

HOW TO VALIDATE AND BE ACCURATE

1. Go back step by step, link one individual to proof in each case.
2. Go from known family information for those living ancestors or recently living.
3. Get BMD certs for anyone you can from 1837 onwards.
4. Check census returns for every decade you think they are alive, however check validity with occupations, addresses, places of birth, other members of the household.
5. Check ages on census records, remember the 1841 census people over 15 were rounded down to nearest multiple of 5, e.g. age 59 shown as 55. However, people didn't always know their correct age, those with large age gaps sometimes changed the dates to look more acceptable. Check census records for similarity across decades. If person alive in 1911 or on the 1939 register these seem to be more accurate. 1939 register showing their actual full date of birth, this may help although again some mistakes occur.
6. Names on census records can vary. In 1911 when householder first filled it in, often a Childs nickname was used or maybe a second name if that was a favourite. Think laterally to check correct document, check for derivatives, e.g. Elizabeth, Liz, Betty, Beth etc.... In earlier census records an enumerator was employed to fill in schedule, accents played a part as to what was heard, also who was giving the info to the enumerator, did they know correct information. Lack of education and literacy was rife, certificates may only show their mark against their name so remember this, if on a subsequent document they suddenly show wonderful copperplate writing it may not be the right person! I looked for years for a death for a Gt Grandmother who was an Annie, found her recorded as a Hannah, she was registered by her friend from next door, Annie and her friend were Irish so that may account t for it. However, it listed her husband's name, address and occupation so I knew it was correct.
7. Use GRO indexes to check mother's maiden name for children born, link to census returns and baptism registers. Free BMD shows mothers name for some of the timeline gaps for the GRO.
8. Check baptism registers, again look at addresses, fathers' occupations, parents' names. Check carefully for any info on birth date, remember baptism could be several years later or as an adult.
9. Check marriage certificates, validate by fathers' occupations, addresses registered for the certificate may not help. Looks at witnesses, are they relatives? Try to link to a census if within time frame.
10. Check several sources for births, different sites transcribed by family history societies may show more detailed information. Check card catalogues for different sites, check FreeReg.
11. When looking at other member sites on ancestry or family search etc, look to see if they have sources listed. If they have documents attached, check validity, ie names, ages, spouses, children (check GRO for them) if you can't validate the information then don't record them.
12. Whilst family names and traditions can help it is not uncommon for what you think is an unusual name to be found in another couple or family or could be related but not the same people.

13. Children who died another child could be given the same name, so look for the death, again GRO can help, check age at death and the registration area for the birth/death. If another child given the name this can account for age disparity.
14. Keep a notebook when you research showing where you have checked what is your evidence. You can record this on your source boxes on ancestry or software. Family history record sheets are another way.
15. If you enter a person onto your tree if it's not yet validated, record why you think its relevant but that you don't yet have 100% proof.
16. Check all information on documents, they may not be right in some cases keep an open mind. Look for married women on their own on census, check if it records Widow status, on a couple's marriage certificate does it say father deceased, it's not always recorded.
17. Keep a timeline of addresses for an individual so you can see if they stayed in an area or moved, again that may help you picking up the right ancestor. Check maps, small hamlets and villages may default to a larger registration district. Names of villages may change also county designation changes e.g. Staffordshire some areas then moved into Warwickshire. Make a note against the person when that happened so you can be sure you're in the right borough.