

<https://www.genuki.org.uk>



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2019

The origins

- .I created the 2nd genealogy web site in the world in Jan 1995
- .Brian Randell suggested it should cover UK + Ireland
- .Hosted at Manchester University, based on a county hierarchy
- .We tried to get FHS's involved, with no interest from them
- .I found myself co-opted onto MLFHS council
- .For a few years running the computer branch
- .So we recruited volunteers to look after each county
- .We formed a charitable trust to run things
- .We agreed it would all be free with no advertising
- .Site is predominantly about where to find information rather than detailed records transcripts

Original technology

- All done by editing raw html pages
- Master copies stored on home computers
- Web space mainly on university computers
- Structure based on agreed layout & look & feel
- Everybody added their own variations
- Maintainers needed technical skills which limited the volunteers

The move to a CMS

- .I retired in 2012, but we still used Manchester University computers for 2-3 more years
- .Then we needed a commercial host and need funding. Some from FFHS, FHS's, donations and fees from talks
- .Then we looked at moving to a Content Management System choosing one called Drupal
- .It took us 3 years to convert using special software to convert around 100,000 web pages
- .We now have a more rigorous look and feel, not restricted to one maintainer per county, and maintenance is considerably easier and much less technical

Geographic hierarchy

- .Our pages are in a geographic hierarchy
- .UK+Ireland / Country / County / 'Parish'
- .Information stored at the level of commonality
- .The 'Parish' level is ancient parishes but that doesn't fit well for all counties
- .Lancashire had large parishes, so that level is based on townships, with a few new towns such as Blackpool
- .You have to be aware though that boundaries have changed over the years
- .A Genuki 'parish' is an area with common genealogical information
- .Record repositories though tend to follow modern administrative boundaries

Topics

- .Within each page data is grouped by Topic
- .The topics are those used within the LDS Family History Library catalogue
- .This works reasonably well, although some terms are American
- .The topics are designed around their library content and sometimes don't quite fit with UK genealogical information

Page structure

- .We have some different page types according to data
- .The primary ones are the place pages but there are also, church pages, gazetteer entries and a large number of plain pages typically used when there is too much information to comfortably fit in a place page
- .On place pages we like to have a map showing where places are surrounded by short-cuts to topics
- .Then a quote from an old gazetteer or directory
- .At the top of the pages are menus to help navigate round the system, look for churches or use our gazetteer.
- .The data can now be searched via our own search engine and there is a search box to let you do that.

Dynamic content

- .Certain page items are added to pages via drupal – as we have the location of the place
- .Location maps
- .Links to online maps
- .List of churches and cemeteries
- .Pictures of the area
- .An up-arrow next to a topic heading combines all the entries from this topic from the current and higher levels to give a fuller picture

Searching Genuki

- .Our search engine uses similar technology to Google
- .So a simple word e.g. - Bolton
- .Facets such as County to be more selective
- .Two words for any with either e.g. - Phil Stringer
- .Add quotes for a pair together e.g. - “Phil Stringer”
- .+Stringer -Phil to ignore those with Phil
- .“cuthbert lytham” ~5 for those within 5 words
- .Searches do not look at dynamic content

Churches

- .A 'church' is a congregation, not a building + cemetery
- .Denomination, dedication, dates, location, pictures, graveyard, history, records – only some data present
- .Grouped by type
- .Associated with a place page – listed there
- .Can also search by distance e.g. at top of place page
- .Can see them plotted on a map – again at page top
- .Can do selective searches

Places

- .Larger places held in our gazetteer
- .Search it to find which place page covers that area
- .Originally approx locations, most now exact. Ireland will take a lot longer
- .For small places like farms GB1900 has used old OS maps to provide over 1 million locations
- .Search via Place search on Place page – looks for names within 3 miles (default)

Maps

- .Various sites have online maps – we link to them under Maps topic – centred on that location
- .A few sites such as NLS provide map tiles that we can use to build our own maps
- .We use these via Leaflet to build our maps and use layering to enable you to switch between maps
- .Still being developed – most layers on churches and nearby places
- .Tiles not always available for all zoom levels

Boundaries

- .Mapping lets us draw lines as well as points
- .In process of adding boundaries to areas covered by place pages
- .Started using those others have made available
- .We have tools to trace over online maps but it does need maps with boundaries on them
- .For England/Wales we use Kain/Oliver and have tiled these maps. Not very precise and some errors. Can use NLS 1900 25" for more exact values but not all are present in evolving towns
- .Over time we'd like to add other boundaries


Moving on

- .Big internal job moving from Drupal 7 to Drupal 8
- .User interface will be quite similar
- .Likely that we can add more functionality
- .It will be easier to maintain as we try to simplify things
- .We are always looking for new maintainers
- .Down at the individual place/church level or specific topics
- .Need to add more links to FHS sites to indicate transcripts they have for sale/available


Award



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GENEALOGICAL STUDIES



THE
**JULIAN BICKERSTETH
MEMORIAL MEDAL**



Convocation Luncheon
Friday 19th October 2001
The Chaucer Hotel, Canterbury

