



Press Release

2 December 2004

Princess Di's right to the throne!

She was married to the future King of England and known as the “Queen of hearts” but in fact, Diana was much more royal than that! New genealogical research shows that stripping Di of her “HRH” title didn’t sap her blue blood.

Information obtained via the Access to Archives website (www.a2a.org.uk) – supported by The National Archives in Kew, West London – has revealed that Charles and Diana are descendants of the same medieval heiress!

As part of Archive Awareness Campaign American genealogical researcher John Ravilious used Nottinghamshire Archives and its catalogue on the A2A website to link Charles and Di to Elizabeth Thornhill, a descendant of Henry II’s illegitimate half-brother. Elizabeth married into the wealthy Nottinghamshire Savile family in the fourteenth century. Her son Thomas Savile was an ancestor of Charles and another, Henry, was a forebear of Princess Diana.

This was not all that Ravilious – who is based in Maryland - dug up using A2A. He also found out that the Queen Mother has French roots as well as Scottish. Her maternal grandmother, Nina, was the great-granddaughter of the 3rd Duke of Portland, whose ancestor was Hamelin de Warenne, illegitimate son of the Count of Anjou. The fact that the Queen Mother’s grandfather was called Claude should have given us a clue!

John Ravilious said: *“Many discoveries in medieval and later English genealogy would have been long delayed or have never occurred, without the A2A website. A2A allows you to search records held in over 360 archives across England before going out there and doing some hands on-research.”*

Access to Archives is a one-stop shop providing access to more than 360 archives in England. A2A enables visitors to search and browse for information about archives held throughout the country, from the tenth century to the present day.

Do you suspect you have French roots or do you dare look for skeletons in the family closet? The BBC, in association with Archive Awareness Campaign, is putting on over 40 family history events across the UK on 4/5 December where you can start to find out about your ancestors. The London event is being held at The National Archives on Saturday 4 December. Visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/events/calendar/bbc.htm> for more information.

Notes to Editors:

- For images or to interview Mark Dorrington, principal archivist at Nottinghamshire Archives, please contact Lucy Fulton at The National Archives on 020 8392 5237.
- A2A (Access to Archives) is part of the national archives network in the UK. It aims to allow anyone to gain easier access to archives through the catalogues drawn up by archivists across England. The A2A database provides access to detailed catalogues from more than 360 repositories in England beyond The National Archives. Through A2A, visitors can also arrange to see or to obtain copies of real archive documents. Visit A2A at www.a2a.org.uk.
- The National Archives, Kew, 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 in Kew, are open to the public 6 days a week.
- Nottinghamshire Archives, <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/archives>, houses historical archives for the county of Nottinghamshire, the city of Nottingham, the diocese of Southwell and other local bodies, families and individuals, including the Portland of Welbeck (ref DD/P) and Savile of Rufford (ref DD/SR) archives. It is open to the public 6 days a week.
- Over 480 events are taking place across the UK this autumn for Archive Awareness Campaign, which aims to reveal the treasures of the archives. The campaign, run by partners the National Council on Archives, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and The National Archives, is now in its second year.
- **For press enquiries about any of the above please contact Lucy Fulton at The National Archives on 020 8392 5237 or e-mail lucy.fulton@nationalarchives.gov.uk**