Free Resources for Family Historians

Alternatives to paying for Ancestry, Find My Past, etc

FreeBMD / FreeCEN / FreeReg
Also General Register Office

Stop me if you have a question

FreeBMD - Summary

- Data for Birth/Marriage/Death records from September 1837
-
- 290 million distinct records
-
- All records double transcribed by volunteer effort
-
- Select Births/Deaths/Marriages or All types
-
- Searchable by Surname/First name, Date range (or Reference)
-
- Filter by Districts or Counties
-
- All record types complete for most locations up to early 1990s
-

FreeBMD - Tips

- Option for phonetic match on names
-
- Option for exact match on first name (if common variants)
-
- Select County - then Districts within County
-
- Use Count button first - to see if too many records returned - then Revise
-
- Then use Find when number of matches is small enough (less than 100)
-
- District may be nowhere near the actual place of the event
-
- Data taken from Index Volumes held at GRO not original certificates
-
- Records only indexed quarterly March, June, September, December

FreeBMD - the search results page

- On results page click page number to see all entries on that page
-
- Click on the District name link to find out about that place
  - ○
    - Linked page contains a further link to the UKBMS site for details
  - ○
    - This page also shows a list of all villages contained in the District
-
- Volume and page relates to one page in the marriage register
-
- Contains details of 2 or 3 marriages - so can work out potential spouses
-
- Info link shows more details - and link for corrections or comment
-
- Spectacles icon to download image of index page (.jpeg best)

FreeBMD - Links

- Progress Births: -   https://www.freebmd.org.uk/progressB.shtml
-
- Progress Marriages   -   https://www.freebmd.org.uk/progressM.shtml
-
- Progress Deaths   -   https://www.freebmd.org.uk/progressD.shtml
-
- District Info   -   https://www.freebmd.org.uk/DistrictInfo.html
-
- Search here https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl

GRO - New Online Indexes

- Prior to November 2016 you had to know the index record details (District, Date, Volume) in order to be able to order a certificate
- Or you could get GRO to find it given the best information you knew
- GRO has since re-indexed 130 million original certificates - not just digitised the old paper indexes to make brand new online digital indexes
- Births from September 18437 to 1934
- Deaths from September 1837 to 1957
- Original digital records for all years from 1984 to 2021
- New data in the indexes include mother's maiden name for all records - not just since Sept quarter 1911 - no maiden name implies illegitimate
- Age at death or year of birth on all records not just since Jan quarter 1866
- Need to register a free account to be able to access the indexes
- Need to know date within plus or minus 2 years to find record
- Marriages not yet re-indexed from original records
- None of this replaces the content of the certificates themselves

FreeCEN - Summary

- Data from Census records for censuses from 1841-1911
-
- Around 46.5 million records
-
- Around 250,000 new records added last month
-
- All double transcribed by volunteer effort
-
- Searchable by Name, Birth Date range, Birth County
-
- Search by Census County then available Place and Census year
-
- Only transcription available - not original image of record
-

FreeCEN - Tips

- Overall coverage varies by Census year - varies from 0.3% to 65.3%
-
- Average 16.3% over all years (figures updated daily)
-
- View Records by County and Year (& wait for results) before trying a search
-
- Then review coverage Civil Parishes within that year and county
-
- Option for phonetic (Soundex) match on names
-
- [Birth place search coming]
-
- Over 3,000 daily searches

FreeCEN - Links

- Summary of Records: - https://www.freecen.org.uk/freecen2_contents?locale=en

-

- County Coverage Summary   - https://www.freecen.org.uk/freecen2_contents/county_index?locale=en

-

- Place Coverage Summary - https://www.freecen.org.uk/freecen2_contents/place_index?locale=en

-

- Places linked to Google map to check location (if common name e.g. Ash)

-

- Search here https://www.freecen.org.uk/

-

FreeREG - Summary

- Data from Parish Registers from earliest in mid-1500's

-

- Over 26 million Baptisms, 8 million Marriages, 19 million burials

-

- All double transcribed by volunteer effort

-

- Searchable by Name and Date range

-

- Search by Census County then available place and Census Year

-

- Choose Baptism/Marriage/burial or all three

-

- Only transcription available - not original image of record

-

FreeREG - Tips

- Overall coverage varies by place
-
- Statistics by Place with first and last record (figures updated daily)
-
- View Records by County then Place within County to see records for each Church
-
- View records totals for Place and First/Last Year before searching
-
- Search options for Family members and Witnesses
-
- Widen search to nearest 40 Census Places
-
- Option for phonetic (Soundex) match on Names
-
- Over 14,000 searches daily

FreeREG - Links

- Summary of Records: -
  https://www.freereg.org.uk/freereg_contents/new?locale=en

-

- County Coverage Summary - e.g. Kent
  https://www.freereg.org.uk/freereg_contents?locale=en

-

- Place Coverage Summary - e.g. Folkestone
  https://www.freereg.org.uk/freereg_contents/53cbf5e8eca9eb03a6005246?locale=en

-

- Places have lists of churches and similar institutions

-

- Places linked to Google map to check location (if common name e.g. Ash)

-

- Can search within place by surname (use Ctrl F to search with page)

-

- Search here https://www.freereg.org.uk/

Remember

FreeBMD

[GRO]

FreeCEN

FreeREG

Happy hunting!

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Shepway u3a
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shepwaygroups@gmail.com
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/page/9513

First point

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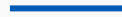
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Use this slide to show a major stat. It can help enforce the presentation's main message or argument.

"This is a super-important quote"

- From an expert

This is the most important takeaway that everyone has to remember.