

WELSH GENEALOGY

Some Sources for Researching Your Welsh
Ancestors in Britain



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TAKE YOUR SEARCH FOR YOUR WELSH ANCESTRY HOME
AGAIN TO WALES!



Here's only a sampling of the UK government agencies, genealogical organizations, and resources available to help you, in person, over the telephone, or especially via the Internet.

Before calling or writing for information or making a trans-Atlantic research journey,

Know What You Know

Discover as much as possible about the ancestor(s) you are investigating—approximate birth, marriage, and death dates, occupation, religion, date of immigration (if applicable), and especially, county, town, and/or parish of origin in Wales.

For some sources for tracing your Welsh ancestors in North America, click [here](#).

NOTE: When contacting any UK group or agency by telephone from outside the UK, you don't need to dial the leading 0 of the area code.

Inside the UK, omit the dialling code (011) and country code (44) and begin with the 0 shown in parentheses in each phone number.

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Offices, Agencies, and Institutions in Britain



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County Record Offices/Archives

These websites can give you information on holdings, locations, hours, fees, rules, contact addresses, *etc.* For genealogical purposes the primary reference is to the historic county name, with the current (post-1996) political subdivisions in brackets.

[The historic Welsh counties](#)

[Current county names and boundaries](#)

[Anglesey](#) [now *Isle of Anglesey*]

Brecknockshire/Breconshire [now part of [Powys](#)]

Cardiganshire [now [Ceredigion](#)]

Caernarvonshire [now mostly [Gwynedd](#); some eastern parts in the county borough of [Conwy](#)]

If the Gwynedd Archives page comes up in Welsh, go to the county [homepage](#), click on the “A-Z” search, click on “A,” and find “Archives” in the list.

For Conwy Archives, click on the “A-Z” link on the top menu bar and key “Archives” into the search engine.

[Carmarthenshire](#) [*Carmarthenshire*]: Go to the “Quick Links” drop-down box on the Home Page and click on “Births, Deaths & Marriages”

Denbighshire [now divided amongst [Denbighshire](#), the county borough of [Conwy](#), and part of the county borough of [Wrexham](#)]

For the Denbighshire Records Office, click on “A-Z” on the top menu bar and choose “Archives Home Page” from the list

Flint [now divided between [Flintshire](#) and part of the county borough of [Wrexham](#)]

Glamorgan [now divided amongst the county boroughs of *Merthyr Tydfil*, *Caerphilly*, *Vale of Glamorgan*, *Rhondda Cynon Taf*, *Bridgend*, and *Neath Port Talbot*, and the cities of *Cardiff* and *Swansea*]

Merionethshire [part of [Gwynedd](#)]

Monmouthshire [now divided amongst *Monmouthshire*, the county boroughs of [Blaenau Gwent](#) and *Torfaen*, and the city of *Newport*]:

The primary Monmouthshire Register Office is in [Abergavenny](#), with a sub-district office in Chepstow.

See also:

[Gwent Record Office](#)

Montgomeryshire [part of [Powys](#)]

Pembrokeshire [*Pembrokeshire*]

Or if the link has changed, enter “Pembrokeshire Record Office” into the [Home Page](#) search engine.

Radnorshire [part of [Powys](#)]

Birth, marriage, and death records for the counties of Conwy, Clywd, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Montgomery, Powys, and Wrexham may also be searched via

[North Wales BMD on the Internet](#)

[Up to Offices, Agencies, and Institutions List](#)



Church in Wales, the (Anglican)

Provincial Secretary - **John Shirley**

Secretary - Sue Brookman

39 Cathedral Road

Cardiff

CF11 9XF

Wales, UK

Phone: 011-44 (0)29 2034 8200

Fax: 011-44 (0)29 2038 7835

E-mail: suebrookman@churchinwales.org.uk

Website: <http://www.churchinwales.org.uk>

From 1538 up until 1837 most **births, marriages, and deaths** in Wales were recorded and held by one's local **Church in Wales** (Anglican) parish, and/or by the diocese with oversight. These records include:

Parish Registers

Bishops' Transcripts of Parish Registers

Wills (1383-1857)

Most historic **Church in Wales** documents are on file at civil offices or archives. But you will promote your search by knowing more about the diocese and parish from which your ancestors came, especially if they were Anglicans.

Map of Church in Wales dioceses

Diocesan office names and contact information

Parish locations and full names

Many Welsh parishes have their own websites, which can tell you what records they might hold..

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Family Records Centre

1 Myddelton Street

Islington, London EC1R 1UW

Phone: 011-44 (0)20 8392 5300 (for general inquiries)

Fax: 011-44 (0)1704 550013

E-mail: frc@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/thefamilyrecordscentre>

The **Family Records Centre**, run jointly by the General Register Office (GRO) and the National Archives. It houses the GRO and National Archives records of greatest interest to the family historian, and is perhaps the closest thing to a one-stop shop for researching your Welsh genealogy from a London base. Its holdings include:

Birth, marriage, and death (BMD) information (from 1837 up to 18 months ago)

Legal adoption data (from 1927)

Census returns for England and Wales (1841 to 1901)

Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills (up to 1858)

Death Duty registers (1796 to 1858)

Records of *nonconformist births, baptisms, and burials* (mostly pre-1754)

Complete set of *GRO Indices*

as well as access to other resources such as DocumentsOnline.

The **Family Records Centre** also offers advice on how to go about your research, access to *Family History Databases*, free internet use at the Myddelton Street facility, a bookshop selling useful publications on family and local history, as well as other services and amenities.

Provided you have the *GRO Index number*, you can order copies of BMD certificates by e-mail at certificate.services@ons.gsi.gov.uk, or phone 011-44 (0)845 603 7788.

To request *census* information and for other non-BMD genealogical inquiries, use the e-mail address above.

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General Register Office

Post Office Box 2
Southport, Merseyside PR8 2JD
UK
Phone: 011-44 (0)151 471 4805
Email: col.admin@ons.gsi.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.gro.gov.uk>

The **GRO** is part of the **Office for National Statistics** and is responsible for England and Wales. They hold:

Records of Civil Registration, including **births, marriages, and deaths** of British subjects recorded since 1837, and **legal adoptions** since 1927. The **GRO** is most helpful if a certificate copy is exactly what you want; consult the *General Register Office (GRO) Index* for the quickest route to the entry you seek. *Copies of certificates* are available in person or online; see the website, especially the Births, Marriages and Deaths Registration *Frequently Asked Questions* page.

For wider-ranging research, consult the *Family Records Centre*.

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National Archives (formerly the **Public Record Office**)

Ruskin Avenue,
Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU,
UK

Phone: 011-44- (0)208876-344

E-mail: Enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Website: <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/familyhistory>

The British **National Archives** is the product of the April 2003 merger between the **Public Record Office** and the **Historical Manuscript Commission**. A [Reader's Ticket](#) is required for access to the materials and is good for three years. To register in advance and save a waiting period, use the application form on-line.

Records held include the following

[British Census Returns](#) (1841 to 1901). The 1901 returns for England and Wales are available [on-line](#) on a pay-per-view basis.

Law Court proceedings, including King's Bench, Court of Common Pleas, Central Criminal Court, Assizes, Equity courts from the 12th century

[Wills](#)

Naturalization certificates

Criminal records

Colonial and Foreign Office files

Inquisitions Post-Mortem

Medieval records

Military Service Records

Subsidy Rolls

Tax Accounts and Assessments

The **National Archives** also holds *The National Register of Archives*, listing detailed catalogs of records pertaining to British history, held elsewhere, and the *Manorial Documents Register*, noting the existence and location of manorial records in England and Wales.

Some documents are held off-site and will need to be [ordered](#) in advance of your visit. See the preceding linked page also for **Archive** rules, hours, and other useful and necessary information.

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National Library of Wales/Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru

Penglais Road
 Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3BY
 Wales/Cymru
 Phone: 011-44 (0)1970 615 709
 E-mail: holi@llgc.org.uk
 Website: <http://www.llgc.org.uk>

The **National Library of Wales (LLGC)** is perhaps the most comprehensive center for family research in Wales. It holds the civil **birth, marriage, death** and **census** records available at other archives in the UK, and for a fee, the staff will search the **GRO Index** and order certificates from the General Register Office for you. The **LLGC** in addition holds copies or originals of

[Parish Registers](#)

[Bishops' Transcripts of Parish Registers](#)

[Marriage Banns records](#)

And other diocesan material, as well as a wealth of documents on Welsh history, manuscripts, photographs, and printed and recorded works of every kind.

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Principal Registry of the Family Division

[The Court Service](#)

First Avenue House,
 42-49 High Holborn,
 Islington, London WC1V 6SP,
 UK
 Phone: 011-44-(0)207936 7000
 Website: <http://www.courtservice.gov.uk/cms/1183.htm>.

The **Family Division Registry** is Part of the Court Service and deals with Divorce, Children and Probate. It has on file [wills](#) proved in England and Wales since 1858. Information is most handily available in the form of annual calendars giving brief details of the probate entries.

NOTE that URLs on this site are known to change. So if the website address listed above doesn't work, enter "**Probate Records and Family History**" into the Court Service search engine to reach the correct page.

The Court Service maintains regional sub-registries in Bangor, Cardiff, and Carmarthen. For locations and contact information, go to

<http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/courtfinder/forms/pa4.pdf>

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Genealogical Societies



[Association of Family History Societies of Wales](#) [AFHSW]

[Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives](#) [AGRA]

[Federation of Family History Societies](#) [FFHS]

[Guild of One-Name Studies](#)

[Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies](#) [IHGS]

[Society of Genealogists](#) [SOG]

[Association of Family History Societies of Wales, the](#) [AFHSW]

This group focusses on Welsh ancestry in particular. For help identifying the member society that can help you in your search, contact:

The Association of Family History Societies of Wales

Mr. Phil Bufton, Secretary

3, Cagebrook Avenue

Hunderton, Hereford HR2 7AS,

UK

E-mail: secretary@fhswales.info

Website: <http://www.fhswales.info>

This site contains links to the county family history society websites.

Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives [AGRA]

Joint Secretaries
 Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives
 29 Badgers Close,
 Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5RU
 UK
 E-mail: agra@agra.org.uk
 Website: <http://www.agra.org.uk>

An organization devoted to the promotion of high standards among professional genealogists. This group can put the amateur genealogist in touch with an experienced researcher who can do on-site work in the UK in his or her behalf.

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Federation of Family History Societies, the [FFHS]

Post Office Box 2425
 Coventry CV5 6YX
 UK
 E-mail: admin@ffhs.org.uk
 Website: <http://www.ffhs.org.uk>

An umbrella organization for genealogical and family history societies throughout Great Britain, the FFHS sponsors a wide-ranging [website](#), with searchable databases covering England and Wales, accessible on a very inexpensive, pay-per-view basis.

The FFHS maintains a separate publishing company, [Federation of Family History Society Publications, Ltd.](#), which issues genealogical guides and booklets regarding family history research and how to locate records. They also publishes the biannual journal, *Family History News and Digest*, containing news of its member societies, their addresses, and other items of interest.

Guild of One-Name Studies

Box G, 14 Charterhouse Buildings,
 Goswell Road,
 London EC1M 7BA
 UK
 E-mail: guild@one-name.org
 Website: <http://www.one-name.org>

bMembers research particular surnames in depth. Inquire at the address or website above for a *list of surnames registered*.

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Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies [IHGS]

79-82 Northgate
 Canterbury, Kent CT1 1BA,
 UK
 Phone: 011-44 (0)1227 768664
 E-mail: See form on website at www.ihgs.ac.uk/contact/contact_principal.php
 Website: <http://www.ihgs.ac.uk>

A charitable educational trust dedicated to studying the history and structure of the family, with inter-disciplinary interests, this body provides a range of courses and examination and is constituted to award degrees. It is a member of [The Federation of Family History Societies](#).

Membership is open to all and currently runs at £22.50 per annum (after an initial £15 registration fee)—click on link and scroll down page for information. Benefits include a complimentary copy of the Institute's quarterly journal, *Family History*, and a bookshop discount. Non-members may [subscribe](#) to *Family History* at £15 a year.

The **IHGS** possesses a fine **library** of genealogical and historical material, housing manuscripts, indices and research guides, material on thousands of genealogical cases indexed by surname, and other documents and information, including material that will prove of interest to those tracing their ancestry in Wales. Access to the library is by appointment only, fee payable (fees higher for non-members); check website or phone ahead for dates and times. Note also that not all collections are available to the public.

The **IHGS shop** sells a series of *county parish and registration district maps for England, Scotland, and Wales*, showing parochial boundaries and probate jurisdictions and earliest dates of surviving registers, as well as other informative material. Inquire or consult the website as to current prices and shipping and handling.

Society of Genealogists

Miss Else Churchill, Genealogist
 Society of Genealogists
 14 Charterhouse Buildings
 Goswell Road
 London EC1M 7BA
 UK
 Phone: 011-44-(0)20 7251 8779
 E-mail: genealogy@sog.org.uk
 Website: www.sog.org.uk

A private association, membership is by annual subscription and includes the quarterly journal *The Genealogists' Magazine*, admission to the Society's

collections housed in their unique London **library**, and free access, within certain time restrictions, to the Society's on-line database. (Currently, for overseas members there is a one-time joining fee of £10 and a subscription fee of £25 per annum). Non-members may subscribe to the journal and use the library upon payment of a search fee (see website).

The **SOG library**, situated at the Goswell Road address, holds primarily pre-1837 material and includes:

The UK's largest collection of *Parish Register* transcripts

A *general index* of more than three million names

Small collections on Scotland and *Wales*

Small collections on British families abroad

and other documents and information

The **SOG** is a member of [The Federation of Family History Societies](#).

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Official Records & Their Indices, United Kingdom



Bishops' Transcripts of Parish Registers: Yearly copies sent by the parishes to their bishop. May often be found at the appropriate [county record office/archives](#).

Census Returns. As in America, the United Kingdom has taken a census of its population every ten years, beginning in 1801. Census returns from 1841 and thereafter list every member of every household. The actual census documents are held at the [Family Records Centre](#), and are visible on microfilm. See the [FRC website](#), your regional LDS [Family History Center](#), or consult *Census Returns on Microfilm*, by Jeremy S. W. Gibson, Federation of Family History Society Publications, Ltd.; available from the [FFSH](#).

General Register Office Indices. To quote the [GRO FAQs](#) page,

“The General Register Office allocates a reference to every event of birth, marriage or death registered in England and Wales. This relates to the year, quarter, and district that the entry was registered in. By giving the office this index reference it allows us to quickly identify the correct entry. This reference is only of use to the General Register Office and not to local registration offices who have their own system.”

The Index is published quarterly from July 1837, recording births, marriages, and deaths. A complete set is available at the [Family Records Centre](#).

International Genealogical Index: Baptismal records for British emigrants 1538-1875. Compiled by the [Genealogical Society of Utah](#); available for consultation at LDS branch libraries and many public libraries around the world, or free on-line at www.familysearch.org.

Marriage and Census Indexes for Family Historians, Gibson, Jeremy S. W., and Elizabeth Hampson, Federation of Family History Society Publications, Ltd., 2000 (8th edition). Available from the [FFHS](#).

Marriage Licenses: Usually deposited in the relevant [country record office/archives](#). Records of special licenses issued through the Faculty Office and Vicar General of the Archbishop of Canterbury are in the

Lambeth Palace Library

Lambeth Palace Road
London SE1 7JU
UK

Those for the Diocese of London are in the

Guildhall Library

Aldermanbury,
London EC2P 2EJ
UK

(In case any of our ancestors slipped off to London to be married by special license!)

See also *Boyd's Marriage Index*, visible at the website [British Origins](#) on a subscription basis.

Non-Parochial Registers: Pre-1837 records of baptisms and burials in non-conformist congregations. If the register has been transferred, it may be inspected at the [National Archives](#), Richmond, London; if not transferred, try the specific **congregation, the denominational headquarters**, or the [county record office/archives](#).

(Note that between 1754 and 1837, all UK marriages, except those of Quakers and Jews, had to take place in an Anglican [C of E] church. Check the relevant *Parish Register* if your non-conformist ancestors were married between those dates.)

Parish Registers: Baptisms, marriages, and burials, especially prior to 1837; some records go back to the 1500s. Originals and often modern copies are deposited in the pertinent [county record office/archives](#). Inquire there to find out if the county holds the register or if it is still in the hands of the **parish** or [diocese](#).

Wills

Proved in England and Wales since 1858: May be found at [Principal Registry of the Family Division](#).

Proved in England and Wales 1383-1857:

- 1) If testator held property in only one jurisdiction, the will was proved in the Archdeaconry, Diocesan, or 'Peculiar' court having jurisdiction; apply to the relevant [Church in Wales diocese](#) for guidance on where the record is held.
- 2) If the testator held property in more than one archdeaconry of the same diocese, the will was proved in the Diocesan Consistory Court. Look for a *Diocesan Will* in the pertinent [county record office](#).
- 3) If the testator held property in more than one Welsh diocese, look into the *Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills*, as the Archbishop of Canterbury traditionally held jurisdiction over Wales. Records and indices can be found at the [Family Records Centre](#), Islington, London, or on-line through the [National Archives' DocumentsOnline](#) website.
- 4) To determine probate jurisdiction pre-1858, see Gibson's [Simplified Guide to Probate Jurisdiction](#).

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Research Results and Guides in Print and On-Line



The following works can be helpful in discovering family material already in print, and names being researched worldwide; they are published in the UK unless noted otherwise. Some of these are available on CD-ROM, or in hard copy or on microfiche in libraries here in the United States. Check www.amazon.com, www.google.com, www.dogpile.com, or your favorite search engine for availability.

British Origins at www.britishorigins.com. Features large collections of church records and other important databases. Records access is by subscription only; a sliding scale applies depending upon how long you want/need to view the information.

FreeBMD at <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com>. You can research from over 90 million birth, marriage, and death records from the years 1837 to 1983.

Genealogical Guide, A: Whitmore, J. B., 1903

Genealogist's Guide, The: Barrow, G. B., 1977

Genealogist's Guide, The: Marshall, G. W., 1903; reprinted Baltimore, Maryland, 1967

Genealogical Research Directory: Johnson, Keith A., and Malcom R. Sainty, editors; published annually by the editors. For information, contact:

Mrs. E. Simpson
2 Stella Grove,
Tollerton, Nottingham NG12 4EY
UK

In and Around Record Repositories in Great Britain and Ireland, Church, Rosemary, and Jean Cole, compilers; Avril Cross, editor. Available from the [FFSH](http://www.ffsh.org).

National Burial Index for England and Wales, Federation of Family History Societies. A set of four CDs; available from the [FFSH](#).

National Genealogical Directory: Caley, Iris, editor
For information on the latest edition contact Ms. Caley at:

Hill View,
Mendip Road,
Stoke St. Michael, Somerset BA3 5JU

Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers, The, Humphery-Smith, Cecil R. editor, David Brown Book Co. Features a complete reduced-size set of parish-boundary and probate- jurisdiction maps for all of Great Britain, with topographic maps and information about records for each parish. A hard copy may be consulted in the Map Room of the Main Library of Ohio State University in Columbus Ohio. It may also be ordered directly from [Phillimore](#)'s (among other places).

Record Offices: Gibson, Jeremy S. W. Available from the [FFHS](#).

Simplified Guide to Probate Jurisdiction: Gibson, Jeremy S. W.; 3rd edition 1985. Available from the [FFHS](#).

UK BMD: Births, Marriages, Deaths and Censuses on the Internet, www.ukbmd.org.uk. Choose from the drop-down menu and click on the "County" link.

Worldwide Family History: Curren-Briggs, Noel; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982

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Other Useful Links



BBC Wales Family History, at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history/sites/familyhistory/pages/genealogy.shtml>.

Includes a family history inquiry-and-message board.

Beginning British Isles Research, by Linda Jonas, Fairfax Genealogical Society; at http://www.fxgs.org/British%20SIG_res1.htm. Last updated 10 October 2002.

British Isles GenWeb Project at www.britishtislesgenweb.org

Cyndi's List of Genealogical Sites on the Internet—Wales/Cymry, by Cyndi Howells. A marvellous compendium of all sorts of helpful genealogical information, found at <http://www.cyndislist.com/wales.htm>. Updated frequently.

FamilySearch, sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' Family History Library, at www.familysearch.org. Features Research Outlines, a Family History Library catalog, and an International Genealogical Index.

The Genealogist, sponsored by S&N Genealogy Supplies and the British Data Archive, at www.thegenealogist.co.uk. This site posts ongoing results of a massive volunteer project to index British census records from 1851 to 1901. County indices viewable by subscription only.

GENUKI at www.genuki.org.uk. A portmanteau site that can lead the researcher into UK family history into more lines of inquiry than he or she could imagine.

Homecoming Wales at www.homecomingwales.com. Welsh genealogy research resources, and hot deals on travel to yr Hen Wlad, to boot.

Origins Network at www.originsnetwork.com. Described as "Specialists in British and Irish Genealogy Research."

Phillimore's Publishers, at www.phillimore.co.uk. "Publisher and Bookseller of British Local and Family History."

Welsh Family History Archive by South Walian John Ball, at <http://home.clara.net/wfha/wales/index.htm>. All sorts of interesting links, with a personal touch.

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Compiled by the Rev. K. A. Horstman
for the St. David's Society of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
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To report broken links, provide corrections, or suggest supplementary resources
and ways to make this page more helpful, e-mail [me](#).

For technical problems with this page, contact the Pittsburgh St. David's Society
[Webmaster](#).

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