

**BMSGH Bromsgrove  
Branch Briefing  
Editor Mike Fisher  
Tuesday 10th November 2015 at 7.45 p.m.**

## **“Writing Your Family History”**

**by Society Member, Professional Genealogist & Author**

**Mike Sharpe**

You know you ‘should’ do it, so why haven’t you? Mike looks at various approaches to writing and presenting a family history, both in print and online. He describes how to build basic facts about your family into an engaging narrative; how to enrich this story from genealogical and historical sources; and how to deal with non-text elements, such as photographs, documents and maps. Finally, he will give some tips on writing your own life story.

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*National Register taken on 29th September 1939*

Advice for searching from “Lost Cousins”-

Use the Advanced search - it'll save you time

Middle names are not shown, only initials (even though it would appear that full middle names were recorded on the original household schedules)

Closed records are NOT indexed, so will not show up in searches, nor will people who were in army barracks or similar institutions (for example, Alan Turing is not listed because by September 1939 he was already at Bletchley Park)

You'll be asked if you want to 'unlock' the record - this is the point at which the 60 credits are deducted; in return you get to see a transcription of the 'open' entries in the household, and the image of the register page

The register pages are like the enumerators' summaries that we see for the censuses up to 1901 - the entries have been copied from the schedules completed by the householders, so we don't get to see our ancestors' handwriting (on the other hand we see a whole page of entries, up to 44 - but on average 14 of these will be closed at launch) P.T.O.

I searched for free for my grandfather Abel Fisher in with Birmingham and got no results but searching for Fisher in the road I knew gave three hits :- Abvel J Fisher, Sarah F Fisher & Nancy W Bartlett (Fisher) with correct birth years. Nancy didn't marry until 1942 so the surname is information added at a later date. Clicking on preview for one of these give their details plus the fact that there were two more people on this record and two more people who are officially closed.

Nancy W Bartlett (Fisher) was born in 1912 is included but as it is covered by the exact date of your search 100 years from date of birth unless they are dead rule. To see people who died less than 100 years ago will require proof of death to be given to the National Archives. If you subscribe to findmypast you to do it via their site but you will need a to upload a copy of the death certificate.

### ***Why your male relative may not appear in the register.***

The Military Training Act of 27 April 1939 responded to Hitler's threat of aggression in Europe. All British men aged 20 and 21 who were fit and able were required to take six months' military training. Even so, when war broke out the British Army could muster only 897,000 men, compared to France's five million.

Another act of parliament was necessary to increase the numbers. The National Service (Armed Forces) Act made all able men between the ages of 18 and 41 liable for conscription; as part of the legislation it was decided that single men would be called to war before married men.

Men aged 20 to 23 were required to register on 21 October 1939 - the start of a long and drawn-out process of registration by age group, which only saw 40-year-olds registering in June 1941.

By the end of 1939 more than 1.5 million men had been conscripted to join the British armed forces. Of those, just over 1.1 million went to the British Army and the rest were split between the Royal Navy and the RAF.

***December meeting on the 8th is "Quiz Night with Festive Refreshments"***

***Mike Fisher***

## ***Re 1939 Register posted on a Rootsweb mailing list***

Between 1987 and 1990 I spent a lot of time working with, what was by then called, the NHS Register. The discussion about computerizing patient records had begun and I spent some time explaining the need for a unique identifier and pointing out that the current NHS Numbers would not work. (I will not give you're the technical details!).

The 1939 Register was used as the basis for the NHS Register. The records were kept up to date because they showed which patient was allocated to which GP. When a patient died the GP was supposed to return their medical file and as a consequence would have their capitation fees reduced. (You might see a reason there why some of them did not report deaths.) If a patient died in hospital, or in other circumstances, the GP might not have known about the death and the patient would remain on their books until there was some kind of audit (a rare occurrence!). The level of inflation in capitation fees was estimated as being between 10% and 30%. No one would do anything about it for fear of upsetting the doctors. (When the NHS started someone asked how the doctors had been persuaded to join and was told by the politician in charge "We stopped their mouths with gold!")

Linking death registrations to the register may have been attempted but it is fraught with problems. Deaths are often reported by people with little real knowledge of the deceased. (My grandfather registered the death of someone who had taken in grandma when her parents died and reported the age as 101. He would have had no idea of her age. She might have been about 80!) Doctors and care workers often know only what the person has told them and exaggerating you age is not uncommon. For married women there will be no clues to their birth name and lots of people change or misspell their own names. You only have to look at the census records to see how mangled a name can get when the recorder has only heard it and the speaker cannot read.

My expectations of this new data set were pretty low. It might help you find A date of birth but I know all of my direct family ones for this period from Grandma's Birthday Book. Bear in mind that this set suffers from the transcription errors of the original recorders as well as those introduced by FMP.