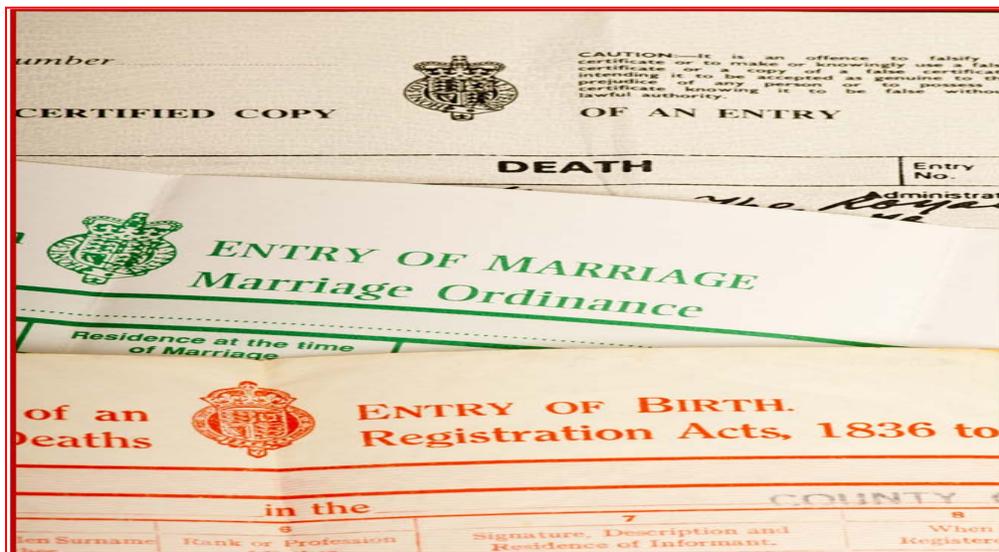


Help with Family History

This helpsheet will give you some tips for starting your family history as well as the resources and help available from West Sussex Libraries.

Getting started

Family Documents - collect together old birth, marriage or death certificates, passports, ID documents, letters or any other papers you can find. Take copies that you can use when visiting the library so you don't need to carry precious or fragile documents around. Always start with what you know and work your way backwards.



Talk to relatives - many will be happy to let you have their memories. Write down everything, no matter how vague; you never know what might make sense later on in your research. However, always look for evidence to back up any stories.

Read a beginner's guide - there are many books available to borrow that will introduce you to researching family history and the sources that you can use. It's FREE to request any non-fiction title in West Sussex Libraries. Here are a few to try:

Who Do You Think You Are? - Dan Waddell

Grow Your Own Family Tree - Pauline Golds

Tracing Your Family History - Kathy Chater

Read a magazine - you can read current and back copies of *Who Do You Think You Are?* using our [free eMagazines service](#). They will often include beginner's guides as well as reviews of websites and books.



Attend a talk or workshop - events are held throughout the year in many of our libraries. Topics include:

How to use Ancestry or Find My Past in libraries

Newspapers for Family History

Free Websites for Family History

Understanding the Census and Birth, Marriage and Death records

Researching WW1 Ancestors

See the [library events pages](#) for more details.

Use the FREE online resources detailed below available in all West Sussex libraries. We provide access to some of the biggest family history websites - use our library computers for your research and either print or email the information home.

Free online resources

Ancestry - a collection of worldwide databases covering everything from census returns to passenger lists. Unique collections include London Parish Records and 20th century BT phonebooks.



Find My Past offers a range of UK databases. Unique collections include pre WW1 army records, school admission registers and log books from the beginning of the 20th Century.



The British Newspaper Archive contains local historical newspapers covering the 18th to the 20th century from the British Library collection, including a range of West Sussex newspapers.



Make notes of everything you find and where you found it. Some information may not be useful now but will fit in later in your research. Record any unsuccessful searches as well so you don't need to search the same documents again in the future. Draw up a basic family tree to help you work out how everyone is related.

Ask a Librarian - if you've hit a brick wall and are not sure where to look next you can contact our Enquiries Team for help. We can carry out up to half an hour free research for you which can include advice on other resources to try or contacts for other archives that may hold the information

you need. Contact us via the [Ask A Librarian](#) form or ask in your local library.

Other ways we can help you find the information that you need:

[Ask a Librarian](#)

[Local Clubs and Societies](#)

[Family History](#)

[Local History](#)

[Business](#)

[Homework and Research](#)

This guide has been produced by West Sussex County Council Library Service © 2020.