

International Genealogical Index (IGI)

Introduction

The International Genealogical Index (IGI), an index compiled by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (also known as LDS or Mormons), was originally known as the Computer File Index (CFI). It was first published in 1975, with updates approximately every 4 years until 1992. It covers over 90 countries.

It is an index to christenings (baptisms) and marriages from various sources, including parish registers, bishops' transcripts, non-conformist registers, compiled marriage indexes, censuses, wills, and LDS members' research (that is, personal family information submitted to the LDS Church, not necessarily confirmed by documentary sources).

Index entries which have come from extracting christening and marriage information from Church of England parish registers, and from pre-1837 non-conformist registers held in the National Archives, are usually the most useful and reliable entries.

The accuracy of the personal entries from LDS members' research depends on the source of the members' information and on the quality of their genealogical research. Some of these entries may result from census information or oral family reminiscences, not from documentary evidence of an actual baptism, birth or marriage. They can also result from the assumptions of researchers rather than documentary evidence. Some have no source or submission information at all. Some were submitted many years ago by persons now deceased.

The IGI only includes entries for deceased persons. Entries span the period from the early 1500s to 1875, although christening and marriage entries for most English parishes are only included up to the beginning of civil registration (mid-1837). The coverage for each county also varies a great deal, depending on the extent of the sources made available to the Mormon compilers, and can vary from 3% to 100%.

Where to Find the IGI

- On-line on the Family Search website
- On microfiche at libraries and family history research centres

There are a number of other useful websites covering various aspects of using the IGI. These include a website providing IGI Batch numbers for parishes in all of the English counties.

Filming of Records by the LDS

It has been the policy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to collect, film and in recent years, to digitize, any record of genealogical interest which is made available to them. In many countries, original parish registers have been made available for filming or digitizing. In those English counties where parish registers were filmed in the past, the IGI entries for christenings and marriages are compiled from microfilms of the original registers, and copies of these microfilms can still be ordered up for consultation in any of the LDS (Mormon) Family History Centres around the world.

The IGI for Devon

The IGI for Devon is not compiled from original Church of England registers, as Devon clergy and the Diocese of Exeter did not grant permission to the Mormons to film the original parish registers. Instead they were granted permission to film the typed and hand-written transcripts of parish registers which had been made by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society. Some transcribers did an excellent job; others were inexpert. In other cases, mistakes may have been made at the data entry stage when the IGI was being compiled. Therefore the IGI can include mistakes: omissions, errors and mis-spellings.

About 60% of Devon Church of England parishes up to 1812 and in some cases up to 1837 are included. This means that about 150 Devon parishes are not included at all, and others have only a partial coverage – not all registers are indexed. In other words, in the case of some parishes, not all parish registers were transcribed, even those prior to 1837. Therefore the coverage for parishes which ARE included on the IGI may still be incomplete. In addition, burial entries from parish registers are not indexed. Only pre-1837 non-conformist registers held in the National Archives are included – none of the later non-conformist registers deposited in Devon archive offices are included. Therefore, the IGI is a useful but fairly incomplete index to Devon baptisms and marriages.

There is a coloured map and accompanying list of the Devon parishes included in the IGI, (with the date coverage for each parish), on display in the Devon Heritage Centre searchroom, for visitors to refer to.

Important Information about Using the IGI on-line

The current IGI search page on the Family Search website allows you to search only the index entries which have come from extracting christening and marriage information from Church of England parish registers, and from pre-1837 non-conformist registers held in the National Archives. This means that you can choose not to include personal family information submitted to the LDS Church in your search. To do this, choose the Community Indexed IGI by ticking the required box, and remove the tick from the box next to the words Community Contributed IGI.

SURNAME: Possible spelling variations are treated as the same name and grouped together under one "Standard" spelling.

FORENAMES: names are indexed as they appear in the original record; e.g. with the abbreviations like Wm., Jno., Richd or Latinised forenames like Jacobus and Gulielmus.

NAMES OF FATHER AND MOTHER: a christening entry includes one or both parents' names, depending on what is included in the original register.

DATE OF EVENT: If birth and christening dates both appear in a christening entry the individual record page on the IGI on-line shows both.

TOWN or PARISH NAME: If only the parish name is given, assume it refers to the established church (in England, this is the Church of England parish church).

If there was more than one church in a parish, or if the church is a non-conformist church, the church will be named.

SOURCE INFORMATION: BATCH NO.: Entries extracted from parish registers or parish register transcripts always have a batch number. A batch number is unique to a particular parish register.

Entries extracted from registers have batch numbers beginning with the letters C, E, J, K, P or M.

SOURCE INFORMATION: SOURCE CALL NO.: this is a link to a page giving information on the source from which the IGI index entries have come

Important Information on Using the IGI on microfiche

The additional notes which follow are designed mainly to assist those who wish to use the microfiche version. It was last updated in 1992.

The microfiche version has detailed instructions, on accompanying microfiche, of how to use it, and is used in conjunction with two complementary sets of microfiche:

The Parish and Vital Records List

This lists country by country, and parish by parish, the records available for each parish and from which the IGI has been compiled.

If you want to know whether a particular parish is included in the IGI, what records were used, and what dates are covered, you must look at the microfiche of the Parish and Vital Records List.

The Batch Number Index

This allows you to trace the source of the information used for each entry on the IGI, and to order up films through a Mormon Family History Centre, using the input source call number.

How the IGI on microfiche is laid out

SURNAME: Possible spelling variations are treated as the same name and grouped together under one "Standard" spelling.

FORENAMES: names are filed alphabetically as they appear in the original record; e.g. abbreviations like Wm., Jno., Richd or Latinised forenames like Jacobus, Gulielmus are all listed in strict alphabetical order.

Marriages are indexed under both surnames if both occur in the original register

SEX: M for male; F for female in christening entry; H for husband and W for wife in marriage entry

TYPE OF ENTRY: C for christening and occasionally. B for birth. M for marriage

DATE OF EVENT: If birth and christening dates both appear in a christening entry the IGI on microfiche only shows the christening date. You must check the original register or the on-line version of the IGI to see if a birth date has been included as well. Where there is more than one entry under a particular name e.g. PROWSE, John, events are listed in date order. Events are listed under old calendar year dates if they appear that way in the register.

COLUMNS B, E and S: these 3 columns refer to dates of ordinances performed by the church and are only of relevance to researchers if the word child appears; this tells you that the child is known to have died before 8 years of age.

SOURCE: BATCH NUMBER AND SERIAL SHEET NUMBER: The key to ordering copies of parish register entries and alphabetical surname listings extracted from parish registers. Entries extracted from registers have batch numbers beginning with the letters C, E, J, K, P or M.

Devon Heritage Centre
Great Moor House
Bittern Road
Exeter
EX2 7NL

01392 888700
devonarchives@swheritage.org.uk
[Website: www.swheritage.org.uk/devon-archives](http://www.swheritage.org.uk/devon-archives)

South West Heritage Trust is a charity and a company limited by guarantee registered in England.

Registered office: Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6SF

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