

An aerial photograph of a village with traditional half-timbered houses, some with solar panels on their roofs. The village is surrounded by green fields and trees with autumn foliage. In the background, there are rolling hills under a blue sky with some clouds.

One-Place
Studies

The Society for One-Place Studies

Presents

A GUIDE TO ONE-PLACE STUDIES

WHAT IS A ONE-PLACE STUDY?

A **One-Place Study** is a perfect combination of family and local history of places around in the world.

Those places include towns, parishes, villages, hamlets, streets, or even individual buildings, with some studies focusing on burial grounds or memorials; the boundaries for a particular study are chosen by the person carrying it out.

One-place study research allows you to explore people and families in their physical and social contexts, using a range of sources including historical records and community stories, analysed alongside the local and national background. By learning about the community as a whole and studying the historical environment and events of a place, you can better understand the people – be they your ancestors or otherwise – who lived there.



There is no fixed, rigid way to carry out a One-Place Study – the beauty of it is that you have full freedom and flexibility to shape the Study to suit your methodology, Place, and information available.

This can, however, be a blessing and a curse – having full flexibility means you aren't constrained by a format which isn't appropriate for your Place, and yet sometimes that can feel like there is too much freedom and no structure for you to use to create your Study. This guide is intended to offer some ideas to get you started, but is not meant to be a formal structure which you should feel you must follow.

The Society highly recommends the book *Ten Steps to a One-Place Study* by Janet Few as a great resource for further ideas and formats which might help you further structure your Study.

A One-Place Studies course by Pharos Tutors is also run on a regular basis, which can also offer inspiration and training. Society members can claim a discount on this course; please see the website for details.



WHO DOES AN OPS?

Anyone with an interest in family and local history would enjoy working on a One-Place Study! Often, people start with a fascination for one or the other, which is able to be combined when they start a One-Place Study.

A One-Place Study can be carried out by an individual family or local historian, a history group or society, or even a community archive or library.

You do not have to live in, nor have any family connection to the Place you choose to research – you may never have even visited there!

A One-Place Study is an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the people who lived in your Place, and to share their lives with the world.

The main shared characteristic of all One-Place Studiers is simply a passion for history!



WHERE DO I CHOOSE?

To help you define a Study, you will need to define some constraints – the main ones are space and time.

SPACE

As stated, you do not need to have any specific connection to the Place you choose; you just need to have an interest in that Place. Some people have ancestors in the Place they study; some study the place they grew up; some study somewhere that just fascinates them for another reason!

Your place can be anywhere in the world, and be any size from an individual building to an entire city – the choice is yours. But remember, if you choose a very large Place you will likely have a lot of data to work through, and it may become a little overwhelming!

If you are thinking about starting a Study of a larger place, perhaps working together with others would



make it a more manageable task? If a large Place such as a town or city is too overwhelming, perhaps starting with a smaller area, such as a single parish, suburb or street might allow you to get started – and you can always add to it at a later date if you want to.

TIME

The second dimension is time – will you study the entire history of your Place? Or will you look to focus on one time period?

For example, your Place may have an ancient origin, but you may choose to focus your Study on post-War redevelopment, or the Roman occupation, or the Industrial Revolution, because that time period is of particular interest to you, or is particularly significant in your Place.

Again, you can always add to the time period at a later date, but having some boundaries can help to get you started.





Key to a One-Place Study is the gathering and synthesising of data to develop a holistic view of a place and the people within it.



WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION FOR MY ONE-PLACE STUDY?



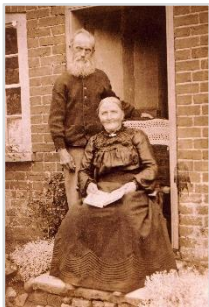
The specific sources available to you for your Place will vary depending on where you have chosen to study. Some places have a wealth of accessible information, but some may be more difficult to get hold of.



Some sources you might want to consider using are newspapers, church and parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, along with monumental inscriptions (gravestones), probate records, censuses, directories and gazetteers

military records, naturalization records, electoral and voter rolls, and civil registration records.

You can also look for information about specific buildings or areas of the Place, such as poorhouses, alms-houses and workhouses, schools, court records, major employers and churches. Maps, photographs and drawings can build a picture of your Place and may be available to you in local or national archives, in the library, in online groups such as on social media, or in local or family history groups.



EXPLORING YOUR DATA

Once you have identified your sources, you can start gathering your data together into a format which suits you and your Place.

You can also start discovering and defining the relationships between people, events and buildings in your Place, and begin to piece together themes in the data – such as occupational changes, the Place during times of war, or young people in your Place.

To add extra context to your research, compare and contrast your discoveries in your Place to national and international equivalents – for example, if you have observed a change over time in the types of jobs people are doing in your Place from largely agrarian roles to more specialised metalworking trades, then why would this be the case? Perhaps it is a discovery of copper in the local area, or a national shift from rural to urban jobs which is the cause – the only way to fully understand the changes within your Place is to examine the local, national and sometimes even international context.

WHAT'S NEXT?

When you feel you have gathered “enough” information (and remember, that is a very subjective word!), you can start promoting your research.

A great way to do this is to create a blog or social media accounts, as these allow you to talk about your Place in small, bite-sized chunks rather than needing to present a full, complete examination of your Place! Of course, you may end up getting together enough information for you to consider publishing a book or pamphlet, but if you start with that in mind, you may never get there! It is often better to start online and work towards publishing if that is your ultimate goal.

Joining local, national and international history groups and organisations, such as the **Society for One-Place Studies**, is a great way to meet like-minded people, get support and advice, and share tips, techniques and research.

THE SOCIETY FOR ONE-PLACE STUDIES

The **Society for One-Place Studies** is the leading organisation for anyone studying the family and local history of places around the world.

Our mission is to advance the education of the public in one-place studies, to encourage and assist those interested in this field of research, and to promote the preservation and publication of material relating to one-place studies, maximising its accessibility to the public.

We publish a quarterly journal, *Destinations*, and present a regular series of online events as well as an annual conference, covering topics relevant to one-place study research, data synthesis, and publication. We are also active on social media, and host a weekly discussion on Twitter under the hashtag #OnePlaceWednesday.



WHO ARE WE?

The Society is run entirely by volunteers who are passionate about One-Place Studies. Day-to-day running of the Society is done by the Committee with various other roles performed by Postholders, all of whom are Members and avid One-Placers.

WHAT DO WE DO?

- We promote the value of and educate the public about One-Place Studies
- We encourage and assist those interested in the genealogical and historical aspects of a One-Place Study
- We promote the preservation and publication of data gathered for One-Place Studies, providing a means to share, exchange and develop Studies on a worldwide basis
- We share tips, best practices and answer questions about resources, methodology, technology and social media associated with One-Place Studies, providing a forum for one-place researchers to share their knowledge and OPS passion

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

There are many benefits of joining **the Society for One-Place Studies**. Some of these are to:

- Be part of a supportive, worldwide community of like-minded people
- Be recognised as the expert for your study place
- Register your One-Place Study and have a profile page created for it on our website – great for publicising your OPS
- Receive our quarterly journal *Destinations* (in PDF format), packed with contributions from one-placers and others with useful knowledge to share, and dip into the archive of back issues
- Take part in our members' monthly webinars and our annual online conference, featuring presentations (with Q & A sessions) on a range of one-place study topics
- Share your knowledge and boost the profile of your study by writing articles for *Destinations*, giving presentations to our online meetings, and contributing posts to our blog, about aspects of your one-place study research
- Take advantage of Member Offers



JOINING THE SOCIETY

There is no requirement for Members to register a One-Place Study – you are welcome to join to learn about the methodology, technology and social media associated with a One-Place Study, ask questions, or simply interact with like-minded researchers.

Annual Membership is £10, and lifetime registration* of a One-Place Study is free (*Registration of Study will lapse when Society Membership ceases). Visit **[our website](https://one-place-studies.org)** for membership applications and OPS registrations.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE? GET IN TOUCH!



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