Debrett
Ancestry Research Ltd

Finding out who's who in your family tree

"If there is a solution, I believe Debrett's can find it"

W Dowell, Virginia

Who we are

Originally a division of the world-famous publishers Debrett's Peerage, **Debrett Ancestry Research** became a separate company in 1982 and since then has traced the histories of thousands of families from all walks of life, from labourers to lords.

In the 21st century, the desire to know where we come from is stronger than ever and the opportunities for finding out have never been more exciting. Many records are now accessible online, but we still place great emphasis on the use of original sources. Our national network of experienced researchers enables us to access the full range of Britain's rich archives.

Why use us?

We are a long-established company with a proudly held reputation for excellence in genealogical research. A Debrett report is much more than just a list of names and dates: the results are analysed, interpreted and documented in full detail, and the presentation of our reports and charts is second to none.

Ancestry research programmes

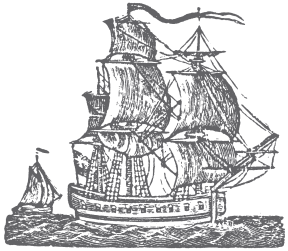
We carry out all our research within fixed-budget programmes. Our fees are based on the time spent on the research and the costs of obtaining documentation, and so results will vary according to how time-consuming the research is.

Unless you direct otherwise, our main priority will be to take the family as far back in time as we can, in the time allowed. However, if you have a particular area of interest, just let us know at the outset; we will do our best to find out what you want to know.

When the programme is completed, you will receive:

- a bound report describing and analysing the research
- a detailed, individually designed family tree*
- copies of documents, where appropriate and available
- a full list of sources
- advice on the feasibility of further research

*In a small minority of cases, where we are working on a very specific area, a family tree will not be appropriate.



"I found the revelations in the bound research copy thorough, pleasing, stunning … thank you for all that you have found and revealed to me"

B K Deaville, Staffordshire

We offer a choice of three programmes of ancestry research:

Standard Programme

For the majority of cases we recommend our Standard Programme, which usually takes two to three months. As a rough guide, if your earliest known ancestor was born around 1900 in England, Wales or Scotland, we would expect to trace back three or four further generations within our Standard Programme; in some cases we might find more and in others less.

Extended Programme

For more intensive research on a single surname line, or for research on two lines (such as your father's and mother's) concurrently. Particularly recommended for cases involving early records or where research has reached a problematic point. Usually takes about three months to complete.

Limited Programme

This is simply a shorter version of the Standard Programme and takes an average of two months. This programme is not suitable for research outside the UK, or for very early or complex research projects.

As with all research, delays may be caused by factors beyond our control, such as the temporary closure of Record Offices.

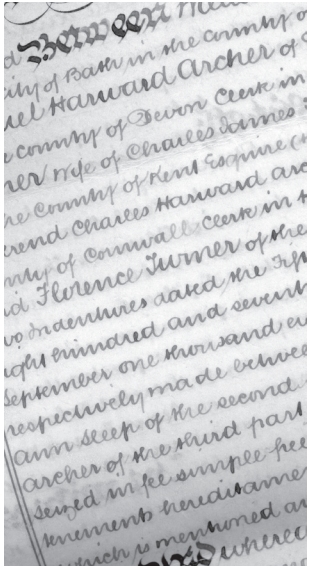
For current prices please refer to our order form or website.

Pedigree charts (family trees)

Debrett pedigree charts are unique, using our own in-house design procedure to create an attractive and detailed summary of your ancestry. In most cases, we provide one of these with each report, combining the information provided at the outset with what we subsequently discover.

We can also create pedigree charts from your own information and can advise on the layout of complex family pedigrees. We can supply high-quality printed charts from A3 up to A0 in size; we can also supply artwork as a PDF. The printed charts are giclée printed on acid-free paper, which is suitable for framing. We charge for these on an individual basis.

For an obligation-free quotation, please send us a copy of the exact information you require to be shown on the chart.



Sources we use

It is now difficult to imagine genealogical research without the Internet, and the ever-increasing wealth of material that is now available, or indexed, online has revolutionised the whole process of tracing family history.

However, the national and local archives still hold a wealth of other records, many of which require specific expertise and local knowledge to interpret.

England and Wales

Births, marriages and deaths have been centrally registered here since 1837, and census returns for the period 1841 to 1911 are another vital source. Beyond 1837 we move on to local records, principally church registers, the earliest of which date from 1538.

Probate records – wills, administrations and inventories – are another key source and can add fascinating detail about your ancestors' lives.

Other sources include military and professional records, visitation pedigrees, poor law documentation, tax returns and court records.

In Wales the use of patronymics in the early period and the popularity of nonconformism, together with the relatively small number of surnames, can make this a tricky area, where expert knowledge of the historical context and sources is vital.

Scotland

Scottish civil registration began in 1855 and Scottish birth, marriage and death records for this late period usually give more detail than their English counterparts. Prior to this, parish registers were not so well kept, and begin at a later date than in England, but the existing records have been well indexed. For families who owned property, sasines and services of heirs, and the registers of deeds, are valuable sources.

Ireland

Many Irish records were destroyed by fire in 1922 and others have simply not been preserved in the same way as their English or Scottish counterparts. Civil registration began in full in 1864. For Irish research we recommend that you send full known details for a free assessment before commissioning work.

Research outside Britain

To complement our research on British families we access a variety of records in the USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Our coverage of these will

depend on the individual requirements of the case, and we recommend that you send full known details for a free assessment before commissioning work.

Early emigrants to North America

This is a challenging field of research in which we have a particular interest and long experience. We hold the unique Frank Leeson Emigrant Index, which complements the more widely available indexes to emigrants and which concentrates on the 17th century.

Free assessment

If you are not sure which programme to choose, or whether research will be feasible, we are always happy to advise. Use the enclosed form to tell us the earliest details you know and we will send a brief assessment of the research prospects for your particular family. There will be no obligation to proceed. Please provide as much detail as you can, as far back as you know.

Research as a gift

A programme of ancestry research makes an ideal gift for a special birthday or anniversary, and the attractive presentation of our reports and family tree charts makes them particularly suitable.

Our recommended method is by gift card. Choose from our **Standard Programme, Extended Programme** or **Limited Programme**; sign up in the usual way, and we will send a personalised gift card, together with a brochure and blank form for you to give to the recipient, who can then send us full details of what they want researching. In this way we avoid spending your money on discovering what the recipient knows already.

"I am truly impressed by the quality of your work and also very grateful. There is so much in the report that I did not know and would never have discovered without Debrett's professional help."

S Coffey, Ireland.

"I cannot tell you how happy it has made me now I know the answer to my mother's question"

J Kerr, Maryland, USA

What we need from you

Some of our clients know very little about their family at the outset; others have been carrying out research for many years. The important rule is to tell us what you do know, so that we spend the budget as efficiently as possible.

The key information will be dates and places of birth, marriage and death, but details such as occupations and religious denominations are also helpful. You can submit this information in a number of different ways:

- by using the printed family tree form sent with this brochure
- by letter or email

Copies of birth and marriage certificates etc are always welcome if you have them.

If you have a complex project, or a report from another research organisation, please send us full details of any research that has already been carried out.

We are always happy to provide a **Free Assessment** of the information you have already, to ensure that research will be worthwhile.

Getting started

To set research in motion, complete and return the enclosed two forms with your payment. Please make sure you have told us all that you know about your family history. Alternatively, you can order a programme of research via our website at **www.debrettancestry.co.uk**.

Frequently asked questions

How far back will you go?

This is the most common question and the most difficult to answer, for every case is unique, and no reputable genealogist will predict the outcome of research. As a rough guide for UK research, if we are beginning at around 1900, we would expect to discover three or four further generations within our Standard Programme. However, there are many variable factors: some families stayed in the same parish for generations, others moved around frequently. Some left better paper trails than others. We just do not know what we will find until we start exploring.

What will I get at the end of research?

At the end of every research programme, we provide a detailed report, describing and analysing the results. Copies of certificates, census returns etc, are included in the report, which is bound in our traditional red and gold Debrett covers. In most instances, you will also receive a pedigree (family tree) chart, usually A3 in size. Samples are shown on our website.

Do you just follow back one surname?

The most efficient method in ancestry research, and the one preferred by most of our clients, is to follow a single surname. The Extended Programme can be used to research two surname lines concurrently.

"I would just like to congratulate you and your team for the wonderful presentation you have made. I loved it, it was clear and precise, and it really is something to treasure"

N Kimber, Oxfordshire

What happens if I want more research?

At the end of every report, if further research is feasible, we make specific recommendations as to what could be done next. You can then choose to commission a further programme if you wish.

Can I get further copies of my report?

We can supply further bound copies of our reports for other members of the family, and these make popular gifts.

Can you trace living relatives?

In most cases we will be tracing back in time to look for ancestors, but the Standard and Extended Programmes can also be used to look for descendants. In general, working forwards in time is more difficult, as there are more unknown factors.

Will my family information be made available to others?

Not unless you give permission for us to do so.

What happens if research is unsuccessful?

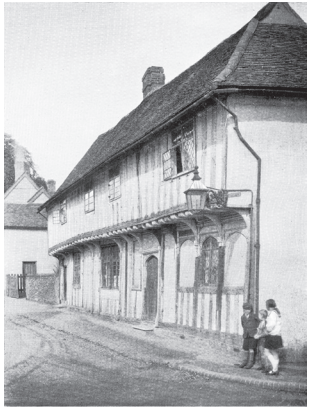
We only carry out research where there is a reasonable chance of success. However, there will be cases where the results may not be as positive as we would all like. We do not usually give refunds in such instances. However, if we reach a point at which we believe further research is unlikely to bear fruit, we will refund any unspent portion of the budget.

Our other services

Family Biographies

When we have traced your ancestry back as far as we can, or as far as you wish, we can create from this a Family Biography: a detailed, illustrated history of your family from the earliest known generation up to the present. This is when your family history will really begin to come to life. The project will be carefully tailored to your particular requirements to achieve a lasting record of your family's history to hand down to future generations.

The final version of your Family Biography can be produced in our standard binding, or we can arrange to have it hand-bound in leather or commercially printed in as many copies as you like. Costs are quoted on an individual basis.



House Histories (England, Scotland and Wales only)

Since the 1980s, Debrett Ancestry Research has helped people trace the history of their houses and properties, from humble cottages to large estates.

For further details, visit our website at **www.debrettancestry.co.uk**, or ask for our House History information pack.

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