

# Newsletter Number 1 September 2004.

I thought our transcribers (and customers!) deserved a newsletter to let them know what is going on, and how the project is progressing.

## A quick update on where we stand:

**Marriages:** We have 49,000 marriage pairs (see below for an explanation) on line, which is about 30% of the total. A lot of these are in recent years 1990-2003 (which are years that have been completed) as these records came out of the Register Office's computer system, and just needed checking and reformatting. The Register Office was also transcribing systematically from C1 (Bath Abbey) onwards, when we started this project, so premises C1 to C8 are also complete from 1837 right up to the last register held. We are now addressing all registers in the order of the date of the first entries in them. Already, 1837 is complete for all premises, and the next update will complete 1838 to 1842 inclusive. Many registers for small and remote churches were in use from 1837 to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, so by doing these registers, we also did a lot of marriages right through to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The next registers to be done, are not only smaller in size, but also cover a shorter time span. Updates 04 onwards may complete 10 to 20 years of marriages at a time!! We have a total of 1,100 marriage registers. We have about 80 registers done to stage 1 (by volunteers) so the time between submitting their work, and seeing it on the web site is going to be about six months.

**Births:** We have now catalogued all the Birth registers - there are 1,152 of them, and they are all listed on the web site on the Birth Coverage page. This necessitated creating codes for the registration districts which records will be indexed under. We have set up a database to manage these registers and districts, and now need to add extra information to the database from each register - like number of entries in the register, start and end years etc. Detailed indexing is now being trialled. Births and Deaths are different from marriages in that most registration districts are non active. We shall address the oldest first and work through in 'sets'. For example, the Abbey district was operative from 1837 to 1870 and has 25 registers. We shall transcribe this district completely and issue it in one go. Volunteers can opt to be involved with this instead of marriages if they prefer.

**Deaths:** We have done a rough survey of the registers held (there are 826 of them) but we have not yet put the list on the web site, allocated codes, or created the management database. This will probably not be started for quite a while yet. There is plenty else to do!

*Marriage Pairs are pairs of people that married. If a woman is a widow or divorcee, she has probably had at least two surnames before the marriage she is now entering. So if Anne Green was formerly known as Anne Brown, and is marrying John Black, two marriage pairs will be created. One for John Black marrying Anne Green, and another for him marrying Anne Brown. So whether you only knew Anne as her original maiden name, or only as her first marriage name, you will still find her second marriage record on BathBMD. Hence one marriage (to John Black) produces two marriage pairs for the one marriage event.*

## **Web Orders.**

The Register Office reports a steady flow of orders from web printed order forms. There is always much joy when a web order arrives as the certificate required can be produced in minutes without the lengthy search. The customer is also likely to get their certificate that much quicker! The web site now has over 7,000 hits recorded against it.

## **Volunteers.**

We have a good stock of volunteers, but always need more. Some of the first volunteers have now become inactive which is a shame as the project still needs to gather momentum. We have one volunteer in Australia no less, and for them, we decided to scan images to e-mail instead of posting photocopies. It is certainly cheaper in postage, and quicker too. The downside is that it takes longer to scan pages to JPG files than to produce photocopies.

Can I take this opportunity to again thank our volunteers for the hard work they put in. We appreciate that it is pretty tedious work at times, but the result of getting data on line is worth it. Never will this data have to be typed again!

## **Comparison to FreeBMD.**

Having got 1837 marriages complete, and with 1837 marriages on FreeBMD also complete, it seemed natural to compare the two to see just how similar our listings were. We found a scattering of typos, and on checking the registers (the ultimate reference!), these were attributable to BathBMD and FreeBMD equally. Naturally, all mistakes in BathBMD were corrected. There were six marriages that FreeBMD listed that we have no registers for. This may be explained by the fact that some churches were in our region years ago, but the registers for them have now been transferred to neighbouring Register Offices. This exercise is still ongoing and will be reported again in the next Newsletter.

## **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](mailto:Submit@BathBMD.org.uk).

### **Accolades.**

This is a superb site. Well thought out and displayed. (J.I. 10/5/2004.)

Just a very big thank you for a fantastic site. I tied up quite a few loose ends. Keep up the good work. (E.P. 8/8/2004.)

**John and Andrea Fairlie.**