



## **Press Release**

20 July 2005

### **The one-stop-shop for access to archives**

The UK's leading archive bodies have set the course for a revolution in online access to archives.

A new scheme, aUK: connecting archives, born out of the Linking Arms consortium, aims to create a powerful new search engine which will provide single-point access to hundreds of archive catalogues. This facility will enable the many thousands of daily searchers to find information, wherever it may be, in the United Kingdom.

aUK is headed by a partnership between The National Archives in Kew, west London, The National Archives of Scotland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the National Library of Wales, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the National Council on Archives. Included in its remit will be the promotion of the digitisation of new archival content, taken from both official records and different kinds of community and independent archives. aUK will set technological standards, providing a focus on improving interoperability standards and initiating a new strategy for the hosting of the UK's online archives.

Sarah Tyacke CB, Chief Executive of The National Archives, said: "This programme will break new ground in enabling people to search online for historical records and information - whether they're researching their family tree, finding out the story of their street, or investigating a school history project. It's a technical solution which will make an enormous difference to the way we manage and access information about our past."

The leaders of the scheme are:

- \* Chris Batt, Chief Executive of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
- \* Elizabeth Hallam-Smith, Chair of the National Council on Archives
- \* Gwyn Jenkins, Director of Collection Services of the National Library of Wales
- \* George Mackenzie, Chief Executive of the National Archives of Scotland
- \* Gerry Slater, Chief Executive of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
- \* Sarah Tyacke, Chief Executive of The National Archives

For more information about aUK please contact Danielle Kelly at The National Archives on 020 8392 5277.

## **Notes to Editors**

\* 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 are open to the public 6 days a week.

Over nine million records are available to view at Kew and some, including wills, First World War Army medal cards and Second World War Seamen's medal records are also available online at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline)

\* The Family Records Centre, Islington, which is jointly managed by The National Archives and the Office for National Statistics, holds the indexes (not the certificates themselves) for births, deaths and marriages for England and Wales from July 1837 and also copies of wills, before 1858, from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) and some other church courts.