HM Passport Office

GUIDE TO BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Find the documentation for your ancestor's birth and you will have the information you need to leapfrog back another generation

It's quick and easy...

ONLINE

It's quick and easy to order a birth certificate online, just follow these three steps:

STEP ONE Visit **www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates** and click on 'Start now'. Select 'Order a certificate online now' and register if you have not registered before (you will need an email address).

STEP TWO Select 'Birth Certificate' and if you know the GRO index reference number, click yes, if not click no. You will need to add the year of the event (if you do not have the index reference number a search will be carried out for you that covers a three-year period around the year you provide).

STEP THREE Once your address has been confirmed you will be asked to provide the information you have got from the index. You can order a certificate without an index reference number but you will need to give some identifying information such as the name at birth, year of birth and district of birth. You will not be charged more for this service but it will take longer for your certificate to be dispatched. You will need to pay by credit or debit card. See right for fees.

BY PHONE

If you don't wish to order online you can apply by telephone with a credit/debit card on 0300 123 1837. Lines are open Monday to Friday 8am – 8pm, Saturday 9am – 4pm.

BY POST

Application can also be made by post and forms can be obtained from GRO or downloaded via **www.gov.uk/bmdcertificates**

TRACK DOWN A FOREBEAR'S BIRTH

Birth certificates are the foundation of any family historian's research into an individual. They will help take you get back to the next generation, providing the father's name and occupation as well as, importantly, the mother's maiden name. These details will allow you to locate a marriage for the parents with a greater degree of certainty.

The General Register Office (GRO) in Southport holds comprehensive records of all births recorded in England and Wales from 1837 onwards as well as records for some British Nationals born overseas dating back to 1761.

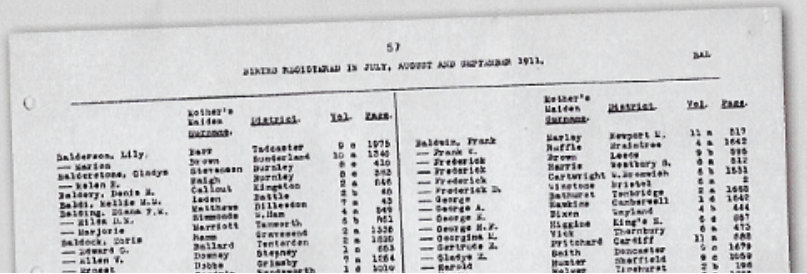
	Standard Service	Despatch target	Priority Service	Despatch target
Certificate with GRO index reference number supplied	£9.25	Four working days	£23.40	Next working day if ordered before 4pm
Certificate without GRO index reference number supplied	£9.25	Fifteen working days	£23.40	Next working day if ordered before 4pm

How to find an index reference

The GRO provides a public index that lists basic details of every birth recorded in England and Wales since 1837. The index is divided into four quarters for each year and can be viewed online for free at most libraries and record offices, or online at **www.freebmd.org.uk**. This free-to-use website has an almost complete transcription of the indexes for England and Wales from 1837 to 1983. You can also search the complete indexes for a fee using commercial websites.

Once you have found the right birth record in the indexes you will need to make a note of:

- **Full name of the person on the certificate**
- **The year and quarter in which the birth was registered**
- **The registration district**
- **The volume and page number of the entry**



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BIRTHS REGISTERED IN JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1911.

Vol.

	Mother's Maiden Surname.	District.	Vol.	Page.
Balderson, Lily.	Dew	Tadcaster	9 a	1975
— Marion	Brown	Sunderland	10 a	1240
Baldercstone, Gladys	Stevenson	Burnley	8 a	410
— Helen E.	Haigh	Burnley	8 a	362
Baldery, Denis H.	Callout	Kingston	2 b	646
Baldi, Nellie M.G.	Leden	Bootle	8 b	46
Balding, Diana F.K.	Matthews	Dillesden	7 a	43
— Ellie D.K.	Simmonds	Willam	4 a	845
— Marjorie	Marriott	Tamworth	6 b	761
Baldock, Doris	Nunn	Gravesend	2 a	1338
— Edward G.	Ballard	Tenterden	2 a	1330
— Allen V.	Downey	Stepney	1 a	653
— Ernest	Dibbs	Grimsby	9 a	1764
		Barnsley	3 d	1014

	Mother's Maiden Surname.	District.	Vol.	Page.
Baldwin, Frank	Harley	Newport M.	11 a	817
— Frank C.	Ruffle	Braintree	4 a	1642
— Frederick	Brown	Leeds	9 b	995
— Frederick	Harris	Westbury S.	6 a	812
— Frederick	Cartwright	W.Bromwich	6 b	1551
— Frederick D.	Winstone	Bristol	6 a	2
— George	Bathurst	Tenbridge	2 a	1660
— George A.	Hawkins	Cuckfield	2 b	1647
— George E.	Dixon	Ingleod	4 b	464
— George H.F.	Higgins	King's L.	6 d	887
— Georgina L.	Vick	Thornbury	6 b	472
— Gertrude J.	Pritchard	Cardiff	11 b	668
— Gladys E.	Smith	Doncaster	9 c	1679
— Harold	Hunter	Sheffield	9 c	1659
	Walker	Tiverton	7 b	196

FIND THAT BIRTH

Try these tips if you can't find an ancestor's arrival into the world recorded in the indexes

TIP 1

Prior to 1875, the registration of an event was not enforced and therefore some births were never officially registered.

TIP 2

Registration of a birth may have happened in the quarter after it took place, so search later indexes.

TIP 3

A birth might have taken place outside England and Wales. Search Scottish records at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk.

TIP 4

Babies were not always named immediately, many appearing as 'infant', 'boy' or 'girl' in the indexes.

TIP 5

The name you know your ancestor by might not be the one that appears on their birth certificate. Many people chose to be called by their middle names.