



English Research in the 21st Century:

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Alan E. Mann, AG®
Senior British Research Consultant
Family History Library
mannae@familysearch.org

English research has changed dramatically since the turn of the century. The Internet now plays a role in nearly every aspect of British research. While well established in the areas of research coordination, finding aids, & published genealogy, the web increasingly gives access to digitized, extracted or transcribed records, indexes, and local help. Even if you need to consult records not available electronically, a web page or an archive email address can help you get more information about the records and how to access them. Many libraries offer online searchable catalogs. A lookup service provides contacts that will actually look at records and email you the results. A *how-to* web page could describe the records and help you determine whether the record will help you meet your research goal.

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

A good list of English websites is maintained by Price & Associates, at www.pricegen.com/english_genealogy.html. A far more extensive catalog of thousands of British websites arranged in FHLC-like categories is used at the Family History Library. This list of websites is on the Library's computers, and is also available in the library to export for personal use. The self-extracting zip file and the instructions for importing are also available on the research wiki at

GenUKI

Although being replaced by newer and more extensive websites, an important site for British research remains GENUKI (GENealogy of the United Kingdom and Ireland) at www.genuki.org.uk/big/. This umbrella site is run by volunteers and attempts to link anything and everything that can help with British Genealogy into one categorized list. The site is patterned after the Family History Library Catalog, with information first organized according to the level of jurisdiction that was responsible for that record. For example, birth records were kept by the national government, so they are described in the topic Civil Registration under the country level (England). Wills were mostly kept by the counties, so they are described in the topic Probate Records at the county level.

Parish registers, on the other hand, were kept by the individual parishes and are therefore described in the topic Church Records under the name of the individual parish under the county in which that parish is located.

One small inconsistency is in parish links. Usually, each geographical selection you make lists the smaller geographical divisions that are contained in that area. Thus, from the first page, you select from a list of countries (England, Wales, Scotland, etc.). From the England page, you get a list of counties. Once you get to the county page, however, the system changes. Now, you must click on a hidden link near the top of the page that says "Towns and parishes." That will list the parishes for you to select the desired one.

Ancestry

Any discussion of British records online would be lacking without mention of Ancestry.com. However, you should know:

1. It costs money—it's not free
2. Many of the records listed are readily available elsewhere, sometimes for free—particularly those that are listed as parish records. Most of these have already been extracted and are available at FamilySearch (and can be separated from other IGI entries using Hugh Wallis' site, see below).

Having pointed this out, however, even when data may be available elsewhere at no charge, by bringing several things together in one index, the time saved may be worth the cost. Ancestry also has an excellent collection of English census records. You can view many of the things available in the Ancestry UK collection by going to www.ancestry.com/search/locality/dbpage.aspx?tp=3257&p=3251 (in a library or FHC, use www.ancestryinstitution.com/search/locality/dbpage.aspx?tp=3257&p=3251).

FamilySearch

There are many things at FamilySearch. A significant percentage of the parish records of England parishes have been extracted and included in the advanced search (for pointers, see Hugh Wallis, next). For jurisdictions and maps, see <http://maps.familysearch.org>. For research help, see <http://familysearch.org/learn/wiki>. Many British records are included in the Community trees section at <http://histfam.familysearch.org>. Browse available records at http://familysearch.org/search/collection/list#page=1®ion=UNITED_KINGDOM_IRELAND.

Millions of records are available at Record Search (see www.familysearch.org/search). A few pointers for using this extensive record collection:

1. There are powerful search options which many consider hidden as *filters* along the side of the results of the initial search. Experiment with these to greatly improve your search.
2. The place search filter is not yet ideal.

3. When entering a place from the search screen, be sure to select the line entry for the place as it appears—even if you have already typed it in.
4. The presence of a camera icon means the original record can be viewed online.
5. Click on the upside-down triangle to the right of the results to see more info.

Hugh Wallis

An excellent free help for British research is Hugh Wallis' IGI Batch number page. The purpose of this page is to allow you to search the millions of extracted parish register entries from the British Isles by parish. Normally, IGI searches are by county. Using this web site, you can limit the search to a particular batch. Since 99% of English and Welsh batches are associated with a parish, it is a good substitute for a parish search capability. Check this out at freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hughwallis/IGIBatchNumbers.htm. Remember, this site works best **IF** you know a parish you want to search.

Genes Reunited

This is a research coordination site which charges a fee to use it. However, the site is widely used, inexpensive, and robust. It is used by so many that it's likely most people with British ancestry will find living relatives. It has a lot of power, including some reliable matching technology which finds others who are likely related to you. It maintains privacy until you specifically release the privacy to a single individual at a time. It is well worth checking out www.genesreunited.com at least on a trial basis.

National Archives (TNA)

This mostly free site has a few fee-based databases and services. However, the site has extensive data and indexes (NOTE: click on categories at top and subcategories just under that). The Discovery catalog indexed images of over 1 million wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (the actual images cost a small fee to view/copy/print), digitized images of military service records, and much more. The Catalogue searches through millions of British Navy seamen and all British Army soldiers discharged from 1760 through 1871. The National Archive has online classes, lessons, videoconferences, leaflets, guides, research aids, and even a free podcasts of guest speakers on a variety of topics of interest.

TNA is working on digitizing their records. It is a slow process, but you can see a list of digitized records at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/digital-microfilm.htm. They are listed by TNA record class number.

For more information on using English web sites for civil registration and census searches, see <http://www.alanmann.com/British%20Census.htm>.

Other Free sites:

- FreeBMD– Search civil registration births, marriages, deaths from 1866 to 1919 at <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com>.
- Access to Archives - Helps you find documents in many archives by name or key word. www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/
- Online parish clerk – List of digitized parish registers available online at www.ukbmd.org.uk/online_parish_clerk.
- Lookup Exchange (<http://aztecrose.tripod.com/LookupExchange.htm>) – volunteers willing to look up things in England for free, and
- ARCHON (www.archon.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/) – contact info for all UK record repositories.
- Vision of Britain – gazetteer of England with links to Local and Administrative Units jurisdictions, see www.visionofbritain.org.uk.
- TNA Labs – several useful databases, most notably useful valuation maps. See <http://labs.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.
- London Livery Companies (1329-1900) – www.londonroll.org.
- Records of London's Central Criminal Court (1674-1913) - www.oldbaileyonline.org/.
- List of British Military records available online (with links) – www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/British_Military_Records_Online
- Old maps (detailed) - www.old-maps.co.uk/index.html.

Other Fee-Based sites:

- Find My Past - www.findmypast.co.uk, is now available at the Family History Library and some Family History Centers at no charge except for the British Newspaper Archive, which is not included in the free access.
- The Genealogist - www.thegenealogist.co.uk lists all their databases, but I find it difficult to follow. A major database is Non-conformist registers, available separately at www.bmdregisters.co.uk/.
- Origins Network - www.origins.net has several smaller databases that are unique to this site.
- Family Relatives - www.familyrelatives.org – the only civil registration search that really works except freebmd (above).
- DeceasedOnline – UK burial records online at www.deceasedonline.com.