



FAMILY HISTORY Federation

Supporting Family Historians since 1974

REALLY USEFUL Bulletin No 56

April 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin*
inside find...

Lead article— *Getting started with researching your ancestor's occupation*
plus news from local FHS and from the Federation

A Grand Day Out at the REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

see Dorset FHS full report page 6



Organised by Dorset FHS with Devon FHS



The *Really Useful Bulletin* is provided free of charge to registered subscribers. It should not be copied or passed onto others.
Visit www.familyhistoryfederation.com/ft#newsletter to register. Only registered individuals may take advantage of offers, etc.



Really Useful Bulletin

Getting started with researching your ancestor's occupation

by Andrew Chapman

Whether we like it or not, we are all defined, to some degree, by our occupations. If anything, it was all the more so for our ancestors. There was little time for discussion of work-life balance, productivity tools or early retirement. For most people in ordinary circumstances, they would start work at a young age, have few days off and keep

going until they died or hit their dotage. Even the introduction of compulsory education for children aged between five and ten, with the Elementary Education Acts of 1870 and 1880, was widely resented as it took children away from contributing to the family income. The long summer holidays that today's parents similarly resent is a vestigial legacy of the compromise reached to allow children to help with the harvest.

Occupations have inevitably been influenced by changes in society and technology. The obvious example is the impact of the Industrial Revolution from the late eighteenth century onwards. At the start of the nineteenth century, around three-quarters of the working population were involved in agriculture and only a quarter in urban industry – less than a century later, the proportions had reversed.

This not only meant that your ancestor may have changed their trade, but also that they migrated within the UK. Census data show urban populations exploding as people flocked in search of work, although this often meant cramped and insanitary conditions, affecting their health too. And some trades saw migration anyway – there have always been people relocating in search of a better life or more available employment. Some trades are strongly associated with particular regions nonetheless – hence Manchester's reputation as 'Cottonopolis', the prevalence of framework knitting in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, or even more specific local expertise such as rope-making in Bridport.



A teacher with children of all ages

Occupation records

With an almost endless range of different trades practised by people down the ages, tracking down occupational records can be complicated. Many businesses have kept records, and some trades faced specific bureaucracy that means a paper trail can be followed; but others have been lost to obscurity.

However, there are also several major categories of record which can help to shed light

on your forebears' work history. One is the census, of course, which from 1841 onwards listed details of individuals' trades and, from 1891, whether they were employed, self-employed or an employer themselves. Birth, marriage and death certificates, going back to 1837 for England and Wales and 1855 for Scotland, can often provide occupational clues. Birth certificates will reveal the father's occupation (and the mother's from 1894); marriage records likewise, as well as the professions of the marrying pair. Death certificates also reveal the individual's trade, if they were still working – and, of course, the cause of death might have been related to their work. Going back through time, parish records often record occupation (in baptisms, for the father, usually after 1812), but by no means always.

Apprenticeship records in some cases date back to the thirteenth century when the trade guild system began. From 1563, it actually became illegal to enter a trade without undertaking an apprenticeship – this usually began between the ages of ten and fourteen, and typically lasted for seven years. Older apprenticeship records can sometimes be found in county record offices or transcribed in the Society of Genealogists' library in London; the SoG also has some digitised within its SoG data online collections, which are available to members via www.sog.org.uk. You will more likely be in luck for the period 1710–1811, when stamp duty was payable on apprenticeship indentures – this left a paper trail, the



Really Useful Bulletin

records of which are available at all three of the main data websites, [TheGenealogist](#), [Ancestry](#) and [Findmypast](#). TheGenealogist also has merchant navy apprenticeship records (1824–1910); Ancestry has regional collections for Dorset and West Yorkshire; and Findmypast also has a collection of London apprenticeship abstracts from 1442 to 1850 – and if your research encompasses ancestors in the capital, it's also worth looking at www.londonlives.org. And remember: these records will typically list both the apprentice and their master, so you might find forebears who were new to the trade, or indeed those who were experienced.



Image © MRC website.

The Modern Records Centre

An essential resource for much occupational research is the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick (www.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/).

Founded in 1973, this is the main British repository for national archives of trades unions and employers' organisations, and you can visit its centre on weekdays (check the website for up-to-date opening times). The MRC also has many smaller collections relating to particular trades compiled by individuals. For an overview of its offerings, see www.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/holdings/main_archives/, plus the A-Z list of occupations at www.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/explorefurther/subject_guides/family_history.

Directories and newspapers

Trade directories are an obvious resource, and again Ancestry, Findmypast and TheGenealogist all have large and growing collections which have been digitised. The first ones appeared in the eighteenth century, although they were only really common from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. You can also find more for England and Wales within the University of Leicester's collection (see below), for Scotland in the National Library of Scotland digital collection (see below) and for Northern Ireland at www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/search-archives-online/street-directories.

Websites for trade directories

Historical Directories of England & Wales

This website has changed its URL over the years but you can still use the easy-to-remember one below. This project is hosted by the University of Leicester and has many directories dating from the 1760s to the 1910s. Note that the collection is now also available within Ancestry. <https://le.ac.uk/library/special-collections/explore/historical-directories>

Scottish Directories

This collection, compiled by the National Library of Scotland, offers more than 700 digitised directories covering most of Scotland and dating from 1773 to 1911, all for free. The directories can be searched by place, year and name.

www.nls.uk/family-history/directories/

Irish Directory Database

Shane Wilson and Joe Buggy have compiled this useful database which has links to more than 1,000 historic trade directories for Ireland – some of those are free online, others at paid-for sites or, indeed, on CD (the database indicates which have to be paid for).

www.swilson.info/dirdb.php

If you're lucky to be able to push your ancestry back to pre-Tudor times, your ancestor may have been a member of a trade guild or London livery company. Local record offices sometimes have holdings for the former, and the latter all have archives (usually at London's Guildhall Library). See also the records at the Records of London's Livery Companies Online (www.londonroll.org) which cover the period from 1400 to 1900. Wills, from that era until the present day, can also provide clues or direct references to an individual's occupation, the tools of their trade, their co-workers and so on.

Returning to the last 200 years, newspapers can also reveal occupational titbits – not just reports of, say, occupational awards your ancestor may have won or encounters with the law, but also reports of industrial accidents. Further, as time went on advertisements became more common in newspapers and you might find a forebear's shop or other service featured in one. The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) is a great starting point.

There have been more than 5,000 trades unions since they began to flourish in the early nineteenth century. The website www.unionancestors.co.uk has a variety of useful information on the subject, as well as a list of known trade unions by name, which could help you track down their records elsewhere, most likely at the Modern Records Centre (see box left).



Really Useful Bulletin

Larger businesses will have kept their own records – the Postal Museum Archive, for example, will help you find records of postal workers (see www.postalmuseum.org/visit/the-archive/); BT has archives going back to 1846 (www.bt.com/about/bt/our-history/bt-archives); and The National Archives catalogue provides information about many business-specific archives around England and Wales.

One type of record which you might not have come across is fire insurance certificates – businesses were required to have them and they can provide useful information about a business, its premises and the people involved. These mainly date from the eighteenth century onwards and there are some online at TNA – see www.genguide.co.uk/source/fire-insurance-registers-plans-and-maps/89/ for details of the resources available.

Typically, it is easier to follow middle-class or professional ancestors, as clerical work inherently left more paperwork, as did occupations that required qualifications such as the law, medicine or the clergy. Nevertheless, if your forebears were typically manual workers, don't despair! There are many surviving factory records, trade union lists, registers of social clubs and so on which can be tracked down – county record offices or TNA's Discovery catalogue will be good starting points. The Modern Records Centre is a key place to know about – see the box. Other relevant archives can be found at the People's History Museum in Manchester (<https://phm.org.uk/collection-search/>) and



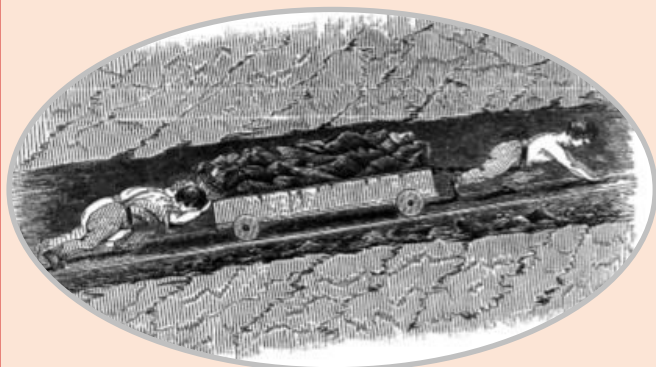
Ploughmen—with child stretching upright from planting

the Museum of Rural Life in Reading (merl.reading.ac.uk/). The National Museum Wales's library has many holdings relating to work in Wales, such as apprenticeship indentures and craftsmen's account books – see <https://museum.wales/curatorial/social-cultural-history/archives/>.

Above all, researching your ancestors' occupations is a rewarding activity – it brings them more vividly to life, and will help you understand their status, location and some of the decisions they will have faced in their lives, just as our jobs affect us today.

Women and children

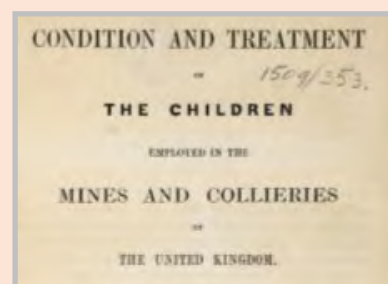
Sometimes we joke these days about sending our kids 'down the mines' or 'up the chimneys', but child labour was a fact of life before the twentieth century. Children did indeed go down the mines (below), as the famous *Commissioners' Report of Children's Employment* from 1842 attests (see www.balmaiden.co.uk/1842.htm). This led to the Mines Act of 1842, which banned children under ten from working in the mines, and more legislation eventually came, such as the Chimney Sweepers Acts of 1840 and 1875, and the advent of compulsory education.



The 1841 census occupations abstract distinguished between workers under twenty years of age or twenty and over. The top five occupations for under twenties (of either sex) were, in decreasing order: domestic servant, agricultural labourer, cotton worker, general labourer and coal miner.

The top five occupations for adult women in the same year, meanwhile, were, in descending order: domestic servant, dressmaker/milliner, cotton worker, laundrykeeper/washerwoman and agricultural labourer. Looking at the 1841 data, we can see that women were involved in far more trades

than we might have assumed – more than 640 of the 877 occupations listed had at least some women doing them, and of the eighty-eight occupations with at least 10,000 people recorded, around half of them had at least 1,000 women working in them. The moral of the story is that, although many women would have looked after children, and they dominated domestic service and some textile work, you should not assume your female ancestors couldn't have had some employment in many other trades.



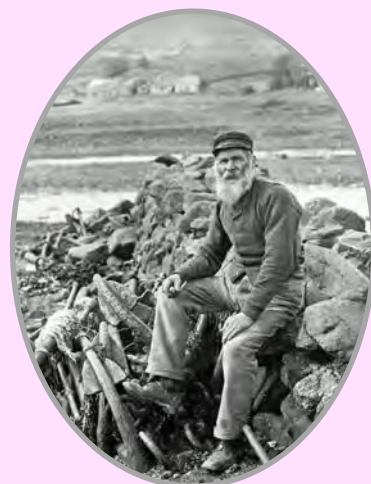


Really Useful Bulletin

Scottish occupations

Much of the information on these pages pertains to Scotland as much as it does England and Wales. A look at the occupational abstract for 1841 shows that the top twenty occupations across the whole working population were mostly very similar. Notably higher up the charts in Scotland were fishermen and women, seamstresses, onshore seamen and carriers/carters; and notably lower were factory workers, silk, lace and worsted workers, and those in pottery manufacture. All of this seems to suggest Scotland was still less industrialised (other than coal mining) than the rest of the UK.

Many Scottish trades had their own organisations, of course, which may well have kept records, and there were differences in the apprenticeship system. There are some useful starting points at www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Scotland_Occupations, and a list of old Scottish occupations at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/glossary (*filter by occupations*).



Further resources



Dictionaries of occupational terms

Census enumerators were given a handbook listing the occupational terms they might have encountered. These can still be useful today for understanding the more unusual trades. The particularly comprehensive 1927 Dictionary of Occupational Terms (based on what was used for the 1921 census) has

been digitised by Peter Christian and is available for free at <http://doot.spub.co.uk>. Rodney Hall also maintains a good list of old trades from abactor to zoographer at <http://rmhh.co.uk/occup/index.html>.

Genuki

One of the unsung heroes of genealogy online is the Genuki portal (which is in the process of being upgraded). Its cornucopia of information includes a very useful page with links to lots of occupation-specific resources – find it at www.genuki.org.uk/big/Occupations.

UKGDL

UKGDL is a portal site which offers many useful lists and directories of relevance to genealogy. It includes an occupational section, which you can browse at <http://ukgdl.org.uk/category/occupations> or search at <http://ukgdl.org.uk/occupations> – the database consists of useful links to resources across the internet.

Mailing lists

It can often be of great help to find other researchers with an interest in the same occupation as your ancestor's. The RootsWeb community hosted by Ancestry has more than 80 mailing lists devoted to occupations (although not all of them pertain to the UK). If there's one for your family trade, you can search its archives or simply join in and ask other people on the list for advice. An index of occupation mailing lists is at https://sites.rootsweb.com/~jfuller/gen_mail_occ.html.

FamilySearch Wiki

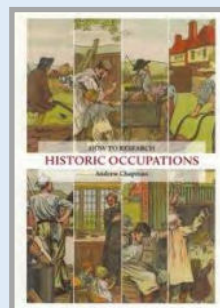
This huge encyclopaedia of genealogical information has a large section on English occupations (and Scottish – see box above) at www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/England_Occupations, and a small section for Wales at www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Wales_Occupations.

About the author

Andrew Chapman has been a writer about family and social history for twenty years. He is the editor of *Discover Your Ancestors* magazine and the British Association for Local History's *Local History News* journal, as well as being a freelance editor and designer of many history-related books for publishers and individual authors. He sells books through www.heritagehunter.co.uk



The above article is an edited version of the introduction to [**How to Research Historic Occupations**](#) by Andrew Chapman, published by Heritage Hunter and available from Family History Books. The book includes an A-Z list of the common forms of employment in the nineteenth century with details of statistics and specific research resources. Just £5 + p&p while stocks last.



Occupations, occupations...



Click on occupations on Family History Books
10% discount on all titles in occupations section—including above book

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/occupations-28

Use code OCC25 to get 10% OFF



Family History Societies



Dorset Family History Society

Really Useful Family History Show South-west

What a busy day we had at the Really Useful Family History Show South West on 29th March. The show was held at



Kinson Community Centre in Kinson near Bournemouth [left] when we welcomed almost 300

visitors (if we managed to count them all on the way in!).

Although we had three late exhibitor cancellations, we were joined by twenty-seven exhibitors: seven 'commercial', five historical societies, fourteen FHS/ research societies



and one museum. Stallholders plus volunteers from Devon and Dorset family history societies added around another ninety-five people gathering at the venue. All were 'customers' for the stalls, talks and experts. Just think about the huge amount of knowledge and experience present at the show that day and on tap for visitors!



The sun was shining, the car park was full and there was a friendly buzz around the venue throughout the day with, of course, the café area being a popular meeting place to pause and chat with friends old and new.

The talk sessions rapidly filled to capacity to hear Debbie Kennett explain 'How to make the most of your autosomal DNA test results' and Janet Few sharing an 'A-Z of Family History and lesser known sources of research'. The 'ask the expert' area had a constant stream of visitors with questions to be answered and advice being sought. Sally from Devon, offering photo-dating advice, had a full schedule throughout the entire day.

Although most of our visitors were from the local Bournemouth and Poole area, we also welcomed people from Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon, Kent, Essex, Wales, many parts of Dorset and quite possibly elsewhere, too!



Just a day or two after the event, comments and feedback were coming in – including:

- ◆ It was so interesting and will be really helpful going forward. Well done to all the organisers and participants.
- ◆ I had a great day, thank you all for putting on an excellent show.
- ◆ Enjoyed visiting today, thank you.
- ◆ A fab morning!! Thank you!!
- ◆ It was wonderful!
- ◆ Thank you to the hard working organisers, and to all the public we met at our stand.

This was a great opportunity for us to work with both Devon FHS and the Federation to present the event and our Dorset FHS volunteer team was joined by a number who travelled up from Devon. Huge thanks go to our exhibitors who provided a really varied selection of stalls to interest our visitors. Thanks also go to our experts, visitors and of course not to forget our volunteers who worked hard to make the event a success, not just on the Saturday but in setting up on Friday and dealing with the aftermath on Sunday! And on the weekend they got an hour less sleep with the clocks going forward!



Visit our website:

www.dorsetfhs.org.uk/

Also, Devon FHS who assisted with show: www.devonfhs.org.uk/

Ed: With apologies to all those readers unable to visit the show. Thank you to all who kindly provided pictures.



Message from Federation Chairman — Steve Manning [pictured at the show]:

Thank you to all who made the show such a successful and enjoyable event.

Would other FHS like to work together to run a REALLY USEFUL Family History Show in their part of the country? To discover more, please contact Debbie on admin@familyhistoryfederation.com.



Family History Societies



Northumberland & Durham Family History Society

In October 1975 the first meeting of the Northumberland & Durham Family History Society was held in Newcastle Central Library. Officers were elected and subsequently, the society was registered as a charity, and became a member of the Family History Federation. We are holding a conference to celebrate:

Fiftieth Anniversary Conference

Saturday 14th June 2025

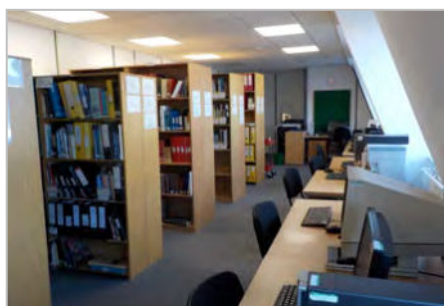
10am—3.30pm

Brunswick Methodist Church, Newcastle

Theme: Mining -

**an industry which plays an important part in
the history of the north-east of England
and its inhabitants**

Over the last fifty years the NDFHS has amassed an impressive collection of transcripts and a growing number of publications which are held in its library and research centre, currently located on the third floor of New England House, 10 Ridley Place, Newcastle upon Tyne. Easily accessible, the centre is staffed by knowledgeable volunteers who not only give their time to help researchers, but also carry out tasks to ensure records are up to date. The centre is open to visitors Monday to Thursday each week. In addition, it is planned to open on the same weekend as the conference, Friday 13 and Sunday 15 June.



The first library and research centre opened in 1996 at Bolbec Hall, which was always very busy with members and researchers. Conferences were held over the years, the most notable

being the one held at Otterburn Hall. After Bolbec Hall, the society moved twice before securing their current location in 2024.

Our quarterly journal is compiled by our very able editor, who always welcomes and encourages contributions from our members. The trustees believe the journal is an integral part of the society, and there is no doubt the articles offer inspiration to our readers who are located around the globe.

The NDFHS does embrace modern technology by sending out journals in electronic format where possible, as well as a quarterly e-newsletter. NDFHS membership gives access

to website databases which contain an amazing three million pieces of data. The society runs an active Facebook page, open only to members, plus monthly Zoom *Roots Chats* are held by way of a talk on specific topics, with discussion afterwards. Our team of volunteers are only too happy to assist with research requests received via email.

Sales are an important part of the society and also for ensuring that researchers are able to receive hard copy data; purchased transcripts being sent via a PDF file. In addition, our sales catalogue provides not only PRs and census data, but a selection of publications and nineteenth-century maps.



The society has eight branches located in Northumberland and Durham: Blyth, Belmont (Durham), Consett, Hexham, Newcastle, North Shields, South Shields and Stakeford. Each holds monthly meetings. Plus a London branch which holds quarterly meetings. Speakers are engaged with discussions afterwards.

All are welcome to the meetings and all this is part of keeping a vibrant interest in family history

www.ndfhs.org.uk

For details of the conference and how to book, visit:

www.ndfhs.org.uk/diary/#50TH

Places are limited so book early!



West Surrey Family History Society

Surrey Family History Fair

**Woking Leisure Centre,
Kingfield Road,
Woking GU22 9BA**

Saturday 8th November

10.00 am – 4.30 pm

To book tables: fair@wsfhs.org

Details: <https://wsfhs.co.uk/pages/openday.php>

**Book the
date!**



Family History Societies



Fenland Family History Society

We are a group interested in learning and sharing information about family history, we are for anyone no matter where their family originated. We cover the fenland area of north Cambridgeshire, west Norfolk and south-east Lincolnshire.

Our researchers often find errors in the transcriptions of church records. For example the baptism record in 1831 of Charlotte Clack RINGHAM was transcribed as BINGHAM. Another was the different spelling of SALLIBANKS or SALLABANKS. Both local families. I wonder which spelling they use now. Sometimes we find things regarding the parentage of a member of the family and we wonder if it will upset the current family. If you would like us to research your family history, please get in touch or attend one of our research sessions; we will do our best for you.

Our team of researchers are in Wisbech Library on the first Tuesday of each month from 10am - 12 noon offering help with family research. Visitors welcome no matter where your family originated. Also in Baytree Garden Centre's restaurant in Hilgay near Downham Market on second Monday of the month from 11am - 2.30pm. We offer our research for free. If you need help but unable to attend please contact us.

Our meetings are held at Wisbech Library (pictured) 7 - 9 pm on the fourth Thursday of the month. [No meetings August & December.] Everyone welcome. Visitors are asked to give a donation to help pay for the room. Our



meetings usually include an interesting speaker, plus refreshments and general exchange of information and help with research. On 24 April Alan JOHNSON is our speaker. On 22 May we look forward to Diane CARLTON SMITH presenting *Going to School in Medieval Fenland*.

Our events team attended the Festival for International Women's Day at the Queen Mary Centre in Queen's Road, Wisbech with illustrations of women in WWII and the work they covered it was so varied including *lumberjills* replacing lumberjacks.

We can provide speakers to attend groups and clubs to give talks in the local area. Our talks are very amusing as well as informative plus a display of items for added interest.

For further information on any of the above please contact Bridget Hunter.

Tel: 01945 587723. bridget25hunter@btinternet.com



Oxfordshire FHS Family History Fair

Saturday 25th October 2025

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.

Refreshments available (until 3:15 pm)

==oOo==

Comments from the 2024 Fair:

Very informative - friendly people.

Great show! Well laid out and good signing.

Great refreshments.

Good venue for public transport.

Really good fair, the best one we've attended so far.

==oOo==

For more information

including advice on how to get to the fair visit:

www.ofhs.uk/fair2025

email: fair@ofhs.uk

Tel: OFHS Helpline: 01865 358151

Registered Charity Number 275891



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

What is Social Media?

Social media has become a key part of the modern world. It is useful to understand what it is, even if we don't use it. Read on if you would like to know a little more.

Since its invention in the 1990s social media has grown and expanded quickly; this was helped by the creation of many platforms in the 2000s like *Friends Reunited*, *MySpace*, and *Facebook*. However, not all platforms stand the test of time and new ones are coming out regularly. So, like it or loathe it, we are now living with social media and it accounts for the majority of worldwide internet traffic. Social media is used by businesses, institutions, organisations, news outlets, politicians and many others in order to get their message heard; and of course millions of ordinary people including many genealogists use it too.

Social media can be particularly daunting for those of us who grew up without it. Conversely, there is a younger generation now in their twenties who have never known a world without it - social media has been around since they were born! However, for the majority of people, social media is something we either use or avoid – and either option is fine. It is misleading though to think of social media as a young person's game. All kinds of people use social media, often with different platforms being popular with different demographics. Active *Facebook* users are mostly over thirty-five, with twenty-five per cent of all its users over fifty-five. *X* users tend to be younger, with only around fifteen per cent aged thirty-five or older. As individuals and societies we decide which platforms to use to reach our target audience. If we use more than one it is possible to tailor our approach on each.

true of organisations and groups, such as family history societies. Social media is one of the most powerful media methods ever invented, allowing for wide dissemination of information (and mis-information of course), opinion, news etc. With social media it is possible to reach a huge number of people, both an audience of passive readers along with an engaged network of friends and acquaintances. We can do so largely free of the barriers of traditional media which is one of the great benefits. It is FREE to access for another. It is possible to curate the stream of information and opinion coming to us in order to suit our wants and needs. There are no editors to review our thoughts for example and we don't need journalistic employment and training, or funds to purchase media exposure to gain access to the means to share information to a wide audience.



The Federation's X homepage

Social media is arguably so popular because it speaks to the basic human need to communicate and connect with people. When it works well social media can bring us to like-minded people along with all kinds of useful and exciting information.

This isn't to say social media is universally great, all things have their flaws. Nor is it for everyone, just as not everyone reads a newspaper or watches television for example. However, social media is available to anyone with access to a computer. You never know: nothing ventured nothing gained.

You can look to the Family History Federation's example on various platforms such as [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and [Bluesky](#) to see how things can be done.

Look out for more pieces in future *Bulletins* on using social media.

Joe Saunders

Joe is the Federation's social media specialist



The Federation's Facebook homepage

The positives of social media are many. This is especially



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

March Dataset Releases with FindMyPast



Lots of coverage of “Moonrakers” (Wiltshire) Records

If you have ancestors in Wiltshire, the datasets provided by **Wiltshire FHS** and published on FindMyPast in March will be particularly interesting.

The following record sets have just been released:

Constabulary Police Officer Records (1839-1926) – some fascinating records with details of service histories, commendations, misconduct and sickness records. Seemingly many officers were disciplined for being drunk on duty! The records also show whether the officer could ride a bike or a horse!

Great Western Railway Hospital Admissions (1883-1916) – some wonderful insights into the various ailments and injuries sustained by the workers and their families at the Great Western Railway works in Swindon. One notable entry is for Leonard Thorpe, aged three years, who had been admitted to the hospital in 1911 after suffering an accident and after a stay of eighteen days, was discharged as cured. Leonard Thorpe eventually became a mayor of Swindon Borough!

Trowbridge Settlement Examinations (1740-1831) – lots of anecdotal detail as part of these records. Take the example of the 1770 dated record for William ALSBURY who is described as a “scribbler, born Corsley. Has worked for several years as a scribbler with several persons at Corsley, Frome, Beckington and Shepton Mallet. Two years ago came to Trowbridge and worked with Mr John MORTIMER and now works with Mr Samuel COOK. A year ago married Elizabeth, daughter of Paul WOODMAN of Trowbridge, weaver by whom he has a daughter 9 weeks. Has not gained a settlement except at Corsley”. He and all those mentioned are indexed so the record set provides some great coverage.

Swindon Advertiser Newspaper BMD Notices (1854-1899)

- some interesting notices covering local births, marriages and deaths

Early Census Returns (1650-1887) – over 6,000 records of early census returns covering many parishes in Wiltshire

Powys FHS

Alongside the Wiltshire records we also had over 19,000 new **burial records** published from **Powys FHS**. These cover the period 1680-1851 for over thirty churches/chapels in Breconshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire.



Upcoming

New datasets continue to be submitted from various family history societies so watch out for upcoming releases of more new records on FindMyPast.

Get involved

We still have capacity to do more. So, if your society has transcriptions that could be suitable for publication with FindMyPast, then please get in contact with the Federation’s data manager at

data.manager@familyhistoryfederation.com.

He can help your society get them published. Together we can broaden the availability of all these wonderful family history records, whilst promoting your society and generating some royalty fees for the society at the same time. A win-win for all!

Society data online in partnership with



Bulletin No. 55—Locating Wills and Probate Pre-1858

We are asked to remind readers that wills were probated in London during the Commonwealth period when the church courts were deprived of the responsibility. However, the peculiar of Masham, Yorkshire, continued administering probate throughout the period despite the edicts! Also, to clarify, the church courts finally ceased handling probate following a Statute of 1857 after which the new court system commenced in 1858.



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

OUT AND ABOUT

It was wonderful to hear so many visitors to the Really Useful Show at Kinson (see elsewhere) commenting about the *Bulletin* and in a complimentary manner, too!



Steve and Jacqui on duty at Kinson

We heard how some look forward to seeing where the Federation will be for various shows and fairs—especially with the bookstall! In the coming weeks, the bookstall will be out and about:

Sat. 26 April **Suffolk FHS Fair**, The Hold, Ipswich
See: suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/pages/view/society-fair

Sat. 3 May **The Family History Show:**
Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool
See: thefamilyhistoryshow.com/liverpool/

We urge all show and fair organisers to add the details of their events to the *Genealogical Events* tab on www.genuki.org.uk/

as many family historians check the listing to see what is on around the country.

LAST REMINDER—10 May, London

If your society wishes to attend the **AGM/GM**, with two great DNA talks (see previous Bulletins), you must book before 25 April: admin@familyhistoryfederation.com

The badges are back!

The badges first appeared at *Family Tree Live* at Alexandra Palace. Since then many have asked if they are coming back. We have listened!

Visit the Federation or Family History Books stand at a show or fair to buy your badge. [Or click here to order online.](#)

Just £1 each. Three roundel designs, 55mm diameter, as shown.

Also available is the enamelled “heads” **pin badge—£2** [click]. Single pin, attaches with a “butterfly” clutch fastening.



Find my past

Delve deeper into your family's wartime story with FREE access to 1939 Register on Findmypast

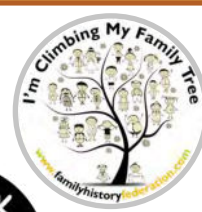
In the run up to the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, Findmypast [FMP] is inviting everyone to delve into their family's wartime experiences from the eve of war to victory. Until 9 May, FMP will provide free access to the 1939 Register, enabling everyone to discover where their ancestors were living at the onset of World War II and discover their unique contributions to the war effort.

The 1939 Register is a valuable resource that provides a snapshot of life on the eve of the Second World War. In particular, you can explore your ancestors' wartime roles through detailed civilian occupation data exclusive to FMP and learn more about their lives on the home front.

Once you uncover your family in the 1939 Register, you can delve deeper and trace them in over ninety million newspaper pages, an extensive collection of military records, and poignant historical photographs of wartime experiences, whether they were ARP first responders battling the Blitz, land girls keeping the country fed, or soldiers facing the enemy in battle.

FMP invites everyone to also participate in preserving the memories of VE Day by contributing to newly created collections showcasing wartime celebrations across the UK. These will highlight the personal accounts, photographs, and memories as experienced by families.

Free access to the 1939 Register is available until 9 May on Findmypast's website. Simply visit Findmypast.com and sign up to begin exploring your family's wartime history.





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 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

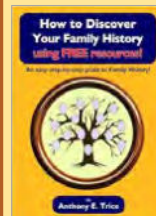


FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

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 offers a range of relevant titles relating to family history research.

FHB welcomes contact from authors! Works of general and 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



Anyone starting out on their family history journey, or seeking ways to reduce their outlay on websites, etc., will find *How to Discover Your Family History Using Free Resources* of huge help! 107 pages in A4 format for just £9.95 + p&p.

There are many useful books available from the bookstall online or at selected live family history events. The shop stocks all titles published by Family History Books plus relevant titles from other publishers, too.

Do visit the [online shop](http://online.shop) or check where to find us at live family history events around the country. Come and visit us and see all the latest titles available. The stall is always very popular!

Happy browsing!

Please explore the range, and place your orders, at www.familyhistorybooksonline.com



The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show Online 14 and 15 November 2025

Please view www.fhf-reallyuseful.com for full details



FFHS does not exercise any control over the content of external website links in this Really Useful Bulletin. It is not responsible for the content or quality. Nor does FFHS endorse any companies or products advertised.
Copyright © 2025 Federation of Family History Societies. All rights reserved.

Family History Federation: www.familyhistoryfederation.com; admin@familyhistoryfederation.com

Family History Federation is the operating name of the Federation of Family History Societies.

The Federation of Family History Societies is a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Company Number 2930189 (England & Wales) Registered Charity Number 1038721

Registered Office: 2 Primrose Avenue, Urmston, Manchester M41 0TY

