FAMILY TREE RESEARCH – GETTING STARTED

1. Gather information together

Take some time before you start and gather together all the information you have about your family.

Dig out that old photo album or box of photos. It is amazing how browsing through old family photos can help jog your memory.

Ask other family members what they can remember.   They often have additional information that will help you.

As well as Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates many families have boxes of old keepsakes (old wedding invitations, christening invites etc.) which can be a valuable source of information.

Think about old family stories but don't take these as 100% accurate. They may have been exaggerated in the re-telling.

2. Starting on your family tree.

Keep it Simple – Start with you, your parents, grandparents & great grandparents. Other family members (brothers, sisters, cousins etc.) can be added at a later date.

3. Drawing your tree

Again just show the basics, name-lifespan-relationship.

It is easier to use the following standard abbreviations on your tree.

b. -Born or baptised date

m. - Married date

d. -Died date

If you have a lot of information it will be easier drawing two trees, one for your father's side of the family and one for your mother's.

Have a separate backing sheet for each person, noting all the information you have collected about them, where they were born, where they lived and occupation. This will help you identify what information is missing.

4.   Starting your research

Once you have got as far as you can go with the information you have to hand, it is time to move online to access the millions of free records to further your research.

If going on line seems rather daunting and you are unsure how to access or find your way around these sites, don't worry, come along to the group and we will take you through step by step.

Online sources for free

If you don't have a computer or iPad, in most cases you can access these records from your local library.

Libraries- Free access

Larger libraries usually have a family/local history section where (providing you have a library card) you can access pay sites like 'Ancestry' on their computers for free. Libraries also contain a wealth of other information, such as Electoral Rolls and church records etc.

1939 List

This is always a good starting point. At the beginning of the war, for rationing purposes, a list of everyone in the country was compiled.   Similar to a census, it shows everyone at a particular address by

- name
- relationship to Head Householder
- date of birth
- occupation
- The original list was kept updated (although new births were not added) and was used again as a basis for the setting up of the National Health Service in late 1940's.

This list can be accessed for free at most larger libraries.

Note: This list only shows relatives that are deceased. If anyone is still alive, for security purposes, names are blanked out.

freebmd.org.uk

(bmd – Births Marriages and Deaths)

In 1837, civil registrations became compulsory. (Before then it was parish records).

The site contains about 272 million records and thousands of searches are made every day.

freereg.org.uk

This contains records of details parish (church) records before 1837

- Births
- Marriages
- Deaths
- Earliest records are from 1538.
- Approximately 37 million records are on line.

familysearch.org

This is a free site and one of the world's biggest. It has millions of members from many countries. It is run by the Church of Jesus Christ & Latter day Saints (Mormons).

There are excellent videos on YouTube detailing step by step how to access and find your way around this site.

Note: Once again, only deceased relatives' names are shown. Anyone still living is simply shown as 'private.'

No matter if you are an absolute beginner or more experienced in family history research, come along to our group and we will be happy to help you.