



Press Release
8 December 2004

Family history fanatics flock to Kew

Who do you think you are? Over a thousand men, women and children travelled to The National Archives in Kew on Saturday to find out at the first BBC Family History Day.

Followers of the popular family history series were treated to a free feast of family history help and advice. Visitors were able to meet the experts and ask questions about their own family history quest, get top tips on how to begin their research, surf the latest online resources for family historians and take tours around the bomb proof vaults that are normally out of bounds to the general public.

Some visitors discovered some very unusual things about their families' past: one woman found out that her family were East End gypsies while another man found out that in 1881 his father had been in jail.

Anthea and Mike from Richmond said:

'We wanted to find out how to research our family history using the Internet and found the day really helpful. Using the merchant seamen records we were able to get some valuable information about our ancestors'.

Notes to Editors:

* For press enquiries please contact Siobhan Wakely in The National Archives' press office on 0208 392 5277 or Siobhan.wakely@nationalarchives.gov.uk

* The National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk in Kew, west London, has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history. It offers the public free access to vast collections of family history sources including military service records, ships' passenger lists, slave registers and tax records. The Family Records Centre, in Islington, holds census information from 1841, wills and birth, death and marriage certificates. The free research rooms at The National Archives and at the Family Records Centre are open to the public Monday to Saturday. For media enquiries please call 020 7392 5277.

* The Archive Awareness Campaign is working with the BBC to raise awareness of the 2000 archives throughout the UK and encourage people to use them. This autumn hundreds of archives and family history societies will support the campaign "Routes to Roots" with over 470 events and activities for all ages. The public will be able to discover how archives can be used for family history and learn exciting new skills like how to take care of family photographs and read old handwriting. To find an event near you or to find out more about Archive Awareness Campaign visit www.archiveawareness.com. AAC is led by the National Council on Archives, The National Archives and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. For media enquiries please call 020 7392 5237.