

# England Beginning Research Series—Handout

## Lesson 3: Understanding Civil Registration



With Margo McKinstry, AG®

### Overview

Civil registration is the government's registration of births, marriages, and deaths (BMDs). It began on July 1, 1837, and continues to the present day.

It is important to understand that there are two registration offices that hold BMD records, a local office and a national office.

### What You Need to Order a Certificate

In order to locate an ancestor's birth, marriage, or death record, there are a series of steps that need to be taken.

**Step 1:** Obtain the ancestor's name, the approximate date for the event, and a location.

**Step 2:** Locate and search the index that contains the needed information on that ancestor.

**Step 3:** With the reference information given in the index, order the certificate.

### Step 1: Obtain an ancestor's Name, an Event Date, and a Location

Step 1 requires a name, birthplace, and birth date. A good place to find this type of information is in the census records.

### Step 2: Locate and Search the Index

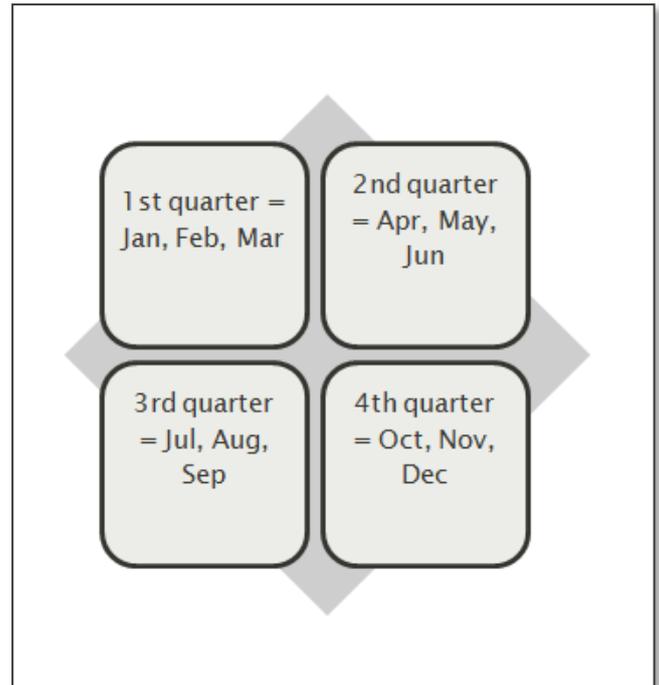
In years past, the microfilm and microfiche that contain the civil registration indexes were only available at certain repositories throughout the world. Fortunately, an army of volunteers has been indexing this collection, and they are now online at various websites for free.



|                  |          |     |    |            |                       |
|------------------|----------|-----|----|------------|-----------------------|
| James Lucas      | Head     | Mar | 43 | Shoe-Maker | Northampton, Southham |
| Harriet Do       | Wife     | Mar | 42 | "          | Do Do                 |
| Harriett Ann Do  | Daughter |     | 13 | Scholar    | Do Coventry           |
| Elizabeth Ann Do | Daughter |     | 10 | Scholar    | Coventry, Northampton |
| William John Do  | Son      |     | 8  | Scholar    | Do Do                 |
| Edith Eliza Do   | Daughter |     | 5  | Scholar    | Do Do                 |
| Rosina Do        | Daughter |     | 2  | —          | Do Do                 |



Civil registration indexes are filed by quarters. The first quarter is March, which also includes January and February. The second quarter, or the June quarter, consists of April, May, and June. The third quarter is July, August, and September and named the September quarter. The fourth quarter, the last quarter of the year, consists of October, November, and December and is noted as the December quarter.



Also keep in mind that there was time allowed for registration of events, and the event is logged in the index under the quarter of the year when it was registered and not necessarily when the event took place. For marriages or deaths, the event was registered very soon after it occurred. However, in the case of births and the 40-day registration period, a child could be born in one quarter but registered in the following quarter.

Here are some of the sites that have these indexes:

- [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)
- [www.ukbmd.org.uk](http://www.ukbmd.org.uk)
- [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)
- [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)
- [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)

As a reminder, the Family History Library also has the indexes in microfiche and microfilm format.

## Order the Certificate

With the information from the indexes, you can order the BMD certificate from the General Register Office. No other entity has ownership of these certificates, although a number of sites have “unwanted certificates” listed and available for the cost of postage.

Here is a link to the site:

- [www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/)

Using a credit card is safe, and you will receive a confirmation number when the transaction is completed. The GRO does not save your payment information. Make sure you keep the confirming e-mail so that if there are any difficulties with receiving the certificate, you will have proof of purchase.

| REGISTRATION DISTRICT                   |   | RUGBY                    |     |                            |  |                                       |   |                             |                       |
|---|---|--------------------------|-----|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1863 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Rugby |   | in the County of Warwick |     |                            |  |                                       |   |                             |                       |
| No.                                     | When and where born                                   | Name, if any             | Sex | Name and surname of father | Name, surname and maiden surname of mother | Occupation of father                  | Signature, description and residence of informant | When registered             | Signature of register |
| 443                                     | 1st quarter<br>January<br>1863<br>Rugby<br>in Warwick | Harriet<br>John          | Boy | John<br>Leeson             | Harriet<br>Leeson<br>formerly<br>Leeson    | Boat and<br>Shoe<br>maker<br>(Mother) | James Leeson<br>Father<br>Nursery<br>in Warwick   | Thomas<br>White<br>Register |                       |

| REGISTRATION DISTRICT   |               | DAVENTRY                       |          |                      |                    |                                   |                               |                              |  |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1851 Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Neatham in the County of Northampton |               |                                |          |                      |                    |                                   |                               |                              |  |
| No.   | When Married  | Name and Surname               | Age      | Condition            | Rank or Profession | Residence at the Time of Marriage | Father's Name and Surname     | Rank or Profession of Father |  |
| 74  | 4th<br>August | James Leeson<br>Harriet Leeson | 24<br>18 | Bachelor<br>Spinster | Labourer           | Neatham<br>Neatham                | Joseph Leeson<br>James Leeson | Labourer<br>Labourer         |  |

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church of England by me,

| REGISTRATION DISTRICT                    |   | DAVENTRY                     |      |             |                  |                     |  |                     |                              |
|--|---|------------------------------|------|-------------|------------------|---------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1969 DEATH in the Sub-district of Weedon |   | in the County of Northampton |      |             |                  |                     |  |                     |                              |
| No.                                      | When and where died                         | Name and surname             | Sex  | Age         | Occupation       | Cause of death      | Signature, description and residence of informant                | When registered     | Signature of register        |
| 438                                      | 1st quarter<br>September<br>1969<br>Neatham | Joseph Leeson                | Male | 77<br>years | Farm<br>Labourer | Stroke<br>Certified | The Head of<br>Elywood Manor<br>Resident at the death<br>Neatham | 1st quarter<br>1969 | William<br>Hobbs<br>Register |