

200 years of the Census in...

DEVON

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.

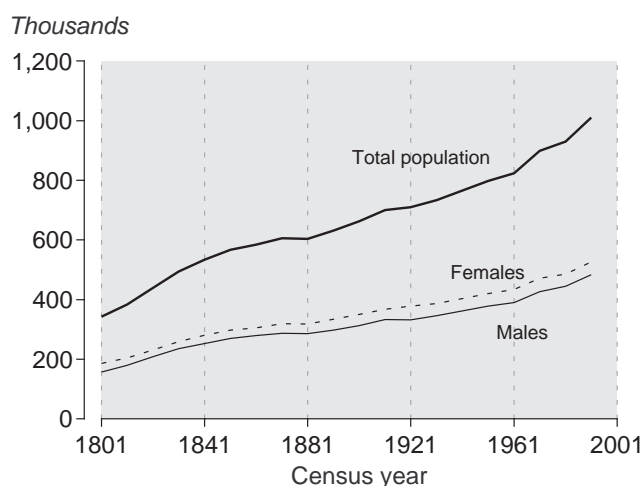
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

This table and chart show the various increases and decreases in area size and population, and numbers of males and females. In terms of analysing the growth in population over the 200 years, Devon has not been significantly affected by boundary changes.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	343,001	157,240	185,761
1811	na	383,852	179,815	204,037
1821	na	439,040	208,229	230,811
1831	1,636,450	494,478	235,789	258,689
1841	1,636,450	533,460	252,760	280,700
1851	1,657,180	567,098	269,583	297,515
1861	1,657,180	584,373	279,411	304,962
1871	1,643,343	606,102	287,211	318,891
1881	1,655,208	603,595	285,340	318,255
1891	1,667,097	631,808	297,898	333,910
1901	1,671,168	662,196	312,536	349,660
1911	1,671,364	699,703	332,813	366,890
1921	1,671,364	709,614	331,984	377,630
1931	1,671,364	732,968	345,887	387,081
1951	1,671,388	797,738	378,276	419,462
1961	1,671,613	823,751	390,095	433,656
1971	1,658,239	898,404	426,783	471,621
1981	1,658,259	930,112	445,117	484,995
1991	1,657,945	1,009,950	483,679	526,271

na = not available

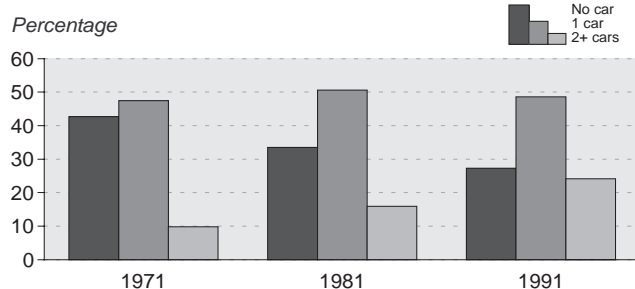
Households and Amenities

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 3,495 households in Devon were without a WC, compared to 19,689 households in 1951. By 1981, only 6,613 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	25,264	10.6
H/Holds without WC	19,689	8.3
H/Holds without fixed bath	84,355	35.5
H/Holds without kitchen sink	30,507	12.8
H/Holds without cooking stove	4,608	1.9
H/Holds with all five of the above	36,407	15.3

(Total Households in 1951 = 237,604)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time almost 58 per cent of households in Devon already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 15 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

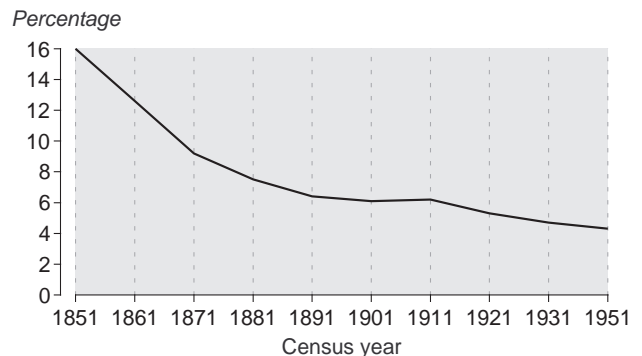
Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Devon the number of agricultural labourers fell from 29,405 in 1861 to 15,720 in 1931, a decrease of 47%.

By 1991, the number of farmers and agricultural labourers accounted for less than 2% of Devon'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.

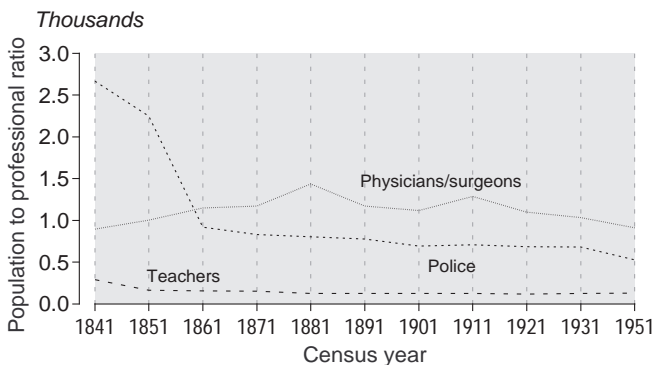
Percentage of people employed in agriculture in Devon



Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Devon, 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 are also 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 2,250 people in 1851, dropping to 529 people in 1951.

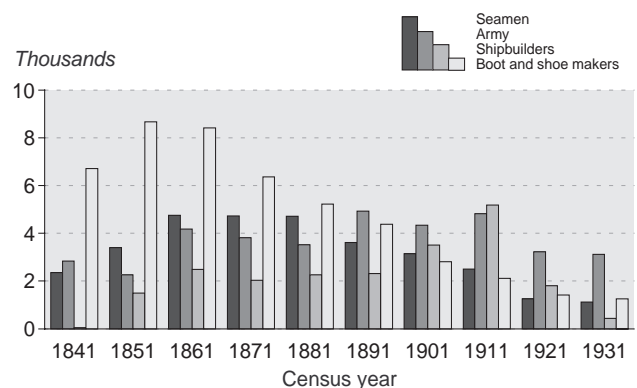
By 1991, there was one teacher per 74 people, one physician/surgeon per 564 people and one police officer per 472 people.

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

The graph clearly shows the growth in ship building in the area during Victorian times and the decrease in the industry in this area during the early part of the 20th century. In 1851, there were more boot and shoemakers than the other three occupations combined. The only relative stable occupation in the county over the 200 years has been the Army, although numbers have risen and fallen over the period.



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

Did you know ?

- The population of Devon increased almost three-fold between 1801 and 1991.
- In 1991, over one in four households in Devon 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 Devon (excluding construction) increased over fourteen-fold - from 351 people to 5,064 people.
- In 1881, 11% of Devon's female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over 25 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1861, there were 2 chimney sweeps between the ages of 5 and 9 in Devon.
- In 1911 there were 5,184 people in Devon employed in shipbuilding.
- The rise in the population density of Devon has been modest. There were 0.3 people per acre in 1831, compared to 0.6 people per acre in 1991. This was below the GB average of almost 1 person per acre in 1991.
- The number of people per household has decreased over the last 200 years. In 1801 the average household in Devon contained 6 people, compared to 2.5 in 1991. This was consistent with the 1991 GB average.

The Census reports also contain interesting explanatory notes:

1821 – *“Kingsteington was formerly remarkable for the frequency of agues and other diseases, but this has been remedied by the drainage of surface water”*

1831 – *“The increase in the population in the parish of Stoke-Cannon is attributed to the establishment of a paper factory.”*

1841 – *“The return for the parish of Exbourne states that there is a temporary increase of 37 persons attending the village feast”*

1851 – *“The decrease in the population in Ippleton, Torbrian and Denbury, which are entirely agricultural parishes, is ascribed to the departure of many of the younger inhabitants to Torquay and other populous places, where they find more profitable employment”.*

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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