

# TRACE LIVING RELATIVES

Go online to find your long-lost cousins  
and make contact all over the world



In association with

**Genes<sup>®</sup>  
Reunited**

"I found my long lost sister after 35 years. She joined Genes Reunited and I found her just 2 days later - amazing! Since then I have discovered another 2 sisters I didn't even know I had - including one who lives in Canada. We are now all very close thanks to Genes Reunited."

Gary Power, Jersey



Every family has a story.  
Discover yours...

At [genesreunited.co.uk](http://genesreunited.co.uk) we have millions of records, a powerful online family tree and a community of people just like you, ready to help you find the fascinating stories in your family.

**Genes<sup>®</sup>  
Reunited**

# WELCOME

## EDITORIAL

Editor: Adam Rees  
Art Editor: Alex Duce  
Production Editor: Lizi Brown  
Community Editor: Annabel Andrews  
Contributors: Anthony Adolph, Karen Bali,  
James Hendrie, David Sutton

## PRODUCTION

Production Coordinator:  
Stephanie Smith

## ADVERTISING

Senior Advertising Manager: Penny Stokes  
To advertise call +44 (0)1225 442244

## FUTURE PUBLISHING LTD

Group Publishing Director: Stuart Anderton  
Group Senior Editor: Paul Newman  
Group Art Editor: Steve Gotobed

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Customer Service: 0844 848 2852  
Overseas: +44 (0) 1604 251 045

## FUTURE PLC

Chief Executive: Mark Wood  
Non-Executive Chairman: Peter Allen  
Group Finance Director: Graham Harding  
Telephone: 01225 442244

Your Family Tree is the registered trademark  
of Future Publishing Ltd.



© Future Publishing Limited 2012.  
All rights reserved. No part of this  
magazine may be used or reproduced  
without the written permission  
of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company  
number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales.  
The registered office of Future Publishing Limited  
is at Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath,  
BA1 2BW. All information contained in this magazine  
is for information only and is, as far as we are aware,  
correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot  
accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies  
in such information. Readers are advised to contact  
manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the  
price of products/services referred to in this magazine.  
If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically  
grant Future a licence to publish your submission in  
whole or in part in all editions of the magazine,  
including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical  
or digital format throughout the world. Any material  
you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care  
is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or  
subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.

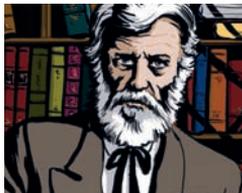
Our family history journeys are usually concerned with delving as far back into the past as we can, discovering the lives of ancestors before our time. However, by using the same techniques you can also find living family, dotted around the world or even living nearby, who may also be on the ancestral trail.

In this guide, we'll show you the top ways you can track down your long-lost cousins, using research techniques, DNA tests, and websites such as Genes Reunited. We'll also show you the best ways to approach these newfound family members and even go about organising a reunion.

We also have examples of how you can research previous generations of your family with the help of your newly-discovered kin. Happy hunting!

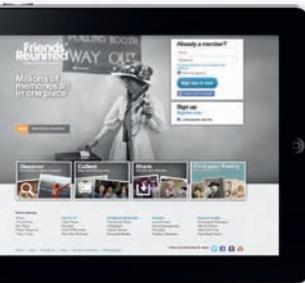
Adam Rees  
EDITOR  
adam.rees@futurenet.com

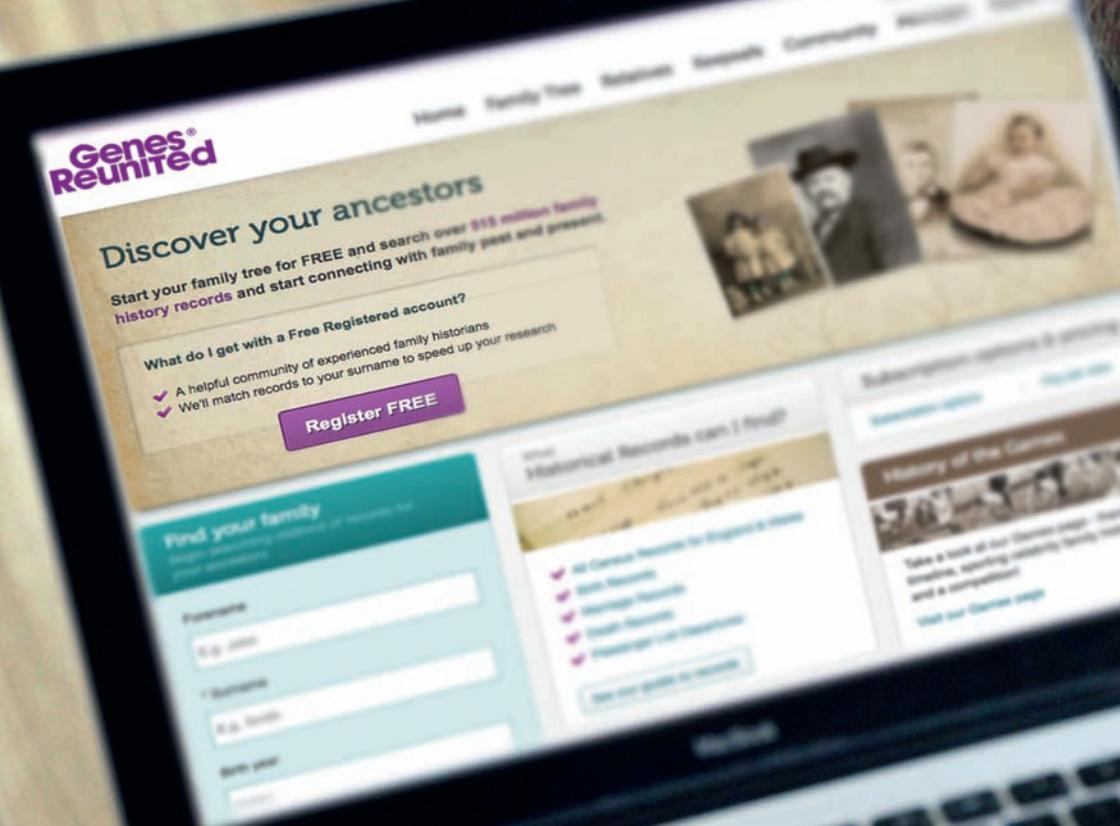




# CONTENTS

- 6 FIND FAMILY WITH GENES REUNITED
- 2 TRACE LIVING RELATIVES AND LOST COUSINS
- 28 PLAN A FAMILY REUNION
- 34 FINDING A WRITER IN MY TREE
- 38 DISCOVERING AN ANCESTRAL TRAGEDY
- 42 SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR FAMILY TREE
- 44 FAMILY RECORDS AT GENES REUNITED





# FIND FAMILY WITH GENES REUNITED

Trace relatives in the past and present using the millions of names on this website...

Researching your family history has become increasingly popular over the last ten years, with more and more people finding their ancestors and publishing what they've found on the internet. There are a number of family history websites, all offering a different experience to different people. Genes Reunited introduces family history to the absolute beginner – those people who are

curious to find out about their family and/or get in touch with living relatives who can tell them about their ancestors and share family stories.

There are over 12 million people on Genes Reunited, all who have a family tree. There are over 236 million names on the trees, with a name added every second of the day. The chances are some of your family will be on someone's tree on the site.



# Genes<sup>®</sup> Reunited

© Robin Beckham/BEEPstock/Alamy

## “There’s a good chance you’ll find family among the 236 million names on Genes Reunited”

Genes Reunited offers a number of tools to help you trace and keep track of your family history, along with the opportunity to utilise a thriving, knowledgeable community that’s always willing to help you. The site also has a sophisticated matching programme, which looks at the names on your tree and informs you if they appear on any of the millions of other trees. This is called the ‘Hot Match’ programme.

Once you have a match you’ll be able to contact the tree holder via secure email. You can request to view their tree and ask them about the people in their tree. It’s very likely that the tree holder is a

distant relative of yours so may be able to tell you stories about your ancestors, and talk you through additional branches of your tree that you can add. This is the best way of finding your long-lost relatives.

## Helping hand

The community section of the site is where the existing members of Genes have regular chats. This is where Genes started almost ten years ago. Members would ask questions and others would answer them, or at least point them in the right direction to carry on their research. Ten years on there are hundreds of people willing to help those who are a bit stuck.

It could be that you don’t know where to find a record, how to interpret one or you’ve simply drawn a blank on a name. The chances are that someone in the community on Genes will be able to help you. The boards are split into different categories with the two most popular sections being Find an Ancestor 

# STEP-BY-STEP: FIND RELATIVES AT GENES REUNITED

Set up a family tree and track down family on this unique website

## Register for FREE

Please complete this registration

Firstname

Surname

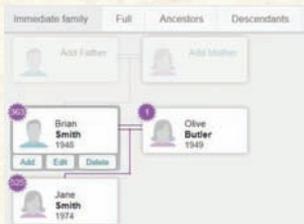
Gender

Year of birth

Place of birth

County of residence

Your email address



## Hot Matches

Your Current Hot Matches

Match rating	New	No. of matches	Tree owner	In my contacts?
🔥	NEW	1	Susan	No
🔥	NEW	1	Howard	No
🔥	NEW	1	Michael	No

## Getting started

**1** Genes Reunited is a great place to discover your family story. Go to [www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk) and register for free. When you enter your name this will automatically create a tree for you. If you already use Facebook you can simply log in with your Facebook details and there's no form to fill out.

## Add names

**2** Add as much information to your tree as you can. Start by working back, adding details of your parents' parents and also any siblings. Speak to your living relatives and ask them about your family, try and find out as many details as you can, then add this new information to your tree.

## Get a Hot Match

**3** Genes searches its entire collection of family trees comparing them to yours. When it finds a match with people in your tree, it lists them in your Hot Matches. You can then look through your matches, and add the name to your tree if the match is indeed one of your relatives.

and Find Living Relatives. The latter boards have become popular after TV programmes like *Long Lost Family* and national events like Adoption Week that runs in November each year.

## Beginners' guide

A lot of people are interested in family history but most are stumped before they begin. The easiest way to build your tree is to start with yourself; and when you register on Genes Reunited you will become the root relation (starting point) of the tree. Look for your birth record in the record section and you will find your mother's maiden name on the index. You can then use this information to look for the marriage record of your parents. You can continue to build your tree using this methodology of search-

**“You will be guided through the process of building your tree when you register for Genes”**

ing for birth and marriage records, by investigating the Hot Matches suggested by Genes, and researching through the community boards. For every person that is added to your tree a relation profile is created, which you can populate with further information later on as you discover more about each of your ancestors.

Also linked to a profile is a Keepsafe, which enables you to store records, photos and other images that are relevant to your family. Every time you come across something of interest on Genes or have a special photograph on your computer, you can simply save it here and add it to your research. You can also search on other people's Keepsafes (subject to privacy settings) as other members may have photographs or records that are of use to you. They could have relatives that worked with yours and have a photo of the place of work, or they could have attended a wedding together and have a photo that shows your ancestor's having fun!

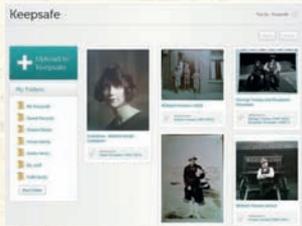
The tree is the hub of family history and enables you to chronologically build your family story. You will start building your tree when you register and

# Genes® Reunited



## Contact members

**4** If you think you have found a connection with another member, you can send them a private message to ask for more information. If you discover you do have an ancestor in common with another member you then have the option to share your family trees with each other.



## Make a Keepsafe

**5** The next step is to back up your research by searching the 515 million historical records available and store this information you find in your Keepsafe. Here you can also save your photos, certificates and any maps or letters. You can also share these documents with other members.



## Community help

**6** Genes Reunited has a thriving community with a variety of message boards, from genealogy discussions to research suggestions. If you have hit a brick wall this is the place to go. The Success Stories boards are full of fantastic heart warming stories that our members have chosen to share.

## “As you build your tree Genes Reunited suggests names and matches for you”

can continue to build it for free. As you're growing your tree, Genes suggests name and record matches for you to help you keep building, and recommends that you talk to any living relatives you have, to gather as much information as you can. It may be an odd date or place, it could be a nickname of someone or a memory – all of the information helps. You can input what you know on the relation panel in your tree, and every detail is matched against other members' relatives to see if you have any common ancestors.

Validating what you know, think you know or have discovered about your family is key to making sure you have the right ancestors, and therefore confirm your links to the living relatives you find on the website. At Genes you can access the England and Wales birth, marriage and death indexes, which are

by far the most popular records to view. These are quite basic but enable you to start building a picture of your ancestor. The census collection starts in 1841 and covers up to the 1911 England and Wales census, which is the latest census to be publicly available. You can track ancestors through the ages in this collection and also explore the Military and Travel collections should you find any gaps. Gene's parish registers take you back past the 1841 Census, and the most recent and exciting collection is the link with the British Newspaper Archives. In here you will be able to see if your family were local heroes or villains, or you might find family announcements or sporting achievements as well. There are over 6 million archived newspaper articles dating from 1700 to 1949, which can really add colour to your family history.

Every family has a story and Genes Reunited is constantly listening to feedback from members to help them to discover theirs. The website is built on members taking part in family reunions and finding amazing coincidences, scandals and family success, so everyone is encouraged to share what they have found their through Genes. ■

**REUNITED** YFT workmate Neville got in contact with his long-lost cousin Peter after putting up a post on the YFT Forum



# “YOUR FAMILY TREE HELPED ME FIND A LONG-LOST COUSIN”

How our colleague made contact and met up with a relative from Australia...

**W**orking for the same company as *Your Family Tree*, I found myself having a ‘water cooler’ moment with one of YFT’s staff. In passing I mentioned that the paternal side of my family tree has proved elusive, since I could find no listing of my late father, or his.

I explained that my grandfather was apparently imprisoned for embezzling from his own brother’s business. As a consequence he changed his and my father’s surname from either Gottman or Goodman, to Marten. The likelihood of getting anywhere seemed slim.

YFT said, “Write us a letter detailing this and we’ll put it on the website. Something might turn up.” I did just that and, lo and behold, two weeks later an email arrived from Australia! It stated, “I think I might be your cousin, Peter Goodman.” You could have knocked me down with a feather!

Peter amplified everything I’d said ten times over, with information corroborating what I’d heard from my mother. It seemed he was indeed my cousin. His grandfather, Thomas, was my grandfather Archibald’s brother – the one whose business the old shark had embezzled! What’s more, my mother is the only person still living that actually knew Thomas, so Peter now had a direct connection to his own grandfather. He’s traced our dynasty back to the 1500s too, and has subsequently furnished us with the whole thing.

Peter and his wife Janet have recently been visiting the UK from Sydney, to catch up with her family, their friends and for Peter to meet other relatives that he’s tracked down. We had to meet up.

Peter came to Bath where I work. We swapped stories, told each other as much as we knew and tied up loose ends. He then went on to visit my mother at home and the two got on like a house on fire. It was wonderful for Peter to hear her describe the man he never met, but whom it turns out was a more savoury character than my own dubious forebear.

It seems no one registered my dad’s birth - apparently his mother walked out and the housekeeper brought him up – it was she that I knew as my ‘grandmother’ on that side. Whether we’ll ever get to the bottom of it all, who knows?

So that’s my story so far! Through the generations there has been intrigue, success, stalwarts of society and scabby scoundrels in equal measure. I wonder how our descendents will view this current crop of Goodmans and Martens – with kindness, I hope.

Many thanks to my new cousin and friend, Peter Goodman, for taking the trouble to contact me, and for providing answers to questions that have eluded my mother, my sister and me for so long. And of course to YFT for making it all happen. ■

 Neville Marten

Genes<sup>®</sup>  
Reunited



# TRACK DOWN YOUR LIVING RELATIVES

There are a wealth of resources and techniques you can use in order to trace long-lost cousins and new family branches all over the world

**M**ost genealogists' focus is naturally set on the past. We strive to trace ever further back in time, seeking out remoter grandparents to add to our family trees. And quite rightly so – that's what genealogy is all about. But as we trace our lines back, other questions arise. If you're descended from the younger son of a family in the mid-18th century, what happened to the elder son and his descendants? Are there people out there who share the same ancestral blood as you? Suddenly, your interest may shift away from ancestors to focus on

collateral branches, and the living relatives who may be at the end of them.

Tracing living relatives may seem like a distraction from the 'real' business of family history. This is seldom the case, however, because of the wealth of knowledge that cousins may have concerning your mutual ancestors. In some cases, you can create lasting friendships with living cousins through this contact, while in others an exchange of data is enough to satisfy both parties, each with eyes focused firmly on the past. ©

## WAS HE IN THE ARMY?

Soldiers often settled where they were stationed...

The British Army was probably the biggest single agency that moved young men away from their homes, resulting in them settling elsewhere in Britain, or in the colonies. If a young man disappears from his home area, it's sometimes worth seeking him in the Army records at The National Archives on a hunch, or seeking his possible marriage, and the arrival of any subsequent children, in the various categories of Army marriages, baptisms and births held by the Registrar General, and now indexed at <http://tinyurl.com/2wnrv89>.

⊙ Sometimes, your search could be sparked by something you find in your research, such as the hint that an ancestor's brother went abroad, or that a sister inherited a family portrait. Finding these people can become a fascinating pursuit in its own right. If the family has an unusual surname, your quest could become a special project, attempting to connect all the living bearers into one big family tree.

### Internet links

Before the internet came along, the best way of meeting living relatives and exchanging information was through family history societies. These remain an excellent source of focused searching. Most societies deal with a specific area of the country, but there are many for special interests, such as German or Catholic ancestors. Some are devoted to specific surnames, and will publish queries sent to them.

A related source for finding living relatives is the Guild of One-name Studies (<http://tinyurl.com/6e4yngb>).

**“Family history societies remain an excellent source of focused searching”**

This currently has 7,850 surnames under scrutiny. Besides being a splendid source of information, its members have considerable knowledge of the whereabouts of living bearers of the surnames.

Sometimes, finding a living relative

is as simple as looking them up

on a search-engine such as

Google. They may appear

with their own website,

or in the news. Contacting

them is usually easy if

this is the case.

You can weed out a lot

of false hits by using inverted

commas – typing in the name Anne

Matthews will yield thousands of hits

for Annes who aren't Matthews and vice

versa, but “Anne Matthews” will return exactly that

phrase. If you know of a middle name, try this in full

and as an initial, ie “Anne Margaret Matthews” and

“Anne M. Matthews”. You can try variant spellings

such as Ann and Mathews, too.

Chance aside, the internet includes several highly-

focussed places for seeking living relatives. Friends

Reunited (<http://tinyurl.com/tyv1>) and Facebook

(<http://tinyurl.com/866bn>), which now has over 1

billion members, are both ways of contacting any

of the many people who have joined the sites (or, ⊙

### CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Finding the right family history society is easy, via the Federation of Family History Societies Federation website at [www.ffhs.org.uk](http://www.ffhs.org.uk).



**Friends Reunited**  
Remember when?  
Millions of memories all in one place

### Already a member?

Email:

Password:

Forgot password or changed email address?

Keep me signed in

**Sign me in now**

[Login with Facebook](#)

---

**Sign up**  
**Register now**

[1,498 people like this.](#)

**1918** What will you remember?

### Discover

Find millions of places & events

### Collect

Keep memories you love

### Share

Add your own memories

### Find your Family

with *Some* you never see

**Find a memory**  
**Music**  
I Tuned Into...  
My Tribes  
Guilty Pleasures  
I Was There

**Film & TV**  
I Was There  
Decades - Moments  
Icons & Moments  
What We Watched

**Childhood Memories**  
The School Days  
I Collected  
Toys & Games  
Favourite Reads

**Fashion**  
Love & Hate  
Hair & Accessories  
Decades  
Fashion Disasters

**News & events**  
Scandals & Disasters!  
War & Politics  
Weird & Funny  
Feel-Good News

**RECONNECTING** Sites such as Friends Reunited are worth checking to see if any of your distant family are members, who you can then contact



## “Haplogroups are unique, so people in the same group must be related to you”

⊙ failing them, their children!). Genealogy message boards have proliferated recently – though sadly it’s a shame we didn’t all agree to use the same one! A particularly good site is Genforum (<http://tinyurl.com/42m76>), which hosts message boards for a vast number of surnames. It has a simple search facility, or you can add the surname you want when you enter the address, ie, <http://genforum.genealogy.com/matthews>. The queries generally concern historical information, but most contributors will be descendants of the people discussed.

The best website for finding living relatives is Genes Reunited ([www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk)). It’s an amazing source of information for ancestors, and most of the details are supplied by their descendants. The site is therefore a fantastic place to find your distant cousins.

## Do a DNA test

Genetic testing firms allow you to learn more about your heritage and distant kindred, via a cheek-swab that, when posted to a laboratory, will be decoded into a string of numbers. These can tell you which genetic haplogroups you belong to. Haplogroups derive from genetic mutations that occurred in the birth of an ancestor, which were passed on to that person’s descendants. Geneticists are busy theorising how long ago these haplogroups arose, and where in the world they originated. What’s important is that they’re unique, so anybody else belonging to the same group must be related to you.

## GET THE VOTE

To interpret electoral registers correctly, you need to understand how the law changed...

From 1832, all men owning land worth £10 or over, and townsmen leasing land worth £10 or over, could vote. In 1867, the countryside qualification value was dropped to £5 and the franchise also extended to those paying £50 or more in rent, while in the towns, all householders were allowed to vote. In 1884, this qualification was extended to the countryside. Votes for all men over 20 and female householders over 30 came in 1918, with the vote extended to all women aged over 20 in 1928. Up to 1970, those over 20 were listed, and in the year someone reached the age of 21 the letter ‘Y’ may appear. From 1971, everyone over 17 appears.

That in itself is not desperately meaningful, as some haplogroups arose as far back as the first human migrations out of Africa. Discovering that all human beings are your living relatives is no great revelation. But genetics becomes very relevant indeed when we use the numerical signatures of the Y chromosomes that pass down from fathers to their sons, and from those sons to their own male offspring. This Y chromosome is liable to constant mutation, creating numerous new sub-haplogroups, each with innumerable, distinctive variants. You can therefore enter the numerical code resulting from a Y chromosome test into a website and search for matches. The best site is [www.ysearch.org](http://www.ysearch.org). If you find an exact (or extremely close match) to your Y chromosome, ⊙

### DNA

If you’re a woman, you won’t have a Y chromosome, so you need to have the Y chromosome of a brother, father, brother’s son or other male-lineal relative tested instead.

## “Tracing living relatives means turning research skills on their head and searching forward”

⦿ then you know this person must be quite a close living relative.

This works if you simply want to find some genetic kin, or want to make contact with living relatives who might know more about your family. It's also useful for finding the likely origins of a line if you're stuck: if you can only go back four generations, and have no idea where to look next, contact with a genetic relative who knows their line's history will indicate where you should start looking. It's also an excellent technique if you, or a recent male-line ancestor, was illegitimate, fostered or adopted, and you don't know the surname of the previous generation in your male line. If you're in a predicament such as this, and find an

exact genetic match with men surnamed Matthews, then you can be pretty certain that Matthews was the surname of your unknown male-line forebears.

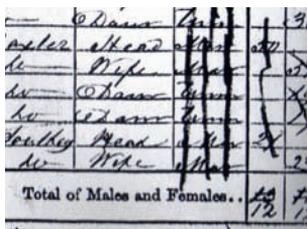
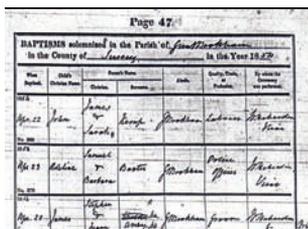
### Find the records

If all else fails, you can turn your genealogical research skills on their head and work forward. Let's say you know a certain ancestor lived in a parish. Obviously, if they died or moved away, they'll stop appearing in the registers. However, you may be able to identify the baptisms or marriages of other members of the family. You can then work forward to find the baptisms of any resulting children. Of course, some of these children will have left as well, but the chances are that others will have remained. You can thus snake your way forward through the registers, generation by generation down male and female lines, perhaps as far as the present, to find relatives still living in the village.

This method won't work for all lines, because so many people have migrated away from their ances- ⦿

## IN DEPTH: TRACE A LINE FORWARD

The records you use to trace your ancestors can also be used as a bridge to living relatives



### Parish registers

**1** We're looking for descendants of Samuel and Barbara Baxter of Great Bookham. Parish registers are your best start, because you can scan many years at once. In 1854, we find Adeline's baptism. Baxter is common, but Adeline is distinctive – this is one to follow.

### Census

**2** The Baxters disappear from Great Bookham soon after 1854, so you can use the indexed 1871 Census to trace them. Identified by Adeline's birthplace of Great Bookham, they appear in Tottenham in London. She's now a machinist, aged 17.

### Marriage certificate

**3** Adeline Baxter isn't on the 1881 Census. She may have died or, more likely, married. A search of marriages reveals a possible entry, and the certificate confirms the father's name, showing Adeline married Charles Coleman in 1876. Now, we can seek them in later censuses.

ORIGINS Websites such as ysearch show how you're genetically linked to other people who have had DNA tests

www.ysearch.org/gedcom\_show.asp?uid=ve6ae

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF LAST NAMES

RESEARCH TOOLS STATISTICS

SEARCH BY LAST NAME SEARCH FOR GENETIC MATCHES SEARCH BY HAPLOGROUP

Need Help? Forget Password? Disclaimer

## Displaying Pedigree for User ID ve6ae

Go Back > Displaying Pedigree for User ID ve6ae

Move your mouse over a name to see birth and death details, if available. Individuals known to be born in or after 1900 are hidden for privacy unless the GEDCOM owner specified otherwise. If you see => on the right of your screen, you can click this to view additional generations (if available).

Look for **red text** indicating people with the surname Duce and links to additional branches with this surname.

```

    graph TD
      1[1 HIDDEN] --- 2[2 HIDDEN]
      1 --- 3[3 HIDDEN]
      2 --- 4[4 Charles Henry /Schaefer/]
      2 --- 5[5 Bertha May /Towle/]
      3 --- 6[6 Robert Albert /Shimmin/]
      3 --- 7[7 Emma /Davis/]
      4 --- 8[8 Johann Jacob /Schaefer/]
      4 --- 9[9 Mary Ann /Emery/]
      5 --- 10[10 William Bentley /Towle/]
      5 --- 11[11 Eveline /Hewitt/]
      6 --- 12[12 Robert /Shimmin/]
      6 --- 13[13 Mary /Brown/]
      7 --- 14[14 Dan /Davis/]
      7 --- 15[15 Naomi Mahala /Cootle/]
      8 --- 16[16 Christoph /Schaefer/]
      8 --- 17[17 Elisabethe Wilhelmine Catharina /Hofmann/]
      9 --- 18[18 Samuel /Emery/]
      9 --- 19[19 Esther /Aston/]
      10 --- 20[20 Frederick William /Towle/]
      10 --- 21[21 Maria Kirkpatrick /White/]
      11 --- 22[22 William /Hewitt/]
      11 --- 23[23 Ann Jane /Sinton/]
      12 --- 24[24 Robert /Shimmin/]
      12 --- 25[25 Ann /Kelly/]
      13 --- 26[26 George /Brown/]
      13 --- 27[27 Jane /Henderson/]
      14 --- 28[28]
      14 --- 29[29]
      15 --- 30[30 John /Cootle/]
      15 --- 31[31 Rachel /Cooks/]
  
```

Home Create a New User Search for Genetic Matches Search by Last Name Edit an Existing User Alphabetical List of Last Names

All Contents Copyright 2003 ysearch.org and Genealogy by Genetics, Ltd. and shall not be reproduced without written authorization



## 1851 CENSUS OF DEANSGATE

Parish or Township of: MANCHESTER		Ecclesiastical District of: ST. MARY		City of MANCHESTER
Shed No.	STREET	NAME		
68	13 White Lion Street Empty	Ellen	BUTTERWORTH	
69	15 White Lion Street	Robt.	COUSINS	
69	15 White Lion Street	Chas.	STEWART	
69	15 White Lion Street	Jesse	WOODF	
	1 Hargreaves Court	Caroline	WOOD	

● tral homes. Turning to neighbouring parish registers (as you might when tracing ancestors) is possible, but it's rather hit-and-miss, not least because many emigrants took greater journeys – to the industrial towns to work in factories, or away across the seas.

For those who stayed in Britain, searches before the late 1700s are going to be very difficult. But from 1837 onwards, we have the boon of General Registration, followed in 1841 by the first national census. Remember that these will pick up adults born considerably earlier than these dates. Someone baptised in a village in 1770 might survive long enough to appear in the 1841 Census for the town to which they had

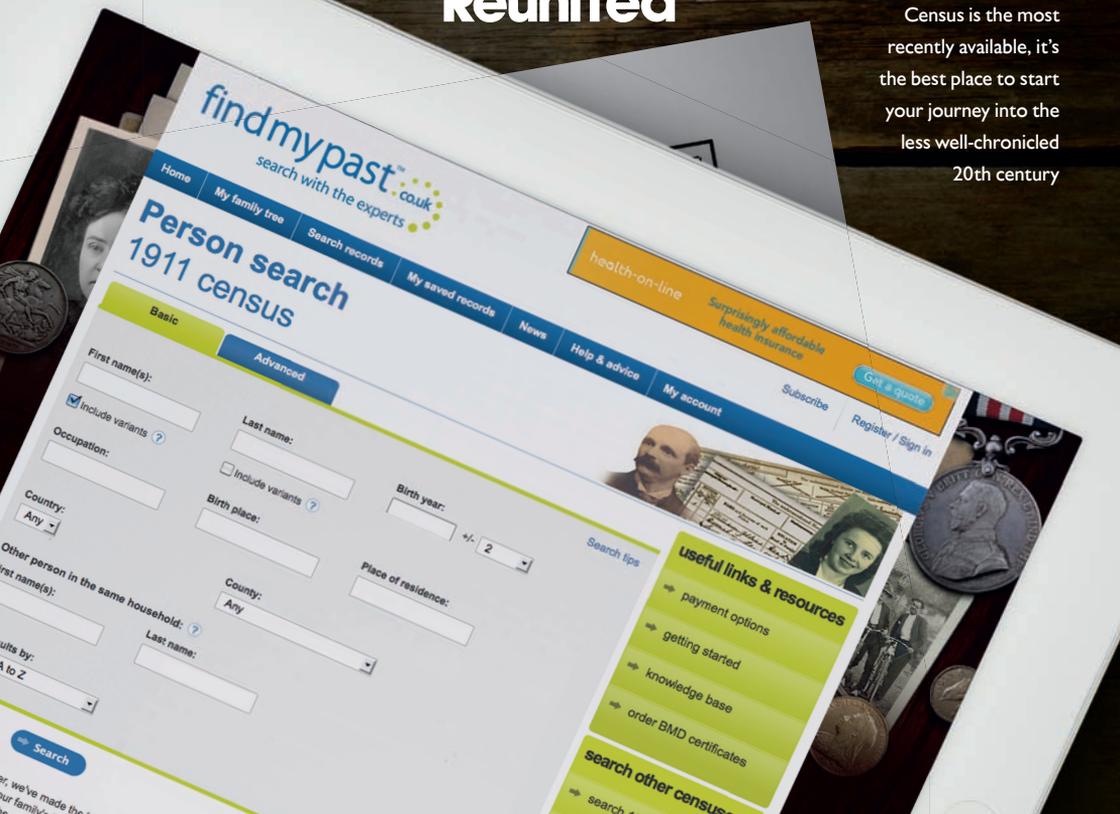
travelled – better still if they lived until 1851, in which case the records will confirm their place of origin.

The censuses for England, Wales and Scotland are now so well indexed that you may be able to hop forward, decade by decade, following your cousins' fortunes and movements without trouble. For example, you may find Frederick Matthews, who was baptised in Rye in 1822, in the 1851 Census for Manchester, aged 29, giving Rye as his place of birth. Maybe he'll appear in 1861, giving the same details, but now married with a five year-old son, Sydney. If Frederick fails to appear in 1871, he may have died, but you can find Sydney, now aged 15, living with his widowed

### STARTING YOUNG

While many people married in their late teens, until 1929 boys could marry at 14 and girls at 12, and even after 1929 the minimum age was only 16.

**BASE** As the 1911 Census is the most recently available, it's the best place to start your journey into the less well-chronicled 20th century



mother. The 1881 Census may then show Sydney married with his own children. If you're in doubt, maybe because there were two Sydney Matthewses born in Manchester about the same time, you'll need to seek the birth of one of his children, and then Sydney's own marriage, to make sure his father was indeed listed as a Frederick.

## 1911 and beyond

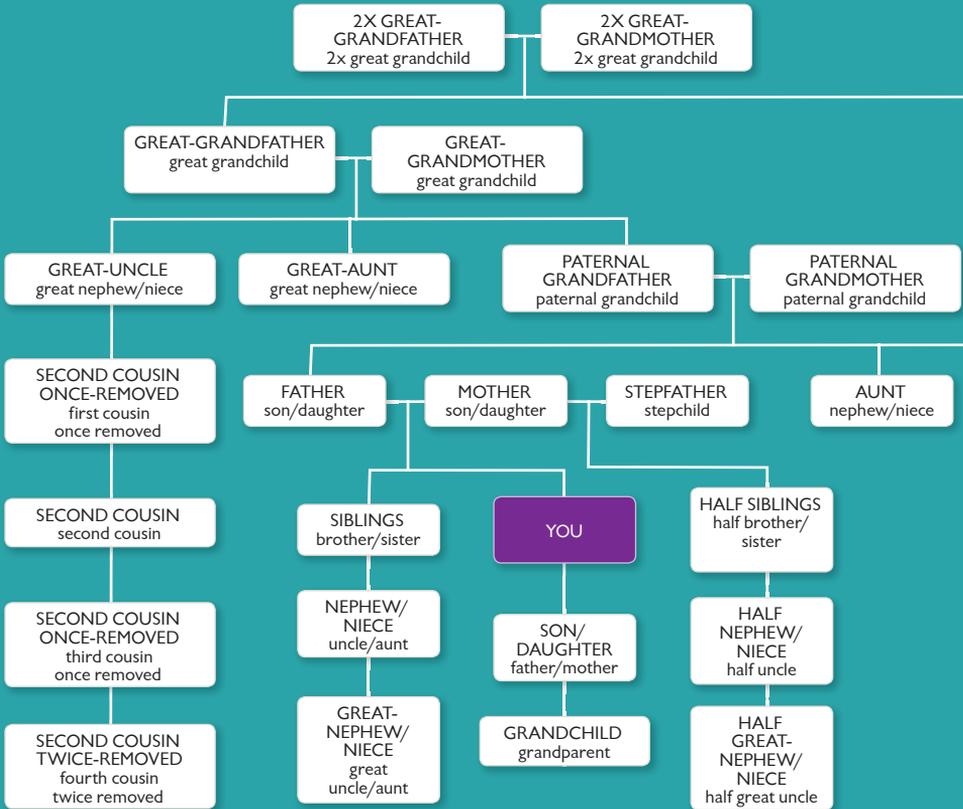
1911 is now a crucial year for tracing forwards. It's the year of the most recent available census, which contains new information not provided in earlier ones, such as how long women had been married, and how many children they had. This often makes it easier to find the marriage, and to seek the births of the children, and provides you with a solid platform from which to advance into the less well-chron-

**“The 1911 Census gives you a solid platform to advance into 20th-century research”**

icled 20th century. Also, from 1 September 1911, the English and Welsh General Registration birth indexes start providing the mother's maiden name. Genes Reunited has a fully searchable birth index from 1837 to 2005. Thus, once you know your relative Arthur Matthews married Jane Witter, you can look through the birth indexes for children surnamed Matthews, with the mother's maiden name, Witter. You can then seek possible marriages for those children. From March 1912, the spouse's surname is ◉

## HOW WE ARE RELATED

Make sense of phrases like ‘first cousin twice removed’ with this helpful chart



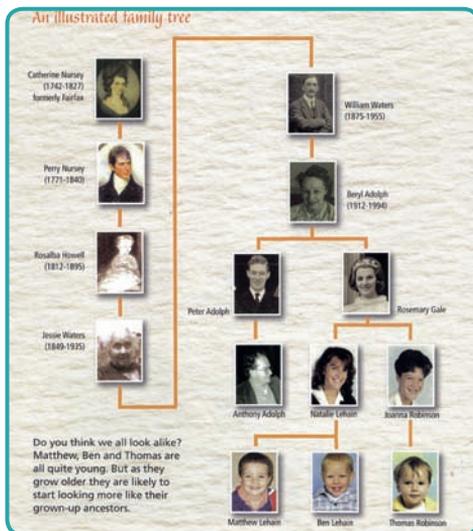
⦿ stated in the marriage indexes, so you can go back to the birth indexes to seek likely children of that union, and so on. If the surnames are very rare, you can get away without buying certificates to confirm you're right – but in any doubt, order them and check you're following the right line.

England and Wales's death indexes give ages from 1866 onwards, helping you spot the right person. Death certificates themselves won't automatically tell

you about offspring, but often the informant (whose address will be included) will be a child, or child-in-law. When searching in Scotland, you're lucky that death certificates give the name and address of informants, and also the names of the deceased's parents. That's potentially three generations on one document – confirming the connection, and leading you down to the next generation. More helpful still, and applicable to any period, are wills. Their only

YOUR RELATIONS' RELATIONSHIP TO YOURSELF IS IN CAPITALS – ie 'THEY ARE MY FATHER'

Your relationship to your relations is in lowercase – ie 'I am their cousin'



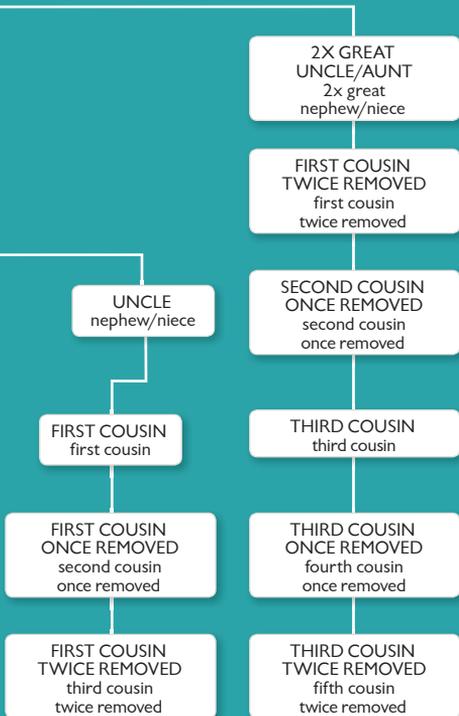
**PHOTO ARCHIVE** This page from Anthony Adolph's *Who Am I?*, shows a series of pictures, sent by living relatives, going back to the 1740s

past), which spell out who actually received legacies, providing snapshots of the actual state of families on the day the estate was shared out.

## Make contact

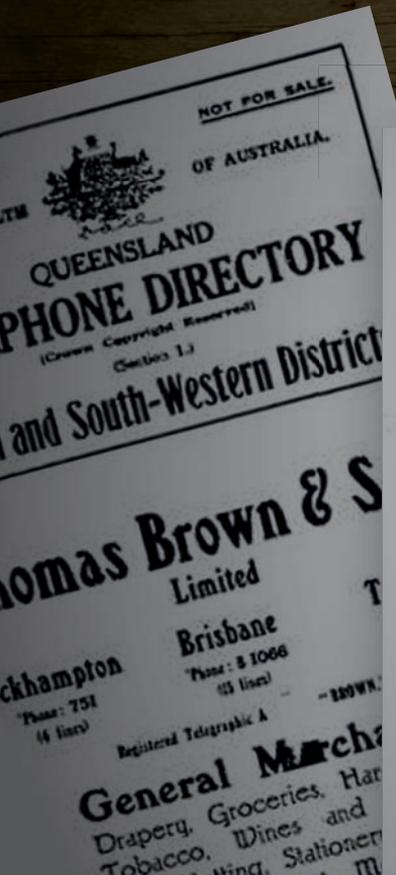
All these sources will guide you towards the present day. You're now more likely to find wills and General Registration records that will provide current addresses. Write a polite letter, explaining who you are and why you want to make contact. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. It's worth asking, if the recipient isn't who you think they are or they're not interested in your project, whether they would be kind enough to forward the letter to any relatives of theirs who might be able to help.

You can also seek living people using telephone directories and electoral lists (though be aware of the recent habit of people opting out of the publicly-searchable versions of both). These are available in libraries, but the easiest way of accessing them is usually via pay-per-view websites. Findmypast



drawback is that relatively few people made them. They're always worth seeking, however, because a single will may name not only children, but grandchildren, nieces, nephews and even more distant relatives.

A neglected source linked to these are the Estate Duty (also called Death Duty) Registers, covering 1796 to 1903 (at The National Archives class IR 26, indexed in IR 27 and now searchable at Findmy-



⦿ (<http://tinyurl.com/2wz2ewv>) is the most useful and economical.

Older electoral registers can be useful for tracing forwards too. The drawbacks are that they're not indexed, and if the people you want move away, the registers won't say where they went. On the plus side, copies for 1937/8 and from 1947 onwards are in the British Library (though they need ordering in advance) and they identify all members of the household. Remember to bear in mind how the qualifica-

**“Don't be daunted if you find a lot of names and addresses of possible relatives”**

tions for voting changed, so you can work out minimum ages for everyone concerned. A new man's name appearing in a family's electoral list entry now, for example, is an indication he's just turned 18. The disappearance of a young woman's name might be a clue that she has married, so you can seek this in the General Registration indexes. More mature people's disappearances, of course, may indicate death, so you can seek a death certificate or will.

Don't be daunted if you find a lot of names and addresses of possible relatives. Even if you make 400 phone calls, or write 400 letters, one positive result will make your efforts worthwhile.

Tracing relatives who went abroad is often as simple as looking them up on Genes Reunited; otherwise, if the country concerned has records like ours, you can trace them using the techniques already

LISTINGS Recent and old telephone directories and electoral rolls, that you can search on Findmypast, are great way for tracing living and deceased relatives



described. The massive problem, however, is that you may not know whether someone emigrated at all, let alone where they went. If you have an inkling, you can try the telephone books of the country concerned, and call people to see if your missing relative was an ancestor of theirs.

Some BMDs for the British abroad appear in the Registrar General's Consular records (<http://tinyurl.com/2wztev>) and the India Office records (<http://tinyurl.com/dg4tv4>).

Online passenger lists have opened up many new possibilities. Findmypast includes 24 million names from passenger lists of ships leaving Britain between 1890 and 1960, including ages and

former addresses. Otherwise, you can explore the records of arrivals in countries you think may have received your relative – you can find directories for different countries at Cyndi's List (<http://tinyurl.com/38rbry>). A particularly good source for migrants to the USA is the Ellis Island records of arrivals, searchable at Ellis Island (<http://tinyurl.com/l5fbwg>).

Some 130,000 relatives of ours are missing because they were sent to the colonies as child migrants. This practise resulted in many founding families in Canada, Rhodesia, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. A good history is given at Child Migrants Trust (<http://tinyurl.com/9tbj845>), a site

**SEARCH ENGINES**  
Different search engines provide different results at different times, so a negative result from one doesn't mean it's not worth trying others.

## “You can’t contact adopted relatives, but you can make your desire to do so known”

⦿ which also aims to reunite the lost strands of these fractured family trees.

### Missing people

All the techniques described here apply to searching for close living relatives too. However, in cases where the missing person may deliberately have made themselves hard to find, it’s sometimes worth focussing on their own immediate family instead. For example, a missing father might still be in perfectly normal contact with his own brothers and sisters. If you can trace them, they may provide a bridge to the man you’re seeking.

Formal adoption started in 1927. Seeking adopted relatives is made deliberately difficult because they’ll now be living under new names, with their identities protected by secrecy rules. The many adoptions and fosterings handled by Dr Barnardo’s are indexed under the original name, not the new one, so these records are not the shortcut many people hope for. Although you can’t make contact with adopted relatives, you can make your desire to be contacted known to them, should they decide to seek their living relatives, using the Adoption Contact Register at Directgov (<http://tinyurl.com/yjk9pqp>). If the adopted person hasn’t joined this register, it’s appropriate to respect their privacy. A similar Contact Register for Scotland is held at Birthlink (<http://tinyurl.com/9k3gsho>). Directgov explains how adopted people can start their own searches: after appropriate counselling, your local social services will reveal your original identity and

provide, if appropriate, further details about your birth parents from your adoption file. From this you can start the process of tracing relatives. Fostering records are kept by local social services departments for 75 years. Those wishing to contact fostered children can ask social services to forward a letter on their behalf.

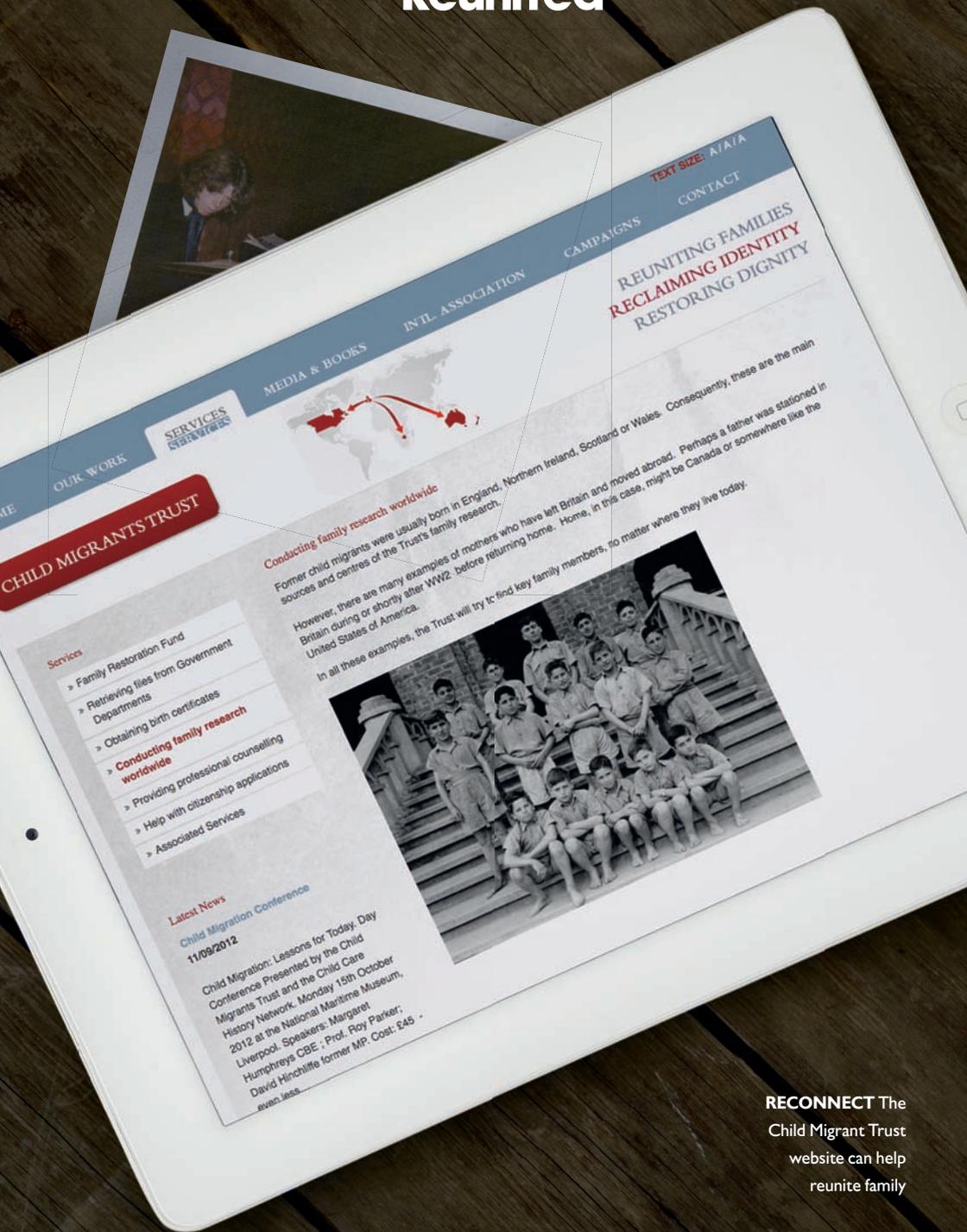
One of the hardest groups of people to trace are single mothers, whose names appear on the birth certificates of many fostered and adopted children. From July 1837, when women married they stated their age and father’s name, and this makes them relatively easy to trace. With single women, we have neither of these co-ordinates to help us. Searching through the birth indexes 14-plus years before they gave birth, and examining the marriage indexes for the years after they gave birth, will probably provide details of their birth and marriage, but unfortunately the correct entries will often be buried among many red herrings. Also, many unmarried mothers deliberately went far away from home to give birth. There is no easy answer; some-

times you can eliminate false possibilities

by finding a mother who died before the illegitimate child was born; on other occasions the birth records will give the unmarried mother’s normal address at the time of birth, and this could tie up with an address on a possible birth or marriage for her. Maybe you’ll have several possibilities, and the dilemma of whether to write saying, ‘did you have a child out of wedlock?’ – a letter that may be received with horror, or great rejoicing. As with all cases of seeking long-lost relatives, if you have a strong desire to find someone, it often provides the will and determination to overcome all obstacles. ■

### COMMUNICATE

When you contact potential relatives you find online, write to them clearly, as you would for a letter. The easier it is to understand, the more likely you are to receive a response.



## CHILD MIGRANTS TRUST

### Services

- > Family Restoration Fund
- > Retrieving files from Government Departments
- > Obtaining birth certificates
- > **Conducting family research worldwide**
- > Providing professional counselling
- > Help with citizenship applications
- > Associated Services

### Latest News

**Child Migration Conference**  
11/09/2012

Child Migration: Lessons for Today. Day Conference Presented by the Child Migrants Trust and the Child Care Migrants Network. Monday 15th October 2012 at the National Maritime Museum, Liverpool. Speakers: Margaret Humphreys CBE; Prof. Roy Parker; David Minchillo former MP. Cost: £45 - [even less](#)

### Conducting family research worldwide

Former child migrants were usually born in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales. Consequently, these are the main sources and centres of the Trust's family research. However, there are many examples of mothers who have left Britain and moved abroad. Perhaps a father was stationed in Britain during or shortly after WW2, before returning home. Home, in this case, might be Canada or somewhere like the United States of America.

In all these examples, the Trust will try to find key family members, no matter where they live today.



REUNITING FAMILIES  
RECLAIMING IDENTITY  
RESTORING DIGNITY

RECONNECT The  
Child Migrant Trust  
website can help  
reunite family

TOGETHER As well as being a great idea for a family party, reunions are a perfect opportunity to acquire more information for your genealogical research



# HOW TO PLAN A FAMILY REUNION

Reunions are a fun way to catch up with family, but they also give you an opportunity to advance your family research and meet newly-discovered living relatives

One of the great advantages of researching your family history is that it can bring you closer to your living relatives. It can help you to understand the lives of those who are older than you, give you something in common to discuss with distant cousins, and even help you track down more lost family.

There is something special about meeting with others who share your history and genetic heritage, and so organising a family reunion is a great idea for people to meet, and also to help your research.

In the past there was little need for a planned arrangement to get all of the family together. Gatherings such as christenings, weddings and funerals were at least an annual event and everyone remained in touch through close family ties. Traditionally family members remained in the same area and if anyone did move away, letters were regularly exchanged and trips home were made for Christmas or other important family events.

Christenings and large traditional weddings are no longer so popular, children move away for education and work, sometimes to another country, and may never return to their area of origin. We have smaller family units, so many people try to make their own

'family' with neighbours, friends and colleagues. But now family reunions have evolved to redress the balance, showing that the genetic bonds still matter.

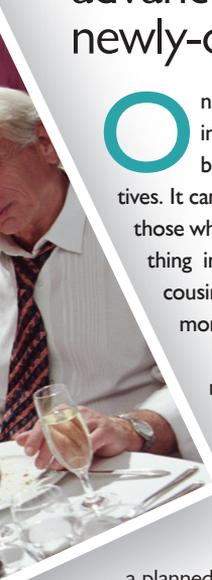
The benefits of a family reunion go beyond just keeping in touch and exchanging news. It presents the perfect opportunity to record information, take photographs to illustrate your tree, update your data and capture the memories of your older relatives.

You can check facts, swap photos and pool family history with relatives who might be researching other lines. All in all, your family reunion could add data to your tree that might have taken months or even years to acquire, and can save the expense of travel, document orders, and so on.

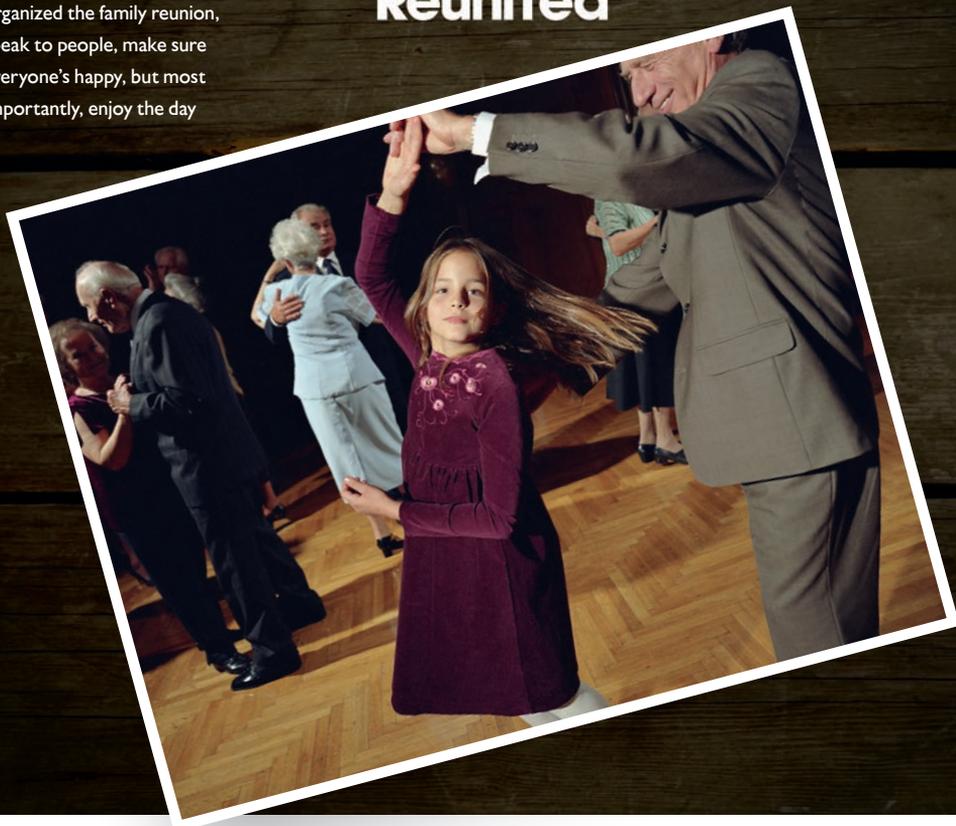
## Get planning

So how do you plan a family reunion and how long does it take? Most reunion veterans recommend that one year is ideal to plan, prepare and organise this kind of event. Of course you may not have this long but try to be realistic about the planning and preparation – it can end up taking over your life and become stressful if you try to do everything on your own.

First fix a provisional date or decide on a few dates so that you can survey those attending to get maximum numbers. Then draw up a preliminary list of everyone you would like to invite, but be prepared for it to grow.



**CELEBRATION** Once you've organized the family reunion, speak to people, make sure everyone's happy, but most importantly, enjoy the day



⦿ Your family reunion might consist of close relatives, any extended family members (for example, all first cousins, their children and any grandchildren), any living descendants of a common ancestor, relatives on one line, or people with the same surname. Some may not be reunions in the true sense, but instead uniting for the first time with distant relatives you have never met.

## Form a committee

Now you need to find your relatives! From your list contact as many relatives as possible to propose the idea of a reunion, taking the opportunity to ask them for information about other family members who you're not in touch with. If they can't help, you may need to spend some time searching the internet, sites such as Genes Reunited and Facebook,

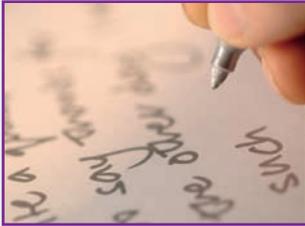
phoning around, writing letters, placing adverts or contacting organisations.

It may sound formal, but putting together a proper reunion committee is highly recommended. Unless your gathering is very small, you're sure to struggle if you try to arrange the whole day on your own. In the initial stages, when you are spreading the idea and gauging interest, ask for volunteers to take on some of the necessary tasks. The first job of the committee might be to decide on a location: whether dinner at home or in a restaurant; a barbeque in the park or a hired hall with live music; an informal gathering or a weekend in a hotel.

Other jobs for committee members may include budget and finance, printing invitations, venue liaison, decoration and displays, music, food arrangements, and recording proceedings on the day. Once you ⦿

## STEP-BY-STEP: ORGANISING THE REUNION

How to make sure that you and your guests get the most out of the get-together and use it as a bridge to living relatives



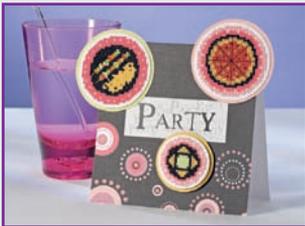
**1** Decide on a tentative date and guest list. Be prepared for the number of guests to grow as you plan further. Give yourself at least six months to prepare. Also, decide on a budget – how much are you willing to spend on the reunion?



**2** Discuss your plans with family members you know. Ask them for contact details of any relatives they're in touch with, do the same again, and build your guest list. You could also try finding family through websites such as Genes Reunited.



**3** Form a reunion committee with other close relatives. It might seem over-formal, but it's far better than trying to plan everything yourself. Each committee member could take charge of the location, food, budget, and print the invitations.



**4** Confirm the date and location. You may need to visit several locations before you find one that's suitable. You can then print and send out invitations. This is a better idea than advertising the event, or relying on word of mouth, as you can see how many people are likely to attend.



**5** Plan some activities for the day itself. Good ideas include awards (such as oldest attendee or longest distance travelled) and perhaps a quiz based around the family's history. These can help to break the ice, and allow people to work out how they're related, name tags can also help here.



**6** Produce some visual material for people to look at. A notice board of old family photographs is always popular, while a printout of an extended family tree is an obvious suggestion. You could also provide a notebook for people to supply their own memories.



**7** Enjoy the day! Your main task is to make sure that everyone's comfortable and happy. Plus, of course, take the opportunity to talk to as many people as possible, and gain details that may be useful in your research. Remember also to keep a note of everyone's contact details.

# Genes<sup>®</sup> Reunited

## GENERATIONS

A reunion is a great chance to speak to older relatives about family links and stories, and get youngsters interested



## “Speak with as many relatives as possible, especially the older ones, to gather facts”

⊙ have a rough idea of the cost of the day, work out the amount per person and ask everyone attending to send a deposit. This saves members of the organising committee from using their own money and ending up out of pocket. Also cater for vegetarians and ask people to inform you if they have special dietary needs.

### On the day

A good display of family memorabilia really makes a reunion interesting. Ask for copies of family photographs, old and new, before the event and have a picture board for everyone to look at. Also try to prepare a family tree chart that is as complete as possible so that everyone attending can find their name, add information or correct any mistakes. You can print charts on large, continuous sheets so that there are no unsightly joins.

Your main objectives for the day itself are to make sure everyone is comfortable and happy, to collect as much family information as possible, record the event for posterity, and make sure you enjoy yourself.

Be at the venue in plenty of time to greet even the earliest arrival. When everyone is there, it may be a nice idea to have one or two ice-breaking activities to get everyone talking. You could arrange for some awards, such as oldest and youngest family members, the longest marriage or the person who has travelled the farthest. Name badges are a good idea too, so that people know who they are talking to and how they're related. If music is played make sure all ages are catered for and that the sound is

## REUNION CHECKLIST

Things to remember when planning your gathering

- ✓ Make a provisional guest list but be prepared for it to grow
- ✓ Choose several dates then survey your relatives and go with the consensus
- ✓ Find a suitable location that is easy for everyone to get to
- ✓ Visit a few venues before making a decision
- ✓ Enlist some help at an early stage
- ✓ Decide on a budget then divide this by the number of guests
- ✓ Plan some activities to help everyone interact
- ✓ Make a display of family photos and a chart
- ✓ Record contact details of all your relatives
- ✓ Gather feedback so that your next reunion will be even better!

kept low, enabling people to hear each other and talk without shouting.

When everyone is settled, go about speaking with as many relatives as possible, especially the older ones, to gather facts. Oral history is an important way to record snippets of life history that might be lost forever, so a video camera or dictaphone will help you record this in a format that can be duplicated, saved and stored indefinitely.

It's a nice idea for everyone to take home something that reminds them of the day, or receive it soon after the event, such as printed mugs, T-shirts or keyrings. After the reunion, if you're ambitious and have the time, you might consider making an album of the day that you can print out or photocopy and bind as a permanent reminder of your family reunion. Remember also to keep a list of everyone's contact details in case you need to chase them up for more information, or to organise future reunions. ■

# CASE STUDY ONE: ANOTHER WRITER IN THE FAMILY

## How a YFT reader James Hendrie used contacts at Genes Reunited to find an amazing family link

**Y**ou make many surprising discoveries when uncovering your family tree. My most surprising so far is that I am not the only author in the family, as one of my distant relatives was the famous satirist Thomas Carlyle.

I am fortunate that my family tree is part of my father-in-law John Waddell's 13,000-name tree on Genes Reunited. This has led to many contacts with people across the world anxious to establish family relationships. John forwarded an email to me from a lady in Canada called Irene Reid, telling me we were third cousins. I was delighted to discover another

family member, and was intrigued by the sentence: "Another interesting point is that the Griersons are distantly related to Thomas Carlyle, the infamous author/poet of Scotland."

Although I had heard of Carlyle and had often driven past the signpost off the M74 motorway at Ecclefechan, which marks his birthplace, I didn't really know much about his works. However, I was determined to find out more, and to establish my family's connection to him. I asked Irene for more information and, looked more into Thomas Carlyle.

Carlyle had humble beginnings, yet it was clear from an early age that he was academically talented. He excelled in mathematics and gained a place at Edinburgh University aged only 14, walking the 80 miles from his home in Ecclefechan to get there.

He passed on a life in the church for the chance to write. He was the author of many famous works, and he and his wife Jane Baillie Welsh also became prolific letter writers.

### On the trail

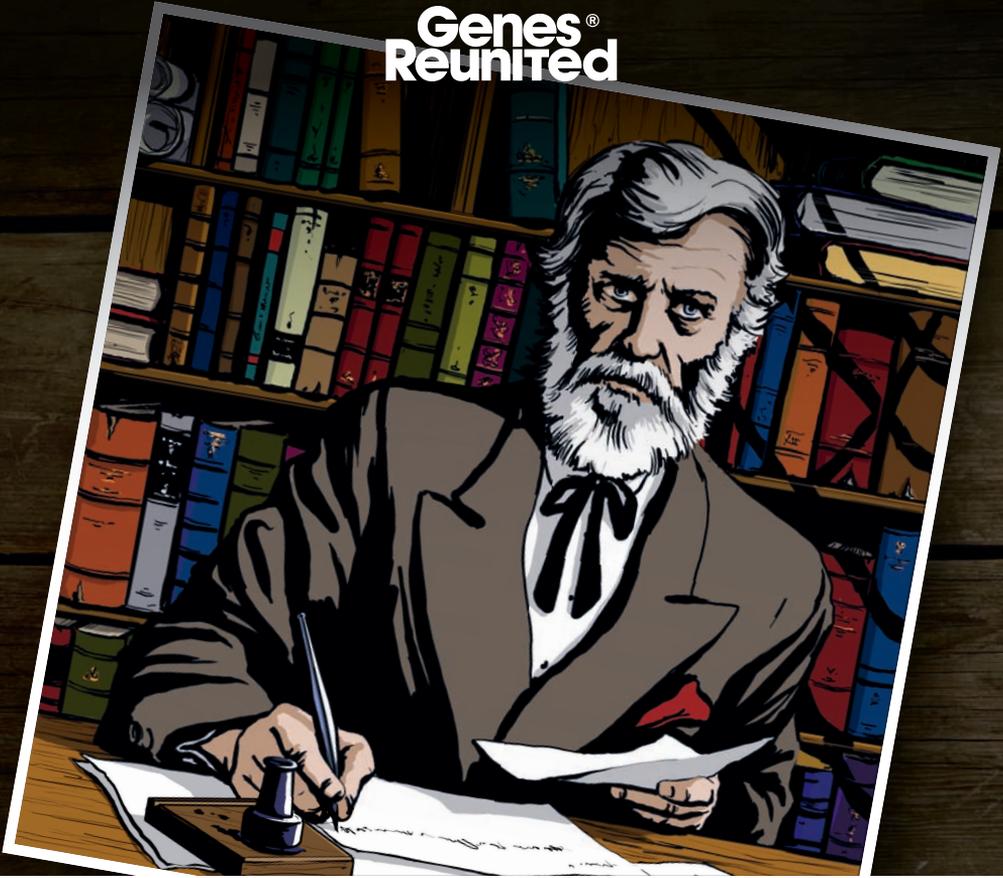
Irene sent me a lot of information – the key point being that my 3x-removed-grandmother Jean Grierson (née Aitken), was in fact Thomas Carlyle's mother's sister and therefore his maternal aunt. The other interesting piece of information was that I had another third cousin in Scotland. I wasted no time in writing to this third cousin, John Walker, and intro-

## THOMAS CARLYLE

Essayist, satirist and historian...

Thomas Carlyle was brought up a strict Calvinist. Rather than enter the church, he went to university and became a writer, publishing many controversial and challenging works.

Frederick the Great is an epic 21-book history of Friedrich II of Prussia by Carlyle, it was published in 1866 and took seven years to write. The Ewart Library holds a copy of an original proofed page owned by John Walker, with Carlyle's handwritten corrections on it.



**“I’m part of a 13,000-name tree on Genes Reunited that has led me to many contacts”**

ducing myself. He replied that his father lodged some papers had at the Ewart Library in Dumfries that showed family connections to Carlyle.

It was clear that I needed to visit to the library as well as a meet John. I was very excited when I went to the Ewart Library for the first time. There was a fascinating collection of papers, letters and a notebook maintained by another relation of Carlyle, which contained genealogical details of the Aitkens, my 3x great-grandmother Jean, and her sister Margaret –

Thomas Carlyle’s mother. I found it remarkable to see copies of these documents and also his handwriting and proof corrections to some of his manuscripts.

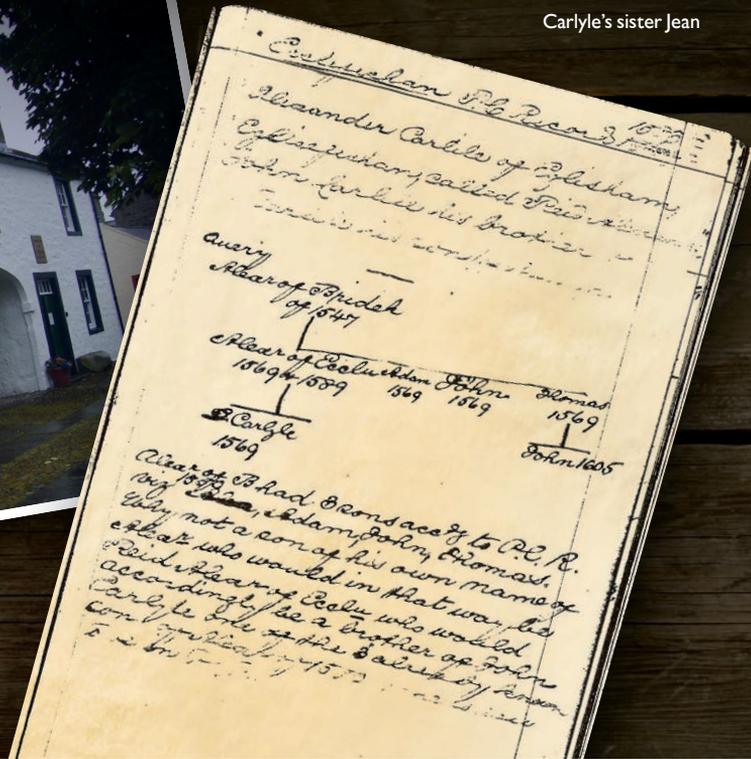
It was even more stunning to see the real-life original copies later on in my research when I visited my newly found third cousin John. He and I were able to compare our respective family trees and also discuss our mutual third cousin’s information, which she had supplied to both of us.

By now I was in no doubt of the connection to Carlyle – Jean Aitken, who married John Grierson in 1793, set up a tree of Griersons from which we were all descended. Interestingly their son, James Grierson, our 2x great-grandfather, was also a cousin of Carlyle, so in fact we have a double connection him.

John was also able to point me in the direction of Professor Ian Campbell, a respected authority and ◉



ABOVE The Arched House, Ecclefechan, where Thomas Carlyle was born



⦿ writer on Thomas Carlyle, as a source of further information on how our family and Carlyle got on all those years ago. I contacted Professor Campbell and he directed me to <http://dukejournals.org>, where you can view over 10,000 letters, including ones Thomas Carlyle and his wife wrote to family and friends.

## Personal letters

The indexing system on this site allowed me to identify the letters with references to the Grierson family, and I spent many hours carefully reading the letters to see how Thomas referred to my ancestors.

I found Carlyle talking fondly of visiting John Grierson, or Grier as he is called in the letters, and his wife Jean. Sadly he also talked of the funeral of my 3x great-grandfather: “Alas I had almost forgotten to say that honest good John Grier of the Grove is gone

to his long home, Alick and Jamie and I assisted at his funeral some three weeks ago.”

In a letter to his brother Alick in 1824, Carlyle asks how uncle John is, and talks to his sister Margaret in another letter a few years later of “parting from the hospitable home of John Grier”. Further investigation showed how Carlyle’s mother was taken to the Grierson family farm when she was ill, and was cared for by John Grierson and his family. With what I had learned about Carlyle and how he and my relations were close all those years ago, I felt that I had to visit his birthplace at Ecclefechan to find out more about him and his writing.

The National Trust for Scotland administers the Arched House where he was born, and going there offered me a terrific insight into the man himself. It was an extremely strange feeling signing the visi-

## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Genes Reunited offers a worldwide opportunity for genealogy research...

While I use [www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk) a lot in my research, I rely on my contacts coming via my father-in-law's family tree, which he has built on the site over many years, and on which my family's details have been added. His tree has been built up using the easy step-by-step Family Tree Builder online.

The site also identifies likely relatives for you, and after making initial contact through the site to determine whether there is in fact a connection, you can then choose whether or not to establish communication links. It is also possible to research census and BMD records on the site. This can be very useful in helping you to understand more about your ancestors. It can all be done for a modest annual subscription or you could opt for a pay-as-you-go basis.

tor book and discussing my family connection with the guide. The house was built by his father and uncle, and Carlyle was born there in 1795. There are many artefacts that belonged to Carlyle and his wife Jane, such as a portrait that show the crowds that turned up for his funeral, which took place only a short distance away from the house at Hoddam Church. Walking from the house towards the graveyard nowadays it's hard to imagine just how famous Thomas Carlyle became, because his grave site is quite simple and it's only identifiable through the long grass by the metal railings around it.

### Family sites

I have also made several visits to the area of Dumfriesshire where my relatives and Carlyle would have lived. John Grierson and his son, James farmed in the area at Noblehill, Ladypark and the Grove, while Jean Aitken's family farmed at Whitestanes.

It has been wonderful to learn about how they and Carlyle worked and lived back then. They were clearly very close and Carlyle had great affection for his aunt, uncle and their family. As well as officiating at John Grierson's funeral, he also visited Jean Aitken just before she died: "Carlyle went with his mother from Ecclefechan to take leave of her before she died and there is still extant among his relics the little present she gave him as a keepsake."

Of all the visits that I have made to the area, the visit to Terregles Church on the outskirts of Dumfries was the most poignant in my family history search. This is an historic place not only for the church which dates back to the 13th century, but also for our family, as side-by-side are the graves of my 3x great-grandfather John Grierson and his wife Jean Aitken, and next to them lies my 2x great-grandfather James Grierson. It's incredible for me to think that at this place in 1828 Thomas Carlyle would have helped to

**"I now have two new family members who share my passion for our family's history"**

lay the body of my relative 'Good John Grier' to rest and in doing so would further demonstrate the ties between him and my family.

So from a simple email I have discovered my family's link to a famous relative, and his life's work. However, I now have two new family members in John and Irene who both share my passion for researching and recording the history of our family, and who I can now hope to visit and share my research with. ■

# CASE STUDY TWO: HOW I FOUND AN HORRIFIC DEATH

How a contact made through Genes Reunited helped our reader David Sutton piece together a terrible incident in his family history

**D**uring my research into the adventures of my seafaring great-grandfather, I discovered a horrendous accident that led to his wife's untimely death. My investigation also uncovered two strangers, whose quick actions prevented the deaths of my grandfather and his siblings on that terrible night.

When I began researching my great-grandfather, William Haylings, I had some difficulty tracing him

**“Despite her horrific injuries she remained conscious, but the doctors held no hope”**

on censuses or finding his birth. Then I found him on the 1901 Census, living at 3 Powells Row, Worcester with his widowed mother, Hannah, and his three children, Rosa, William and Frederick, all born in Plymouth. He's shown as a railway labourer and widower, which inevitably led me to wonder what had happened to his wife, my great-grandmother?

His place of birth was Worcester, and he was 43, giving me a birth year of about 1858. I searched the birth indexes and ordered his certificate, for 16

January 1859, with the surname recorded as “Haylings”. I searched the 1891 Census and couldn't find any records for him in either Worcester or Plymouth, but the 1881 record turned up some intriguing information. It showed an Emma “Hayling”, shown as the head of the household, at 48 Rendle Street, Plymouth. With her were two sisters, Ann and Elizabeth Willcocks, and a son, William J Hayling, who I later discovered died in infancy. I checked the occupation column of the Census, which shows Emma as a “Sailor's Wife”. This had subsequently been crossed through, as this was obviously not her occupation, but it was a very significant clue and I am grateful to the enumerator for not erasing or obscuring it!

## Sea stoker

If this Emma was married to my great-grandfather, then he was probably a sailor in the Merchant or Royal Navy. But tracing these records seemed too daunting, so I decided first to find Emma's marriage certificate for more clues. On 20 July 1879, at Plymouth Register Office, William Haylings married Emma Willcocks. Importantly it states William's occupation as “Stoker, RN”.

This gave me the confidence to search the Royal Naval records at The National Archives, and there I found William's service record, which proved ◉



## CORONERS' INQUESTS

Local newspapers may hold the key to these rare records

If an ancestor's death certificate shows the cause of death to be sudden or unexplained, an accident or a crime, there will probably have been an inquest. Unfortunately, many coroners' records have been destroyed. A coroner is allowed to dispose of records after 15 years and records are generally not open to the public for 75 years – quite a drawback! However, you can find any records that have survived at TNA or county record offices. For instance, the Birmingham Archive and Heritage Service at the Central Library holds coroners' inquests from 1875 onwards, plus coroners' court rolls on microfilm, giving brief details, from 1839 onwards.

If there are no inquest papers remaining, all is not lost. Inquests since the 18th century were often reported in local newspapers, which you can find at county record offices and libraries. If a coroner signed the death certificate, it's worth searching local newspapers for the area in the days after the death. The incident itself or the proceedings of the inquest may have been reported, and this information can dramatically add to your research.

## VICTORIANS SEE THE LIGHT

The revolution of lamps and the refinement of paraffin

Stone lamps carved with a small depression in the top have been around since 15,000 BC or earlier. Lamps stayed more or less unchanged from the Roman period to Medieval times, when conical or vase shaped lamps were made from glass, metal or pottery, and had a floating wick. In 1784, the physicist Amie Argand of Geneva invented a round burner with a tubular wick, using sticky vegetable-based Colza oil. The lamp was later improved with a glass chimney.

Once the extraction process of oil from shale and drilling produced petrol, diesel and paraffin, there was a revolution in lamps. James Young's patented refinement of paraffin in 1847 was the beginning of the oil lamp age. A boom in lamp design followed, with even modest households having several lamps for different purposes. From the cheapest japanned table lamp, to brass Corinthian pillar designs with ornate crystal globes for the dining rooms of the wealthiest, the oil lamp certainly illuminated the Victorian age.

⊙ fascinating. It shows all the vessels he served on between 1878 and when he left the service in 1897, and that he earned several good conduct badges, on over 13 different types of ship.

### Dreadful death

Still, all this fascinating information didn't help me find out what had happened to his wife, Emma. I had to resort to the death indexes. From the 1901 Census, I'd established that the widowed William's youngest child was Frederick, born about 1890. Armed with this year, I searched the indexes for Emma Haylings (and variants) in the years immediately before and after. It was in these that I made my tragic discovery.

On 5 October 1892, Emmalina Haylings died of severe burns caused by the explosion of a paraffin lamp. I quickly re-checked William's service records, which revealed that he was away at sea from 1 July 1892 to 26 February 1893, on board the gunboat *HMS Bramble*. I immediately wondered how this explosion occurred; when did William find out about of his wife's terrible death; and what of the three children, who survived: where were they when the accident happened? Had they been injured?

To find out more, I decided to contact the Devon Record Office to see if there was a newspaper

report of the incident. After conducting a search for me, the Office sent me a photocopy of a page from the Plymouth paper *Western Morning News* for 8 October 1892. Headed "Fatal Lamp Explosion at Plymouth – Cheap Lamps and Inferior Oil", it was a report on the coroner's inquest into the death. I then contacted a cousin via Genes Reunited ([www.genes-reunited.co.uk](http://www.genes-reunited.co.uk)), who sent me another newspaper report he'd obtained from the *Western Daily Mercury* (WDM), headed "Terrible Accident at Plymouth – Woman frightfully burnt" from 5 October. From the two reports, I was able to piece together the tragic events that took place on 4 October 1892.

At around midnight at her home at 15 Flora Street, Plymouth, Emma was preparing for bed. She attempted to blow out the oil lamp, but suddenly it exploded. The neighbours were woken by the loud explosion and the sound of terrible screams.

Two male passers-by, named Merrin and Hardy, heard the commotion and the shrieks for help and rushed to the side door. Hardy could see the glare of a fire under the door and smashed it. The WDM grimly reported: "A shocking sight met his gaze... Mrs Haylin was herself a mass of flame."

Hardy wrapped his coat around Emma and carried her to the adjoining apartment. Despite terri-



# ALL YOU NEED UNDER ONE ROOF

Genes Reunited has all the most important records you need for your family history research

As well as being the best website to track down living relatives among its millions of users and online trees, Genes Reunited is also perfect for getting to grips with family history research and building your own tree. With its huge range of records and easy-to-build family tree, you'll be discovering the lives of great-great grandparents and long-lost cousins in no time.

Once you've signed up to Genes Reunited and started building your family tree, you can start searching the huge range of historical records using

“Once you've found your family's birth and marriage details, you can search the census”

details as basic as a name – though the more information you have the better.

## Start off your research

The best place to start searching is in the birth, marriage and death records. In these you can find the entries for yourself, your parents and family going right back to 1837, up until 2006. Searching the records on Genes Reunited can lead you to getting your hands on the official birth, marriage and death certificates of your family, which are gold dust for your genealogical research.

Start by finding your birth record, and then find your parents' births and also their marriage record.

The information on this will include your mother's maiden name, and also the names of their fathers, meaning you can take your research back another generation.

You can narrow down your results by choosing the region and year of the event.

As opposed to actual records, the results show up in long indexes that were compiled every quarter of the year. When you find your ancestor you will see their name, date of registration, volume number and page number. You can use this information to order a copy of the certificate from the General Register Office.

These certificates can provide extra information to give you more clues and leads for your family history journey.

## Build your tree

Once you have some basic details of your immediate family through these records, you can start building your family tree using the censuses that are taken in the UK every ten years, recording where everyone in the country was on a specific night.

Whether it was your grandparent or parent that was alive in the first decade of the 20th century, you can begin your search by looking for them in the 1911 Census for England and Wales, which is the most recently available census. To find them, simply type their name into 1911 Census page. If you have any other information, such as their age, birthplace or where they may have lived, this will mean you will be more likely to find your ancestor when the results are shown. ◉



## Discover your ancestors

Start your family tree for FREE and search over 515 million family history records and start connecting with family past and present.

- What do I get with a Free Registered account?
- ✓ A helpful community of experienced family historians
- ✓ We'll match records to your surname to speed up your research

Register FREE

### Find your family

First name:

Last name:

Email:

Phone:

### Other interesting records you might like

- ✓ 1850-1900 Census of England & Wales
- ✓ Birth Records
- ✓ Death Records
- ✓ Marriage Records
- ✓ Passenger Lists

### Subscription options

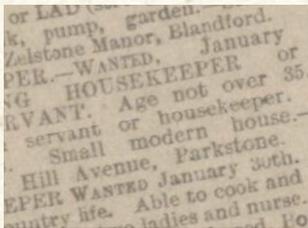
History of the Century

More than 100 years of history and a wealth of information.

View our details page

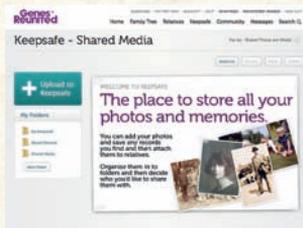
# TOP SIX: FAMILY HISTORY RESOURCES AT GENES REUNITED

Delve into your family's past using these vital tools



## British Newspaper Archive

**1** Search through fascinating content from the British Library's newspaper archive to help you fill in the blanks. Maybe there was a murder or someone famous in your family? Or you can just search for significant events, and read all about it.



## Keepsafe

**2** This allows you to search through thousands of images uploaded by Genes Reunited members, and load your own photos online. You can share photos with family or simply keep them private, and find pics of relations you've not seen before and add them to your own Keepsafe.



## Community

**3** This is not a record set in the usual sense, but you will find a mine of information here. If you have come to a dead end in your research ask a question in the Community. Genes Reunited members are very knowledgeable and will happily help you try to break down your own brick wall.

☉ The 1911 Census shows where everyone in the country was on the night of 2 April 1911, no matter if they were at home, at an inn, in prison or in the military. So you're very likely to find your family who were alive in 1911.

The results will be presented, and you can search through and find your ancestor. You can then click on the information to see the original census return that

relatives by searching the 1901 Census. Then you can repeat this for the 1891 census and so on for further generations until 1841. This will give you the basic building blocks of your tree, which you can extend back several generations in each branch in just a few hours.

After building up your basic family tree using information from other Genes Reunited members, birth, marriage and death records, and the census, you can use other records on the website to expand your research. In the Additional Features section you will find four unique collections to take your discoveries further.

## Unique collections

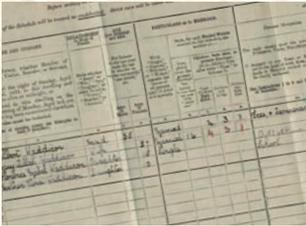
The first collection, Parish Records, will help you take your family back before official birth, marriage and death registration started in 1837. Genes Reunited has 35 million baptism, marriage and burial records going right back to 1538. All you need to search them is your ancestor's name and a county they lived in.

The Travel & Overseas Records section includes detailed Passenger Lists of millions of people who left

**“You can use other records on Genes Reunited to add colour to your research”**

the head of the household filled in on census night. This means you can see information about everyone in the household, from their ages, to where they were born, their occupation, years married, surviving children, and any infirmities, in your ancestor's own handwriting. You can use the information you find on the census page to go back and find older

# Genes<sup>®</sup> Reunited



## 1911 Census

**4** The most recently available census for England and Wales includes more information than previous censuses, such as how long your forebears were married for. It was also filled in by the head of the household, so when you find your family's record, you can see their handwriting!

Search passenger lists  
Enter a name to search millions of UK departure passenger lists between 1890 and 1960.

Forename

\* Surname

Year of birth eg 1839 +/- 0 years

Departure port eg Southampton

## Passenger Lists

**5** Here you can search through millions of people who left Britain and Ireland between 1890 and 1960. As well as those who travelled to the Empire, you'll find family going to every corner of the globe. The records show name, age, point of departure, port of arrival and much more.

ATTESTATION PAPER  
CANADIAN OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT SERVICE  
QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION

1. What is your name? **BURKETT**

2. What are your Christian names? **HENRY & ANNE**

3. What is your present address? **212 Wellington St, Montreal**

4. In what town, township or parish, and in what country were you born? **St. Mary's Parish, Montreal, P.Q.**

5. What is the name of your next of kin? **John & Mary Burkett**

6. What is the nature of your service? **Merchant Seaman, P.M.S.**

7. What is the date of your enlistment? **1914**

8. What is the relationship of your next of kin? **Parents**

9. Are you married? **No**

10. What is your trade or calling? **Merchant Seaman**

11. Are you willing to be stationed in unoccupied and unpopulated areas? **No**

12. Are you now living in the same household as when you were last examined? **No**

13. Have you ever been in any British Forces? **No**

14. Do you understand the nature and effect of this attestation? **Yes**

## Soldiers Die In The Great War

**6** This vast record set aimed to include details of every British soldier, sailor and airman who was killed in World War I. It includes over 700,000 names, along with ranks, regiment, decorations earned as well information on their death.

## “See if you can find an obituary, news story or event in the British Newspaper Archive”

the UK between 1890 and 1960. If you have an ancestor who has disappeared between censuses, it might well be the case that they sought a life abroad, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when newcomers from Britain and Ireland were helping to populate places like North America and Australasia. Using names, birthplaces and rough years of departure, you can use these records to find your family who set off for the New World, with details such as where they landed and with whom. In this section you can also look at Passport Applications from 1851 to 1903, search a whole host of records relating to India, and find those who were forcibly transported to Australia as convicts from 1788 to 1842 – even though many were punished for as little as stealing a loaf of bread.

Given the huge scale of the World Wars in the 20th century, it's almost certain that you'll find someone in your family past who was involved in the armed forces. Among the Military Records at Genes you'll find a huge range of lists and rolls relating to soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought in conflicts from 1767 right up until the end of World War II. The two most important are rolls of honour, showing all those who were killed in WWI and WWII.

Finally, the newest and most exciting project at Genes Reunited is the British Newspaper Archive Records. This is an ongoing project to digitise over 40 million pages of local and national newspapers held at the British Newspaper Library at Colindale. Currently over 3.5 million pages have been made available, with thousands more added every day. You can search the collection at Genes Reunited with just a name, to see if you can discover anything from an obituary, to a mention of an ancestor in court, or even an event that affected your family. All this adds meat to the bones of your family tree, and helps you uncover the stories that are unique to your family history. ■

“

I discovered my father served as Bosun aboard T.M.S.V. Royal Daffodil during the Evacuation of Dunkirk in May 1940. A bomb actually passed right through the hull without exploding and the hole was plugged with a mattress!

The ship brought back 9,500 troops and he was a hero among many. I have only just begun to uncover My father's exploits at sea.”

Bill Ward, Bexleyheath



Every family has a story.  
Discover yours...

At [genesreunited.co.uk](http://genesreunited.co.uk) we have millions of records, a powerful online family tree and a community of people just like you, ready to help you find the fascinating stories in your family.

**Genes<sup>®</sup>  
Reunited**