

SOURCES FOR LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECTS

SOUTH BRENT ARCHIVE

Housed in the Beacon room at The Old School Hall, Totnes Road, South Brent, TQ10 9BP. Staffed by volunteers and open to the public. For opening times see the South Brent Archive and Library details on the Old School website www.theoldschool.org.uk

It has a small but growing collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, maps, scrapbooks, property details, old audio tapes and, and films. Donations are welcome, these are used to buy Archive materials and a contribution to the Old School funds. Donations of items of interest for the Archive are very welcome but please bring only those that refer to South Brent parish.

Contact the volunteer Manager Stephanie Bradley on 01364 644978, or by email on transitionales@googlemail.com

If you want to look at the websites below and do not have a laptop or tablet you could use the Old School computers, look for charges list on the wall, money in honesty box.

IVYBRIDGE LIBRARY

The Watermark, Erme Court, Leonards Road, Ivybridge, Telephone 01752 893140 see www.devonlibraries.org.uk

Open Monday and Thursday 9am – 6pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am – 5pm, Saturday 9am – 1pm. There is a Local History section, one file with information for South Brent. Books about South Brent and many files and books for other local places. Computers are available for you to use.

DEVON RURAL ARCHIVE

Shilstone House, Modbury, Devon, PL21 OTW see www.devonruralarchive.com email office@dra.uk.net telephone 01548 830832. Open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 11am – 3pm, excluding Bank Holidays. Some South Brent history here.

TOTNES IMAGE BANK AND RURAL ARCHIVE

Photographs dating from 1860's onwards. You will find it at the following address:

The Town Mill, Coronation Road, Totnes, TQ9 5DF. Open 9am – 4pm Tuesdays and Fridays. See more details on www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk Images can be purchased for £2.50 per A4 print. There is a large collection of about 500 images of South Brent available. You can also see old images of the South Hams and South Brent if you have a Facebook account, look for South Hams History Forum.

TOTNES MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE

Elizabethan House Museum, 70 Fore Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5RU. www.totnesmuseum.org.uk

Open Thursday and Friday 10.30am – 4.00pm. The archive building is located at the rear of the museum, accessed via a little passageway at the side of the museum building. The Don Stansbury collection (donated by his wife) is available to view here and contains information about the Saxon history of South Brent.

TOTNES LIBRARY

Totnes Library, The Mansion, Fore Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5RP, telephone 01803 659945, closed on Thursdays. Open Monday to Wednesday 9.am - 6.00pm, until 5.00pm on Tuesday, 9.00am - 4pm on Friday and 9.00am – 1pm on Saturday. Check online at www.devonlibraries.org.uk

The library has a large local history section.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

If you are looking for a particular incident or celebration in the newspapers, try the following website. www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk these are also available on family history websites.

THE BOX, PLYMOUTH AND THE COTTONIAN RESEARCH ROOM

The Box, has just opened in Plymouth, it now houses the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office and the Local Studies Archive see www.theboxplymouth.com/collections/archives-and-local-studies, for opening times and rules. They do not undertake research for you, however, if you cannot visit the collection in person they can supply contact details for professional researchers that you can employ. Look on line and identify the items you wish to view, limited to 5 items. The research room is open Tuesday to Saturday from 1pm to 4.30pm, there are few appointments at the moment, one person per month, but that might well change soon. Download and complete the booking form, then email it to collections@plymouth.gov.uk

The new building can be found at Tavistock Place, Plymouth PL4 8AX. Before you arrive at the archive remember to take some photo ID like a driving licence plus anything with your current address like a utility bill. Passports may not be accepted as ID. You may be asked to obtain a "reader's ticket" (usually free) and asked to use only pencils in the archive. Photo copying available by request and done by the staff with a small charge per page, there is a charge to take your own photographs of documents on the day of your visit, currently £6.00 per day. There are secure lockers provided in which to put any food and drink, coats and bags. This is the rule in all record offices. Laptops and mobile phones are usually allowed in archives at your own risk, thefts do happen in record offices and libraries so be careful!

The new building also contains the combined South West Film and TV Archive, The South West Image Bank, The Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery and the Devonport Naval Heritage Centre. Closed on Mondays, open from 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Sunday. At the moment you need to pre book tickets, these are free from www.theboxplymouth.com

Exhibitions are currently £5.00 per person. There will be parking for blue badge holders, book a parking space before visiting.

DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE AND WEST COUNTRY STUDIES LIBRARY, EXETER

Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Exeter, EX2 7NL. Telephone 01392 888700, open Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 1.30pm plus one Saturday per month, usually the third of the month, open 9am – 1.30am, see www.devonarchives@swheritage.org.uk for details. Very large collection of South Brent documents plus Non-conformist registers. A reader's ticket is required. If you do not have one take some ID with you. This needs to have your name, current address and signature like a driving licence or utility bill plus something else with your signature on. Passports are not accepted. The reader's ticket lasts for 4 years. You are allowed to take photographs of documents in the archive, the current charge is £6.00 for the whole day. Photocopies also available. Mobile phones and Laptops are permitted in the archive.

THE ROYAL ALBERT MUSEUM and ART GALLERY, EXETER

Located at Queen Street, Exeter, EX4 3RX. Telephone 01392 265858 www.rammuseum.org.uk
Open Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm, closed Mondays and Bank Holidays. Free entry. A large collection of items to view that may be helpful for family history research.

DEVON TITHE MAPS

Images of land in the county plus a list of the land owners. See who owned the land your home was built on for free on www.devon.gov.uk/tithe-map

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This archive holds an extensive collection, including WW1 and WW2 documents, and much more all kept for the nation to view, it is located at Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU. Telephone 02088 763444, open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm, an appointment, reader's ticket/and or photo ID may be required, check before travelling to the record office, look at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk to see full details of collection. It is possible to purchase images of documents from the archive on line, see details on their website.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

Search for the last resting place of British Forces service personnel at www.cwgc.org A large number of gravestones have been photographed and the images are available free to download. You need to know their regiment and service number to obtain the correct information. Unfortunately, some records were destroyed or were badly burned in WWII bombing raids. If you are lucky enough to have medals, look on the side of the medal where details are engraved on the edge.

You could try this website as well, www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk, the information available has been gathered by groups and individual volunteers from all over the UK who are in the process of transcribing all the 100,000 war memorials in the UK. At the moment they have 40,000 records. You can look yourself at the memorials inside parish churches and in villages and towns and also gather information for the group, see the website above. Men and women are listed by Regiment. Civilians are sometimes included if they died in bombing raids. Unfortunately, some war memorials have been removed, destroyed or stolen. Look inside and outside Parish churches they often list war dead from the area from many previous wars.

FORCES WAR RECORDS

There are 23 million records on this website www.forces-war-records.co.uk transcribed by a large team of military specialists. The basic introduction is free, the annual charge is £48.95. The monthly charge is only £8.95, which is probably all that you would need.

THE NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND

Scottish records are much more informative when looking at birth and marriage/civil partnership records. The Register Office is located in Edinburgh, see the following website for full details of the collection www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk The archive is located at 2 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY. It is open 9.00am – 4.30pm. Civil Registration began on 1st January 1855. See also the National Records of Scotland at www.nrscotland.gov.uk

THE NATIONAL RECORDS OF IRELAND

This is the official government website for Irish genealogy, www.irishgenealogy.ie for family history research and other records at the National Archives of Ireland at www.nationalarchives.ie Civil Registration began on 1st January 1864. Southern Irish records are kept at the Office of the Registrar General, Werburgh Street, Dublin 2, D08 E277 see www.welfare.ie. Northern Irish Civil Registration records at the General Register

Office, Colby House, Stranmills Court, Belfast, BT9 5RR see www.nidirect.gov.uk some records were destroyed in 1922 due to civil war.

WILLS

Very useful for family relationship details and addresses. If you don't have any copies but know a will was drawn up by your relative in the past, ask family members if they have a copy of the will and are kind enough to copy, photograph or scan the document into a computer and email it for you, a mobile phone camera can be very useful here. Wills can help you in family history research to confirm that you have the correct relationships between the people on your family tree and addresses of the family members at the time the will was written. Some websites have copies of old wills that you can download. Ancestry has the National Probate Calendar Index post 1858 up to 1995. For pre 1858 wills, try the National Archives website or the local Record Office to see if you can obtain a copy of a will. If no will had been drawn up then an Administration Document for Probate purposes would have been drawn up detailing all the property belonging to the deceased and its value for tax purposes. Very interesting to discover what they owned and the value of their Estate at the time of death. Early wills were written by hand by a clerk and reading the handwriting can be a challenge. Very early ones are written in Latin.

TRADE DIRECTORIES

Useful if your ancestor owned or managed a business. You can also find the name and address of a business from census returns (see below). Trade Directories are often available from main libraries (see above for Totnes Library) and usually found in the local history section. Also available amongst other record collections on line. You can also see a collection of 689 trade directories and guides hosted by the University of Leicester for free on le.ac.uk/library/special-collections/explore/historical-directories.

FAMILY HISTORY WEBSITES

There are several well-known family history websites which have obtained huge collections of useful documents including census returns from 1841 to 1911, listing a whole family with, names, addresses, occupations, county of birth and approximate ages with images of the original available to print out. These census returns have useful transcriptions included because the census returns were hand written and are sometimes difficult to read. Bear in mind that transcriptions may contain errors due to the handwriting. The 1911 census forms were completed by the householder for the first time and signed, before this date an official enumerator filled it in. The documents could only record what was given in reply, so some details may have been inaccurate or simply untrue. Sometimes an illegitimate child was recorded as a "visitor". Other family members were simply missing from the record because they had been away on census night or missed out in error. Another reason for a person missing from the census could be that they had died, check death registers for the ten-year period between census dates.

All institutions were included in the census also service personnel on duty and ships officers and crew with the name of the ship. The 1911 census has details of how long a couple had been married, the number of children born and the number of children still living.

FAMILY HISTORY WEBSITES

In no particular order useful family history websites are www.ancestry.co.uk www.findmypast.co.uk www.familysearch.org also www.thegenealogist.co.uk but there are many more available. Don't forget to ask family members, sometimes they have photographs and documents you may never have seen before. This could save you time and money. Ancestry, Find My Past, and The Genealogist all offer a 14 day free trial. After this you have the option of taking out a year's subscription with unlimited access to their whole collection.

Family Search is run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints from Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. They have copies of old parish records before 1837, civil registration details from 1837 plus much more. Very early records were written in Latin. This collection is free to use but you must register before you can browse. Other religions also have their own records, Synagogues, Mosques and Hindu Temples etc. Enquire at the respective places of worship.

ELECTORAL ROLLS

These recorded all those who were registered to vote, with names, addresses and their electoral ward. These can be searched on line and in Record Offices. They have more recent information than some records you can find. You will need to target an area to be searched after gathering definite information about the person you are researching.

DNA FAMILY HISTORY DATABASES

There has been a growing interest in having your DNA tested for family history purposes. There are several different companies on the market now, not all of them have sufficient results in their database to be able reunite you to possible distant relatives if you want to make contact with them. It is an expensive undertaking. Please think very carefully before doing this. Whoever you choose to do the test has the right to keep the results for evermore. There may be no relatives who have also taken this test in their database to match you with. They are testing modern DNA so the areas on maps they show where you might have a link are based on tests that have been carried out on other participants and may not be linked to ancient DNA. Tests may not be 100% reliable.

THE FREEMASONS

The head office for The Grand Lodge of England is in London at Freemasons' Hall where historic records of all their Lodges are kept. See the website for details, telephone 020 7395 9257.

www.ugle.org.uk

THE SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

View their website for more details of their collection. Their address is The Society of Genealogists, Goswell Road, London, EC1M 7BA, telephone 02075 533290, www.sog.org.uk

FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES ETC.

There are Family History Societies for each county in the UK. They keep records for that county and information about the people who lived there. They also hold Family History Fairs with stalls selling all you need for research and give helpful advice. Your research may take you to many other areas of the country or overseas. People often had to travel to find work elsewhere rather than fall into poverty and rely on the Parish for support so don't stick to just one area for your research, you might not find them there.

Books about particular occupations can be very useful too and are often for sale at family history fairs or sold direct from the Societies collection.

You may have non-conformist members of the family who are not included in the usual parish registers, look for birth, marriage and death records on line. The Genealogist has a collection of non-conformist records and they now have the 1939 census records. Non-conformist records are also available at some record offices check on line before visiting.

Always try to check your information with the original documents as transcription errors are commonly found in copies. Investigate the details you have obtained from at least three different original sources so that you can confirm that what you have is correct.

Other useful websites are www.freebmd.org.uk is free to use, also see www.deceasedonline.com which has an archive of burial records, not yet complete, again a free search is offered and a subscription to follow if wanted.

For Birth, Marriage and Death certificates use the official government website www.gro.gov.uk and for Adoptions see www.gov.uk/adoption-records

Certificates for Births, Marriage and Deaths have recently gone up in price and are now £11.00 each for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland charge £8.00 each. You can get a pdf copy on line that you can print out at home which is cheaper for family history use. Old certificate copies are only available back as far as 1st July 1837 in England and Wales. Before ordering you need to find out the information required by the General Registration Office from the Freebmd.co.uk website. They require the persons full name, some people used their middle name or nickname, event, birth, adoption, marriage/ civil partnership, death. The quarter, registration district, volume number/letter and page number/letter. The quarters mentioned are as follows, March, June, September and December. Remember that an event in, for example, late December may not be registered until the next quarter (i.e. March the following year). The Freebmd.co.uk website has these required details.

If you know where your ancestor lived, you can apply to the local Registration Office to obtain a copy of a certificate. Bear in mind that people did not always tell the truth when registering, or made mistakes. Sometimes the informant did not know the persons full details, often in the case of a death certificate, written in hospital by a doctor or an informant who was not related to the deceased who may have given the incorrect details at the time of registration, or just someone who was very upset and got the details wrong. Getting a copy of a certificate can confirm the person is a member of your family, the occupation of a father on the birth certificate, the cause of death of a relative. The marriage certificate has details of both fathers' names and occupation. Just a few years ago the mothers' occupation was included on the certificate. All have addresses and witness/informant names. Details of adoption may also be kept in the local Registration Office as well as at the GRO. A birth certificate with a time on it indicates that there was more than one baby born. Look for other babies with the same surname born in the same month in the records.

As from 4th May 2021 there have been two changes to the Marriage Act by the Home Office. For the first time since 1837 Marriage certificates will now have the bride and groom mothers' name and occupation listed on the certificates in England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have done this for some time. All marriage certificates and civil partnership certificates will now be fully electronic with one single register including all churches, chapels and other religious or secular establishments. It is not clear if the participants will "sign" electronically with a tablet pen. This will end the delay in extracting marriage details for government departments to use.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

If you have an old address book or diary belonging to a deceased relative, it could help you to track the address for that person and what they were doing in the past. Remember to ask relatives if they have any documents and photographs that may help your search. Knowing a person's date of birth is also very useful.

The 1939 war time register is useful to find family in recent times. However, many names are redacted because that person may still be alive. There is a system in place to get the full copy, see the instructions on www.findmypast.co.uk website and also the gen. The war time census was used to issue Identity Cards and Ration Books and it also indicated all those who were able to be called up for war service. After the war it was used to form the basis of the National Insurance System and paved the way for the National Health Service that began on 5th July 1948. Where you see a line drawn through the persons details with a date, this may mean that they have left the country and therefore do not qualify for healthcare in the UK. There may be a spouse's surname added with a date, this is the marriage date of the couple. You will also find the persons actual birth date, month and year.

The 1921 census returns taken on 21st June, will become available to view in 2022, probably with redactions. These are currently being digitized by the National Archives and will initially be available on the www.findmypast.co.uk website only. There are 28 very large bound books to be digitized. The 1931 census was destroyed, the 1941 census did not take place due to wartime restrictions.

The recent UK census took place on Sunday 21st March 2021. This was the very first conducted mainly online and boosted by the Covid-19 lockdown situation, because most people had to stay at home over night by law; the Government hoped that 75% of people took part this way. A unique code was sent to every household to complete the online form or you could request paper form instead. It has been reported that this would be the last national census to take place, which will be very unfortunate for future family history researchers! The results will be used to plan future services in the UK. The forms everyone filled in will be closed for 100 years.

There are family history magazines like "Family Tree Magazine" and the BBC's "Who Do You Think You Are," and many others and all are available locally from newsagents. These may help your investigations.

Keep a database with all the information you have found and back up everything on it in case something goes wrong with your computer, laptop, or tablet. You can purchase commercially made family history software for you to add your family records. These enable you to print out a simple family tree or report. Keep paper documents as well as the database and make notes on where and when you obtained the information and the name of a person who gave you the information.

THE GUILD OF ONE NAME STUDIES

If you are lucky enough to have an unusual Surname, try guild@one-name.org based in London at Box G 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London, EC1 7BA, telephone 0800 011 2182.

CRIMINAL RECORDS

These are available, but not recent ones for obvious reasons. The websites Findmypast.co.uk and Ancestry (see above) have some records. If you have ancestors from London a very good website is www.ldbailonline.org free to use, where the whole criminal case is transcribed including witness statements and judgement.

GRAVEYARDS

If you know where a family member/ancestor is buried, gravestones in parish churchyards or other burial grounds can be very useful for birth and death details as well as the name of a spouse. Sometimes a child's name or a relatives name is included. However, some are so worn they are impossible to read, others have been removed or the person did not have a memorial stone. Very large cemeteries often have site offices

you can contact. They need the name of the person, date of death and last known address to be able to give you a plot number, location and burial date. Local councils quite often have departments dealing with cemetery records. Look at their websites. Crematoriums also keep records. Burial records on line for each parish church in an area might be worth looking at, some have websites so look online first. Or write to the local vicar asking if there are burial, marriage and baptism records kept at the church and if he or she could look up an entry for you. But please bear in mind vicars are often very busy with parish work. Sadly, many churches are now not in use or have been converted into homes or used for other purposes. The registers may have been deposited in the local record office. There are a few useful websites for gravestones transcribed by volunteers, these are www.deceasedonline.com and www.findagrave.com there are others available. These websites may not have complete records however. They do have some photographs and cemetery maps with the plot number shown on these two sites. Check burial records first in parish records.

THE FRANCIS FRITH ARCHIVE COLLECTION

Francis Frith born 1822 died 1898, professional photographer. Apart from his photographic collection of photographs of East Asia, he embarked on a project to record every village and town in the UK and any interesting buildings or historic sites. He started to take photographs by himself but then hired other people to help him, then set up his own postcard company. Many of the old postcards you see today in antique shops to buy may have been part of his collection. You can still purchase photographs and old maps based on a location today see www.francisfrith.com There are images and maps available for South Brent.

HISTORIC IMAGES OF THE UK FROM ABOVE

www.britainfromabove.org.uk A collection created by "Aerofilms Ltd" set up by First World War veterans Francis Lewis Wills and Claude Grahame-White as a survey company and dates from 1919. It contains 95,000 images from 1919 to 2006 including photographs taken from before the 1939 outbreak of war when many parts of Britain were bombed and changed for ever.

CROCKFORDS CLERICAL DIRECTORY

If you have an ancestor who was a vicar in the Anglican Church you may find them and a short summary of their career in this directory. The directory includes Anglican Clergy and churches in the Church of England, Ireland, Wales and Scottish Episcopal Church and also recently in Europe. It was first published in 1858 by John Crockford. Not every year is covered from this date. Have a look at the official website for dates from 1968, www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/crockfordsdirectory Churches usually have a list of vicars displayed on the wall, if you know exactly where your ancestor worked. Some churches and cathedrals have copies of the directory in their libraries available to view by the public.

ALAN GODFREY OS MAPS

Old Ordnance Survey maps are available to purchase, the Godfrey Edition, published by Alan Godfrey Maps see www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk there are 3,000 maps available of the UK, most are £3.00 plus £2.00 p&p. Coloured maps are £4.00. Currently there are no maps of South Brent available, see the Francis Frith collection for maps.

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Based in London at 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB see www.bl.uk It holds a vast collection of books documents and manuscripts has a large reading room, galleries and exhibitions. Open Tuesday to Sunday.

11am to 6pm. A reader's pass and ticket required reader-registration@bl.uk at least 48 hours before you want to visit the Manuscripts and Archive section. A pre booked ticket is required for entry to the archive and other parts of the building.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

To visit the Archives in person the address is Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3BU. It is open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and on Saturday 9.30am to 5PM. See the website for details, reader's ticket required take ID.

Many records for Wales are kept in digital form visit www.llgc.org.uk

BRITISH HISTORY ON LINE

Here you can find places of interest, see www.british-history.ac.uk then click on the "local history tab".

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

The museum is located at Cromwell Road, Knightsbridge, London, SW7 2RL, see www.vam.ac.uk
Apart from many historical items of interest it also contains a very comprehensive archive, reader's ticket required, free to applicants, bring ID. Admission to the museum is free, Exhibitions and events are paid on entry or booked ahead on line, see website for opening times and details for visiting the archive. The Theatre and Performance Archive, part of the Victoria and Albert Museum collection is located at Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, Olympia, London, W14 0QX. Opening times Wednesday to Friday, 10.15 am to 4.30 pm, access by appointment only, call 020 7942 2340. See Westminster Archives Centre below for more theatre archives.

ROMANY AND TRAVELLER FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Write to or email, the Secretary, c/o 1 Ancona Close, Ramlese, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 5NR. By email to enquiries@rtfhs.org.uk this family history society includes fairground/ showground families.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Extensive collection for wartime research and education <https://www.iwm.org.uk>
Located at Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ.

WESTMINSTER ARCHIVES CENTRE

Extensive collection for family history research, theatre history and a great deal more, see website for full list on <https://www.westminster.gov.uk>
Located at St Ann's Street, London, SW1 2DE.

Compiled and edited by Sue Dean August 2021