

Family History Interest Group Report – February 2025

18 members attended the talk on Civil Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths and the subsequent general discussion.

Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths (BMD) was introduced in England and Wales in 1837, later in Ireland and Scotland.

Combining census information with information on the BMD certificate can lead the researcher back to 1837 (or earlier) but you need to find the certificate for the right person. This means using the quarterly BMD index, most easily accessed with FreeBMD which is a transcription by volunteers of the General Register Office (GRO) quarterly index. With the search facilities within FreeBMD you can review a list of potential matches to your ancestor and search for them in the census. Marriage partners will have the same index reference for the marriage and FreeBMD provides a search for any marriages on the same register page, but it will require further research in the census to select the correct spouse. The index entry may provide sufficient information for your purpose (name, approximate date and location of event) but the full certificate provides much more – address, occupation, fathers of married couple, for example.

Once you believe you have the right index entry, extra information may be available on the GRO's own online computerised index of births and deaths, namely the mother's maiden name in the case of births and the age at death in the case of deaths. This information is available in the quarterly index for later entries and is free whereas you must pay £3 to view the full BMD certificate.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 13th of March at 13:30 in the Dales room at Enterprise House. Pam Taylor will be talking about the use of DNA testing in Family History research, followed as always by a general discussion.

Alan Swindale