

# Crew Research Guide



## Births, Marriages and Deaths at Sea

### Births

There are a number of way of researching births at sea in the P&O Archives, The National Archives and also online. In the P&O Archive, the best source of information regarding births on P&O ships is the Nautical Reports (essentially Log Book summaries) which cover the years 1847 until the First World War and again from 1939 until 1957. These can be found at the [National Maritime Museum](#) in Greenwich, filed under series [P&O/40](#). The Nautical Reports are **not** indexed so it is necessary to know the name of the ship and the approximate date of birth before beginning your research.

At [The National Archives](#) in Kew, series [BT 158](#), [BT 159](#) and [BT 160](#) cover all births at sea for 1854 to 1890 while series [BT 334](#) records those between 1891 to 1972. Again, the BT (Board of Trade) records are not indexed by name, rather by year of birth. They do include the name of the ship, its official number, port of registry, date of birth, sex, name of father, name of mother and the last place of abode for both parents.

Alternatively, one of the best online sources for births at sea from 1854 to 1887 is <http://www.findmypast.co.uk/> which has digitised and indexed The National Archive's records and so they are searchable by surname.

The screenshot shows the 'findmypast.co.uk' search interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with tabs for 'Home', 'Family Trees', 'Births, Marriages & Deaths', 'Census', 'Migration', and 'Military'. Below the menu, the page title is 'Search BMDs at sea 1854 to 1887'. There are two tabs: 'enter search criteria' (selected) and 'search tips'. The search form includes the following fields and instructions:

- Select an event and year range from the drop down list  
Event and year range: \*
- Enter the full last name  
Last name: \*   
Include variants:
- Optionally enter other search criteria  
Gender (BDs only):   
First name (Ms only):   
First name initial (Ds only):
- Now click search. Mandatory fields indicated by a \*.

At the bottom of the form are 'CLEAR' and 'SEARCH' buttons. Below the form, there is a link: 'Read more about the records and how they can help you discover details about your family history: [BMDs at Sea](#)'.

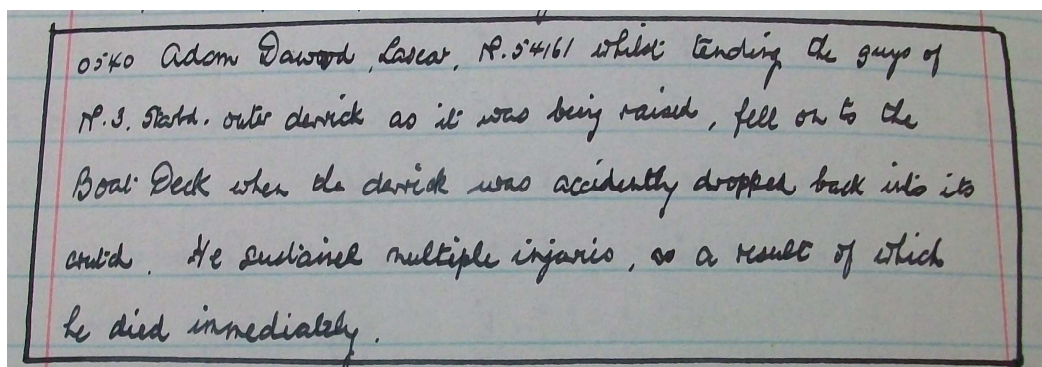
## Marriages

Officially, marriages never took place on merchant ships because they were not legally valid, therefore P&O archives have no record of any ceremonies held on board their ships, although P&O began introducing the service in 1998. P&O Cruises and Princess Cruises are now owned by Carnival plc so please refer to them directly for records of marriages after 1998.

At The National Archives, there is a register of marriages of passengers and seamen at sea between 1854 and 1972 in series [BT 334/117](#) with a transcription of that manuscript available on [The Ships List](#) website.

## Deaths

Deaths involving P&O passengers as well as crew members are recorded in the Nautical Reports (essentially Log Book summaries) that cover the years 1847 until the First World War and again from 1939 until 1957. They can be found at the [National Maritime Museum](#), Greenwich filed under series P&O/40. The Nautical Reports are **not** indexed so it is necessary to know the name of the ship and the approximate date of death before you begin your research.



P&O/40 - Nautical Reports. © P&O Heritage Collection.

There is also a volume entitled 'Deceased Passengers Effects' covering the years 1925 to 1990. This volume, filed under P&O/73/41, gives the name of the deceased, the name of the ship, date of death, cause of death, next of kin and (the reason for the records' existence) the disposal of his/her effects.

At [The National Archives](#), Kew, series [BT 334](#) records deaths at sea by name between 1891 and 1972 inclusive of the name of the ship, its official number, port of registry, date of birth, sex, name of father, name of mother and the last place of abode for both parents.

Alternatively, one of the best online sources for deaths at sea from 1854 to 1890 is <http://www.findmypast.co.uk/> which has digitised and indexed [The National Archive](#)'s records so they are searchable by surname.

## Useful Contact Information

<p>The National Archive Ruskin Avenue Kew Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU</p> <p>Tel: +44 (0)20 8876 3444 Web: <a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/">http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/</a></p>	<p>National Maritime Museum Romney Road Greenwich London SE10 9NF</p> <p>Tel: +44 (0)20 8858 4422 Web: <a href="http://www.nmm.ac.uk/">http://www.nmm.ac.uk/</a></p>
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