



***What else can I expect to find out about my family?***

There are countless other sources which you can search and you would be well advised to read a book on the subject or attend a family history class.

***How do I find out if there are any family history classes in my area?***

Check with your local library first, then try the Workers' Educational Association and the University of the Third Age, both of whom arrange adult classes.

***I don't have time to attend classes. What else do you suggest?***

There are many books on the subject, so ask at your local library. Buy a few Family History magazines and check out their book lists for beginners. Every year the Devon Family History Society, Plymouth Central Library and the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office run Family History Help Desk sessions. Also, you could type "beginning family history" into a search engine.

***Should I join a family history society?***

Yes, join the Devon Family History Society. Go along to their meetings, join in their activities. You will also find it useful to become a member of those societies covering the areas in which your ancestors once lived.

***Supposing there is someone already researching the same family as me, how do I find them?***

Many family history societies publish lists of Members' interests in their journals, as booklets, on CD or online.



**CONTACT US:**

**Plymouth and West Devon Record Office**

Tel: 01752 305940

[www.plymouth.gov.uk/archives](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/archives)

**Plymouth Library Services**

Tel: 01752 305923

[www.plymouth.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/libraries)

**Devon Family History Society**

[www.devonfhs.org.uk](http://www.devonfhs.org.uk)

**Church of Jesus Christ of LDS Family History Centre**

Tel: 01752 668666 Mon-Wed 11am-2pm only

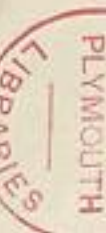
[www.lds.org.uk/contact-us/family-history-centres/](http://www.lds.org.uk/contact-us/family-history-centres/)

The EC supports volunteering as a way of enriching European society, therefore, Europe Direct Plymouth is proud to finance this leaflet and thereby recognise the contributions volunteers have made to family history research.

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# Family History in Plymouth



**Are you interested in finding out more about your past?  
Ever wondered what skeletons you had in your closet?  
Last year literally thousands of people in Plymouth found  
out more about their ancestors and we can help you too!**

#### *Where do I start?*

Start with yourself, add your family, your parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc., in fact, any relatives you can remember. Question older relatives who can be invaluable in providing knowledge of ancestors you may not know of or have forgotten.

#### *I've recorded everything my relatives told me.*

#### *Where do I go next?*

In England and Wales people have been able to register births, marriages and deaths since 1 July 1837. Certificates of events occurring from this date can be obtained from local Register Offices or you can search the General Register Office (GRO) indexes at Plymouth Central Library. There are also a lot of Family History resources now available online. Some good websites to get you started are:

[www.plymouth.gov.uk/familyhistory](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/familyhistory)  
[www.plymouth.gov.uk/researchguides](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/researchguides)  
[www.plymouth.gov.uk/clfamilyhistory](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/clfamilyhistory)

All Plymouth Libraries and the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office (PWDRO) have FREE access to the family history websites, Ancestry and Find My Past. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Family History Centre (LDS Centre) also offers access to these sites.

#### *What information can I expect to obtain from a certificate?*

A birth certificate usually names both parents, including the mother's maiden surname. Knowing both parents' full names, you can search the indexes for a reference to their marriage. A marriage certificate usually supplies the names of the fathers of both parties. Simple steps like these can take your line well back into the 19th Century.

#### *But this information only applies to England and Wales.*

#### *My ancestry is Scottish and Irish. What do I do?*

Civil Registration began in Scotland in 1855 and in Ireland in 1864. Certificates can be obtained from New Register House, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH1 3YT (for Scotland) and from the Registrar General, 8 -11 Lombard Street East, Dublin 2, for Ireland. Registrations for Northern Ireland after 1921 are at Oxford House, 49-55 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4HL. Before commencing this part of your research, however, you are strongly advised to read the relevant chapter in one of the many books available. Look in your local library for books to get you started.

#### *I have traced my line back to the mid-1800s, using the GRO Indexes.*

#### *How do I get further back?*

Now, you will be largely dependent on the church (or parish) registers. These registers were introduced in 1537/8 and contain baptisms and burials (as distinct from births and deaths) and, of course, marriages. Although many early registers have been lost over the years, a surprising number still exist.

#### *Where do I find parish registers?*

Today, very few registers, other than those which are still in use, are held at churches. Many of the registers have been filmed and copies are widely available. PWDRO has copies of all Devon and some Cornwall parish records on microfiche and most Plymouth and West Devon parish records electronically via Find My Past.

#### *I've heard of Bishop's Transcripts, but am not sure what they are.*

In addition to the registers, from 1598 parish priests had to send to their bishop an 'annual return', a copy of the register, known as a Bishop's Transcript. Those that still exist can be very useful in supplying entries omitted from the register or replacing a missing register.

#### *I've heard of the IGI, what is this?*

The IGI, or International Genealogical Index, is an index to about 250 million births, baptisms and marriages from around the world. The index is produced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and is available online via [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) or locally in PWDRO and in the Plymouth LDS Centre.

#### *To date my family history consists, mainly, of names and dates; how do I find out more about my ancestors?*

A census is taken every ten years and records are available for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911. They are arranged by county and in address order, not by name, so it is useful to know where your family lived at those times to trace them. The 1841 census does not give relationships and generally answers "yes" or "no" to the born in County question. For 1851-1901, details such as age, occupation and place of birth may be found on these census returns. In addition, the 1911 census gives number of years married, number of children born and the number of children that have died.

#### *Where can I search the census returns?*

A complete set for England and Wales is housed at The National Archives, Kew. Census indexes 1841-1911 are available online from commercial firms such as Ancestry and Find My Past and images can be downloaded for free within your local library or PWDRO.