

Ordinance Survey & Tithe Maps

- Tithe Maps (1840 onwards): Define land ownership and usage. Available at Eccleston Library (Reference only) and St Helens Archive Service
- You can access and view over 420,000 maps via the National Library of Scotland online: <https://maps.nls.uk/>.

Wills & Probate Records

Pre-1858 wills for Lancashire and Cheshire are available at Lancashire Archives or Cheshire Record Office. Post-1858 wills can be ordered from the UK Government's Probate Search. (probatesearch.service.gov.uk/#wills).

ONLINE GENEALOGY RESOURCES

Books relating to genealogy and family history can be loaned from St Helens Library Service.

- FreeBMD (Free): www.freebmd.org.uk
- FamilySearch (Free): www.familysearch.org
- Free UK Genealogy (Free): www.freeukgenealogy.org.uk
- The National Archives (Free): www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
- Findmypast (Subscription, free at any St Helens Library with a library membership): www.findmypast.co.uk
- Ancestry (Subscription): www.ancestry.co.uk
- British Newspaper Archive (Subscription): www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk
- My Heritage (Subscription): www.myheritage.com
- Scotland's People (Subscription): www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk
- Roots Ireland (Subscription): www.rootsireland.ie.

For in-depth professional help, consider hiring a local independent researcher.

FINAL TIPS

- Keep records organised: Use genealogy software or charts to track your research
- Cite your sources: Avoid confusion by recording where you found information
- Verify data: Cross-check details to avoid errors in names, dates, and locations
- Join local family history groups: Networking with others can help break down brick walls in your research
- Come along to our Family History Helpdesk sessions for guidance on starting your research.

Helping you on your family history journey



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENEALOGY TOOLKIT: GETTING STARTED – ST HELENS ARCHIVE SERVICE

GETTING STARTED WITH GENEALOGY RESEARCH

Genealogy is a rewarding journey into your family's past. Whether you are a beginner or have some experience, the key to successful research is gathering as much initial information as possible and knowing where to look next.

Gather Information from Personal & Family Sources

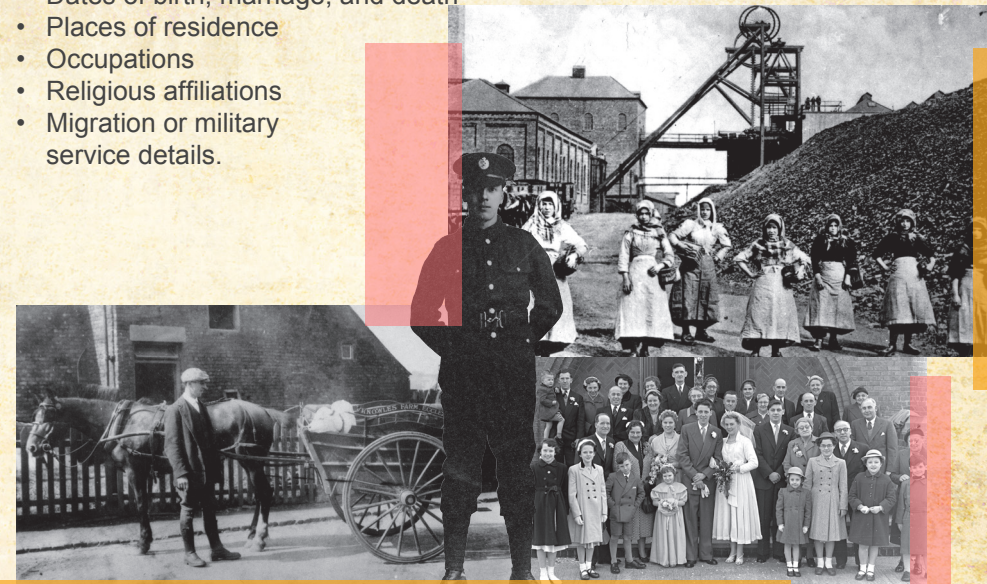
Start with what you already have:

- **Documents:** Birth, marriage, and death certificates, wills, deeds, military records, passports, family bibles
- **Photographs & Heirlooms:** Often contain inscriptions, dates, or clues about ancestors
- **Family Stories & Oral Histories:** Speak to older relatives to uncover names, dates, places, and events. Even family legends may contain valuable leads
- **Previous Research:** Check if relatives have already done genealogical research.

Record Key Facts

Try to establish as many details as possible, for example:

- Full names (including maiden names)
- Dates of birth, marriage, and death
- Places of residence
- Occupations
- Religious affiliations
- Migration or military service details.



RESEARCHING HISTORICAL RECORDS

Once you have gathered your initial research, the next step is to locate historical records that verify and expand on your findings. Do not despair if you have not yet been able to ascertain much information, though.

Civil Registration (Birth, Marriage, Death Records)

- St Helens Borough Council Registration Service (www.sthelens.gov.uk/copy-certificates): Certificates may be ordered for births, deaths, and marriages online or via post. There are also links to ordering from the General Register Office
- Lancashire BMD (lancashirebmd.org.uk) & FreeBMD (www.freebmd.org.uk): Indexes of local records, useful for finding certificates before ordering.

Census Records (1841-1921)

Census records are invaluable for tracing ancestors every ten years from 1841 to 1921. They provide:

- Names of household members
- Ages and relationships
- Occupations
- Birthplaces
- Addresses

Available online via Findmypast (Free at any St Helens Library with a library membership) and Ancestry.

1939 Register

Taken at the start of WWII, this register is particularly useful as it includes full dates of birth, occupations, and household members. Available online via Findmypast and Ancestry.

Parish Records (Before 1837)

For earlier records, parish registers contain baptism, marriage, and burial entries dating back to the 1500s. These are held at:

- St Helens Archive Service
- Other local Archives & Record Offices
- FamilySearch.org (Free access to many parish records)
- Ancestry & Findmypast



Electoral Registers & Directories

Electoral registers from 1832 onwards can help track ancestors between censuses. Trade directories list businesses and professionals. Available at Eccleston Library, St Helens Archive Service, and other local libraries and archives.

Military Records

Records of ancestors who served in the military include:

- WWI & WWII service records, including medal index cards (Held at The National Archives, Kew)
- St Helens Archive Service collections (MX – War Records)
- Burial Registers from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission: www.cwgc.org
- Ancestry & Findmypast.

ST HELENS-SPECIFIC GENEALOGY RESOURCES

St Helens Archive Service

St Helens Archive Service holds records on local history, businesses, war records, maps, photographs, and more. Use the online catalogue to locate reference numbers for items of interest.

- Website: www.sthelens.gov.uk/archives
- Contact: archives@sthelens.gov.uk
- Phone: 01744 671748.

Local Libraries & Microfilm Resources

- Eccleston Library: Census records (1841-1901), Parish Registers, Electoral Rolls, local newspapers (on microfilm), maps
- Newton-le-Willows Library: Some parish records and electoral rolls, local newspapers (on microfilm), maps
- Each St Helens Library has a selection of local history books, as well as free Findmypast access with a library card.

Burial & Cremation Records

Search over 10,000 burial and cremation records from St Helens and Newton-le-Willows cemeteries online: crem.oltps.sthelens.gov.uk/

Local Newspapers

Local newspapers (from 1880 to present) contain birth, marriage, death notices, and local history events. Available via:

- Microfilm at Eccleston & Newton-le-Willows Libraries
- Indexed newspaper cuttings and bound newspapers at St Helens Archive Service
- Digital copies of St Helens Star from 2009 at St Helens Archive Service
- British Newspaper Archive (Subscription needed)
- Newspapers.com (Subscription needed).