Background:

There are different sets of records for genealogical research of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Although records are generally in English, the different historical development of these countries has resulted in individualistic procedures for establishing, maintaining and archiving data. The records for Scotland and Ireland are separate and distinct from those for England and Wales.

Administrative boundaries for some Shires have changed over the years, and some of the Shires have been consolidated and renamed recently. These changes need to be kept in mind when researching old records, since the records are identified to boundaries existing at the time they were generated.

A tremendous amount of the old records have been retained, but, in general, these are held by local organizations. England does not have a central repository. However, many records are accessible via films held by the Family History Library. Major projects are underway to digitize these records, and the amount of information available online by Ancestry.com is increasing daily. Parish Records are very important for researching vital data (b, m, d) prior to the inauguration of Civil record keeping in 1837.

Suggested Approach for Research in the British Isles:

First - Research your U.S. records for clues
Second - "Mine" overseas records that have been filmed and are available in the U.S.
Then - Plan your trip for supplemental information available only in England or Wales

References for England, Wales, Channel Islands & the Isle of Man:

Provides comprehensive description of types of records and their locations for all regions of the British Isles.

(B) GENUKI Website { http://www.genuki.org.uk } offers guidance to research in the British Isles; describes Shires (Counties) & Parishes; contains census & map resources. Also has links to many websites.
(C) **GENUKI Church Database** {http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/churchdb} provides the approximate locations of parish churches (except for Ireland).

(D) **Ancestry.com Website** {http://www.ancestry.com} (UD hookup) There are ongoing additions to the databases.

1. Census indexes and images for 1841-1901. See Footnote # 1

2. Indexes to GRO records (b m d)

3. Some Parish records

(E) **GRO Records (b m d)**
   Record keeping started in 1837
   General Register Office (London) has Register copies for all Shires (Counties)

1st Step - Search the **INDEX** to identify location of **RECORD**.
   Ancestry.com Website has indexes to Record Books
   Website {http://freebmd.rootsweb.com} (1837-1919) nearly complete & FREE
   Microfilms available at FHL (can be viewed at FHC)

b. m. d. Indexes
   There are separate index books - each quarter of each year - a separate series
   for births, marriages & deaths - i.e., 12 books for each year

   Records are found in the "Quarter" in which the event was **recorded**.
   **This may be later than the Quarter in which the event occurred.**

   Names are listed alphabetically, by surname - by given name

   Indexes list the Person's name, Registration District & Page Number for the
   record. The Death data includes "Age."

2nd Step - Obtain copy of **RECORD** from the **GRO**
   GRO has not allowed anyone to copy their files
   Need GRO form to order certificate by mail (payment in Pounds)
   Can order from U.S. on-line with credit card
   {http://www.gro.gov.uk/content}
   **Note:** May need several tries to obtain certificate for **your** ancestor
Family History Library (FHL)  \{ http://www.familysearch.org \}

(F) The International Genealogical Index (I. G. I.) is available on-line. Additionally, records are held by the FHL and FHC.

The I.G.I. often identifies baptism and marriage events; parish names and locations where these events took place; and family relationships. Also, the I.G.I. provides the microfilm reference for the event.

Also refer to Note # 2 regarding Parish Registers.

(G) FHL Library Catalog - "Place Search" identifies microfilms and other records for localities. Access is from the FHL website. Enter the desired "Town" or "County" in the "Place" Field, and the desired "Country" in the "Part of" Field.

(H) FHL Pilot Project. This "link" from Familysearch.org Website provides access to databases (generated to date) for a major effort by the LDS Church to digitize and place on-line their vast collection of filmed records.

(I) Freebmd Website  \{ http://freebmd.rootsweb.com \} is building a database, containing:
- GRO (b m d) indexes
- Parish Registers
- Census

(J) Ordnance Survey Maps  (c. 1900) can be purchased from Alan Godfrey Website. Can order from U.S. on-line with credit card.\{ http://www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk \}

(K) The World GenWebProject \{ http://www.worldgenweb.org \} provides access to Country and County information.

Note 1: Census

Taken every 10 years - started in 1801
1801-1831 - most records destroyed
1841-1901 - available. Each individual listed
(1911 - ) - confidential under "100 year" rule
Census Characteristics: Records are organized the same way they were taken:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Level</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County (Shire)</td>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent Registrar</td>
<td>Dudley District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>Rowley Regis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumeration District</td>
<td>Numbered in Sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locale - Hamlet</td>
<td>Reddall Hill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

England has been divided since medieval times into ecclesiastical parishes. These jurisdictions often carried over into civil administrative districts. The ecclesiastical or civil parish is noted on each census page. Some shire boundaries may have changed since the census was taken.

Note 2: Parish Registers

Parish Registers are especially important for obtaining vital records prior to 1837. Recording of births, marriages and deaths was not begun until 1837, and the 1841 census is the earliest one surviving. Parish Registers were started in 1538 by the Church Of England (Anglican Church) in England and Wales.

Records for Wales

Records are organized and obtained in the same way as for England. Most records are in English: some may be in Welsh. The National Library of Wales, in Aberystwydd, is a central repository for many of the Welsh records. Access via the GENUKI Website.

John Worton, “Genealogy: Your Family Roots” class handout 11/12/09