

Chris Paton

**Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths**

- Non-Roman Catholic & civil marriages recorded from April 1845
- All births, marriages and deaths recorded from January 1864

The General Register Office of Ireland (GROI) was created in Dublin to oversee registration, with the country divided up into Superintendent Registration Districts, each of which was comprised of several smaller Registration Districts. Following the Partition of Ireland in 1921, a separate General Register Office for Northern Ireland (GRONI) was established in Belfast from 1922.

**Key details in the vital records**

*Births:* Date and place, forename, father & residence, mother, father's occupation, informant, registration  
*Marriages:* venue, date, spouses, ages, status, occupations, addresses, fathers, witnesses, registration  
*Deaths:* date, name, sex, status, age, 'rank', cause, informant, registration

Bilingual Gaelic and English headings used on the certificates from the early 1930s in the south.

The GROI compiled indexes on the following frequencies:

1845-1877	Annual indexes
1878	Quarterly indexes
1903	Annual birth indexes, but mothers' maiden names added

Post-Partition, the indexing/recording systems by GROI and GRONI have diverged & evolved.

The GROI indexes from 1845-1958 available on **[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)**, **[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)**, and **[www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)**. These indexes cover the Republic of Ireland for the duration, but Northern Ireland is only catered for from 1845-1921 (with some minor exceptions).

**Online records:**

Records from the GROI are digitised and freely available from **[www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie)**.  
Republic of Ireland: Births –1864-1920, Marriages – 1845-1945, Deaths –1871-1970  
For Northern Ireland: Births –1864-1920, Marriages – 1845-1921, Deaths –1871-1921  
Currently missing are Deaths from 1864-1870, to be added in due course.

**For later records from the Republic of Ireland:**

GRO Ireland **[www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/af7893-general-register-office/](http://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/af7893-general-register-office/)**  
GROI search room, Dublin **[www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/55ccbe-general-register-office-gro-research-facility/](http://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/55ccbe-general-register-office-gro-research-facility/)**

**Further online provision for Northern Ireland:**

The General Register Office of Northern Ireland also has its own credits based digital platform, GENI, at **<https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk>** – 1 credit for transcript (50p), 5 credits for image (£2.50).

Coverage:

*Births* – over 100 years (1864-1920)  
*Marriages* – over 75 years (1845-1945)

*Deaths* – over 50 years (1864-1970)  
*Military deaths WW2* (actually 1939-1954)

Tip: always have 1 credit on your account, as this permits access to some basic information for free when initially doing searches.

NB: More recent records can be ordered from the GRONI in Belfast, or via GENI in its search room ([www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/general-register-office-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/general-register-office-northern-ireland)).

Ancestry ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)) has some basic index info for about 49% of recent deaths in the north of Ireland through its *Scotland and Northern Ireland, Death Index, 1989-2019* database.

### RootsIreland

Some transcripts for civil registration records are available via the subscription based [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie), the online platform of the Irish Family History Foundation. Coverage varies by county – see <https://rootsireland.ie/ifhf/online-sources.php>.

### Church Records

For coverage of the historic province of Ulster, consult the PRONI Guide to Church Records ([www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/proni-guide-church-records](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/proni-guide-church-records)).

### Church of Ireland

- Established church from 1541-1871
- Underpinned the Protestant ‘Ascendancy’
- An episcopal church – archdioceses in Armagh (primacy) and Dublin
- Anglican parishes share the same names & boundaries as civil parishes
- Effectively a wing of government – handled poor relief, taxes, collection of tithes, etc
- Disestablished 1 Jan 1871 (1869)

### Information provided in English

Baptisms: Date, name of child & parents (with mother’s maiden name), residence, & sponsors.

Marriages: Names of spouses, residence, witnesses; By banns or by licence

Burials: Least detailed; Name, age, residence; Denomination – not just Anglicans buried

### Online:

- The Representative Church Body Library in Dublin ([www.ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library)) has many useful resources and records, including *The List of Church of Ireland Parish Registers* and the *Anglican Record Project*.
- [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) has free to access pre-1900 Anglican records for Counties Carlow and Kerry, and Dublin City.
- RootsIreland has various transcriptions for some counties.

### Roman Catholic Church

- The largest denomination in Ireland
- Penal Laws discriminated against the Roman Catholic faith
- 1704 Catholic priests forced to register
- 1793 Catholic Relief Act
- 1829 Catholic Emancipation – most surviving parish records starts from this point
- Records microfilmed by NLI in the 1950s up to 1880/81

- Some additional records microfilmed by PRONI

Roman Catholic parishes and Anglican parishes often do not share the same boundaries or names. A handy tool to convert is available on Shane Wilson's site at [www.swilson.info/rcparishlink.php](http://www.swilson.info/rcparishlink.php).

#### Records are written in Latin or English

- Baptisms: Date, name of child & parents (with mother's maiden name), residence, & sponsors.
- Marriages: Date, names of spouses, residence, & sponsors; Records note if spouses are related, either as cousins (*consanguinati*, by degree), or if families are connected by marriage (*affinitus*)

#### Online:

- Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI (<https://registers.nli.ie>)  
3500 registers from across Ireland, dating from 1740s-1880, digitised from microfilm copies at the National Library of Ireland. The records are FREE to access, but are NOT keyword searchable. Third party indexes to the collection are freely available on FindmyPast.com and Ancestry.com

Further Roman Catholic records, digitised in colour, are available on Ancestry:

- Ireland, Select Catholic Birth & Baptism Registers 1763-1912
- Ireland, Select Catholic Marriage Registers 1775-1912
- Ireland, Select Catholic Death & Burial Registers 1767-1912
- Ireland, Select Catholic Confirmation Registers 1775-1912

Transcripts of many parish registers are again available on [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie).

The Ulster Historical Foundation ([www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)) has almost all pre-1900 Roman Catholic records for Counties Antrim and Down transcribed up to 1900, and some up to 1930 (e.g. Belfast: Sacred Heart, St. Mary's and St. Vincent de Paul).

**IrishGenealogy.ie** has free to access pre-1900 Roman Catholic records for the Diocese of Kerry, the Diocese of Cork and Ross, and parishes in Dublin City (not county).

#### Presbyterianism

- Presbyterianism founded in Scotland 1560
- First Irish Presbytery founded in Carrickfergus 1642
- 'Dissenters' versus 'Protestants'
- Congregations

There are many historic Presbyterian denominations in Ireland, including the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, the Secession Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Wales, Dublin (1838), the Irish Evangelical Church (1927), and the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (1951). William J. Roulston's book *Researching Presbyterian Ancestors in Ireland* can help.

Records arranged by meeting houses and congregations, not parishes – their locations can be easily identified using Brian Mitchell's *A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland (2nd edition)*.

Presbyterian records are available at PRONI ([www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni)); microform or originals.

Some Presbyterian records are transcribed on [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie).

The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland ([www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com](http://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com)) in Belfast offers a great deal of additional registers, kirk session records and other materials at its facility in

Belfast, with some resources accessible via the website.

**Methodists (\* Initially established within the Anglican Church \*)**

1746	Wesleyan Methodist Connexion (Dublin)
1816-78	Primitive Wesleyan Connexion (CoI)
1878	merged to form Methodist Church in Ireland
1798-1905	Methodist New Connexion *
1823-1910	Primitive Methodist Connexion *
1832-1872	Wesleyan Methodist Association *
1859	all came under banner of United Methodist Free Churches (administered from England)

Organised into Classes – Societies – Circuits

*Earliest records – check Anglican parish registers*

Baptisms from 1816/1818 in circuits (PRONI: composite register 1817-1850, MIC 1E). Weddings from 1845 in Methodist chapels found in civil records. Burials in Methodist grounds from 1868.

PRONI Guide to Church Records – many Methodist records now being digitised

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/proni-guide-church-records](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/proni-guide-church-records)**

Methodist Historical Society of Ireland (Belfast)

**<https://methodisthistoryireland.org>**

\* Records for these denominations may be at the University of Manchester

**[www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/special-collections/guide-to-special-collections/methodist/](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/special-collections/guide-to-special-collections/methodist/)**

**Huguenots**

Irish Huguenot Archive **[www.ireland.anglican.org/news/7722/the-irish-huguenot-archive](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/7722/the-irish-huguenot-archive)**

Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland **<https://huguenotsinireland.com>**

**Palatines**

Irish Palatines Heritage Association, Co. Limerick **[www.irishpalatines.org](http://www.irishpalatines.org)**

**Jewish**

**[www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland\\_Jewish\\_Records](http://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland_Jewish_Records)**

**Quakers**

Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, Dublin **<https://quakers-in-ireland.ie/historical-library/>**

Chris Paton books:

**Tracing Your Irish Family History on the Internet (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)**

**Coming soon: Tracing Your Irish Ancestors Through Land Records**

All of my books are detailed at **[www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Chris-Paton/a/1799](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Chris-Paton/a/1799)**

Details of my Pharos Tutors course **Progressing Your Irish Research Online** are available at **[www.pharostutors.com/details.php?coursenumber=260](http://www.pharostutors.com/details.php?coursenumber=260)**