



SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR MEMORIALS

1. Put the name of the person into a search engine, with any further information you may have. Follow up on all the websites you are directed to. You may be surprised by what you may find! Googling the town concerned may give you useful genealogical websites for information on local families.
2. Before 1837 when official records of Birth, Marriage and Death began, Parish Records are the main source of information. You will have the date of death from which you can work out the date of birth. This should produce the names of the parents, and possibly godparents. Look for the marriage of the parents. This will give the maiden name of the mother, possibly their ages at marriage, and the occupation of the groom. This will give you an idea of the kind of family they were. Parish records can be found at local Record Offices and libraries. It is worth trying www.familysearch.org, the search engine of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, if your person can not be found in the church records in the town or neighbourhood. Their information is not always accurate, and they do not have many death records. Family Search is free.
3. After 1837 records of Birth, Marriage and Death can be found on various paying sites. These sites often offer use of their sites free for a limited period before you have to sign up and pay. It is worth looking out for these. Free BMD (www.freebmd.org.uk) will give you the information free.
4. Census. Censuses from 1841 to 1911 are available free on several sites. A lot of libraries offer these free. These are an invaluable source of information on families every ten years and the 1911 census will give you background for the 1914-18 war dead.
5. Directories. These go from Debretts, the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) and other lists of landed families to local trade directories which mention local important families, clergymen and prominent people in the town, merchants, shopkeepers, innkeepers etc. They will give the profession of the people of the town and their addresses. Googling Historical Directories in a search engine will bring up the appropriate directories. Crockford's Clerical Directory, which started publication in about 1858, is very useful. Lists of undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge colleges can be useful, also lists of pupils at schools.
6. Newspapers. A lot of these can now be accessed on line but you have to pay. Record offices and libraries may keep copies which you can look at free. Useful for local events, obituaries and advertisements.
7. Obituaries. If your person is sufficiently important, there may well be a local or national obituary. And you may be able to find a Will.
8. Immigration and emigration records. If you can't find your person over a long period of time, he or she may have gone overseas for various reasons. Try tracking in these records. Just google "emigration" or "immigration". (The person may also be a guest at HMP.....)
9. Army, navy and air force records can be found at The National Archives in Kew. Consult the catalogue to see what they have available which might apply to your person.
10. Don't forget the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (cwgc) web site.
11. Wills and Probate Records. A surprising number of people left Wills. Probate records are free to access, and will give you the occupation of the person, their address, the value of their estate, and who is granted probate. This can be very useful. You may have to pay to see the actual terms of the Will .
12. Parish Magazines. Your person may well be mentioned if they were an active church member.
13. Books on the town and the local area in the local library. Most libraries have a good selection of these and it is worth skimming through the index for your person.