



Civil Registration in the Archives and Heritage Service in Birmingham Central Library.

Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths began in England and Wales on 1st July 1837 and is ongoing. There is no free access to the actual certificates of births, marriages and deaths and the only way that information from these can be obtained is by buying the relevant certificate. However, Archives and Heritage provides free access to the indexes of registrations (the General Register Office, (GRO index) on microfiche.

We hold:

- Births July 1st 1837 - present day
- Marriages July 1st 1837 - present day
- Deaths - July 1st 1837 - present day
- Overseas/Miscellaneous Indexes (various dates) including army returns (such as Army Births, Army Chaplain Births, Chaplains Marriages and Army Deaths), Deaths Abroad and war deaths during WW1 and WW2.

We also hold the Adopted Children's Index from 1927 and the Civil Partnerships Index from 2005.

The alphabetical indexes are arranged quarterly from 1837-1983 and annually from 1984 onwards.

The GRO index is also available online up to 2005 on several websites including www.ancestry.co.uk and at www.findmypast.co.uk up to 2006. Both of these websites are subscription based. www.freebmd.org.uk has partial indexes which can be accessed without charge.

There is free access to the library edition of the ancestry website in all Birmingham libraries. Other authorities may also provide this facility.

To order a certificate, contact the local Register Office which holds registers for where the event was registered or the General Register Office at Southport. You will need to provide the full name(s), year and quarter of the registration and the volume and page number of the entry. Please note that some local Register Offices may require additional information for certain certificates, such as parents' names for births in the last 50 years.

More information about civil registration and how to apply for certificates can be found at www.gro.gov.uk

FAQs

Q. What information is given on a birth certificate for England and Wales?

A. Until 1969 this shows:

Date and place of birth - from the late 19th century an address may be given rather than the name of an institution (eg. City Hospital will appear as 77 Dudley Road).
Name and sex of child

Parents names - including mother's maiden name
Occupation of father
Name and address of person registering the birth
Date of registration

From 1969 there is additional information, including the place of birth of the parents.

Q. What information is given on a marriage certificate for England and Wales?

A. Date and place of marriage
Names, ages and marital status of bride and groom.
Occupations of bride and groom
Addresses of bride and groom at time of marriage
Names and occupations of fathers of bride and groom
Signature/mark of bride and groom and at least 2 witnesses

Q. What information is given on a death certificate for England and Wales?

A. Date and place of death – from the late 19th century an address may be given rather than the name of an institution (eg. City Hospital will appear as 77 Dudley Road).
Name of deceased
Sex, age and occupation of deceased and possibly their home address
Cause of death – if there was an inquest it may be possible to obtain a copy of the coroner's report
Name and address of informant and possibly their relationship to the deceased

If the deceased was a child or a single woman the name of the father is shown

From 1969 a death certificate also includes the date and place of birth of the deceased and the maiden name of a married woman

Q. How much do certificates cost?

A. See <http://www.gro.gov.uk>

NB. Prices may vary between local register offices

Q. How do I find Irish births, marriages and deaths?

A. Civil Registration of births, marriages and deaths began on 1st January 1864, although non-catholic marriages were recorded from 1845.

Registers for all of Ireland up to 1921, and for the Republic of Ireland, from 1922 to the present day, are held at the General Register of Ireland:

For information on these certificates see <http://www.groireland.ie>

Registers for Northern Ireland, including those prior to 1922, are held at the General Register Office for Northern Ireland (GRONI):

For information on these certificates see <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro>

Q. How do I find Scottish births, marriages and deaths?

A. Civil Registration of births, marriages and deaths began on 1st January 1855.

For information on these certificates see <http://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk>

Q. How do I find information on stillbirths?

A. Only the mother or father is able to apply for a stillbirth certificate, and they must be named on the certificate. If the parents are deceased a sibling can apply as long as they can provide the dates of death of their parents.

To apply for the application form for a stillbirth certificate, contact the General Register Office. Further details are available at:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk> by entering the search terms "stillbirth certificate"

Q. How do I find information on adoption certificates?

A. There is a separate index of adoptions which was introduced in 1927. The information shown always refers to the adopted name of the child. The indexes vary in the amount of information they give, dependent on the year in which the adoption took place. Application for a certificate should be made to the Adoptions Section of the General Register Office. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk> by entering the search term "adoption certificate"

Q. How do I find information on soldiers killed in World Wars One and Two?

A. There are separate indexes for soldiers killed in theatres of war. These form part of the General Register Office Overseas/Miscellaneous Indexes. Copies of certificates can only be obtained from the General Register Office. See <http://www.gro.gov.uk>