



Press Release

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From 2 kilometres of shelving to ½ a petabyte: The National Archives announces its partner in digitising the 1911 census

The National Archives is delighted to announce that ScotlandOnline will partner the UK government's official archive in the forthcoming project to put the 1911 census for England and Wales online.

The 1911 census (document references RG 14 and RG 78) is huge - it currently occupies 2 kilometres of shelving at The National Archives. Comprising over eight million householder schedules and a further 38,000 enumerators' summary books, it details information relating to approximately 35 million people then living in England and Wales.

Once digitised the census will take up an equally large ½ a petabyte of computer memory or, physically, 800 data tapes. The digital scanning alone in preparation for digitisation will create 18 million images - 14 times the number of images created in advance of the 1901 census being launched online in 2002.

Census records are invaluable in helping us trace our ancestors, and access to them can help those seeking to trace their family tree. From 2009 there will be a phased release of the information in the 1911 census starting with the major conurbations. This will include images and transcription data, but with sensitive data redacted in line with the Information Commissioner's recent ruling. From 3 January 2012 the public will have full access to the entire 1911 census, including the information not accessible in 2009. Researchers anywhere in the world will be able to search across the fields of the census by name, address or The National Archives reference, and download high-resolution digital images.

Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive of The National Archives said:

"The 1911 census holds more information than the 1901 census. It is also the first census where the householder's schedule has remained the master entry, rather than the enumerator's notes, so researchers are actually able, in most cases, to view their actual ancestors' handwriting when looking at 1911 census entries. This will be an invaluable resource for anyone who is working hard to trace their family's history."

Dr Richard Callison of Scotland Online, said:

"The 1911 census records will provide a mine of important historical information and I'm delighted that The National Archives has chosen to work with Scotland Online on this momentous project. We have a strong track record in the field of genealogy, having worked in partnership with the General Register Office for Scotland since 2002 to publish almost 50 million pages of Scottish historical records, all of which are now available to view online."

Over the past five years The National Archives has embarked on an ambitious and successful programme to digitise over 90 per cent of the most popular documents in its largely paper-based collection. It is aiming to digitise over 100 million pages by 2012. These range from Domesday Book (now available digitally at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday), through to the census records, prisoner of war records, ancient petitions, war service and medal records. Working with partners in the private sector, The National Archives has made records such as lists of emigrating passengers and the 1841 -1891 census records available for research, through similar partnerships. The National Archives has also launched a digitisation-on-demand programme which makes the majority of its collection accessible to researchers from anywhere across the globe.

Additional Notes

There are also 38,000 volumes of enumerators' summary books (document reference RG78) to accompany the census. They hold useful and unique information that supports the census information. However, they do not provide the level of personal details that can be found in the census schedules.

Notes for 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

Scotland Online was established in 1995, and is one of the UK's leading Internet business solutions providers. The company provides a range of services such as managed hosting, internet access and web applications to over 3000 customers including Scottish Widows, Standard Life and the Scottish Executive. In 2002, in partnership with the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), Scotland Online established what is now one of the world's leading genealogy websites ScotlandsPeople www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. With nearly 50 million database records ScotlandsPeople contains the most comprehensive online set of family history information for any country in the world and is currently one of the largest single information resources on the web.

A petabyte is a measure of computer data storage capacity and is one thousand million million (1,000,000,000,000,000) bytes.

Census records online:

Visit www.1901censusonline.com to view the 1901 census

Visit www.ancestry.co.uk to view the 1841, 1951, 1861, 1871, 1881, and 1891 census records.

For additional information about the project please contact Marie Clements at marie.clements@nationalarchives.gov.uk, or call 020 8392 5277.