

FEATURE ARTICLES



Tracing Your English Ancestry Online, Part 2 of 3

by Richard Crowhurst

Once you've gathered together your data and have an idea of who you're looking for, where and when, where do you start? One of the most comprehensive sites in the world is FamilySearch at www.familysearch.org. This site was created by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and allows access to the International Genealogical Index. The IGI is a collection of data from numerous sources, including transcribed parish records. Some of it is reliable, some less so. Until recently

FamilySearch was also one of the best places to access a transcribed copy of the British 1881 Census. However, there are now better ways to search this.

Census Records

There has been a census held in England and Wales every 10 years since 1801, except 1941. The records up to and including 1831 are of limited use to family historians, but records from 1841 onwards can be extremely useful.

Census records in the UK are confidential for 100 years, so the census for 1911 will not be available to the public until 2011. Most organisations are now working backwards and the Census years between 1861 and 1901 are well served, although some years seem to be more reliable than others.

The best provider of access to these records is Ancestry, and British census data is available at both www.ancestry.com and www.ancestry.co.uk. Searches are free, but you will need to pay in order to access the detailed results and download copies of the census pages (essential if you want to study a household or street). A number of pricing plans are avail-

able, ranging from seven days to a year. What you require will depend on the number of people you are searching for and the number of records you expect to find and copy.

Once you log on to the Ancestry website, you are greeted by a series of search boxes. Enter as much data as possible and hit the Search button.

After a few moments, you will be presented with a list of records that match your criteria, starting with the most likely matches at the top. Then simply click on each result to view more details. Once you think you have found a match in the census records, you will be able to view the rest of the household and download a copy of the original record.

The Public Record Office of the British Government originally posted the 1901 census on the Internet and, famously, had to suspend the service within hours due to popular demand. The site (www.1901census.nationalarchives.gov.uk) offers free searches. However, to view the data you need to buy vouchers or use a credit card.

As the National Archives and Ancestry cooperate to provide the Ancestry data, if you are going to do a lot of searching, then joining Ancestry will give you the widest coverage.

The 1861 census is also available as part of the 1837Online website (see Part 3).

NEXT MONTH: Other online records.

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| Match Quality | Name                                    | Estimated Birth Year | Birthplace                    | Relationship  | Civil Parish | County/Island | View Image |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Crowhurst</a>        | abt 1896             | Gravesend, Kent, England      | Son           | Gravesend    | Kent          |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Crowhurst</a>        | abt 1894             | Northfleet, Kent, England     | Son           | Gravesend    | Kent          |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred S Crowhurst</a>      | abt 1900             | Staplehurst, Kent, England    | Son           | Staplehurst  | Kent          |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Crowhurst</a>        | abt 1897             | Brighton, Sussex, England     | Pauper Inmate | Brighton     | Sussex        |            |
|               | <a href="#">Willie Alfred Crowhurst</a> | abt 1896             | Eastbourne, Sussex, England   | Son           | Worthing     | Sussex        |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Crowhurst</a>        | abt 1894             | Polegate, Sussex, England     | Son           | Hailsham     | Sussex        |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Frank Crowhurst</a>  | abt 1899             | Islington, London, England    | Son           | Hound        | Hampshire     |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Crowhurst</a>        | abt 1893             | St Pancras, London, England   | Son           | St Pancras   | London        |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred Crowhurst</a>        | abt 1891             | Leigh, Surrey, England        | Son           | Leigh        | Surrey        |            |
|               | <a href="#">Alfred L Crowhurst</a>      | abt 1891             | Islington, Middlesex, England | Son           | Islington    | London        |            |

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