

## Introduction

The late John Meadley produced manuscript indexes for many of Hull's old newspapers but so far only the Hull Advertiser Index has been published. It is hoped that the Hull Times subject index will be published, in volumes covering ten years, for 1857 - 1925.

The Hull Times first appeared in February 1857 as one of many published after the abolition of stamp duty on newspapers in 1855. Stamp duty was one of the 'taxes on knowledge' and in 1815 reached a maximum at 4d on every paper. When newspapers like the Hull Times were introduced, price 1d, the readership increased enormously. Local papers reported national and local events often giving more space to national stories but the introduction of mass circulation national newspapers changed the balance of reporting. The Daily Mail became the first of the mass circulation dailies when it was established in 1896.

The Hull Times covered a wide geographical area roughly from Scarborough to Boston usually published in two or three editions. By 1886 the Hull Times was owned by the Hull, East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire Conservative Newspapers Co. In 1907 it became part of the Daily Mail and Hull Times Co. who renamed the paper the Hull and Yorkshire Times in 1924.

Hopefully the arrangement of this index is self-explanatory although some 'lateral thinking' may be required. Many entries had been cross-referenced e.g. a fatal fire at a factory would appear under 'Crime', 'Fire' and 'Industries' or 'Occupations'. The 'Towns & Villages' section has been used to house entries that did not logically fit under the others, it does not list all references to, say, Withernsea. All indexes are selective, to list every person or event would require the index to be many times the size of the original newspaper and be impractical. York Library does have an extensive card index to names in the York Courant and other York papers, which contains numerous Hull references. Whilst the Times index is not as comprehensive as the Advertiser it does feature all the important local events and should relieve researchers from the 'lucky dip' approach to using newspapers.

I would like to thank everyone who helped in this project particularly Mrs Wheldon and André Brannan for relieving me of much of the retyping.

Robert Barnard  
1998-99

*NB. Since the above was written two extra years, 1926 and 1927, of Mr Meadley's index have been discovered in Hull Local Studies Library. The new material has been incorporated in this volume. (R B 2000)*

Although the original aim of the indexing project was to cover up to 1927 it was thought desirable to complete John Meadley's work by publishing his remaining Hull Times manuscript, which concludes with 1945. However, the final volume is much larger than expected, which has necessitated a few changes in the format of the index from previous volumes. The amount of cross-referencing has been kept low, to avoid an unmanageable size. This does make it less immediately usable; e.g. 'Tranby Croft' may have separate references in Buildings, Local Government or Property and Land. Also to reduce the size most of the indexing has been done geographically where possible, so 'Grammar Schools' will be under Hull, Beverley, etc. There are now published indexes to Hull newspapers from 1794 to 1945.

Again I would like to thank Andre for most of the retyping of John's original manuscript.

Robert Barnard  
2001

## **John Meadley (abridged from 'The Local', summer 1989)**

We are sad to have to report the death of John Meadley in March. John was well known to most members of the Unit and was a regular attender at LHAU "History Workshop" training events. He was a welcome frequent visitor to the Unit and had provided helpful references and information for many of our research projects. John called the stairs up to the Unit at Inglemire "Mount Ararat". I first got to know John Meadley when in the early 1970s, as a newcomer to the world of local history, I began to patronise the bookshop in Hepworth's Arcade, where John was then the manager. Later he often visited calling to deliver the latest Malet Lambert Reprints I had ordered, or just pushing a note through the letterbox with a helpful reference (although I sometimes never did decipher all his cryptic abbreviations). I was always most impressed by his ability to tell you 'something about everything' you cared to ask him about Hull's local history, particularly one of his main areas of interest, social conditions in 19<sup>th</sup> century Hull. Much of John's knowledge came from his work indexing 19<sup>th</sup> century Hull newspapers. John Meadley's first job was as a gardener, but he later worked in the bookselling trade, in a bookshop in Edinburgh where he is reputed to have rescued many old volumes of Scottish history, destined to be burnt in the bookshop's stove. Later he was manager of Brown's University bookshop in Hull, before moving to his last job in K Books. John contributed much material to Geoff Bell's Malet Lambert Local History Reprints series, and it is this work and the so far unpublished Hull Times, and further Hull Advertiser indexes which will remain John Meadley's memorial. All of us involved in local history owe him a great debt. John was always most pleased to help anyone interested in Hull's history - his notes providing most useful references are legendary - and as Geoff Bell said at his funeral service at the crematorium (referring to one of John's own favourite literary allusions) "John Meadley was willing". John Meadley had many friends, and many more local historians in the future will have reason to be grateful for his invaluable work. I hope a way can be found to provide due recognition of his life and work - ideally by the publication of more of his indexing.

C J Ketchell, 1989

# **A Welcome to the John Meadley Index to the Hull Times**

John Meadley died on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1989 having completed what he entitled

## **THE MEADLEY CUMULATIVE INDEX OF THE HULL TIMES: VOL.I. 1857-1925**

It was his method to index from microfilm in the Local Studies Library in Albion Street, Hull - usually during the day - recording his work in longhand, the results of his efforts being carried home to be laboriously typed up in the evening, John knowing only too well that his hand writing often proved very difficult to read, even by his friends. The collapse prior to his death came in the street, walking home from the library. Some ten years on, he is still sadly missed.

His original copy of the Times index was lodged in the Local Studies Library in Albion Street. But prior to John's death a very small number of photocopies were taken "in case the original typescript is stolen" as John put it.

Until recently lack of computer logistics and expertise and cost, have prevented the publication of John's Times index in whole or in part. It is with delight I note that Robert Barnard and the Local History Unit at Hull College under the guidance of Chris Ketchell are endeavouring to go some way to remedying this. I think John would have been pleased to know that this index is, at last, to be made more readily available to the general public.

The photocopies of the index of just before John's death have an accompanying dedication, acknowledgements and a most informative foreword which bears no signature, and whose authorship, alas, with the passage of time I cannot remember. My apologies to the writer for this lapse of memory, and please forgive the use of your words anonymously. Remembering that these sections were completed just before John's death in 1989 it is thought appropriate, and informative of times past, to record them here.

### ***DEDICATION***

The first volume of the Meadley Cumulative Index of the Hull Times 1857-1925 is dedicated to the following people.

Greta Tait, 1927-1983

G E Oxley, City Archivist

Jill Crowther, Local Studies Librarian

Pauline Ranby, Nick D Ward-Smith, Austin Potter, Philip Schultz, Alan Nocker, Robert Norton, Dorothy Bell - Supporters of a local historian.

### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

My thanks are due to Miss J Crowther, Regional Studies Librarian, who chanced to remark that someone should index and type out the important contents of the Hull Times. I accepted her hint. She has been a generous supporter during the last three years during the indexing of the first volume.

In addition thanks are due to Margaret, Sara, the two Karens, and three former members of staff Liz, Peni and Clare, also Catherine.

Thanks are due to Chris Ketchell and Alec Gill who gave me a generous supply of scrap paper on which to take down the entries.

Thanks are also due to Mr (sic) A G Bell who has offered to print a number of copies in case the original typescript is stolen.

Last and not least thanks are due to a lady who has allowed her dining table to take on the appearance of a publisher's warehouse, who generously acts as a taxi service to transport local historians from A to B, a delivery service for reprints, and who dispenses tea and biscuits to all visiting local historians. Dorothy Bell has earned her place among those to whom this volume is dedicated.

## **FOREWORD**

For well over thirty years John Meadley has worked with unremitting zeal through Hull newspaper files recording material of local historical interest. He was a member of the Hull University Study Group led by Mr K A MacMahon which produced in 1955 a classified subject index of items in the Hull Advertiser from 1794 to 1825 - an index commended as a model by Professor W G Hoskins in his *Local History in England* (1959). Since then he has worked his way single-handed through the Hull Advertiser from 1826 to 1845, and a continuation from 1846 to 1857, based on the MacMahon plan and edited by David Parry was published in two volumes as *The Meadley Index* by the Humberside College of Higher Education in 1987. Over the years he has also indexed the Hull and Eastern Counties Herald from 1867 to 1882 and the Hull News from 1882 to 1928, but his work on these remains in manuscript.

From the late eighteenth century local newspapers are among the local historians most informative sources. Hull is fortunate not only in the number it has produced since the short lived Hull Courant in 1746 but also for the large collection, partly on microfilm, now preserved in the Local Studies Library, part of Hull Central Library. The importance of these as historical material is immediately apparent from the source references in the later chapters of Edward Gillett and Kenneth MacMahon's *History of Hull* (1980). Because of the rarity of national newspapers the earliest local ones tended to concentrate on national news, but by the 1830s they were devoting more attention to local affairs. Inevitably, before the spread of popular education proprietors and editors catered for the more educated and affluent middle classes and this is evidenced by the advertisements as much as by the news coverage.

With the gradual increase of working class literacy newspapers aimed at a more popular readership. One of these was the Hull Times founded in 1857, an early example, observed the contemporary Hull historian J J Sheahan, of a "cheap Saturday paper for the people". Mr Meadley has now indexed this year by year from 1857 to 1925, from microfilm files in the Hull Local Studies Library. Any newspaper index must necessarily be selective, reflecting to some extent the compiler's own interests or estimation of what is important. This is John Meadley's selection and it puts searchers into Hull and Humberside history yet once more in his debt.

### ***Finally***

Full credit must be given to Robert Barnard whose expertise and determination has made this project possible, as well as to Chris Ketchell of the Local History Unit and also Hull Local Studies Library for placing the results of John Meadley's labours before the general public.

May their efforts continue until John's complete index appears in print.

Geoff Bell  
16 October, 1998