

- 1  **My ancestor was a shopkeeper**  
Sources in the Library of the Society of Genealogists & elsewhere
- 2  What is involved in being a shopkeeper?
  - Apprenticeship if specialised skills are involved
  - Long, unsocial hours
  - Energy, self-motivation & ability to work hard
  - Business acumen & capital to start the business
  - Numeracy: handling cash, accounts & book-keeping
  - Communication skills & literacy
  - Organisational skills: planning ahead, ordering stock
  - Marketing skills
  - Strength if stock is heavy
  - Family members or partners to share the load
- 3  On-line catalogues, photograph & picture collections
  - Go to [www.britishlibrary.net/catalogues.html](http://www.britishlibrary.net/catalogues.html) or [www.familia.org.uk](http://www.familia.org.uk) to find national, academic & public library resources on-line
- 4  Access to Archives: [www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)
  - Search for “shop keeper”
- 5  The National Archives (formerly PRO)
  - PROCAT can be searched for occupations as well as names
- 6  The British Library catalogue: <http://catalogue.bl.uk>
  - Search by keyword for particular trades
- 7  Occupational sources
  - Occupational sources for genealogists 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. by Stuart Raymond. FFHS, 1996
  - Company & business records for family historians by Eric Probert. FFHS, 1994
  - Try a Google search for trade AND history
- 8  Scottish occupational sources, by D R Torrance
- 9  Trade manuals, encyclopaedias & how to do it books
- 10  ASLIB directories: Libraries, museums & institutions
- 11  The SoG library catalogue: [www.sog.org.uk/sogcat](http://www.sog.org.uk/sogcat)
  - Click on the down arrow in the “Look for:” box & choose SU (Subject), then type in the first 5 or 6 letters of the occupation eg. Shoemaker, cordwainer etc.
- 12  The SoG library catalogue: Marking items of interest
  - Click in the boxes to the left of the item of interest, then click on “Find”
- 13  The SoG library catalogue: the results of the search
  - Top right is the number of titles & pages in the list. Click on page numbers to move about in the list. Print any or all by marking the check boxes & then clicking on the green printer symbol
- 14  Apprentices of Great Britain 1710-1811
  - Index including masters 1710-74
  - Index gives year of indenture, name of apprentice (pre-c.1750 name of father or widowed mother, their

- address & occupation), name, address & trade of master
  - Index on British Origins
- 15  Original apprenticeship indentures collection
  - 16  City of London Livery Company apprentices
    - Indexes to apprenticeship records of the City of London Livery Companies
    - Also on British Origins web site
  - 17  Newspaper sources
    - Palmer's index to the Times 1790-1905 or Times Digital Archive on-line at [www.galeuk.com/times](http://www.galeuk.com/times)
    - The Colindale on-line catalogue at [www.bl.uk/catalogues/newspapers](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/newspapers)
    - The NEWSPLAN reports
    - Indexes of local papers on the web & held locally
  - 18  Local newspapers
  - 19  Colindale catalogue: looking for trade papers
    - Search for "butcher\*" before 1900 doesn't find much
  - 20  Colindale catalogue: try different keywords
    - Search for "meat" before 1900 finds the main title
  - 21  Trade newspapers
    - Obituaries & details of wills
    - Court cases
    - Biographical features on notable individuals
    - Reports of regional & local trade organisation meetings
    - News reports
    - Job adverts & positions sought
    - Bankruptcies & dissolved partnerships
    - Businesses & products for sale
  - 22  Occupations: craft or trade guilds
    - Guilds originated in the 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries to regulate crafts or trades
    - Some large towns had many guilds eg. 13 in Richmond, Yorkshire
    - Special section on City of London livery companies
    - Surviving records listing masters & apprentices can be located by contacting local record offices
  - 23  Boyd's inhabitants of London – 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries but strongest for 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>
  - 24  Livery Companies of the City of London
  - 25  Links to Livery Company web sites
  - 26  Schools & charities set up by Livery Companies
    - Often set up initially to help the widows or children of members
    - Later they usually became less restricted & were open to all applicants
  - 27  School, college & university registers & histories
    - Published guide lists mainly grammar & public school registers & histories held in the SoG library
    - Also registers & histories of most British universities & colleges down to 19<sup>th</sup> century including Aberdeen, Glasgow & Dublin
  - 28  Local history societies past & present
    - The family & local history handbook ed. by Robert Blatchford. 12<sup>th</sup> edn. 2009

- The British Association for Local History [www.balh.co.uk](http://www.balh.co.uk)
  - Monographs & journals at the SoG, in the local studies library for the area or on the British Library catalogue
- 29  Local history magazines
- This example is from *Bygone Kent*, November 2005
  - It traces over 100 years of the history of a fishmonger, poultry & game shop in Herne Bay
  - Included are photos of the shop & its owners over the years, adverts, interviews with people who worked there etc.
- 30  Hobbies: Local clubs & societies
- Local studies libraries & archives should hold information on clubs & societies which existed in the area
  - Eg. Lewisham holds records of the Bellingham Bowling Club 1911-87, Catford Cycling Club 1886-1990 etc.
- 31  Publishers of old photos of the locality
- Commercial publishers eg. Sutton, Chalford
  - Local studies libraries will probably publish postcards or books of old photos & hold collections of many more
- 32  Sources for photos on the Internet
- The Frith collection: [www.francisfrith.com](http://www.francisfrith.com)
- 33  Sources for photos on the Internet: London
- Photo London: [www.photolondon.org.uk](http://www.photolondon.org.uk)
- 34  Collage: prints of places
- Collage image database: [www.collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk)
- 35  Photos & prints from a local studies library
- 36  Printed ephemera: billheads & advertising leaflets
- 37  Large scale maps & plans
- Large scale maps & plans can show outbuildings eg. Carriage house & stables for delivery vehicle if clientelle was well to do
  - Land registry &/or local council planning applications for deeds & plans
- 38  Maps
- Town & county maps eg. those produced by The London Topographical Society
  - This example shows WWII bomb damage map made by the LCC
  - 19<sup>th</sup> & early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey maps
- 39  Pre 1841 census returns & census substitutes at SoG
- Search catalogue under the place name
- 40  Free access to 1841-1901 censuses
- English, Welsh & Scottish censuses on Ancestry
  - Indexing not as accurate as Origins & Findmypast
  - When all else fails try FHS indexes!
- 41  Directories & poll books in the SoG library
- 42  Town & district directories
- Directories can be used to find addresses for people on censuses which have not yet been indexed

- They can chart/confirm an ancestor's occupation & their business address
  - Don't forget to check the advertisement section – shopkeepers sometimes paid to be included especially in the smaller, local directories
- 43  Rare business directories
- Robinson & Pike's directories of British towns & cities published in the 1890s
  - Eg. "The business dates back to the year 1746 & during the whole of its career it has remained in the same family. The original founder was Mr Joseph Whitely, who was succeeded by Charles Whitely & he in turn by his son Robert, who, on taking his son Frederick into partnership altered the firm's name to R Whitely & Son..."
- 44  Directories elsewhere & on-line
- The University of Leicester's digitised directories on-line at [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org) can be searched by keyword
  - Other good collections of directories are held at the British Library, Guildhall Library & local libraries & archives
- 45  The neighbourhood & customers
- Census returns, directories & local histories also tell you about the area & customers served
  - In London for the 1890s & Edwardian period use the Booth notebooks held at the LSE but published & indexed on the web at <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>
  - Published in book form for SE London only
- 46  Shopfronts
- The best shops had their name in elaborate lettering (often gilded) above the window & sometimes gas lamps to illuminate the shop at night
  - Plate glass windows, blinds to protect the stock from the sun, coloured tiles & elaborate window displays
  - NB The hand cart in this picture – used for deliveries
- 47  Living over the shop: layout of a high street business
- 48  The small general shop
- Often run by women to support themselves or add to family income
  - Premises could be a ground floor front room in the house or a semi basement
  - Stock could include tea, sugar, soap, bread, flour, eggs cheese, bacon, onions, salt, fire wood, jam, milk, sweets, cigarettes, washing powder, ginger beer, cakes
- 49  Buying stock: shopkeepers selling fresh produce
- In large cities like London a weekly or bi-weekly trip to a market very early in the morning
  - Fishmongers to Billingsgate
  - Butchers to Smithfield
  - Fruit, veg. & flower sellers to Covent Garden
  - Introduction of freezers & chillers reduced spoilage of perishable goods
- 50  Buying stock: shopkeepers selling services/dry goods
- Eg. Hairdressers, tailors, tobacconists
  - Wholesale warehouses, importers & travelling salesmen working for trade suppliers
  - Mail order from catalogues or trade magazine adverts
- 51  Deliveries
- 52  Working all hours: the early closing movement
- Sir John Lubbock campaigned to reduce the hours of shopworkers
  - Shops often opened between 7-8am & closed between 10-11pm on weekdays or midnight on

- Saturdays
  - Some shops were open on Sunday as well!
- 53  Working conditions in the 1890s
  - Life & labour of the people in London by Charles Booth
  - Describes each trade & the work involved in it
  - Living & working conditions
  - Occupational hazards & diseases
  - Wages & training
  - With adjustments, relevant to the rest of Britain
- 54  Occupational hazards & illnesses
  - “Mad as a hatter” from the use of mercury
  - Butchers: hernias, back strain, minor amputations
  - Bakers: hernias, back strain, lung diseases, alcoholism
- 55  Trade associations
  - Reports of meetings & special events, often including names of those present, should be printed in trade magazines
  - Controversial subject matter at meetings may be reported almost verbatim eg. arguments over Early Closing Bill 1895-96, proposals to expel German members on outbreak of WWI
- 56  Pillars of the community
  - Supporters of local charities
  - Churchwardens etc of churches & chapels
  - Directors of local schools
  - Members of other local institutions
  - Town councillors
  - Freemasons
- 57  My ancestor was a freemason by Pat Lewis
  - Some lodges were formed for specific occupations but have since generalised:
  - Bakers: Cerealia, Cerepania, Aurea Ceres lodges
  - Tobacconists: Sir Walter Raleigh Lodge
  - Furniture trade: Sheraton
  - Fishmongers: Billingsgate
  - Drapers: Mercurius
  - Undertakers: Acacia
- 58  The library & museum of Freemasonry: <http://freemasonry.london.museum/>
  - Free information if you have a lodge name or number
  - NB. Links under Resources can be searched by place
  - A search without this detail costs £30 (non-refundable)
  - Information normally included is age, address, occupation, date of joining & possibly date of death
- 59  Insurance records: Goad maps
  - British Library
  - Guildhall Library (London maps on Collage web site)
  - Cover most important towns & cities of the British Isles from 1885
  - Scale: 1 in to 40 ft shows individual businesses
- 60  Insurance records: Sources at the Guildhall Library
  - Sun 1710-1863; index of names 1714-31; on-line index of names 1816-33 available on A2A web site
  - Royal Exchange 1753-59, 1773-1883

- Index to Sun & Royal Exchange 1775-87
  - Hand in Hand 1696-1865 (only London indexed)
  - Article on fire insurance registers: FH Monthly Oct 2005
- 61  Investors: unclaimed money & property [TB/MR]
- 62  Investors
- Tontines & Annuities
  - Bank of England stock 1717-1845 [index on British Origins web site]
  - Great Western Railway 1835-1932 [index on findmypast website]
- 63  Voters: poll books & voters lists
- Show name & occupation &/or address & candidate voted for
  - Town & city poll books are more likely to give occupations & contain many shopkeepers after 1832
  - They may not reveal your ancestors political beliefs
- 64  Taxpayers
- Local rate books show both owners & occupiers & describe the property on which rate is paid
  - Government taxes eg Estate Duty
- 65  Assize courts & Quarter Sessions records
- Assizes = senior county courts. Records mostly in Latin pre-1733
  - Most records are at TNA, usually in class ASSI
  - Search the SoG catalogue for the subject (COUNTY) – GENERAL:ASSIZES
- 66  Quarter Sessions records
- Quarter sessions dealt with less serious matters than Assizes
  - Pre-1733 partly in Latin
  - Quarter Sessions records... by J Gibson. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. FFHS, 1995
  - Search SOGCAT for published indexes to Quarter Sessions
- 67  London, Belfast & Edinburgh Gazettes:
- [www.gazettes.co.uk/](http://www.gazettes.co.uk/)
- The gazettes were the official government publications for bankruptcies, medals & promotions in the armed forces, naturalisations, changes of name by deed poll etc.
  - Years available:- London Gazette 1665-2009, Edinburgh Gazette 1796-2009, Belfast Gazette 1922-2009
- 68  The National Burial Index on CD & online
- 69  Boyd's London burials: adult males 1538-c.1853
- 70  Monumental (tombstone) inscriptions
- Monumental inscriptions of St. Matthew Ipswich privately printed in 1884 & supplemented by information from the parish registers
  - ...”The Monuments are numerous, ... some few stones are quite illegible, whilst many can be read only by a practiced eye..”
- 71  Wills – country wide sources
- Canterbury Prerogative Court (PCC) indexes 1383-1858
  - Bank of England will extracts 1717-1845
  - Estate Duty will indexes 1796-1857
  - Principal Probate Registry indexes 1858-1930
  - Scottish Commissariat Court will indexes 1500-1901 on [www.scottishdocuments.com](http://www.scottishdocuments.com),

Services of heirs 1700-1859, Estates of Defuncts 1846-67

- Irish will abstracts & indexes 16-19 centuries

- 72  English & Welsh wills & administrations 1858-1930
- Separate yearly sequences for wills & admons. in early years
  - Details include: name, address, date of death, where will was proved, name of executor & relationship to deceased
- 73  Bank of England wills 1717–1845 on film, indexed on British Origins web site
- 74  Documents on-line web site for PCC wills 1384-1858
- [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline)
  - Search by name, occupation, place or keyword
- 75  Probate jurisdictions by J Gibson & E Churchill. 5<sup>th</sup> edn. FFHS, 2002. & SoG holdings booklet. 1996
- 76  The Phillimore atlas & index of parish registers
- Maps of English, Welsh & Scottish counties as in 1832 showing ancient parishes & the church courts which had jurisdiction over them
- 77  My ancestor was a shopkeeper  
Due to be published in 2010