



One-Place Studies

The basics

What is a One-Place Study?

Quite simply it's a study of a particular place and the people who have lived there over the years

A one-place study brings together both the local history AND family history dimensions to give a much fuller picture of what life was like in that place and why families came and went

We affectionately refer to those carrying out One-Place Studies as 'one-placers'

Place

By 'place' we mean a defined geographical area. In theory, the geographical area can be as big or as small as you wish – we have studies registered covering a single street right the way up to a whole county!

Most one-placers choose to study a village, or very small town, and the area immediately around it within its official boundaries

For more information, see our free 'Starting a One-Place Study' guide: '[Choosing a place](#)'

People

By 'people', we generally mean everyone who lived in that place at any time during the study period, not just those related to the one-placer's ancestral family or people who were famous. Some one-placers will also research people who worked in that place but did not live there

Study period

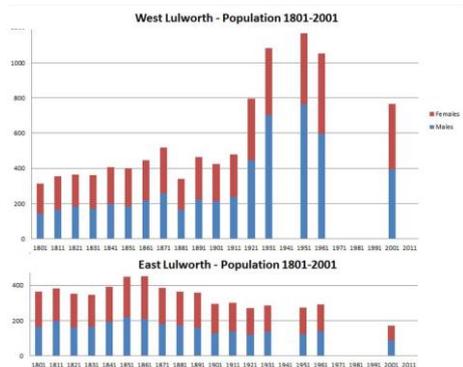
By 'study period' we mean the time period that the study covers. A handful of our one-placers currently focus on the period related to WW1 but most one-placers do not limit the study period, instead working on the basis their research will cover the period from when the first source information is available up to the present day

However, for new one-placers starting out, and those taking on a study with a population of more than 500 people, limiting the study period initially may be advisable

Family History dimension:

Population

The 'population' of a place at any point in time is simply the total number of people living there. Families move into and out of the area for various reasons and birth and death rates vary, so there are periods when the total population increases and others when it falls. A good starting point for one-placers is to analyse the population statistics that are available and to chart these



These examples show the population changes for two adjacent villages, West Lulworth and East Lulworth. Although their populations were broadly similar in the first half of the 19th century, subsequently one witnessed considerable growth and the other a steady decline

Reconnect / Reconstruct

Most one-placers, having researched their own family histories, will want to understand which individuals were connected to who in their study place and to what extent families inter-married over successive generations. Some one-placers find it helpful to create an index of all persons who lived in their place and to use this as the first step towards 'reconnecting' them to others on the list. Some one-placers go one-step further and 'reconstruct' trees for all families, sometimes as simple hand-drawn charts, or through providers like Ancestry where unrelated individuals can subsequently be linked as their relationships to one another are rediscovered

Source information

Primary sources of family history information for one-placers are census returns that typically provide a 'snapshot' every ten years of everyone living in a defined geographical area and local registers that capture key events in their lives, in particular births/baptisms, marriages and deaths/burials. Many one-placers make transcriptions of these key records from images of the originals

There are many secondary sources of information such as electoral rolls, gravestone inscriptions, land records, local directories, military records, newspaper obituaries, probate records, school records, wills, etc.

Check out our [Resources](#) pages and subscribe to our [One-Place Studies: Latest News](#) blog which includes a 'Resources Round-up' blog every week

Local History dimension:

Existing publications

Do check out county archive offices, local libraries local bookshops and online for historic and current publications that contain the local history of your place

Check out our [Resources](#) pages for various information sources including Listed Buildings

Pace the place

We recommend that one-placers living within easy travelling distance 'pace their place'. Essentially this means exploring every street, lane, alleyway etc. taking photographs and looking at the buildings for clues of their age, past uses etc. For example, was that private residence previously a chapel? Also looking at the physical terrain and considering how the features and resources of the local landscape would have dictated the use of the land in years gone by. Of course, this is only practicable if the study covers a small area comprising just a village and a few surrounding hamlets, rather than a whole region

Check out '[Pacing your Place](#)' on our [Resources](#) page

Study the map

Before setting off to 'pace the place' we recommend you 'study the map'. Not just the present day map, but historic large scale maps which may reveal buildings and other features, such as rail links or waterways, long since gone

Check out '[Mapping your Study](#)' and '[Studying your Map](#)' and the various '[map](#)' links on our [Resources](#) page

Other points to consider:

Share the study

There's little point carrying out a study if the information gathered never sees the light of day. Sharing information as you go is a great way of encouraging others to contribute too. You can do this in a number of ways including local displays, talks to local groups, features in local magazines, through dedicated websites and blogs and via social media such as twitter and facebook

We do our best to share the progress of individual studies too - on [twitter](#) and through our [facebook page](#)

See our free 'How to ...' guide: '[Set up a facebook group](#)'

Join our friendly facebook forum

Join fellow one-placers in our free [facebook forum](#) for friendly chat, sharing ideas, top tips & much more

There are no hard and fast rules

You are free to take the study in whichever direction you wish. But do be courteous to people who contact you for help, do respect people's privacy and don't publish personal data about living people without their consent

Take it steady

It's not a race. Work at a pace you are comfortable with. Most one-placers are in it for the long term!

Above all enjoy!