

200 years of the Census in...

DORSET

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.

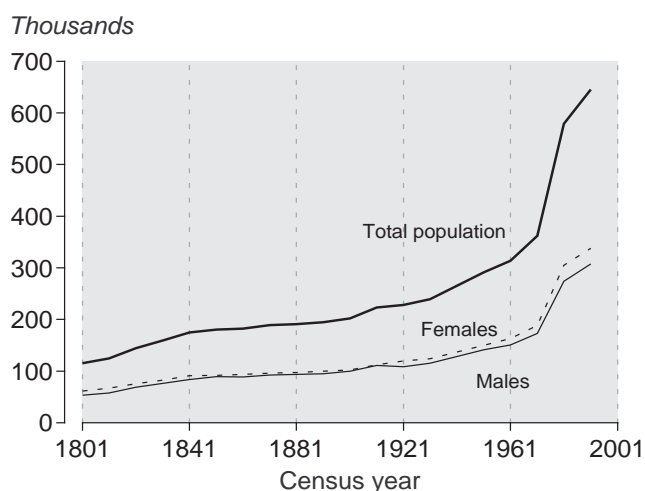
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

This table and chart show the various increases and decreases in area size and population, and numbers of males and females. There have been a number of boundary changes affecting Dorset over the years. The sudden increase in population between 1971 and 1981 is predominantly the effect of the 1974 Local Government Re-organisation on Dorset's boundaries. The main change was that Bournemouth and Christchurch became part of Dorset.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	115,319	53,667	61,652
1811	na	124,693	57,717	66,976
1821	na	144,499	68,934	75,565
1831	627,220	159,252	76,536	82,716
1841	627,220	175,043	83,554	91,489
1851	632,025	180,718	89,204	91,514
1861	632,025	182,193	88,707	93,486
1871	610,582	189,000	92,574	96,426
1881	627,265	191,028	93,736	97,292
1891	632,272	194,517	94,735	99,782
1901	625,578	202,063	99,637	102,426
1911	625,612	223,266	110,805	112,461
1921	656,612	228,160	108,709	119,451
1931	622,843	239,352	115,395	123,957
1951	623,744	291,323	141,266	150,057
1961	623,744	313,460	150,526	162,934
1971	625,749	361,919	173,293	188,626
1981	655,742	578,993	273,965	305,028
1991	655,492	645,166	307,589	337,577

na = not available

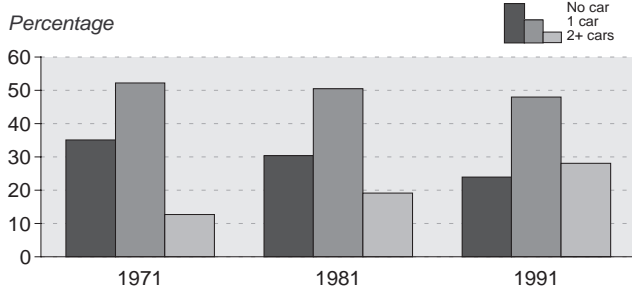
Households and Amenities

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 2,395 households in Dorset were without a WC, compared to 16,674 households in 1951. By 1981, only 2,436 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	9,660	11.4
H/Holds without WC	16,674	19.7
H/Holds without fixed bath	30,139	35.5
H/Holds without kitchen sink	9,815	11.6
H/Holds without cooking stove	2,103	2.5
H/Holds with all five of the above	45,917	54.1

(Total Households in 1951 = 84,818)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time almost 65 per cent of households in Dorset already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 11 percentage points to over three-quarters of households (76 %). There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

OCCUPATIONS

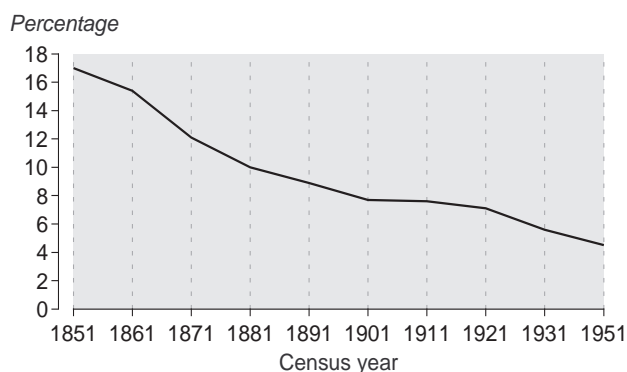
Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Dorset the number of agricultural labourers fell from 19,602 in 1861 to 7,605 in 1931, a decrease of 61%.

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

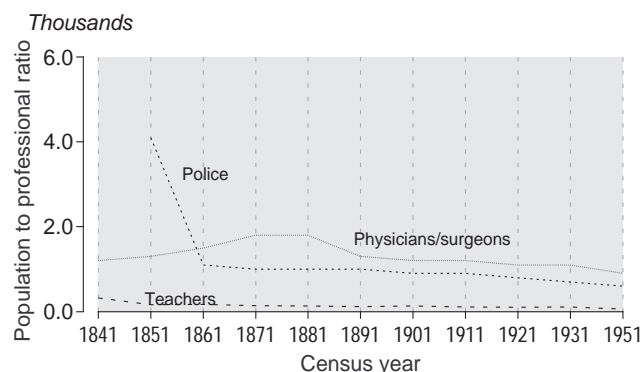
Percentage of people employed in agriculture in Dorset



Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Dorset, 1841-1951.

There have been changes in definition in what is included in each of these professions over the years.



Early figures for physicians and surgeons may be overstated as they included people employed in 'apothecary' (chemists) and medical students. Figures for the police in 1841 have not been included in the graph as there were so few of them in Dorset at the time.

Generally the numbers of people to each professional has fallen over the period. For example, there was one police officer per 4,107 people in 1851, dropping to 610 people in 1951.

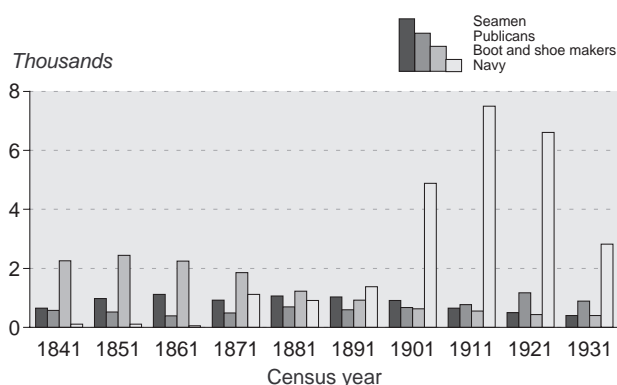
By 1991, there was one teacher per 77 people, one physician/surgeon per 777 people and one police officer per 512 people.

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

The high numbers of naval personnel enumerated within Dorset between 1901 and 1931 may be attributed to vessels in harbours or docks on Census night and also to residents of Portland Naval Base. Although not depicted on the graph, gardeners were a prominent occupation within Dorset, between 1851 and 1921 their numbers increased from 712 to 2,854.



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

Did you know ?

- The population of Dorset increased six-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in six households in Dorset 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 Dorset (excluding construction) increased by nearly twenty-fold – from 81 people to 1,607 people.
- In 1881, 9% of Dorset's female population were employed as indoor domestic servants. Over 17 times as many females were domestic servants as males.
- In 1861, there were 2 chimney sweeps aged between 5 and 9 in Dorset.
- In 1861 there were 1,117 seamen recorded in Dorset, whilst the highest number of publicans recorded for Dorset was 1,178 in 1921.
- There was a rise in the population density of Dorset from 0.2 people per acre in 1831, to just under 1 person per acre in 1991, which matched the GB average.
- The numbers of people per household has decreased over the last 200 years. In 1801 the average household in Dorset contained 5 people, compared to 2.4 in 1991, which was just under the 1991 GB average of 2.5 people per household.

The Census reports also contain interesting explanatory notes:

1831 - " At Abbotsbury 17 males are habitually employed in fishing, and in the fishing season most of the inhabitants.

1851 - "The Wareham and Purbeck Union Workhouse, situate in the Parish of Lady St.Mary Within, contained 93 persons in 1841 and 142 in 1851."

1851 - "the decrease of population in Okeford-Fitzpaine, Stoke-Wake, Woolland and Ibberton, is attributed to emigration, and to the removal of many agricultural labourers into other Parishes in search of employment."

1901 - " the increase in Hamworthy Civil Parish is mainly attributable to the re-opening since 1891 of tile and pottery works."

1921- " Road Transport workers formed 40 per 1000 males, a comparatively high proportion. Just over two thirds were drivers of vehicles and of these 56 per cent drove motor vehicles. Dorset in this respect resembling

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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