



Library and Archives

Sources for Manx Family History Research

Isle of Man

Researching your family history can be an exciting hobby. Resources available through Manx National Heritage Library and Archives at the Manx Museum, and online, are noted below. On visiting, our knowledgeable team is on hand to enable you to use the Library and Archives to do your own family history research. This guide also mentions useful organisations and websites that you might find helpful. We do not provide a research service, but we keep a list of people who may, for a fee, undertake research on behalf of private clients. Please see our separate 'Contacts' factsheet.

Gow soylley jeh feddyn magh tooilley mychione dty skeal Manninagh
Enjoy finding out more about your Manx story.

First check the iMuseum website where you can do a free 'people' search. www.imuseum.im/search/people/ to check if your ancestor is mentioned in indexed records including census returns, Castle Rushen Goal registers, war memorials, registered deeds, First World War and motorsport biographies.

Official Records

Civil Registration of Births Marriages and Deaths

On the Island, compulsory registration of births and deaths began in 1878 and marriages in 1884. Certificates can be obtained for a fee from:

The Civil Registry,
Deemster's Walk,
Bucks Road,
Douglas IM1 3AR.

Tel: (01624) 687039
Email: civil@registry.gov.im
Website: www.gov.im/categories/births-deaths-and-marriages/

You can also search for potential records on the volunteer website: <https://manxbmd.com>

Census Returns 1841-1911

1841 is the first return to hold details of individuals. Microfilm copies of Manx census returns are available to view in the MNH Library and Archives as well as paper indexes. Alternatively use our free guest membership of Findmypast to search and view the images. The Isle of Man Family History Society (IOMFHS) provides indexes (excluding 1881) at http://www.iomfhs.im/resources/census/index_census.html

Manx Church Registers

Following a digitisation partnership between MNH and FamilySearch, many Anglican baptism, marriage and burial registers are available to search and view on the website: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Isle_of_Man_Parish_Registers ([FamilySearch Historical Records](#))

The website is free to join although you will have to log in as a member.

A microfiche index of baptisms and marriages by surname, compiled from Church records (called the International Genealogical index or IGI) was compiled before such databases were available and is available together with microfilm copies of registers.

Ecclesiastical Court Records

People called before the church courts by vicars and wardens for possible discipline are recorded in the so called 'presentments' (1659-1874). Some of these have been indexed and microfilmed. Offences included swearing, not attending church or bearing an illegitimate child. 'Orders of court' are another record series that may name the father of such a baby although the child's name is not given, only that of the mother. An electronic index of individuals can be accessed by the Library and Archives team. (Archives Ref: MS 10194)



Non-Conformist and Roman Catholic records

By law, non-conformists (e.g. Methodists) and Roman Catholics were required to marry in parish churches until 1849. After this, they could marry in their own church in the presence of the Deputy Registrar: non-compulsory marriage certificates were available from 1849 (see Civil Registry).

Registers from some non-conformists chapels and Roman Catholic churches are held in the Archives: these are not name indexed and are incomplete.

Electoral Voters' Lists and rates records

An incomplete run of voters' lists is held at spanning 1867-1915, 1919-1920, and 1950-1984 (Archives Ref: MS 09842). Note that universal adult suffrage did not occur on the IOM until 1919. For 1924-1925, the Douglas Burgess Roll can be helpful (Library Ref: F71/16xf). Incomplete voters' lists 1985-2004 and rates books are held at the Public Records Office (PRO)

Public Records Office
Unit 40A
Spring Valley Industrial Estate
Douglas IM2 2QS

Telephone: (01624) 693569
Email: public.records@gov.im
Website: <https://www.gov.im/pro>

Wills

Wills can be a great way to check family relationships and occasionally they include an inventory of personal effects. The Archives holds wills from around 1600 to 1910. These can be consulted in the Search Room on microfilm, plus wills to 1916 on film only. The microfilms for wills 1600-1800 have been indexed and the later ones (from around 1850 are numbered and filmed in numerical order. The ones in between are filmed by 'bundle'. Wills 1600-1850 can be time consuming to find. When people didn't leave a will, Administration of the estate and the resulting probate records may be found within these records. Wills after this date can be viewed at the Deeds and Probate Registries. They may need to be ordered in advance so they can be retrieved from off-site storage.

Deeds and Probate Registries
Registries Building
Deemster's Walk
Bucks Road
Douglas IM1 3AR

Telephone: (1624) 685250
Email: deeds@registry.gov.im
Website: <https://www.gov.im/categories/home-and-neighbourhood/deeds-probate-and-land-registries/deeds-and-probate-registry/>
Some wills are available on the FamilySearch website. Look at their 'Catalogue'
<https://www.familysearch.org/catalog/search>

Printed resources in the Library

Newspapers

Birth announcements and obituaries, and the local news may be helpful in your research. The earliest Manx newspaper held by the Library dates from 1792. iMuseum Newspapers & Publication (<https://www.imuseum.im/newspapers/>) provides digital access to the most complete run of IOM newspapers from 1792 to 1960. Also available are the publications selected as most useful for understanding our Island's heritage. iMuseum public terminals and wifi allows free access. Or you can take out a subscription giving online access wherever you are. There are daily, monthly and annual options.

Manual indexes up to the 1850s are available on request. Modern era newspapers from the 1960s onwards are viewable on microfilm (a partial card index exists for 1957-1994). From 2004 papers may be accessed from a hard drive. The Cumberland Pacquet carried some Manx news. 1774-1803 copies are viewable on microfilm- a card index spanning 1774-1794 is available.

Directories

The IOM has listings in some early British editions of Trade Directories. Most of these can be searched via the extensive A Manx Note Book website <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/>

The Library holds copies of the following in the Search Room:

Directory	Library reference	Directory	Library reference
Holden 1811	L.10/17q	Brown's 1882, 1894	L.10/BRO
Pigot's 1824, 1837, 1843	L.10	Porter's 1889	L.10/POR
Slater's 1846, 1852, 1857	L.10	Bent's 1902, 1907	L.10/BEN
Thwaites 1863	F.75/71	Barrett's (Borough of Douglas) 1955 and Isle of Man 1963	L.10/13

Telephone directories were slim, only recording businesses and professionals until the telephone network expanded. We have directories for 1900, 1906 and 1925 to date (Library Ref: B.102/1f). 1880-1984 listings are available through www.ancestry.co.uk. Modern listings can be searched at <https://www.thephonebook.bt.com> Remember-many people choose to be ex-directory.

King William's College register 1833-1989

This private school has a printed register of pupils (Library Ref: D.427).



Useful books including biographies

Unlocking The Past: a guide to exploring family and local history in the Isle of Man by Matthew Richardson. MNH, 2011 (Library Ref: G.90/RIC)

The Manx Family Tree: a guide to records in the Isle of Man. 3rd edition, by Janet Narasimham (eds. Crowe and Lewthwaite. IOMFHS. 2000. (Library Ref: G.90)

From printed books to short articles, histories of many Manx families and individuals are lodged at library references G.88, G.90 and G.91.

For example:

Manx Worthies or Biographies of notable Manx Men and Women. Moore, A.W. (1901) Ref: G4

New Manx Worthies. Kelly (Ed) (2006) Ref: KELf

Other useful sources:

Isle of Man Examiner Annuals 1900-1979 (Ref: L9/EX)

Norris Modern Press Yearbooks 1906-1972 (Ref: L9/NOR)

Manx Church Magazines 1891-1975 Ref: (L.6/MC)

For adding background to your tree, we hold many journals, local history books, leaflets, and holiday guides. For example:

'History of Kirk Maughold'. Radcliffe. (Library Ref: F 64/148),

'Kirk Bride: A Miscellany'. Radcliffe. W & C. (F.64/157),

'Shining by the Sea: History of Ramsey 1800-1914'. Radcliffe. W & C. (F.72/14),

'Andreas'. McCambridge, S. (F.75/1/7q).

The Library catalogue is searchable on iMuseum using the Library tab: <https://www.imuseum.im/search/library/>

Manuscript resources in the Archives

Former genealogists' work

The Archives holds the following deposits, which may contain errors, but could be of interest:

Edmund Graves Goodwin (1845-1925) collected details of many Manx families: his work has been described as 'an important genealogical source'. The Goodwin Papers are available on microfilm in the Reading Room.

We hold the trees collated by James Alfred Brew (1923-2008) 'Some Manx Pedigrees' at Archives Ref: MS 09671 as well as additional Brew papers at MS 11810.

A.W Moore (1853-1909) has been described as 'a giant amongst Manx historians'. His 'Old Manx Families' is available on microfilm. We have copies of many others' work on particular families, some at Archives Ref: MD 20.

Manuscripts

There is a separate factsheet for Land Records (Tracing the History of your House). Registered deeds 1847-1910 are now searchable on iMuseum through the online 'people' search. Person information may crop up in business archives and associational records held by us such as friendly societies (the Rechabites and Oddfellows etc) - just ask the team who will be pleased to offer suggestions. Some of the manuscript catalogue is searchable online with more being added.

Other organisations

The Isle of Man Family History Society (IOMFHS) was formed in 1979. Individual members have assisted MNH with register indexing for the iMuseum website and the society has kindly made resources available for it-such as Brian Lawson's wills index. Membership includes a quarterly journal where research interests can be printed. It has its own library of Manx books and family trees in Peel -manned by volunteers twice weekly. There is an active website www.iomfhs.im and Facebook page. Email iomfhs@manx.net for enquiries. The society has compiled indexes to burial records and gravestones existing in the 1980's. These are available in the MNH Reading Room and the IOMFHS Peel Library. Of the additional indexes and resources on its website, some are free and some for members only.

Before your visit:

Check our Library and Archives opening times.

Write down any facts you know for sure.

Be prepared to stow your bags in a locker and use only pencil. Bring a USB key if you want to save digital data and also a camera. Allow sufficient time for research and possible visits to sites of interest. You will need to register with us so bring some photographic ID.

You can find a downloadable version of this, Contacts and other available guides on our website.

<https://manxnationalheritage.im/collections/library-and-archives/>

