

101 Top Tips to help you with your Genealogy Research Part 4

Common TNA Lettercodes

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| ADM | Admiralty (i.e. Royal Navy) |
| AIR | Air Ministry (i.e. Royal Air Force) |
| BT | Board of Trade(including merchant seamen) |
| CO | Colonial Office |
| FO | Foreign Office |
| HO | Home Office (including much about crime) |
| RG | Registrar General (including census and pre-1837 nonconformist registers) |
| WO | War Office (i.e. Army) |

65 A census has been taken every 10 years since 1801. They are available between 1841 and 1901. Earlier ones have largely been destroyed, while more recent censuses have yet to be released.

66 Copies of census records are gradually appearing online and CD-ROM. At present certain parts of the 1911 census www.1911.co.uk the 1901 census www.census.pro.gov.uk and an index to the 1881 census www.familysearch.org are available.

67 The 1841 census is less informative than later ones and is harder to read.

68 After 1851 extra information is given - relationship to head of household, whether married or single, actual age and place and county of birth.

69 About 10 per cent of the 1861 census is missing.

70 An address on a certificate may help you locate a family in the census. Similarly a birthplace in the census should lead you to a pre-civil registration parish register.

Fleshing Out

71 Try to visit the cemeteries in which your relatives are buried. Inscriptions on graves can sometimes hold information not recorded elsewhere. And it can be moving to see the setting where our ancestors were laid to rest.

72 It's much easier to find out about male ancestors, particularly heads of households, than their wives and daughters.

73 You may be able to find more about an ancestor's occupation from records at the National Archives and elsewhere.

74 However, before the 20th century most men were employed as labourers of one kind or another, while women were servants or farm workers. As few records were kept it is almost impossible to find out much about them.

75 Until the Second World War only about 10 per cent of people left a will. Where one exists it can provide a unique insight into an individual's possessions and how he saw his family and friends.

76 Before the 1880s very few women made a will as their possessions passed automatically to the husband on marriage.

77 By researching the community your ancestors lived in, you can out a lot more about their lives and the world they lived in.

78 Local Studies Libraries often have collections of indexed newspaper clippings, which can be a good place to start.

79 Trade and street directories can be found in most local archives. They should mention heads of households and their occupations and can be useful tracking down where people lived.

80 Poll books and electoral rolls contain lists of who could vote in elections. They can be found in large libraries and record offices, but remember that before 1928 not everybody had the right to vote.

81 Before researching a military career you need to know in which service the individual served, whether he was a rating/other ranks or an officer, approximately when he served and in which unit or ship.

82 Service records for both the Army and Navy up to about 1920 are held at The National Archives.

83 TNA also has other records which will flesh out a man's military career even if his service record is still closed.

84 For a fee of approximately £25 the Ministry of Defence will search more recent service records. Write to MOD CS(RM)2, Bourne Avenue, Hayes UB3 1RF.

85 Never underestimate the value of lesser-used sources. There are many different types of records and indexes that could provide a vital clue. Articles in Family History Magazines, books or websites can provide clues about where to look.