

How to find family history online

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The popularity of TV series about history and, especially, ancestry – such as the BBC’s *Who Do You Think You Are?* – has led to a boom in interest in discovering family history and drawing up family trees. This has been made all the easier with the explosion in digital media, with an enormous amount of documentation – like the UK census – going online and becoming freely available.

There’s also an ever-expanding number of computer programs and websites that can walk you through the process (if you feel you need guidance), contain the information you need to trace your ancestors and help you create a detailed family tree or family history document to pass down to your children.

This guide explains how to use [Genes Reunited](#), a genealogy website. It will explain how to register and search for ancestors and build up a family tree. Some searches may require you to pay a fee, however it is free to build a family tree and to add information to this.

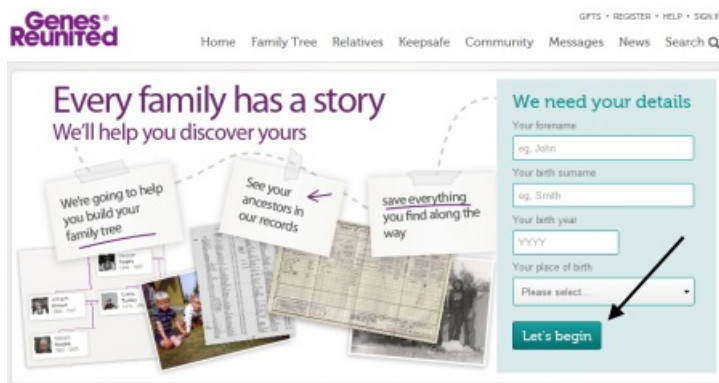
You’ll need:

- An internet connection

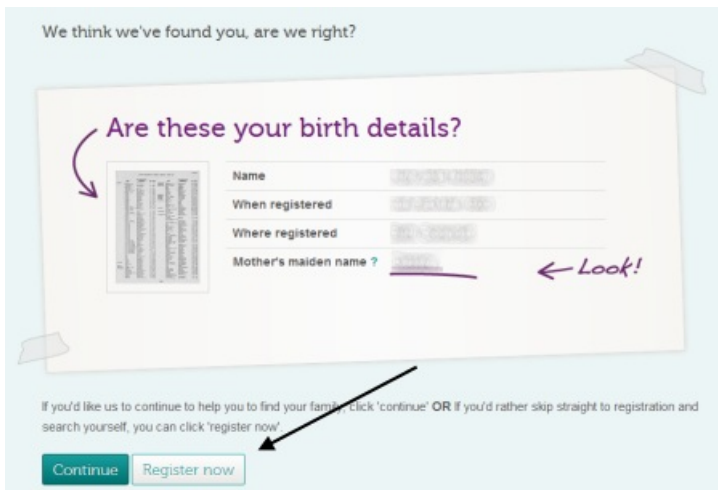
Follow these step-by-step instructions to sign up to Genes Reunited:

Step 1: Open your browser and go to <http://www.genesreunited.com>.

Step 2: The main page will ask you to either log in with your login details if you have already registered, if you have not already registered, enter the required information and click **Let's begin**.



Step 3: The website will then search and display a mock birth certificate containing your birth information. You can choose to continue to search for family members or skip to register. For this guide, we will click **Register now**.



Step 4: You now need to add some additional information, you can do this manually or choose to continue registration through Facebook. For this guide, we shall complete the information, read through the terms and conditions of the site and click **Register Free**. Be careful to check the tickboxes that relate to information you're happy for the site to send you and confirm that you are happy with the terms and conditions of using the site.

Please complete this registration

Forename: [redacted]

Birth surname: [redacted]

Gender: [redacted]

Year of birth: [redacted]

Place of birth: [redacted]

Country of residence: Please Select

Your email address: [redacted]

Choose a password: [redacted]

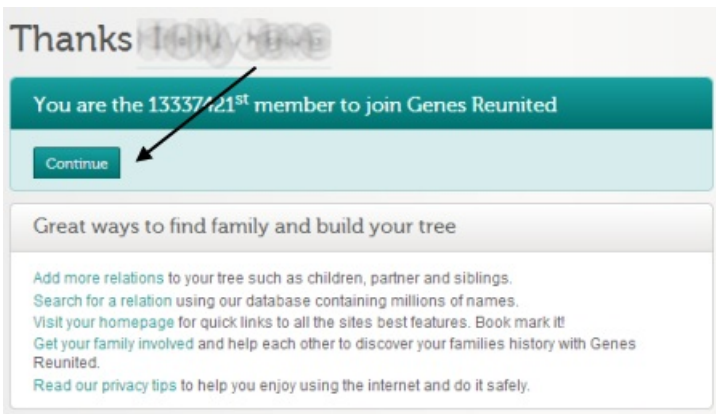
How much do you know about family history? Please Select

- I would like to receive the occasional Genes Reunited newsletter
- Tick to register free on Friends Reunited
- I would like to receive information about 1901 Census Online
- I have read and agree to the terms & conditions and privacy policy

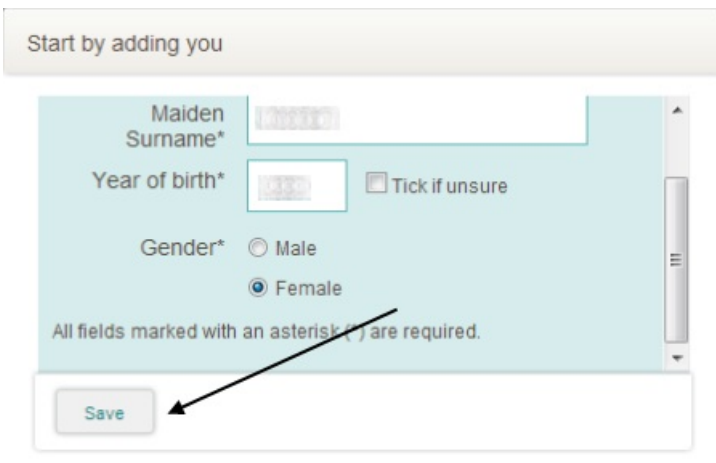
Register Free

This screenshot shows a registration form titled 'Please complete this registration'. It contains several input fields: Forename, Birth surname, Gender, Year of birth, Place of birth, Country of residence (with a dropdown menu), Your email address, Choose a password, and How much do you know about family history? (with a dropdown menu). Below these fields are four checkboxes with corresponding text. The first three are checked, and the last one is unchecked. A black arrow points from the 'Register Free' button in this screenshot to the 'Register Free' button in the next screenshot.

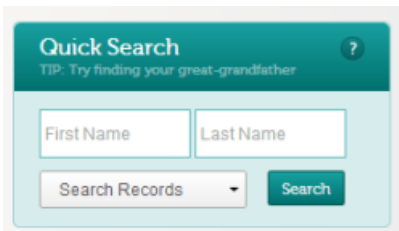
Now your account will be set up and you will be logged into the site. Click **Continue** to start building your family tree.



Step 5: The website will now walk you through the process of completing your account and building your family tree. Start by completing your details then click **Save**



Step 6: Now you can search for other family members. You can either search by name:



Or you can use the 'How do I get started?' guide:


✕

I'M NEW

How do I get started?

Discovering your family history doesn't have to be hard work!

- 1 Enter as much information as you can into your family tree.
- 2 Speak to your relatives and see if they can tell you more.
- 3 Search other members' trees and see if anyone is researching the same names.
- 4 Use our historical records to discover new facts and attach to your relatives.



[Find out more >](#)

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[Next](#)

Step 6: We will use the quick search option. Type the name of your relative, it's a good idea to start with your immediate family and then brainstorm all those distant relatives! Type the relative's name in the quick search box, and choose to search public records or other people's family trees. We will choose 'Search Records'. Click **Search**.

Step 7: A list of results will come up. Click **View** to explore each one. Some of the results will only be visible to paying members.

Free versus subscription

When joining Genes Reunited, as well several other genealogy websites, you have various membership options. It is, of course, for you to decide which one suits you, but here is a run-through of the differences:

Free membership

- Access to the Genes Reunited community.
- Genes Reunited will match records to your surname to speed up searching.
- You can build your family tree.
- You can search for records, but not necessarily see them.
- You can choose to 'pay per view' and pay a small fee to look at individual records that you come across.

Standard membership

As free, plus:

- Access to non-indexed birth and marriage records from 1837-1983 (England and Wales)
- Ability to get in touch with other members directly
- View trees of over 13 million other members
- This costs £1.67 per month* for 12 months or £2.50 a month* for six months.

Platinum membership

As standard, plus:

- Unlimited access to the 1911 census where you can see your relatives' handwriting from the time
- Unlimited access to the Victorian Census Records from 1841-1901 (England and Wales)
- Unlimited access to birth, marriage and death records from 1837-2004 (England and Wales)
- This costs £6.67 per month* for 12 months or £8.33 per month* for six months.

* Prices above expressed monthly. Genes Reunited take the actual payment as one lump sum for full value of membership. Prices current as at this guide update.

Update June 2023

Next steps

 [Best ... family history websites](#)

 [How to find a job online](#)

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Try our free "Digital Essentials" course
