



Embargo until:

Wednesday 17 January 2007 at 0900 hrs

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES LAUNCHES 1911 CENSUS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST SERVICE

The National Archives (England and Wales) has launched its Freedom of Information request service to see entries from the 1911 Census. The service has been launched online at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census as an interim system. This service has been launched in advance of the digital release of the records, as a response to the Information Commissioner's decision notice to address access to the 1911 Census.

The Information Commissioner ruled in December 2006 that The National Archives could supply specific information from the 1911 Census in response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. However, the Information Commissioner's ruling also means that to protect personally sensitive information the 1911 Census must remain closed as a whole document until 2012.

In response to this ruling The National Archives is hoping to start to provide online access to the 1911 Census, through an approved partner, as early as 2009. Originally, the digital release was expected in January 2012. However, the Information Commissioner's decision allows The National Archives to produce an online name and address search of the census in advance of this date, with only the personally sensitive data remaining closed until 2012.

The 1911 Census is a huge document; only one copy of it exists, on paper, in the handwriting of those who completed the census. The National Archives recognises that the Information Commissioner's decision means it needs to respond to requests that arrive before 2009. A special FOI service to deal with requests for information contained in the 1911 census before the online service commences has now launched. Requestors should fill in an online application at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census where the exact, following information will need to be supplied:

- House name or number
- Street name
- Town
- County

The 1911 census does not have a name index, so it is only possible to supply information based on an address search. Researchers using this service will currently be charged a non-refundable research fee of £45 that will cover the costs of each search. Applications can be made in writing, rather than through the online system, to The National Archives, but these requests must also state the exact required information. No personally sensitive data will be disclosed before 2012. For more details on how to make an FOI request to see an entry from the 1911 Census, please visit:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census

Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive of The National Archives, said: 'The National Archives recognises the popularity of family history research and the value of census data and is eager to launch the online 1911 census service as soon as possible. The Information Commissioner's decision allows us to start to digitally release information from the 1911 Census as early as 2009, with the whole census being opened as planned in 2012, which is very exciting for people interested in this type of information.'

‘In the meantime, The National Archives will be providing a Freedom of Information request service for those who would like to have access to information from an address entry in the 1911 Census.’

Ends

For more information, please contact:

Séverine Gould or Marie Clements on 020 8392 5277 or email:

press@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs. Over 600 staff work in Kew, in Norwich, at Admiralty Arch in central London and at the Family Records Centre in Islington. 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

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