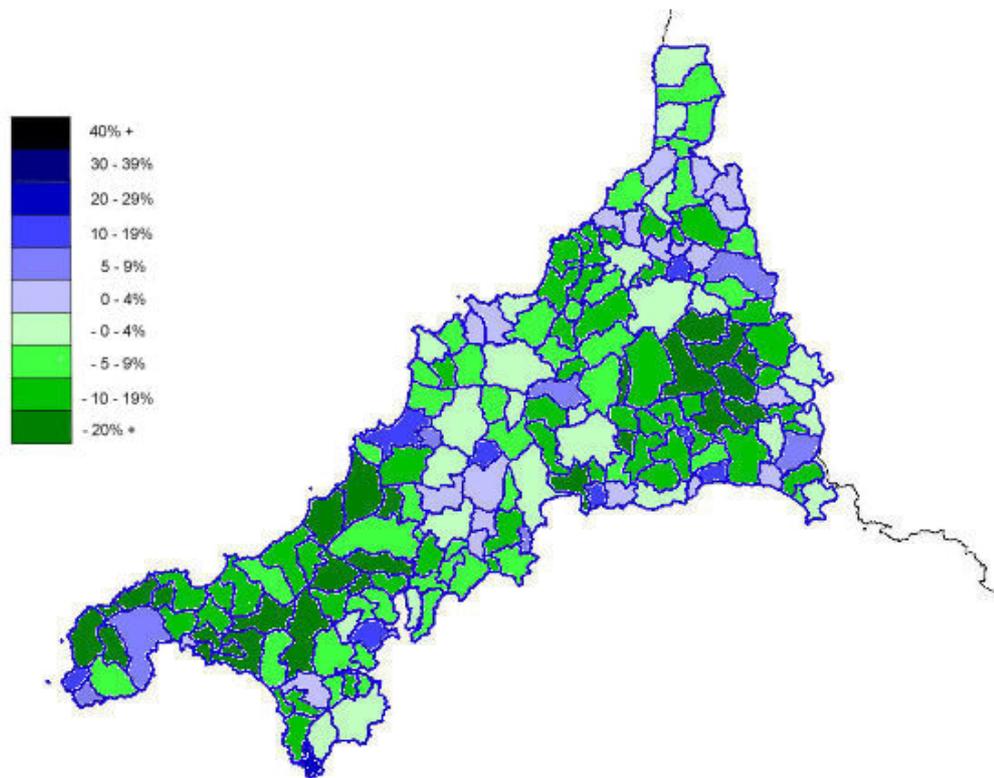


Population change in Cornwall 1871-1901

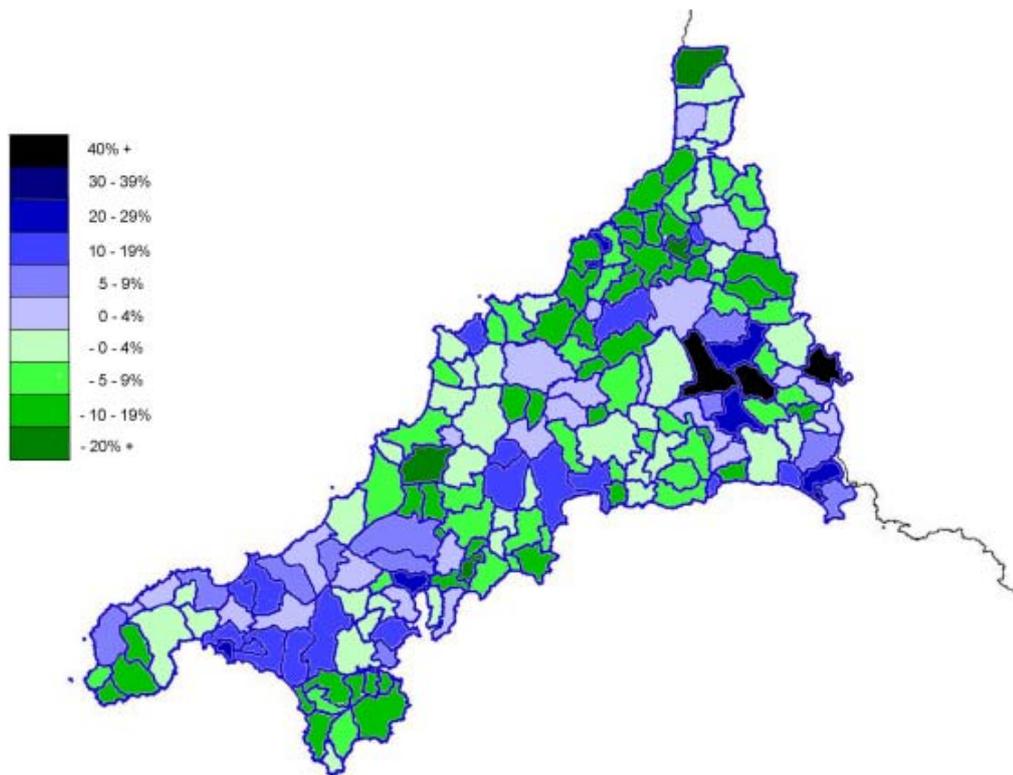
1871-81

The 1870s was Cornwall's crisis decade. Population fell abruptly by 8.6% as out-migration peaked. The decade was unusual in other ways too. It was the only period between the 1830s and 1890s when migration to other parts of the UK exceeded that overseas. Sliding tin prices after 1872 added to problems caused by the almost total collapse of copper output to reduce income and employment opportunities for miners. As a result they could not save enough to pay the costs of emigration. Instead, they left for more buoyant industrial regions in the rest of Britain, hoping there to save the money that could book them on the next trans-oceanic steamship. Furthermore, migrants in this decade included older men, and more women, as whole families moved to escape the unrelentingly bad times in Cornwall. The biggest population falls were experienced in the mining districts of east Cornwall and in an arc of rural mining parishes in the west, running from Perranzabuloe through Gwennap, Wendron, Crowan and Breage to Towednack, Zennor, and St Just in the west. Nonetheless, some places still saw population rises, notably several farming parishes in the north of Cornwall; a district to the west of St Austell; and more urban districts such as Saltash, Bodmin, Looe, Falmouth and Penzance. In this decade too we begin to see a growing population in St Columb Minor, containing the small port of Newquay.



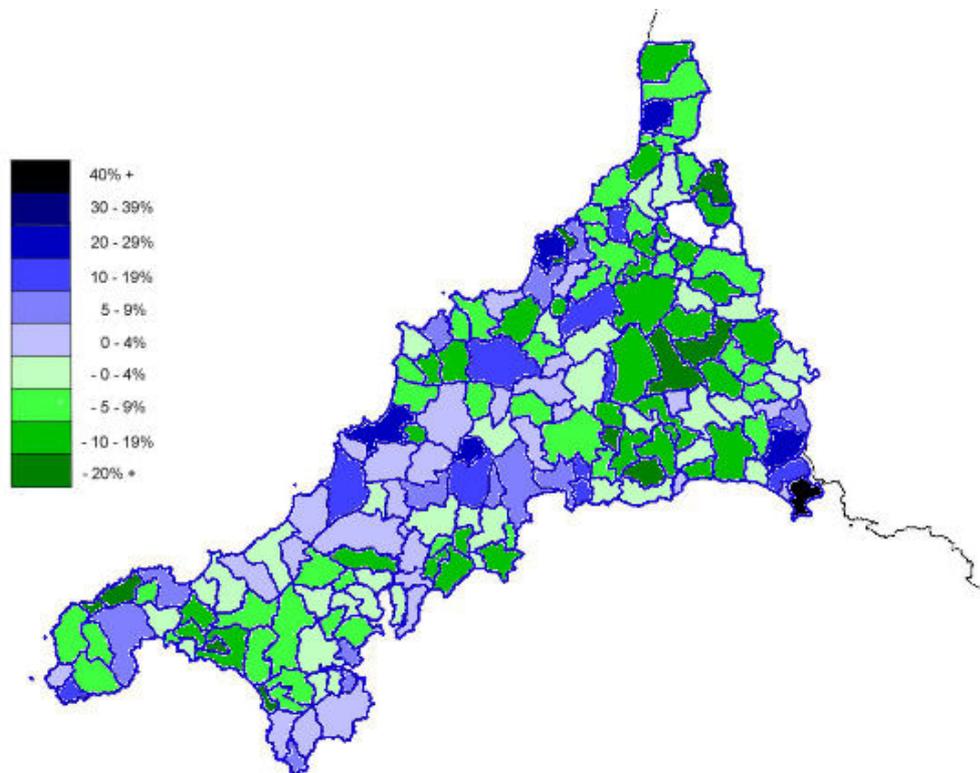
1881-91

Population decline continued to be the pattern of the 1880s but a slight overall fall marked considerable variations within Cornwall. Those areas that bucked the trend again included Launceston and a belt of parishes to its west, presumably buoyed up by a prospering livestock farming owing to falling process of feedstuffs. The area of growing population centred upon St Stephen in Brannel expanded to cover much of Powder Hundred. Population continued to grow also around Saltash, though here the fastest increase was now in the dockyard orientated parishes of Antony and Maker. Other areas of growth included Bodmin, Newquay and Fowey, Moreover, population growth reasserted itself in the central mining district of Camborne-Redruth where tin mining had become concentrated during this decade. Conversely, the largest falls were around Liskeard as copper mining for all intents and purposes ceased in this district, and in various groups of remoter rural areas notably to the north of Bodmin Moor. Other districts of decline included the quarrying district around Tintagel and Camelford, the area around the Camel estuary, rural parishes to the north and south of Truro, on the Lizard peninsula and to the south west of Penzance.



1891-1901

In the 1890s the population finally stabilised after two and half decades of relentless falls. Within Cornwall, however, there were still two main areas of population decline. The first spread across the bulk of east Cornwall, Here population fell generally with the principal exceptions being the far south east, over the river from Plymouth, a strip of coastal parishes in the north, and Stratton, where Bude was expanding, helped by the arrival of the railway. The other fast expanding resort town – Newquay - was now part of a broader zone of population growth in mid-Cornwall, stretching as far west as Truro and east through St Austell as far as Fowey. The second area of decline was found in the old mining parishes from St Hilary east to Kea, but also including Falmouth. This was one of the few decades in the nineteenth century when this urban area lost population. Meanwhile, although the rate of growth had fallen away in Camborne-Redruth, Penzance and St Ives were growing more buoyantly while the rural hinterland of west Penwith continued to haemorrhage people.



Bernard Deacon June 2007