

200 years of the Census in...

SUFFOLK

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.

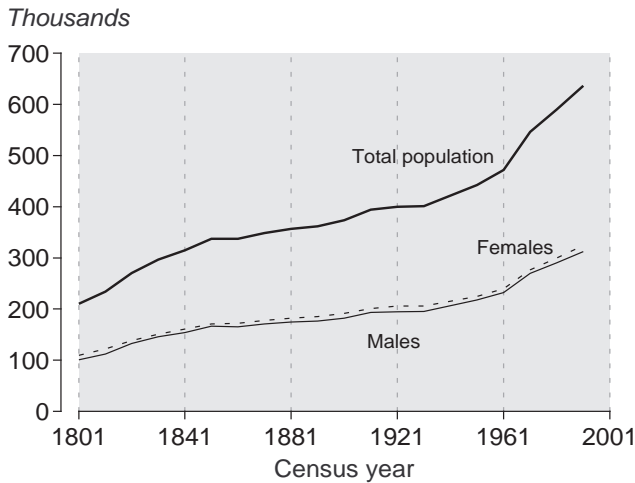
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

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, Suffolk has not been significantly affected by boundary changes.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	210,431	101,091	109,340
1811	na	234,211	111,988	122,223
1821	na	270,542	132,410	138,132
1831	918,760	296,317	145,769	150,548
1841	918,760	315,073	154,095	160,978
1851	947,681	337,215	166,308	170,907
1861	947,681	337,070	164,904	172,166
1871	949,825	348,869	171,166	177,703
1881	944,060	356,893	174,606	182,287
1891	947,724	361,790	176,263	185,527
1901	948,768	373,353	181,846	191,507
1911	948,269	394,060	193,376	200,684
1921	948,269	400,058	194,328	205,730
1931	948,269	401,114	195,477	205,637
1951	948,271	442,561	217,911	224,650
1961	948,271	471,974	232,143	239,831
1971	948,110	546,194	269,435	276,759
1981	938,147	590,133	290,344	299,789
1991	938,582	636,266	312,004	324,262

na = not available

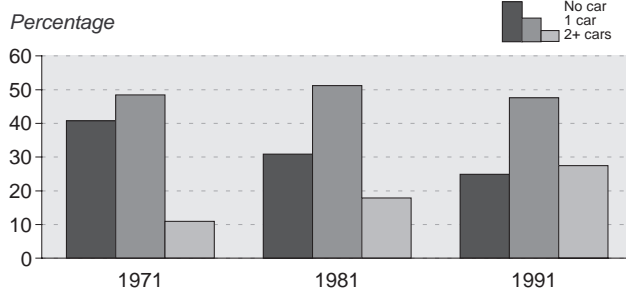
Households and Amenities

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 7,100 households in Suffolk were without a WC, compared to 42,529 households in 1951. By 1981, only 6,034 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	36,880	27.8
H/Holds without WC	42,529	32.1
H/Holds without fixed bath	70,564	53.3
H/Holds without kitchen sink	25,562	19.3
H/Holds without cooking stove	7,428	5.6
H/Holds with all five of the above	51,672	39.0

(Total Households in 1951 = 132,456)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time almost 60 per cent of households in Suffolk already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 15 percentage points to three-quarters of households (75%). There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

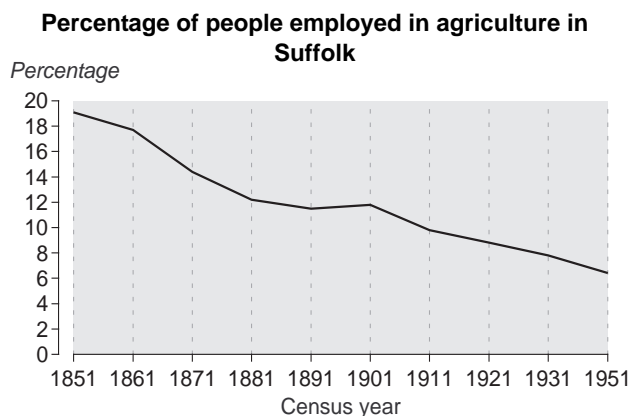
OCCUPATIONS

Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Suffolk the number of agricultural labourers fell from 43,518 in 1861 to 22,913 in 1931, a decrease of 47%.

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

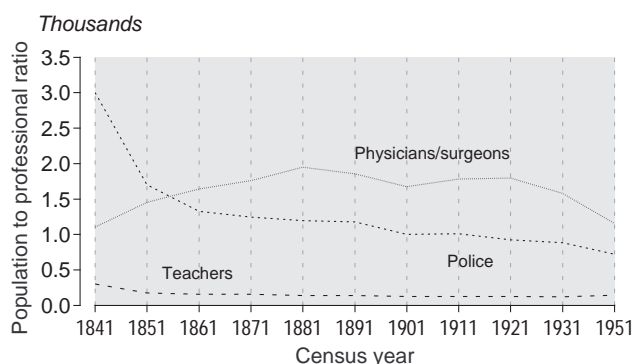
N.B. This analysis is based upon the number of people employed in agriculture as a percentage of the total population, not just the working population.



Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Suffolk, 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 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 1,700 people in 1851, dropping to 723 people in 1951.

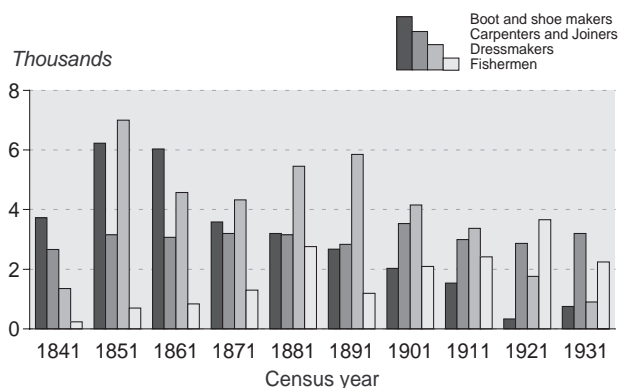
By 1991, there was one teacher per 74 people, one physician/surgeon per 767 people and one police officer per 439 people.

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

The number of carpenters and joiners was fairly stable throughout the period. The number of boot and shoemakers was high in 1851 and 1861, when over 6,000 people were employed in this way, but numbers then fell to below 1,000 by 1931. The numbers of dressmakers also declined from 1891. The number of fishermen/women varied over the period but showed growth overall. The erratic numbers may be explained by fishermen being away for some censuses (and so not counted) but at home for others.



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

Did you know ?

- The population of Suffolk increased three-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in six households in Suffolk 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 Suffolk (excluding construction) increased eight-fold – from 251 people to 2,035 people.
- In 1881, 9% of Suffolk’s female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over 27 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1851, there were 11 chimney sweeps aged between 10 and 14 in Suffolk.
- In 1891 there were 2,024 blacksmiths in Suffolk.
- There was a rise in the population density of Suffolk from 0.3 people per acre in 1831, to 0.7 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 Suffolk 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:

1841 – *“Returns for the county of Suffolk stated that 36 males and 23 females had emigrated to the colonies of foreign countries since December 31st 1840.”*

1861 – *“A decrease of population in the parishes of Orford and Sudbourne is attributed to the migration of families engaged in the shipping trade, in consequence to the opening of a railway in the neighbourhood.”*

1871 – *“The increase in population in Stow Upland and Stowmarket is ascribed to the establishment of gun-cotton works, malt kilns, paper works and a manure factory.”*

1871 – *“An increase of population and houses at Lowescroft is attributed to it’s popularity as a watering place and the success of it’s herring and trawling fishery.”*

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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