

200 years of the Census in...

CHESHIRE

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.

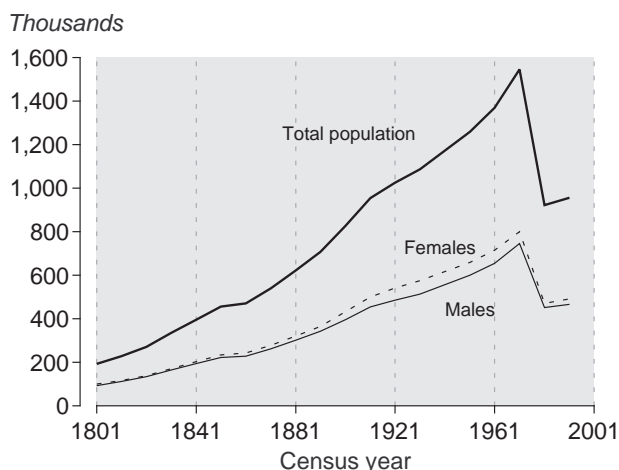
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100 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 CHESHIRE

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 Cheshire over the years. For example, the apparent decrease in Cheshire's population between 1971 and 1981 was predominantly caused by boundary changes, with parts of what was Cheshire becoming Merseyside and Greater Manchester (which are included with Lancashire).



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	191,751	92,759	98,992
1811	na	227,031	110,841	116,190
1821	na	270,098	132,952	137,146
1831	649,050	334,391	164,133	170,258
1841	649,050	395,660	193,646	202,014
1851	707,078	455,725	222,386	233,339
1861	680,836	470,174	228,146	242,028
1871	691,752	539,785	261,604	278,181
1881	643,745	622,365	301,768	320,597
1891	643,791	707,978	342,935	365,043
1901	654,825	827,191	395,017	432,174
1911	656,370	954,779	454,718	500,061
1921	657,950	1,025,724	485,098	540,626
1931	652,383	1,087,655	513,447	574,208
1951	649,519	1,258,507	599,741	658,766
1961	649,519	1,368,979	654,508	714,471
1971	650,301	1,546,387	745,897	800,490
1981	575,363	921,623	451,460	470,163
1991	576,007	956,616	466,256	490,360

na = not available

Households and Amenities

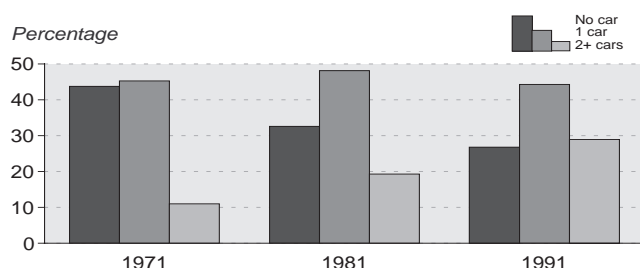
At the end of the Second World War (1939-45) it was vital to assess the overall housing situation in Great Britain. Consequently the 1951 Census had a number of questions on housing needs. These were met in the post-war housing programmes, and significant improvements were evident in subsequent Censuses. In 1971 only 4,515 households in Cheshire were without a WC, compared to 19,687 households in 1951. By 1981, only 5,519 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	4,571	1.2
H/Holds without WC	19,687	5.2
H/Holds without fixed bath	113,021	29.6
H/Holds without kitchen sink	5,125	1.3
H/Holds without cooking stove	7,030	1.8
H/Holds with all five of the above	234,857	61.6

(Total Households in 1951 = 381,393)

Car Availability 1971 – 1991



A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time 56 per cent of households in Cheshire already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 17 percentage points to almost three-quarters of households (73%). There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

OCCUPATIONS

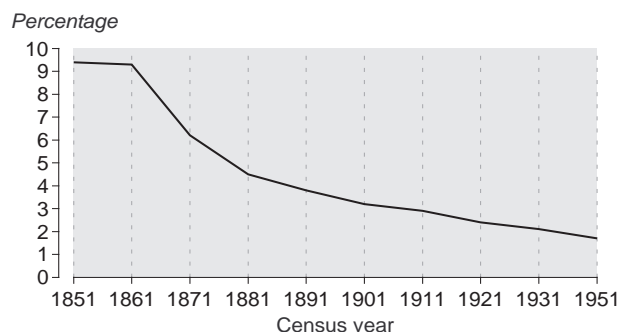
Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Cheshire the number of agricultural labourers fell from 17,096 in 1861 to 12,717 in 1931, a decrease of 26%.

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

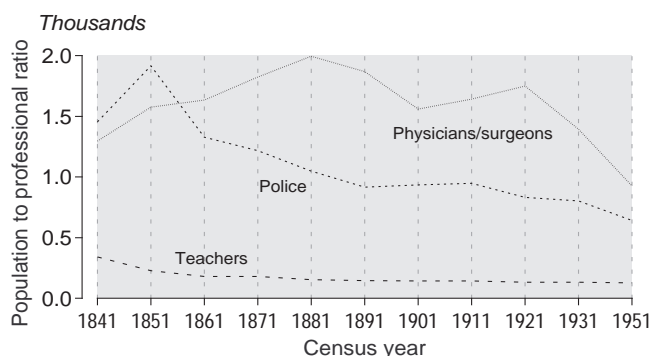
Percentage of people employed in agriculture in Cheshire



Professionals

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

The number of people per physician/surgeon appears to have risen and then fallen, whilst the numbers of people to each policeman/woman and teacher has fallen over the period. For example, there was one police officer per 1,915 people in 1851, dropping to 641 people in 1951.

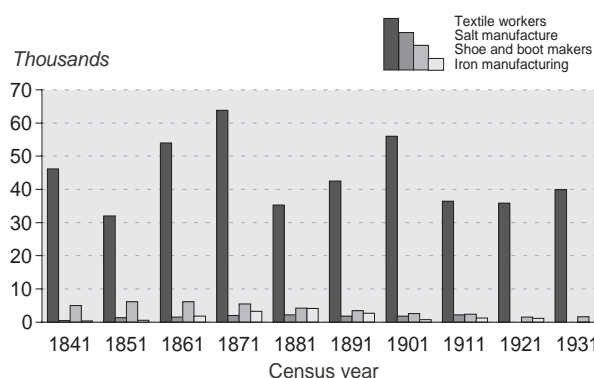
By 1991, there was one teacher per 62 people, one physician/surgeon per 501 people and one police officer per 439 people.

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 Cheshire, past and present, and trends over the years.

The dominance and importance of the textile industry to the area can clearly be seen in the graph. In 1871, over 60,000 people in Cheshire were employed as textile workers (predominately working with cotton and silk). Harder to see in the graph is the rise in numbers of people employed in the manufacture of salt, from 500 people in 1851 to over 2,000 people in 1911. By contrast there was a fall in numbers of shoe and boot makers, from over 5,000 people in 1851 to below 2,000 people in 1931. Meanwhile, the number of people employed in iron manufacturing rose and fell over the period, from under 500 people in 1841, rising to over 4,000 people in 1881 then falling to just over 1,000 people in 1921.



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

Did you know ?

- The population of Cheshire increased five-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in five households in Cheshire did not have central heating, which was consistent with the GB average.
- Between 1851 and 1901, the number of people employed on the railways in Cheshire (excluding construction) increased thirteen-fold – from 764 people to 9,943 people.
- In 1891, there were 6,394 people employed constructing the railways in Cheshire.
- In 1881, 10% of Cheshire's female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Nearly 50 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1851, there were 3 chimney sweeps aged between 5 and 9 in Cheshire.
- In 1841, there were 30,277 people employed in cotton manufacturing in Cheshire
- There was a rise in the population density of Cheshire from 0.5 people per acre in 1831, to 1.7 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 Cheshire contained 5 people, compared to 2.6 in 1991. This was slightly higher than the 1991 GB average of 2.5 people per household.

The Census reports also contain interesting explanatory notes:

1831 – *“The entire Parish of Runcorn contains 10,326 inhabitants and 21,390 acres. The Quarries at Runcorn which afford stone for the Docks and other public works at Liverpool, have caused a great increase in the population.”*

1861 – *“The increase of population in the Township of Shavington-sum-Gresty is attributed to the erection of houses for the accommodation of persons employed in the Crewe Railway works.”*

1871 – *“The decrease of population in the Townships of Stockport and Brinnington is attributed to the migration of factory operatives in consequence of the depression in trade caused by the American Civil War.”*

1911 – *“The large increase in the population of Hoylake cum West Kirby Civil Parish is attributed to its development as a health resort and to its proximity to Liverpool and Birkenhead.”*

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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