



## Passengers & Emigration

### Introduction

Until 1960, all ships carrying passengers in or out of any British port were required by law to deposit an official passenger list with the relevant port authorities. These lists were compiled for the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade (BT), a UK Government body responsible for a variety of tasks. These lists record migrants, tourists, business travellers, men, women and children. With no other immigration or emigration records required to be completed during this period, these represent the only way of identifying people leaving, entering or passing through British ports en route for overseas ports in Africa, Asia, North America, Australia and elsewhere.



In general, British official passenger lists **do not** exist for the following:

- Ships travelling between ports in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- Ferries including those on the English Channel, North Sea and Irish Sea
- Feeder ships carrying passengers across the North Sea for onward passage by transatlantic steamers
- Ships sailing between Britain and European ports, those which lie on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and all islands in the Mediterranean such as Malta, unless the ship's voyage started or ended outside that area
- Cruise ships
- Troop ships – although there are some 20<sup>th</sup> century records for civilian passengers on troop transports
- Ships bound for Britain but which sank before they reached the UK. (This means there is no arrival list for the *Lusitania*'s last voyage, nor for any other ships which did not reach their British destination for whatever reason)
- Passengers travelling to or from the UK on ships bound to or from the UK who left or joined the ship outside the UK (e.g. to travel more quickly across Europe)
- Passengers travelling between intermediate ports in a ship from or to the UK

Passenger lists may also exist for overseas ports served by a ship in which you are interested, but it is not possible to go into detail here. Please contact the port authorities or national archives in question.

### Pre-1878

Unfortunately, it is difficult to trace both outward and inward passengers on board ships prior to 1878 since the survival of those records is sparse. Copies of passenger lists were customarily submitted at their final destination, and as a result, it may be worth contacting the local record office near the port of arrival (if known) to see if they can provide assistance.

## 1878 - 1960

Passenger lists for ships arriving in the UK from 1878 and 1888 survive, although their coverage is patchy. Between 1890 until 1960, a complete record of ships arriving and departing the UK were kept by the Board of Trade. These lists have recently been digitized and present the most straightforward and uncomplicated way of searching for passengers.

If you are searching for **outward-bound** passengers from UK ports, then visit the website [www.ancestorsonboard.com](http://www.ancestorsonboard.com) where you can enter as much information as you are familiar with on their search screen:

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'ancestors on board.com' website. The header includes the site logo, 'powered by findmypast.com', and a navigation menu with links for Home, About, News, Search Tips, Price, Links, and Contact. A 'Live News Updates' button is also present. The main content area features a yellow background with the heading 'A journey of discovery' and a brief description of the database. A large image of a steamship is shown on the right side of the page. Below the main text, there are two buttons: 'Register for email updates' and 'Start searching now'. The search interface is titled 'UK outbound passenger lists 1890 - 1960' and contains several input fields and checkboxes. At the bottom of the search form, there are 'Clear' and 'Search' buttons, and a note stating 'Mandatory fields are indicated by \*' and 'You will be automatically redirected to findmypast.com, where your search results will be displayed.'

ancestors on board.com  
powered by findmypast.com

in association with  
the national archives

Home About News Search Tips Price Links Contact

Live News Updates

### A journey of discovery

Passenger lists with over 24 million records from ships sailing to destinations worldwide.

Findmypast.com, in association with The National Archives, is proud to present ancestorsonboard, a new database featuring 6727 Outward Passenger Lists for long-distance voyages leaving the British Isles from 1890 right back to 1880.

With ancestorsonboard, you can search for passenger list records of individuals or groups of people leaving for destinations including Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and USA featuring ports such as Boston, Philadelphia and New York. Passengers include not only immigrants and emigrants, but also businessmen, diplomats and tourists. Images of the passenger lists are available to download, view, save and print.

Register for email updates Start searching now

#### UK outbound passenger lists 1890 - 1960

First name(s): <input type="text"/>	Last name: * <input type="text"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include variants	<input type="checkbox"/> Include variants
Sex: <input type="radio"/> Any <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Male *	Year of departure: From: <input type="text" value="1890"/> To: <input type="text" value="1960"/>
Port of departure: <input type="text" value="All ports"/>	Ship name: <input type="text"/>
<small>If a ship name is known, enter it without prefixes such as 'S.S' etc.</small>	
<small>Once you have selected a destination country you will be able to select from a list of destination ports.</small>	
Destination country: <input type="text" value="All countries"/>	Destination port: <input type="text"/>
Other passengers travelling on the same voyage:	
First name: <input type="text"/>	Last name: <input type="text"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include variants	<input type="checkbox"/> Include variants
Sex: <input type="radio"/> Any <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Male	

Clear Search

Mandatory fields are indicated by \*.  
You will be automatically redirected to findmypast.com, where your search results will be displayed.

If you are only aware of the passenger's surname and are vague on the remaining details, the website will provide you with a list of potential passengers, including their first name or initial, port of departure, destination and date:

## Passenger list search results

### Search criteria used:

Last name: **Strickland**  
Sex:  
Year of departure: **1935 to 1960**

### Results:

294 records found.

### Cost:

You will be charged 5 credits to view a transcript and 30 credits for an image unless you have purchased a subscription for this set of records.

[Year of birth calculation?](#) | [Ancestor listed twice?](#) | [What are sea departure cards?](#)

[redefine current search](#)

Viewing Page 3 of 6 << [First page](#) [2](#) [[3](#)] [4](#) [5](#) [Last page](#) >>

Last name	First name	Year of birth	Sex	Departure year	Departure port	Destination country	Destination port	Transcript	Image
STRICKLAND	Gerald	1861	M	1935	London	Malta	Malta	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gerald	Adult	M	1936	London	Malta	Malta	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gerald	1913	M	1937	London	Malta	Malta	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gerald	1861	M	1938	London	Malta	Malta	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gerald John	1926	M	1940	Liverpool	India	Bombay	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gilbert	1922	M	1951	Liverpool	USA	New York	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gilbert	Unknown		1952	Southampton	USA	New York	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Gordon Francis	1884	M	1946	Liverpool	Singapore	Singapore	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Guy	1885	M	1935	London	India	Bombay	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	H	1905	M	1944	Liverpool	New Zealand	New Zealand	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	H A	Unknown	M	1960	Rochester	Singapore	Singapore	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	H L	1883	M	1954	London	South Africa	Durban (Port Natal)	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	H L	1882	M	1958	London	South Africa	Cape	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Halsey	1913	M	1936	Southampton	USA	New York	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Harry	1897	M	1947	Southampton	USA	New York	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Harry	1913	M	1952	Southampton	Canada	Montreal	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Harry	1906	M	1957	London	Australia	Sydney	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Henry	1906	M	1937	Southampton	USA	New York	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Henry	1916	M	1953	Southampton	Canada	Quebec	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Henry	1882	M	1954	Southampton	USA	New York	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Henry Charles	1909	M	1953	London	West Indies	Trinidad and Tobago	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Henry Leon	1882	M	1955	Liverpool	West Indies	Trinidad and Tobago	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>
STRICKLAND	Henry T	1916	M	1958	Manchester		Southern U.S. Ports	<a href="#">VIEW</a>	<a href="#">VIEW</a>

For **inward-bound** passengers into UK ports, you can consult [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Passengers are searchable initially by surname, but you can enter as much information as is known to limit the results.

On both websites, digital images of the passenger lists are available to view for a nominal fee. Once payment has been made, you will be able to view, download and print out the particular page featuring your ancestor.

There is no single, standard format for passenger lists. They have changed over time and vary in size and in length and detail. Some are typed, others are handwritten; some record only a minimum of detail about the passengers, others include a wealth of information down to exact address and ultimate destination overseas. An example is provided here:

PASSENGERS											FROM	
S.S. "AMARA"											Date of Arrival	
General Agent: Messrs. D. & G. Steuart & Co., Ltd.											Month of Arrival	
NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND IRISH REPUBLICAN PASSENGERS LARDED AT THE PORT OF LONDON												
No.	Name of Passenger (Surname first)	Sex	Age	Port of Birth	Address	Occupation	Remarks	Country of Birth	Country of Residence	Country of Destination	Remarks	Remarks
101	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
102	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
103	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
104	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
105	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
106	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
107	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
108	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
109	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				
110	MR. J. B. SMITH	M	35	London	10, White Street, North, Greenwich, London S.E. 10.	Student		England				

BT 26 Series. © National Archives

If you do not have access to a computer or wish to carry out your research in person, passenger lists are held at [The National Archives](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk), Kew, in series [BT 26](#) (arrivals) and [BT 27](#) (departures). Both series are arranged by port and date and have no index of passengers' names. In order to consult them, it is essential to know either the name of the ship and approximate date when the passenger travelled, or the port and date of departure or arrival.

**If you do not know port of departure/arrival or the name of the ship, it may be very difficult and time consuming to find any records in person at The National Archives.** It is recommended, therefore, that you utilise both indexed resources online, at least in the first instance, as the probability of locating a passenger is significantly higher.

## After 1960

The Board of Trade was no longer required to collect passenger lists after 1960, although lists may have been kept in some overseas countries or ports beyond this date. For their own purposes shipping companies would have continued to compile passenger lists, but in most cases, these records have not been retained.

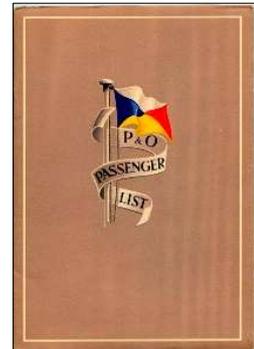
## P&O Passenger Lists

In addition to the official lists required by the Board of Trade, P&O compiled lists of passengers travelling aboard its ships, although precious few examples have survived. These company-generated passenger records have been disposed of once there were no legal grounds for their retention. It was customary for shipping companies to supply



passenger with printed lists of the names of their fellow travellers on a particular voyage. The only lists of passengers in the P&O Archives housed at the [National Maritime Museum](http://www.nmm.ac.uk) in Greenwich are:

- Lists of passengers booked to leave the UK on P&O ships between 1911-1916 (i.e. there is no record of whether they actually sailed or not). These are housed in 6 volumes ranging in catalogue numbers from P&O/42/34 to P&O/42/39
- Lists of passengers on P&O pleasure cruises (i.e. short leisure voyages, not line voyages to or from overseas destinations) between 1925 and 1938. These are housed in bound volumes in catalogue numbers ranging from P&O/44/27 to P&O/44/33
- Assorted copies of the printed passenger lists which are filed with miscellanea relating to the ship in question and are not individually itemised in the NMM catalogue. All individual ship files are catalogued in the P&O/65 series, but if you rely on this source to find an individual list, you will almost certainly be disappointed.



For details of P&O passengers arriving at or leaving from ports outside the UK, enquirers should approach the port authorities, the local or national archives of the country in question.

If you are unable to locate a passenger list owing to the limited scope of passenger lists held in the P&O Archives, please begin your search for a P&O passenger by referring to the previous sections in this guide for information on finding **departing** and **arriving** passengers. Please note that **after 1960** it was no longer a requirement for shipping companies to deposit passenger lists with UK authorities, and neither P&O nor the UK authorities have any passenger lists after that date.

## Useful Contact Information

<p>The National Archive                  Ruskin Avenue                  Kew                  Richmond                  Surrey                  TW9 4DU                  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                  Tel: +44 (0)20 8858 4422                  Web: <a href="http://www.nmm.ac.uk/">http://www.nmm.ac.uk/</a></p>
--	---

## Emigration/Immigration



P&O first entered the business of transporting emigrants from the UK to Australia with the acquisition of Blue Anchor Line in 1910. Orient Line also carried emigrants to Australia, while the New Zealand Shipping Company carried them further south to New Zealand. As

neither P&O nor any of its subsidiary companies regularly carried emigrants to Canada or South Africa, they are not included in this guide.

Records in UK archives contain information regarding the outward portion of the emigration process only in the form of outward passenger lists. The **departing** information can be consulted on [www.ancestorsonboard.com](http://www.ancestorsonboard.com) (see previous section) which will provide the emigrant's name, port of departure, destination and date of departure. For **arrival** information in destination countries, it is best to refer to their local and national archives as UK repositories would hold no records on their behalf.

## Australia

As a rule of thumb for Australian records, including passenger lists for arrivals prior to 1923, are held at the state archives or records office in the State in which port they arrived. Records for anyone (including children) who entered Australia post 1923 - even those who migrated from Britain to Australia under assisted passage schemes after 1950 - are held at the [National Archives Australia](http://www.naa.gov.au) in series A1877. The bulk of the records at the Archives include information on the following categories of emigrants:

- alien (non-citizen) registration
- migration applications
- case files
- migrant selection documents
- migrant accommodation records
- naturalisation (citizenship) records
- passenger records
- passport records
- policy files
- visas and entry/exit documents



Archival sources relating to emigration, other than those held by the [National Archives Australia](http://www.naa.gov.au), can be found at the various State Archives and Public Record Offices, the [Noel Butlin Archives Centre](http://www.naa.gov.au) at the Australian National University, and major libraries in each state such as the [National Library of Australia](http://www.nla.gov.au) in Canberra, the [Mitchell Library](http://www.mitchelllibrary.com.au) in Sydney, the [State Library of Victoria](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au), the [Royal Historical Society of Victoria](http://www.rhsv.vic.gov.au), and the [J S Battye Library](http://www.jsbattye.com.au) in Perth.

## New Zealand

The majority of information on New Zealand emigration is contained in passenger lists which exist sporadically as far back as the 1840s, but were kept more systematically from 1910 to 1973. These lists are held in Wellington at the office of the [Social Security Department](http://www.ssd.govt.nz), however, inward passenger lists from Britain 1884-1910 are held at the Auckland branch. Alternatively, it is suggested to contact the [Alexander Turnbull Library](http://www.turnbulllibrary.co.nz) for records at Wellington.