

Post Adoption Information Sheet No 33

Searching British Births, Deaths & Marriages Information in Australia

The records of the English Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages are public records. This means that anyone can search through the registers and apply for certificates. Some of those records, usually held in large books in London, are available at the Family History Section of the State Library of NSW and QLD, as well as through some genealogical societies.

You can go to the Family History Section of the State Library and conduct your own search. This can be time consuming, so make sure that you have time available. Take a pen and paper to write down the information. Be sure to take with you all the available information on the relatives that you are seeking. The records are stored on microfiche. If you have not used microfiche before, the librarian will assist you. Some of these records are also available online, on the State Library website.

The State Library of NSW and QLD also provide the facility to ask the librarians questions via their websites. The librarians can recommend methods and resources to help with your research, assist with finding the right resources in the Library's collections and guide you with accessing e-resources.

Which English records are available?

Please note that the records listed are for England and Wales, but not Scotland.

Births	1837 to 2004
Deaths	1837 to 2004
Marriages	1890 to 2004

If you are not able to get to the State Library, you can check the internet site www.findmypast.com or www.ancestry.com; although there is a charge for these service's, payable by credit card. If you are searching for records from the 1800s you can check the site www.freebmd.com but this site currently only has historical records. If you do not feel comfortable searching and paying for searches and certificates online you can contact:

Joy Murrin
England & Wales Certificate Service
PO Box 278

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Oatley NSW 2223
 Ph. 02 9585 1187
joy@joymurrin.com.au

Charges for certificates and searches are detailed on Joy’s website.

Or you can contact the General Register Office in England directly:

Certificate Services Section
 General Register Office
 PO Box 2
 Southport
 England
 PR8 2JD

Phone: +44 (0) 300 123 1837
 Email: certificate.services@gro.gsi.gov.uk
 Website: https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/contact_us.asp

What use will the records be to me?

Searching for relatives in England and Wales is undertaken by piecing together information from records of family life; birth, death and marriage.

Certificates can be applied for which will give identifying information about your relatives and will give an address at the time of that event. The full details are not given on the Register; you have to apply for the certificate to get the full information.

In order to apply for a certificate, you must carefully and accurately note all of the information from the entry, including the reference numbers. If this information is not written correctly on your application, it will not be processed.

How do I search the records?

Each year is divided into four quarters: March, June, September, and December. For each year of your search, you will have to look at four entries, one for each quarter. Make a list of the quarters and the years, and tick them off as you go. This will save confusion if you have to resume your search on another day.

The information shown on the Register is as follows:

Birth Register

Surname	First name	Middle Initial	Mother's maiden	District	Vol.	Page
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Russell	Patricia	J	Withers	Chelmsford	5A	436
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Death Register

Surname	First name	Middle Initial	Age	District	Vol.	Page
Withers	Elizabeth	R	74	Chelmsford	23A	899

Marriage Register

Surname	First name	Middle Initial	Surname of Spouse	District	Vol.	Page
Russell	Patricia	J	Hackman	Brent	4A	237

You should carefully write down all this information and the quarter and the year of the entry. Even if you are not sure that this is the right person, make a note to save going back later. You may need to check entries before or after the quarter/ year when you think an event took place.

Search Example

Lucy Wright is an English adoptee who has received a copy of her original birth certificate and is now searching for her English mother, Patricia Jane Russell.

1. Lucy decides to start by looking up Patricia's birth. She knows Patricia was 19 when Lucy was born in 1965, so she goes back to the birth records of 1946. She does not find a birth under that name in that year, but when she goes back to the 1945 records she does find an entry for the birth of a Patricia J Russell, born in Chelmsford.

By applying for this certificate, Lucy will find out the full names and occupations of her grandparents and their address in 1945.

2. Lucy knows that Patricia was not married when she gave birth to Lucy in 1965. Lucy decides to look for a marriage for Patricia starting from 1965. In the June quarter of 1974, Lucy found an entry for the marriage of Patricia J Russell in Brent to a man called Hackman.

By applying for this certificate, Lucy will find out the full name of Mr Hackman and his and Patricia's addresses and occupations at the time of the marriage. She will also see the names of the witnesses to the marriage.

Lucy now has an address for Patricia in 1974. She decides to do some further searches to try to find some more information.

3. Lucy looks through the birth records from 1974 to where the records end in 1983 to see whether Patricia had any further children. She knows that the cross-reference point will be the birth entry under the name of Hackman, with the mother's maiden name being shown as Russell.

Lucy finds records of six births with the Hackman/Russell cross-reference point. These are in various parts of England. As Patricia was born in Chelmsford, Essex and married in nearby Brent, Lucy decides to concentrate her search in the Essex/East London area and to apply for the birth certificates of the two children born in this area: a boy, Daniel P Hackman in the March quarter of 1976 and a girl, April M Hackman in the September quarter of 1979.

By applying for the birth certificates of Daniel and April, Lucy is able to confirm that they are Patricia's children, her half-siblings, and to find Patricia's address as late as 1979.

4. Lucy now has some choices. She can:

- Write to the 1979 address on the chance that Patricia or a member of her family is still living there.
- Ask a PARC or PASQ mediator to contact this address.
- Apply to the England & Wales Certificate Service (address given earlier) for later (post 1983) searches to be done. These might include searches for the marriages of Patricia's children, the deaths of Patricia's parents etc.
- Each of these certificates would give other addresses which might prove useful in contacting Patricia.
- Ask a friend in the UK to do these searches.
- Engage a search agency in the UK to undertake the full search and contact. This may be necessary if the person cannot be found on the indexes. (See our information sheet "*Information for English Adoptees*" for details of search agencies who will undertake the full search.)

Remember that the indexes are only useful if the person, under a name you know them to use, have been named on the entry for a birth, a marriage or a death. If the person has not married, died or had any subsequent children, this can make the search more difficult and the services of a professional search agency may be required.

English Search Indexes in Australia

South Australia

GPO Box 592

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Adelaide
South Australia 5001
08 8272 4222
saghs.admin@saghs.org.au

ACT

National Library of Australia
Parkes Place
Canberra ACT 2600
02 6262 1111

Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra
Box 152
Post Office
Jamison Centre
ACT 2614
02 6251 7004

New South Wales

State Library of NSW
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000
02 9273 1414

Richmond Tweed Family History Society
History Society
PO Box 817
BALLINA NSW 2478
02 6687 8443
secretaryrtfhs@yahoo.com.au

Newcastle Region Library
Local History Section
Level 2
War Memorial Cultural Centre
Laman Street
Newcastle 2300
02 4974 5330

Griffith Genealogical and Historical Society
PO Box 2703

GRIFFITH NSW 2680
02 6964 8942

Penrith City Council
c/- Nepean Family Society
PO Box 81
Emu Plains
NSW 2750 02 4735 3798

Society of Australian Genealogists
"Richmond Villa"
120 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
02 9247 3953

Western Australia

WA Genealogical Society (WAGS)
Units 4,5,6 48 May Street
Bayswater WA 6053
08 9271 4311

Queensland

Queensland Family History Society
PO Box 171
INDOOROOPILLY QLD 4068
07 3355 3369
secretary@qfhs.org.au

Treeroots
Maryborough Family Heritage Institute Inc
164 Richmond Street
Maryborough QLD 46650
07 4123 1620

Gold Coast Family History Society Inc
PO Box 2763
SOUTHPORT QLD 4215
07 5582 8855

Genealogical Society of Queensland
25 Stackpole Street
Wishart QLD 4122
07 3349 6072

Tasmania

Launceston Branch Genealogical Society of Tasmania
PO Box 1290
LAUNCESTON TASMANIA 7250
03 6326 1399

Tasmanian Family History Society – Hobart Branch
PO Box 326 Rosny Park
Tasmania Australia 7018

Also hold various old parochial records for Scotland, National Burial index for England & Wales (2nd ed), British Isles Vitals Records index, Pallots Marriage index 1780-1837, Pallots Baptism index 1783-1837, England & Wales Death index 1984-2000, Northampton Marriage Licences 1521-1869, various Phillimore Marriage indexes. Also have access on a roster basis to Births, Deaths & Marriages 1868-1942.

Victoria

Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies
PO Box 339
BLACKBURN VICTORIA 3130
03 9877 3789

Macbeth Genealogical Services
PO Box 136
HAMPTON VICTORIA 3188
03 9598 0435

State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
MELBOURNE VICTORIA 3000
03 8664 7002

The Genealogical Society of Victoria
Level 6, 85 Queen Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
03 9662 4455

Please phone us if you wish to talk further about any issues raised in this information sheet.

Post Adoption Resource Centre (PARC)

Location: Locked Bag 6002,
Hurstville BC NSW 1481

Phone: 02 9504 6788

Email: PARC@benevolent.org.au

Website: www.benevolent.org.au

Post Adoption Support Queensland (PASQ)

Location: Ground Floor, 189 Coronation Dr,
Milton QLD 4064

Phone: 07 3170 4600

Email: PASQ@benevolent.org.au

Website: www.benevolent.org.au