

# INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: Find your John, Mary, Bruce or Sheila in the largest online collection of Australian birth, marriage and death indexes

World first: Ancestry.com.au is giving free access to the entire Australian Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes from Friday September 28 until 11.59PM AEST on Monday October 1, 2012

Sydney, Australia, 28 September 2012 – This weekend, for the first time ever, Ancestry.com.au, Australia's largest online family history resource[i], is giving free access to over 17 million records of those who were born, married or died in Australia from 1788 until the early twentieth century.

Starting 12.01AM on Friday 28 September, until 11.59PM AEST on Monday 1 October, 2012, this fully searchable database - The Australian Birth, Marriage and Death (BMD) and Cemetery indices - offers valuable information about three of the most significant events in an individual's lifetime.

Ancestry member Diane McAllister used the BMD database to make a startling discovery when she found her father's birth record, which revealed he had lied about his name. This clue prompted extensive further research which eventually unearthed the existence of a double life and another family.

These records also reveal insights into the past 200 years of Australian culture, following the arrival of the first fleet.

While Bruce and Sheila have cheekily been associated as stereotypical Aussie names, John was actually the most popular male name for more than 74,000 Australian boys and Mary the most popular female name for more than 52,000 Australian girls between 1788-1922.

Additional Australian cultural trends revealed from analysis of the records and compared with present day statistics include:

**Births:**For the first half of the last century the number of births registered in Australia each year remained under 140,000, with a dip occurring in the early 1930s during the Great Depression. Since the 1950s, the number of births has steadily increased until 2010, when 297,900 births were recorded, the highest number of births registered in a calendar year in Australia[ii].  
**Marriages:**The records reveal a huge spike in marriages throughout WWII - in NSW alone, over 340,000 people got married during the period of 1939-1943 inclusive. Marriage numbers have dipped significantly since 1943, with only 120,100 marriages registered in Australia in 2009.  
**Deaths:**The death indexes reveal that life for the early Australian settlers was tough, with the average age of death being just 56 years-old, compared to the current life expectancy for Australians of over 79 years for men and 84 years for women. The database is easy to use and can be searched by any of the following terms:

- Birth: name, birth year, father's name, mother's name, and birth place
- Marriage: maiden name, spouse name, marriage year and marriage place
- Death: name, death year, estimated birth year, father's name, mother's name and death place

Brad Argent, Ancestry.com.au Content Director for Australia and New Zealand, comments: "This database is the largest of its kind and is the only place to search BMD records from all over Australia.

It is without a doubt the most important collection in a family historian's tool box for finding missing ancestors and uncovering family secrets.

This database is the root of every Australian family tree - If you've been waiting for the right moment to start researching your family tree, this is it."

To access this collection, please visit [www.ancestry.com.au](http://www.ancestry.com.au).

ENDS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION / INTERVIEWS:

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## NOTE TO EDITORS:

Additional information and updates can be found at the below links:

- Follow us on Twitter: @AncestryComAu
- Follow us on Facebook here
- Read the Ancestry.com.au Blog here

ABOUT ANCESTRY.COM.AU Australia's leading family history website, Ancestry.com.au contains more than one billion records in its Australian and UK collections, including the Australia Birth, Marriage and Death Index, Australian Convict Transportation Registers, 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 Inc is the world's largest online family history resource, with approximately 2 million paying subscribers. More than 10 billion records have been added to the site in the past 15 years. Ancestry users have created more than 39 million family trees containing more than four billion profiles.

In addition to its flagship site [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), Ancestry.com offers several localised web sites, including [Ancestry.com.au](http://Ancestry.com.au) which was launched in May 2006, designed to empower people to discover, preserve and share their family history.

[i] comScore, 2011, based on genealogy related websites selected from the Family and Parenting sub-category under the Community category

[ii] Australian Bureau of Statistics 1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 2012

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Births~51>