



**Press release**  
28 July, 2009

## **Free access to 1911 census rolled out across England and Wales**

Thousands of people across England and Wales are to get the opportunity to delve into their family history online for free.

The National Archives, in collaboration with UK-based family history website findmypast.com, is providing seven archives and libraries around England and Wales with free access to the recently completed online records of the 1911 census.

As part of its commitment to broadening the availability of its records through investing in its online presence, The National Archives is funding a year's worth\* of free access to the 1911 census, available online at [www.1911census.co.uk](http://www.1911census.co.uk).

The institutional accounts will also allow users to download for free other family history records, including earlier census records, held at [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com). The service will be rolled out across the seven locations from the end of July.

The 1911 census launched online in January and attracted 1.5 million people in its first four weeks alone. Last month (June 2009) the final batch of returns – those of British Army personnel and their families stationed overseas – were added, completing the census.

Oliver Morley, Director of Customer and Business Development at The National Archives, said: "The 1911 census has been hugely popular and we are excited to be able to help family historians across the country benefit from this fantastic resource.

"Digitising records allows a far greater audience to access them, and that is especially important with records like the census, which are extremely important for genealogists."

The 1911census.co.uk website service was developed by findmypast.com, owned by brightsolid, in association with The National Archives.

Completed by 36 million householders 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 and the online records include images of our ancestors' own handwriting.

Dave Annal, family history records specialist at The National Archives, said: "Census returns are one of the key nineteenth century resources for family historians, delivering a wealth of information about our ancestors.

"It's easy to see why family historians sometimes assume that census returns were taken with them in mind: the way that our ancestors are neatly packaged together in family groups provides an instant snapshot of the population of the whole of England and Wales on a given date."

The seven institutions taking part in this project will be launching the free access over the next couple of months. Before planning a trip to any of them people are urged to contact the institutions to find out when they will have the service available. Contact details can be found at the following websites:

- Birmingham Archives & Heritage [www.birmingham.gov.uk/archivesandheritage](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/archivesandheritage)
- Devon Record Office (Exeter) [www.devon.gov.uk/record\\_office.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/record_office.htm)
- The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth [www.llgc.org.uk](http://www.llgc.org.uk)
- Manchester Archives and Local Studies [www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arl](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arl)  
and Greater Manchester County Record Office [www.gmcro.co.uk](http://www.gmcro.co.uk)
- Norfolk Record Office [www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk/nroindex.htm](http://www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk/nroindex.htm)
- Nottinghamshire Archives  
[www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/leisure/archives.htm](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/leisure/archives.htm)
- Tyne and Wear Archives [www.tyneandweararchives.org.uk](http://www.tyneandweararchives.org.uk)

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## Notes to Editors

\* The period of free access is an approximation. Each archive is being provided with an institutional account which works on a credit system. Based on the level of interest at The National Archives, where there is free online access, the number of credits being given to each archive is expected, on average usage, to last for one year.

### **About The National Archives:**

The National Archives, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://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](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

### **For further information, please contact:**

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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.

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