

Finding the Irish in Britain

Overview

- Britain and the Crown Dependencies
- British archives
- Civil registration
- Wills
- Poor law records and returns
- British censuses
- 1939 National Identity Register
- Newspapers
- Societies

Britain and the Crown Dependencies

1535-42	England and Wales union
1707	Scotland & England/Wales: Great Britain
1801	United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland
1922	United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland

Separate legal systems – English Law and Scots Law
 Separate state church – Church of England and Church of Scotland
 Separate education systems

Many large Irish Communities in England, Wales and Scotland:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayrshire • Barrow-in-Furness • Birmingham • Bolton • Bradford • Braintree, Essex • Coatbridge • Coventry • Dundee • Gateshead • Glasgow • Halifax • Heywood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jarrow • Keighley • Leeds • Liverpool • London • Manchester • Middlesbrough • Newport • Sunderland • Swansea • Whitehaven • Widnes • Wolverhampton
---	--

14 million people claim less than 25% Irish ancestry. 6 million have more than 25% Irish ancestry.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_migration_to_Great_Britain

Key archives:

National Records of Scotland	www.nrscotland.gov.uk
The National Archives (TNA)	www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
National Library of Wales	www.library.wales

Many Irish related TNA collections on FindmyPast e.g.:

- Ireland, Royal Irish Constabulary Service Records 1816-1922 (HO 184/1-244 some gaps)
- Ireland, Royal Irish Constabulary Pensions 1826-1925 (PMG 48/1-78)
- Ireland, Royal Irish Constabulary History & Directories
- Easter Rising & Ireland Under Martial Law 1916-1921

Also UK collections including the Irish, e.g. on FindmyPast:

- Passenger Lists Leaving UK 1890-1960
- British Civil Service Evidence of Age

Crown Dependencies

- Isle of Man

Manx National Heritage <https://manxnationalheritage.im/collections/library-and-archives/>

- Channels Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, Alderney, etc)

Jersey Archive www.jerseyheritage.org/places-to-visit/jersey-archive

'Guernsey, 1814-1914 : migration in a modernising society' by Rose-Marie Anne Crossan

https://leicester.figshare.com/articles/thesis/Guernsey_1814-1914_migration_in_a_modernising_society/10155788/1

Civil registration

Overview

Civil registration commenced within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at different stages within the 19th century

- July 1st 1837 England and Wales
- April 1st 1845 Ireland (non-RC marriage only)
- January 1st 1855 Scotland
- January 1st 1864 Ireland (all BMDs)

England and Wales – background

1836 – Births and Deaths Registration Act and Marriage Act allow for creation of Office of Registrar General

- 619 Superintendent registrar's districts – subdivided into registration districts
- From July 1st 1837, registration of births and deaths, and creation of civil marriage procedure as an option
- Responsibility for registration lies initially with registrars; 1874 it transfers to the public

Birth records

- Notes child's name, sex, DOB and where born; time of birth only when multiple births
- Both parents' names – from 1874, if illegitimate, only mother's name recorded unless father also attended registration
- Illegitimacy legitimised from 1927 onwards, if parents later married
- Father's occupation
- Informant and signature

Marriage records

- Names of parties, ages, condition as to marriage, addresses, occupations, and signatures (local copies only)
- Names both parties' fathers, & if alive
- Location where marriage occurred and by what means (church wedding or registrar)
- Names of celebrant and witnesses
- When registered

Death records

- Name of the deceased
- Age at death, and sex
- When and where died
- Cause of death
- No parental information (unless infant death)
- Signature of informant

Records indexes

Available from:

- FreeBMD.org.uk
- Ancestry.com
- TheGenealogist.co.uk
- FindmyPast.com

These provide Name, Year, Quarter, Registration District, Vol. no., and Page no. Once an entry is found the record can be ordered from the General Register Office www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/ at £9.25 per record, posted to your address. An alternative is the new online PDF ordering service, covering Births 1837-1920, and Deaths 1837-1957, at £7 per record.

Alternatively, order from local superintendent registrar's office. Details of offices, and some indexes, are accessible via www.UKBMD.org.uk. Council websites may also offer services. £10 per certificate.

Scotland

The Registration (Scotland) Act 1854 gave the new Registrar General responsibility to create a compulsory BMD registration system. Access to BMDs via www.ScotlandsPeople.gov.uk.

- Pay per view site
- All indexes from 1855-2021
- Closure periods for records images – 100 years births; 75 years marriages; 50 years deaths
- All previous searches and images retained on account

Access also via ScotlandsPeople Centre www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/visit-us

- £15 for unlimited access for digitised records and indexes from 1855-2021
- Additional records available at the centre within the online closure periods
- Access also at Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Alloa, Inverness and Hawick – see www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/local-family-history-centres
- Certified BMD copies are £12 each

*Births*BIRTH SP/NRS B 1864 RD 333/1 No. 48 Blackford

Name James KELLY
 Born 11.50pm on August 18th 1864 at Muirhead, Kincardine
 Sex M
 Father James KELLY, Ploughman
 Mother Susan KELLY m.s. McNAMARA, married 1858 January 30th, Milton Malbay*, Ireland
 Informant James KELLY, father, present
 Registered September 3rd 1864 at Blackford
 * *Miltown Malbay is in County Clare*

*Marriages*MARRIAGE SP/NRS M 1862 RD 559/1 No. 60 Abbey Burgh

On 13 MAR 1862 at St. Mirren's Church, Paisley, after banns according to the forms of the Roman Catholic Church.
 Groom Patrick BROGAN, iron miner, age 28, 34 Glen Street, Paisley
 Father John BROGAN, tailor (deceased)
 Mother Ann BROGAN, m.s. GLANCEY (deceased)
 Bride Ann COX, her mark X, marmalade maker, age 25, 56 Caledonia Street, Paisley
 Father John COX, farmer (deceased)
 Mother Mary O' BRINE (deceased)
 Witnesses Patrick MULLIN and Ann McKENZIE
 Registered 1 APR 1862 at Paisley

*Deaths*DEATH SP/NRS D 1866 RD 651/01 No. 23 Airdrie

Name James BROGAN, single
 Died 9.00pm on 1 SEP 1866 at 9 Hunter Street, Airdrie
 Age 41
 Father Owen BROGAN, tailor (deceased)
 Mother Annie BROGAN, m.s. GLANCY (deceased)
 Cause Effusion on brain 14 days, hemiplegia 14 days, as certified by E. N. O' Kane, surgeon
 Informant Catherine McGINN, her X mark, sister
 Registered 3 SEP 1866 at Airdrie

DEATH SP/NRS D 1861 RD 651/01 No. 271 Airdrie

Name John BROGAN, stoker (railway)
 Died 2.30pm on 15 NOV 1861 at Rawyards, Airdrie
 Age 34
 Father Yohan BROGAN, tailor (deceased)
 Mother Ann BROGAN m.s. GLANCY (deceased)
 Cause Accidentally killed on the Monklands Railway
 Informant James BROGAN, his X mark, brother
 Registered 16 NOV 1861 at Airdrie

Note in the above records the spelling variants for the father, Éoin BROGAN, as Owen BROGAN, Yohan BROGAN and John BROGAN.

Scottish records can provide evidence of Irish births and marriages from prior to 1864.

Scottish Registers of Corrected Entries (RCEs)

- Paternity
- Suspicious or unusual deaths
- Errors in recording
- Other changes

NB: 1855 is the 'golden year' as records for that year alone provide more details – e.g.

BIRTH SP/NRS B 1855 RD 662/00 No. 173 Bathgate

Name William JOHNSTON
 Born 11.00am July 27th 1855, Livery Street, Bathgate
 Father John JOHNSTON, coal miner, age 49 years, born County of Fermanagh, Ireland
 Married 1847 Airdrie
 Other children 2 boys and 2 girls living, 1 boy deceased
 Mother Mary CAMPBELL, her 5th child, age 30 years, born County of Tyrone, Ireland
 Informant John JOHNSTON, his X mark
 Registered Aug 16th 1855 Bathgate

DEATH SP/NRS B 1855 RD 662/00 No. 173 Bathgate

Name John CURRY
 Sex Male
 Age 39
 Where Born County Derry, Ireland; 6 years in Glasgow
 Parents Jackson Curry, Day Labourer (Deceased), ----- Curry, m.s. -----
 Married Margaret Burnside 1st wife (Deceased); Elizabeth McGraw 2nd wife
 Issue 1st Marriage: William, 18; 2nd marriage: 1) Elizabeth, 4; 2) Jackson, deceased at 18 months
 Died 3 OCT 1855 at 10pm
 Where Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, Residence at 9 Middleton Place, Garngad Road, Glasgow
 Cause Typhus fever, complicated with 13 months bronchitis 24 days, certified
 Burial Sighthill Cemetery, Glasgow, certified
 Informant William Curry, son
 Registered 4 OCT 1855 at Glasgow

Other UK based GRO generated record sets

Adoption records: 1926 England and Wales; 1930 Scotland

Divorce records:

- Ancestry: Court Minutes from 1858-1911 for Eng/Wales
- ScotlandsPeople Centre: Register of Divorce from 1984

Vaccination: Eng/Wales from 1853; Scotland from 1864

Stillbirths: From 1927 Eng/Wales; 1939 in Scotland

Civil partnerships: From 2005 across UK

Isle of Man

- Voluntary registration births and marriages 1849
- Civil registration births and deaths from 1878
- Civil registration of marriages from 1884

Channel Islands

- Guernsey births and deaths 1840; Jersey 1842; Alderney 1850; Sark 1915
- Guernsey marriages 1842; Jersey 1886; Alderney 1919, Sark 1925

Additional Sources: Overseas BMD Registers

Held at General Register Office, Southport

- GRO Regimental Birth Indexes 1761-1924
- GRO Army Chaplains BMD indexes 1796-1880
- GRO Marine Birth and Death indexes 1837-1960
- Ionian Islands – Chaplains, Military and Civil BMD registers 1818-1864

Indexes included in FindmyPast database 'British Armed Forces And Overseas Banns & Marriages'

The National Archives (Kew) RG32-36

- RG32: GRO Overseas BMDs and Burials on British & Foreign ships, and British subjects etc in colonies, Commonwealth & countries under British jurisdiction (1831-1969)
- RG33: GRO Overseas BMDs and Burials of British subjects (1627-1960)
- RG34: GRO Overseas foreign marriage returns (1861-1921)
- RG35: GRO Misc Foreign Death Returns (1791-1921)
- BT158-160: Registry of Shipping and Seamen, BMDs passengers at sea (B 1854-1908; M 1875-91; D 1875-88)

Accessible at Ancestry, FindmyPast, www.bmdregisters.co.uk and www.thegenealogist.co.uk

And some much lesser known collections...

- Registers of Deaths of Workers on British Oil and Gas Rigs (from 1971)
- Registers of Births and Deaths on British Registered Hovercrafts (from 1972 onwards)!

Church records

Various Catholic and other church collections on all the main vendor sites. e.g.:

Ancestry: Liverpool, England, Catholic Baptisms, 1741-1919

FMP: Scotland Roman Catholic Parish Baptisms

FMP: British Armed Forces Roman Catholic Registers

Wills

England and Wales

Find a Will <https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk>

Ancestry: England & Wales National Probate Calendar 1858-1995

Scotland

Scotland's People Wills and Inventories (1513-1925) www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

Ancestry: Scotland, National Probate Index (Calendar of Confirmations & Inventories), 1876-1936

Poor law records

United Kingdom Poor Law acts (19th century):

1834 Poor Law Amendment Act (England & Wales)

1838 Poor Relief (Ireland) Act

1845 Poor Law (Scotland) Act

Peter Higginbotham's The Workhouse site at www.workhouses.org.uk

England and Wales

- 1834 – Poor Law Amendment Act
- Workhouses established in Poor Law Unions, divided into districts run by relieving officers
- Offers of indoor relief and outdoor relief
- Administered by Boards of Guardians, reporting to Poor Law Commission in London (1847 Poor Law Board; 1871 Local Government Board)
- Reduction in workhouse admission from 1908/1911 once old age pensions & unemployment insurance introduced

Scotland

- 1845 – Poor Law (Scotland) Act
- Poorhouses could be established in parishes, or in 'combinations' of parishes
- Administered by Parochial Boards responsible to Board of Supervision in Edinburgh
- Inspectors of the Poor to decide on poorhouse admission or outdoor relief
- No workhouse test, and a right of appeal

Poor law removals from Britain - Settlement and irremovability:***England and Wales***

Settlement granted by birth, or 3 years residence in a parish

1846 – irremovability status introduced to those resident in a parish for 5 years

1865 – irremovability after 1 year's residence in a poor law union

Scotland

Settlement granted by birth, or 5 years residence in a parish

No status of irremovability (except on medical grounds)

An example of poor law removals from Liverpool in 1834, as previously held on TNA's Moving Here website, is cached by the Internet Archive at

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130513031940/http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/irish/settling/settling.htm#settlement>

UK Parliamentary Papers also has many poor law removals lists from late 1850s

<https://parlipapers.proquest.com> (Institutional subscription only)

Example of one report on Ancestry as the 'Ireland, Poor Law Union Removals From England, 1859-1860' collection

Also examples for removals from Scotland, England and Wales at Raymond's County Down Web Site www.raymondscountydownwebsite.com

Britain & Crown Dependencies Censuses

- First decennial censuses in 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831 were statistical exercises only.
- Useful genealogical information appears from 1841 onwards.
- Censuses for all of Britain, Isle of Man and Channel Islands were co-ordinated from London from 1801-1851. From 1861, the Scottish census has been run separately from Edinburgh.
- Censuses for England, Wales, and Crown Dependencies are held at TNA (Kew). Scottish censuses are held by the NRS.
- 100 year closure period imposed by Census Act 1920.

- 1841 census limited – name, occupation, age, whether born in the county of enumeration (or E, I, W, S, F)
- From 1851, relationship to the head of household added, correct age, and parish or county/country of origin.
- In subsequent years, additional questions asked.
- Information is much more limited than the Irish equivalents.
- No questions on religion asked (as was the case in Ireland).

Don't forget to consider 'chain migration' of Irish migrants to Britain.

1841-1851 Irish census extracts for Old Age Pension applications

Available at www.genealogy.nationalarchives.ie – includes applicants from Britain and the Crown Dependencies

National Identity Register 1939

A wartime census carried out across the UK on 29 SEP 1939

- Information used to produce identity cards, and for the purpose of a possible draft
- Information recorded was later used as the basis for the first National Health Service register from 1948
- Not protected by the UK's Census Act of 1920
- Records still closed for those born less than 100 years ago (unless deceased)

The records are held by different agencies across the UK:

- England and Wales – original records held by Health and Social Care Information Centre (now called NHS Digital); registers digitised and available online
- Scotland – database of extracted information held by the National Records of Scotland
- Northern Ireland – the registers are held by PRONI
- Isle of Man – registers have not survived

Background www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/1939-register

The England and Wales 1939 register is available on FindmyPast, Ancestry, and MyHeritage.

For Scotland, entries are available at £15 per person from the National Records of Scotland (£5 no trace fee). See www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/national-register

“Information Required – Surname, Forename(s), Date of Death and Date of Birth (if known) of the person who is the subject of the enquiry.

If the death was registered outwith Scotland you must also provide us with a copy of the individual's death certificate to enable us to process your application.”

The Irish in Britain's newspapers

British Newspaper Archive

www.britishnewspapers.co.uk

Societies

Irish Genealogical Research Society

www.irishancestors.ie

Catholic Family History Society
Family History Federation
Scottish Association of FHSs

<https://catholicfhs.online>
www.familyhistoryfederation.com
www.safhs.org.uk

Chris Paton

The following books by yours truly may help with your family history research:

- *Tracing Your Scottish Ancestry Through Church and State Records*
- *Tracing Your Scottish Family History on the Internet*
- *Tracing Your Irish Family History on the Internet (2nd edition)*
- *Tracing Irish Ancestors Through Land Records*
- *Sharing Your Family History Online*

And coming soon (March 2023):

- *Tracing Your Belfast Ancestry* (pre-order price, £11.99)

All are available to buy at <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Chris-Paton/a/1799>.

The following courses that I teach may also assist from Pharos Teaching and Tutoring Ltd:

- Scottish Research Online
- Scotland 1750-150: Beyond the Old Parish Registers
- Progressing Your Irish Research Online

Details for all are available at <https://www.pharostutors.com>.

Chris Paton BA (Hons), HND, PgDip (Genealogical Studies)

Scotland's Greatest Story family history research

www.ScotlandsGreatestStory.co.uk

Scottish GENES Blog (GENealogy News and EventS)

<https://ScottishGENES.blogspot.com>