

Who lived in my house before me?



Here are some research tips to get you going if you're curious about knowing who lived in your house before you moved in.

The 1939 Register - your house's inhabitants at the eve of World War II

On 29 September 1939 enumerators visited every household in Britain, taking down details of each civilian in the country. The information was used immediately to issue identity cards and later helped with decisions about conscription and rationing, and the founding of the NHS. You can find out (for free) who was recorded as living in your house at in 1939 on [this page](#) in FindMyPast. Some records may not be available (e.g. if the inhabitant would be younger than 100 years old today).

Electoral registers

Electoral registers are helpful if whoever lived in your house before you was eligible to vote (this has changed considerably over the last 100 years). FindMyPast has digital records of the 1832-1965 electoral registers. [FindMyPast](#) is a paid subscription site.

Your title deeds

Your house title deeds, usually kept by you or the solicitor who handled the sale of the property, should have details of each buyer and seller during the history of the house and may even

record details of who owned the land the house was originally built on.

Street and trade directories

Trade directories can help you to pinpoint former inhabitants or even point to a change of use – perhaps your home was once a shop! You can find a range of online directories for Warwickshire and Birmingham (both cover Sutton Coldfield) at the University of Leicester [here](#). Access to these is free.

The census

The census is a great source of name, age, occupation and place of birth for the inhabitants of your home in years gone by. The first census of use for this purpose is 1841 and they have been taken every ten years since (with the exception of 1941). Because of privacy rules, the most recent census you can access is 1911.

Many subscription website offer access to censuses (e.g Ancestry, FindMyPast and The Genealogist). However you could try [FreeCen](#), a free website with census information, where coverage for Warwickshire is particularly good for the 1891 census. Ancestry and FindMyPast both offer free 14 day trails.

Whatever details you find out about past residents of your home, please do tell their stories at the [Telling Sutton's Stories website](#).