



## **Press Release**

2 December 2004

### **Royal ancestors of the Queen Mother revealed on the Internet**

Genealogists out there know that there are clues lurking in every archive just waiting to be discovered. The Access to Archives website ([www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)) has just helped one researcher get to the root of a well-known family tree.

As part of Archive Awareness Campaign American genealogist John Ravilious has recently linked the Queen Mother to a half brother of Henry II of England. The discovery was made using Nottinghamshire archives and the Access to Archives website - the one-stop-shop for accessing 360 archives which is supported by The National Archives in Kew, West London.

It is common knowledge that the Queen Mother claimed Scottish ancestry and now expert genealogical research has linked the Queen Mother to Geoffrey, 12th-century count of Anjou. Her mother Nina was the great-granddaughter of the 3rd Duke of Portland, William Cavendish-Bentinck. The Duke's ancestor was the count of Anjou's illegitimate son, Hamelin de Warrenne. Geoffrey actually married King Henry I's daughter Matilda, and Henry II was the couple's child. Hamelin died in 1189.

Hamelin's five-times-great-granddaughter was the later mediaeval heiress Elizabeth Thornhill, who married into the Savile family, owners of Rufford Abbey in Nottinghamshire from 1626 until 1938. The genealogical research has revealed that the Queen Mother's great-great grandfather, the Duke of Portland, was Elizabeth's descendant through her son Thomas Savile. One of the descendants of Elizabeth's other son Henry Savile was the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

John Ravilious of Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, the researcher who traced the Queen Mother's ancestry, said "A2A is an invaluable tool in medieval and later English genealogy. It allows people to search over 360 catalogues across the UK quickly and easily."

The Savile family archive is available for consultation at Nottinghamshire Archives and described online in Access to Archives (A2A) at [www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk), along with other unique Nottinghamshire documents including the extensive estate archive of the Dukes of Portland.

Access to Archives ([www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)), supported by The National Archives at Kew, west London, is a one-stop shop providing access to more than 360 archives in England. A2A enables visitors to search and browse for information about archives held throughout the country, dating from the tenth century to the present day. Anyone from anywhere in the world can access this database, which really is a key to the past!

Can you claim to have French blood? Do you think you might be related to royalty or want to locate the skeletons in the family closet? The BBC, in association with Archive Awareness Campaign, is putting on over 40 family history events across the UK on 4/5 December. The London event is being held at The National Archives on Saturday 4 December. For more information please visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/events/calendar/bbc.htm>

**Notes to editors:**

- For images or to interview John Ravilious or Mark Dorrington, principal archivist at Nottinghamshire Archives, please contact Lucy Fulton at The National Archives on 020 8392 5237.
- A2A (Access to Archives) is part of the national archives network in the UK. It aims to allow anyone to gain easier access to archives through the catalogues drawn up by archivists across England. The A2A database provides access to detailed catalogues from more than 360 repositories in England beyond The National Archives. Through A2A visitors can also arrange to see or to obtain copies of real archive documents. Visit A2A at [www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk).
- The National Archives, Kew, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history, from Domesday Book to newly released government papers. The free museum and research rooms in Kew, are open to the public 6 days a week.
- Nottinghamshire Archives, <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/archives>, houses historical archives for the county of Nottinghamshire, the city of Nottingham, the diocese of Southwell and other local bodies, families and individuals, including the Portland of Welbeck (ref DD/P) and Savile of Rufford (ref DD/SR) archives. It is open to the public 6 days a week.

\* Over 480 events are taking place across the UK this autumn for Archive Awareness Campaign, which aims to reveal the treasures of the archives. The campaign, run by partners the National Council on Archives, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and The National Archives, is now in its second year.

\* For press enquiries about any of the above please contact Lucy Fulton at The National Archives on 020 8392 5237 or e-mail [lucy.fulton@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.fulton@nationalarchives.gov.uk)