

Press Release

11 April 2003

Birmingham's Citizen's Rights Go Online

Birmingham forms the focus of a new website called; *Citizenship: A History of People Rights and Power in Britain* which documents civil rights in the British Isles over a millennium. The website uses Birmingham as a case study to show how citizenship was established on the local as well as the national stage. Visitors to the online exhibition will be able to trace the lives of the ordinary people of Birmingham from the times of Domesday using real documents that are available free online.

The exhibition is being launched on May 1st, the date on which, in 1707, the Act of Union joined together England and Scotland. Documents in the exhibition include a sixteenth century letter by the Henry VIII demanding the Manor of Birmingham from Edward Birmingham and the 1947 Diet Survey, which was carried out to compare and assess the diets of women in London and Birmingham. The survey found that the women of Birmingham had far worse diets than those of London women, and also associated the quality of diet with the intelligence of the ladies. The world-renowned Magna Carta, which forced the crown to concede new rights to its subjects is also online, as are extracts of the famous Domesday Book.

The exhibition will provide a fun and interesting way of learning about the development of civil rights on a local and national level. Original quizzes bring citizenship to life for students and adult learners alike. The exhibition can be accessed on:

<http://www.pro.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship>

Citizenship: A History of People, Rights and Power in Britain is part of The National Archives' (previously known as the Public Record Office) *Pathways to the Past* lifelong learning website, which has been described by one critic as a 'multi-layered marvel which simulates the excitement of hands on-research'. It was created in co-operation with the House of Lords Record Office (the Parliamentary Archives) and with National Lottery money from the New Opportunities Fund.

Notes For Editors:

* The National Archives was created on the 2 April 2003 when the Public Record Office, the national archive of England, Wales and the United Kingdom and the Historic Manuscripts Commission came together to form one organisation. The National Archives are open to the public to carry out research 6 days a week. They hold over 1000 years of documents including sources for family history research.

* The House of Lords Record Office (the Parliamentary Archives) provides access to the historic records of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, including Acts, journals, committee records, deposited plans, private Bill evidence, administrative papers

and Appeal cases. It also provides access to collections of private papers, including those of Lloyd George.

* The New Opportunities Fund distributes National Lottery money to health, education and environment projects across the UK with a particular aim of helping the disadvantaged. Grant awards from the New Opportunities Fund's £50 million nof-digitise programme were announced last year. The programme is helping to put information that supports lifelong learning into digitised form. Details on www.nof-digitise.org.

* EnrichUK is the gateway to a collection of 150 National Lottery-funded websites, including *Pathways to the Past* www.enrichuk.net

* For any press enquiries or if you would like to review this exhibition please contact Siobhan Wakely in the Press and Publicity Office at The National Archives tel: 0208 392 5277 e-mail Siobhan.wakely@pro.gov.uk. Digital images are available on request.

