

For immediate release Monday 20 February 2006

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS AND THE MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COUNCIL ANNOUNCE A LANDMARK AGREEMENT

Prestigious national resources such as the online edition of the **Oxford Dictionary of National Biography** and the **Oxford English Dictionary Online** will soon be available to public library members across England following a ground-breaking agreement between Oxford University Press (OUP) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

As part of the new *Reference Online* initiative launched today by the MLA (see www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/online_initiatives/reference_online), OUP is delighted to announce that 142 public library authorities in England have joined together for the first time to share the cost of a national licence for a range of OUP's online resources.

By negotiating on behalf of all English public library authorities, the MLA has been able to secure a special national offer, enabling libraries to extend the range of online resources they can make available to their members.

The popularity of the national offer means that, from either 1 March or 1 April 2006 (depending on subscription start dates) until 31 March 2008, over 48 million English residents will be able to explore OUP online resources free of charge by joining their local library. Access will be available in libraries, but members can also log on from home at anytime using their library card number.

Henry Reece, OUP's Chief Executive, says:

"I am very pleased that Oxford has been able to support the launch of the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council's *Reference Online* initiative with a national offer, and that so many library authorities have already chosen to participate.

The **Oxford English Dictionary** and the **Oxford Dictionary of National Biography** are works of great national interest and standing which OUP has developed over many decades, and which exemplify our mission to disseminate excellent and authoritative scholarship as widely as possible.

The great success of the OUP/MLA national offer means that that these works, alongside a selection of other online reference resources from Oxford, can be consulted and enjoyed by millions of library members in England both in their local libraries and from home."

For further information please contact Kate Farquhar-Thomson, Head of Publicity, OUP on 01865 353423 or kate.farquhar-thomson@oup.com.

Notes to Editors:

Oxford University Press (OUP) is a department of the University of Oxford, and the world's largest university press. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education in its worldwide publishing. In addition to publishing over 4,600 new books each year and over 180 journals, Oxford is a major provider of online information to libraries and individuals worldwide. www.oup.com

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is the national development agency for museums, libraries and archives, advising the government on policy and priorities for the sector. MLA's roles are to provide strategic leadership, to act as a powerful advocate, to develop capacity and to promote innovation and change. www.mla.gov.uk

The MLA/OUP National Agreement:

127 English public library authorities have subscribed to the following resources, which will be available to members from either 1 March 2006 or 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2008:

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (www.oxforddnb.com)
- Oxford English Dictionary Online (www.oed.com)
- Oxford Reference Online (www.oxfordreference.com)
- Grove Music Online (www.grovemusic.com)
- Grove Art Online (www.groveart.com)

15 library authorities have subscribed to the following resources from either 1 March 2006 or 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2008:

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (www.oxforddnb.com)
- Oxford English Dictionary Online (www.oed.com)
- Oxford Reference Online (www.oxfordreference.com)

A full list of the libraries participating in the offer, the resources they are subscribing to, and the subscription start dates is available at www.oxfordonline.com/englishpubliclibraries.