

## 4 Registrations

### Marriage registers

- 4.1 Section 55 of the Marriage Act 1949 requires that the marriage must be registered in duplicate immediately after the ceremony has taken place.
- 4.2 Where a marriage takes place in a building which has its own set of registers, these must be used. The only exception to this is where a couple plan to marry in a building which is then temporarily closed for repairs or rebuilding. The marriage is then registered in the registers of the closed building.
- 4.3 Where a marriage takes place in a building which has no registers the registers from the parish church (or nearest parish church) should be used.
- 4.4 A marriage by special licence, elsewhere than in a church, should be recorded in the books of the parish church of the parish in which the place of marriage is situated. Where such a marriage takes place in a church in an extra parochial place the marriage should be recorded in the books of the nearest parish church.
- 4.5 If the building is being shared with a non-conformist denomination you should not use the registers issued to them.

For further guidance on the use of marriage registers including for the marriage of housebound or detained persons please refer to the Faculty Office booklet "Anglican Marriage in England and Wales. A guide to the law for Clergy."

- 4.6 The entry must only be completed by the Clerk in Holy Orders who solemnised the marriage ceremony.
- 4.7 The entry must be in the next available numbered blank space in each duplicate register using registration ink. If you make the entry at different places in the two registers, please do not alter the numbers. Instead, make a note in the margins of both books of the entry number to refer to in the other register e.g. "*This marriage is recorded at entry number..... in the duplicate register*".
- 4.8 If you need to spoil an entry, please ring GRO for advice.
- 4.9 With regard to marriages in naval, military and air force chapels, see Appendix C.
- 4.10 In the case of churches of newly-created ecclesiastical parishes or of chapels newly licensed for marriages by the bishop, assurance is required from the Diocesan Registrar or from some other authoritative source that marriages may lawfully be solemnized therein before the register books are supplied to the officiating minister.

### Commencement of entries

- 4.11 In no circumstances should an entry be written in a register book until the marriage to which it relates has been legally completed.

### **Completing the register entries**

- 4.12 Register entries should always be completed in blue/black registration ink and in distinct and clear handwriting; surnames should be in capital letters. Abbreviations should not be used, except for signatures. Every column must be completed without overlapping into the next column. If no information is given a line should be drawn in the column and the information should be completed from responses from the couple to your questions and not from the superintendent registrar's certificate.

#### *The heading*

- 4.13 Complete the year, the name of the building (only include the address if the name is similar to that of another building in the same district and could lead to confusion) the name of the district and the name of the non-metropolitan county, metropolitan district or London borough.

#### *Column 1 – When married*

- 4.14 Enter the date of the marriage; the day and month should be written in words and the year in numbers e.g. First January 2010.

#### *Column 2 – Name and surname*

- 4.15 Traditionally the man's names are recorded in the top box and the woman's below; if you enter the details the other way round a correction is not required. The surnames should be written in capital letters.
- 4.16 The names will usually be those entered on the banns form/superintendent registrar's certificates but you should enter them in accordance with the information given by the parties and not that contained in the documentation.
- 4.17 Sometimes a person uses, and is known by, two names at the same time – in this instance both names should be entered using "otherwise". If either of the couple have been known by another name you should try to link both names using "formerly known as" providing that the party does not object. If the party does object, you should advise them that unless both names are entered, difficulties may arise in future years concerning the identity of the party. If the party still objects, you should enter the name and surname by which he/she is known.
- 4.18 Where one of the parties have changed their name by deed poll and it has been registered with the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Deeds at the Royal Courts of Justice, the assumed name and surname only should be entered followed by "(name changed by deed poll)". If registered, The Deed Poll will contain three stamps. The first stamp will state 'High court enrolment' and a number; the second stamp will state 'filed/enrolled' and the third stamp will state the date'.

#### *Column 3 – Age*

- 4.19 Enter the ages of the couples in completed years followed by the word "years" (all lower case) e.g. 25 years.

*Column 4 – condition*

4.20 Confirm the condition of the couple and enter it using one of the following descriptions:

- Never previously married/formed a civil partnership = Single
- Married/formed a civil partnership before but:

husband/wife has died	widow/widower
civil partner has died	surviving civil partner
the court has granted a decree of presumption of death and dissolved the marriage	previous marriage dissolved
the court has granted a decree of presumption of death and dissolved the civil partnership	previous civil partnership dissolved
marriage has ended in divorce	previous marriage dissolved
the couple were previously married to <b>each other</b> and the marriage ended in divorce and there has been no intervening marriage.	Previously married at .....on .....Marriage dissolved on ..... (inserting the particulars of the place and date of the previous marriage and the date of its dissolution)
The couple re-marry where there is doubt as to the validity of a previous ceremony	Previously went through a form of marriage at..... on ..... (inserting the particulars of the place and date of the previous ceremony)
civil partnership has ended in dissolution	previous civil partnership dissolved
marriage is void or found void by a decree of nullity of the Court	use the condition which applied before the void marriage e.g. single/widow
civil partnership is void and has been annulled by a final order of nullity by the court	use the condition which applied before the void civil partnership e.g. single
marriage was voidable and has been annulled by the Court and the decree nisi of nullity was granted on or after 1 August 1971	previous marriage annulled
marriage was voidable and the decree nisi was granted before 1 August 1971	use the description which applied before the voidable marriage e.g. widower/previous marriage dissolved
civil partnership was voidable and has been annulled by a final order of nullity of the court	previous civil partnership annulled

- Married to each other twice in one day. When registering the second ceremony enter the condition of the couple at the start of the day before the first marriage.
- There may be occasions where the parties to a marriage have validly registered a civil partnership to each other, the civil partnership has been ended by order or dissolution

### *Errors in duplicate registers*

- 5.5 Errors and corrections should not be repeated for the sake of uniformity and therefore the numbering of errors may not match in both registers.
- 5.6 All errors as outlined above must be reproduced in quarterly certified copies.

### **After the entry is complete**

- 5.7 If an error is discovered in the registers after the entry is complete, the couple may wish to have it corrected. To do this they will need to complete an application form which is then sent into the GRO casework team.

An example of the form and guidance notes can be found in Appendix F. The application form and guidance notes are available for the couple to download from the “correcting a record” pages on the Directgov.uk website or can be obtained from either the local register office or GRO.

- 5.8 There are certain legal requirements for all corrections:
- all corrections must be made in the margin without altering the original details
  - corrections must be made in the presence of the parties married OR, in the absence of one or both of them, in the presence of the superintendent registrar and two credible witnesses. If witnesses are nominated, they should have personal knowledge of the facts of the case
  - the marginal note must be signed by the persons in whose presence it is made and by you, along with your designation and date of the correction
  - corrections must be made in both duplicate registers (if the error occurs in both); if one register has already been deposited with the superintendent registrar, they will, at your request, arrange for it to be released to you
  - the quarterly certified copies should also be updated; if they have already been sent to the superintendent registrar you must complete an occasional copy form and send it to GRO.

### **Examples of corrections**

- 5.9 Examples of marriages corrections can be found in Appendix G.

## 6 Quarterly Certified Copies

### **Preparation of quarterly copies**

- 6.1 At the end of every quarter (March, June, September and December) you must send a certified copy of every entry made in the preceding quarter, in accordance with section 57 of the Marriage Act 1949. You need to send your returns (including nil returns) to the registrar of births and deaths and will be paid a fee by the local superintendent registrar for every entry made. The superintendent registrar will certify and forward the returns to GRO.
- 6.2 If no marriages have been registered during the quarter, you will need to complete and send a 'Nil Return' form, available from the register office.
- 6.3 As the certified copy will be keyed by staff at GRO onto a computer to complete the national record of registrations, and for the production of certificates, it is vital that your handwriting is clear and legible. Surnames should be written in block capitals.
- 6.4 Your copies must be completed on the forms called "Forms to be used by clergymen for making returns to the Registrar General" (Form 30) and begun on the side which has the words 'Commence on this side' printed at the top of the page.
- 6.5 When preparing your quarterly copies, please use registration ink and copy all marginal notes and error numbers exactly as they appear on the marriage entry.

### **Copies for each quarter to be kept separate**

- 6.6 Only enter marriages from the same quarter onto a quarterly copy form. If an entry from a previous quarter has been missed in the last return please use a new quarterly return sheet.
- 6.7 Prepare and keep copies in register order. If any entries have been inadvertently missed out, reproduce these in their proper numerical order.
- 6.8 The copies must be exact copies of all the information in the entry including every correction, misspelling, marginal note and number. Copies of signatures must be legible. If a signature is in foreign characters, you should add "The signature of ....." (full name and surname) and copy it the best you can.

### **Register from which copies are to be made**

- 6.9 When an error has been made in one book only, any certified copy of the entry should be made from the book containing the correct entry. The marginal error-numbers will not, therefore, always run consecutively in the certified copies.

### **Errors in quarterly copies**

- 6.10 Any copying error found to have been made in the preparation of the quarterly copies should, if possible, be rectified by striking out the error made in the quarterly copy and inserting above it the correct particulars as shown in the original entry. (This procedure applies only to the correction of copying errors made during the preparation of quarterly copies – for guidance on correcting of errors in the register, see Chapter 5.)

Appendix E

CERTIFICATE FOR MARRIAGE  
Pursuant to the Marriage Act 1949

Marriage Act 1949, s.31(2)

†  
□

□

Date and time of marriage

I.....of the district of.....  
hereby certify that on the ‡ .....notice was given by.....and  
duly entered in the Marriage Notice Book of the said district of the marriage intended to be solemnized between the parties hereinafter named and described.

Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Occupation	Place of residence	Period of residence	Church or other building or residence in which the marriage is to be solemnized	Nationality and district of residence
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)

I further certify that the issue of this certificate has not been forbidden by an person authorised to forbid the issue thereof.

Date of issue..... Signature.....

Note: This certificate will be void if the marriage is not solemnized within \*\* one month/three months/twelve months from the date of the entry of notice given above (See ‡).

The marriage must be solemnized on or before.....

\*The Serial number in the Marriage Notice Book must be entered in this space.  
‡ When the marriage has been solemnized the No. of the Entry in the Marriage Register Book must be entered in this space

Groom's Father's Name:  
Bride's Father's Name:

## Appendix F

Examples showing how marriages, solemnized by members of the clergy of the Church of England, should be registered.

### Example 1: Marriage after Banns.

2010 Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i> in the <i>Metropolitan Borough of Sefton</i>								
Parish of <i>Christchurch, Southport</i>								
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
32	<i>Seven-teeth April 2010</i>	<i>Henry HARKER</i>	<i>37 years</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Bank Clerk</i>	<i>6 Epsom Road, Croydon CRO 4NB</i>	<i>Charles HARKER (deceased)</i>	<i>Timber Merchant</i>
		<i>Patricia DAWSON</i>	<i>29 years</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>-----</i>	<i>73 Lord Street Southport PR9 0QP</i>	<i>James MARTIN</i>	<i>Solicitor</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England						by <i>.....</i> <del>or</del> after <i>Banns</i> by me,		
This marriage was solemnized between us		<i>X the mark of Henry Harker</i> <i>Pat Dawson</i>		in the presence of us { <i>W F Thompson</i> <i>Robert Martin</i>		<i>Montagu Curtis</i> <i>Vicar</i>		

### Example 2: Marriage by licence. Showing how to correctly record an Earl and a Dowager Marchioness in the entry.

2011 Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i> in the <i>Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea</i>								
Parish of <i>St. Luke, Chelsea</i>								
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
17	<i>Fifth January 2011</i>	<i>Francis George DEBENHAM</i>	<i>44 years</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Earl of Barford</i>	<i>Grately Manor Suffolk</i>	<i>Frank William DEBENHAM (deceased)</i>	<i>Earl of Barford</i>
		<i>Maud Ellen LATIMER</i>	<i>42 years</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>Dowager Marchioness of Chalfont</i>	<i>14 Belmont Place London S.W.</i>	<i>Hugh Geoffrey COLEMAN</i>	<i>Baronet</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the rites and ceremonies of the <i>Church of England</i>						by <i>Licence</i> <del>or</del> after <i>.....</i> by me,		
This marriage was solemnized between us		<i>Barford</i> <i>Maud Ellen Chalfont</i>		in the presence of us { <i>H G Coleman</i> <i>Emily Matilda Debenham Louisa Brooks</i>		<i>Edward Cargill</i> <i>Rector</i>		

**Appendix F (continued)**

**Example 3: Marriage by Superintendent Registrar's certificate. No fathers details for the groom.**

<b>2011 Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i> in the <i>City of Liverpool</i> in the <i>Parish of St Nicolas, Liverpool</i></b>								
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
85	<i>Eleventh May 2011</i>	<i>Richard WILSON</i>	<i>28 years</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Ship's Steward</i>	<i>32 Clayton Street Liverpool L5 9XC</i>	-----	-----
		<i>Emma MURRAY</i>	<i>25 years</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Dress Maker</i>	<i>96 Vauxhall Road Liverpool L3 6EZ</i>	<i>Patrick MURRAY</i>	<i>Railway Guard</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the rites and ceremonies of the <i>Church of England</i> by <sup>Superintendent registrar's certificate</sup> <del>or after</del> ...by me,								
This marriage was solemnized between us { <i>Richard Wilson</i> <i>Emma Murray</i> } in the presence of us { <i>Caroline Murray</i> <i>Edward Jackson</i> } <i>William Cranfield Curate</i>								

**Example 4: Marriage by Banns. Couple wish to be re-marry.**

<b>2011 Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i> in the <i>City of Westminster</i> in the <i>Parish of St Saviour, Paddington</i></b>								
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
46	<i>Fourth March 2011</i>	<i>Thomas Marton SMITH</i>	<i>37 years</i>	<i>Previously went through a form of marriage at St Saviour's Church Paddington, on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2001</i>	<i>Mining Engineer</i>	<i>16 Westbourne Terrace London W2 4TA</i>	<i>Henry SMITH</i>	<i>School Teacher</i>
		<i>Maud Ellen LATIMER</i>	<i>42 years</i>		-----	<i>16 Westbourne Terrace London, W2 4TA</i>	<i>Eduado VITALI</i>	<i>Insurance Agent</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the rites and ceremonies of the <i>Church of England</i> by ..... <del>or after</del> <i>Banns.</i> by me,								
This marriage was solemnized between us { <i>T M Smith</i> <i>Emma Smith</i> } in the presence of us { <i>F Jenkins</i> <i>Ann Evans</i> } <i>Hilary Harcourt Vicar</i>								