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BASILDON BOROUGH HERITAGE SOCIETY

Resource planning:

If you are just starting the journey of documenting your family history, perhaps some of the following web-sites may help you BUT there is always a way that best suits you and not that which you may feel is too regimented or even difficult. So, with that in mind, perhaps we can review some of these to enable best practice for you!

The sites most in use are Ancestry, My Heritage and Findmypast, all of which charge an annual fee, similarly Fold3 for military records. There are others that target areas of research but also require subscription.

A few points to note of these are that sorting on My Heritage is somewhat overloaded in other words put a name search to it and you will get a lot of names and not in the date order of the person which also appears visibly confusing.

Ancestry, generally on your search criteria will put the response found first and if it's not there, then perhaps your search criteria needs more information. Also, if you intend to upload photos to Ancestry, they become the property of the company! Ancestry does, however, have an easy 'card catalogue' route into London Metropolitan Archives.

Findmypast, as a system is growing, but its attributes are its sorting of responses, which is visibly much easier on the eye. It also provides access to Newspapers.

County Records Offices, as you would expect, we at Basildon Heritage subscribe to the Essex Records Office giving access to all parish church records where they exist, normally this covers a timeframe around four hundred years plus. All counties have similar purchasing options ie from monthly to annual cost.

Free sites:

We can recommend looking at Familysearch.org which is a free site once you have set up an account, because it provides named family trees where they exist and in a format which enables the information to be easily understood and researched. Basically it is the parent company of Ancestry! Other free access sites which extend into the social history side of your research, which are important to consider viewing are:

The Peerage (not Burke's Peerage which requires subscription). This site is being expanded all the time and does help with the Royalty, Landed Gentry and Aristocracy including military descriptors.

The Old Bailey (Central Criminal Court records) from around 1670 to 1913. What is important about this is the fact of all London and Middlesex County Trials are listed and transcribed and the sentencing is indicative of the harshness of the centuries past and very useful when it comes to transportation to the Americas and Van Diemen's Land!

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) which because the Ministry of Defence (until very recently) were responsible for the recording of forces deaths, means you have to think whether the death was a Civil or Military registration (which won't be available without going through the MOD).

Your own system:

A Timeline – can be important to design a simple timeline for any person or family or social history ie wars, pandemics, industrial revolutions etc. all of which can lead to answers or explanations of the movement of people and families, for example Agricultural Labourers moving to work the steel sectors including railways, mining both home and abroad, and in particular family planning time-frames due to war.

Social History:

County Boundaries - undoubtedly you will encounter issues relating to changes in county lines which can be confusing. A simple example of the would be to ask where Essex starts from the West (North and South), the east being the North Sea. A Geographic question against a Political Question.

Illiteracy – when was English taught in the school curriculum?

Typewriters – very many of the reference pages are typed but when were typewriters invented so expect more transcribing errors.

Research notes and pitfalls:

Family and Social History also has many pitfalls when you undertake research.

- Stand back firstly and look at the potential timeline and considerations.
- When person information is given to you, don't think it is correct until you prove it say by getting a copy of a birth death or marriage certificate or getting at least the registration detail for those.
- Abbreviations are a common source of misleading research. ie. "Jack" for John, Harry for Henry etc and then to the letter abbreviations Jas for James, Hy for Henry etc. and one very common literal to phonetic change is Mary Ann to Maryanne, to Marian to Marianne etc. and Mary Ann was very common in the nineteenth century.
- Expect transcribing errors and remember when most of Ancestry has been transcribed by Mormon Students who have little idea of British Geography so research by location is a challenge. So you can assume three transcripts for a record including the potential for phonetic change as well.
- Consider the fact until the 1911 Census, enumerators transcribed the information so it would be of little use to show the person being interviewed whether it was spelled correctly if they couldn't read or write!
- Two different people researching the same person will often come up with varying conclusions and answers.
- The movement of people, particularly German is important as regards the Austro-Hungarian Empire (the Holy Roman Empire pushing northwards and north westwards, the Prussian movement south and westwards, the impact of the Industrial revolution in respect of Agriculture to Industry and movement into larger towns and cities.

- The German Revolution of 1848 / 1849 and that approximately 95% emigration to USA and 5% to UK. There was a complete Regiment of German Emigree's fighting for the Union side in the American Civil War!
- Boston generally recognised as the Catholic Capital of America, was virtually all Protestant until the arrival of the Irish from 1845/50 (the Potato Famine)
- Also, our Criminality transportation from the late eighteenth century was to America up to the time of the Revolutionary wars around 1770's after which of course we soon learnt we were finding families fighting against each other, so we changed direction.
- Lots of German Owners, Directors, Managers etc went to places like the Dutch (Netherlands East Indies) on plantation work. Also later into South America (Chile) on mining engineering.
- The sixteenth century records could be in Latin in England, a high proportion of Ag. Labs (Agricultural Labourers) and their subsequent wives could not read or write, and this existed through to the late twentieth century (say 1870 – 1880).
- In England Parish records are generally available only from County central locations and most in the 16th and 17th Century may be in Latin.
- Similarly, for South Africa, emigration was generally after those other places such as the Australian continent because of our transportation laws to Van Diemen's Land etc and very few returning which made subsequent generation movement easier.
- The movement of Miners from Tin Mining in Cornwall, to Coal in Somerset, to Coal in South Wales and then Welsh Miners to Peru and Chile.
- Dates that are important to UK research
 - (1) 1912 When Mothers maiden names were included on children's birth certificates.
 - (2) 1911/12 When Spouse only name was entered on Marriage certificates. This in context explains why researchers before that date should who got married in a Church on a particular day NOT who married whom.
 - (3) London Archive records ended for children in 1906/7 and for marriages in 1917 and that if anyone bothered to register with them.

I mention Germans in the context of mass migrations which Irish apart and of course the general movement to the USA we in percentage terms about equal whilst we seemed to do Australia, Canada then South Africa.

English records.

- They generally have been transcribed onto Microfiche and not yet fully digitalised meaning research can only be via a personal visit of paying a professional researcher from that location.
- The National Registration system started in July 1837 before which (and in addition since) Parish Records were the sole means of record for Births/Baptisms. Marriages and Deaths.
- Up to the early part of the 19th Century it was common for only the Baptism date to be recorded and not the birth date and parents might go for a 'job lot' in getting three children baptised at one go because it was cheaper.

Bearing that in mind until the 1880's and beyond but on a reducing scale, people could not generally read or write which meant enumerators wrote down their interpretation of what was being said. Similarly years of birth remain even now somewhat a challenge (for example up to the 20th century some scope was given to enumerators within a five years range and even now when registering a death, it is not necessary to have a birth certificate, this is still word of mouth.

- The first Census in England was in 1841 and held every ten years since although there was one undertaken in Sheffield in 1830's.
- Registration Districts may well be different to the location district (for example Leyton/ Canning Town/Custom House etc are all West Ham and even then in the 1940's that was regionalised to Essex Southwestern and similar changes across the Country.

- However, in UK we have a hundred-year rule meaning the last Census available to the public is the 1921 Census.

The census itself evolved in that 1841 was basically a list of names and a tick box on the person being born within the county or not. Later Census sheets had address and profession added and one additional feature of the 1911 Census is a column indicating how many children in the family had died before the Census date.

From a research point of view, your own system will evolve in that it is important to have a basic plan. For example:

1. Try to find the people. Ask family members for example.
2. Prove who they are by registration ie. Birth, Marriage and Death certificate numbers.
3. Leave 'History' until last.

Within that, try and complete the husband-and-wife detail (five registrations required before then establishing the children if any from the marriage and so on.

The one thing that will occur is your historical knowledge will improve beyond measure and make you most impressive at any after dinner speeches you may take on!!!

Understanding different cultures also helps for example in the American Civil War soldiers enlisted for a fixed term and one particular trade changed in consequence at the time of firstly enlisting as a Blacksmith to cope with the requirements of horses and then a subsequent re-enlistment as a Butcher to handle the deaths of horses!

Generally in this country the most complete records and by implication, the easiest to trace, are those associated with the Monarchy, and this includes the named servants and in turn this highlights other historical issues such as in the early thirteenth century King John introduce taxes having established the population growth and thereby forename such as Peter, was added a tradename such as Peter The Fletcher becoming Peter Fletcher and Smith from the Type of work Black or Whitesmiths and so on.

Because of the William the Conqueror transformation of documentation we also can trace back those relatives from France and those 'Saxon' Barons and Earls of England who were supportive of his regime the awards of land and Castles in this country and in Ireland.

Those French Town names also started earlier going back to the Uppsala era (Sweden/Norway) from around the sixth century, to the Viking times and they brought those to France (Northern France/Normandy etc).

Coming more up to date with the Two World Wars, certain other issues should be remembered:

- About 70% of the WW1 records were lost by fire and subsequent water intrusion when the National Archives were bombed in WW2.

Funnies:

- In the nineteenth century, women generally lied about their age upon marriage, so it firstly is important to establish their birth.
- However, enumerators often round up birth date years when the detail was only speculative.
- When registering a death, no formal record of the birth need be taken, so verbal indication of a person's age, generally day and month are known but often mistakes made on the year.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Many of us have surnames passed down to us from ancestors in England. Last names weren't widely used until after the Norman Conquest in 1066, but as the country's population grew, people found it necessary to be more specific when they were talking about somebody else. Thus, descriptions arose like Thomas the Baker, Norman son of Richard, Henry the Whitehead, Elizabeth of the Field, and Joan of York that, ultimately, led to many of our current surnames.

There are perhaps 45,000 different English surnames, but most had their origins as one of these seven types.

Occupational

Occupational names identified people based on their job or position in society. Calling a man "Thomas Carpenter" indicated that he worked with wood for a living, while someone named Knight bore a sword. Other occupational names include Archer, Baker, Brewer, Butcher, Carter, Clark, Cooper, Cook, Dyer, Farmer, Faulkner, Fisher, Fuller, Gardener, Glover, Head, Hunt or Hunter, Judge, Mason, Page, Parker, Potter, Sawyer, Slater, Smith, Taylor, Thatcher, Turner, Weaver, Woodman, and Wright (or variations such as Cartwright and Wainwright) — and there are many more.

This kind of name also gave a clue about who a servant worked for. Someone named Vickers might have been a servant to Mr. Vicker, and someone named Williams might either have served a William or been adopted by him.

From the obscure fact department: In medieval England, before the time of professional theatre, craft guilds put on "mystery plays" ("mystery" meaning "miracle"), which told Bible stories and had a call-and-response style of singing. A participant's surname — such as King, Lord, Virgin, or Death — may have reflected his or her role, which some people played for life and passed down to their eldest son.

Some names, often adjectives, were based on nicknames that described a person. They may have described a person's size (Short, Long, Little), colouring (Black, White, Green, or Red, which could have evolved into "Reed"), or another character trait (Stern, Strong, Swift). Someone named Peacock might have been considered vain.

From an English place name.

A last name may have pointed to where a person was born, lived, worked, or owned land. It might be from the name of a house, farm, hamlet, town, or county. Some examples: Bedford, Burton, Hamilton, Hampshire, Sutton. Writer Jack London's ancestor may have hailed from London.

From the name of an estate.

Those descended from landowners may have taken as their surname the name of their holdings, castle, manor, or estate, such as Earl or Staunton. Windsor is a famous example — it was the surname George V adopted for the British royal family.

From a geographical feature of the landscape

Some examples are Bridge, Brooks, Bush, Camp, Fields, Forest, Greenwood, Grove, Hill, Knolles, Lake, Moore, Perry, Stone, Wold, Wood, and Woodruff. Author Margaret Atwood is probably descended from someone who lived "at the wood."

Patronymic, matronymic, or ancestral.

Patronymic surnames (those that come from a male given name) include Benson ("the son of Ben"), Davis, Dawson, Evans, Harris, Harrison, Jackson, Jones (Welsh for John), Nicholson, Richardson, Robinson, Rogers, Simpson, Stephenson, Thompson, Watson, and Wilson.

Matronymic ones, surnames derived from a female given name, include Molson (from Moll, for Mary), Madison (from Maud), Emmott (from Emma), and Marriott (from Mary).

Scottish clan names make up one set of ancestral surnames. These include Armstrong, Cameron, Campbell, Crawford, Douglas, Forbes, Grant, Henderson, Hunter, MacDonald, and Stewart.

Signifying patronage

Some surnames honored a patron. Hickman was Hick's man (Hick being a nickname for Richard). Kilpatrick was a follower of Patrick.

Wondering whether your family name is English? Try plugging your surname into the Ancestry Last Names Meanings and Origins widget. Type in the surname "Duffield," and you'll see its English, a "habitational name from places in Derbyshire and East Yorkshire, so named from Old English Dufe 'dove' + feld 'open country.'"

There is no doubt that as National Registrations for family certificates becomes even more challenging for the researcher, then think of the complications that one has to consider before that date.

We will try to list these in a near chronological order, but that may also vary from institution to generic types.

The keeping of parish records in England and Wales began in 1538 under the orders of Thomas Cromwell, chief minister to King Henry VIII. The main reason for this was to keep track of births (baptisms), marriages, and deaths (burials) at the local level. These records were maintained by the parish priests of the Church of England.

Key Points About Parish Records from 1538 Onward:

Thomas Cromwell ordered every parish to keep a register recording baptisms, marriages, and burials. These were to be kept in a book and updated weekly.

Early Records (1538–1598) – The earliest records were often written on loose sheets or in single books, leading to loss and damage over time.

Formalization (1598) – Queen Elizabeth I's government required registers to be kept in parchment books, with copies (known as Bishop's Transcripts) sent annually to dioceses for safekeeping.

Further Developments:

1643–1660 (English Civil War & Commonwealth Period) – Many registers were poorly kept or lost, as the Church's control weakened.

1660 (Restoration of the Monarchy) – Record-keeping resumed properly, but gaps exist due to the Civil War period.

1733 – Registers were required to be written in English instead of Latin.

1754 (Hardwicke's Marriage Act) – Required all marriages (except Quaker and Jewish ones) to be recorded in a separate marriage register and conducted in a Church of England ceremony.

19th Century Changes:

1812 (Rose's Act) – Standardized the format of parish registers, requiring separate books for baptisms, marriages, and burials.

1837 (Civil Registration Begins) – The government introduced civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths, reducing reliance on church records.

So- what could go wrong?

Firstly, the Rector, Vicar or Curate was responsible for the purchase of the Register, then, completely non-standard and in so doing, he used every page for each generic part i.e. Birth, Marriage and Death and in so using every space, pages could be non-sequential, upside down, torn out or missing and that is without the different inks fading.

Age and time degrading - So, where registers have been recorded at County Registration level, the numbering systems may embrace all three generic areas making direct access to one type, somewhat difficult.

Spelling – the language of old English at this time means that often the research must be a painstaking task of looking through all entries, none being in alphabetical order with the common changes being U and V reversal, Y for I, and double S as one and F's for S's as well.

Latin – up to one hundred years in some register may be in Latin.

Parish Church – There may well be more than one Parish Church in the area being researched, each having different issues such as age (when built), Records (when started), the ability to clearly write (rather than that of the time).

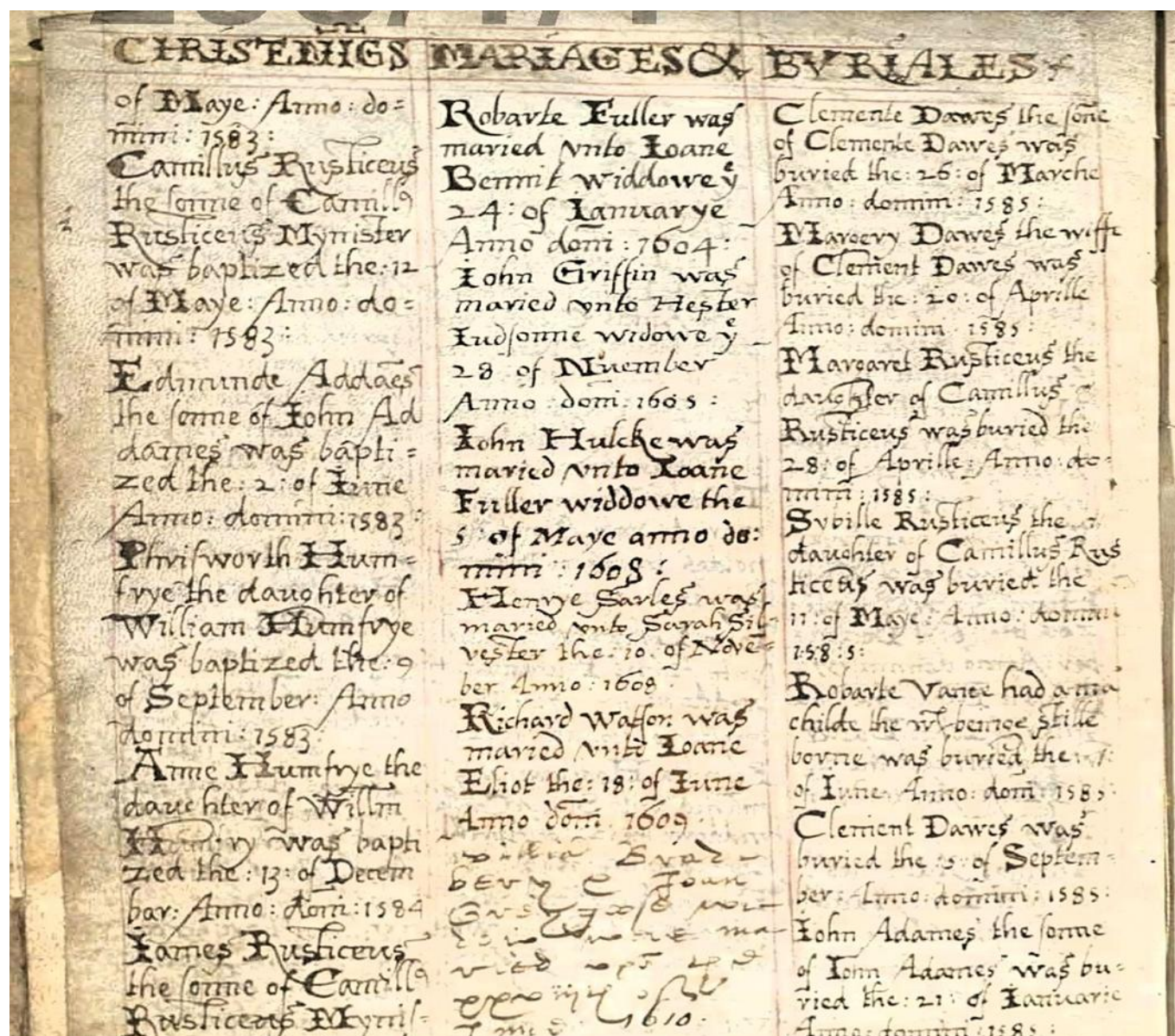
Access to county records – Generally a subscription service although some are being downloaded into the Ancestry and Findmypast systems (themselves a subscription service).

Continuity – The records again suffer from missing registers for whatever reason (ie may not have been handed in), completion may have pre-ceded County Archives and Bishops Transcript not really in parallel.

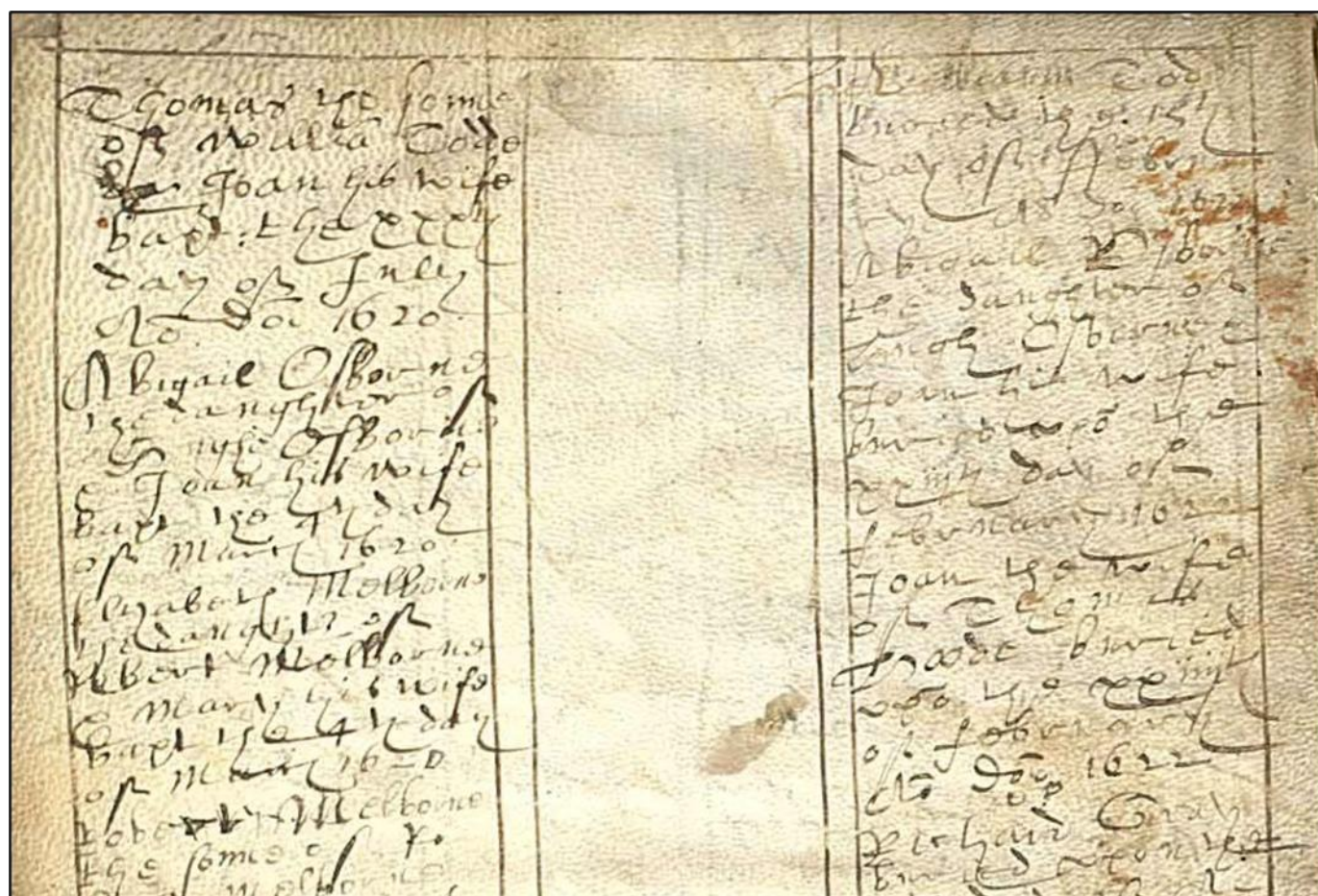
Banns Registers – came into being later than marriage registers and may still not be proof of the marriage or perhaps location.

Types of records – there were formal record pages in registers, not necessarily describing all the information one would like to see (marriages).

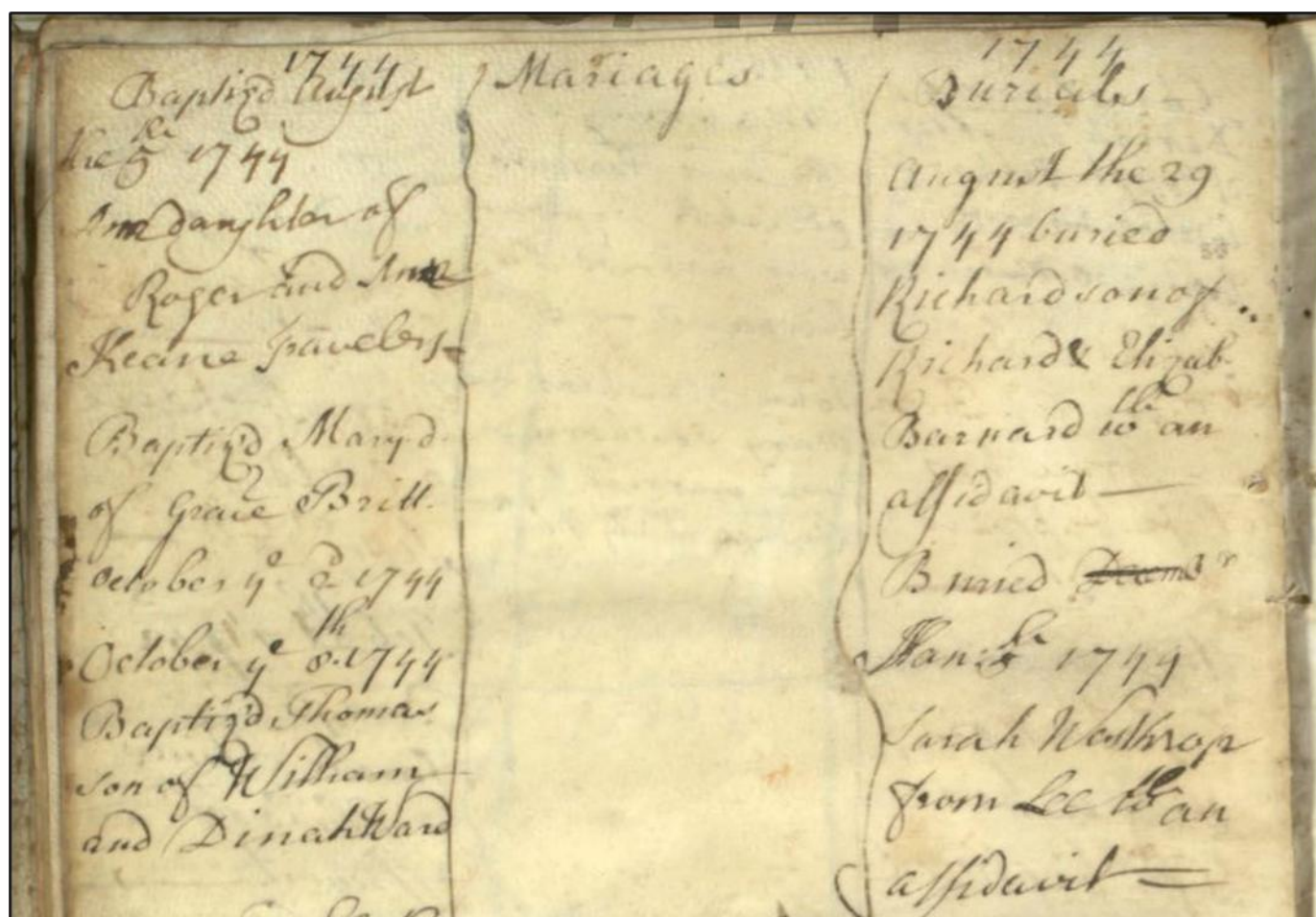
For example: Register D/P 298/1/1 – All Saints and St. Chad Vange Essex (1558-1786)



This is a remarkably good page but the marriages starting to become very difficult to read no doubt with the advent of a new clergyman conducting marriages.



Part of the same register from around 1620.



Part of the same register in 1744.

Register D/P 298/1/4 – All Saints and St. Chad Vange from 1813 showing the new formal (eight entry) page listing.

Page 1.

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <u>Vange</u> in the County of <u>Gres</u> in the Year 1813.						
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1813. <i>Born</i> May 22 1012	Adam	George	Rudland	Vange	Farmer	John Cheekley Curate
No. 1.	Son of Mary Ann		Rudland			
1813. <i>Born</i> 23 ^d	William	Samuel	Bridge	Vange	Laborer	John Cheekley Curate
No. 2.	Son of Richard		Bridge			
1813. <i>aged</i> 10 Weeks the 14 th	Martha	Robert	Jarris	Vange	Farmer	John Cheekley Curate
No. 3.	Daughter of		Martha			

Note: some clergy wrote the date of birth on the edge (left and right) before a later change to the baptism form included Born and Baptised dates to be entered. This confirmed with the new law of single generic registers.

Register D/P 298/1/5 All Saints and St. Chads Vange showing burials (eight page listings) highlighting Twins burials and different parishes.

Page 3.

BURIALS in the Parish of <u>Vange</u> in the County of <u>Gres</u> in the Year 1816				
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
William Reid	Fobbing	Sept 15 1816	11 Weeks	C. R. Landon Rector
No. 17.				
John Reid	Fobbing	Sept 22 1816	12 Weeks	C. R. Landon Rector
No. 18.				
Jonathan Gilby	Vange	May 11 th 1817	65	C. R. Landon Rector
No. 19.				

William Pys of *the* Parish
of Stanford le Hope - Widower
and *Elizabeth Roach* of *this* Parish
Widow
were married in this *Church* by *Barnes* with Consent of
this *Twenty fourth* Day of
July in the Year One thousand eight hundred and *15*
By me *John Cheekley - Curate*
This Marriage was solemnized between us { *William Pys*
Elizabeth Roach's X
In the Prefence of { *Andrew Underwood*
Mary Prettin's X
No. 5.

The Volunteers at the Essex Records Office are gradually transcribing all records from Original (some placed at the National Archives), from Microfiche to computer digital access.

A more descriptive Marriage Certificate was used from July 1837.

Early Records – early records were prone to damage (e.g., ink fading, parchment deterioration, lack of proper storage).

Formalization (1598) –clergy were fined for failing to maintain records properly, reinforcing compliance.

19th Century Changes – Highlight that civil registration introduced non-religious records, which helped track Nonconformists and Catholics more accurately.

MARRIAGE LAWS

Marriage laws and restrictions vary widely depending on cultural, religious, and legal contexts. Generally, most societies impose restrictions on close relatives marrying to avoid genetic risks associated with inbreeding and for cultural or moral reasons. Here's a list of common relative combinations who are typically prohibited from marrying in many jurisdictions:

1. Direct Line Relatives

These prohibitions are nearly universal:

Parent and child (e.g., mother and son, father and daughter)

Grandparent and grandchild (e.g., grandmother and grandson)

Great-grandparent and great-grandchild.

2. Siblings

Full siblings (share both parents)

Half-siblings (share one parent)

Adoptive siblings (in many jurisdictions, even if no biological relation).

3. Uncle/Aunt and Niece/Nephew

Uncle and niece

Aunt and nephew

(In some cultures, this might be allowed under specific conditions, but it's typically prohibited in most legal systems.)

4. Double First Cousins

Double first cousins are children of two siblings who married two siblings. While first cousins are allowed to marry in some regions, double first cousins are more closely related and are often prohibited from marrying.

5. First-Degree Relatives by Adoption.

Even without a biological connection, many jurisdictions prohibit marriage between:

Adoptive parent and adopted child

Adopted siblings.

6. Step-Relatives (in some jurisdictions)

While not biologically related, certain step-relations are prohibited from marrying in some places, especially if there was a parental relationship:

Stepparent and stepchild

Step grandparent and step grandchild.

7. Siblings-In-Law (in some cases)

Brother-in-law and sister-in-law (restricted in some cultures or religions, especially if the spouse is deceased or divorced).

8. Cousins (varies by jurisdiction)

First cousins: Prohibited in many countries but allowed in others (e.g., parts of the Middle East, Asia, and some U.S. states).

Second cousins or more distant cousins: Usually allowed but could be restricted in specific religious or cultural contexts.

9. Relationships Through Surrogacy, Artificial Insemination, or Egg Donation

Marriage restrictions might apply depending on the level of genetic or legal relationship.

Religious and Customary Restrictions

Godparents and godchildren: In some religions, this relationship is seen as familial and marriage is prohibited.

Clergy and members of certain religious orders: Restrictions may apply for marrying family members depending on religious rules.

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

The banns of marriage, commonly known simply as the "banns" or "bans" (from a Middle English word meaning "proclamation", rooted in Frankish and thence in Old French), are the public announcement in a Christian parish church, or in the town council, of an impending marriage between two specified persons. The publication of banns is a traditional ceremony in the Church of England that notifies the public of a couple's intention to marry. Banns are read in the churches where the couple live and where the wedding will take place.

The purpose of banns is to enable anyone to raise any canonical or civil legal impediments to the marriage, so as to prevent invalid marriages. Impediments vary between legal jurisdictions, but would normally include a pre-existing marriage that has been neither dissolved nor annulled, a vow of celibacy, lack of consent, or the couple being related within a prohibited degree of kinship.

Roman Catholic.

The original Catholic Canon law on the subject, intended to prevent clandestine marriages, was decreed in Canon 51 of the Lateran IV Council in 1215; until then, the public announcement in church of marriages to be contracted was only made in some areas. The Council of Trent on 11 November 1563 (Sess. XXIV, De ref. matr., c. i) made the provisions more precise: before the celebration of any marriage, the names of the contracting parties should be announced publicly in the church during Mass, by the parish priests of both parties on three consecutive Holy Days. Although the requirement was straightforward in canon law, complications sometimes arose in a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, when one of the parties to the marriage did not have a home parish in the Roman Catholic Church.

Traditionally, banns were read from the pulpit and were usually published in the parish weekly bulletin. Before 1983, canon law required banns to be announced, or "asked", in the home parishes of both parties on three Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation before the marriage. Under Canon 1067 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the norms regarding the publication of banns are to be established by each individual national or regional Conference of bishops.

In some places, the words once spoken by the priest were: "I publish the banns of marriage between (Name of party) of the Parish of..... and (Name of other party) of this Parish. If any of you know cause or just impediment why these persons should not be joined together in Holy Matrimony, ye are to declare it. This is for the (first, second, third) time of asking."

Anglican

While the Council of Trent is best known as a Counter-Reformation Council, neither the Lutheran Church nor the Church of England broke with the Roman Catholic Church on the requirement of publication of banns (or the equivalent) before marriage. (An equivalent notice was not required in the Orthodox Christian Churches, which used another method to verify eligibility to marry. The break between some Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church was over what would constitute an impediment to marriage (the Church of England, for example, recognised remarriage after divorce in some circumstances), rather than over the means by which impediments to marriage should be identified.

In England, under the provisions of the Clandestine Marriages Act 1753 (26 Geo. 2. c. 33), a marriage was only legally valid if the banns had been called or a marriage licence had been obtained, codifying earlier practice within the Church of England. By this law, the banns were required to be read aloud on three Sundays before the wedding ceremony, in the home parish churches of both parties. Omission of this formality rendered the marriage void, unless the bishop's licence (a common licence) or the special licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury had been obtained. This statutory requirement had the effect of requiring Roman Catholics and other non-conformists to be married in the Church of England, a requirement lifted by legislation in 1836.

Before 1754, when the Clandestine Marriages Act 1753 came into force, it was possible for eloping couples to be married clandestinely by an ordained clergyman (a favourite location was the Fleet Prison, a debtors' prison in London, in which clergymen willing to celebrate irregular marriages might be found).

After the law, elopers had to leave England and Wales in order to contract a marriage while avoiding these formalities. Scotland, in particular Gretna Green, the first village over the border from England, was the customary destination, but became less popular after 1856 when Scottish law was amended to require 21 days' residence.

The Isle of Man was briefly popular also, but in 1757 Tynwald, the island's legislature, passed a similar Act, with the additional sanction of pillorying and ear-cropping for clergymen from overseas who married couples without banns. These details often figure in melodramatic literature set in the period.

In 1656 (during the Commonwealth or Protectorate period) the parish register of St Mary le Crypt in Gloucester records banns of marriage as being "published by the Bellman" – the Town Crier.

Marriage licenses were introduced in the 14th century, to allow the usual notice period under banns to be waived, on payment of a fee and accompanied by a sworn declaration that there was no canonical impediment to the marriage.

The wording of banns according to the rites of the Church of England is as follows:

I publish the banns of marriage between NN of ... and NN of ...

This is the first / second / third time of asking. If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined in Holy Matrimony, ye are to declare it. (Book of Common Prayer 1662) or

This is the first / second / third time of asking. If any of you know any reason in law why they may not marry each other you are to declare it. (Common Worship 2000)

Royal assent was given to the "Church of England Marriage (Amendment) Measure" on 19 December 2012. Prior to that, as only the Prayer Book words were enshrined in the Marriage Act 1949, that wording should arguably have been used. However, in their notes to the 2012 Measure, the Church of England's legal Office stated "In some places the alternative form, as set out in Common Worship, has been in use for some time. There is no legal difficulty with marriages that have been solemnized following the publication of the banns in that form as the legal substance of the words is the same as the form contained in the Book of Common Prayer. However there will now be a statutory basis of the use of the alternative form."

The 2012 measure gave effect to two changes:

Statutory authority for the use of the form of words for the publication of banns contained in Common Worship: Pastoral Services (as an optional alternative to the form of words contained in the Book of Common Prayer);

Banns must be published on three Sundays at the 'principal service' (rather than as previously at 'morning service') and, as an option, they may additionally be published at any other service on those three Sundays.

Methodist

The Sunday Service of the Methodists, the first liturgical text of Methodism, contains "the opening rubric of the Prayer Book rite requiring the publication of banns, by which impediments to marriage such as consanguinity and legal betrothal to another could be revealed and investigated." These banns are to be read "over a period of three Sundays" during "the time of divine service".

The African Methodist Episcopal Church (through its publication of the 1996 Book of Discipline) and Free Methodist Church, both members of the World Methodist Council, contain a rubric for the reading of the banns: First, the Banns of all that are to be married together, must be published in the congregation, three several Sundays, in the time of Divine Service (unless they be otherwise qualified according to law) the Minister saying after the accustomed manner, I PUBLISH the Banns of marriage between M of _____, and N of _____. If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy Matrimony, ye are to declare it. This is the first, (second, or third) time of asking.

United States

Banns were common requirement during the colonial era. Plymouth Colony's first marriage regulation (1636) required the banns to be read to the congregation three times, or if no congregation was in the area, publicly posted for a fifteen-day period. Quakers were allowed to announce banns in their meetinghouses.

Noncompliance with the banns procedure carried a serious fine in the 17th century, which could be imposed upon the groom or minister. The proclaiming of the banns of marriage was also a requirement in the Dutch colony of New Netherland. By the 19th and 20th centuries, the practice of announcing banns faded, as most religious denominations abandoned the practice or made it optional. Banns were superseded by the rise of civil marriage license requirements, which served a similar purpose: "a declaration that no legal impediment exists to the marriages."

Elizabeth Freedman identifies the mid-19th century as the era in which "governmental regulation of marriage in the United States intensified" and the U.S. "re-established jurisdiction over marriage by reviving the policing function that banns had once had, developing a series of prenuptial tests that would determine the fitness of the couple to marry.."

How it works

The couple must apply to the minister of each parish at least a week before the first Sunday of banns.

Banns are read on three Sundays before the wedding, usually during the main service.

The couple must get married within three months of the last time banns were read.

A certificate of publication is issued after the banns are read.

****Who can be married by banns?**

British and Irish citizens can automatically marry by banns.

EU citizens with "settled" or "pre-settled" status can marry by banns if they provide a code to check their status.

Other nationals may need a Common Marriage Licence.

****What happens if the couple doesn't have banns read?**

The couple can apply for a "Marriage Schedule" from the local Register Office. The schedule contains the same information as the marriage document.

DNA

Using DNA in genealogy research is a powerful tool to uncover your ancestry, connect with relatives, and verify family tree connections. Here's a guide to effectively using DNA for genealogy research:

1. Understand the Types of DNA Tests

Three main types of DNA tests are commonly used for genealogy:

a. Autosomal DNA (atDNA)

Tests chromosomes 1-22 inherited from both parents.

Useful for tracing recent ancestry (5-7 generations) and finding matches across both maternal and paternal lines.

b. Y-DNA

Tests the Y chromosome, passed from father to son.

Only available for males.

Traces the paternal line and can identify surnames and deep paternal ancestry.

c. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)

Tests the mitochondrial DNA passed from mothers to all their children.

Traces the maternal line, often over thousands of years.

2. Choose a DNA Testing Service

Popular services include:

AncestryDNA: Focuses on autosomal DNA with a large database.

23andMe: Offers autosomal testing and some health insights.

FamilyTreeDNA: Provides all three test types and advanced tools.

MyHeritage DNA: Autosomal testing with strong European ancestry tools.

LivingDNA: Focuses on regional breakdowns and deep ancestry.

3. Analyze Ethnicity Estimates

DNA testing companies provide ethnicity estimates, showing regions where your ancestors may have lived.

Understand that ethnicity estimates are broad approximations and improve with database size.

4. Explore DNA Matches

Your results will include a list of genetic matches (relatives who share DNA with you).

Contact matches to collaborate on shared ancestors.

Tools like shared match lists and chromosome browsers help identify common ancestors.

5. Verify Family Tree Connections

Use DNA evidence to confirm or challenge relationships in your family tree.

For example, check if suspected cousins match genetically.

6. Join DNA Projects

Join surname projects, regional DNA studies, or haplogroup-specific groups, especially if you take Y-DNA or mtDNA tests.

FamilyTreeDNA hosts many of these projects.

7. Understand Haplogroups

Y-DNA and mtDNA tests assign haplogroups, indicating ancient ancestry paths.

Haplogroups help trace deep ancestry and migration patterns.

8. Use Advanced Tools

GEDmatch: Upload raw DNA data to compare with users from different testing companies.

DNA Painter: Map shared DNA segments to specific ancestors.

Chromosome Browsers: Visualize shared DNA segments (offered by some services like FamilyTreeDNA).

9. Respect Privacy and Ethics

Always ask permission before contacting DNA matches.

Be prepared for unexpected results, such as unknown relatives or non-paternal events.

10. Integrate DNA with Traditional Research

Use DNA evidence to supplement traditional genealogy research.

Combine genetic matches with historical records like census data, birth certificates, and immigration records.

11. Keep Learning

Genealogy DNA research is an evolving field.

Stay updated with webinars, blogs, and forums like those on ISOGG (International Society of Genetic Genealogy) or Reddit's r/Genealogy.

By combining DNA results with traditional records and research, you can build a richer, more accurate family history.