# 1851 England and Wales Census Registration Subdistricts GIS shapefile documentation

# by Max Satchell

**filename: 1851EngWalesRegistrationSubdistrict.shp**

ArcGIS shapefile of 3,316 polygons providing boundary and attribute data for the 2182 registration subdistricts of England and Wales as given in the 1851 census. These data derive from the 173 digital maps of the boundaries of English and Welsh parishes and their subdivisions produced by Roger Kain and Richard Oliver based on the listing in the 1851 census.[[1]](#footnote-1) The maps were subsequently converted into a single GIS by Burton *et al*.[[2]](#footnote-2) The GIS attribute data were checked, edited and enhanced with extra data from the census by Max Satchell, Tony Wrigley and a small army of research assistants with technical support from Peter Kitson and Gill Newton. This work was undertaken as part of *The changing occupational structure of nineteenth century Britain* project funded by the E.S.R.C. – RES-000-23-1579 and directed by Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Tony Wrigley. Max Satchell checked and in some cases digitised GIS polygon data using a variety of cartographic and documentary sources. Of these the most important were digital scans of the Ordnance Survey first edition 1:2500 and 1:10560 maps from the Landmark Group distributed by Edina[[3]](#footnote-3), the series of maps of registration districts and subdistricts boundaries prepared for the Registrar General prior to the censuses of 1861, 1871 and 1891 and the description of enumeration district boundaries given in the Census Enumerators Books for the censuses from 1851, 1861 and 1871. The 1:63,360 maps and Census Enumerators Books are held in The National Archives, Kew (TNA, RG 18/3-155, 198-227, HO 107, RG 9, RG 10).

The work involved changing one or more elements of information about place, parish, county, or three figure census number for 2,461 (10.8 per cent) of 22,729 lines of data in the Kain and Oliver GIS. This editing process saw the redigitisation of 644 of the 22,729 polygons, the deletion of 81 polygons, and the digitisation of 525 new polygons. The upshot of this exercise was that at its end all 23,173 polygons could be assigned to a registration county, only two polygons could not be assigned to a registration district and only five could not be assigned to a registration subdistrict. Details of these five polygons are given in the separate excel file: 1851EngWalesRegistrationSubdistrictAnomalies.xls. This file can be cross referenced against the shapefile using the field called "ID".

The work was aided by an Emeritus Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust, two British Academy Small Research Grants (SG 40833, SG 42909) awarded to Tony Wrigley with further funding under the British Academy's Research Project scheme (BARP) awarded to Leigh Shaw-Taylor. Our thanks go out to these organisations and to the Landmark Group and Edina for supplying the Ordnance Survey data. The shapefile comprises the standard ArcGIS .shx, .shp, .sbx, .sbn, .prj and .dbf files. The dbf file is described below.

**Attribute data**

The attributes of the registration subdistrict shapefile reflect the structure of the population tables of volume 1 and 2 of the 1851 census of Great Britain. Each polygon has in its attributes the standard hierarchy of registration units and their numbers which range from subdistricts, districts, counties, divisions to countries.[[4]](#footnote-4) The registration district and subdistrict numbers (CEN1, CEN2, CEN1\_2) derive from the original Kain and Oliver dataset but have been thoroughly checked and edited. All the other registration unit data was added to the dataset by Max Satchell.

#### 1851EngWalesRegistrationSubdistrict.dbf

The dbf table contains the following fields.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Field* | *Data type* | *Description* |
| **FID** | Object ID | Unique ID for each row in the table |
| **Shape** | Polygon | Polygon/s for each registration subdistrict as per the 1851 census |
| **ID** | Long | Fixed unique identifier  |
| **CEN1** | Text | Registration district number as per the 1851 census |
| **CEN2** | Double | Registration subdistrict number as per the 1851 census as per the 1851 census |
| **CEN1\_2** | Text | Consolidated registration district number and subdistrict number  |
| **R\_SDIST** | Text | Registration subdistrict name as per the 1851 census |
| **R\_DIST** | Text | Registration district name as per the 1851 census |
| **R\_CTY** | Text | Registration county name as per the 1851 census |
| **R\_DIVNO** | Text | Registration division number as per the 1851 census |
| **R\_DIV** | Text | Registration division name as per the 1851 census |
| **R\_CTRY** | Text | Registration country name as per the 1851 census |

### Co-ordinate system

British\_National\_Grid

Projection: Transverse\_Mercator

False\_Easting: 400000.000000

False\_Northing: -100000.000000

Central\_Meridian: -2.000000

Scale\_Factor: 0.999601

Latitude\_Of\_Origin: 49.000000

Linear Unit: Meter

GCS\_OSGB\_1936

Datum: D\_OSGB\_1936

**Citation guidelines**

Satchell, M., Shaw-Taylor, L., Wrigley E.A., 1851 England and Wales Census Registration Subdistricts shapefile (2017). This dataset was created with funding from the ESRC (RES-000-23-1579), the Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy. The Satchell *et al* dataset derives from an enhanced version of Burton, N., Westwood J., and Carter P., GIS of the ancient parishes of England and Wales, 1500-1850. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive (May 2004), SN 4828, which is a GIS version of Kain, R.J.P., and Oliver, R.R., Historic parishes of England and Wales: An electronic map of boundaries before 1850 with a gazetteer and metadata. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive, May, 2001. SN 4348. A description of the dataset can be found in Satchell, M, 1851 England and Wales Census Registration Subdistricts GIS shapefile documentation (2017, 2006) available at: http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/datasets/documentation.html

**Optional extra**

**Citation notes**

1 If on a second reference to the dataset you need an abbreviated reference, our suggestion is Satchell *et al*, 1851EWRSDshp. 1851EWRSDshp stands for 1851 England and Wales Registration Subdistricts shapefile.

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**Errors and further corrections**

Collectively the research teams led by Roger Kain, Humphrey Southall and Leigh Shaw-Taylor have contributed many thousands of hours to create this GIS and have struggled to make it as accurate as possible. However, we remain interested in refining it still further. If you spot something that is wrong with the county boundaries, please email details to campop@geog.cam.ac.uk.

1. R.J.P. Kain and R.R. Oliver, *Historic parishes of England and Wales: An electronic map of boundaries before 1850 with a gazetteer and metadata*. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive, May, 2001. SN 4348 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. N. Burton *et al.*, *GIS of the ancient parishes of England and Wales, 1500-1850.* Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive, May, 2004. SN 4828 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Edina is the JISC national academic data centre based at the University of Edinburgh: http://edina.ac.uk/. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. British Parliamentary Papers, 'Population Tables, 1851, Part I. Numbers of Inhabitants, in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851. Volume I. England and Wales, I-VII', 1852-3, Vol. LXXXV, C.1631; 'Population Tables, 1851, Part I. Number of Inhabitants in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851. Volume II. England and Wales, VIII-XI; Scotland; Appendix', 1852-3, Vol. LXXXVI, C.1632. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)