



## USER GUIDE 18

## Searches on Ancestry

### Contacting Us

Please contact us to book a place before visiting our searchrooms.

*WYAS Bradford*  
Margaret McMillan Tower  
Prince's Way  
Bradford  
BD1 1NN  
Telephone +44 (0)113 535 0152  
e. [bradford@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:bradford@wyjs.org.uk)

*WYAS Calderdale*  
Central Library & Archives  
Square Road  
Halifax  
HX1 1QG  
Telephone +44 (0)113 535 0151  
e. [calderdale@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:calderdale@wyjs.org.uk)

*WYAS Kirklees*  
Central Library  
Princess Alexandra Walk  
Huddersfield  
HD1 2SU  
Telephone +44 (0)113 535 0150  
e. [kirklees@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:kirklees@wyjs.org.uk)

*WYAS Leeds*  
Nepshaw Lane South  
Leeds  
LS27 7JQ  
Telephone +44 (0)113 535 0155  
e. [leeds@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:leeds@wyjs.org.uk)

*WYAS Wakefield*  
West Yorkshire History Centre  
127 Kirkgate  
Wakefield  
WF1 1JG  
Telephone +44 (0)113 535 0142  
e. [wakefield@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:wakefield@wyjs.org.uk)

This guide is intended to help those who are unfamiliar with using Ancestry to begin to search for information on their family.

Ancestry is an online database of family history records from across the world. Their UK website has more than 2 billion searchable records making it the largest online collection of UK family history records. In 2014 some of the most requested collections held by the West Yorkshire Archives Service were made available online on Ancestry.

Ancestry is a useful resource as you can search for information about your ancestors with just their name. However with family history research the more you know the easier it is to find the right person and their records.

The first step is always to write down what you (and other relatives) know about your ancestors. Names, dates of birth, marriages and death, places they lived and how each person was related make for a good start. It is also worthwhile spending some time thinking about what you want to find out. Do you want general information, like where an ancestor lived, what they did for a living and any children they had? Or are you wanting to confirm a family story, for instance, an ancestor's military career, criminal activities or case of illegitimacy? This should help you identify the types of records to look at and keep your search achievable. Our User Guide 11 on Family History research is also a good way to help you get started and once you have done this you can try a search on Ancestry.

There are two types of searches to do on Ancestry;

- ❖ Basic search
- ❖ Specific Collection search

Please also see the FAQ section on page 3 for advice and solutions to common problems. A content page for this Guide can be found on page 8.

## THE BASIC SEARCH

Use the Basic Search if any of this applies to you:

- ❖ You are new to doing family history research or have little experience using Ancestry or computers.
- ❖ You have only basic details for your ancestor (i.e. name, area they lived, year of birth) and are not sure what records they might be in.
- ❖ You want a general search of all Ancestry's records and not in specific types of records.

This search should help you get used to Ancestry searches. It will also find every mention of a name in all of Ancestry's searchable records. Every record about your ancestor will be found, however you'll likely get a large amount of results too. Many will not be for your ancestor because the results include every person who shares that name in Ancestry's records.

For example, the open 2017 Electoral Register had 6163 people with the most common UK name, David Smith. Taken every year, all the Electoral Registers would form just one collection on Ancestry. If the number of registered David Smiths was the same every year from 1918 (universal voting rights for men) there would be 610,317 entries for the name 'David Smith' in the electoral registers alone.

The point is a 'name only' basic search can mean going through too many results to find the one 'David Smith' related to you amongst the many other David Smiths living in the UK.

This is where the other information you have about your ancestors can help. The area the person lived and year of birth can be used to narrow down the results, as can the 'Show More Options' feature on the basic search page.

If you know David Smith (your ancestor) lived in Yorkshire or Wakefield this can be added to the search so that the results show only the David Smiths living in these areas.

Step by step instructions on how to do a Basic search begin on Page 10 of this guide.

## THE SPECIFIC SEARCH

Use the Specific Collection search if any of these applies to you:

- ❖ You are familiar with researching your family history and in using Ancestry.
- ❖ You want to research a specific piece of information about an ancestor e.g. their occupation, how long they lived at an address, where or when they were baptised, married or buried.
- ❖ You want to research a specific set of records i.e. baptisms, marriages, burials, calendars of prisoners, admission registers.

The Specific Collection search is a way of narrowing down your search to just one collection on Ancestry. You get a lot less results you have to check although you may have to do several searches of different collections to find what you want.

For example, you may want to know when and why an ancestor was sent to prison. On the 1891 census they were an inmate of the West Riding House of Correction (latterly HMP Wakefield). From other census records you know they were not in prison in 1881 and had returned to their family home by 1901, so sometime between 1881 and 1901 they had been tried and committed.

A basic search would not be useful in this example since you want to confirm certain information held in a specific record collection. The best way to look through the records would be to do a Specific Collection search instead.

Fortunately there are two collections on Ancestry which could help provide information:

- ❖ Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914 (court records)
- ❖ West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914 (prison admission records)

Please go to page 17 to see how a Specific Collection Search can be done using the above example. You should be able to tailor this to your own specific searches on Ancestry.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How far can I trace my family history back?

In theory you can trace back as far as the records go. If you're related to royalty or other 'Persons of Quality', like landed gentry, lords and other bureaucrats or influential families, you may get as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century with the right pedigree. If you are one of the many who is not you might get back to 1538 when church records (baptisms, marriages and burials) start to be made.

Realistically, you may only get as far as the start of civil registration (1837) or the censuses (1841) though you may find you can only trace a few generations back down some family branches.

Having a common surname, the family moving from the area, illegitimacy or incarceration can be dead ends to any branch. Even something as simple as ancestors being away from home on census night, a missed registration, an error in handwriting or damage to a record can end a line of research.

### How do I know the record is for the right person?

The simple answer is compare the information in the entry on Ancestry to what you know for this ancestor. If the information matches up then you likely have found the right person. Their name, age (or date of birth), the areas they lived or where they were born should form key comparison points as these were entered into many records. Knowing the names of parents, spouses and children is also quite useful as the three most common records you'll look at (the census, parish registers and civil registration certificates) include this information. Once you start finding entries for your ancestors you can use the information from these records as other points of comparison. To find out what information you should be recording, please see *"You think you have the right record for the right person. What now?"*

Errors and omissions are common so it is important to not to discount records which do not exactly match your information. Advice on what can be reasonable error is in *"What if the information in the entry doesn't quite match what I have?"*

There are never any complete certainties in Family History research because what you are doing is making educated guesses backed up by the information you have. Some researchers can spend years on the wrong branch because of a simple mistake made early in the research. Untangling the resulting knot can be tricky so try to keep detailed research records and update these regularly. Do note which record the information came from too as this will make double-checking your research much easier if you find a mistake.

### What if the information in the entry doesn't match what I have?

When comparing records keep in mind that errors are pretty common. A few small differences do not necessarily make it the wrong record for your ancestor, but many differences makes it more possible it is wrong. If you're having particular difficulty you can always try googling an answer. Many genealogy websites have 'boards' where people post issues they're having in the hope that other family tree researchers can help.

### Names and place-names not the same?

Illiteracy was far more commonplace and words were often written the way they sounded. This can mean a family surname has many different ways it can be spelled.

This can also happen with personal (first) names and place-names. To some extent you can also overlook double letters, silent letters and letters that sound the same. If in doubt try saying the names aloud to see if they sound alike. Harringden, Haringdon, Harrenden and Arendon can all be valid ways of writing the same family surname. Try saying each aloud.

## **A difference in age, date of birth or place your ancestor was born?**

Whilst most of us know our personal details, this is because of the detailed way in which our lives are now recorded. It may surprise you to know that civil registration of births, marriages and deaths wasn't compulsory until 1875 and universal National Identity Cards were created in 1939.

Many of the records you'll see were created at a time before most people had regular access to calendars or reliable clocks (or the ability to read them) and birthdays were unlikely to be celebrated unless you were well-off.

This can mean an age (or date of birth) of an ancestor can be out by 2-5 years. We have found one instance of a person 'aging' an extra 6 years between censuses (42 in 1881 and 58 in 1891). Records like the census need the head of the family to reliably remember the names, birthdates and birthplaces for their family. It should come as no surprise that ages and dates of birth in censuses can vary by several years and that a person's birthplace can change place too. Imagine having eight or more children between 2 and 15 years old and remembering how old they were and which bit of the country you were in when each of them were born. The clerks did not check past censuses for errors, trusting the information given to them on census night was correct.

Problems also occur when baptism dates are mixed up with birth dates. Most children in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century would be baptised between 6 months and 3 years of age, though this can vary as families often baptised several siblings at the same time. Some churches will record a birthdate with the baptism register entry, often in the margins, but this was not common practice. This is useful to bear in mind if an age has changed by a few years or if you are looking at records dated before 1875.

### **Any other differences?**

You may also come across simple errors, due to either the wrong information being recorded

or because the handwriting has been read incorrectly. If most of the information is right then you likely have the right record. If most of it is incorrect, then it probably isn't the right person. Sometimes it is a matter of experience and you'll get better at deciding which is which as you do more research. Should you find small differences in one personal detail you should make a note of this and the record. After further research you may find this difference was the right information after all.

### **You think you have the right record for the right person. What now?**

When starting your research it is best to take down all the information in the entries found for each ancestor. This will help you to quickly build up a 'biography' for each relative. These biographies are an important tool in your family history research because their information can be compared to that in other records. When a record matches your ancestor's 'biography' you have likely found a new record for them. The more information you have makes it more obvious which records are for (and which are not for) your relatives.

You should regularly organise your research and update the biographies as this will make it easier to find and compare information when researching. Genealogical websites and apps can be useful in organising your records using templates and databases. A quick google search of 'free family tree software' or 'free family tree template' should help you locate the right resources. Many paid members of Ancestry use the website for creating their own family tree. Some are accessible on Ancestry under 'Public Member Trees'.

This is the basic information you can build a 'biography' around:

- ❖ The name of the ancestor in full, including any alternative spellings you find
- ❖ Date and place of birth (or baptism pre-1837)
- ❖ Date and place of death (or burial pre-1837)
- ❖ Addresses including a date when they lived there
- ❖ What jobs (occupations) they had and when

- ❖ Names of their mother and father
- ❖ Name of spouses and the date and place they were married - you may find several through remarriage, widowhood or bigamy
- ❖ Names of children and their date (or year) of birth

Other information you may want to record:

- ❖ Physical description i.e. height, hair colour, eye colour, distinctive features
- ❖ Names of other people in the record i.e. godparents on a baptism, witnesses to a marriage or other informants. They can be relatives or have other links to the family you may want to explore later.
- ❖ Place of birth for children as this is where the relative was around the date of birth.
- ❖ Other information found in your research. i.e. court or prison sentences, photographs, military service, hospital stays, emigration

Once you have built up a good biography you can pick and choose what else you record for that ancestor and should ignore repeated information, like birthdate. If you find a small difference between a record and the biography you should note this along with the record it came from as you may find that this was right down the line.

Once you feel you have enough information on one ancestor you just repeat the process for each ancestor you want to research. Picking the mother or father of the relative you have just finished means you will eventually work back down one 'branch' of the family tree, but if another relation is more interesting you can choose to research them instead. When you hit a dead end pick a new ancestor to start on. Over time you will uncover the many branches that make up your family tree. You can also choose to trace forwards through the children of ancestors to find distant living relatives as well.

### **Can I get a copy?**

Ancestry allows you to save or email a copy of the record to yourself for free. You can do this by clicking on the green Send button at the top right of a digital copy page and selecting Send Image Home. Ancestry will use the email

address you provide to send you instructions on how to access this document when you are home. Please be aware that by entering your email address and pressing send, you agree to Ancestry's Terms and Conditions and you understand that your information will be used in accordance with their Privacy Statement, including them sending you emails about their services and special offers. There are links to Ancestry's terms and conditions and privacy statements on the box where you enter your email.

Please ask staff for guidance if you would like to save a copy to a memory stick.

Paper copies can also be printed on the Archives Service printer for a small fee. Please ask staff for guidance if you wish to print.

### **I'm having trouble finding a specific collection or type of record on Ancestry! Why is this?**

Ancestry does not hold digital copies of all of the records that are held in archives and records offices. If you cannot find what you want on Ancestry the first step would be to see if the records are available digitally on another website. There are many online family history databases out there and most have exclusive access to the record collections on their websites. A google search of the type of record might help highlight other websites or online resources where it is available. A visit to your local library is advisable; most have free access to a few different websites and online resources which you may otherwise pay a subscription to access.

### **Still having trouble finding a record?**

What you should be asking at this stage is "Does the record you want survive?"

Most organisations have a guidelines which set how long they keep their records for and what should happen once they reach a certain age. Records which show how an organisation, business or group operated (like minutes of meetings) are often kept for preservation.

Personal information about customers or service users may not be kept.

Historically, older records may not have been retained if an organisation had storage limits or if the organisation had closed down.

You may find that some records remain in existence because the same building remained in use many years later i.e. some workhouse infirmaries were converted into local hospitals in the late 1920s. Sometimes the records may be kept as part of a personal collection, like the diaries of Thomas Taylor, the Coroner for the West Riding of Yorkshire from 1852 to 1900.

A good way to find out if a type of record exists would be to check Discovery at <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

This is the National Archives database of the record collections of 2500+ UK based archives. Through this you can find the contact details for the archive or record office where this information is held. You can contact them to see if the records are available online or if just the paper originals exist. You may need to make an appointment to see paper originals in person at the archives where they are kept, or you may need to pay for research by staff.

### **The record exists, but I can't find my relative (or information about them) within it...**

There are several reasons why an ancestor might not be appearing in records. See "What if the information in the entry doesn't quite match what I have?" for common mistakes which may cause a relative to 'disappear' from an Ancestry record.

Another reason might be that the information falls into a gap in the collection. Much can happen in the years, sometimes decades, between a record's creation and it going into an archive. A missing book can mean 50 years of entries are lost and a few destroyed files can mean all the names from Abbott - Cutter are gone from a collection. Sometimes a whole record collection can be lost; the 1931 census was destroyed by bombing during WW2.

Another reason might be because of the condition of the record. If the pages in the digital copy images look damaged or the writing is faded, it could be that the entry you want has been damaged, badly degraded or illegible.

Unfortunately not much can be done if the record is lost or damaged. It is very rare for there to be duplicates like in the case of bishop's transcripts (copies) of early parish registers.

If none of the above apply, it could be that the problem lies in the information you have for that relative. Think of it this way; a birth certificate shows 'David Smith' was born in Wakefield in 1899. A burial register shows his burial at St Michael's church (Church of England) in Wakefield in 1963, aged 74. The census records point to him having lived in Wakefield his entire life, but his baptism register entry cannot be found. It can reasonably be assumed he was baptised in a Wakefield Church of England church. However the reality could be that his parents were non-conformists or Roman Catholic. He could have been very ill when born and so was baptised at the hospital. He may have been born in a suburb of Wakefield, like Sandal, so whilst the birth was registered at Wakefield Registry Office his baptism was at St Catherine's church in the parish of Sandal. The census may show the family lived in areas of Wakefield in 1901 and 1911 but David could have been baptised in Pontefract with his younger sibling when his family lived there from 1904 to 1907.

What this should go to show is that you might need to think quite broadly to find the record you want. Sometimes the circumstances of the event may make it difficult to find it at all.

### **I want to trace a relative that lived outside of West Yorkshire or the UK. What do I do?**

Where your relatives were and when is often key to finding records about them. Our staff can help with records from West Yorkshire and the historic West Riding. Outside this area you'll likely need to find and contact the local archives service or records office for that area.

Each office will hold original records and can best advise you on how to access their records. Some records they have may be available through an online resource, though many exist as paper originals which can only be viewed by making a personal visit to the office.

Some organisations keep specific types of records for England and Wales. The General Register Office keeps civil registration records (birth, marriage and death certificates). Their website can be found here:  
<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>.

Wills for England and Wales from 1837 onwards can be found through the website  
<https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>.

The British Library keep full sets of electoral registers, and you can find out more here:  
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/uk-electoral-registers>.

Many records of national and government bodies are kept by the National Archives. Their website can be found here:  
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Our computers have access to Ancestry worldwide which includes collections of records from elsewhere in the UK and from across the world, so you may find some records through searches on Ancestry.

Please bear in mind records for other countries will likely be in the native language of the country or region. They may also contain different levels of information from UK records.

### **What if I have Scottish ancestors?**

Many common family history records are kept on the Scotland's People website:  
<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>

This is operated by the National Records of Scotland and is the official Scottish Government site for searching government records and archives. In brief, they hold the statutory registers of births, marriages, deaths; census returns; church records; valuation rolls; and

legal records from Scotland's courts of law. It is used by hundreds of thousands of people each year to apply for copies of official certificates and to research family history, biography, local history and social history. The website is a paid subscription service, so you'll need to register in order to access indexes and pay to see the digital copies of the records. This is all within the terms and conditions page below:  
<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/terms-and-conditions>

### **What if I have Irish Ancestors?**

Many common family history records can be accessed through the Irish Genealogy website:  
<https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/>.  
This website is meant to be a portal or search facility for Irish digital genealogy records held across different websites and by different organisations. Simple searches can be done on the Irish Genealogy website with the results acting as links to other websites where you can find digital records.

How the site works is explained in more detail here: <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/how-does-this-site-work/main-search>.

A directory of the records accessible through Irish Genealogy can be found at:  
<https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/irish-records-what-is-available/civil-records>.  
Look for the 'Research in Ireland: Irish records: What is available?' tab on the right of the page. The directory pages are quite useful as they include links to other websites and other resources where you can find specific records or further information.

The official site of the Northern Ireland General Register Office, [www.geni.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.geni.nidirect.gov.uk), allows access to full a database of the transcripts of their records from 1922 onwards (from 1845/1864 for areas now in Northern Ireland) on a pay per view basis.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction to Guide</b> .....	1	Taking a closer look at a Transcript.....	16
<b>Introduction to the Basic Search</b> .....	2	<b>How to do a Specific Search</b> .....	17
<b>Introduction to the Specific Search</b> .....	2	The Card Catalogue page .....	18
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b> .....	3	The Search and Browse page .....	19
How far can I trace my family history back? .....	3	The Specific Search results page .....	20
How do I know the record is for the right person?.....	3	The Information Page.....	21
What if the information in the entry doesn't match what I have? .....	3	The digital copy page .....	22
Names and place-names not the same?.....	3		
A difference in age, date of birth or place your ancestor was born?.....	4		
Any other differences? .....	4		
You think you have the right record for the right person. What now? .....	4		
Can I get a copy?.....	5		
I'm having trouble finding a specific collection or type of record on Ancestry! Why is this? .....	5		
Still having trouble finding a record? .....	5		
The record exists, but I can't find my relative (or information about them) within it .....	6		
I want to trace a relative that lived outside of West Yorkshire or the UK. What do I do?.....	6		
What if I have Scottish ancestors? .....	7		
What if I have Irish Ancestors?.....	7		
<b>How to do a Basic Search</b> .....	10		
The Basic Search page.....	11		
The Basic Search results page .....	12		
The Search Results box in detail.....	13		
The Information page.....	14		
The Digital Copy page .....	15		



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## How to Do a Basic Search

To get to Ancestry's **Home** page, click on Home on the black bar at the top of the screen.

Click on Begin Searching on the **Home** page to get to the **Basic Search** page

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com homepage. At the top, a black navigation bar contains the Ancestry logo, a 'Home' button (circled in red), a 'Search' button (circled in red), and links for 'Message Boards', 'Charts and Forms', and 'New Collections'. On the right side of the navigation bar, the text 'West Yorkshire...' is visible. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of a group of people. Overlaid on the banner is the text 'Searching for that right moment'. Below the banner, the text reads 'Start searching billions of records and discover your family's story.' At the bottom center of the banner area is a green button labeled 'Begin Searching' (circled in red). To the right of the banner is a section titled 'Receive Records at Home'. This section includes a sub-section 'Send Your Find Home!' with a form for entering an email address and a 'Send document' button. Below this is a 'U.S. Public Records' section with a form for name and address, and a 'Description' field. At the bottom of the 'Receive Records at Home' section are links for 'Five Minute Find: Sending Documents', 'Home From the Library', and 'View Video'.

You can also get to the **Basic Search** page by clicking Search on the black bar and choosing All Categories.

The **Basic search** page looks like this:

The screenshot shows the Ancestry search interface. At the top is a navigation bar with the Ancestry logo and links for Home, Search, Message Boards, Charts and Forms, and New Collections. The current location is West Yorkshire. The main heading is "Search". Below this are two input fields for "First & Middle Name(s)" and "Last Name". There are also fields for "Place your ancestor might have lived" (with the example "e.g. London, England") and "Birth Year". A "Search" button and a "Show more options" dropdown are highlighted with red circles. Below the search fields is an "Explore by Location" section featuring a map of Europe with a red pin on the UK and a blue pin on Norway. To the right is a "Special Collections" sidebar with a "+ Card Catalog" button and a list of collection categories including Historical Records, Birth, Marriage & Death (including Parish), and Census & Electoral Rolls.

Enter the person's first and last name in the boxes above. If you know where they lived or year of birth you can add this to the relevant boxes. When you're ready click on Search. The page will go to the **Search Results** page.

Clicking on Show More Options allows you to add extra details about the person. This can include the names of your ancestor's parents, siblings or children or when and where the ancestor was born, married or died.

This is the **Search Results** page for the name 'David Smith' with the place as 'Wakefield' and his year of birth as '1860'.

This box has the information you have searched for. It can be changed using [Edit Search](#). [New search](#) is for when you want to search a different name.

This box shows the different types of records the results cover. Clicking on a category is a quick way to narrow the results to a specific record type i.e. birth, marriage and death records

These are the results of the search. Each **result box** is one entry in one collection. There are 20 results per page. Use the bar on the right (not shown) to scroll down to the other results.

Click on the green arrow box at the bottom of the page to go to the next page of results.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry search results page for 'David Smith'. The page title is 'All results for David Smith'. The search filters are: Name: David Smith, Born: 1860, Any: Wakefield, Y... The search results are displayed in a table with columns for 'Records' and 'Categories'. The results are sorted by 'Records' and show 1-20 of 29,855 results. The first three results are:

Collection	Name	Birth	Residence
West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914	David Smith	abt 1860 - Farsley	24 Mar 1879 - Wakefield
1911 England Census	David Smith	abt 1860 - Bradford, Yorkshire, England	2 Apr 1911 - Southport, Lancashire, England
1911 England Census	David Smith	abt 1860	2 Apr 1911 - Slaithwaite, Yorkshire-West Riding, England

The page also includes a 'Search Filters' section with a 'Broad' to 'Exact' slider, a 'Collection' dropdown menu, and an 'Update' button. A 'Categories' section on the left lists various record types with their counts: Census & Electoral Rolls (+5,000), Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish (+5,000), Military (70), Immigration & Travel (237), Pictures (176), Stories, Memories & Histories (10), Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers (10), and Schools, Directories & Church Histories (836). At the bottom, there is a pagination bar showing '1-20 of 29,855' results, a 'Per page' dropdown set to 20, and a green arrow button to navigate to the next page.

Let's take a closer look at the **results boxes** and what the parts are useful for:

Here you can see the amount of results found (29,855) and how many are on the first page (1-20). Even with some specific details for David Smith there are still 29,855 matching entries across Ancestry's records.

The large blue writing gives the name of the collection (record set) on Ancestry. Clicking on it will take you to an **information page** that has more information taken from the entry in the original record.

Moving your mouse over this will bring up a box with extra information and a small image of the original record. Click on See More on this box to go to the **information page** for that entry.

Clicking on View Image will take you to a **digital copy** (image) of the entry in the original record.

The screenshot shows a search results page for 'David Smith'. At the top, it says 'Results 1-20 of 29,855'. Below this, there are three search results listed:

- West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914**  
WILLS, PROBATES, LAND, TAX & CRIMINAL  
View Image
- 1911 England Census**  
CENSUS & ELECTORAL ROLLS  
View Image
- 1891 England Census**  
CENSUS & ELECTORAL ROLLS  
View Image

On the right side, there are three detailed record entries for David Smith:

- NAME: David Smith**  
BIRTH: abt 1860 - Farsley  
CIVIL: 24 Mar 1879 - Wakefield
- NAME: David Smith**  
SPOUSE: Lamech Jane Smith  
BIRTH: abt 1860 - Bradford, Yorkshire, England  
RESIDENCE: 2 Apr 1911 - Southport, Lancashire, England
- NAME: David Smith**  
SPOUSE: Rebecca Elizabeth Smith  
BIRTH: abt 1860  
RESIDENCE: 2 Apr 1911 - Slaithwaite, Yorkshire-West Riding, England
- NAME: David Smith**  
BIRTH: 1860 - Bradford, Yorkshire, England  
RESIDENCE: 1891 - North Meols, Lancashire, England

Callouts in the image highlight: 'Results 1-20 of 29,855', the collection name 'West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914', the '1911 England Census' result, the 'View Image' link for the 1911 census, the first detailed record entry, the second detailed record entry, and the 'View Image' link for the 1891 census.

This shows the key information from the entry in the records.

Notice that there are two entries in the 1911 census for David Smith. The key information (his spouse, his expected date of birth taken from his age on the census, and residence on the census night) can be useful in narrowing down the right David Smith. Also notice how the 1891 census entry matches information in the first 1911 census entry. This can mean these two are for the same David Smith.

An in-depth look at the **information page** explaining the useful parts:

The screenshot shows the Ancestry website interface for a search result. The navigation bar at the top includes 'ancestry', 'Home', 'Search', 'Message Boards', 'Charts and Forms', 'New Collections', and 'West Yorkshire...'. The main heading is 'David Smith in the 1911 England Census'. A teal circle highlights the 'All Results' link in the top left. A teal box on the left explains that clicking 'All Results' returns to the search results page. Another teal box on the left explains that the top image is a digital copy of the original record, and the bottom image is an old map of the area, both accessible via 'View' buttons. A teal box on the right explains that the 'Suggested Records' section provides entries for David Smith in other collections, which can be useful for finding records for the same person or a different person. A teal box at the bottom explains that the information is taken from the first 1911 census entry for David Smith and that the amount of information varies by entry and collection, advising to always check the digital copy for errors and omissions.

Clicking on All Results will take you back to the **Search Results** page.

The top image is a **digital copy of the original record**. Click View to see it. The lower image is an old map of the area. Click View Map to see it.

Please remember to use this bar on the right to scroll to the bottom of the page where there is further information.

**Suggested Records** are entries for David Smith in other collections. It can be a quick way of finding records for the same person but they can also be for an entirely different person.

This is the information taken from the first 1911 census entry for David Smith. The amount of information you find here can vary from entry to entry and across collections. Always check the entry in the **digital copy** as errors and omissions do occur.

Name:	David Smith
Age in 1911:	51
Estimated birth year:	abt 1860
Relation to Head:	Head
Gender:	Male
Birth Place:	Bradford, Yorkshire, England
Civil Parish:	Southport
Search Photos:	Search for 'Southport' in the UK City, Town and Village Photos collection
County/Island:	Lancashire
Country:	England
Street address:	37 Windsor Road Southport
Marital status:	Married
Occupation:	Retired Butcher
Registration district:	Ormskirk

**Suggested Records**

- 1901 England Census David Smith
- 1891 England Census David Smith
- West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1910 David Smith
- West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813-1935 David Smith
- England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916-2005 David R Hutcheson
- England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915

This is the **digital copy page** with explanations to each part:

This is a scanned **digital copy** of the original 1911 census. Many of the records on Ancestry predate typewriters so you will see lots of handwriting which can be difficult to read. Most records have a **transcript** (typed version).

Click **Save** to save or send a copy of the record by email. You'll need to agree to Ancestry's Terms of Conditions and Privacy Statement before it will be sent.

Use these tools to put the page in full screen, change its orientation, to print or download a copy and to zoom into and away from the record.

Use the arrow buttons to go to the previous and next pages in the record.

The **Film** tool opens a ribbon of copy images along the bottom of the screen. Use this to navigate to other records before and after the one on screen.

The grey box is the number of the **digital copy image** you're on (278). Type a new number into here to go to that number image. The other box is the total number of images in this piece of the census. This is Enumeration book number 9 for North Meols in Southport.

Use this tool to open a **transcript** (typed version) of the record entries on the page. See the next page for an image of what the transcript looks like.

1911 England Census for David Smith  
Lancashire \ Southport \ North Meols \ 09

**Save**

**CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.**

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in ink. The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND USUAGE	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards		BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	OTHER INFORMATION
				Personal Occupation	Industry or Service with which worker associated			
David Smith	Head	57	Married 16	Retired Author	318	Southport	English	
Ann Smith	wife	52	Married 16			Southport	English	
David Smith	son	13	Single	School	598	Southport	English	
Ann Smith	daughter	11	Single	School		Southport	English	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in charge, or in charge, of this dwelling)

Write below the Number of House in this Dwelling (House, Room, or Apartment), check the letters as a year but do not count window, landing, lobby, cloak, bathroom, nor washhouse, outhouse, etc.

Signature: David Smith  
Printed Address: 37 Victoria Road, Southport

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Here is a zoomed in look at the handwritten entries with the **transcript** (called index on Ancestry):

Notice how the yellow and green highlights are for the same information in the handwritten entries above and the **transcript** (index) below.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1	David Smith	Head	51	Married	16	2	3	none	Bradford
2	Lamech Jane Smith	wife	52	Married	16	2	3	-	
3	Rose Agnes Smith	daughter	24	Single					Dress
4	Ada Smith	daughter	13	Single					School
5	Luch Smith	Son	11	Single					School

278 of 411

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Name	Relation to Head	Birth Date	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Birth Place	Address
David Smith	Head	1860	51	Male	Married	Retired Butcher	Bradford, Yorkshire, England	37Windso
Lamech Jane Smith	Wife	1859	52	Female	Married		Stachsleads, Lancashire, England	37Windso
Rose Agnes Smith	Daughter	1887	24	Female	Single	Dress Maker	Bradford, Yorkshire, England	37Windso
Ada Smith	Daughter	1898	13	Female	Single	School	Southport, Lancashire, England	37Windso
Luch Smith	Son	1900	11	Male	Single	School	Southport, Lancashire, England	37Windso

Notice the names *Lamech* and *Luch* in the transcript? The handwriting shows they should be *Sarah* and *Jach* (likely *Jack* misspelled). Be watchful for mistakes in handwriting and alternative spellings as they happen frequently, especially with names. Illiteracy was far more commonplace so words were often written the way they sounded. For example, the surname *Harlow* could be spelled in many different ways *i.e.* *Harlew*, *Harlowe*, *Harelow*, *Harelowe*, *Harrelow*, *Hallow*, *Harrow*, *Arlow* or *Arelowe*, yet they sound the same when said aloud.

To get back to the **Results Page** click on the Back Arrows in the top left of the page. Look for ← All Results or ← or



## How to do a Specific Collection Search

This is Ancestry's Home Page. To search a single collection you need to go to the **Card Catalogue**. To do this you first click on Search on the black header at the top of the page. The pop-up box pictured should appear with Card Catalogue at the bottom of the box. Click on it to go to the **Card Catalogue Search** page.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry website home page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Ancestry logo and links for Home, Searchundefined, Message Boards, Charts and Forms, New Collections, and West Yorkshire... A search dropdown menu is open, listing various collection categories. The 'Card Catalogue' option is circled in red. Below the dropdown, there is a 'Begin Searching' button. To the right, there is a 'Receive Records at Home' section with a 'Send Your Find Home!' form and a 'Send document' button. Below this, there are four search tiles: 'SEARCH CENSUS', 'SEARCH VITALS', 'SEARCH MILITARY', and 'SEARCH IMMIGRATION', each with a representative image and a question.

ancestry Home Searchundefined Message Boards Charts and Forms New Collections West Yorkshire...

All Categories  
Census & Electoral Rolls  
Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish  
Military  
Wills & Probate  
Immigration & Travel  
Schools, Directories & Church Histories  
**Card Catalogue**

Start searching  
discover your family's story.

**Begin Searching**

**Receive Records at Home**

**Send Your Find Home!**  
Enter your email address and we will send you a link to your personalized Discovery Page where you can view and download all of the great finds you make while here.  
**Send document**

**U.S. Public Records**  
Name  
Address  
**Source Information**  
Ancestry.com.  
UT, USA: Ancestry.com.  
Original data: U.S. Public Records, and C  
**Description:**  
The U.S. Public Records are available in all 50 states in

We value your privacy. [Read our Privacy Statement](#)

Five Minute Find: Sending Documents Home From the Library  
[View Video](#)

**SEARCH CENSUS**  
When did those significant

**SEARCH VITALS**  
When did those significant

**SEARCH MILITARY**  
Did your ancestors serve in

**SEARCH IMMIGRATION**  
When did your ancestors

<https://search.ancestryinstitution.co.uk/>

Below is the **Card Catalogue Search** page:

The screenshot shows the Ancestry Card Catalogue Search page. The navigation bar includes 'ancestry', 'Home', 'Search', 'Message Boards', 'Charts and Forms', 'New Collections', and 'West Yorkshire Archive...'. The main heading is 'Card Catalogue' with the subtitle 'Searchable listing of all record collections'. On the left, there are search input fields for 'Title' (containing 'yorkshire') and 'Keyword(s)', with a 'Search' button and a 'Clear All' link. The main content area displays 'Results 1-25 of 25' and a list of record collections. On the right, there is a 'Sort By' dropdown set to 'Record Count' and a table with columns 'Collection', 'Records', and 'Activity'. Annotations include a box on the left explaining the search process, a box on the right explaining the table columns, and a large box at the bottom explaining the collection titles and how to navigate the page.

Record collections held by the West Yorkshire Archive Service can be found by typing 'Yorkshire' into the Title or Keyword(s) boxes then clicking on search.

Here you can see information about each record set. Collection gives the record type i.e. wills, parish, schools. Records give you the amount of digital entries in that one record set (collection). Activity shows any changes made to the collection.

The large blue writing gives the name of a single record collection. Clicking on this will take you to the **Search & Browse page** for that one collection. If you cannot see the collection you want, use the right bar to move down the page. This will show the other collections. In our example we want the West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914 collection.

Collection	Records	Activity
Census & Electoral Rolls	46,743,829	
Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish	6,287,209	
Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish	4,953,780	
Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish	4,130,806	
Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal	3,899,907	
Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish	1,331,307	
Birth, Marriage & Death, including Parish	648,551	
Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal	616,598	
Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal	422,295	
Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal	336,448	
Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal	331,599	

This is the **Search and Browse page** of the 'West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801 - 1914' record collection. From here you can either search the records for a specific person or browse a digital copy of the original record.

This box is used to search the records for a specific name. Enter the name (and any known details) in the relevant boxes and click on Search. Ancestry will search and find any entries which match this information in this one collection.

Search > Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal

## West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914

**Search**  Match all terms exactly

**First & Middle Name(s)**  **Last Name**

**Birth**  **Day**  **Month**  **Year**  **Location**  e.g. London, England

**Any Event**      e.g. London, England

**Keyword**   
e.g. teacher or "Tower of London" ▾

**Sentence**

**Gender**  -- Select -- ▾

**Event Date**  **Day**  **Month**  **Year**  **Location**  e.g. London, England

**Search** [Clear search](#)

**Browse this collection**

To browse this image set, select from the options below.

**Prison or Quarter Session**  HMP Wakefield ▾

**Title**  Nominal Register ▾

**Year Range**

- 1879 Feb - Nov
- 1879 Nov - Dec
- 1880 Dec - 1881 Nov
- 1882 Aug - Nov
- 1882 Mar - May
- 1882 May - Aug
- 1883 Jul - Nov
- 1883 Mar - Jul
- 1883 Nov - 1884 Mar
- 1884 Jun - Oct

**Related data collections**

[U.S., Atlantic Ports Passenger Lists](#)

This box is used to browse a **digital copy** of the original record. It is useful if you don't have a name but do have other information like a date or a place.

You will often need to select a Place, Record Type and Year using the options boxes and bar. Collections will differ in the type and number of box options here. Blue writing is usually linked to a **digital copy page**.

In this example, the option boxes are the Prison or Quarter Session (Place) and the Title (record type). Clicking on one of the blue Year Range options will take you to the **digital copy page** for the period selected. If you don't know which option to choose you can go through each of the options. If the digital copy doesn't have the right information, go back and select another option.

This is the **search results page** with explanations to each part:

**ancestry** Home Search Message Boards Charts and Forms New Collections West Yorkshire...

## All West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914 results for David Smith

Search Filters Broad Exact

David Smith  
ANY: 1850  
Edit Search New Search Update


All Categories  
> Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal  
> Court, Governmental & Criminal Records

West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914

The prison at Wakefield was first established in 1595 as the West Riding House of Correction. Did any of the black sheep in your family take up residence there? Find out in West Yorkshire,...

Results 1-17 of 17

View Record	Name	Birth Place	Event Date	Prison or Quarter Session	Sentence	View Images
View Record	David Smith	Liverpool	3 Apr 1891	HMP Wakefield	Imprisonment or Servitude	
View Record					Imprisonment or Servitude	
View Record					Other	
View Record					Imprisonment or Servitude	
View Record					Other	
View Record					Other	
View Record					Imprisonment or Servitude	
View Record					Imprisonment or Servitude	
View Record					Imprisonment or Servitude	

View Record  [View Record](#)  
[See More](#)

NAME: **David Smith**  
BIRTH YEAR: **1852**  
BIRTH PLACE: **Cardiff**  
AGE: **44**  
EVENT DATE: **09/03/1896**  
PRISON OR QUARTER SESSION: **HMP Wakefield**  
LOCATION: **Wakefield West Yorkshire England**  
SENTENCE: **Imprisonment or Servitude**

Moving your mouse over the result box will bring up a pop-up box like this. This box has extra information and a small image of the original record. Click on [See More](#) to go to the **information page** for that entry. Click on [View Record](#) to go to the entry in the **digital copy** of the original record.

This is the information you have searched for. It can be changed using [Edit Search](#). If you want to search a different name use [New Search](#).

This box gives a brief explanation of the collection you're looking at.

These are the search results for the name 'David Smith' in the Prison records.

Each **result box** is for one entry. Some information is included that can be used to find the entry for the right event or person.

Clicking on [View Record](#) or the [View Images](#) icon will take you to the **digital copy** for that entry.

This is the **Information Page** for our Nominal Register book with explanations for each part. The entry here covers one event which would be David Smith's admission to HMP Wakefield on 3rd April 1891. As some people will have been in prison more than once in their life you may find other admissions for the same person in your search results.

The screenshot shows an information page for David Smith in the West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914. The page includes a 'View' button for a digital copy of the original record, a table of key information, a 'Suggested Records' section, and source information. Callouts explain the function of each part.

**Callout 1:** Clicking on All Results will take you back to the **Search Results** page.

**Callout 2:** This image is the **digital copy** of the **original record**. Click View to see it.

**Callout 3:** This box gives a brief summary of the collection and records.

**Callout 4:** **Suggested Records** are entries for the name *David Smith* in other collections. It can be a quick way of finding records for the same person but they can also be for an entirely different person.

**Callout 5:** This is key information from the entry for David Smith in a Nominal Register from HMP Wakefield. You should look at the digital copy as they often contain more information than what is here. As they are a scan of the original record, the digital copy is useful for spotting errors and omissions.

Field	Value
Name:	David Smith
Birth Year:	abt 1845
Birth Place:	Liverpool
Age:	46
Event Date:	3 Apr 1891
Prison or Quarter Session:	HMP Wakefield
Location:	Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England
Sentence:	Imprisonment or Servitude

**Suggested Records**

- Lancashire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1911  
David Smith
- England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975  
David Smith
- Manchester, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1915  
David Smith
- England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915  
David Smith
- 1861 England Census  
David Smith

**Source Information**  
Ancestry.com. *West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014. This collection was indexed by [Ancestry World Archives Project](#) contributors.  
Original data: West Yorkshire Prison Records. Reference C118: Wakefield Prison. West Yorkshire Archive

This is the **digital copy page** which shows an image of the original record. Many contain several entries for different people on each page. The entry for David Smith is the last entry. Please see the **Digital Copy Page** of the **Basic Search** for information on the features on this page.

This is the Collection Name. Click it to go back to the **Search and Browse page**.

To change your selection click these and select a different option from the drop-down box. This is useful for browsing the records but not if you have searched a specific name.

The top of the register shows what is recorded in each column. In order there is the register number, name of offender, date and place of trial, offense, sentence, education, physical description, trade or occupation, religion /or birthplace, prior convictions, discharge date and remarks.

West Yorkshire, England, Prison Records, 1801-1914 for David Smith  
HMP Wakefield > Nominal Register > 1890 Dec - 1891 May

Register Number	NAME Surname Christian Name	Summary Convictions, Fictions, Court Martial, etc Date and Place of Conviction 1897	Re-examination and Trial Date and Place of Conviction 18	Arrest and Sentence Date and Place of Conviction 18	OFFENCE	SENTENCE	Education	Age, Height, and Colour of Hair	TRADE or OCCUPATION	Religion and Birth Place	Number of Previous Convictions, and Evidence to last Entry	DATE OF DISCHARGE and REMARKS
7295	Fields Tho		Bail	2 apr Sheffield Goo Goo	Assaulting Anne Maria Fieldo	Discharged on recognisance to attend for management if called upon	Imp 5ft 5in Brown	31 5ft 5in Brown	Shade Proprietor near on left in	Church Sheffield	nil	2 April
7296	Fell Mr Herbert		Bail	"	stealing 1/6 from omnibus	Acquitted	Imp 4ft 6in Brown	22 4ft 6in Brown	Shoe Sheff	Church Sheff	nil	2 April
7297	Hand Geo		Bail	"	Obtaining £10 by false pretences	Acquitted	Imp 5ft 7in Brown	23 5ft 7in Brown	Butcher	Church Sheff	nil	2 April
7298	Stevens Geo. H.		Bail	"	stealing 6 shirts	Acquitted	nil	22 5ft 5in Gray	actor near on chin	Church Sheff	nil	2 April
7299	Mr Geo Daniel White	3 apr Rotherham Goo			Drunk & disorderly	7 days with from 2 <sup>o</sup> or pay 1/4	nil	24 5ft 7in Brown	Pen. Lab	Church Rotherham	11/57 7789	2 apr
7300	O'Brien John	3 apr Hudds Goo			"	10 days or pay 1/10	Imp 5ft 7in Brown	40 5ft 7in Brown	Lab Fring Hall	Church Bradford	nil	11 apr
7301	Murphy Geo	3 apr Carnaby			Drunk & Disorderly	10 days with or pay 1/10	Read 5ft 7in Sandy	50 5ft 7in Sandy	Beer but seen right Grove	R.C. Kilgobbin Ireland	nil	"
7302	Smith David	3 apr Dewsbury					Read 5ft 7in Brown	46 5ft 7in Brown	Tailor not left school made	R.C. Lanc	nil	"

West Yorkshire Archive Service  
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The bottom entry is for David Smith, a tailor aged 46. He was born in Liverpool, was a Roman Catholic and could read but not write. At Dewsbury court on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1891 he received 10 days hard labour for begging. This may be the David Smith we want if census night fell when he was in prison so long as the other details here match up. If not then you can go back to the **search results page** to check the other results.