



# Getting Started

[www.ringmer.info/u3a/family-history](http://www.ringmer.info/u3a/family-history)

There is plenty of advice for those new to family history - on the Internet, in libraries and in our local County Record Office (The KEEP). Perhaps there is too much for a novice who can become overwhelmed and not know where to start. Our Annual Newsletter reminds members of seven Golden Rules that are regularly printed in the "Your Family Tree" Magazine. They are repeated below. We all have different reasons for researching our ancestors and there is no single approach which works for all. However, there are some basic principles which we all need to follow. During this workshop we will discuss how you can start your research and the pitfalls to watch out for. Hopefully, you will then be able to start tracing your ancestors.

## Seven Golden Rules

1. Work backwards starting with yourself.
2. Be organised and honest.
3. Start with living relatives.
4. Set your sights.
5. Understand surnames.
6. Join a class or society.
7. Use the resources that you have.

Taken from "Your Family Tree" Magazine

## Get the latest from the web

Many magazines and Web Sites produce a free monthly newsletter which is emailed to you. This will give you the very latest information. All you need to do is visit their web site and sign up. Some examples are:

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

[www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/](http://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/)

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

## Birth, Death & Marriage (BMD) Certificates

Our web pages (see above) include a Resources Section. We put useful guidance there for you to access. You can get the General Register Office (GRO) index reference for BMDs at [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk) (free) or [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) or [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk). Once you have the details you can order a BMD Certificate at [www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates). If you are using this site for the first time you will need to register first. Be wary of other sites that charge.

## Local help is at hand - use it

The Ringmer U3A Family History Group has many experienced members. All are more than happy to share their experience and help those new to family history. If you are just beginning to research your ancestors then do make use of the *fellowship time* during meetings to ask for advice. Look at the "Member's Interest" pages to see who uses what. Also make full use of *our library*. The books and magazines, all donated by members, are there for you to use. The answer to your question is bound to be there somewhere. If you are thinking of buying a family history magazine then have a look in our extensive library first to see what is available.

Very early on in your research you will need to visit one of the family history web sites that contain the Birth, Marriage and Death (BMD) Registers and the Censuses. Most charge for use, but you can get **free access to "Ancestry" and "Find My Past"** at the *local library and County Record Office*. It is well worth using these facilities to start with. If you do decide to sign up to a fee-paying site many have a 2-week free trial offer and make use of that first.

We are holding 2 "Getting Started" Workshops (October and January). Don't worry if you miss either as they are very informal and we can arrange further sessions if necessary. All you need to do is turn up with a note book and pen/pencil so you can take notes.