

For further help

Free BMD (www.freebmd.org.uk) and **UK BMD** (www.ukbmd.org.uk) are free to access and offer searchable databases of birth, marriage and death records registered since July 1837 – but note that neither has complete coverage. The latter has a Yorkshire-only section you can jump straight to (www.yorkshirebmd.org.uk) and which is particularly useful in regard to marriage records because it gives the name of the relevant church.

If you can't get to the library, we can do a limited amount of research for you. We charge £7.00 per 30 minutes if you live in Leeds, rising to £14.00 for customers outside Leeds. Copies of documents are charged at the usual rate. Write or email your request to the contact details below. (Prices correct at time of printing.)

Opening times

Monday – 9.00am – 8.00pm
Tuesday – 9.00am – 8.00pm
Weds – 9.00am – 8.00pm
Thursday 9.00am – 5.00pm
Friday – 9.00 – 5.00pm
Saturday – 10.00am – 4.00pm
Sunday - Closed

For more information

Local and Family History

**Leeds Central Library, Calverley Street,
Leeds, LS1 3AB**

T: 0113 378 6982

E: localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk

W: www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries

Blog: secretlibraryleeds.net

Tickets:

ticketsource.co.uk/Leedslibraryevents

Newsletter: bit.ly/LeedsLocalHistoryNews



BMD Indexes

Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes

The Local and Family History Library gives you access to indexes of births, marriages and deaths registered in England and Wales from 1837 to 2006. This leaflet explains how to use these to apply for a certificate.



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Birth, Marriage and Death (BMD) records

For many people of the past, these three events in life were perhaps the only ones likely to leave behind a physical record, in the form of a **birth, marriage or death certificate**. You may be lucky enough to find a parish record – from a church's own register of baptisms, marriages and burials (sometimes going back to the 1500s) – but actual civil registration administered by the British government only dates **back to July 1837**.

The good news is that it's quite straightforward to search BMD indexes for 1837-2005 (deaths 2007 complete, up to 2022 incomplete) on **Ancestry.co.uk**, which is available free in all Leeds Libraries. From these, you can obtain the three-month quarter of the year when the event was registered and the place of registration, all of which is enough to then apply for a certificate containing the more detailed information.

- In the case of **marriages**, both partners are listed separately in the same quarter of the marriage index (after 1912 the surname of the spouse is included in the index).
- In the case of **births**, a handy feature is the listing (since 1911) of the mother's maiden name (from 1837 on the GRO website). This means you can search for children born with a certain combination of surname and mother's maiden name within a given time period... or, to put it another way, the possible siblings of a particular child.

A few words of warning!

This information only applies to **England and Wales** (Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have their own administration in place) and registration was not made compulsory until 1875, so there are gaps before then. Ancestry is, as always, open to transcription errors so we've held onto our microfilmed copies of the indexes (1837-2000), which have the added benefit of being guaranteed to work without an internet connection. Lastly, for BMD information after 2005, you need to contact the General Register Office (see below) if you're not sure where the event was registered.

Obtaining Birth, Marriage or Death Certificates

On the GRO website indexes:

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp>

birth records give the mother's maiden name from 1837 and births and deaths can be searched up to 2021 (as at June 2024)

There are only two places you can contact to get hold of a certificate: the **local register office** where the event was registered or the **General Register Office** (GRO) in Southport, part of Her Majesty's Passport Office and effectively the institution's headquarters. Before selling you a certificate, both will require you to provide:

- **Name** of the person in question
- **Year** the event was registered, including the quarter (i.e. three-month period of the year)

- **Reference number** and **place** (aka registration district)

You can usually find these details using the civil registration indexes on Ancestry.com or microfilm reels in the library, or on the GRO website .

Copies from local Register Offices:

If your ancestors came from Leeds, you can write to:

Leeds Register Office, City Centre Community Hub, Merrion House, Leeds, LS2 8LX.

Telephone: (0113) 222 4408

Web: www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Order-certificates.aspx

Other register office contact details can be found via www.genuki.org.uk (or ask a member of staff for help).

Copies from the General Register Office:

Order **online** at: www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates

By post: Certificate Services Section
General Register Office
PO Box 2
SOUTHPORT
PR8 2JD

Telephone: 0300 123 1837