



FAMILY HISTORY Federation

Supporting Family Historians since 1974

REALLY USEFUL Bulletin

No 25

September 2022



1926—2022



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Welcome to the latest edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin*

inside find...

This month: THE UKBMD PROJECT *plus— to help newcomers—* **BASICS FOR BEGINNERS**
along with news from local FHS and from the Federation

The 2022 REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

Online Friday 11th (evening) and Saturday 12th November

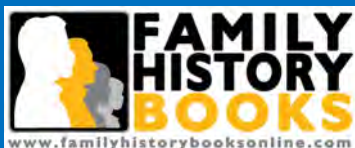


Speakers announced

Dozens of workshops coming soon

Buy your ticket NOW to access all areas:

www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/



NEW!

This is the ultimate handbook for all Dorset research. The wealth of information it contains – and how to access it – really does make it the Bible of Dorset Research! This is a very readable book for those whose research involves the county. Author *Chloe O'Shea, BSc, MA, is a professional genealogist who grew up in the county of Dorset.*

The book is hot off the presses and available NOW at £14.95 + usual post and packing. [Click for direct link](#) to further details.



DISCOVER YOUR DORSET ANCESTORS



CHLOE O'SHEA



Really Useful Bulletin

The UKBMD Project – a brief history

by Ian Hartas

As I write this it's the beginning of July 2022 and the project has reached a major milestone. We now have over fifty million index entries on line!

So, what is this project? It can best be described as a connected set of associated websites that have the same software, design, and the same aim which is to put online the indexes to the birth, marriage and death events which have been registered locally in England and Wales since 1837.



It's worth stepping back for a moment to highlight the differences between this project and other BMD indexes that are online via sites such as FreeBMD, Ancestry, Find My Past, etc. These are all based on indexes to the registers held by the General Register Office (GRO). When births and deaths are initially registered the registration occurs at your local register office. Likewise, marriages are either registered at the church or the local register office.

Quarterly, copies of these original registers are sent to the GRO where they are collated and re-indexed. If we look back to 1837, there were no computers, not even typewriters, so the copying and re-indexing process used to create the GRO version has become well known for its errors and omissions. Michael Whitfield Foster wrote two books on the errors in the GRO marriage indexes [*A Comedy of Errors or the Marriage Records of England and Wales 1837-1899* and *A Comedy of Errors Act 2*].

So it's the usual advice, if you can get access to originals the information is more likely to be accurate and complete. This is the aim of the *Local BMD Project* – we are indexing the original local registers. An added bonus of the marriage indexes is that the marriages are fully

paired and each also shows the venue for the marriage. Here's an example search result from the Yorkshire BMD website showing the marriage of one of my ancestors:

Yorkshire Marriage indexes for the years: 1841								
Surname	Forename(s)	Surname	Forename(s)	Year	Church / Register Office	Registers At	Reference	Add to Summary
HARTAS	John	HINDSON	Mary	1841	Helmsley, All Saints, Ryedale	Harrogate	C26RY/1/74	☐

There are a set of tutorials with short videos on the UKBMD website that explain how to get the best out of the *Local BMD Project* websites, covering many aspects from performing a basic search, to how download the results for use in a spreadsheet. Ordering copy certificates is also covered.

See: <https://UKBMD.org.uk/tutorials>

We're human so obviously errors can and do occur, but as we have access to the original registers we can correct the error. An entry missing in the GRO's version will always be missing.

So, how did this all start? Back in 2000 the South Cheshire FHS (my local FHS at the time) were approached by the registrar from Crewe and he asked if we could put his marriage indexes online. At a similar time the main Family History Society of Cheshire had been asked the same question by the Chester Register office. However, the two people chairing the two societies decided that we should pool our resources and create one combined website. The result was the fledgling *Cheshire BMD* website.

As time passed other societies approached and asked if the same software could be used for their indexes and soon after, Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Lancashire BMD websites followed. Over the years other areas joined in we now have eleven regions of the country using common software. Covid restrictions have limited our progress over the last few years but work continues and updates to the various sites keep the totals rising and as mentioned at the start of this article, we now have over fifty million indexes online. There's still a lot to do on



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most of the websites, they all have coverage pages that show the extent of the transcription work so far, and an updates page that details the contents of the latest site updates.

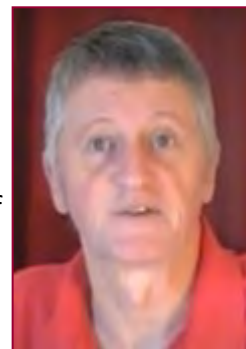
Over time there has been continuous maintenance plus addition of features to the software with the most recent set of updates adding an *Advanced Search* page where births, marriages and deaths can be searched in one go, and then this Advanced Search page itself was updated to add in a feature, *Gaelic Prefix*, which aims to account for names which may have lost their “Mac”, “Mc” or “O” prefixes over time. I’m always open to suggestions for future features – just let me know.

How do I find all these sites on the Internet? The best way is to use the UKBMD website: <https://UKBMD.org.uk>. UKBMD was initially set up just as a quick means of providing links to the various BMD websites, but very quickly its remit was expanded to include links to thousands of websites with online data for genealogical research in the UK. Links to the Local BMD Project websites can be found on the Local BMD page within UKBMD. This page also provides links to the other BMD websites which are run separately to the Local BMD Project, but also share the aim of putting online indexes to the original registers.

UKBMD itself continues to be updated adding new links, and alongside of it there are its two companion websites, UKGDL [<https://UKGDL.org.uk>] and UKMFH [<https://UKMFH.org.uk>]. UKGDL provides links to both free and commercial websites that have online genealogical directories and lists of data aimed at family history and UKMFH does the same for military family history.



About the Author: My interest in genealogy arose due to my rare surname and I’ve been involved in genealogy for several decades now, with the BMD websites a major part of my genealogical life. After a lifetime in the IT industry I have been semi-retired since 2009, but still concentrate on creating websites. A Lancashire lad, with Yorkshire ancestry, living in Cheshire.



And for the technically minded, the first version used *Perl* and *Berkely DB* whilst the current version uses *PHP* and *SQLite*.

Ed: One of the many advantages of UKBMD is that the marriage place confirms when it was a civil marriage. No good searching Church of England holdings online—the only way of obtaining a copy certificate is from the civil registration service. An example from my own family research is below. If you want to see signatures, order from the local civil registration office and request a scan or photocopy!

Cheshire Marriage indexes for the years: 1876 to 1880							
Surname	Forename(s)	Surname	Forename(s)	Year	Church / Register Office	Registers At	Reference
CHALLONER	Joseph	EARDLEY	Jane	1877	Chester, Civil Marriage or Registrar Attended	Cheshire West	ROC/14/31

UKBMD also has links to other sources for family historians, especially *One-Place Studies* website which contain census and similar information. Also, a listing of the *Online Parish Clerks* around the country.



If you are involved with civil registration locally, why not explore the service provided by UKBMD. Simply use the “contact us” on the UKBMD website!



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Basics for Beginners

Where to start

Start with yourself and your immediate family and work back to each earlier generation. Older relatives can provide a great deal of helpful information, including stories about earlier generations that you could not find in written sources. Many relatives will have kept family certificates which will save you time and money. They may also have newspaper cuttings of family events such as weddings, funerals, etc. Not everyone remembers everything accurately, so it is important to try to locate as many family documents and pictures and either scan or photograph them for your records. In the case of pictures, name your image so it is clear who is included and, where possible date them, e.g. *About 1900 John Baxter and Ann Truman*.

Every family's history is unique and people encounter similar challenges as their research progresses. It can be a great advantage to join a family history society or other local family history group and avail yourself of

their local knowledge by meeting fellow members who could help you with research questions. It is well worth locating the [societies](#) which cover the area in which you live and also the area from which your ancestors originate.

Family history societies

Finding a society

A-Z of societies
British Societies
Overseas Societies
One-Name Study Societies
Map view

Researching beyond living memory

The extent of undertaking further research is really dependent on the information you have already gathered. In the early stages, much can be achieved online because birth, marriage and death indexes since 1837 (you will need to purchase a certificate or two) and census returns between 1841 and 1921 are readily accessible. You need to be fairly sure of where your ancestors lived unless their names are less popular.

Finding a certificate for your ancestor

The indexes to most births, marriages and deaths registered in England and Wales between 1837 and 1983 are now included on the free site [FreeBMD](#) and can be searched in a variety of ways. If you search in these indexes and cross-check the results with census records or parish registers, you may be able to avoid the



need to buy loads of certificates to find the correct one. The mother's maiden name prior to 1912 has been added to the indexing available on the [General Register Office's website](#).

If you are looking for a marriage that took place in a church, scanned images of the registers may be available online. In such cases, you will see the same information that would appear in a GRO marriage certificate, with the added bonus of seeing actual signatures of the bride, groom and witnesses. The [UKBMD Project](#) [see previous pages] provides added detail on local registrations of births, marriages and deaths for many areas.

Obtaining birth, marriage or death certificates

How to order certificates – England & Wales

You can order certificates of births, marriages and deaths from as early as July 1837 or PDF copies of certain birth and death records online from the [General Register Office \(GRO\)](#), which is part of the Identity and Passport Service.



You can also obtain certificates from local registrars' offices although the cost is slightly more than that from the GRO. However, sometimes local offices can find entries that the GRO cannot.

How to order certificates – Scotland



["Scotlands People"](#) is the gateway to details from civil registration and a host of other records relating to Scotland. It provides good accounts of the periods covered and the information that should have been included at various dates.

How to order certificates – Northern Ireland



Visit the [General Register Office for Northern Ireland](#) website to order their civil registration certificates.

Many other countries have a civil registration system starting at various dates from which it is also possible to obtain certified copies of vital records.



Really Useful Bulletin

Using the census returns

A census was taken every ten years and, with each decade, more information was taken. Very few lists of households with names survive prior to 1841. The censuses for the period 1841 – 1921 for England, Wales and Scotland have been indexed and are available online as digitised images.



Many returns are available free at [FreeCEN](#) or [FamilySearch](#). Pre-1921 can be searched on subscription websites such as FindMyPast, The Genealogist and Ancestry. 1921 is only available on FindMyPast.

If you do not subscribe to one of the commercial sites, many local public libraries offer free access to library members. You can also view census collections for free at LDS Family History Centres and national libraries and at The National Archives, Kew.

Researching further

Some of the other major sources that include substantial family history information:

Parish registers – many of these start in the sixteenth century.

Bishops' transcripts – contemporary copies of parish register entries, again often starting in the sixteenth century and useful if parish registers have been lost or cannot be easily read. Many end around 1840.

Probate records – a will can provide evidence of family relationships but not all people left one. Before 1858 probate was administered by the ecclesiastical court system. Some of these are online via subscription websites, others are in local repositories. After 1858, a national system exists for the whole of England and Wales. The basic name and dates can be found for

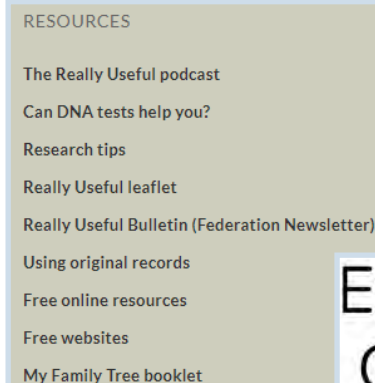


England and Wales on the [government copy will website](#) but you have to order a copy of the will to see the details.

Newspapers – many survive from the late-18th century onwards. Scanned and indexed images of pages from a wide range of titles can be found online at the [British Newspaper Archive](#) and on FindMyPast, but some are still in original format or microform often available in local libraries.



Other sources – are profuse. Initially use the *Resources* on the [Family History Federation](#) website.



You can see from the list that there are plenty of articles to help you.



Later in 2022 a new website, [Explore your Genealogy](#), is to be launched which will continue to expand with helpful articles and information specialising in UK family history research. The [FamilySearch wiki](#) is an extensive online, wide-ranging source of information and links, including for other countries.

**To take your research further
join a local [family history society](#)**

In addition to local family history societies covering a geographical area, there are a number within the Federation that cover specialist research topics. Some of these are:

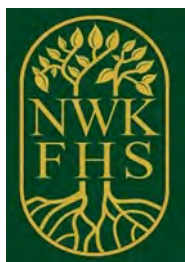


Within the Federation there are also overseas family history societies, groups covering places and organisations which specialise in a single surname [a one-name study]. The websites of these and the above can be found via the link below.

**See the full listing of Federation members at
www.familyhistoryfederation.com/societies-az**



Family History Societies



North West Kent Family History Society

Like virtually all societies North West Kent has had to reinvent itself as a result of the pandemic. Its major focus prior to then was face-to-face branch meetings and attendance at local events to boost membership.

The society already had many members living all over the UK plus some from overseas, but the pandemic and subsequent lockdown made us realise that technology had to play a much greater part in how we operated.

During lockdown the society started following up the opening welcome letter to new members with a further communication providing more information with offers to help their research and it became clear that some eighty to ninety per cent of these new members did not reside close to an area covered by our branches.

So how did we change?

Very few of us had ever heard of Zoom and the thought of conducting a meeting with everyone staring at each other on a screen was unheard of.

Slowly but surely the society adapted with talks, workshops, discussion groups, coffee mornings all conducted via Zoom

and thus being able to involve anyone, anywhere at any time and it is significant that many of our new members who live abroad in different time zones still tune in to our talks and discussions via Zoom.

This meant of course that the members involved all had to adopt new skills, new techniques and learn lots of new terms and which buttons to press and it was a steep learning curve for many.

It was also necessary to recruit volunteers from within the membership with the necessary skills to carry out the additional functions which were now required.

Now we are well into 2022 and although the world is reopening to something like pre-pandemic normality our society realises that to continue to be successful, we must communicate with all our members wherever they reside using every platform at our disposal and we will never be satisfied until everyone feels included in the society's activities be they actual or virtual.

That is why we are still running face-to-face monthly branch meetings at Dartford and Sevenoaks together with a monthly Zoom meeting.

We produce a bi-monthly enews bulletin containing many interesting facts about people who have contacted us as well as details of all our upcoming events. This is open to both members and non-members as is our very active Facebook

page. Examples of the effectiveness of our bulletin include tracing several family members via bibles and old letters.

We currently hold regular workshops and discussion groups on a variety of general and specialist subjects including DNA and Scottish interests. These are at present on Zoom.

We have an enthusiastic team constantly transcribing old parish records the majority of which, when edited, are submitted to Find My Past with some being added to our own website.

Local events and fairs are now becoming more commonplace again and the society will participate wherever it can but like many other societies one needs an active pool of volunteers.

We are also resuming our drop-in sessions to local libraries to assist with the general public's enquiries.

The society is now building on the excellent work already achieved on our website by branching into new areas such as offering digital downloads of many of our products enabling an easier and more cost-effective means of continuing one's research. This development will augment the wide selection of CDs already available for purchase via the eshop on the website.



Our Twitter account is now allowing us to reach a wider audience and share many of the resources that the society and the website has to offer.

We are also hoping to produce a new promotional video and make regular blogging a feature of the site.

All of this is and continues to be possible only with the help of the fabulous members of our team.

Dartford Branch- meetings held at Dartford Science and Technology College, Heath Lane, Dartford DA1 2LY on the first Saturday of each month. Doors open 9.45am.

Sevenoaks Branch- meetings held at Otford Memorial Hall, 28a High Street, Otford, Sevenoaks TN14 5PQ on the second Saturday of each month. Doors open 10.45 am.

Visitors always welcome.

Membership £10 per annum, family membership £12 per annum.

If you would like to know more about North West Kent and all its activities do look at our website (nwkfhs.org.uk) or contact publicity@nwkfhs.org.uk

*Picture: Main Gate, Royal Arsenal Woolwich
from NWKFHS Newsletter, August 2022.*



Family History Societies

Peterborough & District Family History Society

www.peterborofhs.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 298897



The Society has an annual update of archives every July. This year's additions meant we added over 4,500 names to our **Archives Names Index** bringing the total names from around the world to over 200,000.

THE ARCHIVE NAMES INDEX IS SEARCHABLE BY EVERYBODY

MEMBERS CAN IMMEDIATELY ACCESS THE ARCHIVES THEY WANT TO REVIEW

Amongst the new archives are:

1.BPB.023 – The Building of Crescent Bridge, Peterborough. This details the reasons why it was built and the families who lived in "The Crescent" whose houses were demolished to make way for it.

1.CDS.020a4a – Missing Glinton Burials 1701-1812 This is the start of our project filling in the gaps of our Bishops' Transcripts archive of many parishes in the old Soke of Peterborough.

1.EXT.023x2 – Alwalton Churchyard and **1.EXT.104a – Maxey Churchyard Memorial Inscriptions**

1.EXT.105 - Fletton Logbook Teachers

1.IND.033a – Gaches Solicitors Papers – An index and summary of papers deposited at Northamptonshire Record Office.

1.IND.034a – National Provincial Bank Account Holders 1869 who had a Peterborough address.

NOTE: There is also a file of all names but without place of residence for MEMBERS to search. This file's names have not been added to our Archives Names Index but MEMBERS can check the file for potential ancestors not living in Peterborough. If they find a potential entry, they can check out the residence at the Local Studies Centre.

To find out what other archives we have made available to MEMBERS please look at the **ARCHIVE SUBJECT INDEX** on the website.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR JUST WANT TO SAY HALLO
THEN PLEASE VISIT OUR BOOTH AT THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW



The FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show will be online on
Friday 11th November 6-10pm and on Saturday 12th November 10am-6pm

The Really Useful Bulletin welcomes contributions from all Federation member organisations.

It is opportunity to promote *your* society to the extensive Bulletin readership.



Family History Societies



British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

Conference: 28 September—2 October

England and Wales—at Home and on the Move



The pace is picking up for conference 2022!

There's lots happening with this year's fall virtual conference by BIFHSGO.

You can get a taste of the upcoming talks: the speakers are providing short videos with hints on the approach and content of their presentations. They're coming in steadily. Check them out at: www.bifhsgo.ca/in-their-own-words The twelve speakers include Ian Waller, Dave Annal, Mia Bennett, Gill Blanchard, and Janet Few.

The three different *Connect* sessions where you can chat in breakout rooms with conference speakers, genealogy-related vendors, or family history society representatives, are filling up with hosting participants:

- The conference session hosts will be speakers Gill Blanchard and Ian Waller (for England); Gill Thomas (for Wales); and Caroline Gurney (for migration).
- Organisations participating in the vendor session already include ArchiveCDBooks, Family Ancestrees, Geni, Legacy Family Tree Webinars, Linda Corupe, MyHeritage, Sher Letooze, Shop-the-House and Scottish Indexes.
- In the society session there currently are local Ontario societies (eg the Archives of Ontario, Ontario Ancestors, the Ottawa Public Library and the Huntley Township Historical Society), other Canadian societies (eg Manitoba Genealogical Society and the Quebec Genealogical eSociety), and the Family History Federation from the UK.

The Expo Hall continues to grow with currently over forty participants.

And conference registration payment just got easier! We have added e-transfer to the payment options.

Explore the event! You'll learn why your ancestors lied about themselves, how Welsh migration is different, why maps are important for your research, and how the poor were treated before workhouses came into being. There will be research advice, background details on key locations like London and Liverpool, and intriguing tales of adventure.

The registration fee is just \$40, and if you miss any sessions, the online versions will be available for a month. Conference 2022 will be fun and useful...and not just for English and Welsh research!



You can check it out and register at

www.bifhsgo.ca/2022-BIFHSGO-Conference

BIFHSGO is the leading Canadian family history society with a focus on the British Isles.

Located in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the society encourages research and its dissemination through programmes that connect, educate, share and inspire.

<https://www.bifhsgo.ca/>



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

The REALLY USEFUL Podcasts Are Back!

The new series of the Federation's Really Useful Podcasts will be launched monthly from September through to February.



- ⇒ September – ***Beginning your family history***
- ⇒ October – ***Online resources***
- ⇒ November – ***Talking to relatives***
- ⇒ December – ***Historians collaborate***
- ⇒ January – ***Occupations***
- ⇒ February – ***Writing your family history***

Initially these will be accessible on the [Federation's website](#), and will then move to the new Explore Your Genealogy site to be launched this autumn.

Keep visiting the [website](#) for final details!

Come and meet the 'Fed'

The Federation's roadshow is out and about in the coming weeks. Some events will have the full bookshop, while the craft shows generally have a smaller selection from Family History Books for your delectation.

When visiting any of these events, do stop by and have a word with our officers and helpers who enjoy talking to visitors!

- 22-25 Sep [Creative Crafts](#), West Point, Exeter
- 24 Sep [The Family History Show](#), Kempton Park
- 1 Oct [Oxfordshire FHS Fair](#), Marlborough CofE School, Woodstock
- 13-16 Oct [Creative Crafts](#), SEC, Glasgow
- 15 Oct [Huddersfield FHS Fair](#), Cathedral House, Huddersfield
- 22 Oct [Suffolk FHS Fair](#), The Hold, Ipswich
- 3-6 Nov [Creative Crafts](#), NEC, Birmingham

Please click the event for link to the organiser's website and further details.



Child "Care" - 1840s' Style

The provision of newspapers online via the British Newspaper Archive, also on Find My Past, provides much to occupy our time. A simple name search can add great colour to the stories of our forebears. However, this report was somewhat more colourful than anticipated. The item was repeated in many out-of-area papers over the following days.

Stamford Mercury, 30th June 1843

A few days ago, Robert Stokes, baker, at Wansford, sold one of his children, an interesting girl two years of age, for three guineas! The unfeeling parent went into the Granby public house with his child, and whilst there a dealer in drapery goods, named John Turley, made his appearance, noticed the little girl, and asked Stokes whether he would sell her. To the astonishment of all present, a bargain was struck, and the child was transferred to the hawker, an Irishman, who said he had been living for 17 years at Oundle, but was about to return to Newry, in Ireland, his native place. Turley took away his bargain immediately and conveyed her in his cart to Stamford. The news soon spread that the baker had sold his child, and the mother became almost frantic. The female neighbours got together and warmly remonstrated with Stokes, who, perceiving that he was not likely to be treated by them in the most agreeable manner, promised to re-purchase his child and started in pursuit for that purpose. The hawker and his wife were fortunately found at the Woolpack inn at Stamford; and although, having no children of their own, they were delighted with the little girl, and would probably have taken better care of her than Stokes had shown a disposition to do, they were prevailed upon to restore the child to her father on the return of the "purchase money".

One wonders just how "warmly" the local women remonstrated!

With thanks to Steve Manning, who adds that the little girl, called Eliza, had been baptised on 20 September, 1840. She is at Wansford with her family in the census of 1851.

What is the most unusual newspaper report you have found?



Really Useful Back Page

Family History Research Aids from the Experts



Parish Chest, a service from the Family History Federation, has over sixty family history societies and some twenty-plus traders, at a one-stop online shop, offering a wide range of family history materials in some sixteen 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

www.parishchest.com

to see what is there to help you add to your family tree.

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

admin@familyhistoryfederation.com



FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

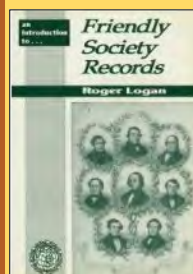
www.familyhistorybooksonline.co.uk

Family History Books is a shop for books from many publishers on all aspects of family history research. Family History Books is also a publisher of relevant titles relating to research. Family History Books is owned by the Family History Federation in order to provide a service to the genealogical community.

Family History Books has an online shop. In addition, the bookshop can be found at major live family history events around the country enabling you to view the latest titles—the stall is always very popular!

The latest title is [Discover Your Dorset Ancestors](#) see front page. Other new titles are in the pipeline!

The online shop includes a number of older titles that provide key information; they appear in the [Legacy Titles](#) section. The contact details in some may be outdated, but the contents are wonderfully informative. One such is [An Introduction to Friendly Society Records](#)



providing useful detail including a rundown of the number of relevant local holdings in county repositories in England, Wales and Scotland. In the early 1800s it is estimated that forty per cent of families were reliant on local friendly or benefit societies for support. Worth investigating! This inexpensive book will get you started.

Please explore the full range, and place your orders, at

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com



Friday 11th and Saturday 12th November 2022

Speakers announced in Show News No 1 and on website

Please view www.fhf-reallyuseful.com for details



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