



## USING BATCH NUMBERS TO UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF THE IGI

The International Genealogical Index is a phenomenal resource for family historians - and best of all, it's online and it's free!

But even if you're already using the IGI, you may not be familiar with how 'batch numbers' can be used to further your research. Utilising batch numbers allows you to carry out searches that otherwise wouldn't be possible.

What is a batch number? When volunteers from the LDS Church transcribed the entries from parish registers they were submitted in batches. Batches numbers for christenings usually begin with the letter C, and batches for marriages with the letter M.

Typically a batch will contain all of the entries from a particular register, or a series of registers in a chronological sequence. In almost every case the entries in a batch will relate to a single parish, or a single church - for example, the batch C062572 comprises baptisms from the parish church at Monks Eleigh in Suffolk from 1628-1812.

If you go to the IGI Search page and simply enter this batch number, select 'British Isles' as the region, then click Search you'll get a listing of all the baptisms for that period.

Usually you'll want to limit your search in some way - and having entered a batch number you have a lot of freedom in how you can do this. For example, you might want to see all of the baptisms for a particular surname or a specific couple.

Supposing you have a suspicion that your ancestor was baptised under a different surname - in this case you could search on forename alone, something you normally wouldn't be able to do.

As you can see, batch numbers are very useful not only because you can focus in on a single church, but also because you have more ways of searching. Hugh Wallis has an excellent site that makes it really easy to look up the batch numbers you're interested in for churches in the British Isles and North America. His is just one of the many useful sites listed on the My Links page at LostCousins.

Another way to use Hugh Wallis's site is to find out whether records for a particular church or parish are included in the IGI.

Why is this important? Because if you don't find the entry you're looking for when you search the IGI, the chances are that the event took place in a church whose records haven't been transcribed. If you were planning a visit to the records office that holds the parish registers for the area, then knowing which were and which weren't in the IGI would enable you to make better use of your time.

By the way, Hugh Wallis has also made it possible to search for IGI entries by middle name, something that can't be done at the FamilySearch site. Unusual middle names and middle names which are surnames often provide useful clues.