

Further information about the Halifax Guardian Birth, Marriage and Death index

Introduction

At the beginning of 2010, Calderdale Libraries embarked on a project to produce a name index to the 'Calderdale' births, marriages and deaths recorded in the Halifax Guardian newspaper. The Index is designed to assist family historians by directing them to entries in (microfilmed) newspapers containing information about events concerning their ancestors. The Index will eventually include the whole period of the newspaper's existence from 1832 to 1921. The vast majority of the work on this project is being carried out by volunteers, to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude. As they progress through this immense task, new records will be added at intervals to the website. The first batch of records (to October 1853) was launched in November 2010.

How to access the full newspaper record

Like the index in a book, this index does not include all the information given in the newspaper. It is a way of finding out whether anything is recorded. If it is, there are 2 ways of proceeding. You can either visit the Central Reference Library in Halifax and look at the microfilms yourself or you can contact us by e-mail and request that we look up and pass on to you the information recorded in the relevant entries. There is a small charge for this service and the e-mail address is: reference.library@calderdale.gov.uk

What is and isn't included?

The Halifax Guardian includes notices of births, marriages and deaths throughout Yorkshire and sometimes beyond. Our index, however, only includes events involving at least one party from the 'Calderdale MBC' area, which is the area covered by our Local Studies collections. (For help with the area covered, go to Calderdale Maps Online: <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/siteinfo/online-services/maps/index.jsp>) We have worked on the following principles:

1. If anyone in an entry comes from the 'Calderdale' area, we include all the people mentioned in relation to that event (even if some or all the others are from elsewhere), apart from officiating ministers (vicars etc).
2. If the entry doesn't state anything about where anyone comes from, we assume they are local and include everybody mentioned.
3. If the entry mentions one or more people from outside 'Calderdale', along with one or more people with no place-name attached, we assume none of them were from 'Calderdale' and therefore don't include any.
4. The convention seems to have been that, if a person had previously lived locally and then moved away and died somewhere else, the entry will say something like 'late of Halifax' – in which case we include all the people mentioned in that entry.

How we record information

In general, the charts are self-explanatory, listing for each of those involved in the events recorded: surname, forename, event type, relationship to event, date (of newspaper) and page number. The following points are offered for clarification.

1. If no first name is stated but there is an initial or a title (for example Mrs), we use these in the First Name column
2. If no name is recorded for a new baby, we enter either *Son* or *Daughter* in the First name column and *newborn* in the Relationship to Event column
3. Where a baby is recorded as stillborn, and no name is given, we enter either *Son* or *Daughter* in the First name column and *stillborn* in the Relationship to Event column
4. Where an infant death is recorded without a first name, we enter *Infant son* or *Infant daughter* in the First Name column
5. We record the names as actually printed, unless an obvious abbreviation has been used. If we can make a 99% confident guess but aren't 100% sure, we record the guess with the original in brackets following
6. Sometimes, the man's name is used when referring to his wife. For example, regarding a birth, if the mother's name is given as Mrs Joseph Hamerton, we would record Hamerton as surname and Mrs Joseph as first name. This will put her under M in alphabetical sequence. We would also make an entry for Joseph Hamerton and in 'Relationship to Event', use 'husband of mother'.
7. Sometimes it is unclear whether an entry expresses a double-barrelled surname or a sequence involving a first name, a middle name (derived from a surname) and then a surname. For example: Hannah Mortimer Smith. We follow library convention in treating names as separate unless they are hyphenated - so in this instance, we would record the individual as Hannah Mortimer (first names) and Smith (surname)
8. In marriage entries, when the father of the bride is referenced, newspaper convention seems to be only to give the bride's first name(s), eg Hannah, daughter of Thomas Smith, or Hannah Jane, daughter of Thomas Smith. Confusion may arise when a name appears which may be a first name or a surname, for example, Hannah Robinson, daughter of Thomas Smith. In these cases, we work on the assumption that they are following convention and only quoting the first names of the bride, so the bride's full name here would be Hannah Robinson Smith, with Smith as the only surname, while Hannah and Robinson are recorded as first names.

(There is a chance that the bride could have been married before and genuinely have a different surname. However, in such a case, the entry may be more likely to refer to her as the widow of Fred Robinson, rather than the daughter of her father and we have worked on this assumption.)

