

Tracing Missing Persons



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You can download a copy of this *Guide* from
www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives

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Contents

Introduction	4
Adoption	4
Births, Marriages and Deaths	4
Census Returns	5
Company and Business Information	5
Change of Name	5
Divorce	5
Electoral Registers	6
Emigration / immigration	6
Hospitals and Mental Institutions	8
Internet search and social media sites	6
Naturalisation	7
Newspapers	7
Probate	7
Rate Books	8
Schools	8
Telephone Directories and Trade Directories	9
Useful websites	9
Sheffield Local Studies Library and Sheffield Archives facilities	11
Contact details	12

Introduction

This booklet lists sources available within Sheffield Libraries Archives and Information for tracing the whereabouts of persons in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Some of the information sources listed below contain sensitive personal data which is restricted under the Data Protection Act. For advice on how to access such information please contact Sheffield Archives.

Adoption

Sheffield Archives and Local Studies Library do not hold adoption records. For adult requests relating to Sheffield please contact: [Sheffield City Council, Adoption Support Services](#).

If adoption was arranged by court order in Sheffield, enquiries should be made to: The Legal Advisor, Sheffield Magistrates' Court, Castle Street, Sheffield S3 8LU. Tel 0114 276 0760

For unreported cases in recent history, see *Transcripts - What is available and How to Obtain Them* published in 1993 by the Lord Chancellor's Department Library Service, Supreme Court Library. A copy is available in the Sheffield Reference and Information library (ref. 347.013).

The [DirectGov](#) website has a section devoted to adoption, and provides information on how an adoption is recorded, using the adoption contact register and finding your original birth or adoption record.

For Yorkshire adoptions there is also [After Adoption Yorkshire](#).

Births, Marriages and Deaths

Index to births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales are available online via websites such as www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk. You can order copy certificates from the [General Register Office](#) (GRO)

Birth, marriage and death certificates are also available from local register offices. Sheffield Register Office is based in the Town Hall. For more information see <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/register-office.html>

Sheffield Archives holds registers of baptism (not births), marriage and burials (not deaths) from churches and chapels in the Sheffield area. To use these you need to know in which church or chapel the event took place at. For details of these registers see <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/parish-registers>

Census Returns

A population census has been undertaken every 10 years since 1801 (with the exception of 1941). They are kept confidential for 100 years so the latest you can see is 1911. Census returns record details of every citizen including name, address, age, marital status and birthplace. Those for 1911 are available online via websites such as www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk

Company and Business Information

If the person you are looking for ran their own business you can search for information on over 2 million companies via Companies House

<http://wck2.companieshouse.gov.uk/2c67c7637354134ce9c9b17b45f390a4/wcframe?name=accessCompanyInfo>

The *London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes* record details of business partnerships and bankruptcies. They can be searched online <http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk/>

Sheffield Reference and Information Library (in the Central Library) also holds business information

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/find/all/referenceinformation/intellectual-property--business-information#company>

Change of Name

From 1914 to 1952, all deed polls enrolled in the Supreme Court had to be advertised in the London Gazette. It can be searched online <http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk/>.

Supreme Court records from 2003 onwards are kept by the court:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/courts-and-tribunals/courts/queens-bench/enforcement.htm>

Prior to 2003 you need to contact the National Archives who hold the Supreme Court archives (ref. [J18](#)).

For more information about records of change of name see the guidance issued by The National Archives: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-person/changeofname.htm>

and

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/change-of-name.htm>

Divorce

There is a central register of every divorce granted by a court from 1858 onwards. The register is kept by HM Courts Service. They have produced a leaflet on how to access information on the register

http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/courtfinder/forms/D440_web_0709_e.pdf

Electoral Registers

UK electoral registers (edited versions) from 2002 onwards are available to search online on a number of website including www.192.com, www.dial192.com and www.eroll.co.uk.

Registers for Sheffield are available at Sheffield Local Studies Library. For more information see www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/electoral-registers.html

- The registers only cover the Sheffield district as it was at the time.
- The registers for areas which are now within the Sheffield boundary but which were formerly outside Sheffield, may be held by Derbyshire or West Yorkshire libraries.
- There are some gaps in coverage, as registers were not published in World War One or World War Two.
- Women over 30 were granted the vote in 1918 and almost everyone over the age of 21 could take part in an election by 1928. There were no registers compiled between 1914 and 1920 or between 1939-1945.
- Until 1969 you had to be aged 21 to be on the register. After that date, those aged 18 were included.
- From 2002 onwards people could opt out from the published version for privacy reasons.

Emigration / Immigration

You can search the Board of Trade lists of passengers arriving in the UK (up to 1960) on www.ancestry.co.uk

You can search the Board of Trade lists of passengers leaving the UK (up to 1960) on www.findmypast.co.uk

Note: there are no passenger lists after 1960. For further information see the National Archives guide to [emigration](#) and [immigration](#).

Hospitals and Mental Institutions

Sometimes registers of admission and discharge to hospitals and mental institutions are available; however, as such records contain personal sensitive data, access to them is restricted to the person to whom the information relates.

For details of Sheffield hospital archives see <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/hospital-records.html>

Internet search and Social Media Sites

Try typing in the person's name in a popular search engine such as Google and see what results you get.

Also, try other popular websites such as [Facebook](#), [Friends Reunited](#) and [My Old Mate](#).

Naturalisation

The *London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes* record details of naturalisation and changes of name. They can be searched online <http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk/>

For further information see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/naturalisation.htm>

Newspapers

The main titles available at Sheffield Local Studies Library are: *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1855 – 1986; *Sheffield Telegraph* (weekly) 1989 – date; *Sheffield Independent* 1819 – 1938 and the *Star* 1873 - date

The *Sheffield Star* and *Sheffield Telegraph* have some of their articles from the last 6 years or so available online at: <http://www.thestar.co.uk> and www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk

Some *Sheffield Star* articles from 2003 onwards are also available via www.newsuk.co.uk. Members of Sheffield Libraries and Archives can access this pay-per-view site for free using their library membership number.

Archives of some national newspapers are available on the internet, notably *The Times* (<http://archive.timesonline.co.uk>) and *The Guardian* (<http://archive.guardian.co.uk>)

Probate

There is a register of grants of probate for England and Wales kept at HM Courts and Tribunal Service at the Principal Probate Registry (London Probate Department, PRFD, First Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, 7th Floor, Holborn London, WC1V 6NP).

Local probate registries often have indexes for their areas covering the last 50 years. The Sheffield sub-registry address is P.O. Box 832, The Law Courts, 50 West Bar Sheffield, S3 8YR
http://hmctscourtfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/Search.do?court_id=526

For information on probate see <http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/courts-and-tribunals/courts/probate/copies-of-grants-wills.htm>

Rate Books

Rate books were compiled in order to keep a record of local people's rate assessment. Rates were based on an assessment of the yearly value of a property (i.e. the annual rental /rent) and were levied to pay for local services. The ratepayer was the person responsible for paying the local taxes and could be the owner or occupier of the property.

The information contained in rate books varies according to the date and type of rate collected, but rate books generally record the names of ratepayers, listed by street, and include the following details:

- Street
- House/Court number
- Name of occupier (head of household only)
- Name of owner
- Rates (amount due, received, arrears, etc.)

Some rate books from the 19th century up to 1974 are available at Sheffield Archives. For more information see www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/rate-books.html

Schools

Sheffield Archives holds records of admission to several hundred local authority schools across the city. These record the name of the pupil, address at the time of admission, names of parents or guardians, date they left the school and sometimes their subsequent school or other destination.

School register information is considered sensitive personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act and is therefore not available for general perusal. If you are not the subject of the record you are unlikely to be allowed access to the information.

For further information see <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/school-records.html>

Telephone Directories and Trade Directories

The British Telecom (BT) phone book and directory enquiries is available to search online: www.thephonebook.bt.com

Other websites such as www.192.com and www.dial192.com also hold telephone directory data.

A comprehensive collection of Sheffield telephone directories from 1960 onwards including alphabetical, classified and Yellow Pages is available at Sheffield Local Studies Library. There are a few telephone directories from before 1960. For more information see www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/trade-directories.html

Sheffield Reference and Information Library (in the Central Library) holds hard copies of telephone directories for England
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/find/all/referenceinformation/intellectual-property--business-information#company>

For worldwide telephone books try www.infobel.com

Sheffield Archives and Local Studies have trade directories (listing business and private residents) up to the mid-1970s. For more information see <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/trade-directories.html>

Sheffield Reference and Information Library (in the Central Library) holds trade directories for other parts of the country.

Useful Websites (all accessed March 2012)

Some of the services listed below require you to register (and in some cases pay a fee). We take no responsibility for the content of external websites nor do we accept responsibility for any loss or damage which may happen from using any information in this guide.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/InYourHome/SupportAtHome/DG_10030785 UK Government advice on missing persons

www.Look4them.org.uk is a joint initiative of 7 UK organisations, set up to make it easier to find help and advice (Salvation Army family Tracing Service , Missing People, AAA-NORCAP, Reunite, British Red Cross, Police service and Association of British Investigators)

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/FamilyTracing The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service

[www.barnardos.org.uk/what we do/working with former barnardos children.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/working_with_former_barnardos_children.htm)

Dr Barnardo's also holds records of many agencies which have now ceased operating, for example: The Children's Aid Society, Macpherson's Homes, Marchmont Home, Liverpool Sheltering Home, Sharmans Home

www.missingpeople.org.uk Missing People National Missing Persons Helpline

www.norcap.org.uk AAA-NORCAP (national organisation focussed entirely upon supporting adults affected by adoption)

www.reunite.org UK charity specialising in the movement of children across international borders

www.redcross.org.uk/trace British Red Cross international tracing and messaging service

www.helpmefind.org.uk web based service providing help for families, relations, friends or just passing acquaintances to get back in touch

www.theabi.org.uk Association of British Investigators

www.postadoptioncentre.org.uk supporting those involved in adoption

www.peopletracer.co.uk electoral registers, telephone books, etc.

www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/lost-trails British Legion lost trails message board service to help locate your former service comrades

www.missing-you.net free messaging service

www.around.co.uk UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and World-wide people finder website

www.findaparentorchild.co.uk/ electoral registers, telephone books, etc.

www.findermonkey.co.uk/tracing-agency professional tracing agency

www.lookup.com/about.php Lookup.com is a people search engine that makes it easy to find and connect with people online. Lookup.com is the largest online people search with more than 200 million people profiles from across the Web, including social networks and other online communities.

<http://wikiworldbook.com/trace-lost-friends-and-relatives> The People Tracing Service - message board service

Sheffield Archives and Local Studies services collect and preserve original records and printed material relating to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The information dates from the 12th century to the present and relates to Sheffield, South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire.

Included are extensive collections of books • pamphlets • photographs • church registers • newspapers • census records • minutes • diaries • films • maps • deeds • records from schools • hospitals • businesses and charities • family estates • personal papers etc.





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Adding to our collections

Sheffield Libraries and Archives seeks to preserve information about events in our city's history. If you have photographs or personal papers that may be worth preserving please consider safeguarding them for current and future generations by placing them in the care of Sheffield Libraries and Archives. It is only through the generosity of individuals and organisations that we are able to have a complete record of important events in the history of Sheffield and the nation. We are interested in photographs, flyers and posters, minutes of meetings etc. For advice on record keeping and the facilities we offer please contact Peter Evans, Archives & Local Studies Manager (pete.evans@sheffield.gov.uk or 0114 203 9397).

<p>Sheffield Local Studies Library 1st floor Central Library Surrey Street Sheffield S1 1XZ</p> <p>Tel: 0114 273 4753 Fax: 0114 273 5009</p> <p>localstudies.library@sheffield.gov.uk</p> <p>www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</p> <p>(selected) Sheffield Local Studies Library catalogue http://library.sheffield.gov.uk/uhtbin/webcat</p>	<p>Sheffield Archives</p> <p>52 Shoreham Street Sheffield S1 4SP</p> <p>Tel: 0114 203 9395 Fax: 0114 203 9398</p> <p>archives@sheffield.gov.uk</p> <p>www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</p> <p>(selected) Archives catalogues: www.calmview.eu/SheffieldArchives/CalmView and www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a</p>
<p>For 45,000 images of Sheffield: www.picturesheffield.com</p>	

	<p>www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives</p>
	<p>www.twitter.com/shefflibraries</p>
	<p>www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries</p>
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