

Website Forums

The Internet age is upon us.

We can order a clock from China and it's delivered to our door for less than £5

We can find out what or who did what in 800bc

By using the medium of the Internet we can communicate with our long lost relatives in New Zealand.

So let's use this to our /your advantage. Message boards, Chatrooms, Mailing lists and Forums have been the heart of the genealogical community since 1990.

They have helped to power the explosion of interest in family history that followed the launch of the Internet.

If you have hit a brick wall, or fancy an interesting read why not tap into the wider research community.

Even if you don't want to register to post your own queries, the digital community is so vast that you just might find a hint or correspondence between researchers which may be of interest.

There are forums for every major branch of Family History, and some highly specialist ones that focus on individual regions, periods of time, conflicts, software or commercial products.

So where do we start ??

Rootschat

rootschat.com

The busiest and best UK Focused - encompassing family history forums.

It boasts 4.9 million posts and over 200,000 members.

Sections for beginners, others on dating and restoration of photos as well as research signposts for the armed forces, Romany and Travellers and one named studies.

The hand writing section encourages users to upload any mysterious documents and then the wider community can chip in to decipher hard to read passages or just explain archaic terms.

Unfortunately there are banner ads but not enough to become annoying but there is also a archived reference Library with threads going back to 2003.

Great War Forum

1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums

This site is the best of the many military forums which like its parent site (1914-18.net) is designed specifically with family historians in mind.

Many use it to post photos of men and women in uniform so members can help identify the regiment of unit.

The most popular sections are *Units and Formations* and the *Paraphernalia of War* - uniforms, cap badges, insignia, medals, equipment and more.

There is a new section devoted to documents where you can post queries relating to source material such as service records and medal index cards and currently with 3,728 topics and over 20,000 replies.

Genesreunited

[Genesreunited.co.uk/boards](https://www.genesreunited.co.uk/boards)

An established and popular forum from the commercial sector within which you'll find general chat and find ancestors boards and this site boasts more than 5 million posts alone. There are inspiring tales of research and reunions in the success stories as well as ongoing hunts in the find living relatives section.

Military chat isn't as busy but there is an informative research tips thread going back to 2009.

The suggestions board allows users to request changes or additions to the parent website.

This site is not as focussed and formal as some but the forum is active and easy to use.

Who Do You Think You Are Magazine

[whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/forum](https://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/forum)

This magazine forum has some excellent features not available elsewhere.

First and foremost there is the free WDYTYA Forum App

([whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/news/download-our-free-forum-app](https://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/news/download-our-free-forum-app)) designed to help you get the best from the forum and enables you to write comment and discuss on the move as well as upload photos straight from your mobile device.

The most popular sections are the general research queries closely followed by photo identification.

The forum also hosts popular live web chats with expert researchers and these are usually timed with the WDYTYA series.

Curious Fox

[curiousfox.com](https://www.curiousfox.com)

This website calls itself a village by village contact site and is aimed at family and local historians.

To test activity in an area just search by place name and you'll be presented with a list of posts from researchers.

To post your own entry you need to join as either a free or paid member.

If you have paid £5.50 a year all users can contact you however if you opt to join as a free member only paid members can contact you.

More Great Websites

Alongside dedicated forum sites, there are lots of forums that form part of larger commercial websites or communities.

You can check the health of a forum from the home page, as this usually includes statistics which relate to posts, threads, active users, all - time members and more.

The biggest forum is Ancestry's Rootsweb ([rootsweb.ancestry.com](https://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com)).

It is huge, free, and is broken down into the world connect project, genealogy mailing lists, the world connect global search, the rootsweb surname list and the share your family history sections.

First time users may feel overwhelmed, so begin with *getting started* then try out *message boards* as this is home to some 25 million posts on more than 198,000 boards and these are dedicated to surnames, localities and more.

More Great Military Websites

Military examples include the British Medal forum (britishmedalforum.com) and the excellent Boer War forum (angloboerwar.com/forum) which has a generous and bustling section dedicated to genealogical discussions.

Similarly (victorianwars.com) has a section for researching individual soldiers and sailors.

More Great Regional Websites

A great example of a busy regional history hub is the Birmingham History forum (birminghamhistory.co.uk/forum) or there is the Scotland wide (talkingscot.com/forum).

More General Example Websites

General examples include Gen Forum (genforum.genealogy.com), Lost Cousins Genealogy forums (forums.lc/genealogy/index.php), British Genealogy and Family History forum (british-genealogy.com), Family History UK (forum.familyhistory.uk.com), Historum (historum.com) and Family Tree forum (familytreeforum.com/forum.php).

The deeper you delve into the subject of genetic genealogy the harder it becomes to wade through technicalities and jargon. For this reason its just the kind of topic where a bit of straight talking may help. The largest sites have areas devoted to the topic, or why not try out (forums.familytreedna.com).

Family Search discontinued its well hidden forum in 2012 and replaces it with (familysearch.org/ask) and the valuable research wiki.

Meanwhile Find My Past feedback section (feedback.findmypast.co.uk) where users often vented frustration has become the more positive sounding ideas board for new feature requests.