The 1939 NATIONAL REGISTER

Presented to CU3A Family History 2 by Peter Heilbrunn on 19-9-2018

1939 General Register talk summary

- Chronology of Census records, 1901 to 1941
- The National Registration Act 1939
- Access to Register Records
- Features of the General Register
- Examples of search results
- Online examples using FindmyPast and MyHeritage.

20th Century Census dates until WW2

- 1901 UK wide inc Ireland data released to general public
- 1911 UK wide inc Ireland data released to general public
- 1921 Great Britain wide ex Ireland Data due for release in 2022
- 1926 Eire & NI only not yet released
- 1931 Great Britain wide England & Wales files destroyed in 1942 fire. Scottish records due for release in 2032 were not harmed as kept in Edinburgh
- The 1939 General Register
- 1941 UK wide None taken because of war

The National Registration Act 1939

- As war approached, preparations were made to enable a national register to be rapidly compiled and identity cards issued. A <u>National</u> <u>Registration Bill</u> was passed on the 5th September 1939. The National Registration Day would be Friday September 29th 1939
- Three main reasons for undertaking the census.
 - The first was the major dislocation of the population caused by mobilisation and mass evacuation and also the wartime need for complete manpower control and planning in order to maximise the efficiency of the war economy.
 - The second was the likelihood of rationing, actually introduced from January 1940 onwards.
 - The third main reason was that the Government needed recent statistics about the population.

The National Registration Act 1939 part 2

- The 1939 Register was designed to capture every member of the civilian population in England and Wales It contains records of around 40 million people recorded in more than 65,000 transcript books.
- Members of the armed forces were not to be recorded unless they were on leave or civilians on military bases. They were also excluded when billeted in private homes even their own.
- It does not include the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- The information was arranged by
 - Enumeration district each having a unique 4 or 5 letter code
 - Household or institution, i.e hospital, jail
 - National registration number- each person is shown as a sub-number with the household or institution

The National Registration Act 1939 part 3

- Thus the Register was an instant Census. Basically 65,000 enumerators across the country delivered forms ahead of the chosen day. On the 29th September, householders were required to record details on the registration forms
- Some dispensations were allowed Wearside Jews celebrating Sukkot (The Festival of the Tabernacles) were allowed a one day delay.
- Then on the following Sunday and Monday the enumerators visited every householder, checked the form and there and then issued a completed identity card for each of the residents.
- Approximately 46 million Identity Cards were issued. They were finally abolished in 1952.

1939 Sample registration Form

Schedule Number						Postal address Name of homeholder or other person } Description of premises, establishment, } etc., if orman than a private dwelling.		
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Access to the 1939 Register Records

- The 1939 Identity Card Registers for England and Wales, the 1939 Register, was made available in 2010 from the NHS Information Centre. It is now available on line at www.findmypast.co.uk/1939Register. Access to the register is available as part of a FMP annual (note not monthly) subscriptions or by using separately purchased credits
- Since 2018, records can also be searched Ancestry.co.uk and at MyHeritage.com though no access is given to original documents on the latter, just transcripts.
- The records for Scotland can be obtained at a charge of £15 for a person search https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/nhs-central-register/about-the-register/1939-national-identity-register-and-how-to-order-an-official-extract
- For Northern Ireland, the records are the responsibility of the <u>Public Record</u>
 <u>Office of Northern Ireland</u>. There is no formal process set up to obtain data; you will need to make a FOI (Freedom of Information) request to the archives.

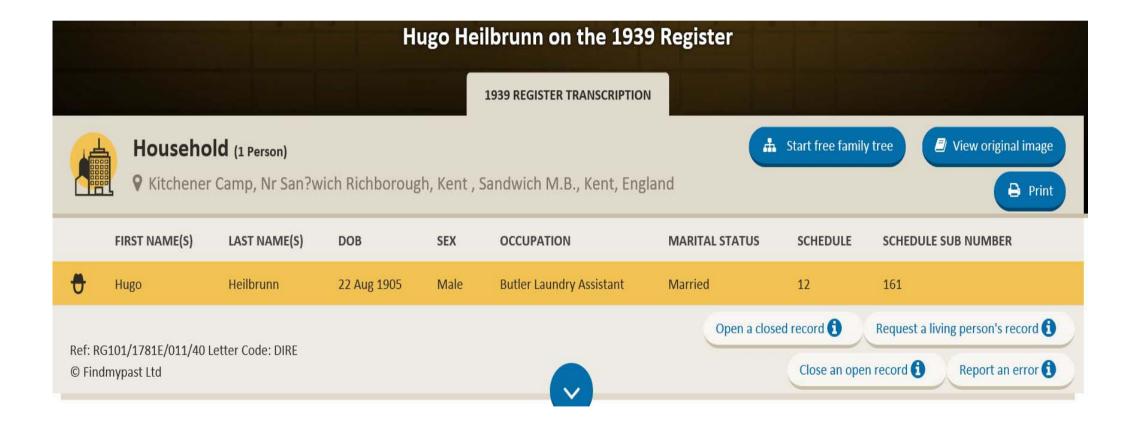
Features of the General Register

- FindmyPast and Ancestry searches can be made by person or address.
 One can see both the original register and a transcript.
- Only records for people not born within the last 100 years can be seen. The version on Ancestry will be updated annually to show the records that have been opened during the past year
- The Register has been updated since 1939, change of name, married name etc are recorded. You can search for a person using either their name in 1939 or any subsequent name.
- The register is divided into schedules each contain 205 names approximately 15-17 pages.

Closed Records and Updates

- FindmyPast subscribers can request a check of closed records free of charge. Proof of death is required.
- Alternatively one can use the National Archive FOI request form in order to initiate a search. If successful, one is send a transcript of the information. The original record can also be viewed with 10 days on FMP. The search costs £23.35
- The 1939 Register records were used by the NHS at its inception in 1948 where they remained until 1991. Therefore most changes of names were probably notified. Change of Address was not recorded.

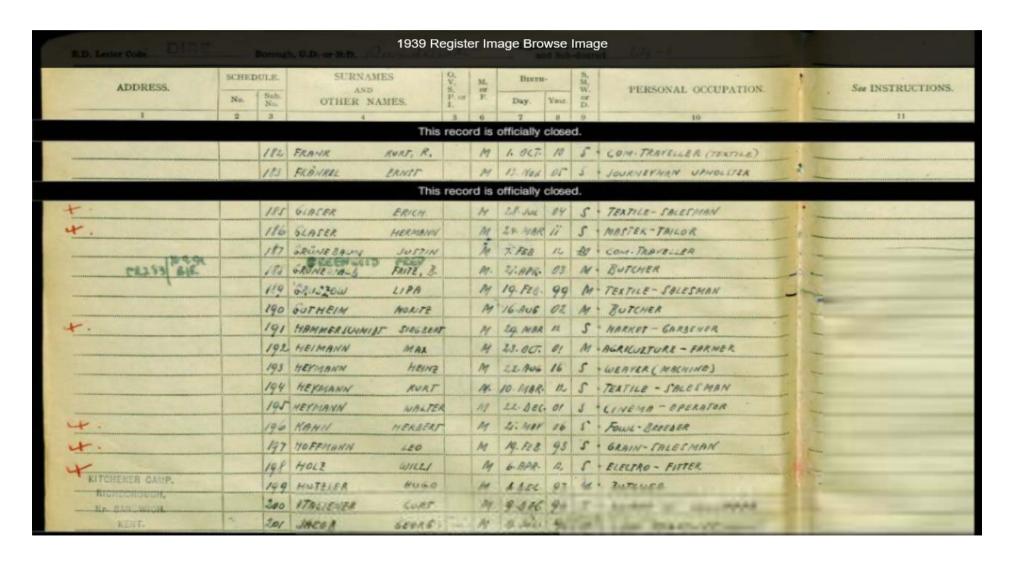
FindmyPast transcript sample



FindmyPast sample original document

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FindmyPast sample original document



MyHeritage Transcript sample

Hugo	Heilbrunn								
Gender:		Male							
Birth:		Aug 22 1905							
Residence:		Sep 29 1939 Kitchener Camp, Nr San?Wich, Richborough, Kent, Sandwich, Kent, England							
Age:		34							
Marital status:		Married	Married						
Occupation:		Butler Laundry Assistant							
Census									
District:	Sandwich Municipal Borough	E.D. Letter Code:	DIRE						
County:	Kent	TNA Reference:	RG101/1781E/011/40						
Country:	England	Piece:	1781E						
Date:	Sep 29 1939	Item #:	011						
Schedule:	12	Line:	40						