

## FreeCEN Newsletter – March 2026

Hello All

Welcome to the FreeCEN newsletter for March, and 39 new pieces have been added to the website since the last edition, around 175,000 entries between these pieces. Details at the end of this newsletter.

Congratulations to the Wiltshire team of transcribers as the 1851 census for the county is now complete and all pieces now part of the online searchable database.

These newsletters are sent on a monthly basis, and are usually sent out around the 4th of the month.

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## Contribution Guidelines

Contributions are welcome, and all received are considered. These should be emailed to [Chris Mahoney](mailto:chris.mahoney@freeukgenealogy.org.uk) (chris.mahoney@freeukgenealogy.org.uk).

They can be in any format, but I do have three particular requests with contributions.

1. Please do include a scanned image of the census record referred to (if appropriate) along with relevant source information (i.e. piece number, folio number, page number, and schedule number)
2. With any images, please include copies in their original format such as jpg or png (much easier to work with than copying one out of your article)
3. If you have quoted another source (or copied an image from somewhere), please quote what that source is

## Previous FreeCEN Newsletters

Past editions of the newsletter are [now available to download](#) from the FreeCEN website. Or go to the “About” page, and then look on the right hand side under “See Also”.

The previous twelve are there now, all in downloadable PDF format (can also be read in some internet browsers). Older editions available on request.

## Volunteer for FreeCEN

Like what you see in these newsletters? Has our website helped you with your family research? Then please consider helping to expand our database. We have plenty of coordinators who would welcome you as a member of their team.

You need only basic computer skills and you can use any spreadsheet app. We provide plenty of help and support. We also supply the scans.

Use this link to the [Volunteer page](#) or select “Volunteer” in the purple menu bar near the top of any page on the website.

## **News from Denise Colbert (Q4 2025)**

(Chief Operating Officer, Free UK Genealogy CIO)

Hello everyone,

As the year draws to a close, I wanted to share an update on what we've been working on during the final quarter of 2025. It's been a particularly full few months, bringing together a lot of the preparation and groundwork laid earlier in the year.

October began with our Strategy Weekend, which brought volunteers, trustees, and staff together both in Birmingham and online. The weekend gave us valuable time and space to reflect on where we are as an organisation, review progress against our pillars of Quality, Value, and Growth, and think carefully about what we want the coming years to look like. The discussions covered everything from project priorities and volunteer experience to culture, community, and how we work together across Free UK Genealogy. I very much enjoyed meeting some of our wonderfully dedicated volunteers and I'm so grateful to everyone who took part to help make it such a constructive and thoughtful event.

FreePRO (FreePROBATE) continued to move forward this quarter on several fronts. Earlier in the autumn, we were delighted to learn that FreePRO had been selected to receive £5,000 of Champion funding for the Big Give Christmas Challenge, following the successful completion of our £10,000 pledge target. During the campaign week itself (2–9 December), we reached 83% of our £30,000 target, and once Gift Aid is included we actually exceeded this! With thanks to all of our volunteers who contributed to this fantastic result: it's a real testament to the generosity and belief our community has in the project.

Alongside fundraising, technical and editorial work has continued steadily, helping prepare FreePRO for its next phase and future volunteer involvement. As FreePRO moves towards its pilot phase, we'll soon be looking for a small group of volunteers to help us test and shape how the project will work in practice. This will include working with samples of our probate data, helping refine workflows, and feeding back on tools and processes as we prepare for wider rollout. If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, please contact [FreePRO.volunteers@freeukgenealogy.org.uk](mailto:FreePRO.volunteers@freeukgenealogy.org.uk) and let us know you'd like to be involved.

You're right to flag this, and I'm sorry I missed it.

Why it happened: when I rewrote the Q4 FreeBMD2 paragraph earlier, I leaned on the general "launch + stabilisation" storyline, but I didn't ground it in the FreeBMD2 comms materials and the post-launch discussions, where the blog post is explicitly part of the strategy and messaging (especially reassurance about FreeBMD1). That blog post is clearly important, both for user confidence and because it appears to have had a measurable impact on sustained engagement.

FreeBMD2 was officially released this quarter, and it took a huge amount of work to get it over the line and then support it properly once it was live. A significant focus since launch has been on addressing performance and speed, which were key concerns in the early feedback. I'm pleased to say that the site is now running much faster, and the improvements made over the quarter have had a noticeable impact on usability. Alongside this technical work, we published a blog post and wider launch communications to reassure users that FreeBMD1 remains available, while FreeBMD2 continues to be improved and developed. This messaging has been an important part of helping users understand that the new site is a step forward, built carefully and respectfully alongside the existing service. My thanks go to the volunteer developers and others who worked tirelessly on these improvements. At the same time, we've continued to think about the long-term sustainability of FreeBMD, including how we balance income generation with a good user experience, so the service remains free and viable for the future.

Across FreeREG and FreeCEN, volunteers have continued to add, review, and improve records throughout the quarter. Work has also continued behind the scenes on improving processes and tools, including ongoing development of FreeComETT, our new transcription tool for FreeREG. While progress here is gradual, the aim remains clear: to make transcription easier, more accessible, and better supported over time.

Much of this quarter has also been about looking ahead. Planning for future volunteer needs, including how we recruit and support volunteers for FreePRO, has begun, and we're starting to think about how ideas discussed at the Strategy Weekend can be turned into practical actions in 2026.

As we close out the year, I want to thank you all for the time, care, and commitment you bring to Free UK Genealogy. Whether you contribute records, support others, develop tools, or help shape our direction, your involvement makes everything we do possible. I'm looking forward to building on this work together in the year ahead.

With thanks for everything you do,  
Denise Colbert  
Chief Operating Officer  
Free UK Genealogy CIO

## **FreeCEN Vacancies**

If you are interested in becoming one of our county coordinators, then this is for you as we have some roles that we would like to fill. Experience at transcribing and proofreading for FreeCEN is preferable. Help and support is available if needed.

We have the following vacancies at present:

### **Hereford**

County has been inactive for a while so no active transcribers at this time. One year is fully transcribed with some pieces from other years also complete. We do have scans we can supply you with.

### **Nottingham**

County has six years fully transcribed. There are a small number of transcribers working on the remaining two years. We do have scans we can supply you with.

### **Sussex**

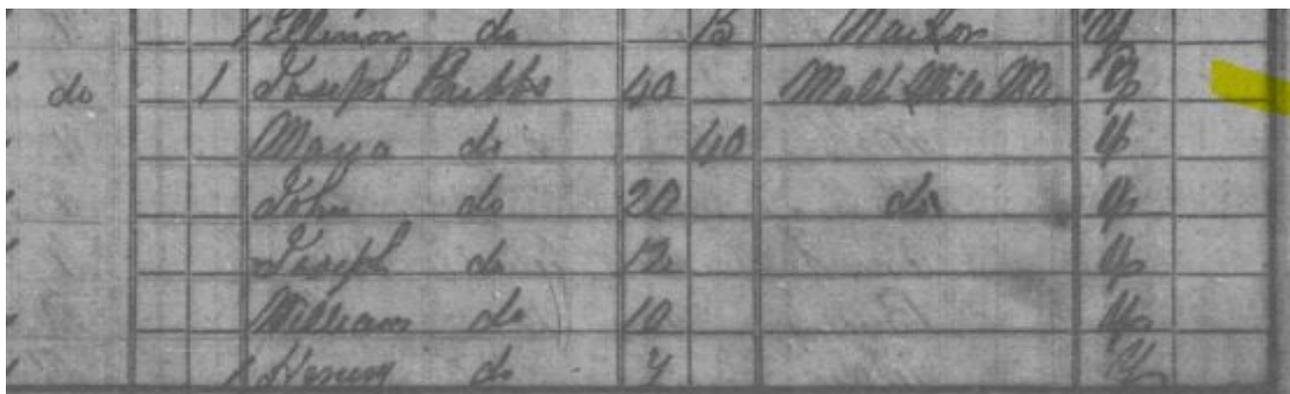
County has no coordinator at present, and has been vacant for a while, so no active transcribers at this time. Three years are fully transcribed, with another close to it. Some of the uploaded pieces however do need re-validating (but we may already have someone to do these re-validations). We do have scans we can supply you with.

If you are interested in taking on one of these counties, or would like to know more, please let us know.

## Unusual Occupations in 1841 Census

(Lesley Haldane)

I am transcribing part of the 1841 census and have come across some very unusual occupations, some of which I haven't been able to solve but this one for Malt Mill Maker really got to me and I managed to find out about it.



do	1	Joseph Bartlett	40	Malt-Mill M.	10/2
		Maya do	40		4
		John do	20	do	4
		Joseph do	13		4
		William do	10		4
		Henry do	4		4

(from the 1841 census of Worcester, district of Dudley)

According to:

- Wrightons Directory of Birmingham 1839 there was a John Bartleet Malt Mill Maker at 10 Court Deritend.
- Jones Mercantile Directory of Birmingham 1865 there was a John Bartlett Steel Mill and Hop Press manufacturer 10 Court High Street Deritend (probably John Bartlett jnr)
- Post Office Directory 1875 John Bartlett jnr Hop Press Maker 39 High Street Deritend
- Hulley's Birmingham Directory 1881 John Bartlett jnr Steel Mill Manufacturer 39½ High Street Deritend. Home Address 7 Arthur Street Deritend which also shows on the 1871 Census.
- Kelly's Directory of Birmingham Streets and Suburbs and Court Sections John Bartlett jnr Hop Press Maker No 39 High Street No 9 Court. High Street Deritend 73 Digbeth to High Street Bordesley.

A Dictionary of Old Occupations has:

“A malt mill maker, in a historical or engineering context, is traditionally known as a Millwright, a specialized tradesperson who designed, built, and installed industrial machinery like watermills or grain mills. In modern brewing and production, the professional responsible for operating or maintaining the equipment that crushes malted barley is often referred to as a Maltster, Brewery Worker, or Grain Mill Operator.”

## Boys Refuge and Industrial School

(from Merle Drury)

I am currently transcribing Lancashire Liverpool 1891 and came across the ‘Boys Refuge and Industrial School’ in St Annes Street which, when I researched it, told a very interesting story.

119	62, 4 <sup>th</sup> Anne St. 1	John Willson	committed	Wharfedale	18	Nil	St Helens	Lancashire
	Boys Refuge and School	Thomas Galt	00		15	St. 00	00	00
	Committed	John Gough	00		14	00	Preston	00
		Michael Connor	00		18	00	Barnley	00
		William Birchall	00		15	St. 00	St. Helens	00
		Christian Lott	00		14	00	00	00
		Arthur Jones	00		15	St. 00	Warrington	00
		John Brund	00		15	00	St Helens	00

(Extract of Piece RG12\_2922 with the start of the first schedule covering the school)

Created by a Catholic priest in 1865 to ‘save destitute and homeless street boys from want, ignorance and crime’ it was later certified as an Industrial School which allowed it to home boys whom magistrates had committed to a period of detention. The crafts and trades taught were printing, tailoring, shoemaking and paper-bag making and later went on to include cooking and carpentry. A boys band was also established.

		(A)	B	MARRIAGE		C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
				Male	Female								
121	62	J. Ames St.	Henry Pudgeon	Head	ch	40	Superintendent of School	X					Suffolk, Suffolk
		Boys Refuge, Col.	Agnes do	Wife	ch	39	Matron of School	X					Beland, Newmarket, Suffolk
			William Higham		wid	32	Domestic of do	X					Manchester
			Henry Richmond		y	21	Matron Tailor of School	X					Prater
			James M. Fairman		ch	15	do. Shoemaker do	X					Liverpool
			William Smith		ch	13	Cook of do						do.
			Samuel Kelly	Servant	wid	53	Domestic Servant	X					Dublin, Arklow

(Schedule with staff of school)

Under the care of the Catholic Brothers there were complaints of lack of hygiene and overcrowding so, in 1866 a change of regime brought about better standards of cleanliness and education. The junior classes were taught knitting and knitted and darned the socks for all of the boys – the age range was from 7 years to 16 years. At the time of the 1891 census there were a total of 138 boys of whom the majority were ‘committed inmates’ and just 14 listed as ‘voluntary inmates’.

The Children’s Homes website has the [full and interesting history](#).

## “British” as a place name

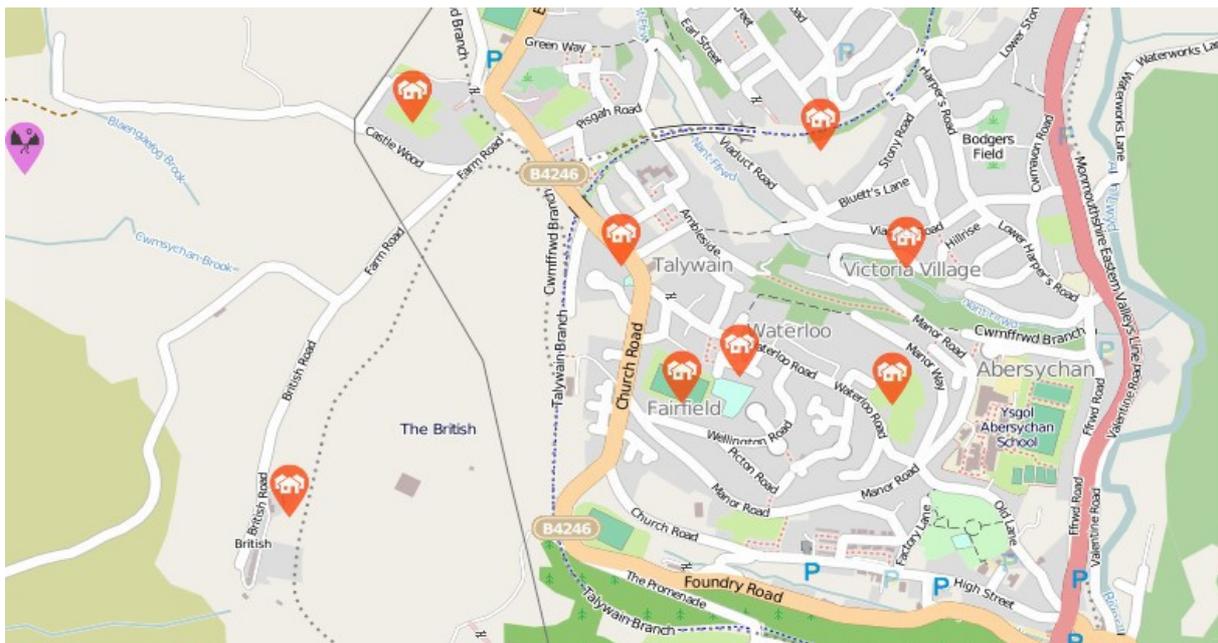
(From Chris Mahoney with research from Ann Rogers and Brian Collins)

Recently seen a few times on pieces I have been validating for the Monmouth 1871 census the name “British” had been enumerated as a person's place of birth. First thought was that either the enumerator had made a mistake or it was a misinterpretation by the transcriber of a name from a bad scan. However the following appearance of the name leaves little doubt that it has been transcribed correctly.

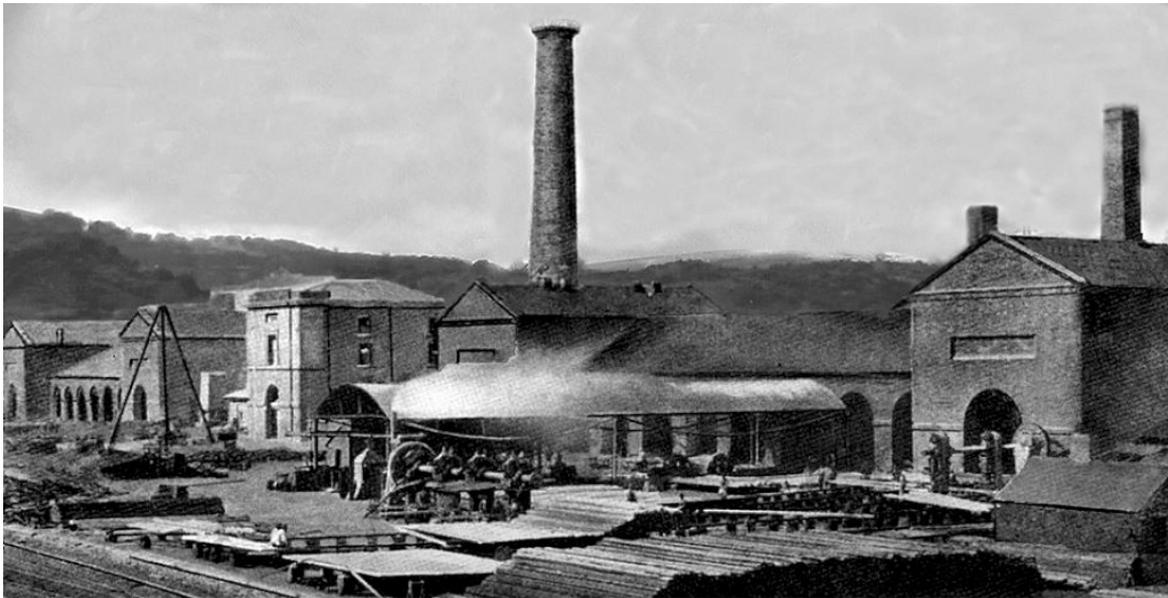
71	10	Do	1	Annell Oldeman	Daughter	Mar	38	Laundress	Monmouth Tredegar
				Daniel Ryan	Head	Mar	27	Labourer	York Ireland
				Marcy Ryan	Wife	Mar	30		do do
				John Sullivan	Son	Mar	20	Labourer	do do
				Julia Sullivan	Step-Daughter		9	Scholar	Yorkshire Africa
				Daniel Ryan	Son		11mo		Monmouth Tredegar
				Michael Phillips	Boarder	Mar	30	Labourer	do British
72				Daniel Hecks	Head	Mar	25	Labourer	York Ireland
				Do	Wife	Mar	22		do do

(Extract of 1871 piece RG10\_5319 for the town of Tredegar)

Various maps do show British thus leaving little doubt that the place does actually exist. Take the following from the “Gazetteer of British Place Names” for example.



According to the [“Industrial Gwent” website](#), the village of British was established around 1825 to provide housing for the nearby iron works and the surrounding collieries. Production at the iron works ceased in 1881.



(Artist impression of how The British Iron Works may have looked at the time it was operating)

The village lasted some time after the closure of the iron works as can be seen from the below photo from the 1950s. Plans to redevelop the village never eventuated and today only one row of houses survives.



## Pieces Uploaded during February 2026

County	Year	Piece	Location	Civil Parishes	Number of Entries
Anglesey	1841	HO107_1358	Llyfon	Bodedern, Bodwrog, Ceirchiog, Llanbeulan (Llanerchymedd), Llandrygarn (Gwyndy), Llanfaelog (Pengornisiog), Llanfair yn Neubwll, Llanfihangel Yn Nhowyn, Llanllibio, Llantrisant (Gwredog), Llanynghenedl, Llechcynfarwy (Llanerchymedd), Llechylched, Trewalchmai (Cemas-Coed; Gwalchmai)	6,597
Cardiganshire	1871	RG10_5550	Pencarreg	Cellan, Llanfair Clydogau	1,122
Cardiganshire	1871	RG10_5551	Lampeter	Betws Bledrws, Lampeter Pont Stephen (Trefycoed), Llanygyby, Silian, Trefilan	2,880
Cardiganshire	1871	RG10_5553	Llandysiliogogo	Dihewyd, Llanarth	2,052
Cardiganshire	1871	RG10_5554	Llandysiliogogo	Llanarth, Llandysiliogogo	1,814
Carmarthenshire	1861	RG9_4148A	Amroth	Cyffig, Eglwys Cymyn, Henllan Amgoed(Henllanamgoed), Marros, Pendine	1,219
Carmarthenshire	1871	RG10_5464	Loughor	Llanelly, (Berwick), Llangennech, Loughor	5,364

Carmarthenshire	1871	RG10_5470	Pembrey	Kidwelly St Mary Within, Kidwelly St Mary Without, Pembrey	3,335
Carmarthenshire	1871	RG10_5488	Llandebie	Llandebie, Llandeilo Fawr, Llanfihangel Aberbythych	3,065
Carmarthenshire	1871	RG10_5494	St Clears	Laugharne, St Clears	1,865
Carmarthenshire	1871	RG10_5550A	Pencarreg	Llan Y Crwys, (Forest;Mynachty), Pencarreg	1,709
Dorset	1851	HO107_1850A	Mere	Gillingham, (Bourton), Silton	1,335
Essex	1841	HO107_340	Uttlesford	Arkesden, Birchanger, Chrishall, Debden, Elmdon, Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Great Chishill, Henham, Heydon, Little Chesterford, Little Chishill, Littlebury, Newport, Quendon, Rickling, Stansted Mountfitchet, Strethall, Takeley, Wendens Ambo, Wendon Lofts, Wicken Bonhunt, Widdington, Wimbish(Thunderley)	8,582
Essex	1861	RG9_1082	Great Baddow	Danbury, Great Baddow, Little Baddow (Middlemead), Sandon, Springfield	6,786
Essex	1861	RG9_1100	Colchester Third Ward	Colchester All Saints, Colchester Greenstead, Colchester St James, Colchester St Leonard, Colchester St Mary Magdalen, Colchester St Nicholas	6,562
Flintshire	1901	RG13_5235A	St Asaph	Prestatyn, Tynyrallt	1,275
Glamorganshire	1871	RG10_5399	Upper Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil	6,397

Hampshire	1841	HO107_382A	Alton	East Worldham, Hartley Mauditt, Headley, Holybourne, Kingsley, Neatham, Shalden, West Worldham	2,870
Hertfordshire	1891	RG12_1096	Sawbridgeworth	High Wych, Sawbridgeworth, Thorley	3,615
Hertfordshire	1891	RG12_1109	Watton	Aston, Bennington, Datchworth, Hebing End, Sacombe, Stapleford, Walkern, Watton	4,007
Lancashire	1891	RG12_3120	Great Bolton	Great Bolton	15,041
Lincolnshire	1851	HO107_2116	Brigg	Barnetby le Wold, Broughton (Castlethorpe; Gokewell; Manby), Cadney cum Housham, Croxton, Elsham, Hibaldstow, Kirmington, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton (Cleatham; Manton; Twigmore), Melton Ross, Newstead, Redbourne, Scawby cum Sturton, Worlaby, Wrawby (Glanford Brigg; Wrawby)	12,398
Middlesex	1861	RG9_763	Sunbury	Hanworth, Sunbury(Charlton;Upper Halliford)	3,152
Norfolk	1841	HO107_758B	Earsham	Alburgh, Billingford, Brockdish, Denton, Earsham, Mendham, Needham, Pulham St Mary Magdalen, Pulham St Mary the Virgin, Redenhall (Harleston), Rushall, Starston, Thorpe Abbotts, Wortwell	8,584
Norfolk	1841	HO107_784	Tunstead	Ashmanhaugh, Bacton, Barton Turf, Beeston St Lawrence, Bradfield, Crostwight, Dilham, Edingthorpe, Felmingham, Honing, Horning, Hoveton St John, Hoveton St Peter, Irstead, Neatishead, North Walsham, Paston, Ridlington, Sco Ruston, Sloley, Smallburgh, Swafield, Tunstead, Westwick, Witton, Worstead	10,916

Northumberland	1851	HO107_2412A	Blyth	Earsdon, (Newsham; South Blyth), Horton (Bebside; Cowpen; East Hartford; Horton; West Hartford), St Andrew (Cramlington)	10,276
Pembrokeshire	1861	RG9_4148	Amroth	Amroth, Crunwear, Llangan, Ludchurch	2,069
Somerset	1851	HO107_1841AA	Bradford South Eastern	Freshford	641
Somerset	1851	HO107_1850AA	Mere	Kilminster, (Norton Ferris)	644
Somerset	1911	RG14_14281	Bridgwater	Bridgwater	1,349
Wiltshire	1851	HO107_1848	Wilton	Berwick St James, Fisherton De La Mere (Bapton), Fugglestone St Peter (Bemerton), Great Wishford, Little Langford, Netherhampton, South Newton (Burdens-Ball; Chilhampton; Little Wishford; Stoford; Ugford), St Peter or Foylestone (Quidhampton), Stapleford, Steeple Langford (Great Bathampton; Hanging-Langford; Little Bathampton), Wilton, Wylke (Deptford)	5,759
Wiltshire	1851	HO107_1848A	Bishopstone	Barford St Martin, Baverstock (Hurdcott), Bishopstone (Crouchston; Faulston; Hamston; Netton; Pitts; Throope), Bowerchalke, Broad Chalke (Knighton; Stoke-Fathing), Burcombe (Ditchampton; North Burcombe), Compton Chamberlayne, Dinton, Ebbesbourne Wake, Fifield Bavant, Fovant, Groveley Wood	5,045

Wiltshire	1851	HO107_1849	Donhead	Alvediston, Berwick St John, Donhead St Andrew, Donhead St Mary (Charlton; Dognal; Heystone), Semley, Tollard Royal (Tollard-Royal)	4,327
Wiltshire	1851	HO107_1849A	Tisbury	Ansty, East Tisbury (Chicksgrave; Staple; Tisbury), Sutton Mandeville, Swallowcliffe, Wardour (Chicksgrave; Hatch; Staple; Tisbury), West Tisbury (Hatch; Tisbury)	3,322
Wiltshire	1851	HO107_1849B	Hindon	Berwick St Leonard, Chicklade, Chilmark (Ridge), Fonthill Bishop, Fonthill Gifford, Hindon, Teffont Evias, Teffont Magna	2,585
Wiltshire	1851	HO107_1850	Mere	East Knoyle, (Knoyle; Milton;Upton), Kingston Deverill, Maiden Bradley (Yarnfield), Mere (Chaddenwicke; Mere Town; Woodlands; Zeals), Monkton Deverill, Sedgehill, Stourton (Brook or Gasper; Stourton), Upper Pertwood, West Knoyle	6,489
Worcestershire	1861	RG9_2106	Pershore	Fladbury, (Wyre Piddle), Norton by Kimpsey, St Andrew Pershore (Pensham; Pinvin; St Andrew Pershore), Stoulton, Worcester St Peter (Whittington)	2,982
Yorkshire North Riding	1871	RG10_4893A	Yarm	Middlesbrough	3,241
Yorkshire North Riding	1871	RG10_4894A	Yarm	Middlesbrough	3,438

## Table Notes

- If the piece number has a letter after it, then this suggests that the upload may only include some of the listed districts for the piece, but not necessarily all of them.

## FreeCEN1

The last reported update to our old website at [FreeCEN1](#) took place on July 6th 2021. Further updates to this website have been discontinued, and any new uploads of completed pieces will take place on FreeCEN2 only.

We expect that the old website will be taken off-line at some point.