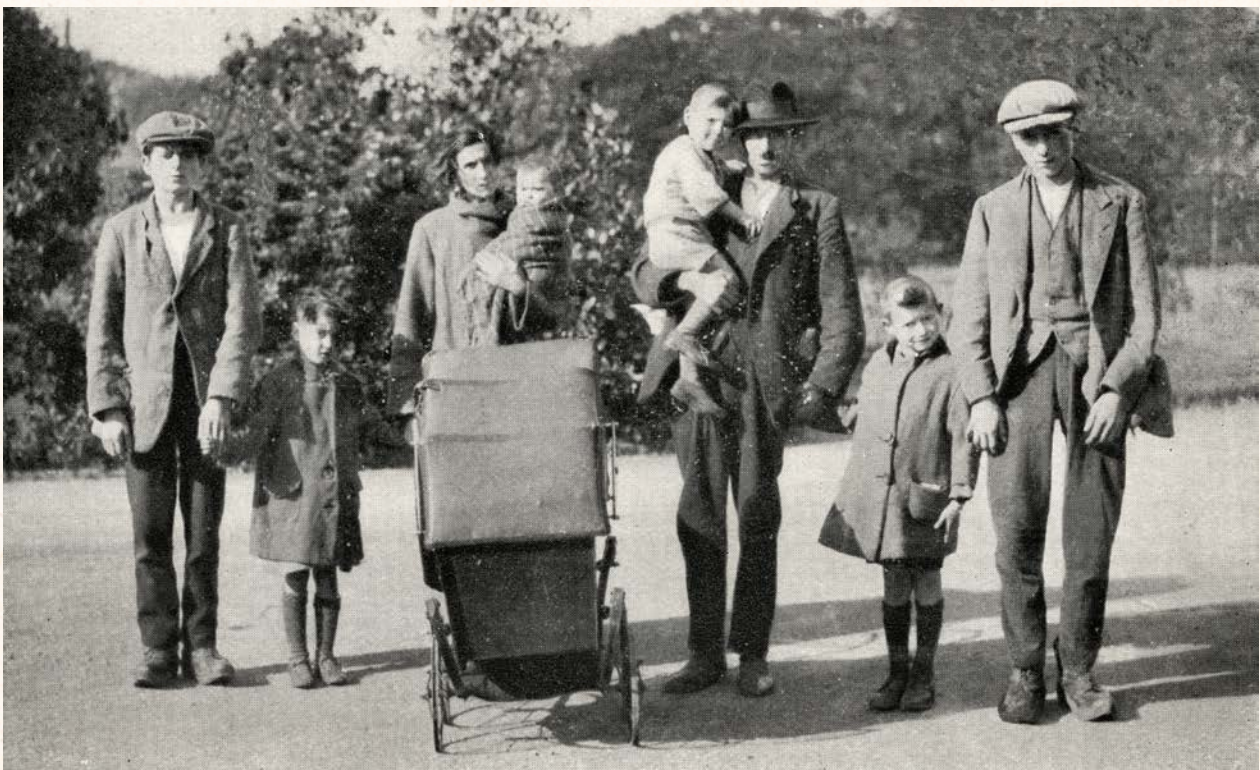
## 12. Quaker Collection

While the Quaker community is comparatively small, it has amassed a prolific collection of records. We've got over 1.5 million searchable records dating back to the mid-1600s, including births, marriages, deaths, disownments and testimonials, and migration records.



### DID YOU KNOW...

The first Quaker in Ireland, William Edmundson, was converted in 1653 after being introduced to the faith while serving in the Parliamentary Army at Chesterfield.



# HOW TO

## GET WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

It's all well and good having billions of records (a smidge over 8 billion, in fact), but that doesn't count for much if you can't find what, or who, you're looking for.

### FINDING RECORD COLLECTIONS

Know what type of records you want to search? Follow these three simple steps to find them.

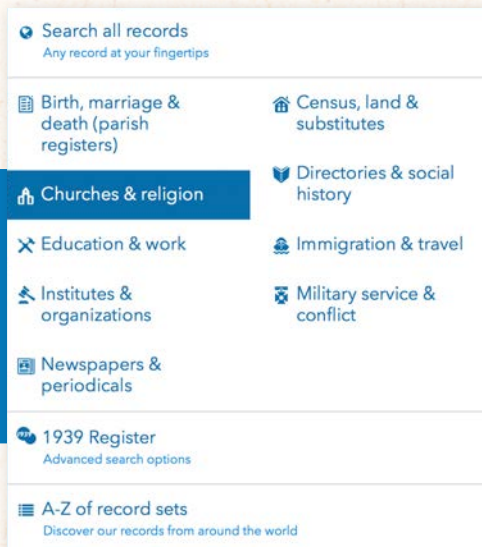
#### STEP 1

Click 'Search' on the blue bar at the top of the Findmypast homepage.

A blue rectangular button with a white magnifying glass icon and the word "Search" in white text.

#### STEP 2

Choose the category applicable to the record set you're looking for.



#### STEP 3

Click on the record collection you want to search.

#### Churches & Religion

- Administration
- Church Registers
- Courts & Legal
- Directories & Almanacs
- Newspapers & Magazines
- Religious Ceremonies

## FINDING YOUR ANCESTORS

No idea what record collections your ancestor might be in? Follow these three simple steps to find him or her.

### STEP 1

Go to the homepage and enter the name and any details you know of the ancestor you're researching into the search box and click search.



Search all records

Who  
Michael Murphy

When  
Born 1880 +/- 2yrs

Where  
Ireland Location

Search



Who		When			Where	
Last name	First name	Born	Died	Event	Record set	Location
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	Belfast, Antrim, Ireland
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	Newry, Armagh, Ireland
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	Newry, Armagh, Ireland
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	Newry, Armagh, Ireland
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	Dundalk, Armagh, Ireland
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	Armagh, Ireland
Murphy	Michael	1878	—	1878	Irish Births 1864-1958	New Ross, Carlow, Ireland

### STEP 2

The results of your search will be displayed on a new page. You can narrow your search using the filters on the left-hand side to choose a specific record category, or sort your search results at the top of the page by name, date and record set name.

### STEP 3

Once your search has been narrowed, click the transcript or image icons to view the records. To make a change to your search, click 'Edit search' on the left-hand side of the search results screen.



Ireland Marriages 1845-1958 Transcription

First Name Christopher  
Last Name Moody  
Year 1893  
Registered Quarter/Year Jan - Mar 1893  
Registration District Baltinglass  
Volume 2  
Page 429  
Potential Spouse Names Elizabeth Moody  
Mary Jane Hegarty  
Record set Irish Marriages 1845-1958  
Category Life Events (Birth, Marriage, Death)  
Record collection Marriages & divorces  
Collections from Ireland





# TIPS & TRICKS

## FOR SEARCHING LIKE AN EXPERT

### UNDERSTANDING SEARCH FIELDS

When you enter a name and/or date in the search fields in the homepage, we search our entire database for anyone matching those details. When you go to a specific search screen for a record category, collection or set you'll see the search forms become increasingly specific.

Fields only appear when they are relevant. That is, when the information you are searching for would have appeared in the original document. For example, if you select the record set 'Dorset Marriages', you'll be able to enter the spouse's first and last names. This is because these fields will have been entered in the original certificate (and indexed by us in the transcript).

However, if you're looking for a burial, you can't enter the spouse's name, even if you know it. This is because that information was not included in the original document. If you feel there's a search field missing, you can use a keyword to find any word that has been transcribed.

### USING KEYWORDS

In category pages (and some individual search screens), you can search records by keywords. Keywords work by identifying records that have a particular word in their transcripts. For example, you could search for the name 'Smith' in the birth, marriages, deaths and parish records, then use the keyword 'Glasgow', to find all the Smiths who were somehow associated with Glasgow in their records.

Or try typing 'murder' in the keywords box on the prison registers collection, to find all those involved in any recorded murder cases. You can use keywords to search for any fields that aren't displayed in our forms (for example, you can enter the house number to narrow down your results when searching for an address).

## MASTERING WILDCARDS

Wildcards indicate that a fragment of your search term is missing. They are your secret weapon when it comes to searching Findmypast. You can use them across many of our records to help find those that may have been mistranscribed or where spellings may have altered through a mishearing of a name or poor literacy.

Insert an asterisk \* (entered by pressing Shift and the 8 key on most keyboards) in a search field where you suspect there may be an alternative spelling. This will pick up places where a letter may be missing, repeated, or incorrect. For example, a surname search for Fo\*kes will return results with spelling variations that include Foakes, Fokes, Folks, Fookes, Forkes, Foukes, Foulkes and Fowkes. If you suspect there's only one incorrect letter, you can use the ? symbol. For example Sm?th, will return results for both Smith and Smyth.

You can use as many wildcards as you need to in a search field, so the results returned for search term Bla\*k\*mo\*r\* include the following variants: Blackmoer, Blackmoore, Blackmor, Blackmore, Blackmore Lee, Blacksmore, Blakemore and Blakmore. You can also use wildcards when searching for regiments (\* Som Yeo\* would yield North Somerset Yeomanry, as well as West Somerset Yeomanry), service numbers and more.





# HOW TO...

## TAKE YOUR FAMILY TREE BACK PAST 1837

Laura Berry - lead genealogist for Who Do You think You Are? - highlights four record collections that can get your family history research back to before civil registration began in England and Wales.

### PARISH REGISTERS

Parish registers are one of the key sources for piecing together your family tree before 1837 when the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales was introduced. Parish priests were obliged to record all baptisms, marriages and burials from 1538 and, although there isn't a complete national collection, the good news is that lots of County Record Offices have partnered with Findmypast to digitise the registers for hundreds of Anglican parishes. There's also a mammoth collection of Protestant nonconformist registers for dissenters who attended their local chapel or meeting house rather than the parish church.

### DEATH DUTY REGISTERS

In 1796, the government introduced Legacy Duty, which became payable on inheritance money received by anyone who was not in the deceased's immediate family. Registers were compiled to keep track of who owed the tax and how much was due. The Registers are held at the National Archives in Kew and contain vital facts such as the deceased's last address and occupation, how much their estate was worth, who the beneficiaries were, how they were related and where they lived. The pages were updated in subsequent years to include dates of death for the beneficiaries or information about their marriages. The index to the registers on Findmypast also acts as a useful discovery tool for many wills proved prior to 1858.



## MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

Family history societies around the UK have done sterling work recording the messages inscribed on old headstones in graveyards before they are corroded away. The searchable transcriptions on Findmypast also include epitaphs from memorials found inside and around churches. A wealth of biographical information about several generations of a family can be found on a single stone, including dates of death and years of birth.

## WILLS

Before the Principal Probate Registry was established in 1858, a complex network of church courts had responsibility for proving wills and issuing grants of probate for winding up estates. To find a copy of a will you usually need to work out which ecclesiastical court had jurisdiction over the estate first. Copies of wills kept by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury - the most superior court in England and Wales - are on Findmypast. The Prerogative Court of York dealt with estates where possessions worth over £5 were held in more than one diocese in the Province of York. Below these two courts were the Bishops' Diocesan and Consistory Courts, the Commissary Courts, Archdeaconry Courts and Peculiar Courts. Indexes for wills proved in many of these smaller courts across the country can be searched on Findmypast.



# 6 METHODS

## FOR BREAKING DOWN BRICK WALLS

In the world of genealogy, getting stuck is known as hitting a brick wall, and, unfortunately, it happens to all of us at some point. Next time you find yourself bashing up against one, try following this simple guide. With any luck, you'll break right through it.

### 1. RE-EXAMINE EVERYTHING

The first step in overcoming a brick wall is to re-examine how you got to this point by going back over all of your research so far. Not only will you refresh your memory of how far you've come, and give you a wider context for the elusive ancestor you are struggling with, but it may well throw up the answer.

Something that wasn't relevant when you found it months ago may provide an all-important clue. A previously unknown person on your family's census entry, someone with a similar name in the birth, death or marriage index that you had previously ignored or ruled out. Check for clues in what you have amassed so far, as well as mistakes that you might have made first time round.

You need to question everything you think you know about the missing ancestor. Whether you're working on assumptions, hearsay or even information taken from an official document, it may well be incorrect. Mistakes can be found on a certificate as well as in a relative's testimony. Check for proof of everything you think you know, double-checking ages and places, spellings and dates.

### 2. SEARCH ALL AVAILABLE SOURCES

Brick walls can often be overcome by broadening your search. The first step is to locate all possible records for the person. Try to find them in all relevant censuses, birth, marriage and death records. Make sure that you obtain the documents as proof. Double-checking and cross-checking details such as the name, age and place of birth is essential.

If you've exhausted all of the core records, it's time to branch out and investigate the billions of other records available on Findmypast.

Search the Passenger Lists, for example. Perhaps the reason you can't find a death entry for a person is that they moved overseas. Look at occupations directories, parish registers, military roll calls and lists. A dead end doesn't mean the end of your research, simply that you will have to try another approach.

There are a great number of resources available, both online and offline (see Useful Resources for inspiration). There are many experienced genealogists in our friendly Facebook group. Libraries and local family history societies may also be able to help. The answers you're looking for will be out there somewhere - it's always worth exploring other avenues.

### **3. TRY NAME VARIATIONS**

The further back in time your research takes you, the more likely you are to encounter name variations and misspellings. Literacy levels were considerably lower in previous centuries so there's a good chance your ancestor wouldn't have been able to tell an enumerator the correct spelling of their name, nor indeed recognise if it had been written down incorrectly. The spelling of names was more fluid, and phonetic, until the early Victorian era, meaning that if you're tracing ancestors beyond 1850 you should expect to encounter variations.

If you're still having difficulty locating someone, try name variations. Be creative. Think of how a name could be spelled phonetically. Try different vowels and any obvious possible alternate spellings. Also, search using known middle names or nicknames.

### **4. TRY AGE VARIATIONS**

In the same way that a name may be noted slightly differently in the records, an age can also be a source of difficulty. Your ancestor may have deliberately altered their age at one time or another, for many reasons. Perhaps they needed to be older to enlist in the military or to gain employment, or maybe they were marrying someone much older (or younger) than themselves and wanted to reduce the margin. Misinformation stated in one record has a habit of creating a knock-on effect, making the job of locating them harder.

If possible always double-check ages, collating all available certificates and matches on the various censuses. This should help to pin down an accurate date of birth, and help to locate a person throughout their life.

## 5. RESEARCH COLLATERAL LINES

Researching other lines of your family tree - the siblings of ancestors and other wider family - isn't only an equally valid part of your family history, but also a good way of finding answers to problems on your direct line. Collateral kin, as these ancestors are known, may be the key to unlocking the secrets of more immediate relatives. And while they may seem irrelevant when viewed from a modern vantage point, there would have been a time when their ties to your own ancestors were much closer.

Perhaps the elusive ancestor you're having trouble finding was staying with a relative on the night of the census; perhaps they were mentioned in a will, appear as a witness on a death certificate or even married within the family. And remember: marriages between cousins was not uncommon.

## 6. KNOW YOUR SOCIAL HISTORY

The history of your family is inextricably linked to the history of their time, and place. Part of the appeal of genealogy is discovering how your family lived, and how different their world was. Events of the time would have had a marked effect on their day-to-day lives, perhaps causing them to leave an area, pursue a different line of work or even causing their death.

Knowing that a deceased male ancestor was of fighting age in 1914, for example, would naturally lead you to check for his death in the World War One records. Between 1914-1915, an estimated 250,000 British underage boys enlisted and 120,000 of them were killed. Their death records will refer to them as being older than they actually were, due to their having adjusted their ages when signing up.

On a smaller scale, the industrialisation of the country led to marked changes in employment, as well as mass movement of people. You may have an ancestor's dates of birth and death, but what happened in between? Why did they live where they did? Who did they move with, or towards? All of these questions can be useful when looking to trace a problem ancestor.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

While we like to think we're the best family history website for finding British and Irish ancestors, the wide world of genealogy has plenty of other useful resources that can help with your research.

### THE FINDMYPAST BLOG

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[blog.findmypast.co.uk](http://blog.findmypast.co.uk)

Our blog is the number one educational resource for anything and everything genealogy-related. As well as how-to guides for using Findmypast, it's packed with amazing discoveries our users have made, along with guest blogs from experts and the latest updates on our weekly record releases.

### THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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[nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Official site of our friends at the National Archives. But while their website is a treasure trove of information - be sure to check out the Discovery section - we heartily recommend a trip to their beautiful building in Kew. A rite of passage for any serious genealogist, there's nothing quite like actually being able to see the physical records where your ancestors appear.

### GUILD OF ONE NAME STUDIES

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[one-name.org](http://one-name.org)

A one-name study is a project researching facts about a surname and all the people who have held it. The Guild of One-Name Studies is the world's leading organisation for one-name studies.

### THE FINDMYPAST FACEBOOK COMMUNITY

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[facebook.com/findmypast](https://facebook.com/findmypast)

Converse with like-minded family historians, stay up-to-date with all the latest genealogy news and views and have some fun while you're at it by joining our community on Facebook. We post daily updates and go live every Friday with a session dedicated to getting you further in your research. There are lots of friendly genealogists there - come and join us!

### THE SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

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[www.sog.org.uk](http://www.sog.org.uk)

An educational charity that exists to 'promote, encourage, and foster the study, science and knowledge of genealogy', the Society of Genealogists' (SoG) premises in central London house the largest family history research library in the UK.

### SCOTLAND'S PEOPLE

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[scotlandsppeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandsppeople.gov.uk)

The official government site for Scottish family history records. It includes BMDs, census records, parish records, wills and testaments, and more.



## **FAMILY SEARCH**



[familysearch.org](https://familysearch.org)

Free family history, family tree, and genealogy records and resources from around the world.

## **FFHS**



[ffhs.org.uk](https://ffhs.org.uk)

The Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) is an educational charity representing over 200 genealogy societies throughout the world, including national, regional and one-name groups.

## **IRISH FAMILY HISTORY CENTRE**



[irishfamilyhistorycentre.com](https://irishfamilyhistorycentre.com)

A vast online library of sources, where you can join a helpful community of Irish genealogists.

## **NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND**



[nationalarchives.ie](https://nationalarchives.ie)

The National Archives of Ireland website offers free access to many Irish records including wills, transportation registers and more.

## **IRISH GENEALOGY**



[irishgenealogy.ie/en](https://irishgenealogy.ie/en)

This Irish Government site has free access to civil records as well as a range of transcribed Catholic and Church of Ireland parish registers.

## **IRISH LIVES REMEMBERED**



[irishlivesremembered.ie](https://irishlivesremembered.ie)

A free monthly Irish family history e-mag, packed with useful information.