

Adoption

- Background & History
- Legal Adoptions
- Adoption Records
- Researching Adoptions
- Discussion, share stories & experiences etc.

What is Adoption ?

” A way of providing a new family for children who cannot be brought up by their own parents.

It is a legal procedure in which all parental responsibility is transferred to the adopters. An adopted child loses all legal ties with their birth parents and becomes a full member of the new family, usually taking the family's name.”

Legalisation of Adoption

- No formal or legal adoption in the UK until 1926
 - the term “adoption” often used previously for guardianship or fostering
- 1926 Adoption of Children Act for England & Wales
- 1929 Adoption of Children Act (Northern Ireland)
- 1930 Adoption of Children Act (Scotland)

1800s – 1850s

1800s – Poor Law System -

- Orphaned & illegitimate children in poorhouses
- Indentured apprenticeships

1834 – Poor Law Amendment Act (“New Poor law”) -

- Formation of Poor Law Unions from parishes
- Formally established the Victorian workhouse system run by “Guardians”
- Ensured that the poor were housed in workhouses, clothed and fed
- Fathers not financially responsible for illegitimate children
- Forced most unmarried mothers into adoption

Mid-1800s – Early 1900s

- Growing concerns about morals, illegitimacy etc.
- Church & charities doing “rescue” work, social work & arranging adoptions
- Informal adoptions
- Common for birth mother to know “adoptive” parents
- Children often “reclaimed” when old enough to work
- Institutions - Homes for “Waifs & Strays”, Foundling Hospitals, Orphanages etc...
- Barnardo's - 1887 introduced “boarding out” children to families – an early form of fostering
- Little support for unmarried mothers → many forced into workhouses or worse
- “Baby Farming”

“Waifs & Strays”



At start of 20th century, the term 'adoption' for children was being used in 3 different senses:-

- For the situation where the child was taken into the home of a person other than the child's parent, and brought up to a greater or lesser extent as the child of the adopter. This kind of 'adoption' had been and remained a familiar social institution in all classes of society.
- Where 'adoption' was simulated: an unmarried pregnant woman would arrange for her child to be delivered in a private lying-in house, whose owner would be paid a lump sum in exchange for arranging the child's 'adoption'. The child would then be removed to 'the worst class of baby-farming house' where it would often be neglected and die.
- The so-called Poor Law Adoption in which the Poor Law Guardians assumed all the child's parents' rights and powers in respect of the child's upbringing; and would arrange for the child to be 'adopted'.



1926 Adoption Act

- Legalisation of Adoptions was driven by problems with....
 - Illegitimate births
 - Unofficial adoptions
 - Baby farming
 - Number of orphans after WW1
- Children who can't be cared for by birth parent(s) placed in another family not an institution
- Focus on relief for unmarried mothers & needs of couples unable to have children
- "Closed Adoption" = permanent severance of all ties with birth family & secrecy
- Adopted Children's Register created (GRO)
- Legal framework for courts to make adoption orders - little state involvement
- Adopted child not fully integrated into adoptive family no inheritance or succession rights

The Homeless Children's Aid and Adoption Society





Adoptions 1927 onwards

- 166,000 adoptions over next 20 years
- 3,000 in 1927 → over 21,000 in 1946
- Most arranged through voluntary adoption agencies (usually church or charity based)
- 1939 Adoption Act
 - Consistency of how children placed
 - Registration of agencies with local authority
 - Only charitable organisations allowed (no advertising or payments)

1949 Adoption of Children Act

- Birth mother can't consent to adoption until child 6 weeks old
- Adoptive parents can't apply for full adoption order until child with them for 3 months
- Placement supervised by local authority
- Reinforced permanent severance & secrecy
- Adopted children have same rights as birth children

1950s – 1970s

- More responsibility to local authorities
 - Suitability of adopters
 - No untrained guardians (children's officer or probation officer)
- Most adopters wanted babies → older or disabled children "unadoptable"
- Supply exceeded demand until 1970s
- Number of babies for adoption declining
 - more support for unmarried mother to keep child
 - less social stigma, birth control, abortion

1970s Move → “Open” Adoptions

Adoption Act 1976 –

- Adopted children over 18 have right to access birth records
 - if adopted before 1975, must have counselling first
 - intermediary services for adoptee (or their relatives) who want access
- Adoption Contact Register created
 - adopted adults & birth parents can register wish for contact
- By 2000, babies accounted for only 4% of adoptions
- Adoption became more for children from local authority care


Adoption Records (1)

- GRO Birth Index – entry under birth name
- Birth Certificate... can be up to 3 variations
 - Short version, no parents named
 - Long version original certificate under birth name
 - shows birth parent(s)
 - “Adopted” written against entry
 - Adoption Birth Certificate under adopted name
 - certified copy of entry from Adoption Children Register
 - replaces original birth certificate for adopted child
 - shows adoptive parents & adoption order date/place,
 - no reference to birth name or birth parents
- Adoption Order Record

-- Valerie K.	Green	Grantham	3 b	150
-- Vaughan	Collins	Portsmouth	6 b	700
-- Veronica L.	Goldney	I. Light	6 b	1255
-- Victor F.	Pitt	Nthmld.C.	1 b	491
-- Virginia S.M.	Baumber	Louth	3 b	551
-- Wendy B.	Jackson	Bucklow	10 a	175
-- Wendy M.	Young	Nthmld.N.2nd	1 b	551
-- Wendy M.	Moss	N.Cotswold	7 b	826
-- Wendy P.	Newman	Newcastle T.	1 b	110
-- William	Wadsworth	Bury	10 b	1029
-- William A.T.	Calderwood	Surrey S.W.	5 g	1356
-- William E.	Baughan	Hackney	5 c	1011
-- William J.	Benbow	Coventry	9 c	1426
-- William M.H.	Howat	Nelson	10 e	819
-- William P.H.	Nunn	Coventry	9 c	1372
-- William T.	Kirsch	Croydon	5 g	27
-- Winifred S.	Moxon	Lower Agbrigg	2 c	802
-- Yvonne	Rumney	Wigton	1 a	290
-- (Female)	Clark	Plymouth	7 a	826
Clarke, Adrian	Crocker	Taunton	7 c	305
-- Adrian R.	Willis	Norwich Outer	4 b	1092
-- Agnes E.M.	Willemsse	Shardlow	3 a	690
-- Agnes M.	Kelly	Bootle	10 b	878
-- Alan	Shaw	Ashton	10 b	126
-- Alan	Fagan	Manchester	10 e	482
-- Alan	Ash	Manchester	10 e	552
-- Alan	Clarke	Manchester	10 b	578

YD 648173 B. Cert. S.
S.R.

1 & 2 ELIZ. 2 CH. 20

 **CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH**

Name and Surname Emma Hesker

Sex girl

Date of Birth 11 March May 1891

Place of Birth { Registration District Preston
Sub-district St. John


I, STEPHEN ROBERTSON Superintendent Registrar
for the Registration District of PRESTON do hereby
certify that the above particulars have been compiled from an entry in a
register in my custody.

Witness my hand this 4th day of May 1955

CAUTION:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on
this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true,
knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

20/3/51 S. Robertson
Superintendent Registrar.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number COL 486505

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Preston

1891 BIRTH in the Sub-district of St. John in the Counties of Preston and Lancaster


Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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 registrar	Name entered after registration
371	Thirteenth May 1891 Hawson Dunrobin W.S.G.	Emma Jane	Female	John Hutchins	Isabella Hutchins Lawrence	General Labourer	X The Master Isabella Hutchins Mother 1 Hanover Square Preston	Twenty Second June 1891	William Rood Wood Registrar	

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 18th day of October 2007

BXCC 779559

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE
AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE ©CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.


JJE

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 3941324-1

When registered

Signature of registrar

Name entered after registration

Twentieth December 1947.	Jim Ratkinson Registrar.	Adopted Jim Ratkinson Registrar
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Adoption Birth Certificate

**CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY IN THE
RECORDS OF THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE**

Given at the **GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE
SOMERSET HOUSE**

The statutory fee for this certificate is £1.94.
Where a search is necessary to find the
entry, a search fee is payable in addition.

Application Number. _____

(i) No. of entry	(ii) Date and country of birth of child (See footnotes)	(iii) Name and surname of child	(iv) Sex of child	(v) Name and surname, address and occupation of adopter or adopters	(vi) Date of adoption order and description of court by which made	(vii) Date of entry
17894	Fourteenth January 1955. 11.55 am. England	Ann William Carter	Female	Nelson William Carter 4, Glenbrees Road, Liverpool, 12. Cost Clerk. and Dora Alice Carter, his wife of the same address.	Twenty fourth February, 1958. Liverpool County Court	Fifth March 1958

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the Adopted Children Register maintained at the General Register Office.
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 19th day of March 1958

This certificate is issued in pursuance of the Adoption Act, 1950 (14 Geo. 6 cap. 20), Section 15. The Act provides that the particulars in columns 5, 6, 4, 5 and 6 shall be entered in the register as they are specified in the Adoption Order; and that if the country of birth of the child is not England, Wales or Scotland, the particulars of that country may be entered in the register and the entry.

By Section 17 (2) of the Act a certified copy of any entry in the Adopted Children Register, if purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office, shall, without any further or other proof of that entry, be received in evidence of the adoption and where the entry contains a record of the date or country of birth of the adopted person, such certified copy shall also be received in evidence of that date or country in all respects as if the copy were a certified copy of an entry in the Register of Births.

CAUTION.—Any person who (1) supplies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

GA 081938

Adoption Records (2)

- Adoption Order Record (aka Adoption Papers)
 - Agreement between birth parents & adoptive parents (i.e. to give up child & accept child)
 - Should include (as minimum):-
 - child's new name & previous name
 - birth mother's name & address
 - names of adoptive parents
 - child's address at date of adoption
 - Not held centrally or online
 - No standard layout
 - Contact adoption agency/charity to obtain

Researching Adoptions

- Obtain original birth certificate (if birth name known)
- Apply on BIBA form if birth details not known
- Get Adoption Birth Certificate – apply via GOV.UK
- Use Adoption Contact Register at GRO –
 - to find a birth relative or an adopted person
 - not tracing service - for any connection, both people must be on Register
- Look for Adoption Papers
 - check with adoption agency or local authority
- Adoption Search Reunion website
 - database to find where records might be held
 - intermediary services

Useful Organisations & Websites

- GOV.UK – official procedures for accessing birth records, Adoption Contact Register, intermediary agencies
- Adoption Search Reunion website – has database to find where adoption papers might be held
- PAC – largest independent Adoption Support Agency
- Adoption UK – a national charity run by and for adopters
- BAAF - British Association for Adoption and Fostering
- Barnado's - archives for Barnado's children