



## How to find out what's available...

Discovering your pre-1837 family can be difficult, all the main genealogy websites provide a full list of their databases for Parish Registers etc.

An increasingly important tool is [www.freereg.org.uk](http://www.freereg.org.uk) - its aim is to 'provide free Internet searches of baptism, marriage, and burial records, which have been extracted from parish registers, non-conformist records and other relevant sources in the UK'. To check coverage, go to the 'Transcriptions' link at the top of the home page and follow the instructions. This will give you accurate information detailing what is included for each parish or county and there is also a link to the relevant **Genuki** page for each county.

For **Ancestry** you can access their database by searching the Card Catalogue. If you want a specific parish record they provide, from the search page select UK Parish Baptism, Marriage and Burial Records and click on the link entitled 'View all collections included in this search' and to ascertain which parishes are included in a specific parish register collection is to go on the search page for the database and use the 'Browse this collection' section. From here you can access a dropdown list of all parishes included, to check coverage dates for each one; however, you need to click on each parish individually, though there may be no breakdown by event type.

On **Findmypast** search the A – Z index of records to find the full list of databases. When searching a specific parish register collection make sure you investigate any links entitled 'Learn more' or 'Discover more', as these sometimes contain useful information.

If you are using **TheGenealogist.co.uk**, it does have a listing of all parishes included in your subscription, plus dates by event type for each parish. Click on the link on the search page that says 'What's included in my subscription' and select 'Parish Records'.

With **FamilySearch**, when looking for a parish register collection follow the link entitled 'Learn More', which will take you through to a page giving further details about the records. Also, go to the Search menu on the FamilySearch home page and select 'Wiki' from the dropdown list. When the next screen appears, enter the name of your parish into the search box and in nearly all cases you will see there is a link for the page relating to that parish. Using the FamilySearch Wiki is an excellent option for assessing individual website coverage but it still takes a long time to assess whether online coverage is complete for a large number of parishes.

So, while family history records are much more readily available to researchers, thanks to the internet, the results are by no means handed to us on a plate. Genealogy research is still the brain-teasing puzzle it has always been!