

The genius of Genuki

Peter Christian celebrates Genuki's first decade, and appeals for more volunteers to join him in expanding this genealogical website

In March 1995, a newsgroup message announced the launch of a new website devoted to genealogy in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Ten years on, with almost 55,000 pages, Genuki at www.genuki.org.uk is not only the oldest but also the largest general genealogical site devoted to the British Isles.

Genuki is designed to act as a repository of the most useful information about British and Irish genealogy, and to provide links to other sites of relevance. This makes it a combination of a genealogy handbook and web directory. While there is some general information about family history, the main focus of Genuki is geographically specific information about the British Isles and its constituent parts.

The British Isles Genealogy page at www.genuki.org.uk/big/ leads to individual pages for England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Each of these in turn leads to a main page for each county (or, in the case of the Channel Islands, to a page for each island). Below each of these are pages for individual parishes or towns, although not every parish yet has a page of its own.

On each of these pages, after a brief geographical description and, usually, a map, information and links for the country, county or parish are grouped under a strict set of subject headings used consistently across all parts of Genuki. What you can expect to find, certainly at the county level, includes:

- Details of local record offices and libraries (under Archives and Libraries)
- Information about parish registers (under Church Records)
- Links to family history societies in the area (under Societies)
- Online map collections (Maps)

Because many of the local web projects featured are run by individuals and groups, there is a lot of variety in what these pages contain.

If you've never used Genuki before, it is worth having a look at www.genuki.org.uk/org/ which offers guidance for first-time users, while www.genuki.org.uk/org/user.html describes how the information is presented.

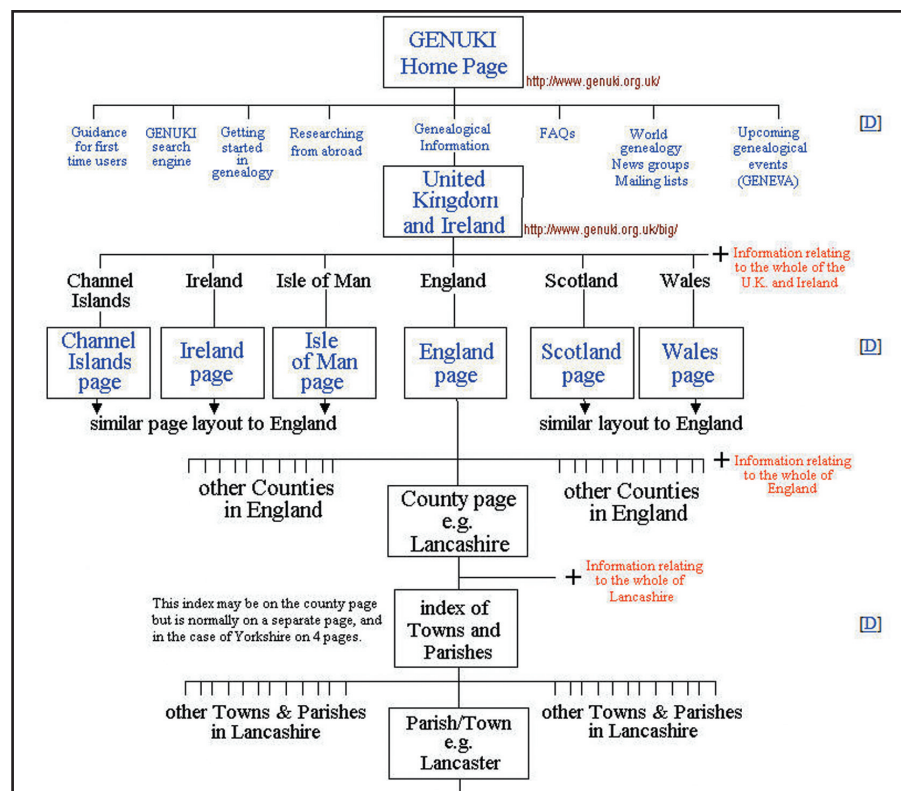
You'll find general information about genealogical records on the national pages for England, Scotland etc – helpful if you are new to genealogical research in a particular area.

But Genuki also has some general pages which are among the most useful on the site.

Among these is the area devoted to a complete listing family history societies at www.genuki.org.uk/Societies/. Almost all links here are to the

different society websites; where there is no website it gives contact details. There is also a general page on societies at www.genuki.org.uk/big/Societies.html.

Genuki also has a list of genealogy mailing lists at www.genuki.org.uk/indexes/MailingLists.html. Most of the material here comes from John Fuller, who sends out regular mailings about new genealogy mailing lists and is also available on his site at www.rootsweb.com/~jfuller/gen_mail.html. The Genuki listing is organised geographically, consistent with the Genuki hierarchy, making it easy to see what there is for a particular county. It also includes a number of email newsletters relating to British Isles genealogy and the organisations involved. In addition, it links to web pages, giving full details of a list, including any associated website or message archives.



The Genuki site map.

In association with Genuki, Graham Jaunay runs a collection of county-based surname interest lists, which you can consult to find others who are researching the same surnames as you. Find this at www.genuki.org.uk/indexes/SurnamesLists.html.

Genuki also offers a number of gazetteers linked from www.genuki.org.uk/big/Gazetteers.html. These are:

- The Genuki Gazetteer, which gives a grid reference and details of every town and village in Great Britain (not Ireland) and lists neighbouring parishes. You can also check how far two places are apart.
- The searchable database of places in the 1891 census with The National Archives piece number and the LDS microfilm number (find this at www.genuki.org.uk/big/census_place.html).
- The Genuki Church Database, which lists all parishes and churches up to the early 19th century, within a selected distance of a place. If you know where someone lived, this will help you identify possible places of baptism. This is a downloadable file available in both Dbase and Access versions (at www.genuki.org.uk/big/ChurchRecords.html).

For an online calendar of genealogical events you can consult Genuki's GENEVA page ("GENEalogical EVents and Activities") at geneva.weald.org.uk. In most cases, there is a link to online details of the event.

Genuki has its own search engine at www.genuki.org.uk/search/, which covers not only its own pages but also those from The National Archives, the Society of Genealogists and Federation of Family History Societies, as well as all the family history society websites linked from the Societies page, and all the county surname interest list sites.

Focusing purely on the British Isles, Genuki concentrates on resources relating to records and places, and does not provide links to sites for individual surnames and pedigrees unless they also include information of more general usefulness.

Genuki is a free site run entirely by volunteers (of whom I am one). Unlike

Genuki subject headings (from www.genuki.org.uk/org/user.html)

Almanacs	Handwriting	Obituaries
Archives and Libraries	Heraldry	Occupations
Bibliography	Historical Geography	Officials and Employees
Biography	History	Orphans and Orphanages
Business and Commerce	Inventories, Registers, Catalogues	Parish Registers – <i>see Church Records</i>
Records	Jewish History	Pensions
Cemeteries	Jewish Records	Periodicals
Census	Land and Property	Politics and Government
Chronology	Language and Languages	Poorhouses, Poor Law, etc
Church Directories	Law and Legislation	Population
Church History	Manors	Postal and Shipping Guides
Church Records	Maps	Probate Records
Civil Registration	Medical Records	Public Records
Colonization	Merchant Marine	Religion and Religious Life
Correctional Institutions	Migration, Internal	Schools
Court Records	Military History	Social Life and Customs
Description and Travel	Military Records	Societies
Directories	Minorities	Statistics
Dwellings	Monumental Inscriptions – <i>see Cemeteries</i>)	Taxation
Emigration and Immigration	Names, Geographical	Town Records
Encyclopedias and Dictionaries	Names, Personal	Visitations, Heraldic
Ethnology	Naturalization and	Vital Records – <i>see Civil Registration</i>
Folklore	Citizenship	Voting Registers
Gazetteers	Newspapers	Yearbooks
Genealogy	Nobility	
Guardianship		



The Abbots Bromley Horn Dancers in 1901. There is a GENUKI subject heading devoted to Folklore.

most websites, it is "distributed", which means the material is not all on the same web server; different parts are hosted in the web space of the individual volunteers. So although the main web address for Genuki is www.genuki.org.uk where all the general material is kept, many of the county sections have different addresses. (This means, incidentally, that when there is a technical problem in one area of the site, other parts are not affected.)

Even after 10 years, Genuki still has some way to go. There are a number of

counties, particularly in Scotland and Ireland which have only basic information and need a volunteer with local knowledge to develop them more fully. If you're interested, go to "job vacancy" on www.genuki.org.uk/org/providers.html.

Since Genuki covers every part of the British Isles, in more or less detail, it is a site that will be useful to anyone with British or Irish ancestry; and with thousands of links to other web sites, it will often be the best place to look for other genealogical resources on the web.