Researching, Recording and Reporting Your Family History

Handout WDYTYA Live April 2017

We all approach the way we research, record and report our genealogical research differently. There is no right or wrong way, however the right way is the way that is right for YOU.

There are four ways to research
>Using online websites where you could also record your family history
>Software on your computer
>Pen and Paper
>Combination of any of the above

The main websites are:-
Ancestry
FindMyPast
TheGenealogist
FamilySearch [which is free]

Several family history websites offer you the chance to store your family history on their website. Personally I don't think this a wise idea, as you have little if any control over your own research and depending on which country the website is based, what rules and data protection it falls under. What happens if you subscribe to the site and your subscription lapses, who then has control of your research, if you haven't backed it up in someway onto your own computer then you could have lost all your research.

Disadvantages of online subscriptions.
Need to remember to pay subscription
If you lapse, does the website then have right of ownership of YOUR research?
If the website closes you could lose all your research overnight without warning

Increasingly I am hearing of cases where ownership of the research is disputed, or a member of the family is objecting to their private personal details being on the internet. Also the chances of your email contact being caught in a furious ring of spammers, who will subscribe to sites just to collect email addresses.

Installing a family history programme onto your computer would give you control of your research. Software programmes need not be expensive. Some offer free demos to download, allowing you to see if the programme is user friendly to you.

Benefits of using software on your computer
One payment
YOU are in control of your family history
You can still share via gedcom aka GEnealogical Data COMunication
Lots of Family History programmes to choose from

Family history programme on our computer, they are all different in some way or other. Before going to purchase a software programme to store your family history, think about what you want to record, how you would like to record it and how much are you prepared to pay for a programme.

Here are a few programme examples:-
RootsMagic
Family Historian
Legacy
Reunion   [also Mac friendly]
TreeView   [also Mac friendly]

Things to consider:-
Cost of the programme
Will it run on your computer?
How the programme works
What are the print options?
Does it have Match / Merge? [if this something you might use]
Is it user friendly to YOU?
Do you wish to include photos, census images, scanned copies of certificates?

All programmes have differences and it comes down to personal preference as to which one is best for you, choose which once you have taken into consideration what you want from your family tree programme, how you would prefer your information to be presented to you, your level of computer skills, cost, the family history charts and print out each programme can provide you with.

Most now will import and export via Gedcoms, GEnealogical Data COMunication
If you are intending to include images of photos, certificates, census entries, remember doing this can make your family tree a very big file. Personally I keep these separately.

Take into consideration that backing up your research could result in multiple cds or USB sticks, so how you store photos, scanned images [census, parish records] etc, or scanned certificates could be a factor to consider. Keep separate folders, such as Photos, Census, Certificates and Miscellaneous.

Scan Certificates, yes as an additional safety net, also should you wish to take a certificate with you, say to a record office then print a copy from your PC. Then when you meet up with a fellow researcher you can swap and share, you share with another person and you have effectively buy one get one free.

Print options to maybe consider:-

Pedigree
Ancestral Chart

Box Pedigree
Fan Chart
Ahnentafal
Bowtie
Family Groups
Descendant Tree
Landscape Ancestor

Do you wish to be able to add colour, pictures or images to your family tree charts.

Choosing your programme
Visit a family history fair
Look out / ask if a demo is available some demos are available to download free
Check Magazines and read any reviews
Search the Internet for other researchers comments

Several programmes have downloadable demos online, try these links
Other Family History programmes also have free online downloadable versions
programmes such as:-
Legacy Family Tree www.legacyfamilytree.com/
RootsMagic www.rootsmagic.co.uk/
Family Historian www.family-historian.co.uk/downloads

Many more are mentioned www.coraweb.com.au/categories/software including some for
Mac users

Personally for most of my family history needs I use S&N Genealogy Supplies a family
run company, with a fast, friendly service, with sensible prices. Their website is
https://genealogysupplies.com/

Apps
[I openly admit this is not an area I know a lot about so I'll stick to what I have tried]
        I have Treeview on my android tablet, and find the app versatile, I can edit my tree,
even when I don't have a signal.
        The programme runs on iPhone, iPad, iPod & Android
It is FREE, for more information www.thegenealogist.co.uk/app

Pen & Paper, [a method I still use]
Colour coding your notes / research will help, I use red for Births and Baptisms, Green for
Marriages, Black for Deaths and Blue, pencil or another colour for other notes.

When researching and recording, always record as much detail as possible, don't forget to
record your sources.

If someone else saw your research, would they understand and know exactly what you are
referring to?

If I wrote "B Farnborough" or even "b Farnborough" what would I mean?
B/b could be born, birth, baptism, buried

Farnborough? which Farnborough, Farnborough in Hampshire, Farnborough in Berkshire [near Wantage], Farnborough in Warwickshire [just north of Banbury], Farnborough in Kent [near Bromley]. Maybe I could have made a typo and mean FarMborough near Bath, or do I really mean Farnborough, Queensland, Australia.

The best way is to write in full Farnborough, Hampshire, England.

Just writing London is equally as bad as their are places called London in Ontario, Canada, America has several places called London in Kentucky, Ohio, Arkansas, California, and Texas. The possible list continues, London near Brittany in France, Lucerne in Switzerland to name a few.

The same applies to 'Sources', which index, the IGI [International Genealogical Index] the GRO [General Registry Office] or a transcription of parish records produced by a FHS [Family History Society]. Think about what you want to record then draw up your own system and record what your system is.

If you record a source as "Aunty Mary"? which Aunty Mary are you referring to? I would put something along the lines of Mary Sheather nee Harden and include a contact address if possible.

Save money by drawing up your own customised research sheets, these can be done either on the computer and or by using pen and paper. Have a notebook and write down anything you need to remember. Don't be shy to ask fellow researchers for photos, copies of certificates, census etc. it shows you take your research seriously and can save you money.

A selection of some of the check sheets I have used can be found at the end of the handout, I adjust them to suit the time and type of record I wish to record.

Double check family trees shared with you, just because your sibling, parent or aunt/uncle shared it with you doesn't mean it is 100% correct. Only trust the facts that you have verified yourself.

Be aware that transcription errors happen, IsObel could easily be transcribed as IsAbel or vice a versa, some other regular errors are [a e o] [i l t] and [5 6 8] these are just a few to give you an idea, so do keep and open mind when researching.

Since November 2016 the GRO [General registry Office] online certificate ordering now records Mothers maiden name www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/ you will need to register. However you can search the birth for free but only over a short time period and only male or female so you will need to change you search criteria.

Be careful with the dates of death, the number could refer to say 2 days, 2 weeks, 2 months, or even 2 years.

Have you found a time of birth certificate on a certificate? then this could, and generally is, an indication the child is from a multiple birth, other counties including Scotland do tend to record time of birth for all births.

Record the negative searches as well as the positives, this will save you the time of going back and redoing a search you have already done.

Ask questions on mailing lists & forums, they are often full of very experienced researchers

Be clear with your research, you don't know who might be reading it in the future.

Use original records as much as possible

Don't give up on brickwalls they generally crumble in time, even many years [20+] later.

Join family history societies, family history groups, remember beginners learn from the experienced and the experienced get reminders from the beginners

Listen to talks, some are available as podcasts and are downloadable

Allow for transcript errors on census, I once found Nathan Sheather on the census as Sheather Nathan and therefore Sheather had been recorded as his first name not his surname.

Problems researching in Canada? Birth Marriage and Death records are closed for 100, 75 and 50 years accordingly. Try the Canadian website www.legacy.com/obituaries/leaderpost/ the Canadian often write some really wonderfully informative obituaries.

Don't forget other sources for research such as 'Historical Societies', 'One Place Studies', GoONs aka Guild of One Name Studies, TNA aka The National Archives.

Before visiting a record office check that what you are intending to search is available, you might be able to access it from home via your local library.

Make life easy for yourself, visit relatives, visit villages, Churches, and Cemeteries where your ancestors lived if possible, you might be surprised at what you find.

Go prepared, do your homework in advance.

Take your notepad and pencil[s] [you might snap one]

Remember your camera

Don't forget Doxie, it is a Mini Scanner that runs solely from batteries, no computer required to scan. Quick & easy to use, push one button to scan in seconds, just insert the SD card from the scanner into your computer. They are wonderful to scan images anytime, anywhere. Compact, lightweight and durable. You get a 4G memory card included in the purchase. High quality, high resolution images, colour is true to the original. Also they are versatile as you can scan any size original, 'Stitching' allows you to scan large documents and then seamlessly combine them. The stitching programme is included when you purchase Doxie.

Check Memorabilia for clues, a snippet in a postcard message or a comment in a Bible, could lead you on an interesting trail

Newspapers – not used as much as they could be, don't search with your blinkers on, I found a relative from Fleet, Hampshire, England mentioned in a Norfolk Newspaper.

Always carry a USB stick, you never know when you might find something of interest.

I purchase a majority of needs from S&N check out S&N Genealogy Supplies website
https://genealogysupplies.com/

For more of my hints and tips, read my free newsletter FH4U aka Family History For You. A mailing list exists for those who wish to be reminded that a new issue is available. To be added on to the mailing list please send an email to fh4u@roccoland.plus.com

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Baptisms

Church _____

Parish _____

Denomination of Church _____

Date	Child's Name	Father's Name	Mother's Name	Parent's Occupation	Address or Place

Burials

Church _____

Parish _____

Denomination of Church _____

Date	Name	Age	Status & or relationship	Address or Place	Cause of Death

Family Group Record [Especially useful if you have LDS members in the family]

Husband				See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	LDS ordinance date	Temple
	Christened	Place	Baptised	
	Died		Endowed	
	Buried	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
Husband's father				
Husband's Mother				
Wife				See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	LDS ordinance date	Temple
	Christened	Place	Baptised	
	Died		Endowed	
	Buried	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
Wife's father				
Wife's Mother				
Children List each child in order			LDS ordinance date	Temple
Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
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	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	
Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	

Family Group Record [continuation sheet if they had a large family]

Husband			
Wife			

Children List each child in order			LDS ordinance date	Temple

Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	

Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
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Sex	Name			See Other Marriages
	Born	Place	Baptised	
	Christened	Place	Endowed	
	Died	Place	Sealed to Parents	
	Spouse			
	Married	Place	Sealed to spouse	

Surname	Given	Rin	Birth	Mar	Died	41	51	61	71	81	91	01	11	39	B	M	D	Mi	Will	Probate