



Group web pages

[https://u3asites.org.uk/
ringmer/pages/79968](https://u3asites.org.uk/ringmer/pages/79968)

RINGMER FAMILY HISTORY GROUP EASTER 2021 EDITION

By now you should have completed your Census form. It could be the last undertaken this way; that is, universally and every ten years. Data about us now seems to be freely available and is accessed by all and sundry and not least by supermarkets who, for example, send out prize certificates to customers who are the biggest weekly buyers of frozen chipolatas. On which point, how good is it to be in BST and have the weather warming up. But I digress. In a year's time we will be able to access the information from the 1921 Census. It will only be on the Find My Past web-site and comprises of 28,000 volumes covering 38 million people. It has information on employment for the first time giving place of employment, materials used and the employer's name. For over 15s it has marital status and for under 15s whether their parents are alive or dead. Hopefully many of us will make interesting and helpful discoveries. I wonder if the impact will be so great in 2122. Sue Hall has timed her article on the census perfectly and it appears on the next page. She looks further at information in the 1921 census and reflects on the 2021 version.

My family tree updating continues at a pace - snail's pace! I've just started on file 8 of 12. Every answer to any question I ask seems to lead to at least two more questions. Trying to identify the right ancestor when common Sussex names such as Funnell or Baker are involved and where an extended family has been in the same village for hundreds of years is, at times, almost impossible. Why did they all have the same first names? Grghh.

As the light at the end of the tunnel grows ever brighter your planning group will soon be able to meet and prepare a programme for 2021. We have a draft one in place from when we last met with unfounded optimism in September last. We still need a new convenor and are happy to welcome any member to join the group. Please contact me.

I hope you will use the next few months to complete your family histories or, at the very least, to meet all my challenges of the past few years! I will give you my final challenge at our first meeting hopefully in June or July.

I hope you have all managed to keep well and have received your first vaccination.

Best wishes Bob

WEB-SITE NEWS

Scotlands People (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), which is run by the National Records of Scotland, has been updated and 136,500 births added from 1920, 49,000 marriages from 1945 and 65,000 deaths from 1970.

The GRO (www.gro.gov.uk) has added birth records for 1920-1934 to its civil registration indexes at www.gro.gov.uk. Unfortunately copies of the original registrations are not available as PDFs and mothers' maiden names are not included.

Find My Past (www.findmypast.co.uk) has added 92,000 court and prison indexes. Each record comprises of a transcript and image of the original document.

Find My Past have also added 3.3 million Death Duty entries for 1796 - 1903. TIP - Always check a few years after the year of your ancestor's death as the granting of probate was often delayed.

Family search (www.familysearch.org) have added more than 3 million Petty Sessions records for the State of Victoria, Australia covering 1858 - 1985.

Ancestry (www.ancestry.co.uk) have added 2.2 million criminal records from four different collections held at the National Archives. They have also completed the digitisation of 3 million WW1 pension records which are held on fold3.com which is part of their web-site.

TV PROGRAMMES

Have you watched either of the mini-series about DNA? DNA Journey has been on ITV and is a faint imitation of WDYTYA but with celebrity (sic) entertainment thrown in. Even so there were some interesting and insightful moments. DNA FAMILY Secrets has been on BBC2. It showed how DNA can be used more widely and not without risks but, for me, was diluted by the choice of its host. She didn't seem to be speaking the Queen's English or indeed anyone's!

A FEW TIPS

When looking at census records always look at the pages either side of the page you're interested in. Families often lived very close to each other and you may find other members of your wider family.

If, like me, you preferred the previous Family search web-site it is still available at www.familysearch.orgoldsite. Just sign in as usual.

When you are searching any web-site make use of wildcards especially if variants of first names and surnames aren't offered. Use * for up-to 5 characters and? in place of a single character.

ODDS AND ENDS

Our good friend Jayne Shrimpton has published her 8th book in as many years. It's called 'Fashion and Family History' and covers the period 1800-1950. It's published by Pen and Sword at £14.99.

I hope you've joined in the various zoom meetings. thanks again to all those who organise and deliver them and especially to Gill and Pat and our friends at Burgess Hill U3A for sharing their meetings with us. Much appreciated.

A few discoveries from the church registers:-

died at Wadhurst in July 1793 an unnamed 'widow woman traveller, died in a barn'

in 1776, also Wadhurst, 'f. infant of 2 yrs old name unknown, smallpox'

in 1659, again in Wadhurst, 'old man, traveller, died in Cousley Wood'

and even when apparently a village resident, which probably also tells us something about the status of servants, this from Chiddingly in February 1706 for an unnamed woman, 'a poor maid and servant of William Lidlowes.

Finally, an interesting first name from Rotherfield in 1585, 'Passwater '.

1921 – Census – 2021

Sue Hall

As you will know this year is a Census year and we will be required to complete it on 21 March or as soon as possible thereafter. This reminded me that the 1921 Census records are due to be released next year 2022. Unlike the 1911 Census, the 1921 Census was conducted under the 1920 Census Act, which is still in force and which contains a statutory prohibition on disclosure. As Family Historians we know how Census Records are gold mines which further our research but despite numerous requests and challenges to allow the 1921 records to be released earlier, the Government has stuck firmly to the '100 year rule'. ScotlandPeople.gov.uk hold the 1921 Census records for Scotland and these are scheduled for release in 2021. Due to the political turmoil in Ireland, no 1921 Census was conducted. Following the partition of Ireland, two separate Irish censuses were conducted in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. Unfortunately only the 1926 Census of the Republic of Ireland has survived.

So here in England and Wales we must be patient until January 2022 when Findmypast plan to make the entire 1921 England & Wales Census available. As I understand it images of the records will be free online at The National Archives but original documents will not be available in the reading rooms and there are no plans to produce microfiche. Searching the Census will be free on Findmypast but viewing images or transcriptions will cost; they have not yet revealed what the cost will be.

The 1921 Census was taken on the night of Sunday 19th June. It had originally been planned to be taken on the night of 24th April but it was postponed by almost two months in the wake of the Black Friday strike by coal miners, railwaymen and transport workers. Although the new date did avoid the annual big industrial holidays of the north it did clash with the Macclesfield industrial holiday. Also there were striking increases in the populations of seaside towns such as Blackpool and Southend-on-Sea. So holding it later in the year and in the holiday-making period does mean that when we do get to see the details we might not find our ancestors where we thought they might be and families might be fragmented! This is the one and only time that the census date was changed.

Apparently the 1921 enumeration went smoothly and with few exceptions the public were most co-operative. The Enumerators found the weather one of the main obstacles. It rained for most of the week before Census day, and on the Monday after (when the bulk of the

forms should have been collected) it rained steadily all day in nearly all districts. In consequence the enumerators were naturally reluctant to examine forms at the door. So much for British summer weather!

Another problem Enumerators found when trying to collect completed forms was that in 1921 people tended for one reason or another to leave their homes unoccupied for longer periods. One factor clearly is the extent to which married women now went out to work, and consequently many evening visits needed to be repeated by the Enumerators.

The 1921 Census had the familiar questions but age was required to be answered in years and months for the first time. New questions included whether a marriage has been dissolved by divorce - it was felt that as divorces had greatly increased in the years up to 1921 it was important to know exactly how many there were. In the event 16682 people were said to be divorced on the returns, however, there was considerable doubt post-census on the reliability of these numbers. Another new question asked where each person worked, in particular to obtain information about the travelling involved in getting to work.

For Wales and Monmouthshire, there was an extra question for each person (over three years old) on whether they spoke English and Welsh, English only or Welsh only. For Scotland there were extra questions about whether each person (over three years old) spoke Gaelic only and also whether they were entitled to benefits under the National Insurance (Health) Acts.

The so called "fertility" question introduced in 1911 about the number of years of the marriage and the number of children was dropped. The reason given was that the results from the previous census had not yet been tabulated. Also the question about blindness, deafness or dumbness was removed on the grounds that the parents had objected to giving this information about their children with the result that answers given in the previous census were unreliable.

The 2021 Census appears to be in two parts. One with fourteen questions about the household: names, how many people, visitors, relationships to householder, type of accommodation, number of bedrooms and whether the accommodation is owned or rented. There are two further questions, which I found interesting, about the type of central heating (or none) and how many cars/vans were used by the household.

The other part of the Census is for individuals to complete and has 51 questions. The fundamental ones cover name, date of birth, sex, country of birth, nationality, ethnic group, religion and employment. There are also questions on education, qualifications, other residences and health. Also we shall be asked what main language we use and how well can we speak English; how many passports do we hold; how do we travel to work; details of current or past employment including unpaid domestic/caring work; or if unemployed whether actively seeking work.

My favourite questions are No.17 – *“This question is intentionally left blank”* and No.51 *“There are no more questions”!*

I do wonder what our ancestors in 1921 would have made of some of the 2021 questions and at the same time what will future family historians make of our answers?

