

## *200 years of the Census in...*

# **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**(Includes Soke of Peterborough between 1891 and 1961 inclusive)**

March 10<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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.

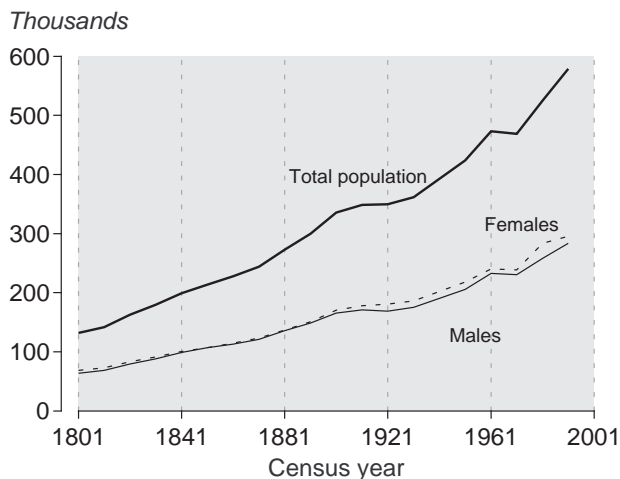
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

This table and chart show the various increases and decreases in area size and population, and numbers of males and females. For the purposes of this monitor, statistics for the Soke of Peterborough have been amalgamated with those for Northamptonshire up until 1961 inclusive. Statistics were collected separately for the Soke of Peterborough from 1921 and can be provided on written request to Census Customer Services.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	131,757	63,417	68,340
1811	na	141,353	68,279	73,074
1821	na	162,483	79,575	82,908
1831	646,810	179,336	87,949	91,387
1841	646,810	199,228	98,977	100,251
1851	632,219	213,844	106,747	107,097
1861	630,358	227,704	113,078	114,626
1871	629,912	243,891	120,859	123,032
1881	629,912	272,555	135,662	136,893
1891	639,541	299,508	148,544	150,964
1901	638,612	335,628	165,235	170,393
1911	638,612	348,515	170,841	177,674
1921	638,612	349,363	168,517	180,846
1931	638,612	361,313	175,240	186,073
1951	638,612	423,481	205,472	218,009
1961	638,612	472,763	232,367	240,396
1971	584,980	468,623	230,254	238,369
1981	584,977	524,967	258,149	283,395
1991	584,878	578,807	283,395	295,412

na = not available

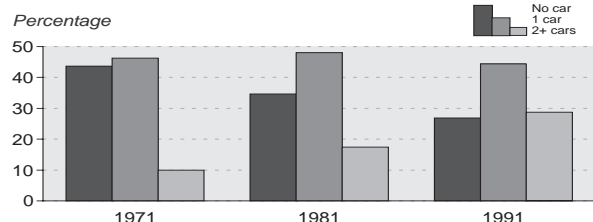
## Households and Amenities

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 1,870 households in Northamptonshire were without a WC, compared to 15,904 households in 1951. By 1981, only 2,992 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	15,623	12.0
H/Holds without WC	15,904	12.2
H/Holds without fixed bath	54,963	42.3
H/Holds without kitchen sink	10,712	8.2
H/Holds without cooking stove	1,652	1.3
H/Holds with all five of the above	65,029	50.0

(Total Households in 1951 = 129,938)



## 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 Northamptonshire 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

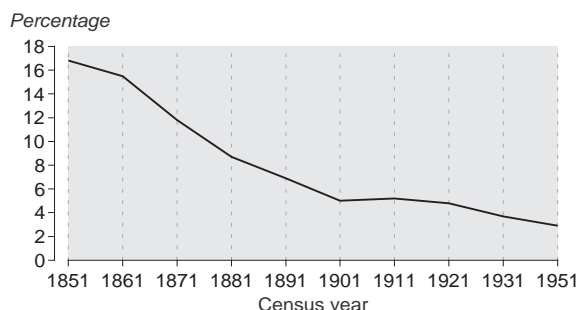
## Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Northamptonshire the number of agricultural labourers fell from 25,822 in 1861 to 8,502 in 1931, a decrease of 67%.

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

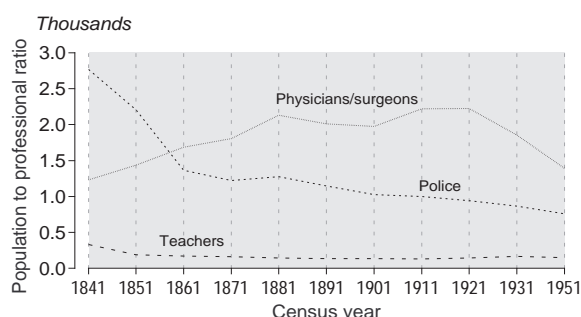
**Percentage of people employed in agriculture in Northamptonshire**



## Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Northamptonshire, 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 fallen, whilst the numbers of people per policeman/woman and teacher has fallen. For example, there was one police officer per 2,205 people in 1851, dropping to 758 people in 1951.

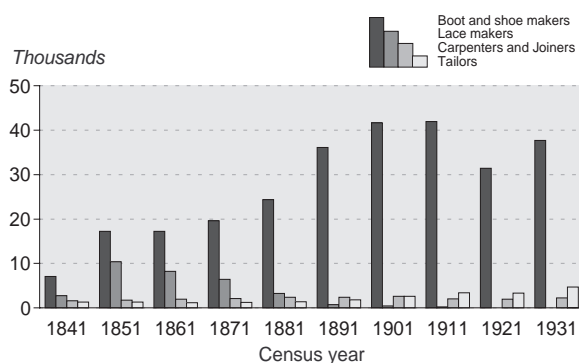
By 1991, there was one teacher per 67 people, one physician/surgeon per 864 people and one police officer per 429 people.

*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 Northamptonshire, past and present, and trends over the years.

Between 1841 and 1931 the dominant occupation, and one that rose greatest, was boot and shoe makers with over a five-fold increase. The peak of this rise occurred in 1911 with 41,926 people working in the industry. Numbers of both tailors and carpenters & joiners rose steadily, whilst lace makers increased rapidly during the early years but gradually decreased down to just 219 people in 1911.



*N.B.* Analyses are only shown to 1931 because of difficulties in making comparisons with more recent statistics. No specific occupational figures for lace makers exist after 1911.

## Did you know ?

- The population of Northamptonshire increased by just over four-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in seven households in Northamptonshire 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 Northamptonshire (excluding construction) increased over eleven-fold – from 465 people to 5,375 people.
- In 1881, 8% of Northamptonshire’s female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over 19 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1851, there were 2 chimney sweeps aged between 5 and 9 in Northamptonshire.
- In 1891 there were 1,229 blacksmiths in Northamptonshire.
- There was a rise in the population density of Northamptonshire from 0.3 people per acre in 1831, to 1.0 people per acre in 1991. This matched 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 Northamptonshire contained 5 people, compared to 2.6 in 1991, which closely matched the 1991 GB average of 2.5 people per household.

## The Census reports also contain interesting explanatory notes:

1831 – *“The Borough of Northampton increased in population by 4,558 persons, chiefly attributable to the extension of boot and shoe manufactories.”*

1871 – *“An increase of population in Brafield on the Green is ascribed to the large demand for labourers at the ironstone mines at Cogenhoe (or Cooknoe), and at various railway works.”*

1891 *“Including officers, 91 persons returned for Northampton prison (78 males and 13 females).”*

## 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 10<sup>th</sup> March 2001 there will be additional information made available on our website [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk). Further advice and limited research can be also carried out by Census Customer Services.

Census Customer Services  
Office for National Statistics  
Room 4300S  
Segensworth Road, Titchfield  
Hampshire, PO15 5RR

ONS London Library  
1 Drummond Gate  
Pimlico  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

Phone: 01329 813800  
Fax: 01329 813587  
e-mail: [census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk](mailto:census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk)

