

200 years of the Census in...

OXFORDSHIRE

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.

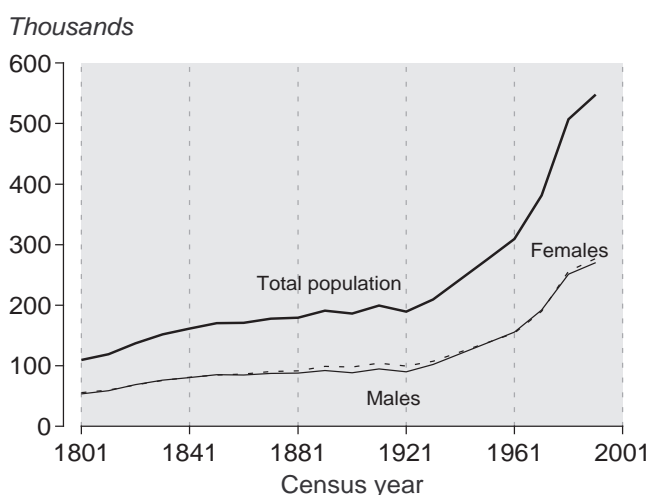
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

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 Oxfordshire over the years; for example, the apparent increase in Oxfordshire's population between 1971 and 1981 was predominantly caused by boundary changes.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	109,620	53,786	55,834
1811	na	119,190	59,133	60,057
1821	na	136,971	68,817	68,154
1831	467,380	152,156	76,387	75,769
1841	467,230	161,643	80,436	81,207
1851	472,887	170,363	85,481	84,882
1861	472,717	170,944	84,806	86,138
1871	470,095	177,975	87,466	90,509
1881	483,621	179,559	88,025	91,534
1891	485,322	191,191	92,366	98,825
1901	480,687	186,460	88,316	98,144
1911	480,687	199,269	94,937	104,332
1921	479,220	189,615	90,281	99,334
1931	479,224	209,621	102,419	107,202
1951	479,178	275,808	137,717	138,091
1961	479,178	309,452	155,554	153,898
1971	479,174	381,590	191,833	189,757
1981	644,392	507,230	251,093	256,137
1991	638,162	547,584	270,366	277,218

na = not available

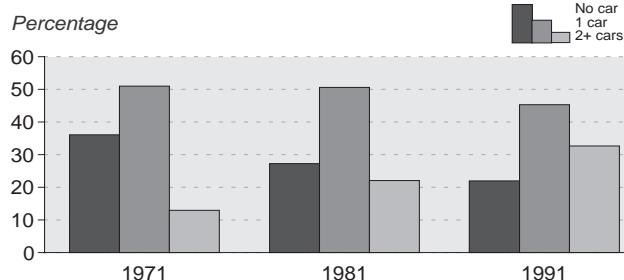
Households and Amenities

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 2,220 households in Oxfordshire were without a WC, compared to 17,288 households in 1951. By 1981, only 2,187 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	12,443	16.3
H/Holds without WC	17,288	22.6
H/Holds without fixed bath	30,194	39.5
H/Holds without kitchen sink	10,288	13.5
H/Holds without cooking stove	1,928	2.5
H/Holds with all five of the above	37,837	49.5

(Total Households in 1951 = 76,472)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time almost 64 per cent of households in Oxfordshire already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 14 percentage points to over three-quarters of households (78%). There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

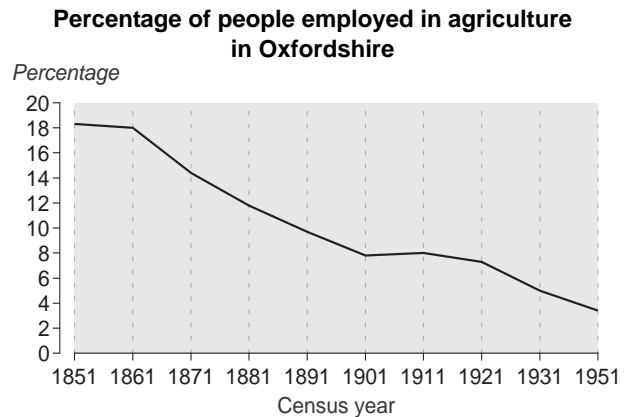
OCCUPATIONS

Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Oxfordshire the number of agricultural labourers fell from 30,833 in 1861 to 10,405 in 1931, a decrease of almost 66%.

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

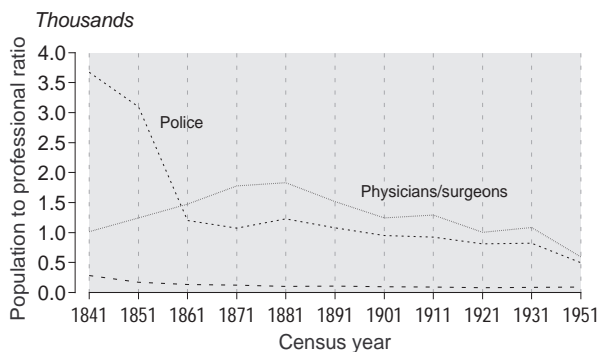
N.B. This analysis is based upon the number of people employed in agriculture as a percentage of the total population, not just the working population.



Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Oxfordshire, 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 3,098 people in 1851, dropping to 496 people in 1951.

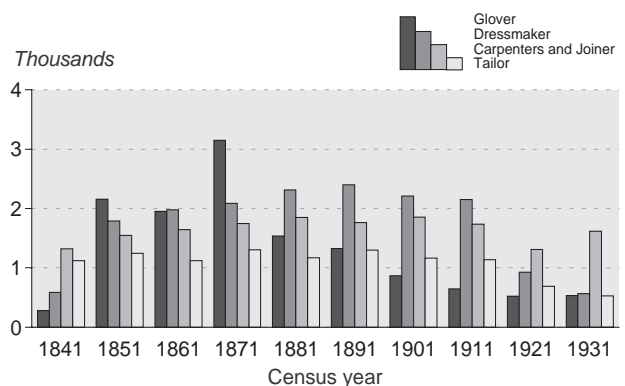
By 1991, there was one teacher per 50 people, one physician/surgeon per 418 people and one police officer per 431 people.

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

The graph clearly shows the rise and fall of numbers of people working in the glove making industry. At its peak in 1871, over 3,000 people in Oxfordshire were employed making gloves. The number of tailors remained steady between 1841 and 1911, but decreased from then onwards.



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

Did you know ?

- The population of Oxfordshire increased over five-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in six households in Oxfordshire 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 Oxfordshire (excluding construction) increased twelve-fold – from 108 people to 1,242 people.
- In 1881, 11% of Kent’s female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over 12 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1851, there were 2 chimney sweeps aged between 5 and 9 in Oxfordshire.
- In 1891 there were 894 blacksmiths in Oxfordshire, whilst the highest number of lace makers recorded for Oxfordshire was 1,778 in 1851.
- There was a rise in the population density of Oxfordshire from 0.3 people per acre in 1831, to 1.2 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 Oxfordshire 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:

1851 – “A decrease in the population of Woodstock Parish is attributed partly to the closing of the ‘Marlborough Arms,’ formerly a large posting inn, and partly to the fact that, in 1841, a large number of workmen were temporarily employed upon extensive alterations and repairs at Blenheim Palace”

1881 – “The increase in the population of Owley is attributed partly to the erection and occupation since 1871 of military barracks and the Cowley Military College”

1901 – “A considerable proportion of the population of Littlemore Civil Parish was enumerated in the Oxford County Lunatic Asylum”

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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