



# Places of Worship Registration Act 1855

## 1855 CHAPTER 81

An Act to amend the Law concerning the certifying and registering of Places of Religious Worship in *England*. [30th July 1855]

WHEREAS by an Act of the First Session of the First Year of King *William* and Queen *Mary*, Chapter Eighteen, and an Act of the Fifty-second Year of King *George* the Third, Chapter One hundred and fifty-five, Places of Meeting of Congregations or Assemblies for Religious Worship of Protestants (save as therein excepted with respect to Places of Worship of the Established Church and otherwise) were required to be certified to the Bishop's or Archdeacon's Court, or to the General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace, and to be registered, in such Court, and recorded at such Sessions: And whereas by an Act of the Thirty-first Year of King *George* the Third, Chapter Thirty-two, every Place of Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship of Persons professing the Roman Catholic Religion is required to be certified to and recorded at the General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace: And whereas by the Two following Acts respectively, that is to say, an Act of the Session holden in the Second and Third Years of King *William* the Fourth, Chapter One hundred and fifteen, and an Act of the Session holden in the Ninth and Tenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Fifty-nine, Her Majesty's Subjects professing the Roman Catholic Religion, and Her Majesty's Subjects professing the Jewish Religion, in respect of their Places for Religious Worship, are made subject to the same Laws as Protestant Dissenters: And whereas by an Act passed in the Session holden in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, Places of Meeting of Congregations or Assemblies for Religious Worship of Protestant Dissenters are required to be certified to the Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in *England*, and to be recorded in the General Register Office, in lieu of being certified to and registered and recorded in the Bishop's or Archdeacon's Court, and at the General or Quarter Sessions, as herein-before mentioned: And whereas it is expedient that all Places of Religious Worship, not being Churches or Chapels of the Established Church, should, if the Congregation should desire, but not otherwise, be certified to the said Registrar General:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, as follows:

**I 15 & 16 Vict. c.36 repealed, but Places of Worship certified thereunder to have Force, &c.**

The said Act of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, shall be repealed: Provided always, that the certifying thereunder before the passing of this Act of any Place of Meeting for Religious Worship shall, subject to the Provisions hereinafter contained, have the same Force and Effect from the Time of such certifying as if the same had been duly certified, registered, and recorded as before the passing of the said Act of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, was required by Law, and such Act and this Act had not been passed.

**II Places of Worship to be certified to Registrar General.**

Every Place of Meeting for Religious Worship of Protestant Dissenters or other Protestants, and of Persons professing, the Roman Catholic Religion, by the said Acts of King *William* and Queen *Mary*, the Thirty-first and Fifty-second Years of King *George* the Third, and the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, or any of them, required to be certified and registered or recorded, as therein mentioned, and not heretofore certified and registered or recorded in manner required by Law, and every Place of Meeting for Religious Worship of Persons professing the Jewish Religion, not heretofore certified and registered or recorded as aforesaid, and every Place of Meeting for Religious Worship of any other Body or Denomination of Persons, may be certified in Writing to the Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in *England*, through the Superintendent Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages of the District in which such Place may be situate; and such Certificate shall be in Duplicate, and upon Forms in accordance with Schedule A. to this Act, or to the like Effect, such Forms to be provided by the said Registrar General, and to be obtained (without Payment) upon Application to such Superintendent Registrar as aforesaid; and the said Superintendent Registrar shall, upon the Receipt of such Certificate in Duplicate, forthwith transmit the same to the said Registrar General, who, after having caused the Place of Meeting therein mentioned to be recorded as herein-after directed, shall return One of the said Certificates to the said Superintendent Registrar, to be re-delivered by him to the certifying Party, and shall keep the other Certificate with the Records of the General Register Office.

**III Places of Meeting to be recorded.**

The said Registrar General shall cause all Places of Meeting for Religious Worship certified to him under this Act to be recorded in a Book to be kept by him for that Purpose at the General Register Office, and no such Place of Meeting as aforesaid shall be certified to or registered in any Court of any Bishop or Archdeacon, or be certified to or recorded at any General or Quarter Sessions; and the certifying to the said Registrar General of any such Place of Meeting for Religious Worship of Protestant Dissenters or other Protestants or Roman Catholics, or Persons professing the Jewish Religion, and of any Place of Meeting for Religious Worship of any other Body or Denomination of Persons, shall, subject to the Provisions herein contained, have the same Force and Effect as if such Place had been duly certified and recorded or registered and recorded as before the passing of the said Act of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, was required by Law, and such Act and this Act had not been passed.

**IV Places of Meeting already certified, save those certified under 15 & 16 Vict. c.36, maybe certified to Registrar General, and be recorded by him.**

Any Place of Meeting for Religious Worship heretofore certified and registered or recorded in manner required by Law, and which continues to be used for Religious Worship, save any such Place of Meeting certified to the said Registrar General under the said Act of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, may, at any Time after the passing of this Act, be certified in Writing to such Registrar General through the Superintendent Registrar of the District in which such Place may be situate, and shall be recorded by such Registrar General in manner herein-before mentioned concerning Places of Meeting not heretofore certified and registered or recorded.

**V Fee of 2s. 6d. to be paid with Certificate to Superintendent Registrar.**

Upon the Delivery of every Certificate to the Superintendent Registrar for Transmission to the Registrar General for the Purpose of being recorded under this Act, the Person delivering the same shall pay to such Superintendent Registrar for his own Use the Sum of Two Shillings and Sixpence, and it shall not be lawful to demand or take any greater Fee or Reward for the same respectively.

**VI Notice to be given to Registrar General of every Place of Meeting becoming disused for the Purposes for which it was certified.**

Whenever any Place of Meeting for Religious Worship which may have been certified under the said Act of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, or this Act, shall have wholly ceased to be used as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship, the Person or One of the Persons who so certified or last certified the same (as the Case may be), or the Trustee or One of the Trustees for the Time being of such Place of Meeting, or the Owner or Occupier or One of the Owners or Occupiers thereof, shall, if then resident within the Superintendent Registrar's District within which such Place shall be situate, forthwith give Notice to the Registrar General through such Superintendent Registrar that such Place has so ceased to be used as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship, such Notice to be in a Form in accordance with the Schedule B. to this Act, or to the like Effect, and which Form shall be provided by the said Registrar General, and may be obtained (without Payment) upon Application to the said Superintendent Registrar; and the Person giving such Notice shall sign the same in the Presence of such Superintendent Registrar or of his Deputy, who shall forthwith transmit the same through the General Post to the Registrar General at the General Register Office.

**VII List of certified Places to be printed.**

The said Registrar General shall, in the Year One thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, and also at such subsequent Periods as One of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State shall from Time to Time in that Behalf order or direct, make out and cause to be printed a List of all Places of Meeting which have been certified to and recorded by him under the said Act of the Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, or this Act, and the Record of which has not been cancelled as herein-after provided, and shall state in such List the County and Superintendent Registrar's District within which each of such Places of Meeting is situated, and the Religious Denomination to which the Persons for the Time being certifying it belong, and shall cause a Copy of such List to be sent to every Superintendent Registrar of Births,

Deaths, and Marriages in *England*, and such List shall be open at all reasonable Times to all Persons desirous of inspecting the same, on Payment to such Superintendent Registrar of a Fee of One Shilling.

**VIII Direction to the Registrar General to cancel Records of Certificates of Places of Worship ceasing to be used as such.**

Whenever it shall appear to the Satisfaction of the said Registrar General, from any Notice which shall have been given to him as aforesaid or otherwise that any certified Place of Meeting for Religious Worship has wholly ceased to be used as such, the said Registrar General shall cause the Record of such Certification to be cancelled, and shall give public Notice of the Cancellation thereof by Advertisement in some Newspaper circulating within the District in which such Place of Meeting is situated, and in the *London Gazette*, and shall also expunge the Name of such Place from the List of certified Places so to be printed by him as aforesaid; and after such Cancellation and Publication thereof as aforesaid such Place shall cease to be deemed duly certified as by Law required, and shall so remain until it shall have been duly certified afresh under this Act.

**IX Certified Places exempted from the Operation of "The Charitable Trusts Act, 1853."**

Every Place of Meeting for Religious Worship certified to the said Registrar General under the said Act of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Thirty-six, or this Act, and recorded by him as aforesaid, so long as the same continues to be *bonâ fide* used as a Place of Religious Worship, and the Record of the Certification thereof has not been cancelled as herein-before is provided, shall be wholly freed and exempted from the Operation of an Act passed in the Session holden in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Years of Her Majesty, Chapter One hundred and thirty-seven, intituled "The Charitable Trusts Act, 1853," and shall not be subject or liable to any of the Provisions of the same Act, save that the exempted Charities may avail themselves of the Sixty-third and Sixty-fourth Sections of the said Act, if they shall think fit.

**X Nothing to affect Churches, &c of Established Church.**

Nothing in this Act shall affect or be construed to affect the Churches or Chapels of the United Church of *England* and *Ireland*, or the Celebration of Divine Service according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the said United Church by Ministers of such Church, in any Place hitherto used for such Purpose, or being now or hereafter duly consecrated or licensed by any Archbishop or Bishop or other Person lawfully authorized to consecrate or license the same.

**XI Certificate of Place having been certified to be given.**

The Registrar General, on Payment to him of a Fee of Two Shillings and Sixpence, shall, with respect to any Place certified to him as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship, the Record whereof remains uncanceled, give to any Person demanding the same a Certificate, sealed or stamped with the Seal of the General Register Office, that at the Time or respective Times in such Certificate in that Behalf stated the Place therein described was duly certified and duly recorded as required by this Act, and that at the Date of such sealed or stamped Certificate the Record of such Certification

remained uncanceled ; and every such sealed or stamped Certificate, if tendered in Evidence upon any Trial or other judicial Proceeding in any Civil or Criminal Court, shall be received as Evidence of the said several Facts therein mentioned, without any further or other Proof of the same.

**XII Sums received by or on account of Registrar General to be accounted for, and Expenses defrayed as other Expenses of the General Register Office.**

All Sums to be received by or on account of the Registrar General in pursuance of this Act shall be accounted for and paid in manner directed by the said Act of the Seventh Year of King *William* the Fourth, "for registering Births, Deaths, and Marriages in *England*," with respect to Sums received by him or on his Account under the Provisions of that Act; and all Expenses incurred by the said Registrar General, or by any Superintendent Registrar, or Registrar, with his Sanction and acting under his Direction or Authority, in carrying this Act into execution and making known its Provisions, shall be deemed to have been incurred in carrying on the Business of the General Register Office, and be defrayed accordingly.

**XIII To remove Doubts as to Validity of Marriage.**

Notwithstanding the Provisions of this or any other Act, all Marriages which heretofore have been had or solemnized in any Building which has been registered for the Solemnization of Marriages pursuant to the Provisions of an Act passed in the Sixth and Seventh Years of His late Majesty King *William* the Fourth, Chapter Eighty-five, but which may not have been certified as required by the Provisions of this or any other Act, shall be as valid in all respects as if such Place of Worship had been so certified.

**XIV Extent of Act.**

This Act shall not extend to *Scotland* or *Ireland*.

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*Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).*

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## SCHEDULES REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING ACT.

### SCHEDULE A

*To the Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in  
England.*

Directions for filling  
up this Schedule.

I, the undersigned (a) of do hereby, under and by virtue  
in the County of Year of Her Majesty Queen  
of an Act passed in the Victoria, intituled "An Act to amend the Law concerning the  
"certifying and registering of Places of Religious Worship in Eng-  
"land," certify that a certain Building known by the Name of  
situated at in the County  
of within the Superintendent Registrar's  
District of [was used (b) as a Place of Meeting  
for Religious Worship before the 30th Day of June 1852 and] is  
intended to be used as heretofore, (c) and will accordingly be forth-  
with used as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship by a  
Congregation or Assembly of Persons calling themselves (d)

(a) Here insert the  
Name, Residence, and  
County in which it is  
situate, and the Rank  
or Profession of the  
Party certifying.

(b) If the Place was  
not so used before  
30th June 1852,  
expunge this and the  
following Line.

(c) If the Building  
has not been pre-  
viously used as a Place  
of Worship, erase the  
Words "as heretofore."

(d) Here insert  
"Protestant Dissenters,"  
"Independents,"  
"Particular Baptists,"  
"Wesleyan Method-  
ists," "Roman  
Catholics," "Jews,"  
or other Religious  
Denomination of, or  
Religious Appellation  
adopted by the Persons  
on whose Behalf the  
Building is certified;  
but if those Persons  
decline to describe  
themselves by any  
distinctive Appellation  
erase the Words  
"calling themselves,"  
and insert "who object  
"to be designated by  
"any distinctive Reli-  
"gious Appellation."

and I request that this Certificate may be recorded in the General  
Register Office, pursuant to the said Act. Dated this Day  
of 185 .

(Signature of the Party certifying.)

(e)

of the Place of Meeting above described.

(e) Insert on this  
Line immediately  
under the Signature  
the Word "Minister,"  
"Proprietor," "a  
Trustee," "Occupier,"  
"an Attendant," or  
such other Words as  
will clearly show the  
Connexion subsisting  
between the Person  
certifying and the  
Place of Meeting.

