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1911 CENSUS GOES ONLINE

- Online access to the records of 36 million people in 1911
 - Major new family history resource

36 million people were recorded in the census taken on the night of Sunday, 2 April, 1911. Today, after nearly 100 years, these census records are available to the public at www.1911census.co.uk.

The census covered England, Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, as well as recording those aboard Royal Naval and Merchant vessels at sea and in foreign ports and, for the first time in a British census, full details of British Army personnel and their families in military establishments overseas. It is the most detailed census since UK records began and the first for which the original census schedules have been preserved – complete with our ancestors' own handwriting – providing a fascinating insight into British society nearly a century ago.

From today over 27 million people's census entries – 80 per cent of the English records – will be available. A further nine million records of people from the remaining counties of England, Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, as well as the naval and overseas military records, will be made available over the coming months.

www.1911census.co.uk is easy to access and enables the public to view high quality colour images of their ancestors' original handwritten census returns. Transcribed text versions of the records ensure they are fully searchable by name or address.

Public demand for the 1911 census, which will be a key resource for family historians, has resulted in the records being released earlier than the scheduled 2012 date. To make this early online release to the public possible, the 1911 census team worked around the clock for two years – scanning on average one census



page per second. In line with data protection legislation, certain sensitive information relating to infirmity and to children of women prisoners will be held back until 2012.

Comprehensive and rigorously tested, www.1911census.co.uk has been developed by UK-based family history website findmypast.com, owned by brightsolid, in association with The National Archives.

Elaine Collins, Commercial Director at findmypast.com, said: *“The 1911 census offers a crucial new entry point to family history research for a wide range of people, from novice family historians to seasoned genealogists who have hit a ‘wall’ in their family tree research. As well as helping people trace their ancestors, these records shed more light on our ancestors’ day-to-day lifestyles, providing a snapshot of a day in their lives, with details of their occupations, housing arrangements and social status.”*

The 1911 census is huge – occupying over two kilometres of shelving – an incredible eight million paper census returns have been transcribed to create over 16 million digital images. This makes the 1911 census one of the biggest digitisation projects ever undertaken by The National Archives in association with a commercial partner.

Oliver Morley, Director of Customer and Business Development at The National Archives, commented: *“This is a major achievement. By teaming up with findmypast.com, we are bringing history to life for millions. This remarkable record is available online to researchers and family historians all over the world for future generations. The 1911 census is a poignant reflection of how different life was in early 20 century Britain, before the Great War.”*

Due to the widespread popularity of family history, it is anticipated that www.1911census.co.uk will experience a high level of visitors logging on to search the records, especially in the first weeks of launch.

Elaine Collins, Commercial Director at findmypast.com, advises: *“We aim to deliver a quality service that has high but not infinite capacity. If visitors do experience a short delay in accessing the records via www.1911census.co.uk soon after launch, we would advise them to try again later when the website*



becomes less busy. www.1911census.co.uk is here to stay and access to the online census records will be unlimited permanently from today."

Handwritten records

Completed by all householders in England and Wales on Sunday, 2 April 1911, the census records show the name, age, place of birth, marital status and occupation of every resident in every home, as well as their relationship to the head of the household.

People will also have unique access to their ancestors' handwriting as the original householders' schedules were preserved and used as working documents rather than copying the details in to summary books as was the case in previous census years.

The records contain details about the lives of many important British historical figures, such as David Lloyd George, the contemporary Prime Minister H.H. Asquith and 'Bloomsbury Set' author Virginia Woolf. The launch of the records also creates a starting point for people to trace their own family tree by looking up their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents who were alive in the year 1911.

'Fertility Census'

The 1911 census was the first to ask questions relating to fertility in marriage. Married women were asked to state how long they had been married and how many children had been born from that marriage. The census also provides a fascinating snapshot of the population of the country just a few years before a whole generation of young men perished in the Great War of 1914-1918.

How to use the 1911 Census records

- Log on to www.1911census.co.uk and register for free
- Search for an ancestor in 1911 by entering their name
- If the name is common you can enter their approximate year of birth, which will help to narrow down the results

- Search for an address to look up the history of your house or an ancestor's address in 1911 (this function will be available in summer 2009)
- Pay as you go to view each record. You will be charged 10 credits per transcript and 30 credits for each original household page. Visitors to the website can buy 60 credits for £6.95.
- Findmypast.com vouchers will also be valid on 1911census.co.uk. Vouchers can be purchased from The National Archives bookshop and redeemed on findmypast.com. Credits can then be spent on both findmypast.com and 1911census.co.uk.
- For more information about using the 1911 census for family history research, 'Census: The Expert Guide' by Peter Christian and David Annal is available from The National Archives online bookshop at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The 1911 census is a special case at the request of the Information Commissioner all records of infirmity as listed on the records (e.g. 'deaf', 'dumb', 'blind', 'lunatic' etc.) have been obscured and will not be available to view until January 2012.

The 1911 Census is a special case in that parts of it are being made available early. Since 1920, government has given a commitment that information collected in a census will be kept confidential for 100 years.

Spokespersons

Please contact The National Archives Press Office or Lansons Communications should you wish to speak to an expert.

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About findmypast.com

Leading UK family history website findmypast.com (formerly 1837online.com) was the first company to make the complete birth, marriage and death indexes for England & Wales available online in April 2003.

Following the transcription, scanning and indexing of over two million images, the company launched the first website to allow the public easy and fast access to the complete indexes, which until then had only been available on microfiche film in specialist archives and libraries. The launch was instrumental in creating the widespread and growing interest in genealogy seen in the UK today.

Findmypast.com has subsequently digitised many more family history records and now offers access to over 650 million records dating as far back as 1538. This allows family historians and novice genealogists to search for their ancestors among comprehensive collections of military records, census, migration, occupation directories, and current electoral roll data, as well as the original comprehensive birth, marriage and death records.

In November 2006 findmypast.com launched the ancestorsonboard.com microsite in association with The National Archives to publish outbound passenger lists for long-distance voyages departing all British ports between 1890 and 1960.

As well as providing access to historical records, findmypast.com is also developing a range of online tools to help people discover and share their family history more easily, beginning with the launch of Family Tree Explorer in July 2007.

Over 1.7 million people in the UK have researched their family trees and findmypast.com has over 800,000 active registered users, revealing the mass appeal of genealogy and findmypast.com's position as the leading family history website based in the UK.

In April 2007 findmypast.com's then parent company Title Research Group received the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise: Innovation 2007 in recognition of their achievement.

Findmypast.com was acquired in December 2007 by brightsolid, the company who were awarded The National Archives' contract to publish online the 1911 census.

About The National Archives:

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.

in association with

findmypast.com
family history in the making™



The National Archives

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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

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