



## Merchant Navy Service, Officers: 1845-1913

### Information from Archives D7

#### 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 date (even if approximate) and place of birth of the person\*  
.....
- In what capacity did the person serve (i.e. master, mate, engineer or skipper or mate (second hand) of a fishing vessel)?\*  
.....
- Between which years (approximately) did the person serve?\*  
.....
- Was a certificate issued to this person in the colonies – if so, which colony? .....
- Names and dates of any ships on which the person was known to have served .....

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. *To make payment on a secure link, choose the search you require and please click on the link to our website:[insert link].* 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 at:

[enquiry@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

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1. Alphabetical Register of Masters (1845-1854)

Standard charge: £30

Catalogue reference: BT 115

These registers record details of masters extracted from crew lists.

They are arranged by the first few letters of seamen's surnames, with further subdivisions of common surnames according to forename as well as a category called 'various'. Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the name following the Mc prefix (e.g. McDonald under Donald).

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Information that this source should reveal:

These registers normally record:

- Surname and forename
- Age (at the time of the first recorded voyage)
- Place of birth
- Voyages – but these registers do not give the ships' names

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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates. For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

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2. Certificates of Competency and Service, Miscellaneous, 1845-1850

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue references: BT 143/1; BT 6/218-219; Appendix to Lloyd's Register, 1850

This is a register of men passing the Board of Trade voluntary examinations of competency. Arrangement is chronological with separate sections for masters and mates. There is an index by first letter of surname. Names beginning with Mc are to be found under M. The register only covers certificates granted for masters to 1 January 1849 and mates to 9 May 1850.

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Information that this source should reveal:

These registers normally record:

- Date
- Surname and forename
- Class of certificate
- Examining board
- Year and place of birth
- Number of register ticket
- Remarks

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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates. For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

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### 3. Registers of Certificates, Masters and Mates, 1845- 1925

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue references: BT 122-128

These relate to those passing, or granted exemption from, the compulsory examinations for masters and mates that were progressively introduced from 1845. They do not include details of those passing the voluntary examinations. There are six separate series of registers, depending on the type of certificate. The registers are of two forms as described below.

All of these registers are arranged numerically but there is one composite name index. Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the name following the Mc prefix (e.g. McDonald under Donald).

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Information that this source should reveal:

The name index normally records:

- Surname and forename names
- Year and place of birth
- Certificate number

The first type of register normally records:

- Number of certificate
- Number of pilotage certificate i.e. seamen's ticket number
- Surname and forename
- Year and place of birth
- Type of certificate with date and place of issue

- Reference to voyages (up to and including 1888)

The second type of register is a Summary Register and these normally record:

- Surname and forename
- Number and grade of certificate
- Year and place of birth
- Remarks

No voyage details are given.

Factors affecting success of a search

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates. For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

Not all those who should have had a certificate necessarily did.

#### 4. Registers of Certificates, Engineers, 1861-1921

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue references: BT 139-142

These relate to those passing, or granted exemption from, the compulsory examinations for engineers introduced in 1861. There are three separate series of registers, depending on the type of certificate. The registers are arranged numerically but there is a composite name index. Names beginning with Mc are to be found at the start of the letter M.

Information that this source should reveal:

The index normally records:

- Surname and forename
- Year and place of birth
- Certificate number

These registers normally record:

- Number of certificate

- Surname and forename
- Year and place of birth
- Type of certificate, with date and place of issue
- Reference to voyages (up to and including 1888)

Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates. For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

Not all those who should have had a certificate necessarily did.

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## 5. Registers of Certificates, Fishing Boat Officers, 1880-1921

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue references: BT 129, BT 130 and BT 138

These relate to those passing, or granted exemption from, the compulsory examinations for skippers and mates (second hands) of fishing vessels introduced in 1880. There are two separate series of registers depending on the type of certificate. The registers are arranged numerically but there is a composite name index. Names beginning with Mc are to be found at the start of the letter M.

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Information that this source should reveal:

The index normally records:

- Surname and forename
- Year and place of birth
- Certificate number

These registers normally record:

- Number of certificate
- Number of pilotage certificate

- Surname and forename
  - Year and place of birth
  - Type of certificate, with date and place of issue
  - Reference to voyages (up to and including 1888)
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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates. For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

Not all those who should have had a certificate necessarily did.



the national archives

## Searching for information: your options

### **Our Search Service**

This brand new service is being introduced in advance of the Freedom of Information (FOI) search service to be launched next January. We are beginning with a selection of popular subjects, and will gradually be extending the range. From January 2005 we shall offer paid searches in all The National Archives records, under the Freedom of Information Act.

The searches will be done in a prompt and professional manner and will reflect the expertise of The National Archives in the field of historical records. If you wish us to do the search we shall provide the information within ten working days of receipt of payment.

Our charge is £15 per 15 minutes.

There are also many independent researchers whom you can hire to carry out searches for you. Lists of those known to THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES are on our web site at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/irlist/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/irlist/) Alternatively, you are welcome to visit us - we can help you to do the search yourself, and admission is free.

Our postal address is Reader Information Services, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU, and our e-mail address is [enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

### **Independent researchers**

There are many independent researchers whom you can hire to carry out research for you. These researchers may charge significantly less than our 'full cost recovery' service. I enclose a list of some who undertake research in your area of interest. These lists are also available at our web site ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/irlist/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/irlist/))

### **Our on-site service**

You are welcome to visit us - we can help you to do the search yourself, and admission is free.

If you visit us, you will need to register as a researcher. To do this, please bring with you some proof of identity. If you are a citizen of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, please bring either a driving licence, a banker's card or a passport. If you are a citizen of any other country, please bring your passport or national identity card. If you do not have this identification, please ring us on 020 8392 5200 before you visit. Please allow time at the beginning of your visit for familiarisation with our procedures. You can register in advance as a reader at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/registration/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/registration/)

You can carry out some initial research by accessing the research guides and on-line catalogue on our web site ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk))