

BEST WEBSITES



Genealogist **Jonathan Scott** recommends websites for family historians delving into their roots on the Continent

European genealogy covers a wide range of sources and disciplines. Each country has its strengths and weaknesses in terms of research. Some, like the UK, have huge quantities of family history resources digitised and online, while others lag behind. Some have exhaustive and accessible civil registration, census and church records; others have primary sources that are more scattered and fragmentary.

Understanding how to do research in a new country can be a challenge, but with some digging you should, at the very least, be able to find useful sources of advice. My recommendations give a spread of good centralised resources, as well as revealing the kinds of online tools that exist.

Finally if you are following European ancestors who settled here, several of The National Archives' free research guides cover migration, naturalisation and citizenship. You can find them at nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides.



1 FamilySearch familysearch.org

I normally shy away from recommending such an obvious website in my Top Five, but it's the best place to start researching forebears in unfamiliar territory. Go to the homepage then click 'Search', select 'Records' from the drop-down menu and click Europe on the 'Research By Location' map. A drop-down list

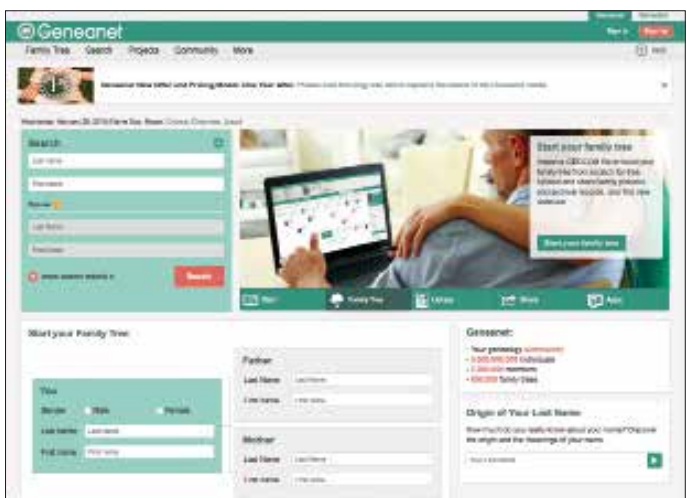
of 29 locations will appear. Clicking 'Portugal', as an example, takes you to the dedicated research page. Here you'll find a list of indexed collections and a series of 'image only' (ie unindexed) collections. You will also be shown links to relevant online courses in the website's Learning Center, plus the Portugal Wiki.



2 WieWasWie wiewaswie.nl/en

WieWasWie is brilliant for anyone researching Dutch ancestors, and currently boasts a database of more than 152 million names.

the 'Sources' and 'News' sections for coverage and latest additions. In January the website was bolstered by records of more than 455,000 criminals from registers of the houses of detention in Brabant (1812–1925).



3 Geneanet en.geneanet.org

France's Geneanet is especially valuable for those with French ancestry, but it is increasingly useful for research across Europe.

for two years. It has elements of both familysearch.org and genuki.co.uk in its veins, with a detailed wiki and community section.

Expert's choice



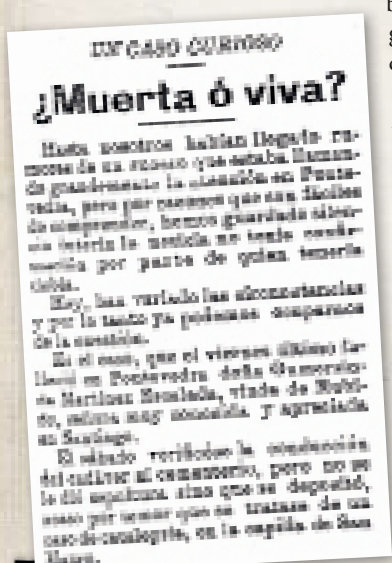
Genealogist Daniel Smith-Ramos of thegenealogycorner.wordpress.com has researched roots in England, Italy and Spain

"One of the many blessings of having mixed ancestry is being able to explore and compare genealogy resources in different countries. Almost all of my maternal ancestors came from the rural region of Galicia in north-west Spain.



Daniel recommends Galiciana to anyone with Spanish forebears

"My favourite collection, however, is the repository of Galician newspapers broadly covering 1850–1960. In a country like Spain, which does not have a centralised index for its civil registration system and where church records are rarely digitised or available online, finding references through newspapers (such as birth and marriage announcements, obituaries, migration movements, civic events and of course the occasional social scandal) is practically indispensable.



been able to study my great grandfather's political discourses, see references to my grandparents' honeymoon itinerary, and read about the violent death of a famous cousin in a car accident in 1933.



Among the wealth of documents available on Galiciana are newspaper stories and obituaries

GALICIANA



4 Verein für Computergenealogie compgen.de

The utilitarian design might put you off this German website, run by the Association for Computer Genealogy (Verein für Computergenealogie). But it is packed with useful information and free resources for anyone researching Germany ancestry.

it is home to what is described as the largest and most active German-speaking forum for family researchers. It also has a selection of free databases drawn from sources such as monumental inscriptions, plus a database of addresses from historic address books, population directories and civil books.



5 Danish Demographic Database ddd.dda.dk

This website offers access to various Danish datasets, mainly drawing from probate material and, most usefully, census records. At present you can search census records by individual or household, and there are various advanced options – enabling you to narrow your search by

county or district. The website should automatically detect your location and present its text in English, but if not just click the Union Flag icon on the top-right-hand corner of the screen. The Danish Demographic Database is expanding all the time, so it's well worth checking back.

More great websites

While you should see what ancestry.co.uk and findmypast.co.uk have to offer, myheritage.com is particularly strong for European connections, and each territory may also have specialist websites.



Anne Morddel, the blogger behind French Genealogy, is a prolific author of colour images of historical records, while the top-notch blog French Genealogy (french-genealogy.typepad.com) includes a directory of departmental archives and a glossary of French terms.

Sweden, for example, has the long-running ArkivDigital (arkivdigital.net), which boasts millions of colour images of historical records, while the top-notch blog French Genealogy (french-genealogy.typepad.com) includes a directory of departmental archives and a glossary of French terms.

Europeana (europeana.eu) is a wonderful place to find out more about historic artefacts, books, documents, newspapers, artworks, videos and oral histories from collections across Europe, and millions more that have been submitted by users.

Genealogy Indexer (genealogyindexer.org) is a useful tool for anyone searching for ancestors in Central or Eastern Europe, although much of the data was produced using optical character recognition (OCR) software, so remember to try wildcards and spelling variants when you're searching.

Through Archives Portal Europe (archivesportaleurope.net) you can search hundreds of millions of records from 6,989 institutions. Its map option will lead you to archival websites from Finland (arkisto.fi/en) to Belgrade (arhiv-beograda.org/index.php/en).



Archives Portal Europe includes contact information for over 2,300 institutions and the cross-archive portal at archivi.beniculturali.it. Other groups can be found via the Foundation for East European Family History Studies (feefhs.org), and other cross-archival portals include the Spanish site PARES (El Portal de Archivos Españoles; pares.mcu.es) and the vast Archival Resources Online (szukajwarchiwach.pl – if you're researching Poland, you should also visit archiwa.gov.pl).

Don't neglect genealogy societies and historical groups, either. Their websites will detail publications, projects and news, and links to useful sites. One well-established and long-running example is the Anglo-German Family History Society (agfhs.org). Another is the Anglo-Italian Family History Society (anglo-italianfhs.org.uk); its 'Links' page leads to sites with beginners' advice, church records and civil records, and

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Religious persecution may have caused your ancestors to cross country boundaries. If that's the case then huguenotsociety.org.uk/family-history could come in handy, as will jewishgen.org and jsgsb.org.uk for anyone who has Jewish roots.

Finally Google Translate is a very useful tool. At translate.google.com you can type in or paste a word, phrase or passage (up to 5,000 characters), then select the language you wish to translate it into. And if you find a site with no obvious English version, you can enter the full web address (including http:// or https://) in the left-hand text field, choose the source language and click 'Translate'.