

Genealogy Report 1st December 2022

Worldwide Family Trees

The big family history websites – FamilySearch, Ancestry, MyHeritage etc – have millions of family trees entered into their databases by their members building their individual family trees. The websites realised that these family trees must often intersect at common ancestors and that they could help their members by compiling the information into a global family tree, provided the member agrees. This information may be so-called ‘vital statistics’, such as birth dates, or the children of distant uncles or aunts whose descendants are cousins of the member.

For example I knew the burial date, 26 October 1699, in the Hexham registers of Richard Swindel, my earliest known Swindell (etc) ancestor, but I did not know where or when he was baptised. The FamilySearch Family Tree had a baptism date of 10 December 1643 at Hexham discovered by another researcher in a manuscript copy of the registers which has never been microfilmed, much less published on-line.

If you have a family tree on FamilySearch, either entered manually or by uploading a GEDCOM file, you can compare your entries with the global FamilySearch Family Tree. If your ancestor already exists in FamilySearch Family Tree you can compare the information available; if not, you can add your ancestor to the global tree so as to be available for any other researcher.

Ancestry does not provide a global family tree as such but if an individual in your family tree matches an individual in another family tree Ancestry will provide you with genealogical ‘hints’ based on information in the other tree.

MyHeritage partners with Geni to provide a global family tree similar to that on FamilySearch. Geneanet also features a global family tree. WikiTree and WeRelate invite you to add ancestors directly into a single family tree with features to avoid duplication and to merge any duplicates which nonetheless result.

These worldwide family trees are a very good way to collaborate with other researchers but do involve significant work to re-enter your research results into just one tree, much less several.

The next meeting of the Genealogy Group will be on Thursday 5th December at 2 p.m. at Enterprise House and the topic will be ‘Smiths’ – the occupation rather than the name.