



SOURCES FOR LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECTS

SOUTH BRENT STORYTELLERS AND ARCHIVE

Housed in the Beacon room at The Old School Community Centre, Totnes Road, South Brent, TQ10 9BP. Staffed by volunteers and open to the public on open days or by appointment see the volunteer manager's details below. Other details about the Archive can be found on the Old School website www.theoldschool.org.uk.

It has a small but growing collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, maps, scrapbooks, books, a small number of property details, old audio tapes and films. Donations of items of interest for the archive are very welcome but please bring only those that refer to South Brent Parish. We are able to scan documents and images if you wish to keep your items, please make an appointment with the Volunteer Manager. Cash donations are also welcome, these are used to buy archive materials and a contribution to the Old School funds.

Contact the Volunteer Manager Stephanie Bradley on 01364 644978, or by e-mail : info@southbrentarchive.org.uk
See our Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sbarv>.

IVYBRIDGE LIBRARY

There is a Local History section, files with information for South Brent. Books about South Brent, information in boxes, and many files and books for other local places. Computers are available for you to use.

Visit The Watermark, Erme Court, Leonards Road, Ivybridge, telephone 01752 893140

Open Monday and Thursday 9am – 6pm, Tuesday 9am – 5pm Wednesday 9am – 1pm, Friday 9am – 5pm, Saturday 9am – 1pm. Summer Bank holiday times may differ.

DEVON RURAL ARCHIVE

The archive holds a selection of South Brent history and is located at Shilstone, Modbury, Devon, PL21 OTW see www.devonruralarchive.com. Contact at archive@shilstonedevon.co.uk telephone inquiries 01548 830832. Open Wednesday to Sunday, 10.30am to 4pm, excluding Bank Holidays. This archive has a mixture of records from South Devon. There are large maps, trade directories, other documents for each village and town and a large selection of books. A new restaurant has opened offering drinks, meals and snacks.

TOTNES IMAGE BANK AND RURAL ARCHIVE

Photographs dating from 1860's onwards. You can search through their collection. There are many images of South Brent available to view. Images can be purchased per A4 print from the image Bank.

Visit The Town Mill, Coronation Road, Totnes, TQ9 5DF. Open 10am – 4pm Tuesdays and Fridays, free entry. See more details www.totnesimagebank.info.

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. You might also like to look at www.legendarydartmoor.co.uk/south-brent-fair.htm

TOTNES MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE

The Don Stansbury collection (donated by his wife) is available to view here and contains information about the Saxon history of South Brent.

South Brent Storytellers and Archive

The archive is kept at Elizabethan House Museum, 70 Fore Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5RU

archive@totnesmuseum.org Open Fridays 10.30am – 2pm, other times by appointment. The archive building is located at the rear of the museum, accessed via a little passageway at the left-side of the museum building. The following charges apply to all visitors: Use of resources £1.25 per hour and Research services £7.50 per hour.

TOTNES LIBRARY

The library has a large local history section.

Visit Totnes Library, The Mansion, 36 Fore Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5RP, telephone 01803 659945. Open Monday 9am - 6pm, until 5pm on Tuesday, Wednesday 9am – 6pm, closed on Thursday on Friday 9am – 5pm and Saturday 9am - 1pm. Check online at www.devonlibraries.org.uk.

You can also find useful information from www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk and www.heritagegateway.org.uk.

THE VALIANT SOLDIER MUSEUM AND HERITAGE CENTRE

A public house frozen in time, closed in the 1960's everything has been left in place including the domestic areas of the pub. The building also contains the local history archive of Buckfastleigh. Open from the end of March to the end of October see <https://valiantsoldier.org.uk> for opening times.

Located at 80 Fore Street, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 OBS, telephone 01364 644 522

email info@valiantsoldier.org.uk

THE BOX AND THE COTTONIAN RESEARCH ROOM

Entry to the The Box in Plymouth is free, but some special exhibitions will require payment via tickets that can be purchased online or at the entrance. Closed on Mondays. Apart from the extensive collections it houses, it is now home the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office and the Local Studies Archive. Located on the second floor, a lift is available for the disabled. See www.theboxplymouth.com/collections/archives-and-local-studies

They do not undertake research for you, however, if you cannot visit the collection yourself, they can supply contact details for professional researchers that you can employ, but bear in mind that this could be expensive. Look online and identify the items you wish to view then order them from the vaults for the day you have booked. You are limited to five items. The research room is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am to 1pm then 1.30pm to 4.30pm, Thursday to Friday afternoons 1.30pm to 4.30pm and limited Saturday from 1pm to 4.30pm, to book an appointment download and complete the booking form, then email it to collections@plymouth.gov.uk outside these times the archive exhibitions can still be viewed. The collection includes items from the Ivybridge area west to Plymouth and districts surrounding it.

The Box is at Tavistock Place, Plymouth PL4 8AX. It seems that you do not need to buy a reader's ticket here but if you want to photograph any of the documents you have pre-ordered from the vaults then you need to purchase a photograph licence from its online shop. These are available for daily, weekly or annual licences. Before you decide to visit any archive remember to check beforehand if a reader's ticket is required. The research room is small and located just inside the entrance, a reception desk on the right- hand side of the room. If ID is required, 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. Use only pencils in the archive. Photo copying available by request and done by the staff with a small charge per page if you think the document is too large to photograph, this may be posted to you after your visit. There are secure lockers on the left-hand side of the archive entrance in which to put any food and drink, coats and bags. There is a £1 non-refundable charge for this so bring a £1 coin with you. This is the rule in all record offices. Laptops and mobile phones are usually allowed in archives at your own risk, but thefts do happen in record offices and libraries so be careful!

The Box 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. See details of opening times and all exhibitions in other galleries online at www.theboxplymouth.com.

There is parking provided for blue badge holders, book a parking space before visiting. Parking is also available at the Regent Street car park a short walk from the Box or at the Drake Circus car park across the road from the Box.

DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE AND WEST COUNTRY STUDIES LIBRARY, EXETER

Has a very large collection of South Brent documents plus non-conformist registers and parish records before 1837 (church records of baptism, marriage and burial). This archive contains documents from the South Brent area eastwards. Search their collection online and order the items you want and book a seat in the research room. A reader's ticket is required but 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 a few years. You are allowed to take photographs of documents in the archive but charges apply, check the website for current prices and booking details. Photocopies also available, charges per page for this service. Mobile phones and Laptops are permitted in the archive. Always best to check before your visit in case these rules have changed. Take a £1 coin for the lockers.

Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Exeter, EX2 7NL, telephone 01392 888700, open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am – 5pm www.devonarchives@swheritage.org.uk for more details.

COOKWORTHY MUSEUM, ARCHIVE AND IMAGE LIBRARY

Huge collection of costumes, items of agriculture and local interest, documents, photographs and items of social history. The building was once a grammar school.

Located at 108, Fore Street, TQ7 1AW. Telephone 01548 853235 email www.kingsbridgemuseum.org.uk

The museum is closed to the public between November and March, but you can view the collection on line and purchase photographs and other information. Large collection of South Brent documents, postcards collection and photographs. Closed Saturday and Sunday, open Monday to Friday from 10.30am to 3.30pm, Bank holiday times may differ. Long stay parking nearby, see Google maps for details.

THE ROYAL ALBERT MUSEUM and ART GALLERY, EXETER

A large collection of items to view that may be helpful for family history research.

It is 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.

DEVON TITHE MAPS

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

CENSUS RETURNS AND WAR TIME REGISTER

A census of the population was taken every 10 years, from 1841 to 1921 and also in 1939, listing whole families with names, addresses, occupations, county of birth, country where that applies and estimated ages of those listed in the census. Before this a census was taken in 1801 but no names were recorded. Census returns were not intended to be used for family history purposes, but they are now extremely useful for research. Most are available to view at record offices. It is possible to buy a census CD in separate decades from family history societies and record offices costing about £20.00.

Ages were often rounded up or down until the later census returns like the 1921 census where the age in years and months was included. Images of the original pages are available to print out, a full copy is much more informative than a transcript. Census returns have useful transcriptions included because the census returns were handwritten and are sometimes difficult to read. Bear in mind that transcriptions may contain errors due to the handwriting. You can enlarge the original image to give you a better view on the screen.

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 working elsewhere or missed out in error. The 1911 census was boycotted by the Suffragettes; if they were not the head of house they may still have been recorded or they wrote "Suffragette" in the occupation section. Another reason for a person missing from the census could be that they had died in the years between the census, check death registers for the ten-year period between census dates. You may also discover that more children had been born between the census years and appear in the next census. Check for children in the on-line records using the mother's surname.

All institutions were included in the census, 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. The 1921 census has divorce recorded for the first time; divorce was unusual in those days. It has the name and address of the employer, and also indicates if a child's parents are alive or dead.

The 1921 census for England and Wales was taken on 21st June and is now available to view with redactions. These have been digitized by the National Archives and are initially available on the www.findmypast.co.uk website only. There are many very large bound books that have been digitized, with 38 million people recorded in the census. Charges for a digital copy are £2.50 for a transcript or £3.50 for a full copy remember to print out the two pages, the second page has the address and signature of the householder. A full copy would be best because it contains more details missing from the transcript. Think carefully about which records would be most useful before you start to search, make sure you have all the information about that person with you before you search, it is very easy to get carried away with your research and that could be expensive if you pay for a printout for someone who is not related to you. Try searching for a known address first for that person if you are certain, it is the correct one. If you already have a subscription to findmypast.co.uk you will be given a 10% discount for each request. You can only see the records for free if you travel to The National Archives at Kew, Manchester Central Library, or The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth in person. If there are living people in the record (100 years and one day from their date of birth) they have the right to have their record redacted. The census shows if a child had lost one or more of their parents. Just like the 1911 census returns the householder filled in the form themselves and signed at the bottom right-hand side of the return. The address does not appear on the form below the signature like the 1911 census returns, www.ancestry.co.uk has census returns from 1841 to 1939.

For the 1921 census records for Scotland see www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. For Ireland however, the 1921 census was not recorded due to the Irish war of Independence. The census eventually took place in 1926 following partition, but it will not be available for a few years yet.

The England and Wales 1931 census was destroyed by a fire and the 1941 census did not take place due to wartime restrictions.

The 1939 war time register is useful to find family in recent times and the last detailed information you will be able to view until 2052/3 When the 1951 census will be digitized and released. Available from family history websites.

Many names have been redacted in the 1939 register 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 Genealogist website www.thegenealogist.co.uk. 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 had left the country and therefore did 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 person's actual birth date, month and year.

The recent UK census took place on Sunday 21st March 2021. This was the very first conducted mainly online. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown in the UK at the time of the census, most people had to stay at home by law. The Government hoped that 75% of people would take part online. In 100 years' time it will reveal just how many people were at home during the pandemic. 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.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE & DEATH RECORDS

Look for baptism, marriage and burial records online but remember that you may have non-conformist members of the family who are not included in the usual parish registers. The Genealogist has a collection of non-conformist records. Non-conformist records are also available at some record offices, check online before visiting.

If possible, check your information with the original documents because 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 before you start to look further back in time.

Useful websites such as www.freebmd.org.uk are free to use, but 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. If you go to a third-party website to order, it will be more expensive.

Certificates for Births, Marriage and Deaths have recently gone up in price and are now £11.00 each for England and Wales. You can get a pdf copy for £7.00 to print at home which is all you would need for family history purposes. Scotland and Ireland charge £8.00 for a full copy. Old certificate copies are only available back as far as 1st July 1837 in England and Wales. If you need earlier information, look at parish record entries. Before ordering you need to find out the information required by the General Registration Office from the www.freebmd.org.uk website. The GRO require the persons full name (some people used their middle name or nickname) the 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 late December may not have been registered until January the following year. Very late entries were written at the bottom of a page or at the back of the old registration books.

If you know where your ancestor lived, you can apply to the local Registration Office to obtain a copy of a certificate. People did not always tell the truth when registering or made mistakes. A birth certificate with a line through the father's section of the document, or left blank, meant that the child was illegitimate. However, parents may have married at a later date, then the mother's surname remained as a middle name and the father's surname was added

to the child's surname. 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 by 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, their address and that of the informant, 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 occupations. Recent babies' birth certificates show the mother's occupation. All have addresses and witness/informant names.

Details of adoption may 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.

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. Paper copies have to be requested online. This ends the delay in extracting marriage details for government departments to use. Another new change came into force on the 26th of April 2022. The legal age for marriage has changed from 16 years old (with parents' consent) to 18 years old. It is now illegal to facilitate a marriage or take abroad for a religious or cultural marriage ceremony not registered with the local authority, of anyone who is under the age of 18 years old. If charged with this offence you will face a jail term of 7 years and a hefty fine. The young couple will not be charged.

THE FOUNDLING'S MUSEUM

Located at 40 Brunswick Square, London, WC1 1AZ. Telephone 020 78413600 or look at the website www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm, Sunday 11am to 5pm.

This museum contains the records of children taken into its care. Many were vulnerable, often abandoned by desperate mothers, found in various locations by others and very often these babies were illegitimate. Other children were taken there by a mother who was unable to care and feed her child due to lack of income. These mothers often left a token with her child so that they could be reunited at a later date when circumstances changed. Very few returned to collect their child. Some were taken there with a cash settlement and no questions were asked about the origins of the child. Perhaps from a very wealthy parent. Children were educated and sent into domestic service or other trades. Some children did not survive. children were never collected by their mothers. It was the very first children's' charity. The museum has an art gallery which was the first one open to the general public.

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 online, see details on their website.

Their very helpful list of guides is at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/>.

FORCES WAR RECORDS

There are 23 million records on the 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, and the monthly charge is £8.95.

Another site for the last resting place of British Forces service personnel is 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 the details you need are engraved on the edge. You might be lucky if you look for the service record on ancestry.co.uk or findmypast.co.uk websites for your ancestor, the records might include their service number. The Imperial War Museum is also a good source of information, see www.iwm.org.uk there is a subsection on the website for The Evacuated Children of World War Two which could be worth looking at for family history purposes, also the Bomb Census Survey 1940-1945. The Bomb Survey collection shows where bombing occurred, the greatest number fell on large towns and ports. There are still unexploded weapons being uncovered every year since the 1940's due to the volume of devices dropped during the war. There is also a register of the civilians killed during the war and where they were found.

In addition to the war records you could try 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 outside in graveyards for the gravestones of the war dead. Church memorials are to be found inside on the walls listing war dead from the -area from many previous wars. Family history websites also have details about military forces including the RAF, medals awarded, pension details and also burial details where known.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Recreations of WWI trenches and the Blitz. Tanks, planes, and military exhibitions. Military records also kept here, see above. Entry is free but priority entrance tickets bought in advance can help you avoid queues at busy times, See the website www.iwm.org.uk for details of its collection etc. Located in Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ. Telephone 020 7416 5000. Open Monday to Sunday 10am to 6pm. Closed 24th to 26th December.

THE NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND

Scottish records can be much more informative when looking at birth and marriage/civil partnership records. The Register Office is in Edinburgh, see the following website for full details of the collection www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk. The archive is located at 2 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY. It is open 9am – 4.30pm. Civil Registration began on 1st January 1855. See also the National Records of Scotland at www.nrscotland.gov.uk

You can also visit the National library of Scotland at www.nls.uk based on two sites, the main visitor centre is in Edinburgh at the George IV Bridge Building, EH1 1 EW. The moving image library is based in Glasgow at Kelvin Hall. See websites for collections information.

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. The 1921 census did not take place due to the Irish war of independence 1916 onwards, some of the records

were destroyed during the civil war. The 1926 census for The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland took place after partition.

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

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

To visit the Archives in person the address is, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY233BU. Open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 9.30am – 5pm. See the website for a full list of the collections. A readers' ticket is required. Many of the records are in digital form, visit www.llgc.org.uk where downloads are available.

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 to you if they don't live nearby. A mobile phone camera can be very useful to photograph shared documents. 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. If you find that a recipient has been given one shilling in a will it was a sign that that person had not found favour with the family. Some websites have copies of old wills that you can download. ancestry.co.uk 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. Many professionals maybe be included in the directory including addresses for doctors, vicars and other trades people, travel times for stagecoaches etc. 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 online. You can also see a collection of 689 trade directories and guides hosted by the University of Leicester for free on www.le.ac.uk/library/special-collections/explore/historical-directories The collection holds trade directories from the 1760's to the 1910's. It has 2000 images of England and Wales. The West country collection contains Kelly's Directory of Devon 1919, Kelly's Directory of Devon and Cornwall part 1 dated 1914, The History Gazetteer and Directory of Devon 1878 to 1879, and the Post Office Directory of Cornwall 1856.

FAMILY HISTORY WEBSITES

There are several well- known family history websites which have obtained huge collections of useful documents. In no particular order useful family history websites are www.ancestry.co.uk, www.findmypast.co.uk, www.familysearch.org and www.thegenealogist.co.uk but there are many more available. Don't forget to ask family members about your family story. Sometimes they have photographs and documents you may never have seen before. This could save you time and money. Ancestry, Findmypast, and The Genealogist all offer a 14-day free trial. After this you have the option of taking out a year's subscription.

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.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

If you are looking for a particular incident or celebration in the newspapers, try www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk but charges are made for searches. Some family history websites also hold newspaper archives.

ELECTORAL ROLLS

These recorded all those who were registered to vote, with names, addresses and their electoral ward. These can be searched online 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. Many websites such as Ancestry also hold many old electoral rolls.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

You can trace relatives using telephone directories online, some family history websites also have them to view. For example, Ancestry has many dating from 1880 to 1994. You must be confident about their address because you could find many people with the same name you are searching for who are not related. If you have an unusual surname your search should be much easier. This will give you information regarding their address and perhaps when they moved away.

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 to reunite you with 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. If you do find distant relatives it may not always be a happy experience. 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. Some offer a DNA health check for future diseases which may affect you. A record of this information will be kept by the DNA company and they might supply this information to insurance companies in the future.

BURKES PEERAGE

First published in 1847 by Burks's Peerage Limited this is a record of the ancestry, heraldry and the peerage, baronetage and knighthoods of the landed gentry of the UK. Whilst you may not have any links to the gentry classes, you might well have had servants as ancestors who worked for them on their estates and in their houses or ancestors who paid rent to the gentrified owners of their homes and/or farms, see www.burkespeerage.com

DEBRETTS

Established in 1769 in London, they compiled a list of titled aristocracy. These days they also keep a list of outstanding professional achievements and success by people in all walks of life in British society. They produce guides regarding etiquette, see <https://debretts.com> and enquiries@debretts.co.uk

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 They have lists of researchers who are qualified in genealogy.

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. Local events may also have had an impact on your family in the past.

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 and Ancestry (see above) have some records. If you have ancestors from London a very good website is www.oldbailonline.org free to use, where the whole criminal case is transcribed including witness statements and judgement. You could also search newspaper archives for reports about a criminal case.

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 relative's name is included. However, some are so worn they are impossible to read while 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 online 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. Grave plots can be reused after 100 years. Burials have been removed for major redevelopment schemes. 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. 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 Parish Records listed below for St Petroc's church South Brent are not available at the church. Burial registers from before 2000, Marriage Records from before 1995 and Confirmation registers from before 2005 are now at the Devon Record office, Great Moor house, Bittern Road, Exeter, EX2 7NL, telephone 01392 888700 or look at www.devonarchives@swheritagecentre.org.uk. Records for Marriages only are also held at The Registrar, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5NE, telephone 01803 861181. Peter Taylor has completed a list of burials for the church.

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, eBay also have old postcards for sale. You can still purchase photographs and old maps based on a location today see www.francisfrith.com where there are images and maps available for South Brent.

HISTORIC IMAGES OF THE UK FROM ABOVE

www.britainfromabove.org.uk is 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. There is a new website with Aerofilms Ltd photographs to view them at www.historicengland.org.uk which offers six million photographs and also has 60,000 books, journals and reports. It additionally has details of listed buildings and architectural features. They are based at The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH, telephone 01793 414600 or contact the archivist on archive@historicengland.org.uk.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIRECTORIES

Churches usually have a list of vicars displayed on the wall - useful 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.

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 these directories. Crockford's 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 but 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.

There is also a clerical database at <https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>.

Local Catholic church records available from Buckfastleigh Abbey Archives contact the Archivist Steve Roach at - sroach@buckfast.org.uk

ALAN GODFREY OS MAPS

Copies of old Ordnance Survey maps are available to purchase from 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 of the village, you can purchase a copy based on your postcode.

INTERACTIVE MAPS

A good source of maps for South Brent can be found on <https://maps.nls.uk/> the National Library of Scotland where you can compare and old map of the village to the modern.

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.

BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE

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 online, 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

For details about this family history society, write to or email, the Secretary, c/o 1 Ancona Close, Ramlese, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 5NR, enquiries@rtfhs.org.uk

TRAVELLING SHOWMEN ARCHIVES

The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain Archive Hub JISC collection. The Showmen's Guild exists to protect the interests of travelling showmen. It was founded in 1889 as the Van Dwellers Protection Association in Salford. More details on <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk> you can also try the National Archives collection on <https://nationalarchives.gov.uk>

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>. It's located at St Ann's Street, London, SW1 2DE.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

It has a huge collection of educational films from the past. Get a glimpse of life recorded in the last century, some from the South West area. You can view films on www.player.bfi.org.uk/free

BRITISH PATHÉ NEWS ARCHIVE AND THE STORY OF BRITISH PATHÉ

A huge collection of past events recorded for news reels once shown in cinemas nationwide. Available to see on YouTube and take a look at The Story of British Pathé also on YouTube.

THE HUGUENOT SOCIETY

If you have Huguenot ancestors you can find valuable family history information and about the history of Huguenot families who arrived in Britain and Ireland from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. They were refugees from Europe, France, Flanders now Belgium, and what is now The Netherlands. All fleeing persecution because they were members of the Protestant faith in a Catholic country. See www.huguenotsociety.org.uk You can also find records of the Huguenot families and their history at Kew record office, see website details on page 6.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

If you have an old address book and/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/or photographs that may help your search and add to your family story. Ask relatives if they can name people in photographs (and date them) that don't have any details on the reverse. Don't forget to write down your own memories too. Knowing a person's date of birth, country/county of birth and address will also be very useful when using family history databases online. Any other documents are also useful to add to the family story.

There are family history magazines like Family Tree and the BBC's Who Do You Think You Are? Others 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 or the source where the information was obtained.

Compiled and edited by Sue Dean, 24th October 2024
South Brent Storytellers and Archive