



# Blessings and Curses of Tracing Welsh Ancestry

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## Blessings

1. More historic records online
2. Nonconformity
3. Patronymics
4. National Library of Wales

## Curses

1. Common names and patronymics
2. More records must be used in combination
3. More time searching for records (more than England but less than Ireland)

The typical order for searching records must change, partly due to the common names. This list is arranged with greater value placed on records that are easy to get to and which show a person within as broad a context as possible. The order in which you search records will vary depending on the time period you are working in and the research question.

1. **Census:** This is important for the ability to see a person within the context of their family, community and occupation. Census substitutes may be included for all time periods.
2. **Monumental Inscriptions:** These also show a person with additional information that gives a clearer view of which Jone Jones he is. Many but not all have been recorded by Welsh family history societies.
3. **Church and chapel records:** These include more than just christening, marriage and burial records although few of the additional records are online. Most of the parish register indexes are available on FamilySearch. Indexes and images are on Findmypast.
4. **Civil registration:** These may cover more of the population after 1837 but are not open for public use. Good indexes exist. Alternatives exist for obtaining marriage certificates.
5. **Probate:** About 10% of the people left a will but about 40% are mentioned in those wills. Families are often identified. These records are available for free on the National Library of Wales website. Probate abstracts are available on FamilySearch with all name indexes.

## Findmypast Key Record Sets:

- Wales parish registers (unique to Findmypast)
- Census 1841-1911
- Passenger lists of people leaving the UK 1890-1960
- Index to Death Duty Registers 1796-1903
- Non-conformist births, baptisms, burials and marriages before 1837 (TNA RG4-RG8)
- National Burial Index (unique to Findmypast)
- 1939 National Registration (available in FHL & FHCs) (unique to Findmypast)
- Periodical Source Index (PERSI)

Findmypast has published most of the parish registers for Wales in association with the Welsh County Archivists Group and the National Library of Wales.

	<b>Years Covered</b>	<b>Records</b>
<b>Baptisms</b>	1538-1912	2,083,430
<b>Marriages</b>	1539-1927	1,226,650
<b>Banns</b>	1603-1927	557,078
<b>Burials</b>	1539-2007	2,057,453

Searches can be done two ways, global (search from the home page) or within each record set. Each has benefits and your choice will depend on the problem you are solving. In most cases I prefer to search within one record set. This can be done by pointing at "Search records" then click on "A-Z of record sets".

Many family history societies have made their indexes available on Findmypast. Search these when you are not able to find what you think should be in the parish registers.

Try a similar search on FamilySearch or Findmypast since the same records are included there but the search operates differently. Many of the Bishop's Transcript indexes are on FamilySearch, Ancestry and Findmypast.

**Parishes not included in the online Findmypast and FamilySearch parish register collections:**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Diocese</b>
Aberpergwm	Llandaff	Llandrindod (Old & New Churches)	Swansea & Brecon
Abertillery	Monmouth	Llandyfeisant	St Davids
Ammanford	St Davids	Llanedi with Tycroes	St Davids
Beddau	Llandaff	Llanfihangel Cwm Du	Swansea & Brecon
Betws with All Saints and St Michael's	St Davids	Llanilid with Pencoed	Llandaff
Blaengwrach	Llandaff	Llanrhydd	St Asaph
Carmarthen	St Davids	Llansadwrnen	St Davids
Cefnlllys	Swansea & Brecon	Llanstadwel & Neyland	St Davids
Cilfynydd	Llandaff	Llantrisant with Miskin	Llandaff
Clydach	Swansea & Brecon	Malpas	Monmouth
Crickhowell	Swansea & Brecon	Meidrim	St Davids
Cwmtillery	Monmouth	Merthyr	St Davids
Dinas with Penygraig	Llandaff	Newport	Monmouth
Diserth	Swansea & Brecon	Pontypridd	Llandaff
Gabalfa	Llandaff	Resolven	Llandaff
Glyntaff	Llandaff	Ruthin	St Asaph
Heol y Cyw	Llandaff	Saron	St Davids
Holy Trinity	Monmouth	Six Bells	Monmouth
Howey	Swansea & Brecon	St Catherine's	Llandaff
Laugharne	St Davids	St Denys	Llandaff
Lisvane	Llandaff	St John Baptist with St Mary's & St Michael's	Swansea & Brecon
Llananno	Swansea & Brecon	St Mark's	Llandaff
Llanbadarn Fynydd	Swansea & Brecon	St Matthew's	Llandaff
Llanbeblig	Bangor	St Peter's & St John's	St Davids
Llanbister	Swansea & Brecon	St Stephen's	Monmouth
Llanboidy	St Davids	Taliaris & Maesteilo	St Davids
Llandawke	St Davids	Tretower	Swansea & Brecon
Llanddewi Ystradenni	Swansea & Brecon	Waunarlwydd	Swansea & Brecon

## **FamilySearch** <https://familysearch.org/>

FamilySearch offers several options for free access to information. If used from home there are some features such as images of the Wales parish registers that will not be available although the index is included for free.

Key online record sets: (there are 42 total)

- Wales parish register indexes
- Census 1841-1911
- Wales Probate Abstracts 1544-1858 (all name indexes in a browse image collection)
- England and Wales Non-Conformist Record Indexes (RG4-RG8), 1588-1977
- Wales Births and Baptisms, 1541-1907 (should include some Bishop's Transcripts)
- Wales, Court and Miscellaneous Records, 1542-1911

## **Family History Library Catalog** <https://familysearch.org/catalog-search>

Lists records that are available in the Family History Library and more than 4,500 centers around the world. Records may be listed at the parish, county, country and kingdom level. The keyword search will show additional items you may otherwise miss. It can be searched by place, surname, keyword, film or fiche number, subject, author and title. It is now tied to the OCLC WorldCat website helping you find sources in a library close to where you live.

## **FamilySearch Books**

[https://books.familysearch.org/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=FHD\\_PUBLIC](https://books.familysearch.org/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=FHD_PUBLIC)

This is a collection of more than 150,000 digitized books.

## **FamilySearch Wiki** [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Wales\\_Genealogy](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Wales_Genealogy)

Help information for Welsh family history records, where to find them and how to use them.

## **FamilySearch Genealogies** <https://familysearch.org/family-trees>

Genealogies are trees submitted to FamilySearch. Accuracy varies. A Welsh database contains about 305,000 individuals, mostly born before 1700.

## **England & Wales Jurisdictions 1851** <http://maps.familysearch.org/>

Parish boundary maps for England and Wales are available. Map boundaries are based on what existed in 1851. The search feature works well if you use the "correct" spelling.

## **Patronymics / no surnames**

### Patronymic connectors

- Mab or ab or ap = son of
- Ferch or verch = daughter of
- In South Wales ab or ap was not always used

### Patronymic examples

- Evan Rees ap John (clear indication with the word for “son of”)
- William Morgan John (short form of William ap Morgan ap John)
- David William (typical form before the use of fixed surnames)
- David Williams (the s at the end of the name indicates a fixed surname)

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