

# BMD CERTIFICATES

## Birth, Marriage, Death



In England and Wales people have been able to register Births, Marriages and Deaths (BMD) since the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1837. In Scotland registration began in 1855 and in Ireland it began in 1864. Local record offices and some libraries hold BMD indexes which list names and dates, and physical copies of certificates can be obtained from [www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/).

## England and Wales

The General Register Office for England and Wales (GRO) holds records relating to births, marriages, deaths and adoptions. These include those registered with British Consuls, High Commissions, HM Forces, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen. Indexes for these may be searched at [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk), though you will need to register an account (free) to order copies.

### Birth and Deaths

There are two ways into the process for from the GRO menu.

#### a) Search the GRO Online Index

Choose either Birth or Death, and enter the minimal required detail.

	Required initial detail	Information returned
<b>Birth</b>	Surname at Birth Gender Year +/- 2 years	Surname, Firstname(s), Mothers Maiden Name <u>GRO Reference</u> : Year, Quarter, Place, Volume, Page
<b>Death</b>	Surname at Death Gender Year +/- 2 years	Surname, Firstname(s), Age at Death <u>GRO Reference</u> : Year, Quarter, Place, Volume, Page

*NB. Advanced search: Age at death allows for a range of 0, 1, 2, 5 or 10.*

#### b) Place an Order

If you know the GRO Index Reference this skips the search. (see *FreeBMD* over page)

It also provides a route back to the Index and an option for the GRO to search for you.

A positive result will provide options for what is available to order.

#### Certificate

- Paper copy used for official identification
- £12.50 despatched 4 working days after application (if GRO Index Ref used)

#### PDF

- Electronic copy that cannot be used for official identification
- £8 available to view within 4 working days after application (if received before 4pm)

#### Digital Image (JPEG) *new service*

- Image of a record that cannot be used for official identification
- £3 instant view once payment complete, available for 3 months
- Available for Births 1837-1922 and Deaths 1837 1957

### Marriage

These are not indexed at the GRO. To order a copy you will need to find the reference elsewhere (FreeBMD) or ask the GRO to search for it for you. Use the 'Place an Order' route, provide the year, at least one persons full name, date of marriage ( if not known enter 1 Jan for the year and they will search the whole year) and place of marriage.

### Siblings

Prior to 1911- Enter a year, choose + - 2 years, male or female, surname, mothers maiden name and district, and then work through the years.

## Certificate contents

Birth	Marriage	Death
Date Place Full name Residence Mother name Mother maiden name Father name Father occupation  - From September 1911 the mother's surname is included in the index - Knowing both parents' full names, you can search the indexes (not GRO) for a reference to their marriage.	Date Place Groom & Bride - Full names - Ages - Occupations - Residences - Fathers' names - Fathers' occupations Witnesses' names - From 1912 the spouse surname is included in the index. - In 1929 age at marriage changed to 16, from girls 12 boys 14.	Date Full name Age Residence Occupation Cause of Death Informant Name Informant Residence  - From 1 January 1866 the supposed age at death is shown in the index and the date of birth from 1 April 1969

### FreeBMD - [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)

The FreeBMD Database currently contains 292,717,594 distinct records (390,630,794 total records), as at 30 Oct 2023

A team of volunteers has for many years been entering the GRO Index entries into a searchable database. There is no charge for using this database. Read their instructions and study the options they offer. If you are looking for a 20<sup>th</sup> century event then it is as well to check their display of Graphs which show the progress they are making to see if the years you wish to search are covered. [www.freebmd.org.uk/progress.shtml](http://www.freebmd.org.uk/progress.shtml)

To Search click on one of Births, Marriages, or Deaths.

You can choose to limit your search

- by Registration District, [www.ukbmd.org.uk/reg](http://www.ukbmd.org.uk/reg) provides a helpful list of places
- by County.
- by Name, remember that the index may not have included the full names.
- by date, all the quarters are available March to December (except 1837)

#### TIPS:

1. Note of the details: Year, Quarter, District, Volume, Page, Name as it appears.
2. For Births, from Sep 1911 it is possible to search for all children by entering the surnames of both parents.
3. If the name you wish to find is a frequently occurring one then it would be well to divide the period you wish to search into sections. eg Mar 1900 to Dec 1905 and then reducing or increasing the range if you get too many results or only a few.
4. Marriages: search first under the less frequent name, then confirm it by clicking on the page, or by searching under the other name with the precise year and quarter to see if the same reference is shown. From 1912 it is possible to search including the spouse surname.
5. Pre 1912 FreeBMD will search for the name on the page; this could take a long time.
6. Deaths: it is possible to enter a range of ages (60-70) or an estimated date of birth (@1910- 1913).

## Scotland and Ireland

For physical copies of certificates from Scotland you can contact the New Register House, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH1 3YT and copies relating to Ireland can be obtained from the General Register Office, Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon.

Registrations for Northern Ireland from 1922 are at Oxford House, 49-55 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4HL.

Before commencing Scottish or Irish research, however, you are strongly advised to read the relevant chapter in one of the many books available.