



The National Archives

Press release

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Signposts point researchers in the right direction

Researchers often have trouble finding the right resources for their research, but this is not be a problem anymore as The National Archives has launched an innovative online tool that points them directly to the historical resources they need.

Known as '[research signposts](#)', the first set of 'looking for a person' signposts simplify the process of researching an individual's history by drawing together for the first time all useful research resources in one place.

Split into three categories, 'Life events', 'Military personnel' and 'Civilians', the researcher now need only click on a series of subcategories, such as 'Births in England and Wales' or 'Officers in the Merchant Navy' to find out if the information they are after exists, and where to find it - be it online, original documents or from external sources .

Complementing the research signposts, a series of two minute animated guides, collectively entitled '[Understand the archives in minutes](#)', have been designed to develop researchers' skills so they can explore the archives more effectively. The titles of the guides include, 'Preparing to research', 'How to use the catalogue' and 'How the records are arranged'.

Jeff James, Director of Operations and Services at The National Archives said, "*These 'research signposts' will guide researchers through the minefield of information out there. As the first port of call, the online tools pull everything together in one place and will give people greater confidence to find the answers for themselves.*"

The online tools are a result of a research project to learn more about who uses The National Archives website. The tools provide relevant information for all levels of researcher. They give the novice insight into a particular subject but also direct experienced researchers to more detailed sources of information.

The new tools are the first in a series of online investments The National Archives is making in its website over the next year. Two further sets of research signposts, 'Looking for a place' and 'Looking for a subject', are currently in development and will be available on the website from September.

The new tools can be found under the Research Guidance tab on the homepage of The National Archives website, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/gettingstarted/guides>. The animated guides are also available on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalArchives08>

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For further information, please contact:

Frances McDarby

The National Archives

T. 020 8392 5277

frances.mcdarby@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the official archives of the UK government, it cares for, makes available and 'brings alive' a vast collection of over 1000 years of historical records, including the treasured Domesday Book.

Not only safeguarding historical information, The National Archives also manages current digital information and devises new technological solutions for keeping government records readable now and in the future. It provides world class research facilities and expert advice, publishes all UK legislation and official publications, and is a leading advocate for the archive sector.

At the heart of information policy, The National Archives sets standards of best practice that actively promotes and encourages public access to, and the re-use of information, both online or onsite at Kew. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensures that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk