

archives.gov.uk) have digitized census records and some old parish records.

The website <http://scotsfamily.com/parish.htm> lists records for Scotland, as does that of [The National Archives of Scotland](http://www.nas.gov.uk) (www.nas.gov.uk).

One of the best free websites is that of the [Public Record Office of Northern Ireland](http://www.proni.gov.uk) (www.proni.gov.uk), but very few parish records remain, and you need to know both county and parish to locate them.

Most official Irish records were destroyed in the (1922) rebellion. There are several for-pay websites with records, including www.origins.net and www.ancestryireland.co.uk. [Griffith's Valuation](http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation) (a private survey completed in 1868; visit www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation) has a number of Irish records.

You can search for records by church affiliation. Keep in mind that in some places and during some time periods, Jews were required to register births with the nearest official church, so do not be surprised to find them in Catholic or Protestant churches.

As for research tools, always carry pencils, a sharpener, paper clips, carbon paper (so you can keep a record of the order slips you submit, since most European research sites do not have open stacks of books), coins and paper money, a good map of the area, and the telephone number, street address and open hours of the library plus a copy of the reply to your appointment request.

Have your hotel call to verify the appointment the day before. You cannot expect the front-desk personnel at your hotel to do any kind of document translation, but calling to confirm an appointment, reservation or tour is one of their functions. And if there is a problem with the appointment, they can translate for you.

With the copy of your appointment letter in hand, the agency cannot easily deny you the appointment. Having the hotel call also makes you more respectable and courteous in the agency's eyes.

Be respectful when doing research in cemeteries. Some are private, and

many frown upon visitors doing rubbings of grave markers or using shaving cream, chalk or other things to bring out faded or worn inscriptions, as it might cause damage.

Instead, try recording grave markers with a camera. On a sunny afternoon, sharp shadows will add contrast and bring out faint images.

Keep separate logs of photos and research places, starting with location, date and time. List everything you check, even if you had no results.

Note every photocopy you request, since what they give you probably will not tell you what file or book it came from. I guarantee that the one time you do not record the source citation, you will really need it.

One last caution — at home or abroad, not everybody is as interested in your ancestors as you are, especially some of your relatives. Libraries and archives hate when people write rambling volumes about "Great-grandma Maria, who might have been born in Italy," without ever mentioning her last name, birth date or anything else but demanding, "Tell me everything about her."

Some bureaucrats hate genealogists on general principles, but most will help if you are organized, succinct and limit your query to one or two specific questions with full names, approximate dates and places.

When you calculate the cost per hour of your trip as opposed to hiring a researcher, traveling is a lot more expensive, but it's also a lot more fun. And whether you are walking across your ancestors' land in Scotland or Nebraska, it is still a thrill.

Kit Stewart, Sequim, WA 

Swiss watch museum

In Switzerland, the [Espace Horloger - Vallée de Joux](http://www.espacehorloger.ch), or [Joux Valley Museum of Watchmaking](http://www.espacehorloger.ch) (*Grand-Rue 2, 1347 Le Sentier, Switzerland; phone +41 21 845 75 45, www.espacehorloger.ch*), reopened in May 2012 after an 8-month renovation.

The museum, an hour's drive or a 90-minute train ride from Geneva, showcases timepieces from the 16th to 19th centuries and ranging from table and travel clocks to Gothic and planetary clocks. Interactive exhibits show the skills involved in watchmaking.

The museum is open 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday, May to October, and 1-5 p.m. other months. The admission fee is CHF12 (near \$13).

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