VOLUNTEER INDUCTION HANDBOOK

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Updated: July 2017

About Us

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Our Mission:

Free UK Genealogy provides free, online access to family history records. We believe that Open Data and Open Source are key to making and keeping public records accessible to all. We work with others with the same concerns.

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Our History

Free UK Genealogy is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) acting as an umbrella organisation for **FreeBMD**, **FreeREG** and **FreeCEN**.
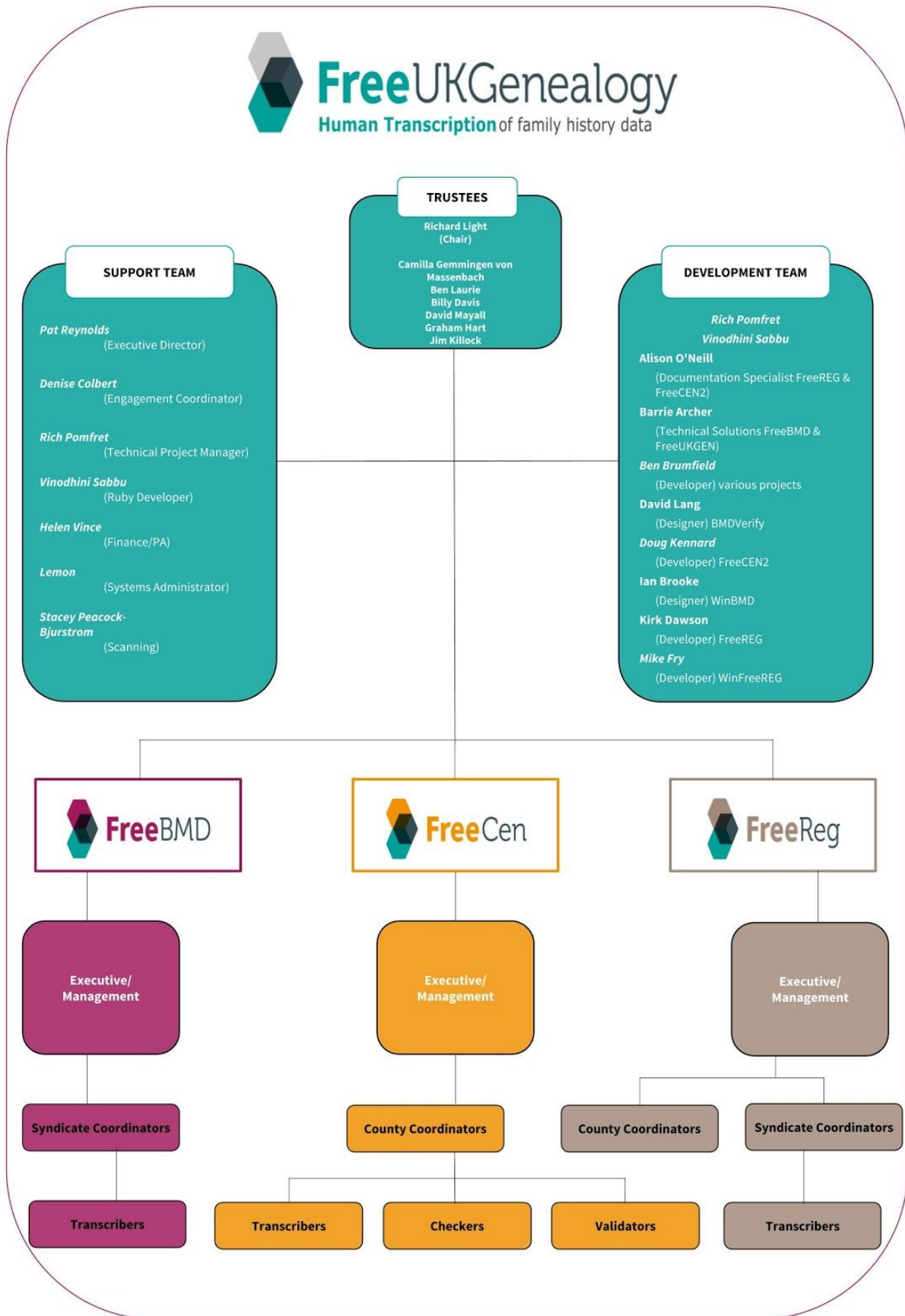
FreeBMD was founded in 1998 by Ben Laurie, Graham Hart and Camilla Gemmingen von Massenbach after they realised the potential that the online genealogy community had to make records accessible to support research. Volunteers came together online to transcribe the General Register Office (GRO) indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths for England and Wales.

Work continues to complete a transcription database covering the indexes from 1837 to 1983. All three founders are still actively involved with supporting and managing the organisation. In 2003 the organisation registered as a charity under the name FreeBMD. In 2014 we changed the name to Free UK Genealogy which better reflected our aims, and in 2016 we became a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation).

Our Structure

We work with teams of dedicated volunteers to create high quality transcriptions of public records from governmental sources, parish churches, and other trusted institutions. A board of Trustees, Advisory Board, and a small support team provide the governance and reinforce the work of the volunteers.

Organisational Structure:

FreeUKGenealogy
Human Transcription of family history data

SUPPORT TEAM

Pat Reynolds
(Executive Director)

Denise Colbert
(Engagement Coordinator)

Rich Pomfret
(Technical Project Manager)

Vinodhini Sabbu
(Ruby Developer)

Helen Vince
(Finance/PA)

Lemon
(Systems Administrator)

Stacey Peacock-Bjurstrom
(Scanning)

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Rich Pomfret

Vinodhini Sabbu

Alison O'Neill
(Documentation Specialist FreeREG & FreeCEN2)

Barrie Archer
(Technical Solutions FreeBMD & FreeUKGEN)

Ben Brumfield
(Developer) various projects

David Lang
(Designer) BMDVerify

Doug Kennard
(Developer) FreeCEN2

Ian Brooke
(Designer) WinBMD

Kirk Dawson
(Developer) FreeREG

Mike Fry
(Developer) WinFreeREG

FreeBMD

Executive/ Management

Syndicate Coordinators

Transcribers

FreeCen

Executive/ Management

County Coordinators

Transcribers **Checkers** **Validators**

FreeReg

Executive/ Management

County Coordinators **Syndicate Coordinators**

Transcribers

Core and Project Executive / Management Volunteers:

FreeUKGenealogy

Core Volunteers

AdSense & SEO - Anna Klepacka

Adwords - Mike Liapis

SEO - Nicola Rubino

Craft/Website - Bev Yu

Design - Lindsey Price & Sonia Vera

Social Media - Simone Bonnett

Partner Research - Matthew Titchener & Suzanne Maitland-Wood

FreeBMD

Allan Raymond (Syndicate & Volunteer Coordinator & Administration)

--*Also*--

Barrie Archer (Quality Assurance Coordinator, document/web editor)

Martin Cope (District Alias Team Coordinator)

FreeCen

Brenda Bowers (Chair)

--*Also*--

Rena Mitchell

Chris Mahoney (Communications Coordinator)

FreeReg

Stephen Biggs (Acting Chair)

Eric Dickens (Coordinators / Technical)

--*Also*--

Eric Booker (Database Data Manager)

Mick Claxton (Transcription Data)

Jo Summerfield (Transcribers / Training)

Sandra Adams -West (Communications Coordinator)

Bob WIlkins (Deputy Comms Coordinator)

Free UK Gen's volunteers have made available:

- 300,000,000 births, marriages and deaths
- 37,000,000 records from parish registers
- 30,000,000 individuals from census data, from 1841 to 1891

We make the databases we create freely available for people to search in order to support their family history research. Unlike many sites, which are 'pay-to-view' after an initial search is carried out, our databases are completely free to search and view.

Our Projects

Our records are currently divided into three separate projects:

FreeBMD provides free access to births, marriage and deaths records. This resource is ideal for those beginning their family history research. The recording of births, marriages and deaths was started in 1837 and is one of the most significant resources for genealogical research. The transcribing of the records is carried out by teams of dedicated volunteers and contains index information for the period 1837-1983.

FreeCEN offers a free, online database of the 19th century UK census returns. Census data can provide the full name, exact age, relationship to head of household, sex, occupation, parish and county of birth, medical disabilities and employment status of an individual. Later census years have more information. FreeCEN are currently working on the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, and 1891 census.

FreeREG houses our parish and nonconformist registers of baptisms, marriages and burials. The recording of non-civic registers began in England and Wales in 1538; this is separate and distinct from the civil registration process that began in 1837. We are currently developing a new version of FreeREG, which is halfway through its transformation. This will be a template for the future development of FreeBMD and FreeCEN.

Volunteering with us

Support and training

You will have a primary Point of Contact (PoC) for your volunteering role, and possibly a secondary PoC also. They will support you in settling into your work, supplying and facilitating any relevant training for the tasks you will be doing. Your PoC should be your first port of call for any minor issues you may encounter.

Working remotely, it's really important to be able to get in touch with your team / colleagues when you need to. You'll be in email contact with your PoC and some volunteer roles will include regular online meetings or 'catch ups' via Google hangout; these may be held weekly, fortnightly or at intervals appropriate to the work you're doing.

If you fulfil more than one role, you could have more than one PoC. For example if you are a transcriber your PoC for that role may be your County Coordinator, but if you are also a deputy Comms Coordinator, your PoC for that role would be the Comms Coordinator.

Using Google Apps & Hangouts

Free UK Genealogy uses Google apps for administration and communication. G Suite (formerly Google Apps for Business) gives us the facility to create Free UK Gen email addresses in the format your.name@freeukgenealogy.org.uk, which are managed exactly like a regular Gmail account. If you would like one of these we can set one up for you; the benefit of this is that it keeps all of your emails, calendar events and documents etc. under one roof, and hangouts are are generally easier and better quality.

You can access your arranged hangouts via your email invitation or through your Google calendar. If you are unsure about using hangouts, let your Point of Contact know and they will set up a short trial before your first meeting.

Hangout tips:

- Hangouts work best in Chrome. The Firefox 52 release isn't equipped for hangouts at the moment, but Google are working on a solution.

- If you have a Gmail/Gsuite account, use that for hangouts. Ask the person setting up the meeting to use that address to invite you to the meeting.

- Feedback can be a problem in hangouts; to reduce the potential for this, use a headset/earphones if possible and place your device on a hard surface.

- It's good hangout etiquette to keep your microphone muted when you're not speaking- but do remember to turn it on when you are! This also reduces any feedback we may experience.

- If you experience quality issues, turning off your camera reduces bandwidth and often helps alleviate the problem.

- If problems persist, try using a different browser to enter the hangout.

Useful PC keyboard shortcuts for hangouts:

Shortcut	Keyboard keys
Turn camera on or off	Ctrl + e
Mute or unmute your microphone	Ctrl + d

The full list- including Mac shortcuts- can be found here:
https://support.google.com/hangouts/answer/3112005?hl=en-GB

During a hangout, you can chat and also share your screen with the others in the meeting.

In the top left corner of the hangout screen, you'll see a 'chat' bubble. Clicking on this will open the group chat facility where you can chat (useful if sound is poor) and share links, documents etc.

Below the chat icon is the screenshare button; it looks like a green screen with an arrow inside.
To share your screen, click on this button and choose how you'd like to present; either showing your application window or the entire screen.
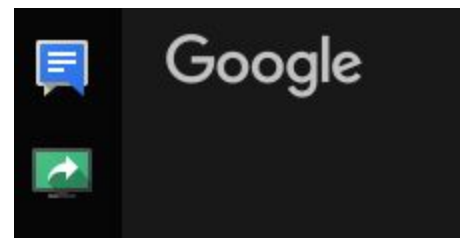
Using Google products:

We find Google's products great for creating our communications, including **Google Docs** (word processing), **Sheets** (spreadsheets), **Slides** (presentations), **Forms** (surveys, questionnaires) and **Draw** (flowcharts, mock-ups etc.).

Most of these allow you to work collaboratively with others. There are two main ways; Commenting and Suggesting.

Commenting:

Wherever your cursor is on the page or when you have highlighted something, you will see a comment bubble to the right:


Click on this to add your comment. You can tag collaborators using @their_email_address, and also assign tasks to them

Please Note: Comments are not automatically saved: you must click on the 'Comment' button, pressing enter is not enough

Suggesting:

When working on a file, in the top right of the screen you will see some options like this:

Click on 'Share' to allow people to view, comment on or edit the file.
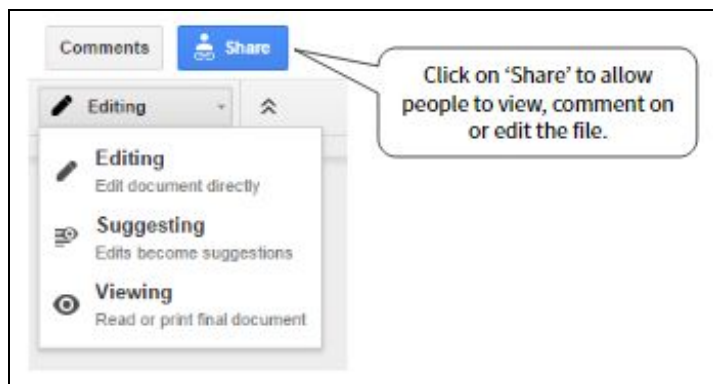
Select 'Suggesting' mode from the drop-down menu to make suggestions for edits.

NB- If you are responding to an email with more than one person contributing, and you want it to go to everyone- please remember to hit 'Reply All'

Absence

Please let your primary PoC know if you're unable to volunteer for a time. This will depend on the kind of volunteering your doing. For example, if you are a transcriber- please let us know if you're taking a long holiday lasting several months. If you are in a role that handles enquiries, please tell your PoC and deputy (if appropriate) as soon as is reasonable, to help us keep things ticking over smoothly.

Copyright

On very rare occasions there can be confusion about who owns something and the copyright around it, when created during the course of a volunteer opportunity. Just for clarity, all written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which is made or acquired by you during the course of your involvement with us is our property and our copyright.

How to claim expenses

Ensure you are familiar with Free UK Gen's [Volunteer Expenses policy](). The claim form is attached to the policy.

To claim, forward the email authorising the expenditure, along with the completed claim form and evidence to [helen.vince@freeukgenealogy.org.uk](), with [pat.reynolds@freeukgenealogy.org.uk]() cc'd.

Evidence may take the form of scans/photos of any tickets, receipts etc., fowarded / screenshotted email receipts or confirmations.

Policies

[Risk Assessment]()
[Equal Opportunities]()
Code of Conduct - To follow
[Privacy Notice]()
[Social Media]()
[Volunteer Expenses]()

Dealing with Problems

What to do with any concerns

We want your time spent volunteering with us to be happy, productive and issue-free. However if you do have concerns or grievances, rest assured we will deal with them expeditiously.

In the first instance, where possible and practicable, issues should be raised with your Point of Contact (the person who normally directs and supports you in your work, e.g. syndicate coordinator, COORD, project manager, etc.)

If this isn't possible, or if preferred, concerns or grievances can be raised with the Executive Director.

Concerns or grievances with the Executive Director should be raised with the Chair of Trustees, or in their absence, with any other Trustee.

If you have any feedback or suggested additions for this handbook, please email info@freeukgenealogy.org.uk