

Family History

England and Wales birth, death and marriage indexes

What records are available?

Civil registration of births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales started in July 1837. Indexes to these records are also known as the **St Catherine's House indexes**. State Library of Queensland holds the indexes on microfiche:

Holdings on microfiche		Call no
Births	1837 - 2001	MFC 929.341 1990-
Deaths	1837 - 2001	MFC 929.341 1990-
Marriages	1837 - 2001	MFC 929.341 1990-

State Library also holds the indexes to deaths from 1984 to 2000 on CD-ROM.

How are the indexes arranged?

From 1837 to 1984 the microfiche indexes are arranged separately by event (birth, death or marriage). They are then arranged into quarters:

March quarter	January, February, March
June quarter	April, May, June
September quarter	July, August, September
December quarter	October, November, December

From 1985 onwards the indexes are annually arranged.

Please note: some of the microfiche indexes can be difficult to read.

What information do the indexes provide?

Birth Indexes (Sep 1837 to Jun 1911)	Surname, Given Name/s, Registration District, Volume and Page.
Birth Indexes (Sep 1911 to Dec 2001)	Surname, Given Name/s, Mother's Maiden Surname, Registration District, Volume and Page
Marriage Indexes (Sep 1837 to Dec 1911)	Surname, Given Name/s, Registration District, Volume and Page. (Does not provide the details of the spouse.)
Marriage Indexes (Mar 1912 to Dec 2001)	Surname, Given Name/s, Surname of Spouse, Registration District, Volume and Page
Death Indexes (Sep 1837 to Mar 1866)	Surname, Given Name/s, Registration District, Volume and Page
Death Indexes (Jun 1866 to Dec 2001)	Surname, Given Name/s, Age, Registration District, Volume and Page.

Examples:

1. Birth Entry: Arthur Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister 1937-1940 (1869, June quarter):

Name	District	Volume	Page
CHAMBERLAIN --- Arthur Neville	King's N.	6c	407

2. Death Entry: Arthur Conan Doyle, author of Sherlock Holmes novels (1930, December quarter):

Name	Age	District	Volume	Page
DOYLE --- Arthur C.	71	Uckfield	2b	135

To what does the volume number refer?

The volume number refers to the civil registration district. For example, Neville Chamberlain's birth entry listed 6c as the civil registration district, which is Worcestershire. There are two sets of Civil Registration District Codes, one between 1837 and 1852 and the other between 1852 and 1946. A district key explaining the volume numbers is held at the level 3 desk.

How do I order certificates?

With the information gained from the indexes you can:

- Order online through the **General Registry Office** (<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>)
- Via agents in Australia found through the **Australasian Association of Genealogists and Record Agents Inc** (<https://www.aagra.asn.au/>)

Why can't I find anything?

- **Late Registrations** - Some events (usually births) may have been registered several weeks after the event. In this case check the next few quarters.
- **Misspelt Surnames** - Surnames can occasionally be incorrectly recorded. This can be caused by numerous factors such as illiteracy, strong accents and speech impediments.
- **Incorrect Dates** - Occasionally the age listed on a death or marriage certificate may be an estimation therefore it is advisable to search a wide range of years.

What other indexes are available?

The following UK records are also available:

Army returns and consular returns: indexes to births, deaths and marriages 1761-1965

[microfiche] MFC 355.30941 1995

These records include: Army Chaplains births indices 1796-1880, Chaplains returns marriages 1796-1880, Army Chaplains death indices 1796-1880; and Births abroad indices 1966-1994

GRO marine deaths indices 1837-1965 [microfiche] MFC 016.929341 1996

GRO marine births indices 1837-1965 [microfiche] MFC 016.929341 1996

The above indexes are also available on **FindMyPast**, available at State Library, under 'British Armed Forces and Overseas ...'.

Various baptism, marriage and burial record indexes are available for some English counties.

For more information check the One Search online catalogue <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>

Where can I find UK births, deaths and marriages online?

General Register Office (GRO) UK <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/Login.asp>

Birth search includes mother's maiden name back to 1837. Death search includes age at time of death. To search you do need to register but it is free to do so. You can order certificates from the search results for Births: 1837-1934; Deaths: 1837-1957. Later indexes are also available online, but the certificates are not available as PDFs and cost more: Births: 1984-2021; Deaths: 1984-2021. No marriage indexes are online yet.

Free BMD <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/>

This project's aim is to gradually transcribe information from the civil registration indexes (1837-1983) and enter the information into a searchable database. Volunteers are constantly adding new information.

Ancestry (Library edition) - Available *onsite* at State Library

Search England and Wales Free BMD 1837-1983 plus England and Wales birth, death and marriage indexes 1837-2005. Check the full list of English birth, death and marriage listings, which are frequently updated, for civil and parish records.

FindMyPast - Available *onsite* at State Library

This site contains a searchable database of English and Welsh birth, death and marriage indexes; civil and parish, from 1538 to the present.

FamilySearch <https://www.familysearch.org/en/australia/>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has constructed an online database containing a worldwide collection of indexes and an increasing number of records. To search you do need to register but it is free to do so.

UKBMD – Births, marriages, death indexes & census transcriptions online for UK family history

<https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/>

This commercial site contains links to web sites that offer on-line transcriptions of UK births, marriages, deaths and censuses indexes among others. It is a good way to locate the original indexes to births, marriages and deaths held at local register offices.

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | slq.qld.gov.au/ask

© State Library of Queensland, 2025. Last updated April 2025.



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY-4.0) licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/