

Light at the end of the Tunnel for Marriages.

So much progress that we have to make new plans and get ready for what happens next!!

A quick update on where we stand:

Marriages: All primary attention is being given to marriages still. We are up to over 88% complete, being either published, or ready here for publication. All records to 1920 are published and available, and the next update which is almost ready will make us complete to 1960. I expect about 162,000 marriage pairs ultimately - that's the number shown on the web site home page. All the Church indexes have been sent out to volunteers, and we just have the 1974 to 1990 indexes for the RO2 series to finish sending out for Stage 1 typing. That will be done in the next two or three weeks. These indexes are slightly different, being indexes that have been compiled for YEARS. As such, each index contains a reference to both the register number AND the entry number. The Registers here are numbered 1A to 60A, the later registers after this for 1990 to the present day being already done and published. We will have to slice up the submitted stage one files back to files for Registers, but this will be no problem.

Births: Births have about 7% of entries done and published. These complete the years 1837 to 1840, and all the published records are all before 1862. Volunteers were busy on Stage One transcribing of Birth indexes last year, and a further 75,000 names are held ready for the second stage of transcribing. We also have another 60,000 names ready for stage 2 typing from the 1991 to 2004 era that came from the Register Office's computer system, so there is plenty to keep everyone busy! We will definitely get more Births published later this year. We will start by simultaneously doing 1991-2004 and 1840 onwards. Progress will be quite fast knowing the people that do the stage 2 work!!

Deaths: We have now catalogued all the death registers, and a full list is available on the Death coverage page of the web site. The next task will be to add data on each register to the management database, (like start year, end year and number of entries), and that will make us ready for indexes to be copied and sent out.

Web site Off Line.

Users and volunteers alike will have seen that the BathBMD web site was off line for 12 days at the end of May. We hope that this was a one off occurrence that will not recur. It was due to an administrative mix up - a function resulting from a change of staff.

Progress and Time Scales.

I first envisaged that completing all records on BathBMD would take six years. This was highly dependent on getting volunteers that would be doing the bulk of the work. Naturally, the more volunteers we get, the faster work will progress. The first few months of the project (that's the

beginning of 2004), were spent setting up the system, buying and setting up the web site, and learning what we were doing. In those early days the first volunteers were found, and each was announced with a great fanfare! Now we have some 30 active volunteers, and all know what they are doing and work well. I have recently put a prompt on the home page of the web site calling for new volunteers. This has added two more so far, and is designed to catch those that are users of it. The register office was also at one time sending out flyers to its genealogy customers that had written in and may not know of the existence of BathBMD.

We have made such good progress that completion will now be around the five year mark, so that's about the end of 2008. All thanks go to the volunteers that continue to do brilliantly. Well done. Please keep up the good work. If we continue at the current excellent rate the five years will be improved on further!

Death Records.

I am not sure how genealogists view death records. Deaths are notoriously difficult to find. A marriage certificate may give pointers to the approximate year of birth, and census returns show ages and children's ages, all pointing to likely marriage dates and birth dates. But there can be no pointers to what year your ancestors may have died. Certainly the Register Office does little business in death certificates. But is this because the data is hard to use before we get it indexed and published, or is it that genealogists just don't rate death details highly in their research?

In my own genealogy, I started seeking the ages at death and causes of death of the 32 ggg grandparents of my children. That proved a difficult task and remains only about half done. It's just a pity that none of my ancestors came from the Bath area!!

Any comments would be appreciated. We shall still stay with the original plan of doing births next, and then deaths, but I am wondering if volunteers will lose interest when births are completed. Send us your views - do you wish to seek out death data?

How is the Mrs. Doing?

Readers may be pleased to know that my good wife has settled in very well in her new job at a local school after having left the employment of the Register Office at the end of April. She is enjoying the change of duties tremendously and is fast learning all the new processes and requirements. It has meant that I no longer have the facility to get mailings to volunteers in at the Register Office for posting, except on my weekly visits there, usually on Fridays. Some volunteers ask for work before their last batch is complete, and this is one way to ensure a smooth supply of data. Generally though, I will tend not to send more work until you have completed existing batches. At least when we get onto Births again and deaths, registers are of uniform 500 entry size so each volunteer wad will be 500 names.

Feedback...

We welcome feedback from any volunteers, past, present or future! Tell us what you think is good, or bad. Tell us what you want to do, or what you want us to do. Send all comments to Submit@BathBMD.org.uk.

John Fairlie.

Thank You for Helping and Supporting BathBMD