



14 March 2008

### **Closure of The National Archives' services at the Family Records Centre**

The staff and services provided by The National Archives at the Family Records Centre move to Kew when the doors close on 15 March 2008. The transfer of these services and expertise into one building will make research easier.

The National Archives in Kew is being extensively refurbished and improved. This is part of an ongoing improvement programme and allows us to incorporate the services provided by The National Archives at the Family Records Centre. When complete, additional seating, microfiche readers and computer terminals will be available to visitors, improving access to original records, research resources and the ever-growing range of online material.

Following consultations with visitors to The National Archives and Family Records Centre the talks programme has been extended. There will be two new talks rooms providing an educational programme of talks on a variety of topics from family history to military history. In addition, three smaller surgery rooms will be available for more in-depth consultations.

Commenting on the new services Jeff James, Head of Advice and Records Knowledge at The National Archives said: "The exciting developments underway at Kew will genuinely improve our visitors' experience, from the improved restaurant and new museum, to the redeveloped reading rooms. The reading rooms have been designed to create a more open and accessible environment for our visitors."

People who used to visit the first floor of the Family Records Centre will find all of the information they enjoyed available at Kew. In addition, they will be able to consult documents and records spanning 1,000 years of history and have access to a wider range staff expertise.

To provide security for visitors and staff whilst also ensuring documents are protected, The National Archives has installed a new security system.

If you would like any more information about the improvements at Kew please visit The National Archives website at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

Ends

For further information please contact Tim Matthews, [tim.matthews@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:tim.matthews@nationalarchives.gov.uk), or 020 8392 5277.

Notes for editors:

The National Archives, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk), is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). 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](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives is also the UK government's official archive, containing 900 years of history from Domesday Book to the present, with records ranging from parchment and paper scrolls through to recently created digital files and archived websites. Increasingly, these records are being put online, making them universally accessible.

The vision of The National Archives is to:

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone

### *About the General Register Office*

The Office for National Statistics is currently responsible for GRO, but this responsibility will transfer to the Identity and Passport Service on 1 April 2008. The Family Records Centre will close to the public after 15 March 2008.

There are already public organisations such as record offices and libraries, which have some of the indexes on microfiche, but these will not include adoptions and civil partnerships, nor birth, death, marriage and overseas events since 2005. These new arrangements will cover the full range of indices. For a list of places where microfiche copies are held or to obtain more information please visit the GRO website: [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk)

These are the locations where the full range of GRO indexes held on microfiche will be accessible free of charge after the FRC closure:

- Greater Manchester County Record Office.
- Birmingham Central Library.
- Bridgend Reference and Information Library.
- Plymouth Central Library.
- The National Archives at Kew

The GRO indexes available at each of the above locations include Births, Deaths and Marriages from 1837 to 2007, Overseas from 1761 to 2006, Civil Partnerships from 2005 to 2007 and Adoptions from 1927 to 2007. Each of these centres will receive the GRO indexes for more modern events as and when they become available.

Microfiche copies of births, marriages and deaths indexes from 1837 onwards continue to be available at many other local libraries, record offices and other facilities.

These arrangements are expected to continue until free, online access to the GRO indexes can be provided.