

Hidden in Plain Site – Handout

This handout accompanies ‘*Hidden in Plain Site – Freely available sources we often overlook*’ talk held on 23 October 2021 for the Scottish Indexes Conference. It covers alternative sources of information for common record types and some more unusual sources of information. It also identifies some hidden records on popular websites. The talk was originally written with a focus on English and Welsh resources but many of the websites are useful for any location. The handout also contains some free websites which were not covered in this talk.

Civil Registration

General Register Office (GRO)

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>

- Mother maiden names from 1837-1919
- Age at death from 1837 (note no unit given so age may not be in years)
- Births 1919-1934 (full names but not all maiden names)
- Recent births and deaths 1984-2019

Local Registry Offices

https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/local_bmd

- Locally stored information that is then usual sent to General Registry Office
- Project to index the locally held information
- Locations part of the project include Bath; Berkshire; Cheshire; Cumbria; Lancashire; North Wales; Shropshire; Staffordshire; West Midlands; Wiltshire; Yorkshire
- Additional locations that have similar indexes include Caerphilly; Cambridgeshire; Darlington; Durham; Gateshead; Gloucestershire; Isle of Wight
- Often include more information than the GRO indexes (e.g. marriage location)

Church Marriage Finder

<https://surname-society.org/marriage-finder/>

List of registration districts included (as of 27 July 2021) – Image © The Surname Society

Bermondsey	Bishopsgate	Bloomsbury
Braintree	Camberwell	Chelsea
Clerkenwell	Colchester	East London
Farringdon	Fulham	Greenwich
Holborn	Islington	Lambeth
Marylebone	Medway	Newington
North Aylesford	Paddington	Pancras
Poole	Poplar	Rotherhithe
Southwark	St George Southwark	St Giles
St Luke	St Saviour	Strood
West Ham	West London	Westminster
Westminster St Margaret	Witham	

- By providing registration year, quarter, volume and page, states the Church of England church the marriage took place in or states was in a Registry Office or non-conformist church.

Parish Records

FamilySearch

FamilySearch has a number of different options under their Search menu. Records is the most commonly used option that allows you to search indexed record sets. Some of these link to images. The Research Wiki (https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page) links to

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information about places by topic as well as many other useful subjects. If you are trying to find out what information is available for a specific place, it is an excellent resource. In particular, the probate pages for each county are particularly useful.

To find all physical sources within FamilySearch (e.g. not digital indexes), use the ‘Catalog’ option (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>).

- Digitisation of the microfilms
- Access depends on contract with providing Record Office – if locked online at home, most are available at a FamilySearch Affiliate Library (a list of affiliate library locations can be found here - https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/FamilySearch_Affiliate_Libraries)
- Symbols help indicate access



• Index available



• Locked images



• Microfilm



• Images available

- Filter for online record sets (select ‘Online’ under Availability)
- Counties that are open include Cambridgeshire (BTs), Cheshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devon, Dorset, Durham, Essex (BTs), Lancashire (incl. Manchester), Middlesex, Norfolk, Warwickshire (note that not all parishes in these counties are necessarily open)
- Records include items beyond Church of England Parish Registers or Bishops Transcripts in some cases so worth checking other items for those counties

To find sets of freely available images (often not indexed), use the ‘Images’ option (<https://www.familysearch.org/records/images/>). Then search on place name, surname, topic, etc. to identify what is available.

FreeREG

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

- Free transcripts of parish registers although not all parishes covered
- Ability to search on witness and family members

Online Parish Clerks

- Often known as OPCs
- Find by searching:
 - {county} and OPC in Google (e.g. Lancashire OPC),
 - via UKBMD (https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/online_parish_clerk)
 - via county pages at GENUKI (<https://www.genuki.org.uk/>)
- Different counties have different approaches and different formats
- Records include Parish Registers as well as other datasets
- Many counties have an OPC but not all – some parishes have one without a countywide OPC

Lancashire

<http://www.lan-opc.org.uk/>

- Church Record based
- Anglican and other denominations
- Search by whole county

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- Search by church/chapel, parish, village/town, within distance
- List of churches for each parish
- Historical data on parish

Sussex

<http://www.sussex-opc.org/>

- Access via Parish, Place of Worship or Record Type
- Baptisms, Marriages, Burials
- Monumental Inscriptions
- Census
- Wills – note these include full transcripts
- Indexes to Journals/Magazines
- Postcards & Images
- Directories, Poll Registers, Protestation Returns, Gazette

Wiltshire

<https://www.wiltshire-opc.org.uk/genealogy/>

- Free log on required
- Parish based
- Places of Worship
- Contiguous Parishes
- Various links and transcripts
- Photo galleries

Medway Ancestors (previously CityArk)

- <http://medway.adlibhosting.com/>
- Fully scanned copies of Medway (Kent) Parish registers – available as a PDF
- Other records are indexed but only limited are digitised
- Exception is Images database (old receipts, photos, postcards) – use Advanced Search and tick digital only

One Place Studies

- Register of One Place Studies - <http://www.oneplacestudy.org/>
- Society of One Place Studies - <https://www.one-place-studies.org/>
- List of One Place Studies at UKBMD - https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/one_place_study

Other sources

- Village Historical Societies – search for {Village name} and history or society or group
 - Example within talk – Kemsing Heritage Centre
(<http://www.kemsingheritagecentre.org.uk/wordpress/>)
- Archaeological Societies – often at county level so search for county or parish and ‘Archaeological’
- Cyndi’s List - <https://www.cyndislist.com/> - search under County then ‘Locality Specific’
- GENUKI - <https://www.genuki.org.uk/> - go to County then ‘Towns and Parishes’
- Dusty Docs - <http://www.dustydocs.com> - Covers UK as well as Australia and New Zealand and links to websites containing Parish Records

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- Online Genealogical Index - <https://www.ogindex.org/> - links to records available for each parish

Archives

County Archives

- Search for county and 'archive' or 'record office' to find website
- Search Catalogue – look into record information as often detailed transcript
- Special Projects – often links to additional sites that have been set up as part of a special project
- Facebook – look for Facebook group or page for the Archives which alert new record sets, additions to the online catalogue and events

The National Archives Discovery Catalogue

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

- Online catalogue for National Archive and over 2,500 other archives

Scotland Archive Network

<http://catalogue.nrscotland.gov.uk/scancatalogue/search.aspx>

- Online catalogue covering more than 50 Scottish archives
- Search or browse
- Drill into item level information

The National Archives Digital Microfilm

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/free-online-records-digital-microfilm/>

- Variety of records with A-Z provided
- Images of records originally filmed on microfilm available as downloadable PDFs
- IR1 Apprenticeship Books: To find the relevant image in the digital microfilm collection, use the reference (IR1/xx and page number ref – e.g. IR1/13 page 84) from the index. The first reference number (e.g. 13 in this case) refers to the IR number IR1/13 – this is the file you request to download. The second number (84 here) is the sheet number (each sheet is on two pdf pages) so double the number and that is the image number you want to identify on the file you have downloaded.

Anglo American Legal Tradition

Home Page: <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/>

Wiki: https://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/Main_Page

- Digitised images of various legal documents stored at The National Archives
- Selection of documents only
- Use Search on Wiki to find names and/or places within the short abstracts of the documents
- Use TNA Catalogue reference to find

Digitised Books

Internet Archive

<http://www.archive.org/>

- Search metadata – information stored in description of item – good for searching places
- Search text contents – information stored in item as found by OCR – good for searching surnames

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- Search TV news captions – uses the subtitles produced for the TV news
- Search archived web sites – known as the ‘Way Back Machine’ – identifies searched word in the top metadata of website – finds cached pages including of websites that no longer exist
- Way Back Machine – at top of page at Internet Archive – paste in a broken URL to see if the pages have been saved in the past

Google Books

<https://books.google.com/>

- Snippet view – only small sections of book visible – use search within the book to find other relevant entries
- Free eBooks – state ‘Read’ under information – can search within document – add to ‘My Library’

Hathi Trust

https://www.hathitrust.org/digital_library

- Digital Preservation Repository
- Public domain documents can be viewed in full
- Items in copyright are searchable

FamilySearch Books

<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/>

- View ‘Full text results’ – gives snippet of information for all results (even if ‘Protected’)
- ‘Public’ is accessible in full at home via website

Probate

Online indexes

- Andrew Millard’s Recent Indexes to English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish Probate Records
 - <https://web.archive.org/web/20200518152555/https://community.dur.ac.uk/a.r.millard/genealogy/probate.php> (paste full URL into browser if link does not work)
 - Search for specific probate jurisdictions
 - Links to books (see previous section)
- FamilySearch Wiki
 - https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/England_Probate_Records
 - Replace England by Wales, Scotland or Ireland
 - Find copies of probate records on FamilySearch Catalog by searching {County} in Place field and ‘Probate’ in Keyword field
- County Archive Catalogues and Indexes – many archives either have index lists or have abstracted wills in their catalogue
- North East Inheritance Database
 - https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/collection_information/family_records/probate/
 - Run by Durham University Library and Collections
 - Gives details of probate and links to images on FamilySearch for many items
- Lancashire Will Search
 - <http://user.xmission.com/~nelsonb/lws.htm>
 - Search gives details and links to indexes on Internet Archive and FamilySearch

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- Canterbury
 - <https://wills.canterbury-cathedral.org/>
 - <https://www.drdauidwright.co.uk/kent-probate-indexes.html>
- Norfolk Sources
 - <http://www.norfolksources.norfolk.gov.uk/DserveNS/>

Miscellanea

National Library of Wales

- Newspapers - <http://welshnewspapers.llgc.org.uk/en/home>
- Wills – pre-1858 – <https://www.library.wales/discover/library-resources/wills>
- Marriage Bonds - <https://www.library.wales/discover/library-resources/marriage-bonds>
- Tithe Maps - <https://places.library.wales/home>

London Lives

<http://www.londonlives.org/index.jsp>

- 1690 to 1800 – Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis

Charles Booth Online

<http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

- Maps and notebooks from ‘*Inquiry into Life and Labour in London*’
- Search on any keyword – name, place, etc.

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