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Family History Resource List

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Date

Monday 10 July 2017



Support Services in Leeds for Family Historians

Sometimes when researching our family histories we come across things about our ancestors which we might find upsetting, or which might cause us to reflect on difficult episodes in our own lives. If this happens there are a lot of places in Leeds where you will be able to find advice and support.

[Leeds Bereavement Forum](#)

On their website you can find out about events (including death cafes) and there are some resources available to download. They also have an extensive [directory of services](#) to help you find the most appropriate service either locally or nationally.

[MIND](#)

Provides support for anyone facing mental health difficulties. They run [peer support groups](#) in locations across Leeds which are free to attend (donations welcome).

[Mindwell](#)

Another mental health charity which provides information on services and events in Leeds, including [links to support groups](#) for a range of issues.

[SANDS \(Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity\)](#)

A support group based in Leeds and run by bereaved parents, open to all no matter how long ago the loss occurred.

[Adoption Search Reunion](#)

Offers support and information for adopted people, adoptive parents and birth relatives. Includes information on every stage of searching for birth or adoptive parents, and on researching an adoption that took place in the UK.

Useful Websites and Archives for Family History Research

General and Guidance

[BBC History - Family History](#) : The basics, next steps, and easy to use tools.

[GENUKI](#) : UK and Ireland Genealogy. Lots of tips and resources.

[Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter](#) : A blog with regular updates about genealogy tools and resources.

Archives

[Archives Hub](#) : brings together descriptions of collections at nearly 300 institutions across the UK. Search for sources held in archives across the country.

[The National Archives](#) : Search for documents held in the National Archives as well as local archives and public record offices across the country. The National Archives have also produced [research guides](#) for a wide range of subjects.

[West Yorkshire Archive Service](#) : For documents relating to Leeds and West Yorkshire, including a [guide for family historians](#) researching the area.

Leeds Central Library, [Local and Family History Library](#) : A large collection linked to Leeds local and family history, and free access to the Ancestry database. The library also offers free Family History workshops for beginners and drop-in sessions for anyone having difficulties.

Databases

The most extensive databases are [Find my Past](#) and [Ancestry](#), and both contain a huge range of documents relating to family history research. They charge a subscription but are often available free of charge in local libraries and archives. In Leeds Libraries you can access Ancestry free of charge.

You can access transcriptions of birth marriage and death certificates for free at [FreeBMD](#) (they are transcribing all records for 1837-1983, but they have not completed the project yet). [UKBMD](#) is a similar website and also includes parish registers and census records. Through the [General Register Office](#) you can search the historical birth and death indexes and order Certificates or PDFs Online. [And Cornwall Online Parish Clerks Database](#) has transcriptions of birth, marriage and death certificates as well as a range of other documents relating to genealogy in the UK.

To find parish registers you can use [Family Search](#) which has a free index. This website is linked to the Church of the Latter-day Saints, but is not limited to documents relating to that church.

Find a will or probate document and order them online from the [UK government website](#).

On the National Archives website you can find out about [accessing the Electoral Register](#). There was a General Election in 1918 and all those away from their place of residence, including all men in the army, were listed on Absent Voters Lists; you can find the Leeds list [here](#).

For Irish family history research try [Irish Genealogy](#) which includes birth, marriage and death records, and search the Irish Census for free using the [National Archives website](#). Church records for Ireland are also available on the [Irish Genealogy](#) site.

If you are interested in your Scottish heritage you can use [Scotland's People](#) to search for free, then charges apply.

To research a particular place try the [Society for One-Place Studies](#) and [Trade Directories](#). To trace a surname have a look at the [Guild of One-Name Studies](#).

Specific Histories and Experiences

There are websites to help you research specific topics and themes within your family history:

- [Workhouses](#)
- [Children's Homes](#)
- [Railway Work, Life and Death](#) in the early twentieth century
- [Chartist Ancestors](#)
- [Manor Search](#)
- [Masonic genealogy](#) and [Masonic abbreviations](#)

War service records:

- [The Battle of Jutland Casualty Database](#)
- [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) has a database of many (but not all) war graves from the First and Second World Wars. Images of war graves and memorials can be found on the [War Graves Photographic Project](#). And the Imperial War Museum is compiling a [War Memorials Register](#)
- [Forces War Records](#) has wide range of records relating to the armed forces since the eighteenth century
- [Ancestry](#) has records for the First and Second World Wars, including card catalogues, and for the First World War the service and pension records which survive and medal records
- [Find my Past](#) has Second World War casualty lists as well as the 1939 register which lists those performing war work
- Second World War service records are closed, but you can [apply to the Ministry of Defence](#) for access. You can also [apply for a veteran's badge or medal](#)
- The National Archives have many research guides on aspects of the [First World War](#), [Second World War](#), and [other wars](#), as well as the [British Army medal index cards](#) for 1914-1920
- [The London Gazette](#) listed medal winners for the First and Second World Wars (including civilians)
- General guidance about researching the First World War can be found on [The Long Long Trail](#) website
- Red Cross [prisoner of war database](#) for the First World War; for the Second World War some information is listed on the [Lamsdorf](#) camp website
- Information on [Conscientious Objectors](#) from the Peace Pledge Union
- The [Bomb Sight](#) website has the location of bombs dropped on London during the Second World War as well as documents and personal accounts
- Accounts of life during wartime can be found at the [Second World War Experience Centre](#), Wetherby; the [Imperial War Museum](#), London;

Newspapers

[Leeds Libraries](#) have online access to: Access UK and Ireland Newspapers (national and local newspapers from 1882 to the present); Nineteenth Century British Newspapers; The Times Digital Archive. In the newspaper room you can also look at three centuries of local newspapers on the microfilm readers (the earliest edition

is the *Leeds Mercury* from 1719).

The British Library has a huge collection of local and national newspapers which can be viewed in London and at their [Boston Spa](#) site. There you can also access the digital [British Newspaper Archive](#) which has local and national newspapers from the 1800s up to the 1950s, although the digitisation project is ongoing so the geographical coverage is uneven.

Maps

[Old Maps Online](#) has a collection from around the world; [The National Library of Scotland](#) has a range of maps from the UK which can be accessed online. There are several local online collections of Tithe Maps, including one for [Leeds](#). And old Ordnance Survey maps can be ordered from [The Godfrey Edition](#).

Images

- [Leodis](#) has a very large collection of photographs of Leeds
- [Geograph](#) is developing a collection of photographs of every square km in England
- The [Gravestone Photographic Resource](#) is an international directory of grave monuments
- [Timepix](#) in an expanding archive of old photographs, with a large collection from the Greater Manchester area

Digital tools for family tree building and organising notes

The [BBC family history](#) pages have some useful basic templates.

For you're looking for something more technical, try: [Genopro](#); [Family Historian](#); [Family Tree Maker](#); [My History](#); [Legacy Family Tree](#); [Roots Magic](#); [ZoomPast Genealogy](#).

Oral History

Have you thought about interviewing family members to preserve their stories? There is lots of guidance available, including from the [Oral History Society](#) (who also have links to [other projects and websites](#) in the UK and the world), and the Oral History Association has a list of [Web Guides](#). If you are interested in doing interviews it is particularly important that you think about ethics and consent; the UK Data Archive have [clear guidance](#) on this and the Oral History Society has advice for [interviewing within families](#).

Thanks to Imogen Gerard who drew the family tree which illustrates this post.

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