

Really Useful Bulletin

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Family History Federation

Supporting family historians since 1974



Welcome to your latest edition—inside find...

Lead article is [Which Archives are Where in London?](#)

plus new DNA section, news from local FHS and from the Federation

Do you struggle when
reading old documents?

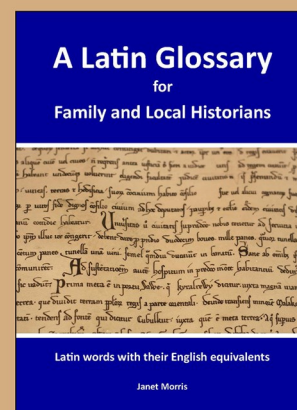
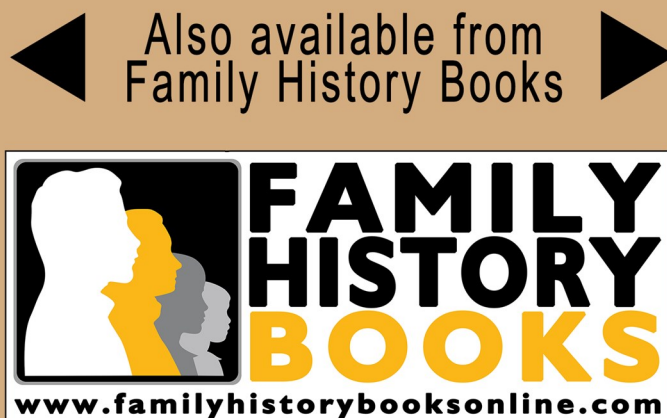
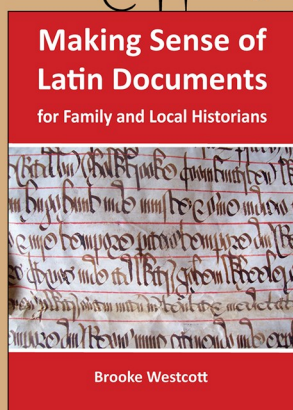
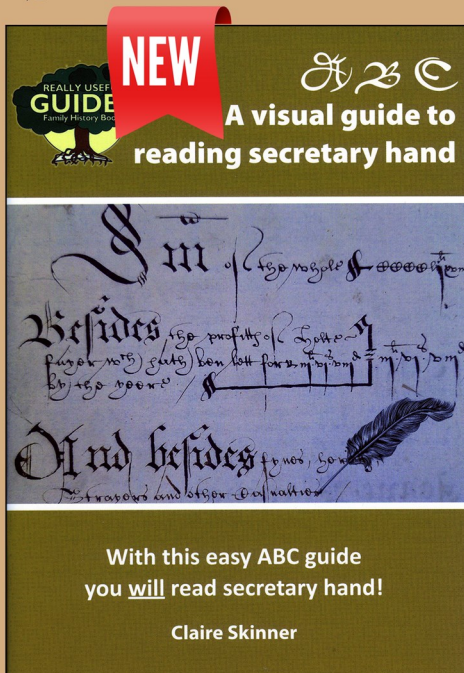
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As the name Suggests,
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Help is available from
Family History Books!

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Which Archives are Where in London?

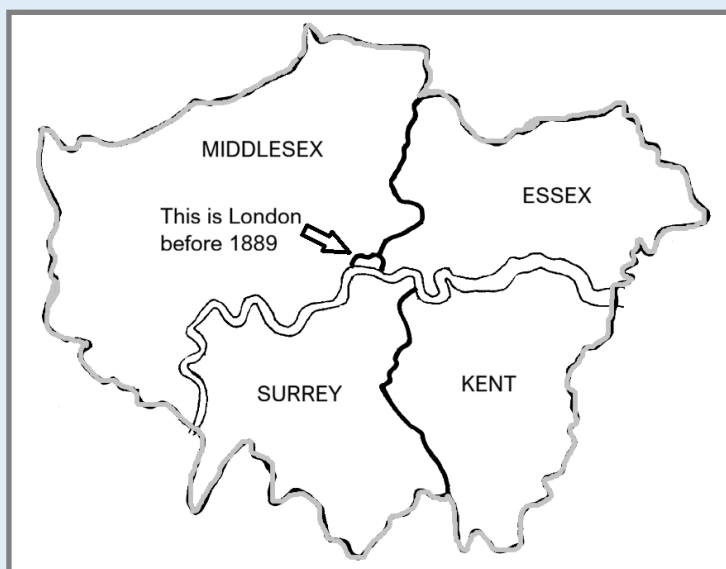
by Elizabeth Burling

‘My ancestors came from London – where are the archives?’ is a question which comes up all the time and, because it is London, the answer is complicated!

We are very lucky in that the main sources we need to research our family history – the parish registers and the census returns – have all been digitised and are widely available on pay-per-view websites (and may well be free at your local archives centre or library). You can get quite a long way by only using these but, to get a more rounded picture of our ancestors’ lives, there are many other collections we can investigate. However, these are spread among many archives centres and just which records are where depends on various factors, the first being just what do you mean by ‘London’?

‘London’ has meant different things at different times so you will initially need to check the date you are looking at. What is thought of today as London is what we locals call Greater London. It covers a massive area of 607 square miles and has an estimated population of some 9.5 million people. Greater London was created in 1965 with the formation of the thirty-two boroughs. The ancient and historic City of London (which is not a borough) is right in the middle. The City was the original London, the smallest city in England with an area of just over one square mile. If your ancestor did something ‘in London’ before 1889, this is the area you should be concentrating on.

THE CITY OF LONDON



The City of London is one of the oldest settlements in the country, having been more or less continuously inhabited since the Romans established Londinium in about 43AD. Of

course, we don’t have archives from 2,000 years ago but they have been amassed for hundreds of years here, especially because London was the seat of government. For example, the Pipe Rolls, which are the written audits of the monarch’s accounts, have been kept by the Exchequer since 1129. These very old records and others, especially ones with a national slant, are all kept at The National Archives at Kew in the London borough of Richmond.

The National Archives (TNA) was formed in 2003 from the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission. I’m going to explain a little more about them as knowing their history helps you understand which records they contain. The **Public Record Office** was established by Parliament in 1838 to take over from the Rolls Chapel on Chancery Lane, which then housed the national archives. These included the rolls of Chancery (administrative and legal records including letters and instructions from the monarch, financial records, grants of privileges and liberties, and similar), Domesday Book, Magna Carta and other state papers. Around 1860 the stored records were cleared out of the chapel and taken to a nearby purpose-built Public Record Office, also in Chancery Lane. The **Historical Manuscripts Commission** was formed in 1869 to document the existence and whereabouts of privately owned historical collections, such as those owned by families or institutions, which could be of use for the study of British history. These two organisations, one concerned with public and the other with private archives, formed the basis of The National Archives’ collection. There are over 18 million historical government and public records here with less than ten per cent currently digitised.

Several other organisations then joined TNA. The Office of Public Sector Information (concerned with encouraging the re-use of public sector information) and His Majesty’s Stationery Office (responsible for supplying the public service with printing services) joined in 2006, as did the UK Statute Law Database (giving access to Government legislation) in 2008, the Find Case Law database (giving access to court judgements and tribunal decisions) in 2022. These are less likely to provide fodder for family historians but this is not necessarily the case with the **Parliamentary Archives**, which joined TNA in 2025. For example, the Protestation Returns from 1642 are in this collection and free to view on TNA’s website, providing a list of men in each parish who swore allegiance to King Charles I. About a third of these survive including those for most of Middlesex (as North London then was).



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Perhaps the main records of use to family historians at TNA are the census returns from 1841-1921 and Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills from 1384-1858 (these last can be downloaded from TNA's website for free if you register with them). However, also here are military records, Metropolitan Police records, prison and higher court records, passenger lists (1890-1960), railway company records and much more which can be very useful to those researching London ancestors. In 1837 and again in 1857 (in particular), nonconformist registers were collected in and these are also at TNA, with copies widely available online. Of course records at TNA are not restricted to London and many pertain to other areas of the county. The National Archive's Discovery catalogue is user-friendly and includes archives from all over the country, so must be a good point to start. It will also tell you whether a particular TNA record has been digitised and how you can access it.

Other records relating specifically to the historic City of London can be found in the **Corporation of London Records Office**, which was created in 1876 to look after the records of the City of London Corporation (previously called the Corporation of London) and is now at **The London Archives (TLA)**. Their massive archive dates from 1067-2010 and is thought to be one of the finest and most complete municipal archives in Europe. The PDF file in the digital catalogue at TLA listing the individual items in this collection runs to over 10,000 pages. Almost anything which happened in the City might be found here, from the archives of Ward administration to the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths (a bell-ringing society which was established in 1747 and rang peals throughout London and the home counties, especially in the church of St Leonard Shoreditch) to the Benevolent Slop Cutters' Burial Association (whose minute book dates from 1858-1892) to the City Parochial Foundation (which administered the charities of 107 of the City parishes) and much more.

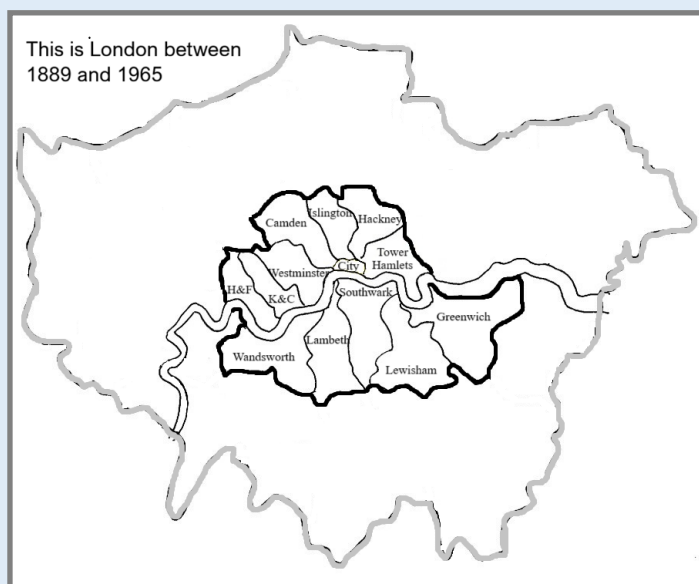
The London Archives, which was known as London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) until 2024, had taken over the Corporation of London Record Office in 2005 and the **Guildhall Library Manuscripts, Prints and Maps** section in 2009 – another City of London based collection. The Guildhall Library prints, maps and manuscript collection is fairly self-explanatory. Many of the images in the London Picture Archive come from this collection.

The Guildhall Library prints, maps and manuscript collection moved to TLA in 2009 but that was not all of the archives at Guildhall. **Guildhall Library (GL)** was founded around 1425 and housed a collection of manuscripts and other items of interest. It took over the responsibility of being the local record office for the City of London in 1945 and its Manuscripts Section was declared a Diocesan Record Office in 1954. It now holds a comprehensive collection of printed books on the City of London together

with pamphlets, eighteenth-century poll books, trade directories from 1677, and a complete run of the *London Gazette* from 1665 to the present. It also holds the libraries of the Clock Makers', Gardeners' and Fletchers' Companies, the Antiquarian Horological Society, Gresham College and the Charles Lamb Society and much more. Other archive collections, managed by TLA and accessed at Guildhall Library, include those of eighty City livery companies, the Lloyd's Marine Collection, the London Stock Exchange archive and those of Christ's Hospital and St Paul's Cathedral.

THE COUNTY OF LONDON

We have now looked at the main archive collections which originated in the City of London. However, in 1889 the County of London was formed from the parts of the counties of Middlesex, Kent and Surrey (but not Essex) which surrounded the City of London – ones which had been designated as 'the metropolis' by the General Register Office. The County of London was administered by the London County Council (LCC), and comprised the area which we think of today as Inner London. This is the area which later became the twelve London boroughs of Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and the City of Westminster. This is the area you need to look at if your ancestor lived 'in London' between 1889 and 1965.



The **London County Record Office (LCRO)** was created following the formation of the County of London and was located at County Hall along with the London County Council. The LCRO took over the records of the predecessor administrative bodies such as the Metropolitan Board of Works (not name-rich sources on the whole), the Metropolitan Asylums Board (institutional records from infectious disease hospitals, residential schools and asylums for those with learning difficulties) and the School



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Board for London (admission registers, minutes, and so on) as well as the organisations which continued their work. The London County Council Education Office school records here, for example, are a fabulous resource for London historians. Division five covers schools in Bethnal Green, the City of London, Poplar and Stepney and contains items such as the girls' school log book for All Hallows School in the City dating from 1883 to 1905, and the infants' log book for All Saints, Buxton Street, Mile End New Town from 1928 to 1938. Other records at LCRO were ones of charities, such as the important Foundling Hospital archive (now digitised and can be seen for free on the *Coram Story* website), parish records and diocesan records.

The London County Record Office, the London County Council Members' Library (which contained books about the history and topography of London, along with drawings, maps, photographs and prints) were two of the bodies which merged in 1965 to form the **Greater London Record Office (GLRO)**, which was renamed as London Metropolitan Archives in 1997 and is now **The London Archives** (London is never easy!). The London Archives looks after the historical archive not only for Inner London but for the whole of Greater London and has over 3.5million items. This includes the nineteen Outer London boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Waltham Forest. If you are looking for people 'in London' from 1965, then you need to look at the whole of Greater London.

GREATER LONDON

I mentioned before that Inner London became the County of London in 1889. Before this date, Greater London north of the Thames and west of the City was in Middlesex (with archives now at TLA) while east of the City of London was in Essex.

The other body which formed part of the GLRO in 1965 and so became part of TLA was the **Middlesex County Record Office (MCRO)**. This was founded in the 1880s as a place to store the old records of the county. At the time, these were described as 'a body of muniments which, relating as they do to the history of the Metropolitan County from Elizabeth to Victoria, may safely be said to surpass in interest, as they probably do in extent, the records of any other county of England'. They included collections such as that of the Middlesex Sessions of the Peace, which survive from 1549 and mention many thousands of Londoners, but did not include the Westminster Sessions from 1620-1844 (despite this being in Middlesex) or the City of London ones (which are in the City of London Corporation archive). Also at MCRO were local government files, coroners' records

(although don't get your hopes up with these, newspapers are a better source) and similar.



Essex parishes did not become part of the County of London so if you are searching for events which happened in the areas which became the London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest, you will need to look at **Essex Record Office** in Chelmsford rather than TLA. Essex Record Office does have an excellent digitisation programme called Essex Archives Online.

South of the River Thames were the counties of Surrey to the west and Kent to the east. The parts of Surrey which became Greater London are those now in the London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth. Archives are held at **Surrey History Centre** and comprise the pre-1889 administrative records such as those of the Quarter Sessions. The parish registers for these areas are at TLA but Poor Law and other records might be at either repository.

You might think that your family were from central London and so you won't need to access Surrey archives. However, they hold the records of Brookwood Cemetery. This cemetery was opened in 1854 at Woking by the London Necropolis Company and was used by the parishes of St Margaret Westminster, St Anne Soho and others. Around eighty per cent of burials were pauper funerals carried out on behalf of London parishes and prisons – these have had no permanent memorial. Bodies might also have been moved from their original resting places many years later and ended up here in Surrey. Civil engineering projects, especially the building of railways and road widening, often necessitated the demolition of burial grounds and Brookwood was the final resting place of many remains.

Kent Archives does not generally hold records for the parts of Kent which became London boroughs. These are held at



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local London borough archives. When the London Boroughs were created in 1965, each got its own archive centre, so there are thirty-two of them. These tend to hold archives of the Borough itself, such as council minutes, borough magazines but also very local items like directories, newspapers, maybe some poor law or rates records, and so on. It is always worth speaking to their archivists, who are a very knowledgeable bunch of helpful people.

These London borough collections often also include archives which may have been held by previous local government organisations such as libraries. For example, Harrow; the archive collection here originated from one started at Wealdstone Library in 1948 which was moved to Gayton Library and then to Harrow Civic Centre Library, where it remained from 1972 until this building was closed in 2013. Since October 2013, the Harrow Archive collection has been based at **Headstone Manor and Museum**. The collection includes local newspapers, electoral registers, directories, photographs and much more.

But back to Kent, records of the Greater London parishes are held at London borough archive centres: **Bexley Local Studies and Archives Centre** (Erith and Sidcup), *Bromley Archives* (Beckenham, Bromley and Orpington), **Lewisham Local History and Archives Centre** (Lee and Lewisham) and **Greenwich Heritage Centre** (Charlton Holy Trinity, Charlton St Luke and Greenwich St Paul). Items from Deptford, Woolwich and some Greenwich ones, however, are at TLA.

There are some anomalies, of course! One noticeable absence from TLA is records relating to Westminster. These are housed at the **City of Westminster Archives Centre**, which opened in 1995 to house the records of Westminster, Paddington and St Marylebone. The parish records for churches in Westminster are here, along with rate books, directories, local school records, local newspapers and more. So although Westminster was in Middlesex, the records were not in the Middlesex County Record Office and, in a similar manner, although St Margaret Westminster was the principal church in Westminster, its records are not at City of Westminster Archives Centre. They are at **Westminster Abbey Muniment** collection, along with the records of Westminster Abbey. This collection includes lease books from their extensive estates from 1486, tradesmen's bills and City of Westminster coroners' inquests, as well items directly about the Abbey.

Three of the parishes in the London Borough of Barnet were not previously in Middlesex. Chipping (or High) Barnet, East Barnet and Totteridge were historically in Hertfordshire until 1965, and the northernmost Middlesex parish of South Mimms was swapped into Hertsmere at that time. This means that you will also need to check

Hertfordshire Records and Local Studies to find records from these and, in fact, some surrounding areas.

So, archives centres in London include The London Archives, The National Archives, City of Westminster Archives and all thirty-two London borough archives—but that is not all.

Then there are the **local history societies** and **historical associations**. Just about each borough has one and they can also hold archives. Hornsey Historical Society, for example, covers not only Hornsey but many surrounding areas too, including Bounds Green, Crouch End, Harringay, Muswell Hill, Stroud Green and Wood Green. Resources about these areas include books (of which many are publications documenting the history of these areas, which the society has produced), deeds, documents (includes some birth, marriage and death certificates), ephemera, exhibitions, indexes, letters, manuscripts, maps, media (such as CDs and DVDs), newspapers, objects, paintings, pamphlets, periodicals, photographs, postcards, prints and more. Local history societies can always add colour to a family history and are definitely worth visiting.

The **Society of Genealogists** needs a mention. Apart from a vast library and copies of the main useful records for those researching in London, there are exclusive records too. For example, there are many manuscript copies of memorial inscriptions which were recorded in times past. You might not be able to get these anywhere else.

And then you might need to think about more **specialised collections**. For instance, the **Wellcome Collection** has a great many mainly healthcare-based records, **London Zoo** has its own archives, as do **London Transport**, the **Post Office**, **Hampstead Garden Suburb**, the **Inns of Court**, the **Freemasons**, and many other institutions and businesses.

I hope I have given you a good overview of which archives are where in London. I might be able to help you further, certainly with North London archives.

Elizabeth can be contacted via: chairman@lwmfhs.org

About the author

For the last twenty years, I have been a volunteer with the **London Westminster and Middlesex Family History Society**, which covers much of North London. We are creating a series of *Parish Research Guides* which aim to assemble, in one booklet, a list of the main records of each ancient parish in our area. We look at all the relevant local archives centres and show which original records are where, which dates are covered, and whether they are also online and on which platform. We hope to inspire family historians and help you locate those important mentions of your ancestors.





Really Useful Bulletin



DNA news, views and clues

with Toni Neobard



Ancestry's DNA Origins update: have your ancestors moved again?

If you've taken an Ancestry DNA test, you may have noticed that your ancestors have been on the move again. Not content with crossing oceans, changing counties and occasionally disappearing from the records altogether, they now seem quite capable of changing nationality without leaving the comfort of their graves!

It's not our ancestors who have changed, of course. It's Ancestry's interpretation of our DNA.

What's changed?

Ancestry's 2026 DNA Origins update, released on 8 October, has more than doubled the number of ancestral regions, from 146 to 302. It has also changed the way it compares our DNA with its reference populations, aiming to tell closely related neighbouring regions apart more accurately.

For anyone who enjoys the technical detail, Ancestry's white paper explains the science, including how the percentages are calculated (www.ancestrycdn.com/support/images/Ethnicity2026_white_paper.pdf).

What do the percentages mean?

The key point is that 40% south-eastern England doesn't mean 40% of your ancestors were born there. It means that about 40% of your DNA looks most like that of Ancestry's south-eastern England reference group: people living today whose families have long been rooted there.

That reflects shared population history rather than any particular generation of your family, so even a carefully researched tree can't necessarily prove or disprove an estimate. Whenever Ancestry refines its method, reference populations or regions, your estimate can change too, even though your DNA hasn't changed.

My mother has apparently become more English!

I'm fortunate to have had both my parents' DNA tested, something I'm particularly grateful for now they've both passed away.

Mum's DNA Ethnicity Estimate

AncestryDNA® results: October 2025 compared with October 2026

Region	Oct 2025	Oct 2026	% Change
Southeastern England	64%	90%	+26%
Northwestern Germany	10%	0%	-10%
East Midlands & Yorkshire	7%	2%	-5%
Sweden	5%	0%	-5%
Devon & Somerset	4%	0%	-4%
Northern Wales & North West England	3%	1%	-2%
Southern Germanic Europe	3%	0%	-3%
Cornwall	0%	2%	+2%
Donegal, Ireland	2%	0%	-2%
France	0%	2%	+2%
West Midlands	2%	2%	No change
Northern England	0%	1%	+1%

Figures are reproduced exactly as reported by Ancestry.

Source: AncestryDNA® ethnicity estimate, ancestry.co.uk

My mother's results are striking (see table above). Her south-eastern England estimate has risen from 64% to 90%, while most of her smaller regions have disappeared or shrunk, including north-western Germany (10%) and Sweden (5%). Cornwall and France have each appeared at 2%.

That's quite a transformation in twelve months!

The new estimate looks more like my documentary research, which traces her ancestors almost exclusively to Essex and Hertfordshire, mostly along their shared border.

But my research covers a few centuries, while 'Origins' estimates may reflect population history stretching far beyond the parish registers. So the closer fit is reassuring rather than proof, and it doesn't mean the earlier estimates were wrong.

The white paper notes that most people with deep roots in the south and east of England are likely to carry 3 to 5% Scandinavian DNA, reflecting Germanic and Viking



Really Useful Bulletin



DNA news, views and clues continued



The really exciting next step would be to apply the same grandparent split to our DNA matches, showing which grandparent each match connects through. That isn't an announced feature, but it would be a huge help to genetic genealogists.

And finally...

Origins estimates are fascinating, but they're only one part of genetic genealogy. When identifying unknown ancestors or solving family mysteries, our DNA matches, shared matches and documentary evidence generally provide much stronger clues.

There's more on origins estimates in my

forthcoming ***Really Useful Guide: DNA explained for family historians*** (due to be released in December 2026).

In the meantime, don't be too alarmed if your ancestors appear to have moved again. They're probably exactly where you left them. It's Ancestry's interpretation that's changed!

Introducing Toni Neobard

Toni has been researching family history for some fifty years and, more recently, has developed a particular interest in genetic genealogy. She is vice chair of the Essex Society for Family History, and gives talks and workshops. She is the author of the upcoming ***Really Useful Guide: DNA Explained for Family Historians*** and co-author of ***Granny was a Brothel Keeper—50 Family History Traps***, ***Grandad did a Dastardly Deed—50 More Family History Traps*** and, due out end of October, ***Finding and Researching Living Relatives***. All from Family History Books.

Click first two for full details—the third is due very soon!

settlement, and that Ancestry deliberately included such people in its reference panel. A little Scandinavian DNA is part of what south-eastern English DNA typically looks like.

So my mother's previous 5% Sweden and 10% north-western Germany didn't necessarily mean a Swede or German lurking undetected in her family tree. Those Germanic and Viking settlers left their mark on the region's DNA, which the new estimate may simply count as 'Southeastern England'.

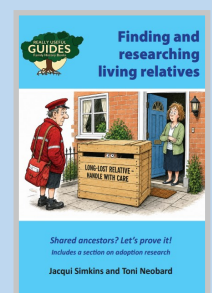
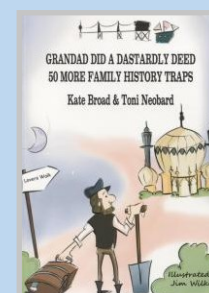
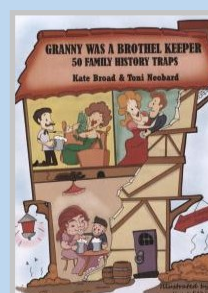
A couple of things worth doing

Look at the ranges. Each percentage comes with a range showing how confident Ancestry is in it. Treat small percentages with particular caution: Ancestry acknowledges that small regions can appear or vanish between updates largely by chance.

Save your previous results. Open 'DNA Origins' and find 'View previous results and FAQs' to download a PDF comparing your old and new estimates. It's only available for a limited period after the update.

What might come next?

Ancestry now shows which regions we inherited from each parent and each grandparent, even if they haven't tested. Having tested both my parents, I'll be able to compare its grandparent breakdown with their own results.





Family History Societies



Oxfordshire Family History Society

Family History Fair

Saturday 24 October 2026

10am—4pm

Free entry, free parking

**Cherwell School (North), Marston Ferry Road,
Oxford, OX2 7EE**

Wheelchair and child friendly

Get help with your research – particularly in Oxfordshire
but also in other counties and countries

A variety of subject experts will be present, browse and buy
books, CDs, maps, postcards and materials from specialist
companies

As well as the stalls, we have a series of three talks during
the day, check website [below] for details

Refreshments available (until 3.15 pm)

Comments from the 2025 Fair:

Very informative and interesting day.

Good variety of tables, all with knowledgeable staff.

Plenty of car parking and nice to have tea/coffee available.

Also, reasonably close to bus stops.

Lovely fair, helpful OFHS staff and other stallholders.

Come and help us celebrate our Golden Anniversary

For more information including advice on how to get to the
fair visit: www.ofhs.uk/fair2026

Email: fair@ofhs.uk Tel: OFHS Helpline: 01865 358151

Registered Charity: 275891



Huddersfield & District Family History Society

Family and Local History Fair

Saturday 24 October 2026

10am—4pm

Masonic Hall, Greenhead Road, Huddersfield, HD1 4EN

Admission is £5.00

List of exhibitors see: <https://hdfhs.org.uk/fair-exhibitors/>

New this year...**Alan Godfrey Maps** with a new range of
historical maps of the Huddersfield area. And the **Yorkshire
Dialect Society** and **Folk and Fable Heritage Studio**.



Plus family history societies,
local history societies and
groups plus an exhibitor selling
unusual gifts.

Tickets for talks are available on
admission to the event.

Keith Robinson discussing his recently released book ***The Mill Workers of Lockwood***— an area of Huddersfield which
until now has been neglected in terms of recorded history
and is a speaker not to be missed. **10.30am.**

Christine Leveridge returns to give one of her entertaining
talks: ***The Yorkshire Coalfield*** on pits and mining
communities around West and South Yorkshire. **12 noon.**

Chris Smith is an avid collector of postcards. His
presentation will be ***A Walk Around Huddersfield in Old
Postcards – Part 2***. **1.30pm.**

Take lunch in the lovely bar at the Masonic Hall, treat
yourself to books and maps of interest along with our
society's publications and a wide range of new books on
family and local history related subjects. There will also be a
stand with genealogical stationery and a raffle for a fabulous
family history related hamper.

Don't miss the donated books stand! Throughout the year
people donate books to the society, many of which we
already have and so we make these available for small
donations to the society at this event.

Our memorial inscription team will look up names on our
database and give more information about the work we do.

The help and assistance of our volunteers along with those
who help on exhibitors' stands is so important. Our research
service is available throughout the day.

Please see our website: <https://www.hdfhs.org.uk/the-family-history-fair/>

We hope you can join us!

Susan Hutson, secretary



Family History Societies



Cumbria Family History Society

Vacancy – trustee/honorary secretary

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a replacement trustee/honorary secretary for the charity.

This role works closely with the other trustees to advance the objectives of the society for the benefit of its members.

The society has a fifty-year history of helping our members to carry out their genealogy research by providing media for communication from the website pages and Facebook (over 3,600 members) to our successful conferences and the quarterly newsletter, additional Cumbrian resources by organising and publishing an increasing portfolio of new transcriptions and bringing further benefits such as Zoom meetings through collaboration with other similar societies.

All trustees are voluntary and therefore unremunerated although reasonable officer expenses such as travel to meetings is reimbursed. You don't need to be in Cumbria to apply although the ability to attend some meetings would be helpful. A lot of the council and trustee meetings are now online except the AGM, which is held in person.

The secretary role has specific responsibilities which are described in the job description, as well as creating and implementing future strategies with the other trustees and council members. The way we communicate is changing faster each year and the council aims to ensure that the society uses the most appropriate platforms for the benefit of the members.

If you feel that you fit this role and would like to be more involved in the direction of the society then we would love to hear from you.

Please email publicity@cumbriafhs.com to tell us, briefly, why you are interested in this role and what you feel you could bring to the society.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Please email publicity@cumbriafhs.com if you would like a copy of the job description.



Cumbria Family History Society

AUTUMN CONFERENCE

**Friday 6 November to
Sunday 8 November 2026**

**Crooklands Hotel,
Milnthorpe, near Kendal**

We have David Sowerby hosting the very popular short stories related by CFHS members

Seven speakers are booked with a variety of topics:

Paul Crone

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Petra Mitchinson

Read all about it—researching newspapers

Steven Dickinson

DNA correlations over the generations in Cumbria in respect of Viking/Scandinavian ancestry

Dr Mike Winstanley

Thomas Allom, architect and artist

Janet Rigby

Lancashire Canals (Kendal area)

Hilary Chalmers

Ships' Crew Lists—can they tell a story?

Kevin Aleander

Askam-in-Furness

Booking form in the latest newsletter or

booking is live on the website

www.cumbriafhs.com/events

For more information, and to book please contact

Hilary Chalmers cfhs.crooklands@gmail.com.

Open to non-members



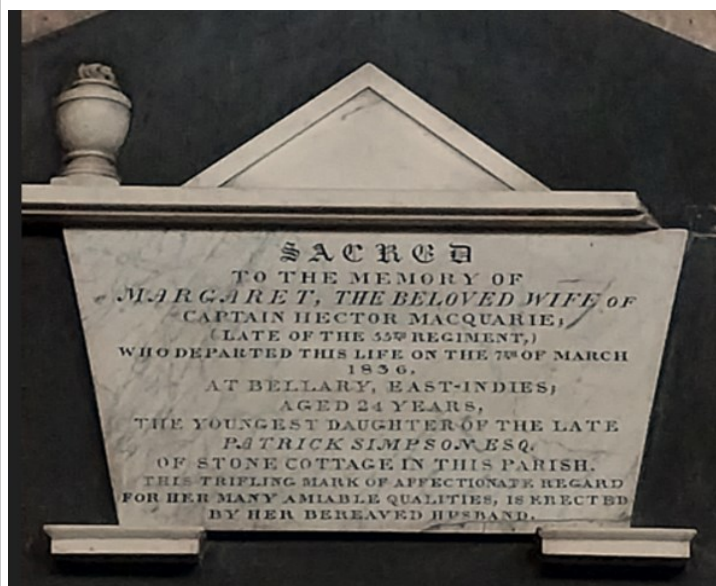


Really Useful Bulletin

Making Connections

A Heritage Open Day Connection

It was at a Heritage Open Day in the parish church in Fillongley, Warwickshire, that two inquisitive family historians spotted a name on a memorial plaque. Both had Australian connections and both commented—*I wonder if he is connected to Lachlan MacQuarie?*



Whenever we visit places, we should take note of all memorials and in this instance a trail of curious exploration took place. The memorial above faced that of Margaret's parents across the aisle. The surname is correctly SIMSON and is so on her parents' memorial.

Although Margaret SIMSON was born in Fillongley, her father was of Scottish stock. A SIMSON family tree online is packed with medics (as was her father), clerics (as was her uncle who was incumbent in Coventry) and academics.

Her "beloved" husband was in barracks at nearby Coventry. The story that evolved showed Hector MACQUARIE to be a dissolute fellow with no regard for others. The researchers decided he was after Margaret's money—he was in debt.

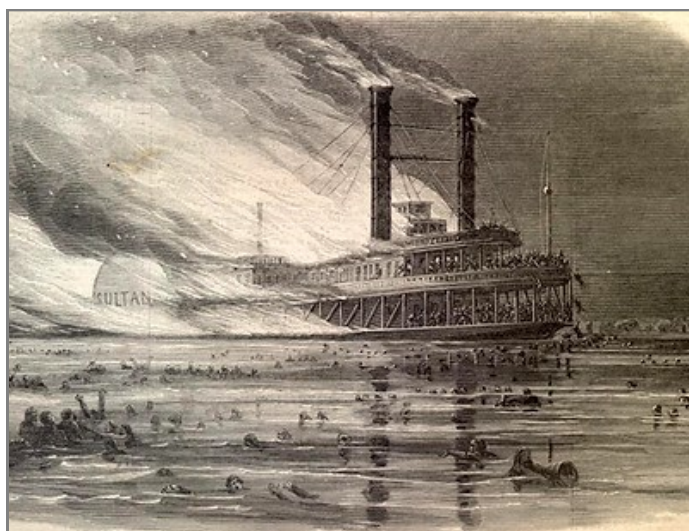
Subsequent research used the [FIBIS](https://fibis.org/) website for Margaret's death in India, a number of articles about Lachlan MACQUARIE (Australia and Isle of Mull) and the wonderful research by Pauline Conolly—<https://paulineconolly.com/2016/hector-macquarie-and-his-two-wives/>

The research was written up for the church displays.

Making connections worldwide from "just" a memorial on a church wall!

Do you have a connection?

We were recently told of a museum—with a database—marking the disaster involving the *Sultana* steamboat as the Civil War in American came to its end. There will be families with individuals who went to America and who ended up on one side or the other during the war and perhaps were connected with this disaster which remains the worst maritime disaster in US history.



In spring 1865, the *Sultana* was commandeered from its usual cargo work travelling the Mississippi river from St Louis to New Orleans carrying supplies. It was to collect Union soldiers from the Andersonville and Cahaba prisons and transport them to be paroled.

On the morning of the 27 April 1865 tragedy struck when the grossly over-loaded *Sultana* exploded - over 1,000 individuals lost their lives. Online database link below.

In November a new museum is opening in memory of this tragedy and coincides with a reunion for the descendants of those involved with the disaster.

Check their database to make a connection! There are details for each person whether they died or survived:

<https://sultana-7f06a.web.app/search>

For more information go to Sultana Disaster Museum www.sultanadisastermuseum.com

The Sultana Association of Descendants and Friends: www.thesultanaassociation.com

With thanks to Dee Cody. Image from the museum website.



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

Did you know...?

The Federation has invited all member groups to submit one item about what they are doing for the *Bulletin*.

This may be a transcription project, an upcoming event, a different activity to the norm...in fact anything that will be of interest to *Bulletin* readers but does not require a full article to be drafted—a sentence will do!

Easy and free advertising! All member groups are asked to submit one item before the end of October for inclusion in your November *Bulletin*.

Do encourage your group to send details to Debbie:
admin@familyhistoryfederation.com

Out and about—end of the year

The team will be at two major hobby/craft shows in the coming weeks. Do find the Federation's booth, stop by for a chat, discuss your current "unfindable ancestor" [the team found one for a visitor at Exeter!] and also have a look at the latest titles from **Family History Books**.

Glasgow, ICHF at SEC 22—25 October
Birmingham, ICHF at NEC 5—8 November
ICHF shows: www.ichfevents.co.uk/upcoming-shows/

Out and about—early next year!

The team is already booked for some events early in 2027. Note the dates—visit the stand!

Glasgow, ICHF at SEC 4-6 March
Birmingham, ICHF at NEC 11-14 March

The Family History Show Midlands 13 March
Three Counties Showground, Malvern—the bookstall will be there! See: thefamilyhistoryshow.com/midlands/

FHF Southern REALLY USEFUL Family History Show 24 April
Kinson Community Centre, near Bournemouth—the bookstall will be there! This is a show not to be missed!! See Dorset FHS website



Future of Family History Societies



Saturday 21 November 2026

10am—3pm



at Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission

49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU

Session will be led by Nick Barratt

All Federation members are invited

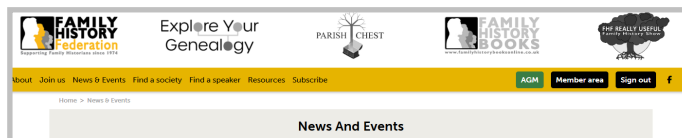
Details sent to member groups. We ask all to attend this vital in-person gathering to consider how family history societies/groups can move forward in the next few years and how the Family History Federation can support your society/group.

To confirm your attendance, please email Debbie :
admin@familyhistoryfederation.com

Fairs, shows and events

Please ensure that member groups' activities are added to the Federation's dedicated website:

www.familyhistoryfederation.com/news-and-events



It is strongly recommended that all family history events are also added to Genuki's events listing:

[//geneva.weald.org.uk/doku.php?id=list](http://geneva.weald.org.uk/doku.php?id=list)



Already for 2027 there are events that clash. This is not good for attendance or for family historians wanting to get out and about to meet societies, groups and more!

Do not bury heads in the sand... Remember that many family historians will travel considerable distances to attend relevant events, so check what is already advertised before setting YOUR event date. Individuals' family history research interests are rarely in just one area—do not limit your possible visitor numbers!





Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

New records published by Findmypast

Highlighting all family history society record sets recently published through to October

Leicestershire and Rutland FHS – Firstly, the *Leicestershire Quarter Sessions Index 1714-1885*. This collection allows you to discover over 27,000 records of poor law related court cases held across the Leicestershire County Quarter Sessions, Borough of Leicester Quarter Sessions and Rutland Quarter Sessions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



Secondly, you can now search through over 8,000 new records of *Leicestershire apprentices* between 1646-1897. Whether your ancestor was an apprentice glover, printer or hatter, this collection helps you uncover more details about your ancestor's career in Leicestershire during time periods where genealogical information tends to be scarcer.

Additionally, roughly 4,000 new records of *burials and monumental inscriptions* for Leicestershire have been added. New burial records are available for the Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel in Hinckley between 1787 and 1983. New monumental inscription records for both Oadby and Wigston cemeteries are live for you to search between 1850 and 2022.

Lastly, thanks to the generous contributions from Leicestershire and Rutland FHS, you can discover an impressive collection of *poor law records* for Leicestershire. This includes an index of over 10,000 Leicestershire Order Book records which document removal and settlement orders from Quarter Sessions in Leicestershire between 1679 and 1832. The collection also includes records of the Leicester Division Bastardy Book between 1844 and 1874, and the Leicestershire Bastardy Order Books between 1678 and 1832. And lastly, the Leicester Union Emigrants Register which details emigrants who had their passage paid for by Leicester poor law union between 1905 and 1921.

Dorset FHS – For those with family history in Dorset and an interest in naval history, thanks to contributions from the Dorset FHS you can now discover a new collection of records that document Dorset men that served at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 in our Battle of Trafalgar Collection.



Additionally, FMP has published a brand-new set detailing individuals in Dorset who joined the Monmouth Rebellion Army in 1685.

Kevin Todman

Data Manager – Family History Federation

E: data.manager@familyhistoryfederation.com



If your society has records it would like to place on Findmypast—and earn some money—contact Kevin who will be happy to help you.

Learn with Lorna—Highland Archives

At time of putting this *Bulletin* together, Lorna Steele-McGinn has reached talk number 264— *On board ship*.

Her talks are fascinating whether or not you have interests in the Highlands area.

Link for 264: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2vE9eOcx3E



Editor's [very!!] little box

We are delighted to welcome **Toni Neobard** who will be having a regular *Bulletin* spot to help you with your DNA research—*DNA news, views and clues*.

Scottish Indexes Conference XXXIV

Saturday 14 November 2026

Interested in tracing your Scottish genealogy? This online conference is an opportunity to learn new research skills, discover diverse records and see how others have put these into practice.

Timings to suit worldwide audience.

Visit their website for further information / register for the event www.scottishindexes.com/conference.aspx





Really Useful Back Page



Family History Research Aids from the experts

Parish Chest, a service from the Family History Federation, has over eighty family history societies and associated suppliers at a one-stop online shop, offering a wide range of family history materials in some eighteen categories including:

- *Parish register transcriptions and more from local FHS*
- *Memorial inscriptions information from gravestones across the country, compiled by local FHS*
- *Nonconformists: Baptists, Wesleyans, Independents, Quakers and many more nonconformist lists*
- *Wills and probate indexes of wills and administrations*
- *Folders, printing facilities, giftware*
- *..and more!*

Societies and suppliers regularly add new lines, so visit to see what is there to help you add to your family tree.

www.parishchest.com

Societies and others interested in joining Parish Chest should initially contact:

admin@familyhistoryfederation.com

Explore Your
Genealogy

This extensive information website is free to use. It has access to every genealogical topic imaginable, podcasts, resources, societies and much more. Click the logo to visit. It is provided by the Family History Federation.

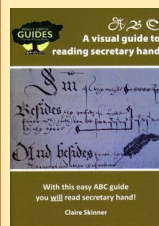


FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS & MAPS

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

Family History Books (FHB) is an online bookshop and publisher; it is owned by the Family History Federation and the aim is to provide a service to the genealogical community. Family History Books Online offers a range of relevant titles relating to family history research, plus a range of specialist maps for family and local historians.

FHB welcomes contact from authors! Works of specific interest to family historians with wider social history topics are of interest. FHB does not publish individual family histories or fiction. If you have a book in the making, then do contact FHB via admin@familyhistoryfederation.com. We would love to hear from you about your ideas.



This new title was extremely popular when launched at the recent *Family History Show London*. Author Claire Skinner has developed a book that will enable all researchers to read this often difficult-to-decipher hand. **ABC—A Visual Guide to Reading Secretary Hand.** Just £4.95 +p&p. For details click [HERE](#).

In addition to its [online shop](#) FHB can also be found at major live family history events around the country. Come and visit us and see all the latest titles available. The bookstall is always very popular!

Happy browsing!

Explore our range of specialist family history books at:

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

The *REALLY USEFUL Bulletin* is published monthly and circulated free of charge. Members of the Family History Federation are encouraged to provide information about their projects and activities for inclusion free of charge.

The Federation policy is to include paid-for commercial advertising providing space allows.

For details of advertising rates, sizes, etc., please email admin@familyhistoryfederation.com—please put “Bulletin Advertising” in the subject line.



The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show 24 April 2027—near Bournemouth—see Dorset FHS

Can FHF members put on a regional show elsewhere? Assistance available.

Contact: chairman@familyhistoryfederation.com



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