

Making the most of your computer

World wide websites

World Vital Records

James Taylor looks at an American website with an international reach

www.worldvitalrecords.com

World Vital Records (WVR) is an American subscription website founded in 2006. It started with just 21 online databases, but now offers over 3,000 separate databases – from all over the world and fully searchable.

The first thing you'll notice is the eclectic content: British databases include not just the usual vital records (births, marriages, and deaths in England and Wales 1837 to 1973), but censuses (England and Wales, 1861, 1881 and 1891), military records, some emigration records and – since they were British when collated – some data relating to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. There are also fragments of the 1851 census for Cork.

For Australia and Canada there are a few local town directories. Ireland is represented by a searchable index of wills from the 17th to 19th centuries, and more than 33,000 names of convicts imprisoned between 1780 and 1867, returning (where recorded) name, sex, age, trial place and date, crime, sentence and trial notes. Ireland also joins Great Britain in a series of gazetteers. Wales also gets a separate mention in the *Rural Deanery of Arlechweidd, Bangor, Caernarvonshire* records, 1541–1793.

English data is fairly specific, with a range of parish registers including: the Isle of Wight, Tamworth, and Leek. Canterbury is covered by *St Peter's 1560–1800*, the *Canterbury Catholic Register* from 1756, and *Allegations for Marriage Licences issued by the Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Canterbury 1660 to 1694*. Other assorted 'Allegations' are offered for London, Westminster, and Sudbury in Suffolk and there are various 'Visitations' for Surrey, London, Norfolk, Sussex, Cumberland, Rutland, Yorkshire, Bedfordshire, Oxford, and others.

Military information includes an *English Militia Attestations* database for the Essex Regiment, Middlesex Regiment, Suffolk Regiment and Suffolk Royal Garrison Artillery in the late 19th and

American website World Vital Records (above) includes such eclectic content as the *East Anglian Pedigrees* (right)

early 20th centuries. Other military information covers Australian, Tasmanian, and Canadian forces.

There's a separate section for family trees, including *Families Directly Descended from All the Royal Families in Europe, 495 to 1932*, as well as the *Mayflower Descendants*. The *Quintin International Collection* gets a section to itself, and you also get the *Lincolnshire Pedigrees, Volume One*, and the *East Anglian Pedigrees*.

The *Nationality Genealogy Community* pages currently replicate data from WVR but are planned to include expert and user-generated content. Some of these databases identify their source (by name only) but none give guidance on how to view or obtain the original documents.

Some of WVR's US content is provided by such big names as Everton

Publishers and The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation Inc, as well as the familiar FamilySearch.

There is no UK-only subscription, but subscription to the inclusive World database costs \$149.95 (about £75) per annum. These rates compare with Ancestry's world subscription of £199.95 (see the review in *FHM* 146).

If you have connections with America, this is a useful and ever-expanding resource, with the benefit of some 'world' content. However, some of its UK content is already accessible elsewhere on the web, though, while some is available through data CDs from UK suppliers. You need a subscription to get at WVR's detailed information, but it's worth taking a look at the publicly-available contents listing to gauge its relevance to your research.