



Births, Marriages and Deaths in the UK

The crucial information needed for a search in the archives

The National Archives holds records which might contain the information you require and we can:

- Either search for it on payment of a fee and supply you with the information (if found)
- or
- Enable you to search for the information in other ways.

Please send as much information as you can. The following details are particularly important:

- The full name of the person*.....
- The parish of the event*.....
- The approximate date of the event*.....
- The name of the parent(s).....

If you have all of the information marked with an asterisk*, the standard charges for our searches will apply and these are shown on this leaflet. If you do not have this information, the standard charges will not apply, as the search time will increase by a large amount, and therefore the search will require a very high fee to be paid. Please contact us if you still want to proceed: enquiry@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

1. Birth, Marriage or Death Records after 30 June 1837

Standard charge: £30 for each five year period.

This charge is for searching the indexes to the Birth, Marriage and Death certificates, as The National Archives holds copies of the indexes on microfiche, but we would strongly encourage you to approach the General Register Office instead, as they hold the actual certificates and their charges for postal searches will be significantly cheaper than ours.

Birth, marriage and death certificates in England and Wales are not public records under the terms of the Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967. The National Archives does not hold copies of these certificates and if you want copies you need to contact:

General Register Office
Office for National Statistics
Smedley Hydro
Trafalgar Road
Southport
Merseyside, PR8 2HH
United Kingdom
www.gro.gov.uk

Microfiche copies of these indexes are often held by local library and archive services and at Genealogical Society of Utah Family History Centres. Free transcriptions of the indexes are being compiled on www.freebmd.org.uk. The National Archives also holds a copy of the microfiche indexes for the period 1837- 2007, so you, or a researcher acting on your behalf, can use them free of charge.

Birth, marriage and death certificates for Scotland are in the custody of the General Register Office for Scotland. If you would like copies you would need to contact:

General Register Office
New Register House
3 West Register Street
Edinburgh, EH1 3YY
Scotland
United Kingdom
www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/

Information that this source should reveal:

Until 1983, there are quarterly indexes for each year. Within each quarter the indexes are arranged by surname and first name(s). The registration district where the event was registered, the volume and page number of the entry are given. After 1983 there is one index per year.

Please note; the indexes do not provide full details as found on the certificates.

Factors affecting success of a search:

If you wish us to search the indexes we require the following information:

Surname and forename(s); event, for example, birth, marriage or death; the dates you would like us to search; location of the event; name of mother (for births); name of spouse (for marriages); age at death or date of birth (for deaths).

Please note that for a variety of reasons it is not always possible to find people in the indexes. The indexes at The National Archives cover events in England and Wales only.

2. Birth, Marriage or Death Records before 1 July 1837

The Genealogical Society of Utah has compiled an *International Genealogical Index* (IGI), drawing on parish, chapel and vital records of births, baptisms and marriages throughout the world. The latest edition is accessible at www.familysearch.org, which is regularly updated. You can inspect the 1993 edition and addenda to 2000 on CD-ROM in many local libraries, record offices and Family History Centres. You can search the 1992 edition on microfiche at The National Archives and many libraries, record offices and Family History Centres. The microfiche are arranged county by county.

References in the IGI to events in England and Wales before 1837 are to parish registers (kept locally) or to non-parochial (usually non-conformist) registers, kept at The National Archives in the record series RG 4 (see below). Many parish registers have been filmed and copies of these and of non-conformist registers in The National Archives can also be viewed in Genealogical Society of Utah Family History Centres.

It should be noted that much of the registration in non-parochial registers (The National Archives record series RG4 to RG8 described below) was retrospective and the date of an event may be much earlier than the date of its registration.

3. Anglican (Church of England) Birth, Marriage or Death Records before 1 July 1837

Standard charge: £15

Catalogue reference: RG 4

There are a few official Anglican registers, kept by institutions outside the normal Church of England parish structure, such as Greenwich Hospital.

Information that this source should reveal:

Baptisms: Name of parents, name of child, date of baptism, date of birth (in some cases), occupation of father (in some cases).

Marriages: Names of bride and groom and their home parish(es), date of marriage, signature of the priest.

Burials: Name, date of burial, occupation (in some cases) of the deceased. Can also include age and residence of the deceased and name of person performing the burial ceremony.

Factors affecting success of a search:

The full name is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The place and the date (or approximate date) where the event took place are also essential.

The name(s) of the parent(s) will help to confirm the correct entry for births/baptisms.

You can carry out a search yourself and download the images for a fee, see www.bmdregisters.co.uk for further information.

4. Wesleyan Birth, Marriage or Death Records

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 4

The Wesleyan Methodist Metropolitan Registry was set up in 1818 and provided for the registration of births and baptisms of Wesleyan Methodists throughout England, Wales and elsewhere. The registers continued till 1838, with some retrospective registration of births going back to 1773. Birth Certificates from the Wesleyan Methodist Metropolitan Registry are in RG 5.

Information that this source should reveal:

The register entries have the name and sex of the child, the name and address of the father, the name of the mother and of both her parents, the date and place of birth, and the name of the Wesleyan circuit, with the signature (or name, in the register) of the parents, the witnesses to the birth, and the baptising minister.

The birth certificates give the same information.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Many of the registers have been indexed or edited for publication by local family history societies.

The full name is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The place and the date (or approximate date) where the event took place are also essential.

The name(s) of the parent(s) will help to confirm the correct entry for births/baptisms.

You can carry out a search yourself and download the images for a fee, see www.bmdregisters.co.uk for further information.

5. Baptist Birth, Marriage or Death Records

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 4

The Protestant Dissenters' Registry at Dr Williams' Library served the congregations of Baptists, Independents and Presbyterians in London and within a twelve-mile radius of the capital. However, parents from most parts of the British Isles and even abroad also used the registry. The register was started in 1742, with retrospective entries going back to 1716, and continued to 1837.

Birth certificates from the Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist Registry are in RG 5.

Information that this source should reveal:

The register entries have the name and sex of the child, the name of the parents and the date of birth.

The birth certificates are signed by their minister and by the midwife and one or two other people present at the birth and after 1828 by the parents as well.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Many of the registers have been indexed or edited for publication by local family history societies.

The full name is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The parish and the date (or approximate date) where the event took place are also essential.

The name(s) of the parent(s) will help to confirm the correct entry for births/baptisms.

You can carry out a search yourself and download the images for a fee, see www.bmdregisters.co.uk for further information.

6. Roman Catholic Birth, Marriage or Death Records

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 4

Registers of births, baptisms, deaths, burials and marriages for some Roman Catholic communities in Dorset, Hampshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Yorkshire. The majority cover Northumberland.

Information that this source should reveal:

Baptisms: Name, parents' names, date of baptism, date of birth, parish, and father's occupation.

Deaths: Name, date of death.

Marriages: Names of parties, residence, date of marriage.
(Residence is usually an area e.g. a parish, not a full address).

Factors affecting success of a search:

Many of the registers have been indexed or edited for publication by local family history societies.

The full name is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The place and the date (or approximate date) where the event took place are also essential.

The name(s) of the parent(s) will help to confirm the correct entry for births/baptisms.

You can carry out a search yourself and download the images for a fee, see www.bmdregisters.co.uk for further information.

7. Quaker Birth, Marriage or Death Records: 1578-1841

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 6

Registers of births, deaths, burials and marriages of congregations of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in England and Wales. A number of original birth and burial notes and original marriage certificates are included.

Information that this source should reveal:

Post-1776 birth notes and register entries contain the date of birth, place of birth, parents' names (often with the father's occupation), the child's name and the names of the witnesses. It is not always stated whether the father was living at the time of the birth.

The post-1776 burial notes and register entries give the name, residence, age, date of death, date of burial, the gravemaker's name and the date the grave was to be made, the burial place and the mark or signature of the gravemaker.

Printed abstracts of marriage certificates give the date of the marriage, name, residence and occupation of the groom, the bride's name, names of parents, the fathers' occupations, the place where the ceremony was held, signatures of the parties, the witnesses and the registrar.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Many of the registers contain integral indexes.

The full name is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The place and the date (or approximate date) where the event took place are also essential.

The name(s) of the parent(s) will help to confirm the correct entry for births/baptisms.

8. Foreign Protestant Churches in England Birth, Marriage or Death Records

Catalogue reference: RG 4

Standard charge: £30

French and other foreign Protestant churches in England including the Dutch, French and German Chapels Royal at St James's Palace. There are also registers from the English church at St Petersburg. Registers of some Scottish churches in England.

Information that this source should reveal:

Baptisms: Name, names of parents, date of baptism, date of birth.

Marriage: Names of parties and their parents, or of their previous spouse if widowed, and the date of marriage.

Death or burial: Name, date of death, age at death, residence, date and place of burial. (Residence is usually an area e.g. a parish, not a full address).

Factors affecting success of a search:

Entries are in French, German, etc.

The Huguenot Society has published transcripts of the foreign registers.

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The parish and the date (or approximate date) where the event took place are also essential.

The name(s) of the parent(s) will help to confirm the correct entry for births/baptisms.

Many non-conformist registers will be held locally, or deposited in a local record office.

You can carry out a search yourself and download the images, for a fee, see www.bmdregisters.co.uk for further information.

9. Russian Orthodox Birth, Marriage or Death Records

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 8

Registers of births, marriages, deaths and conversions from the archive of the Russian Orthodox Church in London, 1721-1927.

Information that this source should reveal:

Please note we are unable to provide a translation as part of this service.

Factors affecting success of a search:

The usual language is Russian, with some Greek.

10. Burial grounds and non-denominational cemeteries

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 4

Some of the registers and other records of burials at burial grounds and non-denominational cemeteries, particularly the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, City Road, London (1713-1854); the South London Burial Ground, Walworth, London (1819-1837); and the Necropolis Burial Ground, Everton, Liverpool, Lancashire (1825-1837).

Catalogue reference: RG 8

Burials in the Victoria Park Cemetery, the New Burial Ground, Southwark, Bunhill Fields Burial Ground (Golden Lane), Hackney (1833-1853), and the Bethnal Green Protestant Dissenters Burying Ground; registers of Chapels Royal at St James's Palace, Whitehall and Windsor Castle.

Information that this source should reveal:

Name of deceased, date of burial, age at death, last residence, grave number.

Can sometimes give cause of death, parents' names and name of person performing burial ceremony.

(Last residence is usually an area e.g. a parish, not a full address).

Factors affecting success of a search:

The full name is essential to make a search feasible (ideally any 'middle names' should be included).

The place and the date (or approximate date) of burial are also essential.

You can carry out a search of RG 4 yourself and download the images for a fee, see www.bmdregisters.co.uk for further information.

11. Registers of Clandestine Marriages and of Baptisms

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: RG 7 Marriages only

Principally registers, 1667-c1777 (with some indexes, 1698-1754) and note books, 1682-1774, giving particulars of clandestine marriages and baptisms performed in the Fleet Prison, at the May Fair Chapel, at King's Bench Prison or within the Mint.

This series records the marriages of a significant proportion of the population of London and surrounding areas up to 1754. It has been estimated that in the first half of the eighteenth century, a third of all marriages were actually clandestine.

Information that this source should reveal:

Most of the registers include the full names of the couples, their marital status, their residences (generally parishes), usually the groom's occupation, and the minister's name or initials. Some registers, however, only give Christian names. For sailors, the name of the ship is sometimes given.

N.B. The documents are unauthenticated and are without any clearly documented provenance.

Factors affecting success of a search:

Many registers have been published.

An unpublished index compiled by B. Lloyd is available at The National Archives. Boyd's Marriage Index is an index of all English marriages from various sources for the period 1538 to 1837, and some clandestine marriages may be found amongst the entries. The only complete copies are held at the Society of Genealogists and the Guildhall Library.
