

Historic records launching online today for the first time ever detail 'key players' of the English Civil War –

[Ancestry.com.au](http://Ancestry.com.au)

Earliest London Parish records in existence – eight million in total      Records detail those alive during key events in England's history, including the Civil War      Revolutionaries Thomas Fairfax, Oliver Cromwell and John Milton detailed online      Ancestry.com.au, in partnership with the City of London's London Metropolitan Archives, today launched online for the first time eight million of London's oldest surviving parish records, charting the history of the city from the 16th Century to modern times.

The London, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538 – 1812 contain vital records kept at more than 1,000 London parishes and include some of the few extant records of the English Civil War.

Approximately 1.4 million records in the collection are of those who lived during the English Civil War, accounting for about 30 per cent of England's population at the time<sup>1</sup>. Today there are more than 2.4 million British immigrants in Australia with first generation British heritage<sup>2</sup> who can now start exploring their revolutionary or royalist ancestors.

Crucially, these records pre-date Civil Registration, the system introduced by the Government in 1837 to record the 'vital' events of its citizen's lives, including births, marriages and deaths. The only way to trace one of these key events before the 19th Century is to use parish registers.

The English Civil War was a series of armed conflicts and political manoeuvrings between King Charles I and the English Parliament, fuelled by Charles' unpopular religious reforms in England and Scotland and disregard for Parliament's financial muscle.

During the mid-17th Century, Parliament was the Crown's only means to collect taxes and without it the King struggled for funds. When Charles I called on Parliament to raise funds to suppress rebellious Scots in 1640, the Parliamentarians tried to use their financial influence to force through political reform and increase their own power. Charles refused, leading to war in 1642.

Eventually the Royalists were defeated by the Parliamentarians, but a few radicals still feared Charles could return to the throne. This led the powerful parliamentarian New Model Army, under the command of Colonel Thomas Pride, to arrest all MPs who were sympathetic to the king. A Rump Parliament was established and Charles I was executed for treason. The commissioner at the trial, Oliver Cromwell, became Lord Protector of England.

Numerous prominent names from the Civil War feature in the collection, including:

Thomas Fairfax – Fairfax was a parliamentary general and commander-in-chief of the New Model Army, which was instrumental in numerous victories against the Royalists. Unlike Cromwell, he refused to condemn Charles I to death as he was more moderate in his political and religious views. His marriage to Anne Vere in Hackney on June 17, 1637 features in the collection. Oliver Cromwell – Cromwell served as a commander in the New Model Army and later supported the trial of Charles I, even signing his death warrant. He became Protector of England until his death in 1658. Cromwell's marriage to Elizabeth Bourchier on August 13, 1620 is listed in the St Giles Cripplegate Parish Registers. Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford – Considered as one of the most prominent figures in the period leading up to the Civil War, Wentworth supported King Charles I and became one of his leading advisors. However, the King never fully trusted him and accused Wentworth of treasonously advising him, which eventually led to his beheading on Tower Hill. His baptism can be found in the 1593 St Dunstan in The West Parish Registers. Other famous and notable names that feature in the collection include William Blake, Charles Dickens, John Milton, Robert Peel and Samuel Pepys. [Record images available upon request].

The majority of the parish registers date back to 1538 when Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's Vicar General, issued an order that each parish was to keep a register of each baptism, marriage and burial performed there, however the collection also features a few much earlier records. One of the transcripts that is included within the collection is dated 1274.

Ancestry.com.au Partnership Development Manager, Australia and New Zealand Brad Argent comments: "These records detail the existence of those living through the fascinating period of the English Civil War. The conflict instilled Parliament with genuine power for the first time, while its factions developed into what can now be seen as the beginnings of modern politics.

"Australia is fortunate in that it has never experienced civil war but as so many Australians have UK ancestry, it is possible that we may nevertheless have revolutionary – or royalist – forebears."

The launch of the early parish records marks the completion of the London parish registers, which began in September 2009 with the launch of the 'modern' records dating from the early 19th Century to the 1980s. A total of 18 million parish records are now online, dating from 1538 to 1980.

ENDS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION / INTERVIEWS:

Carla Dovgan

Lauren Sewell

Howorth

Howorth

P: 02 8281 3856

P: 02 8281 3804

M: +61 411 437 411

M: +61 457 605 706

E: carlad@howorth.com.au

E: lauren@howorth.com.au

1. The English Civil War took place between 1642 and 1651; however the people who lived through the conflict could appear in the collection either before or after these dates in baptism, marriage or burial records. There are 1,425,878 (million records) spanning the length of a 'lifetime' (75 years) between 1600 and 1675. 160,000 of these are dated specifically between 1642 and 1651.

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Australia – ancestry by counting birth of parents for time series

ABOUT ANCESTRY.COM.AU Officially Australia's leading website for family history resources, Ancestry.com.au contains more than 920 million records in its Australian and UK collections including the Australia Birth, Marriage and Death Index, the Australian Convict Transportation Registers, the Australian Free Settlers, Australian Electoral Rolls, New South Wales SANDS Directories, as well as the most complete online collection of England, Wales and Scotland Censuses and the England and Wales Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes.

Ancestry.com.au was launched in May 2006 and belongs to the global network of Ancestry websites (wholly owned by Ancestry.com Operations Inc.), which contains five billion records. To date more than 18 million family trees have been created and 1.8 billion names and 40 million photographs and stories uploaded.(Figures current as of 30 June 2010)

The Ancestry global network of family history websites:www.ancestry.com in the US,www.ancestry.co.uk in the UK, www.ancestry.ca in Canada, www.ancestry.com.au in Australia, www.ancestry.dein Germany, www.ancestry.it in Italy, www.ancestry.frin France, www.ancestry.sein Sweden andwww.jiapu.com in China.

ABOUT LONDON METROPOLITAN ARCHIVES London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) is the largest local authority record office in the United Kingdom. It manages and provides public access to 80KM of archives, photographs, plans, audio-visual and printed material dating from 1067 to the present day - an enormous amount of information about the capital and its people. Owned and provided by the City of London Corporation, LMA is the premier destination for family historians tracing their roots in the London area and for learning about any aspect of the capital's past.

## Contacts

+61 2 8281 3804

mailto: lauren@howorth.com.au

Lauren Sewell

+61 2 8281 3804

mailto: lauren@howorth.com.au