



Family History Getting Started

It is a good idea to decide how much you want to get out of your new interest, some people may only have a passing interest, others a desire to get as far back in time as they can, some want to collect as many names as they can that are linked to their family and others may only want to research one line only because a family myth has sparked their curiosity. **Genealogy** as a study is an altogether more serious undertaking and is a step by step process of working backwards in time, with properly annotated sources to build up a direct blood-line of ancestors. Sooner or later when you have gone as far back in time as is conceivable, you will probably find yourself spreading out sideways along the branches of your family to discover as much as you can about the various twiglets that make up your tree. Having got this far you are likely to be addicted by now and want to put some flesh on the bones of your family (including discovering the odd skeleton or two), and now find yourself in the realms of **true Family History**.

You will probably want to start with a photograph of the church they married in, an old map of the area they lived, what their house used to be like, the kind of jobs they did, where the local shops were, what medical care might have been available, health and hygiene problems, what kind of social life they had (if they had time), and all the other many aspects, that make our ancestors into people, like ourselves, with hopes and aspirations for the future. You may also want to build a Historical Timeline to gain an understanding of how local and historical events impinged upon their daily lives.

As a newcomer to Family History don't make the mistake of thinking that all the information you need is available on the internet, and that after a few hours research you will be back to your original ancestor who came over with William the Conqueror. The internet is a marvelous tool and will provide you with lots of shortcuts to sources and background information, but this will have to be backed up by hours of research, trawling through microfilms of original records and various websites, not everything is on Ancestry, and old reference materials at a record office or local studies library.

Start by gathering together old photographs, documents and certificates and touting these round your relatives in the hope of exchanging information, but remember that older relatives may have imperfect memories of distorted family myths. Nevertheless don't dismiss anything you are told out of hand, since most myths contain an essence of truth. Visit younger relatives as well since they may hold a stock of papers and information passed down the family.

Once you have gathered your information it is a good idea to plot out some sort of embryonic family tree to decide where you want to go from here. Later you might want to invest in a Family Tree software programme and start to input your details into the database. The most important thing to remember is to be methodical and document your sources properly. If you start making assumptions on a few dodgy bits of material here and there you could quite easily find yourself barking up the wrong tree!

Most people are doing well if they can get back five or six generations, and to get back in an unbroken line to the time of Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare is excellent (and not impossible), but unless your ancestors were Royalty or Landed Gentry any earlier than this is pure conjecture.

Read at least one good book on the subject, there is a good range at most local libraries, get to know the geography of the area and make yourself familiar with historical civil and parish boundaries. You could also find that someone else is researching the same family. Family History Societies have lists of member's interests, and if you join you will be invited to submit your list of interests.

For people just starting out on their Family History volunteers from The Family History Society of Cheshire, Tameside Group run advice sessions at Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre on the first and third Tuesdays of each month between 2-00pm and 4.00pm.

Useful Websites and Addresses

Tameside Local and Family History: www.tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk – local website with masses of information about our area – a good starting point locally. FREE

Carl's Cam: www.carlscam.com – Carl Rogerson's web page of Cheshire photographs of War Memorials, Buildings, and Churches. A searchable database of soldiers on the memorials and a Cheshire Gazetteer and timeline. FREE

GENUKI: www.genuki.co.uk - This site is an absolute must and your first stop to find out which resources are available to family historians in all parts of the UK and Ireland. FREE

ROOTSWEB: www.rootsweb.com - to join geographic and topic based mailing lists, and checkout research guides etc. FREE

Cheshire BMD: www.cheshirebmd.org.uk - Transcriptions of local Registrar's Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes. All Tameside birth, marriages and death indexes to 2009 are now on-line. Over 5 million entries for Cheshire including more than 1.8 million for Tameside. FREE

UK BMD: www.ukbmd.org.uk - Using the prototype developed by Cheshire BMD, other local counties are coming on-board, including Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, North Wales and West Midlands, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Bath. Click on Local BMD. There is now the facility for cross database searching. Lancashire has now overtaken Cheshire with nearly 15 million entries including all the marriages at Manchester Cathedral 1837-1946. Derbyshire marriages are available pay per view on the Family History Online website. FREE

Free BMD: freebmd.rootsweb.com - Although incomplete, The FreeBMD Database was last updated on Fri 4 Aug 2017 and currently contains 262,812,210 distinct records (336,300,128 total records).. Progress is rapidly approaching 1973. Check the coverage on their information pages, some periods are now complete. The reference numbers relate to those held at the General Register Office and are not particularly useful when applying to local register offices. I would try to search one of the UK BMD sites first and apply for certificates locally. FREE

Ancestry: www.ancestry.co.uk – UK and Ireland Subscription website. There are now several payment options to suit light or heavy use of the site. All the Censuses with Original images are complete for 1841 -1911. There are two BMD databases index searches available via Ancestry, another version of Free BMD up until 1915, and full searching from 1915-2006. They are now adding lots of miscellaneous records London Metropolitan Archives sources, parish registers, trade directories, migration and telephone directories etc. WWI army records are now on-line. These include surviving papers of those who served and pensions records including those who were refused or denied a pension. PAY SITE

Find My Past: www.findmypast.co.uk - new name for 1837 on-line - original BMD indexes held at the Family Records Centre in London are available to search on-line. They also have the whole of the 1841 - 1911 censuses on-line. Also includes registrations notified to the British Consul of Births, Marriages and Deaths which occurred abroad, plus Soldiers who died in the Great War and other WW1 records. The website now has a facility for cross database searching. Also migration records for people leaving British ports for long distance journeys 1890-1960. Plus much, much more. Access now includes, British Newspaper Archive and the 1939 Register. PAY SITE. Millions of records continue to be added.

FAMILY SEARCH: www.familysearch.org - The LDS Family History Library catalogue, Birth Marriage and Death Registers, Parish and Census records and many other resources including world wide. FREE

Tameside Local Studies and Archives Library
Central Library
Old Street
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 7SG
Tel: 0161 342 4242
e-mail: localstudies.library@tameside.gov.uk
web: <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/archives>

The Family History Society of Cheshire (Tameside Group)
Gay J Oliver (Group Leader)
Telephone 0161 338 5241
e-mail: gayjoliver@gmail.com
web: fhsc.org.uk click and navigate to TAMESIDE

Tameside Register Office
Town Hall
Dukinfield
Tel: 0161 342 5032
e-mail: tameside.registrars@tameside.gov.uk
web: <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/registrars>

Dukinfield Cemetery and Crematorium
Hall Green Road
Dukinfield
SK16 4EP
Tel: 0161-330-1901
e-mail: cemeteries@mail.tameside.gov.uk
web: <http://public.tameside.gov.uk/candc/regenq.asp>

LDS Family History Centre
Patterdale Road
Ashton-under-Lyne
Tel: 0161 330 3453

Manchester Archives and Local Studies
Central Library
St Peter's Square
Manchester
M2 5PD
Tel: 0161 234 1983
e-mail: libraries@manchester.gov.uk
on-line: <http://www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries>

Stockport Heritage Library
Wellington Road South
Stockport
Cheshire
SK1 3RS
Tel: 0161 474 4530
e-mail: localheritagelibrary@stockport.gov.uk then search for Genealogy Database

Gay J Oliver - September 2017
Web Manager tamesidefamilyhistory.co.uk
" " fhsc.org.uk
" " tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk
Sessional Tutor for the WEA
Tameside Family History Group Leader