

Family history research

by Andrew Matheson

In this issue we look at three more types of material available on the internet.

Family history forums

One of the great pleasures of exploring your family's origins is connecting and working with people around the globe. The family history community is friendly and collaborative, and joining it can lead to significant discoveries.

There are many online forums for you to pose questions and offer your own advice. We have our own for Clan Matheson New Zealand, both through our website [family history forum](#) and our Facebook [group](#).

If you want to reach out further afield there are many forums such as [Rootschat](#), [Rootsweb](#), [Family Tree Forum](#) and [Who When Where](#).

There is a Scottish-focussed forum at [TalkingScot](#), and all the major forums have boards specific to localities including Scotland and New Zealand.



It's worth browsing these forums to see the type of information that gets requested and posted, and thinking about how your research needs might fit one forum better than another.

To me there is a difference between genealogy and family history. Genealogy is finding out about relatives, their family connections and basic biodata. Family history is their stories: who they were, how they lived and what shaped their lives. Genealogy is the skeleton, which you need

to start with, but family history is the flesh on the bones.

So as you move from genealogy to family history, it's worth checking out specialist forums not just for family history but for wider historical research. These can be invaluable for finding out more about your ancestors.

For example, there are many to do with military history such as to do with the First World War, the [Second World War](#) (and also [here](#)), and even forces such as the different branches of the [Royal Air Force](#). There are forums on many subjects, which may be useful if you are researching a specific topic or location.

Wiki

You know what Wikipedia is, and in the same vein is a family history research wiki run by FamilySearch, the family history service of the Mormon church. It doesn't deal with individuals, but lists family history databases, websites and other resources to help you in your quest. For a location where you have ancestral connections, the wiki will link to resources of use.

Blogs

Blogs are websites used by people who write articles, make (and often invite) comments and link to other sites of interest. It's worth searching out blogs with a family history focus, and a quick search will link to articles that review blog sites.

Here are three with a Scottish focus. [The frugal family historian](#); true to its name, this links to a lot of free or cheap resources. Its tagline is 'Tips on researching your family tree without breaking the bank'. [The Scottish genealogy blog](#) and [Relatively Scottish](#) are also of interest.

