

Newsletter Number 9

November 2006.

Change of Plan!

Its four months since the last newsletter so time for another one. A lot has been happening, in fact, we have had a quiet revolution!

At the last Newsletter, we were hoping to work on Births in the quiet autumn months with the hope of completing them by now. Events which I will explain, have persuaded us to switch back to Deaths, leaving the births done only to 1970. But all Births have now been completed to Stage One (apart from four indexes which are still due back from volunteers). We are still sending out Death indexes to Stage one volunteers, and are now up to 1978. We expect to complete this by the end of this year. This part of the plan remains unchanged and on schedule!

It is the Stage Two work that has had to be changed. Our access to the Registers which is required for Stage two work was stopped on 25th August. From this date, we were only allowed copies of the registers, these copies being produced by Register Office staff as best their time will allow. With the restriction of not having Birth Registers out of circulation in the high demand summer months now not applicable, we decided to switch back to deaths. This is because we only had deaths done and published to 1895, while Births were done and published to right up to 1970. Deaths from this period are also of a much greater value to genealogists than more modern day births.

The Stage two work of processing and expanding the work of the stage one volunteers has therefore taken a blow. We can now work only as fast as the Register Office is able to supply register copies, and this has not been as fast as needed to keep all the stage two volunteers fully occupied. Before, the only limitation was the supply of volunteers. The overall project is therefore going to be delayed. The Register Office staff are doing all they can, and have even got in a new and extra photocopier, but they still require staff to handle the massive copying task, and this is now the bottleneck. At the time of writing, they had 457 Death Registers to copy, and 432 Birth Registers. That's a lot of copying!!

I had hoped to divert some of the stage one volunteers to stage two work when all stage one work was complete. This would have resulted in the end date for having everything done being drastically improved on. But I am now struggling to keep the existing stage two volunteers loaded with all they are able to comfortably do. So there is little point in retaining and employing the stage one volunteers when their work completes this December. That will be a shame, but it cannot be helped. They have done a brilliant task, and I cannot commend them enough for their work. Without them, we would not even be where we are today.

The New Plan

The new plan is now to progress deaths to completion. As stated, the stage one death work will run to about the end of 2006, and the stage two work will go as fast as the supply of register copies will allow. At about the present rate of 20 register copies a week, death registers will take 23 weeks to complete, and the Birth Registers a further 22 weeks to complete. Realistically, this will take to the end of 2007 as a minimum, and some four to five months longer than I had hoped. If the Register Office can get extra staff on the copying of registers, then we can still revert to the faster completion, but I am not in charge of that!! As we speak, Deaths are now over 52% complete and Births are over 71% complete. The

complete project is now at 74% complete. (Marriages are 100% complete!), so light is certainly there to be seen at the end of the tunnel. But it's still a long tunnel!!

Data sent for Publication.

As we moved away from Births, we were able to publish another 15 years worth to bring births complete up to 1970. A publication of 55,000 deaths will also be made very shortly now, and this will bring deaths up to 1921. Further web updates could be made as and when good wads of data become finished, but I am reluctant to make any promises. If all that I have said leaves you a bit confused, it is all summarised in the following diagram.

BathBMD's Final Work Plan

	2006		2007											
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Stage 1	Deaths		<< Task Finishes about December 2006 for Stage One volunteers											
Stage 2	Deaths to completion							Births to completion						
Info to web site	Deaths to 1920 in Nov 06		Deaths to 2006 in June 2007					Births to 2006 in December 2007						

Web Site Hits

We have now reached 117,000 web site hits. The search counters have also been busy and register that there have been 49,000 birth searches, 60,000 marriage searches, and 6,000 death searches. That's a lot of look ups that otherwise may have taken a lot of time and a lot of frustration! Have you found the records you wanted to find? Please write and let us know if you cannot find a record that you think ought to be there, considering the time spans we have not yet published. We had one case last week where a Joseph GRAY could not be found. By being able to search only on Joseph GRA, we found the entry had been mis-transcribed as Joseph GRANT. So, not only was the correct record found, but a mistake was corrected.

Excel Tips.

Excel is a wonderful beast and provides one of the main tools we use to manage data for BathBMD. (The other being the Microsoft Access database.) Even seasoned users of Excel will have learnt some new tricks. The ones I have learnt are:-

Control D - copies one or more cells to the row beneath. Can even copy to a number of rows beneath if a block of empty space is first selected. NEVER re-type data that you have already typed once.

Copying down a formulae or data - just double click the bottom right hand corner of the selected cell. The data will be copied only as far as data exists in adjacent columns. Very useful!

John Fairlie.

Thank You for Helping and Supporting BathBMD