

Useful Websites

1) Lancashire Online Parish Clerks

www.lan-opc.org.uk/

Useful free website since 2004. Aim is to record Lancashire parish records (baptisms, burials, marriages). Not complete coverage, 10M+ records to date, more records being added all the time. This is the project that I've done transcribing and photography for.

2) LancashireBMD

www.lancashirebmd.org.uk/

Another useful free Lancashire site, part of Local BMD/UKBMD project. Aim is to provide summary of local BMD registers (Civil Registration). Excellent coverage for most areas and years, updated regularly. Shows mother's maiden name for births in many cases, also age at death.

3) FreeBMD

www.freebmd.org.uk/

Useful free site. Holds civil registration indexes to BMD (births, marriages and deaths) registers for England and Wales. This also gives the reference information needed to order copies of certificates. Good coverage for records from 1837 up to early 1900s.

4) GENUKI (UK & Ireland)

www.genuki.org.uk/

Really useful free site for general information. Basic "look and feel" but masses of information about towns, parishes, churches, original records etc. Contains useful pointers to other sites.

5) Family Search (UK, Ireland & other countries)

www.familysearch.org/

Useful free site run by Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). I've had limited success with it in past with unreliable information. Much improved now and redesigned over last few years, with more reliable information now (PRs, census transcripts, BMD indexes etc.). The site offers a global family tree!

6) Ancestry (£)

www.ancestry.co.uk/

Possibly the best general research site (in my opinion). Depending on subscription type - access to England & Wales census images from 1841 to 1911 (Scotland transcriptions only), BMD indexes, 1939 Register, parish records, military records, criminals, probate records, migration/passenger records, USA census, Irish records etc. I've had an annual subscription for 15 years. You can search and access some data for free (e.g. BMD indexes) although you need to register. Offers Family Tree facility, also DNA tests with largest DNA database.

7) Find My Past (£)

www.findmypast.co.uk/

Another good general research site, various subscription levels. Now has a lot of similar content to Ancestry, plus some newspaper archives, with different user interface and search options. I occasionally used to buy some credits for this site if I'm struggling to find something through my Ancestry subscription. FMP was first site to have 1911 Census & 1939 Register, and only site currently having 1921 Census.

8) General Register Office UK (£)

www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/

Government Records Office site, easiest/cheapest way (£11) to order BMD certificates (England & Wales). Now has Index Search for Births & Deaths, mother's maiden name & age at death shown. PDF copies available (£7) for Births 1837-1921, Deaths 1837-1957.

9) GOV.UK Wills & Probate

www.gov.uk/search-will-probate

Official website for obtaining copies of Probate Grant or Will for someone who died after 1857, in England or Wales (different process for Scotland & N. Ireland). I find application process clumsy, also slightly different for pre & post 1996. Search for free, but pay £1.50 for copy of probate or will.

10) The National Archives (TNA)

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/

Lots of useful information in specific areas, not much information about individuals. Some areas are free, some you pay for.

"The National Archives (TNA) is the UK Government's repository for more than 1,000 years of records. Its website is a glorious window into this world, packed with free guides, informative blogs and online collections. From this homepage you can also redirect to the Discovery catalogue to find records held at TNA and more than 2,500 archives across the UK. More than nine million records have been digitised and can be downloaded for a small fee."

11) Lancashire Archives & Record Office

www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/archives-and-record-office/our-collections

Another good source for Lancashire research is Lancashire Archives in Preston. Their website has a catalogue of what records and resources they have, including a list of all the church records available.

12) Scotland's People (£)

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/

Good site for viewing Scotland BMD register entries, parish records & census. Pay website (by buying credits). Some basic searches of indexes are free. Quality of images is not always good.

13) Commonwealth War Graves Commission

www.cwgc.org/

Free site containing details & locations of cemeteries & graves of Commonwealth forces who died in WW1 & WW2. Records sometimes show useful personal/family information about deceased person.

14) British Library Newspapers (£ or free)

www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/libraries/digital-library/

Excellent newspaper archives website with articles from 1730-1950. Pay website but free subscriptions via County library (I think still available). I've had free access for 15 years through Lancashire Digital Library. Includes newspapers from 1730-1950 although most articles I've found are from 1830s to early 1900.

15) RootsChat

www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php

The best family history forum (in my opinion) and free – I use it a lot. Website split into topics – e.g. Beginners, UK Countries/Counties, Ireland, USA, Armed Forces, Photograph dating/restoring, DNA, Technical Help etc. You can post queries, search for advice etc. Lots of useful information, e.g. resources available for each county.

16) Ellis Island – Passenger Arrivals in New York, USA

www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island

Excellent website for viewing passenger arrivals into USA through Ellis Island. Free to use for searching and viewing passenger list, although some limits on usage & pay for other options.

17) Lost Cousins (£ or free)

www.lostcousins.com

"A website designed to connect people with other family historians who are related to the same family. It does this by matching the census records mainly the UK 1881 census and the US 1880 census".

I've had limited success with lost cousins facility but worth registering (free) to get the excellent newsletter, produced 2-3 times per month, and lots of useful help & advice on the website, all clearly written. Costs £10 p.a. to use lost cousins facility.

Irish websites –

18) Roots Ireland (£)

www.rootsireland.ie/

Pay by credits website (although basic searches are free). Can be useful for parish records if you know enough about location, dates, names etc. Not complete coverage. I've found a couple of baptisms from my ancestors here.

19) Ireland GRO (General Register Office)

www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Apply-for-Certificates.aspx

Official Government website for ordering Irish birth, marriage or death certificates. I've obtained several certificates from here 3-4 years ago. It seems they now have an online ordering system (I haven't used this as it wasn't available last time I used this site). Note there is a different procedure for Northern Ireland.

20) Irish Genealogy Toolkit

www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/index.html

Useful free site with lots of information and links to other websites.

21) National Archives of Ireland

www.nationalarchives.ie/genealogy1/

Very useful free website, lots of useful information and links for Irish research. Includes free access to Irish 1901 and 1911 census (almost all other Irish census records for other years were destroyed).

22) Irish Genealogy

www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/

Excellent free site, run by Irish Government department, much improved in last few years. Website contains Civil BMD records - indexes plus register images for most years. You can order official certificates (£) if needed. Some church records available, also useful research guides, useful links etc.