

200 years of the Census in...

SHROPSHIRE

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.

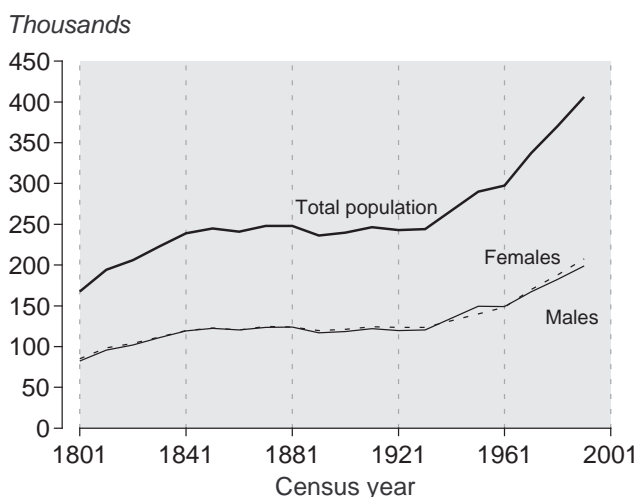
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

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 minor changes in the boundaries and size of Shropshire over the past 200 years. The significant growth in population since 1961 is largely due to the rise in population of The Wrekin district.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	167,639	82,563	85,076
1811	na	194,298	95,842	98,456
1821	na	206,153	102,056	104,097
1831	864,360	222,938	111,017	111,921
1841	864,360	239,048	119,355	119,693
1851	904,220	244,898	122,297	122,601
1861	826,055	240,959	120,436	120,523
1871	841,167	248,111	123,472	124,639
1881	844,565	248,014	124,157	123,857
1891	859,516	236,339	116,736	119,603
1901	861,802	239,783	118,675	121,108
1911	861,800	246,307	121,835	124,472
1921	861,800	243,062	119,542	123,520
1931	861,800	244,156	120,585	123,571
1951	861,800	289,802	149,519	140,283
1961	861,801	297,466	149,189	148,277
1971	862,453	337,102	167,043	170,059
1981	862,414	370,355	182,462	187,893
1991	861,803	406,387	198,915	207,472

na = not available

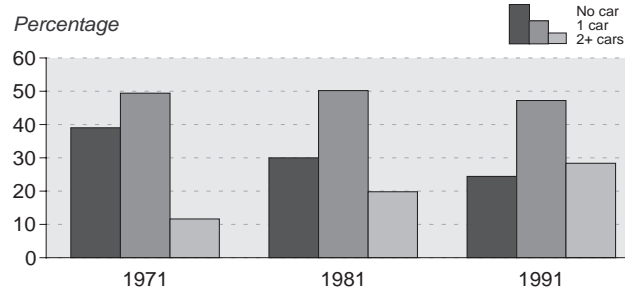
Households and Amenities

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 5,175 households in Shropshire were without a WC, compared to 25,927 households in 1951. By 1981, only 3,139 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	18,817	24.1
H/Holds without WC	25,927	33.3
H/Holds without fixed bath	38,256	49.2
H/Holds without kitchen sink	12,631	16.2
H/Holds without cooking stove	3,415	4.4
H/Holds with all five of the above	31,717	40.8

(Total Households in 1951 = 77,822)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time 61 per cent of households in Shropshire already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 14 percentage points to three-quarters of households (75 %). There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

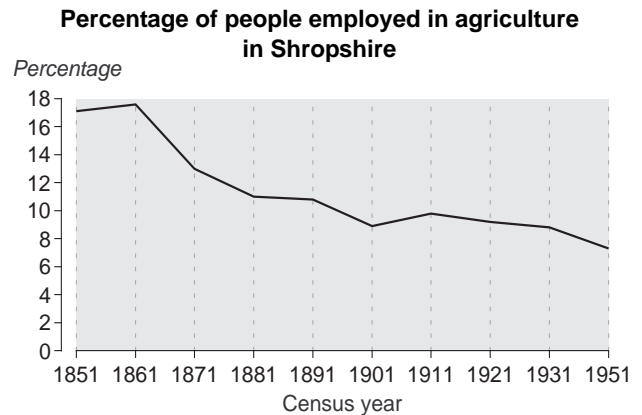
OCCUPATIONS

Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Shropshire the number of agricultural labourers fell from 18,450 in 1861 to 12,056 in 1931, a decrease of 35%.

By 1991, the number of farmers and agricultural labourers accounted for just over 2% of Shropshire's population.

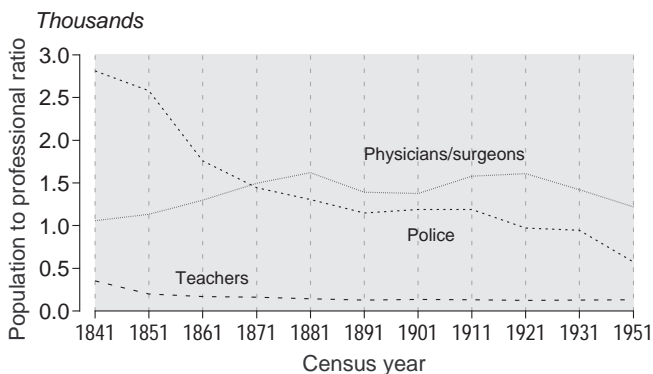
N.B. This analysis is based upon the number of people employed in agriculture as a percentage of the total population, not just the working population.



Professionals

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

The number of people per physician/surgeon appears to have remained relatively stable, whilst the numbers of people to each policeman/woman and teacher has fallen over the period. For example, there was one police officer per 2,500 people in 1851, dropping to 575 people in 1951.

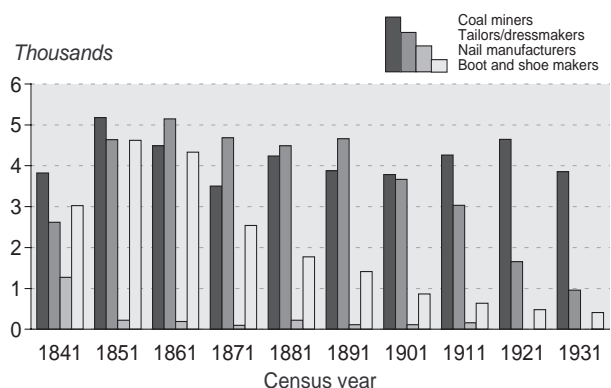
By 1991, there was one teacher per 58 people, one physician/surgeon per 535 people and one police officer per 557 people.

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

The graph clearly shows the high numbers of people employed in coal mining over the 1841 to 1931 period. In 1851, numbers of people employed as tailors, dressmakers and boot and shoemakers matched the numbers of coal miners. However, by 1931 the numbers employed in these professions had fallen considerably, whilst the number of coal miners had remained relatively stable.



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

Did you know?

- The population of Shropshire increased more than two-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in five households in Shropshire 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 Shropshire (excluding construction) increased twenty-fold – from 30 people to 610 people.
- In 1881, 12 per cent of Shropshire’s female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over four times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1861, there were 23 female domestic servants aged between 5 and 9 in Shropshire.
- In 1851 there were 4,649 boot and shoemakers in Shropshire.
- The rise in the population density of Shropshire has been modest. There were 0.3 people per acre in 1831, compared to 0.5 people per acre in 1991. This was below 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 Shropshire contained 5 people, compared to 2.6 in 1991. This was slightly higher than the 1991 GB average of 2.46 people per household.

The Census reports also contain interesting explanatory notes:

1831 – *“The preparation of iron for the forge is the principal manufacture in the County of Salop. At Hales-Owen, nearly 500 males of around twenty years of age are so employed and at Madeley half as many”.*

1851 – *“There are 1,597 persons enumerated as ‘paupers living in the workhouse’ of which 108 males and 94 females are under 5 years of age”.*

1871 – *“The decrease of population in the parish of Hopton in Cleobury Mortimer is attributed to the exhaustion of several of the coalpits and the consequent migration of the colliers”.*

1911 – *“The large increase in the population of Church Stretton Civil Parish is attributed mainly to its development as a health resort”.*

1921 – *“The numbers of persons aged 0 to 14 years who are orphans is 165 males and 178 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 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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