RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY TREE.
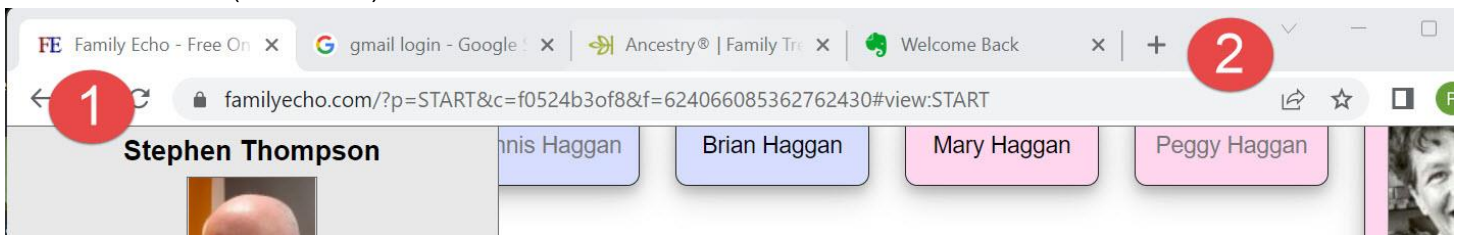
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INTRO

Middlesbrough Libraries have a licence for Ancestry. This allows you to search for your ancestors but unlike the personal paid-for account you can't store anything or create a family tree. But you can send any of your findings to yourself by email. If you don't have an email account we'll help you set one up.

As for a family tree, we've found a FREE tool to do that. In fact, we've found several free digital tools to assist you. More of that later but the first thing you should probably equip yourself with is a notebook and pen. You should also talk to relatives and get as much information about your family as you can. Dates and places etc, plus any documents and pictures you can get your hands on. The best way to get started is to open the web browser on the computer and go to the following internet address.

www.rekindle.digital/resources

This has links to everything you need as well as how to guides and videos (including this document). Clicking on any link at the above address will open the link in a new tab in the browser (see below)

The image above shows the top part of the web browser with four web pages open in "Tabs". The first tab (1) is the one currently active at your Family Echo account. The next three tabs are Gmail, Ancestry.com and your Evernote account. Tabbed browsing is really useful for Family History or any form of research as you can switch between a number of web pages (as above) and compare things, copy and paste between applications and all kinds of useful stuff. You can add a new tab by clicking the + icon (2) and then enter the web address what you want.

RESOURCES

(1) Ancestry

This is free to use at the library licence at the library. You can run searches and find documents but unlike the paid-for version, you cannot build and share a family tree. www.ancestrylibraryedition.co.uk (you must be in the library to access this)

(2) Family Echo

This free online tool helps you create and share a family tree. Used with the above, it is a helpful combination.
https://www.familyecho.com/

(3) Family Search

The Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) of Salt Lake City provide this. This is a great tool for searching for your ancestors. You can build a family tree or you can even import the tree you have created in Family Echo (above). If you find documents it will link you to where you can download them. However, you will sometimes have to pay for downloads. But - you will most probably be able to find the document to download for free at Ancestry dot com. (1) www.familysearch.org

MAKING A START

You may start with any of the three options above. To create a family tree, the place to start is with yourself and then add your parent's details. That's the foundation from which a family tree will grow. You can do this in Family Search or Family Echo but you can only do this in Ancestry if you have a subscription account. If you are using the Library's free account you will use it for research. The place to start online is www.rekindle.digital/resources

We had a discussion about Latter Day Saints Family Search versus Family Echo for building a family tree. There are swings and roundabouts. LDS Family Search affords research opportunities that Family Echo does not. Also with LDS you may stumble on an ancestor that is already on the system which could open up a link going back hundreds of years. On the other hand LDS is one giant family tree and you may find someone else edits part of the tree you are linked to and the edit is incorrect of destructive. On the other hand Family Echo belongs to you and you control it. You can also share the Family Tree you've created with a link. As far as I can see you can't do that with the LDS site.

So make your choice. Possibly using both is a good idea.

DIGITAL TOOLS FOR FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

There are a number of tools and processes that can help you in your efforts

Copying and Pasting

Copying and pasting and pasting is really useful and you can do it on a computer, a tablet of a smartphone. There is a separate document explaining copying and pasting and there is also a video here: www.vimeo.com/720023029 explaining copying and pasting on a tablet or smartphone. This is particularly useful if you should come up with a wealth of information. It could take you ages to write it all down. But you could copy it and paste the info into an email or a personal digital notebook like EVERNOTE or a GOOGLE DOC. Evernote and Google Docs are both free. See below.

Evernote

Evernote is a digital note taking application. It is really useful in the Library situation because if you make a discovery on Ancestry dot com just ten minutes before the library closes, you might struggle to write this all down in your paper notebook. However you can "copy and paste" (see above) into your Evernote digital notebook in a trice. See separate document and/or videos here: www.vimeo.com/showcase/9594158

Google Docs

Google Docs is another way to digitally store the results of your research on Ancestry dot com. It may be harder to organise and retrieve information than on Evernote but it does afford some possibilities for collaboration. See separate document.

Blogger

You may not want to create a traditional family tree but instead you may wish to create a "family collection". By that we mean an online collection of stories and pictures. You can also structure these stories in chronological order too. Blogger is a great free tool in which to do this. A separate document describes how. There is an example here:

[Steve's Ancestors (stevesancestors.blogspot.com)](stevesancestors.blogspot.com)

Pixlr
Pixlr is an online photo editor very much along the lines of the industry standard Photoshop. On a basic level imagine you have a picture of your gran and grandad. You want to create two head and shoulder shots of each of them to add to your family tree. Pixlr can do this for you. See separate document.

Google PhotoScan

We can use a smartphone or tablet to digitize pictures. Now, photos of photos can be a bit iffy but the photoscan app from google performs a little bit of magic. It is available for both Apple and Android devices.

www.apple.co/3QOL8SY
www.bit.ly/foto-scan

There is a video about this here: https://vimeo.com/740887021

Bitly

If you've created a family tree at Family Echo you'll find that the web address (URL) is rather long. With Bitly you can make it quite short and memorable making it easier to share with friends and family.

Eg the PhotoScan link above was originaly

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.photos.scanner&gl=GB&pli=1

This is much easier www.bit.ly/foto-scan and they both go to the same place. See separate document for guidance on using Bitly.