

200 years of the Census in...

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

March 10th 2001 marks the bicentenary of the modern Census in Britain.

For 200 years the Census has been the cornerstone of planning in Britain. The first Census in 1801 was taken amidst fears that Britain's growing population might outstrip the country's supply of food. It asked 5 questions and counted 10 million people living in two million households. The 2001 Census, which takes place on the 29th April, will count almost 60 million people who live in approximately twenty four million households. It will ask 40 questions and generate 2 billion pieces of information to allocate more than £50 billion of public spending each year.

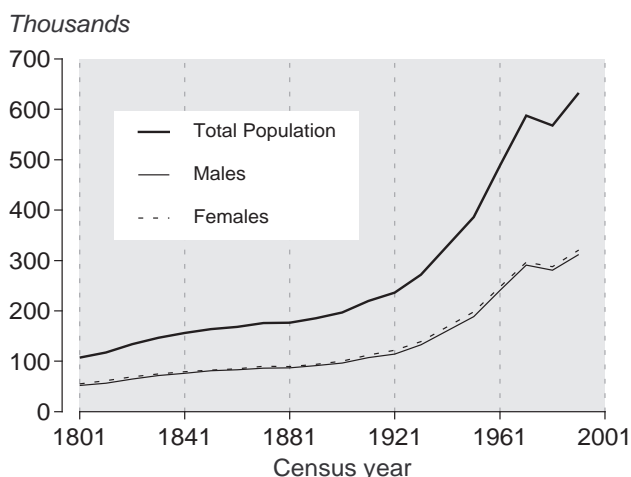
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100 years from 4.6 persons in 1901 to approximately 2.4 persons in 1991. We are also living longer. In 1821 almost half of the population was under 20 years of age compared with just over a quarter under 20 years of age today.

The value of the Census is that it provides detailed information at a local as well as a national level. This pamphlet - one of a series for various areas in England and for Wales - describes the changes in society measured by the Census between 1801 and 1991.

The information from censuses has continued to evolve and grow since the first reports in 1801. The questions and results are on issues relevant to a particular time and change cannot always be tracked exactly over the two centuries. Boundaries of counties also shift over time. The figures and graphs in this pamphlet are the best approximation in the circumstances and are to help paint the picture of change. A full list of the topics covered in the census since 1801 is available in an accompanying document 'Census Topics 1801-2001', and details on how to obtain further information on historical census statistics are given on the back page of this monitor.

THE POPULATION AND AREA SIZE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

This table and chart show the various increases and decreases in area size and population, and numbers of males and females. There have been several changes in the boundaries and size of Buckinghamshire over the years. The apparent decrease in Buckinghamshire's population between 1971 and 1981 was predominantly caused by the 1974 Local Government Re-organisation when boundaries were changed. The most significant change to Buckinghamshire was that the boundary was changed to no longer include the town of Staines.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	107,444	52,094	55,350
1811	na	117,650	56,208	61,442
1821	na	134,068	64,867	69,201
1831	463,820	146,529	71,734	74,795
1841	463,820	155,983	76,482	79,501
1851	464,930	163,554	80,990	82,564
1861	466,932	167,993	83,023	84,970
1871	467,009	175,879	86,059	89,820
1881	477,151	176,323	86,840	89,483
1891	475,694	185,284	91,195	94,089
1901	479,358	197,046	96,486	100,560
1911	479,360	219,551	107,326	112,225
1921	479,360	236,171	113,979	122,192
1931	479,360	271,586	132,490	139,096
1951	479,406	386,291	188,457	197,834
1961	479,406	488,233	240,810	247,423
1971	477,735	587,559	291,132	296,427
1981	465,249	567,979	280,465	287,514
1991	463,739	632,487	311,662	320,825

na = not available

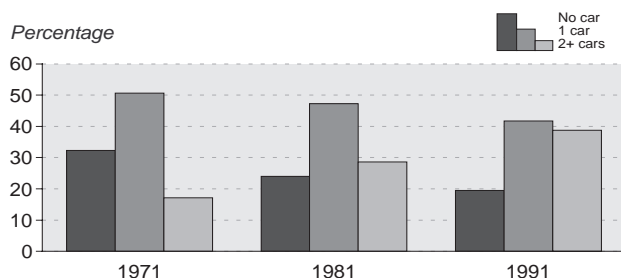
Households and Amenities

At the end of the Second World War (1939-45) it was vital to assess the overall housing situation in Great Britain. Consequently the 1951 Census had a number of questions on housing needs. These were met in the post-war housing programmes, and significant improvements were evident in subsequent Censuses. In 1971 only 1,460 households in Buckinghamshire were without a WC, compared to 13,052 households in 1951. By 1981, only 2,232 households were without a fixed bath. The 2001

Census will ask questions relevant now, such as availability of central heating and the lowest floor level of accommodation.

Amenities	1951	H/Holds %
H/Holds without piped water	7,000	6.2
H/Holds without WC	13,052	11.6
H/Holds without fixed bath	34,765	30.8
H/Holds without kitchen sink	5,067	4.5
H/Holds without cooking stove	1,542	1.4
H/Holds with all five of the above	68,431	60.6

(Total Households in 1951 = 112,949)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time almost 70 per cent of households in Buckinghamshire already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 10 percentage points to around four-fifths of households (80%). There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

OCCUPATIONS

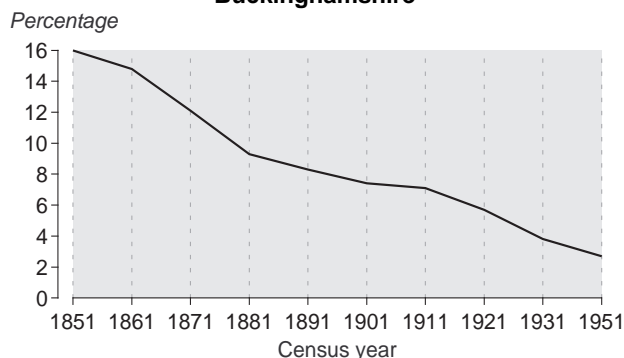
Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Buckinghamshire the number of agricultural labourers fell from 17,195 in 1861 to 6,243 in 1931, a decrease of 64%.

By 1991, the number of farmers and agricultural labourers accounted for less than 1% of Buckinghamshire's population.

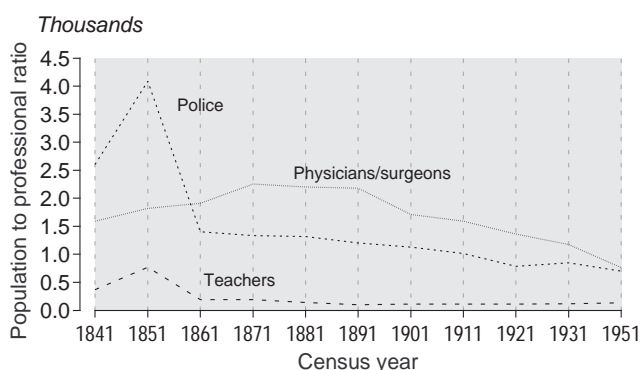
N.B. This analysis is based upon the number of people employed in agriculture as a percentage of the total population, not just the working population.

Percentage of people employed in agriculture in Buckinghamshire



Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Buckinghamshire, 1841-1951.



There have been changes in definition in what is included in each of these professions over the years. For example, in 1841 'Police' included watchmen who were paid for 'guarding the gates' and patrolling the streets at night. Early figures for physicians and surgeons may also be overstated as they included people employed in 'apothecary' (chemists) and medical students.

Generally the numbers of people to each professional has fallen over the period. For example, there was one police officer per 4,089 people in 1851, dropping to 701 people in 1951.

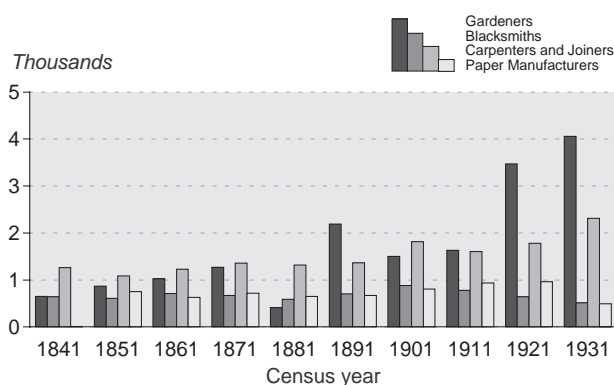
By 1991, there was one teacher per 61 people, one physician/surgeon per 555 people and one police officer per 413 people.

N.B. Figures between 1951 and 1991 have not been included due to problems with the availability and comparability of data between these years.

Key Occupations

The chart highlights four of the main occupations in Buckinghamshire, past and present, and trends over the years.

The graph clearly shows the large increase in the number of gardeners over period. The number of carpenters and joiners also rose fairly steadily over the period. Numbers of blacksmith's peaked around the turn of the century and then started to decline. Similarly, numbers of people employed in paper manufacturing rose steadily, peaking in 1921 and then falling.



N.B. Analyses are only shown to 1931 because of difficulties in making comparisons with more recent statistics.

Did you know ?

- The population of Buckinghamshire increased six-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in seventeen households in Buckinghamshire did not have central heating, which compared to a GB average of one in five.
- Between 1851 and 1901, the number of people employed on the railways in Buckinghamshire (excluding construction) increased five-fold – from 134 people to 697 people.
- In 1881, 13% of Buckinghamshire’s female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over 11 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1851, there was one chimney sweep aged between 5 and 9 in Buckinghamshire.
- In 1871 there were 242 nurses (not domestic servants) in Buckinghamshire
- There was a rise in the population density of Buckinghamshire from 0.3 people per acre in 1831, to 1.4 people per acre in 1991. This was above the GB average of almost 1 person per acre in 1991.
- The numbers of people per household has decreased over the last 200 years. In 1801 the average household in Buckinghamshire contained 5 people, compared to 2.6 in 1991, slightly higher than the 1991 GB average of 2.5 people per household.

The Census reports also contain interesting explanatory notes:

1821 – *“At Tingewick the females were mostly employed in the making of thread lace.”*

1871 – *“The decrease of population in Amersham is largely attributable to the want of railway communication.”*

1881 – *“The decrease of population in Newton Blossomville, Lavendon and Weston Underwood is attributable to the removal of navvies who were resident in 1871, who were engaged in the construction of a railway.”*

Further information

These monitors have been produced to show county level information. Often, there is more interest in information for lower geographical areas e.g. parishes. Many good reference libraries hold census volumes to enable individuals to carry out their own research. The ONS London library (details below) which is open to the public also contains a full set of census volumes back to 1801. From 10th March 2001 there will be additional information made available on our website www.statistics.gov.uk. Further advice and limited research can be also carried out by Census Customer Services.

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