

4. 1939 Register:

The 1939 Register provides a snapshot of the civilian population just after the outbreak of war. It is the most complete survey of the population between 1921 and 1951. (The 1931 census was destroyed by fire during World War II and no census was taken in 1941).

ADDRESS	SCHEDULE		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES	O. V. S. P. or I.	M. or F.	BIRTH		S. M. W. or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION
	No.	Sub. No.				Day	Year		
Stretton	1	1	Broady, William S	-	M	10	FEB 78	M	Engineer (Civilian)
"	1	2	" Agnes J	-	F	10	JULY 97	M	Unpaid Home duties
"	1	3	" Lilian E.	-	F	10	APR 09	S	Day domestic
"	1	4	" Harry	-	M	7	MAY 16	S	Partly Farmer
Stretton 2	2	1	Jennings Thomas C	-	M	27	MAY 79	M	Gardener (Heavy work)
"	2	2	" Alice	-	F	29	MAY 78	M	Unpaid Home duties
"	2	3	" Thomas	-	M	22	SEP 02	S	Gen. Workman (Heavy work)
"	2	4	" William H	-	M	21	MAY 07	S	Gardener
"	3	1	Rose, Mary B	-	F	24	MAY 71	M	Unpaid Home duties
"	4	1	Price, John M. (W)	-	M	15	FEB 82	M	Coach - City Motor (Rider)
"	4	2	" Robertina	-	F	18	SEP 80	M	Unpaid Home duties

The Register is available to search and view on both **Ancestry** and **Findmypast**. Military personnel were not included, as conscription did not start until January 1940 - most people who subsequently served were still civilians in September 1939. The Register does include members of the armed forces on leave and civilians working on military bases.

5. National Archives:

Under normal circumstances, a visit to the National Archives at Kew is a must, as you can request sight of many original records. Currently you may need to make an appointment and access is restricted. The National Archives website has lots of background information, including a [WW2 Research Guide](#) with information on how to search for records, both at Kew and elsewhere.



NOTE: The National Archives **does not** hold Second World War army service records - these are held by the Ministry of Defence. However it does hold records for Merchant Seaman and those on the Home Front, including the Home Guard and the Women's Land Army.

If your ancestor was awarded a medal or honour during World War II, you can search the Archives catalogue for the Award Recommendations; these are currently free to download but (free) registration is required.

The National Archives also hold a large number of operational records, most of which are only available to view on site, including the unit War Diaries and operational records for the Admiralty, War Office, and Air Ministry.

Unfortunately, most of these have yet to be digitised so cannot be downloaded. One exception is the RAF Operational Record Books which do occasionally name individuals and which are available at www.thegenealogist.co.uk (£).

6. **Ancestry:** This is possibly the most useful website. Click on “Search” and it will offer you a number of boxes to complete: Forenames; surname; where an individual lived; date of birth. If you do not know the date of birth, a guess in the 1920s is a good start, as the search option will allow for +/- 5 years. Click on “Show more options” and fill in any other information you may have. Click on “Search” and look through the names offered. You can filter your search to show military records etc. Once you have found the person you believe is the right one, the site will offer you other documents relating to them.

7. **Forces War Records:** On entering this website you will see a search box just asking for the name. Enter this and press “search” - you will then have the opportunity to add more information and to filter your results.

8. **Find my past:** This is a very straightforward website with a search function similar to Ancestry. It also hosts the National Archives [Prisoner of War](#) collection and [Casualty Lists 1939-1945](#)



9. **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** (www.cwgc.org): This site will help you find your ancestor’s grave or memorial. There can be interesting and useful information on a gravestone which can help with your search.

10. **London Gazette:** If your ancestor was mentioned in despatches or awarded a gallantry medal you will find them listed in the London Gazette, it’s free to search (but not always so easy to navigate the results; try filtering your search by date to narrow down results).



11. Other archives and sites with collections that may be useful are:

[Imperial War Museums](#)

[National Army Museum](#)

[National Maritime Museum](#)

[RAF Air Historical Branch](#)

[National Museum of the Royal Navy](#)

[International Red Cross](#)

