

## The New Look of English Research

English research has changed dramatically in just the past few years. The Internet now plays a role in nearly every aspect of British research. While the Internet is exceptionally useful in the areas of research coordination, finding aids, & published genealogy, the web also gives access to an increasing number of imaged records, as well as compiled genealogy, extracted or transcribed records, indexes, and local help. Even if you need to consult records not available electronically, a web page or an archive email address can get more information about the records and how you can access them. Many libraries offer online searchable catalogs. A lookup service may provide a contact who actually looks at the record and emails you the results. A "how to" web page describes the records and helps you determine whether the record will meet your research goal.

Two major pieces of exciting news are the recent release of English records on FamilySearch's digitized RecordSearch at <http://www.familysearch.org/recordsearch/start.html> and the 1851 Jurisdictions beta site <http://maps.familysearch.org>.

**RecordSearch** allows you to view digitized microfilms from English records, including parish registers and bishops transcripts. At the time of preparation of this syllabus, the site had Cheshire parish registers and electoral records, the full 1841 and 1861 censuses, Durham bishop's transcripts, and a collection of British Vital Records originally published as *British Vital Records Index, Second Edition*. All but the Durham BTs are indexed. The search functionality is incredible—allowing you to preview search results by place, date range, gender, role, or name.

These records are the output of FamilySearchIndexing ([www.familysearchindexing.com](http://www.familysearchindexing.com)), where individuals such as yourselves volunteer to do online indexing of records from home or other locations. Current projects include several Cheshire records--Poor Law, Land Tax, and School records, as well as Essex parish registers. Cornwall parish registers and parish certificates as well as Warwick parish registers are upcoming indexing projects. A forthcoming addition to the FamilySearch offering is the Research Wiki, currently

in Beta at [wiki.familysearch.org](http://wiki.familysearch.org). This is having major content added with constant updates and new content.

**1851 Jurisdictions** is a preview of the future organization for genealogical research. A vast effort, drawing on decades of research in England, has created a database showing the various jurisdictions for England. Since records are typically kept or filed by the jurisdiction that created them, this is the most critical part of locating records. This website displays the genealogical jurisdictions that apply to any place in England and overlays it on a map. The various jurisdictions can be displayed as layers to allow one to see the interrelationships of the jurisdictions.

I'd like to give special notice to an underutilized function of the web—putting living relatives in touch with each other. Those with English ancestry should sign up and explore the best site for this purpose I've seen anywhere in the world—[www.genesreunited.com](http://www.genesreunited.com). Nearly everyone I've helped use it has found living relatives they never knew about--who then share information about their common family.

## Basic English web sites

The most important site for locating British websites is GENUKI (**GENealogy of the United Kingdom and Ireland**) at [www.genuki.org.uk/big/](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/). This umbrella site is run by volunteers and attempts to link anything and everything that can help with British Genealogy into one categorized list. The site is patterned after the Family History Library Catalog, with information first organized according to the level of jurisdiction that was responsible for that record. For example, birth records were kept by the national government, so they are described in the topic Civil Registration under the country level (England). Wills were mostly kept by the counties, so they are described in the topic Probate Records at the county level. Parish registers, on the other hand, were kept by the individual parishes and are therefore described in the topic Church Records under the name of the individual parish under the county in which that parish is located.

One small inconsistency - from the first selection page, geographical divisions are listed for your selection. Thus, from the first page, you select from a list of countries (England, Wales, Scotland, etc.). From the England page, you select a listed county. Once you get to the county page, however, the system changes. Now, you must click on a hidden link near the top of the page that says "Towns and parishes." That will then list the parishes for you to select the desired parish.

The British government web site ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)) offers an ever-expanding collection of documents you can view in your home (NOTE: click on categories at top rather than picking from “pull-down” list to get description/explanation of choices). Documents Online includes indexed images of over 1 million wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. The *Catalogue* searches through millions of British Navy seamen and all British Army soldiers discharged from 1760 through 1871. The National Archive has leaflets, guides, research aids, and even a podcast of guest speakers on a variety of topics of interest.

A more thorough treatment of English web sites with detailed examples can be found on my website at [www.alanmann.com/England.htm](http://www.alanmann.com/England.htm). This webpage explains eight different types of websites and gives examples of each category in an outline form. It is far easier to refer you to that site than to try to list all the URLs (web addresses) here.

## Major Genealogical Record Sites

### Free:

- FreeBMD– Search civil registration births, marriages, deaths from 1866 to 1919 at <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com>.
- Access to Archives - Helps you find documents in many archives by name or key word. [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/) –
- Online parish clerk – Somerset lists other counties in the margin, so go to <http://wsom-opc.org.uk/index.php>.

### Fee-based:

There are many projects and fee-based web sites coming available for England.

- Find My Past - [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com), is now available at the Family History Library and some Family History Centers at no charge.
- FamilyHistoryOnline sponsored by Federation of Family History Societies - [www.familyhistoryonline.net](http://www.familyhistoryonline.net) has many databases (click on databases to see the full list, sorted by county).

- Origins Network - [www.origins.net](http://www.origins.net) has several smaller databases that are unique to this site.
- Family Relatives - [www.familyrelatives.org](http://www.familyrelatives.org) – the only civil registration search that really works except freebmd (above).
- The Genealogist - [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk) lists all their databases, but I find it difficult to follow (also uses [www.BMDIndex.co.uk](http://www.BMDIndex.co.uk)).
- The official 1911 census web site – [www.1911census.co.uk](http://www.1911census.co.uk) – free search, but it costs for each transcription or image you view.
- [www.BMDRegister.uk.org](http://www.BMDRegister.uk.org) – census and other records. What's unique is non-conformist registers. (see [www.bmdregisters.co.uk/help/guide.htm](http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/help/guide.htm))
- For Civil Registration and Census records, check out <http://ukbmd.org.uk>, which maintains a list with links to all census and civil registration sites with at least county or large city-wide coverage.
- Any discussion of British records online would be lacking without mention of Ancestry.com. I caution you that many of the records listed are readily available elsewhere, for free—particularly those that are listed as parish records. Most of these have already been extracted and are available in the IGI (and can be separated from other IGI entries using Hugh Wallis' site, see below). Having pointed this out, however, I must say that even when data may be available elsewhere at no charge, by bringing several things together in one index, the time saved may be worth the cost. Ancestry also has an complete collection of English census records., While all of the census records are available on other commercial sites, no other single site has the complete collection. If you are going to be doing many searches in British 1901 census records, the cost of Ancestry would be less than that of the British government 1901 census site. You can view a list of available records in the Ancestry UK collection by going to [www.ancestry.com/search/locality/dbpage.aspx?tp=3257&p=3251](http://www.ancestry.com/search/locality/dbpage.aspx?tp=3257&p=3251).

A good list of English websites is maintained by Price & Associates, at [http://www.pricegen.com/english\\_genealogy.html](http://www.pricegen.com/english_genealogy.html). A far more extensive collection of many thousands of British websites arranged in FHLC-like categories is used at the Family History Library. The Family History Library's staff maintain this list of websites for use on the Library's computers, and has made this list available in the

library to export for personal use. The self-extracting zip file and the instructions for importing are available in the library or on the FamilySearch Wiki at [https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Family\\_History\\_Library\\_Internet\\_Favorites](https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Family_History_Library_Internet_Favorites). The favorites have been copied and put online by a private individual at [www.fhl-favorites.info](http://www.fhl-favorites.info), but this list may not be up to date and is more difficult to navigate than using the actual favorites downloaded from the FHL.

An excellent help for British research is Hugh Wallis' IGI Batch number page at [freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hughwallis/IGIBatchNumbers.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hughwallis/IGIBatchNumbers.htm). This page allows you to search IGI extracted British Isles parish register entries by parish. Normally, IGI searches are by county. Using this web site, you can limit the search to a particular batch. Since 99% of English and Welsh batches are associated with a parish, it is a good substitute for a parish search capability. (**NOTE:** temporarily pulled down by Ancestry, may not be there). Remember, though, that this site works best IF you know a parish that you want to search.

Don't miss:

the Lookup Exchange, where individuals offer to look things up for you for free (<http://aztecrose.tripod.com/LookupExchange.htm>)

ARCHON - ([www.archon.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/](http://www.archon.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/)), the official site for UK archives.

Vision of Britain – online gazetteers at  
<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/descriptions/index.jsp>

The British Library is beginning to put 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century newspapers online at <http://www.uk.olivesoftware.com/>

Landranger Maps Online with Ordnance Survey Gazetteer -  
<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/>



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