



## Parish Records Research Guide

Today, it's fairly straightforward to research your family history online using **Civil Registration (BMD)**, the **Census** and **The 1939 National Registration** but before 1837 in England and Wales, 1855 in Scotland and 1864 in Ireland, the Parish records can be difficult to search...

Parish Registers were formally introduced in England on 5th September 1538, when Thomas Cromwell issued an injunction on behalf of Henry VIII requiring the register of baptisms, marriages and burials to be kept by the church. Many of the approx. 12,500 ancient parishes ignored this order as it was commonly thought that it presaged a further taxation so, in 1597 transcripts of the parish registers, were ordered to be forwarded to the Bishop of the Diocese, and in 1831, official inquiries were made of all clergy, as to the exact date, condition and number of parish registers in their custody and their replies were published in 1883.

An important website to start your search, is **www.freereg.org.uk** – it aims to provide free search of baptisms, marriages and burial records, taken from parish registers, non-conformist records and other relevant sources in the UK, and to check what parish records may be available to you, click on the **'Transcriptions'** link at the top of the home page and follow the instructions, this will give you some information detailing what records may be found for your parish or county and there is a link to the relevant **www.genuki.org.uk** page for information on the county. **Note:** *check out the **parish**, before starting your in-depth searching, to see how far back did their records actually start...*

### State parish churches

- Anglican Church ( the Church of England, the Church in Wales, the Church of Ireland )
- Presbyterian-based Church of Scotland ('the Kirk') from 1560 theoretically...

Where to find these records; **genuki.org.uk** – **freereg.org.uk** - **findmypast.co.uk** – **thegenealogist.co.uk** - **familysearch.org** and **'Dade Registers' 1777-1812** at (<http://englishancestors.byu.edu/Pages/dade-registers>)

### Non-conformist records

- Quakers, Presbyterians ( in England & Wales ), Baptists, Methodists, and the United Reform Church

Where to find these records; **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk** – **bmdregisters.co.uk** **quaker.org.uk** – **urc.org.uk/clergy-and-office-holders/archive-and-records.html**

## Scottish records from 1553

- Church of Scotland parish registers, collected in 1855 and 1885
- Scottish Catholic Church
- Scottish Episcopal Church

Where to find these records; [nrscotland.gov.uk](http://nrscotland.gov.uk) (digitalized at [scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk)) [scottishcatholicarchives.org.uk](http://scottishcatholicarchives.org.uk) – [scottisharchives.org.uk/explore](http://scottisharchives.org.uk/explore) and at [findmypast.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/old-parish-registers/list-of-old-parish-registers](http://findmypast.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/old-parish-registers/list-of-old-parish-registers)

## Records for Ireland

- Anglican-based Church of Ireland was historically the state church until 1871 but was a smaller denomination than the Catholic Church and penal laws targeted Catholics and Presbyterians (Dissenters) until 1829
- Church of Ireland was challenged in Ulster by the dissenting Presbyterian, Catholic and Methodist churches

Where to find these records; Catholic records at [registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie) and at [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk) [ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/registers/PARISHREGISTERS.pdf](http://ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/registers/PARISHREGISTERS.pdf) [indirect.gov.uk/publications/proni-guide-church-records](http://indirect.gov.uk/publications/proni-guide-church-records) – [rootsireland.ie](http://rootsireland.ie)

## Crown dependencies

- Isle of Man – [familysearch.org/search/collection/1784428](http://familysearch.org/search/collection/1784428)
- Channel Islands – [familysearch.org/search/collection/1584983](http://familysearch.org/search/collection/1584983)

## Military families overseas

- Regimental Birth Indices 1761-1924 part of [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk) (Parish Records)
- Overseas records, British Army & Navy Births, Marriages & Deaths 1730-1960 [ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60931](http://ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60931)

## Searching for settlers

- US church records [familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_Church\\_Records](http://familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Church_Records)
- Canadian records [collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://collectionscanada.gc.ca) and <https://familytr.ee/lacguide>
- India from the early 17th century held in the British Library on [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk)
- Australia from 1788 [familysearch.org/wiki/en/Australia\\_Church\\_Records](http://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Australia_Church_Records)
- New Zealand [familysearch.org/wiki/en/New\\_Zealand\\_Church\\_Records](http://familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_Zealand_Church_Records)
- South Africa from 1801-2004 also on [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)

Most of the major subscription websites have Parish records acquired by partnerships with a number of county archives, and which also come from countrywide collections, such as the FamilySearch IGI, Phillimore Marriage Records or Boyd's Marriage Index, and many of the websites have data drawn from antiquarian volumes of parish transcriptions, often covering just one parish or one church, and originally published more than a century ago.

The Society of Genealogists also has a substantial collection of England & Wales Parish records available for consultation, with a useful guide via. <https://familytr.ee/sog5>

Another good place to search is [www.ukbmd.org.uk](http://www.ukbmd.org.uk) – Ian Hartas is a long-time genealogist and author of this website and to explore for parish records, click on '**PARISH REGISTER**' on the left side of the home page. Choose your county and some links begin with 'Parish Registers of.....' which may lead you to the [archive.org](http://archive.org) website with old printed books from the **Parish Register Society** with transcriptions, which is **free** to research.

#### **Citations:**

Paton, Chris. April 2020. *Family Tree Magazine* [www.family-tree.co.uk](http://www.family-tree.co.uk)

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Bradbrook, William. 1910. *The Parish Register*. Walton-on-Thames: Chas. A Bernau available Classic Reprint Series at [www.forgottenbooks.com](http://www.forgottenbooks.com)

Herber, Mark. 2005. *Ancestral Trails: The Complete Guide to British Genealogy and Family History*. 2nd ed. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., in association with the Society of Genealogists.