

200 years of the Census in...

WALES

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.

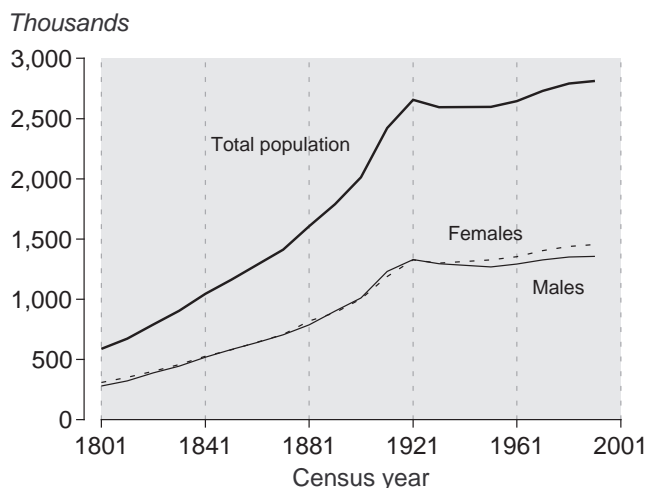
The Census is not only useful for planning. Two centuries of census taking have produced a record of remarkable changes in British society. For example, 90% of the population lived in urban areas in 1991 compared with just 16% in 1831. The average size of households has fallen by half in the past 100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

This table and chart show the various increases and decreases in area size and population, and numbers of males and females. There have been many boundary changes within Wales over the 200 years, which made it impractical to carry out this analysis at a lower geographical area. There have been a number of minor boundary changes between Wales and bordering counties in England, but these should not be significant in terms of analysing the growth in population over the 200 years.



Year	Area Size (Acres)	Total Population	Males	Females
1801	na	587,128	279,351	307,777
1811	na	673,337	322,335	351,002
1821	na	789,271	387,765	401,506
1831	na	904,312	445,658	458,654
1841	5,076,310	1,045,958	518,313	527,645
1851	5,092,885	1,163,139	581,840	581,299
1861	5,102,885	1,286,413	641,652	644,761
1871	5,090,222	1,412,583	706,048	706,535
1881	5,082,631	1,604,821	786,322	818,499
1891	5,121,013	1,788,639	900,955	887,684
1901	5,126,491	2,012,876	1,011,458	1,001,418
1911	5,127,734	2,420,921	1,231,739	1,189,182
1921	5,130,022	2,656,474	1,329,994	1,326,480
1931	5,130,086	2,593,332	1,293,805	1,299,527
1951	5,130,107	2,596,850	1,269,278	1,327,572
1961	5,130,107	2,644,023	1,291,764	1,352,259
1971	5,139,922	2,731,204	1,327,507	1,403,697
1981	5,131,854	2,790,500	1,352,000	1,438,500
1991	5,131,328	2,811,865	1,356,886	1,454,979

na = not available

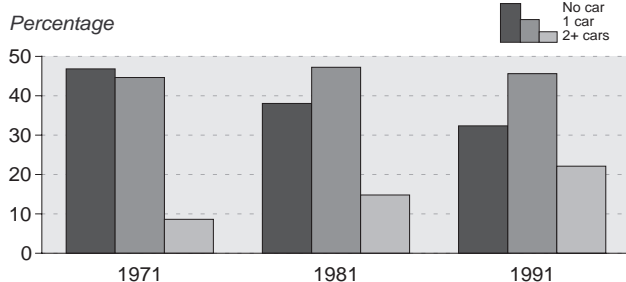
Households and Amenities

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 25,025 households in Wales were without a WC, compared to 115,237 households in 1951. By 1981, only 35,507 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	98,392	13.1
H/Holds without WC	115,237	15.4
H/Holds without fixed bath	370,976	49.4
H/Holds without kitchen sink	142,819	19.0
H/Holds without cooking stove	54,503	7.3
H/Holds with all five of the above	300,527	40

(Total Households in 1951 = 750,627)



Car Availability 1971 – 1991

A question on car availability was asked for the first time in 1971, by which time 53 per cent of households in Wales already had a car. At the time of the 1991 Census this had increased by a further 14 percentage points to 67 percent. There has also been a big increase in households with two or more cars since 1971.

OCCUPATIONS

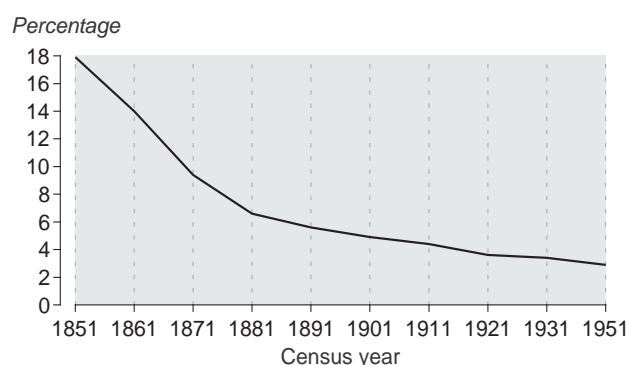
Agriculture

A general decline in the number of people employed in agriculture is common to many counties. In Wales the number of agricultural labourers fell from 41,671 in 1861 to 33,426 in 1931, a decrease of 20%.

By 1991, the number of farmers and agricultural labourers accounted for just over 1% of the population of Wales.

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..

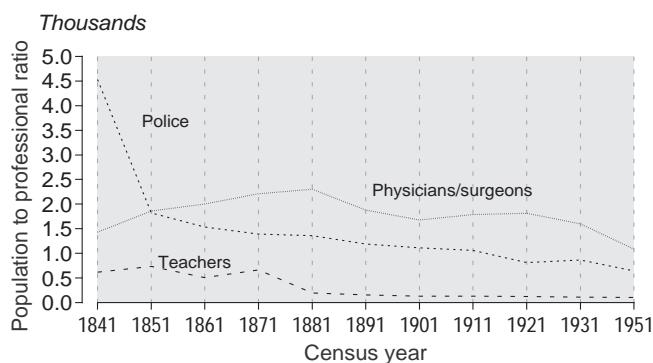
Percentage of people employed in agriculture in Wales



Professionals

This chart is based on a comparison between three professional occupations (physicians/surgeons, teachers and the police), and the total population of Wales, 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 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 4,500 people in 1851, dropping to 648 people in 1951.

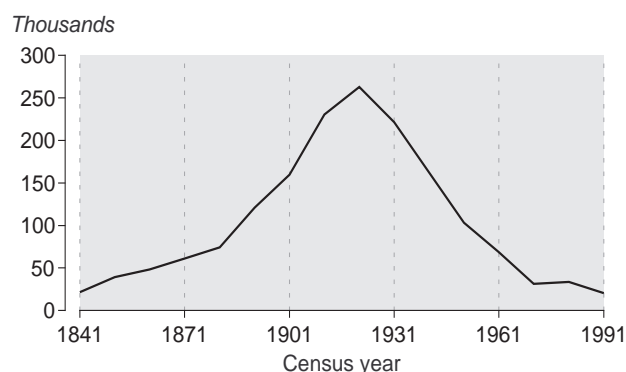
By 1991, there was one teacher per 66 people, one physician/surgeon per 579 people and one police officer per 397 people.

N.B. Figures between 1951 and 1991 have not been included due to problems with the availability and comparability of data between these years.

Coal mining in Wales

The number of coal miners in Wales increased from 1841 onwards, culminating in over 260,000 people working in the industry in 1921, almost one tenth of the entire population.

The number of people employed in coal mining declined from then onwards and by 1991, less than 1% of the population worked in this industry.



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

Welsh Language

A question on the Welsh language was asked for the first time in 1891 of people aged 3 years and over, and a question about Welsh language has been asked in every Census since.

From 1971 the question was modified to enquire if people could also read or write Welsh. The statistics have been published within a 1991 Census Welsh Language Monitor available on request from Census Customer Services at the address below. The 2001 Census will again ask whether people can speak, read or write Welsh. The 2001 Census forms and Information leaflets will be available in the Welsh language, and assistance on the Census 'Helpline' will be available in Welsh.

Year	Percentage of people able to speak Welsh only	Percentage of people able to speak Welsh and English	Percentage of people who did not speak Welsh
1891	30.1	23.9	46.0
1901	15.1	34.8	50.1
1911	8.5	35.0	56.5
1921	6.4	30.6	63.0
1931	4.0	32.8	63.2
1951	1.7	27.2	71.1
1961	1.0	24.2	74.8
1971	1.3	27.3	71.4

Did you Know?

- The population of Wales increased five-fold between 1801 to 1991.
- In 1991, one in five households in Wales did not have central heating, which was consistent with the GB average.
- There was a rise in the population density of Wales from 0.2 people per acre in 1831, to 0.5 people per acre in 1991. This well 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 Wales contained 6 people, compared to 2.4 in 1991. This was slightly lower than the 1991 GB average of 2.5 people per household.

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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