

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 [National Registration Bill](#) 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

E.D. Letter Code Schedule Number	DATE OF NATIONAL REGISTRATION DAY	Postal address _____ Name of householder or other person responsible for making the return. } _____ Description of premises, establishment, etc., if other than a private dwelling. } _____		FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ Initials _____ Date _____			
Persons to be included. All persons who spent the night of National Registration Day in this household or establishment, whether as members, visitors, boarders or servants, or who joined the household or establishment the next morning without having been enumerated anywhere else. No one else may be included.		PERSONAL OCCUPATION. State Occupation or calling followed. If wholly retired, add "Retired" after the statement of Occupation. Indefinite terms such as "Labourer," "Shoemaker," "Machinist," "Accountant," must not be used. Just add verbatim the Occupation precisely as "Builder's Labourer," "Iron Moulder," "Capstan Lathe Hand," "Wood Machinist," "Chartered Accountant," and so on. See instructions on back as to statement of Occupation. If a person engaged in heavy work write "Heavy Worker" after the statement of Occupation. If a person serving in the Royal Navy, Regular Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Marines, or in any regular Women's Service administered by the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force, see Instruction 12. If a person belonging to the Merchant Marine, see Instruction 13. If a child at school, write "At School."		Membership of Naval, Military or Air Forces Reserves or Auxiliary Forces or of Civil Defence Services or Reserves. If a person on the Retired, Emergency or Pooled List of the Royal Navy or Royal Marines, or belonging to the Territorial Army or to any Naval, Military or Air Force Reserve or Auxiliary Force, state Service, and whether Retired, etc., the Reserve or Force, Unit, Rank and Number, if any. If a person belonging to any Women's Auxiliary Force or Organisation, administered by the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force, state the Force or Organisation, Unit, Rank and Number, if any. If a person belonging to— the Special Constabulary or any Police Reserve; any Ambulance or Nursing Auxiliary Service or Reserve; or the Merchant Marine War Service List or Coastguard Auxiliary Service; or if a person enrolled in any Civil Defence Service or Reserve (including any A.R.P. Service or Reserve or Auxiliary Fire Service) or in any Land Army Force or Reserve; State the Force, Service or Reserve, etc., the authority with whom enrolled and the person's Service Number, if any.			
SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES. See note above for the persons to be included. Newly-born infants who have not yet been given a name should be described as "Baby", following the Surname. Enter Surname first in Block Capitals.		SEX. (M. for male; F. for female.)	BIRTHDAY. (Day and Month.)	YEAR OF BIRTH.	CONDITION AS TO MARRIAGE. State whether "SINGLE," "MARRIED," "WIDOWED," or "D." if marriage dissolved by divorce.	F.	G.
A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.	
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that the persons included spent the night of National Registration Day in this household or establishment, or have been otherwise properly included according to the above instructions.

Signature _____
 (Head of Household, Manager of Establishment or other person responsible for making the return.)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____	Enumerator's Initials.
--	-------------------------------

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 [Public Record Office of Northern Ireland](#). 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

Hugo Heilbrunn on the 1939 Register

1939 REGISTER TRANSCRIPTION

**Household** (1 Person)

Kitchener Camp, Nr Sandwich Richborough, Kent , Sandwich M.B., Kent, England

[Start free family tree](#)[View original image](#)[Print](#)

	FIRST NAME(S)	LAST NAME(S)	DOB	SEX	OCCUPATION	MARITAL STATUS	SCHEDULE	SCHEDULE SUB NUMBER
	Hugo	Heilbrunn	22 Aug 1905	Male	Butler Laundry Assistant	Married	12	161

Ref: RG101/1781E/011/40 Letter Code: DIRE
© Findmypast Ltd

[Open a closed record](#)[Request a living person's record](#)[Close an open record](#)[Report an error](#)

FindmyPast sample original document

1939 Register Image
View transcription

[View transcription](#)

This record is officially closed.

148	FRIEDLÄNDER	ERICH	M	24. OCT. 06	M	DOMESTIC SERVANT
149	GADIEL	ISIDOR	M	28. SEP. 10	M	DENTIST
150	GANS	JULIUS	M	19. APR. 11	M	FARMER, AGRICULTURE
151	GEMBICKI	WERNER	M	25. NOV. 15	M	CLERK (HIDE SKINS)
152	GERBER	WALTER	M	4. FEB. 04	M	TEXTILE - SALT-DRY
153	GERSON	KURT	M	1. JUNE 12	M	MECHANIC (MOTOR-CARS)
154	GOLDMANN	HERBERT	M	11. SEP. 01	M	CONFECTIONER
155	GOLDSCHMIDT	SAMUEL	M	24. FEB. 93	M	BUILDING - WORKER
156	GRABOWSKI	MARTIN	M	9. FEB. 95	M	CARPENTER

This record is officially closed.

158	GUTER	LEO	M	2. JAN. 95	M	AGENT, (TEXTILE)
159	HAMBURGER	MAX	M	31. MAY 97	D	LAWYER
160	HAMMERSCHMIDT	ARTHUR	M	23. MAR. 11	M	GENERAL LABOURER
161	HEILBRUNN	HUGO	M	22. AUG. 05	M	BUTLER, LAUNDRY ASSISTANT
162	HEINRICH	BERTHOLD	M	11. APR. 06	S	MUSIC-TEACHER
163	HEYMANN	JOSEF	M	2. SEP. 10	S	MECHANIC (MOTOR-CARS)
164	HEYUM	SIGFRIED	M	12. DEC. 02	S	CLERK (COFFEE - CONFECTION)
165	HEYMANN	LUDWIG	M	3. SEP. 14	M	LABOURER

16.1.58
D334-16

FindmyPast sample original document

1939 Register Image Browse Image

R.D. Lector Code **D185** Borough, U.D. or R.D. **100** and Sub-district **100-1**

ADDRESS.	SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.	O. V. S. P. or L.	M. or F.	Birth.		S. M. W. or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION.	See INSTRUCTIONS.
	No.	Sub. No.				Day.	Year.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
This record is officially closed.										
		182	FRANK KURT, R.		M	1. OCT.	10	S	COM. TRAVELLER (TEXTILE)	
		183	FRÄNDEL ERNST		M	13. NOV.	05	S	JOURNEYMAN UPHOLSTER	
This record is officially closed.										
		185	GLÄSER ERICH		M	28. JUL.	84	S	TEXTILE - SALESMAN	
		186	GLÄSER HERMANN		M	24. MAR.	11	S	MASTEK - TAILOR	
		187	GRÜNEBAUM JUSTIN		M	7. FEB.	14	S	COM. TRAVELLER	
		188	GRÜNEBAUM FRITZ, J.		M	21. APR.	03	M	BUTCHER	
		189	GRÜNEBAUM LIPPA		M	19. FEB.	99	M	TEXTILE - SALESMAN	
		190	GUTHEIM MONTE		M	16. AUG.	02	M	BUTCHER	
		191	HÄMMERLUNDT SIEGBERT		M	29. MAR.	12	S	MARKET - GARDENER	
		192	HEIMANN MAX		M	23. OCT.	01	M	AGRICULTURE - FARMER	
		193	HEYMANN HEINZ		M	22. AUG.	16	S	WEAVER (MACHINE)	
		194	HEYMANN KURT		M	10. MAR.	12	S	TEXTILE - SALESMAN	
		195	HEYMANN WALTER		M	22. DEC.	01	S	CINEMA - OPERATOR	
		196	KANN HERBERT		M	21. MAY	16	S	FOWL - BREEDER	
		197	HOFFMANN LEO		M	19. FEB.	93	S	GRAIN - SALESMAN	
		198	HOLZ WILLI		M	6. APR.	12	S	ELECTRO - FITTER	
KITCHENER CAMP.		199	HUTZLER HUGO		M	1. DEC.	97	M	ZITNER	
RICHMOND,		200	ITALIENER KURT		M	9. DEC.	94	S	...	
St. DANIEL		201	JACOB GEORG		M	...	...	...	...	
KENT.										

10093/10091
10093/10091

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
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