

The 1939 Register

The Register was taken on the 29 September 1939, just before the start of World War II, and the information was used as the basis for identity cards, rationing and conscription, amongst other things. This Register is an invaluable tool in bridging the gap between the 1911 census – the latest currently available – and the present day.

[Using the 1939 Register in your research.](#)

The 1939 Register is a comparatively new weapon in the family historian's armoury and it is not critical in the way that the censuses and BMD registers are. However, it can be useful in locating more recent relatives or when starting to build a family tree where there is little information within the family.

A typical entry is that for my Great-Aunt and Uncle:

15 Thompson Street, Chesterfield				
Name	Date of birth	Status		
Thomas Bradshaw	3 Sep 1900	Single	Master potter	Earthenware manufacturer
Winifred Bradshaw	24 Apr 1904	Single	Unpaid domestic duties	

The Register gives actual birth dates, which are very useful in locating missing birth registrations and hence mother's maiden names.

The Register does not give family relationships so the fact that Tom and Winnie are both single is the only clue to the fact that they were brother and sister and not husband and wife.

Sometimes the Register includes useful annotations and updates: the later, married, surname of single women or that someone worked with the air-raid wardens (ARP) or Home Guard during the War.

[Where to find the 1939 Register:](#)

Unfortunately, the 1939 register is only available on the subscription sites:

- www.Ancestry.co.uk ££. Images and transcriptions
- www.FindMyPast.co.uk ££. Images and transcriptions.
- www.MyHeritage.com ££. Transcriptions only

If you don't want to pay for a full subscription, then look for free trial periods or investigate pay as you go and short-term options.

Searching the 1939 Register:

The Register can be searched by: name, location, gender, date of birth, marital status, and occupation.

Generally, you will use the name and then refine the results using year of birth and location. Note that the 1939 Register is as prone to errors as any other record so allow for variation. Cross-referencing the date of birth with the information in other records should confirm that it is correct.

People not included in the Register:

- People born less than 100 years ago and not known to have passed away. These entries are redacted – their details do not appear in the indexes or transcriptions and in the images they are covered over with a thick black line.
 - As time passes these entries will gradually become public.
- People already in the military.
- People outside England and Wales.

Hints and Tips

- Allow for spelling variations and errors
- Don't assume people were where you expect them to be
- Entries for people who were children in 1939 will be redacted. If you can't find someone in this category, search for a parent or older sibling.
- Scanning the images tells you about the area your family were living in and who their neighbours were.
- People often married the "girl or boy-next door" so you may see other members of your family living in the immediate area.

Disclaimer: This document is intended as a guide to get you started with researching your family history. It is not intended to be comprehensive and Cameo Family History does not accept responsibility for errors and omissions.