

Oxfordshire

THE HENLEY CENSUS GROUP

The Henley Census Group was set up in 2007 as part of the Henley EPE project. Members are transcribing the censuses for 1841-1901 for selected parts of the town, focusing on the historic core, but also including the southern suburbs along Reading Road and south of Friday Street, which were mostly built up during the 19th and early 20th century.

Part of the Group's work involves trying to link the census entries with actual buildings. This is not as straightforward as it seems, since most Henley censuses before 1901 do not give house numbers or names. Even counting houses along a street is not always reliable, since houses were sometimes subdivided or amalgamated. Fixed points such as pubs can sometimes provide the key, while shops or trade premises can sometimes be identified from old photographs or from entries in printed Trades Directories. Large-scale Ordnance Survey maps are particularly useful, especially those which are nearly contemporary with the census being examined.

Fieldwork is another important element. A couple of initial Fieldwork Days were set up as part of the EPE project, and Group members have since paid repeated visits to 'their' census streets, trying to match up the buildings with the census entries.



Members of the Henley Census Group relax during a day of fieldwork around the town (left), and (right) celebrate the Group's first Christmas. Historical research need not be all hard slog!

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