

Newsletter Number 10

January 2007.

The Long Tunnel!

It's not so much that I have a lot to report, but more a case that we have passed a milestone! So here we see a New Year with a new Newsletter.

I am pleased to report that the stage one typing (that's the typing up of existing index books) is now complete. All indexes have been sent out to volunteers, and apart from a handful that are still due back, all have been returned. That's a major milestone achieved. Thanks go to all the volunteers that have been involved with this work. It was a long task, and a tedious one, but it is now as good as done. Those volunteers can relax in the knowledge that they have contributed to a major project. If you are one of the volunteers that still has an index in hand, please continue to do it. We do need it!!

But that leaves me with a slight problem. Our stage two work, (that's the work of expanding the stage one index files up to a state for full web publication), has been slowed by the supply of register copies from the Register Office. As readers will know, our access to the registers was stopped last August, and we had to work from then on with only photocopies of the registers. That meant that the limiting factor was no longer the supply of volunteers, but the supply of register copies. Now, with the stage one volunteers having completed their work, it was a possibility to move some of the volunteers that lived more locally, onto stage two work. But at the moment I am struggling to keep even the existing stage two volunteers busy.

The Register Office hope that a new financial year in April 2007 will see scope for paying for more staff, or more overtime to existing staff, and that photocopying can take a leap forward. As of the first of January this year, we had 808 registers that needed copying and doing to stage two. That's a lot of work still!

One possibility is to say thank you and goodbye to all the existing stage one volunteers, and for the nine stage two volunteers to deal with register copies as we get them, with hopefully a better flow from April onwards. I am reluctant to do this as they have done such a marvellous job, and there is still a lot more work to do. For those that live far away, we have no choice. I can but recommend FreeBMD as a worthy project that you might like to donate some time to from here on.

A second option is to keep some of the stage one volunteers in reserve for April, and hope that if we get a better supply of copies, we can utilise them (if they are still keen that is!) and power ahead with stage two work and data publication then.

A third option is to ask any of the existing volunteers, whether they would be prepared to attend the Register Office and do photocopying of Registers. Naturally this would have to be in normal working hours only, and would be by arrangement with Register Office staff. You would of course be offered as much tea, coffee and such as you could muster. I would only be there on Friday mornings probably (to collect copies done), as I work on Mondays to Thursdays, so you would be working under the control of Register Office staff. Can I ask any volunteers that would like to volunteer for this to let the Register Office know directly. (e-mail to Judy_Stone@bathnes.gov.uk please.) Judy will make any arrangements with you for attending. Later it may be viable to get volunteers to do actual stage two work in the Register Office, but at the moment, the need is greater for copying that will facilitate many volunteers

doing stage two work in their own homes. One copier for three hours a week could probably keep two or three stage two workers busy at home.

Current Death Progress.

I now have over 42,000 death records ready for publication, and these will be sent for publication soon. I am just waiting for a few more registers to be completed that will enable us to publish all deaths to 1960. They should all be available on the web site by about the end of January. We will then keep progressing the death registers to completion before we resume the births which are done and published to 1971. At the last newsletter in November, I stated that deaths were 52% complete. Well, they are now 67% complete. The whole project has moved up from 74% complete to 78% complete. Yes, there may be light at the end of the tunnel, but it's still a very long tunnel! But with dedication and application we WILL get there, I'm sure. It would be a shame if the project fizzled out now. The final work plan is now as follows:-

BathBMD's Final Work Plan

		2007											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Stage 2	Deaths to Completion							Births to completion					
Info to web site	Deaths to 2006 in June 2007							Births to 2006 in December 2007					

Mother's Maiden Names.

BathBMD users will know that all Births have had Mother's Maiden Names transcribed and published right from 1837. Ian Hartas (Thank You Ian!!) has now perfected and released the facility on the web site where you can search for specific Surname and Mother's Maiden Name combinations. This makes searching for all likely offspring of a family so much easier. Ian has added the Soundex match facility to both the surname and the Mother's Maiden Name, so the power and versatility of this search is maximised. As an example of the variety in ways in which names can be spelt, try searching on SMITH with a Mother's Maiden Name of ASHLEY between years 1837 and 1850 and select Soundex. You can add an optional Forename initial if looking for a particular person, but leave it blank for all family members to be returned.

A Helping Hand

You may have noticed a new facility on the home page of the web site to provide an extended search facility for those that fail to find records that ought to be found! This is to cover any transcribing errors that may have slipped through. I can do more powerful searches at home than is possible on the web site - like all occurrences of a middle name, or in fact, any part of a forename or surname. So far it has only been used a couple of times, but if you want to give it a go - please do. Until the next time - thanks again to all volunteers and for using BathBMD. You know it makes sense!

John Fairlie.

Thank You for Helping and Supporting BathBMD