



# Shropshire Archives

## 20. A short guide to the Internet for family and local history

- ◆ The Internet is a very useful tool for researching your family or local history, however there are some things to be aware of:
  - ◇ It isn't yet possible to do everything from your computer - ultimately, you will need to consult real documents and probably travel to different parts of the country to do your research.
  - ◇ Many web-sites contain transcribed material and indexes. These should **always** be checked and verified. Even the most diligent researchers and transcribers do make mistakes.
  - ◇ Be wary of paying to access web-sites. There are over 2 million free web-sites for family history. Some web-sites (mostly US ones) charge an 'entry' or registration fee, but don't give you a chance to see whether the site contains any information that is useful to you before you register. Also these web-sites tend not to be secure so your credit card details could be vulnerable. The exceptions to this 'don't pay' rule are the government or organization funded web-sites (such as [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)). With most of these sites, you can do a limited free search so you know exactly what you will be paying for.
  - ◇ Family history is extremely popular. Many people are accessing these web-sites. Sometimes the demand is so high that the web-site can't cope and may give a 'timed out' or 'gateway error' message. If this is the case, then try again at a later date.
  - ◇ Be careful about the search criteria you use. Don't feel that you need to fill in every search box, just because it is there. If no results are found, try changing or removing one of the criteria.
  - ◇ Be aware that even the most uncommon English surnames have an average of 39 branches, and they won't all be connected to your family tree. Make sure you cross check the information you find.

Do read the introductory pages on a web-site. These can help you to search effectively.

*The following list of useful sites is intended for guidance only. Shropshire Archives does not endorse or take responsibility for any of the information or services provided on these sites.*

## Some useful web-sites

### ◆ for family history:

#### **[www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk)**

This is the largest family history web-site for the UK. It contains 4 million pages, including lists of where sources can be found, immediately viewable transcriptions, links to personal pages and information for beginners. The section on Registration Districts at [www.fhsc.org.uk/genuki/reg/](http://www.fhsc.org.uk/genuki/reg/) is especially useful.

#### **[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)**

This is managed by the Church of the Latterday Saints and includes a searchable index to the 1881 census and the International Genealogical Index (IGI).

#### **[www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)**

A site which you pay for either by credit card or vouchers. Shropshire Archives has subscribed to the Library Edition of Ancestry so you can use it free of charge on the PCs here. The indexes to the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 census returns for England and Wales are searchable by name. You can then see a digital image of the original page. It also has scanned images of the General Register Office indexes for England and Wales (1837-2004). There are also lots of US records.

#### **[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)**

This is the web-site of The National Archives and so contains much more than just family history sources. It includes impressive digital exhibitions and useful leaflets on public records as well as a searchable catalogue for The National Archives' own records and access to wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

It includes the 1901 census which can be searched by name or place. This can be paid for with a voucher (available at Shropshire Archives).

Also worth looking at is the section called 'search other archives'. This includes contact information for archive repositories (the ARCHON directory). You can also search for the whereabouts of archives for landed families, businesses and prominent individuals by using the National Register of Archives (NRA).

#### **[www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)**

The Access to Archives web-site contains lists from archive repositories all over England. These can be searched by names or other key words.

### **[www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk)**

This is the official web-site for the civil registration service. It gives information about buying birth, marriages or death certificates. You can also order certificates on-line through this web-site.

### **[www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)**

This is part of an ongoing project to transcribe the index to births, deaths and marriages and make them available online for free. The project is not yet complete – make sure you check what years have been covered and how fully.

### **◆ for Wales, Scotland and Ireland:**

#### **[www.llgc.org.uk](http://www.llgc.org.uk)**

The National Library of Wales' web-site includes an online catalogue, useful links and a searchable list of marriage bonds from 1617-1837.

#### **[www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)**

This contains digitised primary sources, searchable indexes of births, marriage and deaths (some going back to 1553) and indexed census data. It is run in conjunction with the General Register Office for Scotland. There is a registration fee payable for a full search.

#### **[www.nas.gov.uk](http://www.nas.gov.uk)**

The web-site of the National Archives of Scotland includes lots for family historians, including fact sheets and exhibitions.

#### **[www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk)**

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has a useful web-site containing on-line indexes and information about the records held there.

#### **[www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)**

The web-site for the National Archives of the Republic of Ireland contains a section for genealogy including useful links and online indexes.

### **◆ for people with ethnic backgrounds:**

#### **[www.casbah.ac.uk](http://www.casbah.ac.uk)**

A pilot web-site for research resources relating to Caribbean studies and the history of black and Asian peoples in the UK.

#### **[www.movinghere.org.uk](http://www.movinghere.org.uk)**

A database of digitised photographs, maps, objects, documents and audio items which record migration experiences of the last 200 years.

## ◆ Shropshire sites:

### **[www.shropshirearchives.co.uk](http://www.shropshirearchives.co.uk)**

The web-site for Shropshire Archives containing information about our holdings, services and forthcoming events.

### **[www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk)**

News about the Friends of Shropshire Archives' events and projects.

### **[www.discovershropshire.org.uk](http://www.discovershropshire.org.uk)**

A gateway to information about Shropshire's history.

### **[www.secretshropshire.org.uk](http://www.secretshropshire.org.uk)**

The web-site allows you to explore Shropshire's natural environment, its archaeological treasures, archives and other gems from the past.

### **[www.shropshireroots.org.uk](http://www.shropshireroots.org.uk)**

The Routes to Roots project (based at Shropshire Archives and Oswestry Library) highlights aspects of Shropshire's history such as Victorian crime, transport, changes in landscape and World War 1 and 2.

### **[www.sfhs.org.uk](http://www.sfhs.org.uk)**

The web-site of the Shropshire Family History Society provides information about the society, its meetings and members' interests.

### **<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>**

The Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains almost 18,000 records on archaeological sites and historic buildings.

### **<http://uk.geocities.com/wlsfuk/>**

This is the web-site of the Wrekin Local Studies Forum, which brings together organizations and individuals interested in local studies in and around the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. The web-site contains details of events and links to other local web-sites.

### **Shropshire Archives**

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e-mail: [archives@shropshire-cc.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire-cc.gov.uk)  
web site: [www.shropshirearchives.co.uk](http://www.shropshirearchives.co.uk)



## **Gateway to the history of Shropshire and Telford**

Short guide to sources no. 20 (12/06)

W/Archives and Archaeology/Archives/Information Services/Onsite/Publications/Subject Handouts new