

# Guide: Searching places, units and locations in *A Vision of Britain through Time*

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## I. Introduction

“A Vision of Britain through Time” (Vision of Britain) has been funded by both the UK National Lottery and more recently by JISC as a local history web site for a wide audience of life-long learners. We have successfully reached that audience: the *Sunday Times* described the site as “well-designed [...] easy to use and clearly labelled”, and it regularly receives over c. 160,000 users per month:

[www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk](http://www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk)

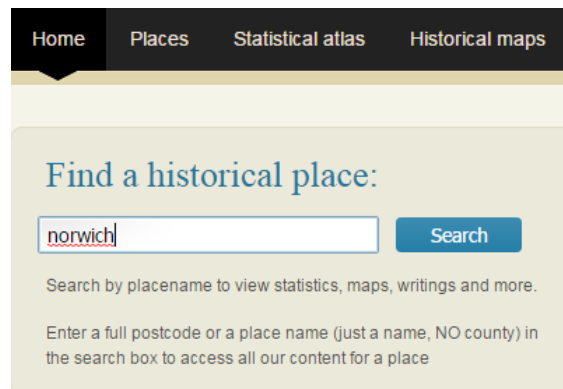
This guide does not explain how to use all the features of the Vision of Britain site, which is large and complex. Instead it focuses on two aspects; firstly the home page which is designed to work with a wide audience by resembling other “geographical” web sites: you just type in a postcode or a place-name and it gives you lots of information about a particular place; and secondly one of the more specialised search interfaces within the system providing direct access to information on specific administrative units.

These notes describe how our system works at the time of writing, in May 2017. Most planned changes will not affect the functions covered here and the URLs given here will still work.

## II. Finding Places

The most accessible information in our system is about “places”, broadly covering towns, villages, suburbs, “districts” – the places where people say they live. We currently define 22,373 places, and the majority of our administrative units are linked to one of these. This might just mean a Civil Parish and an Ecclesiastical Parish being linked to a village, but a major town will usually have an ancient Borough, a Poor Law Union/Registration District, maybe both a County Borough *and* a Rural District from 1894-1974, a Constituency and so on.

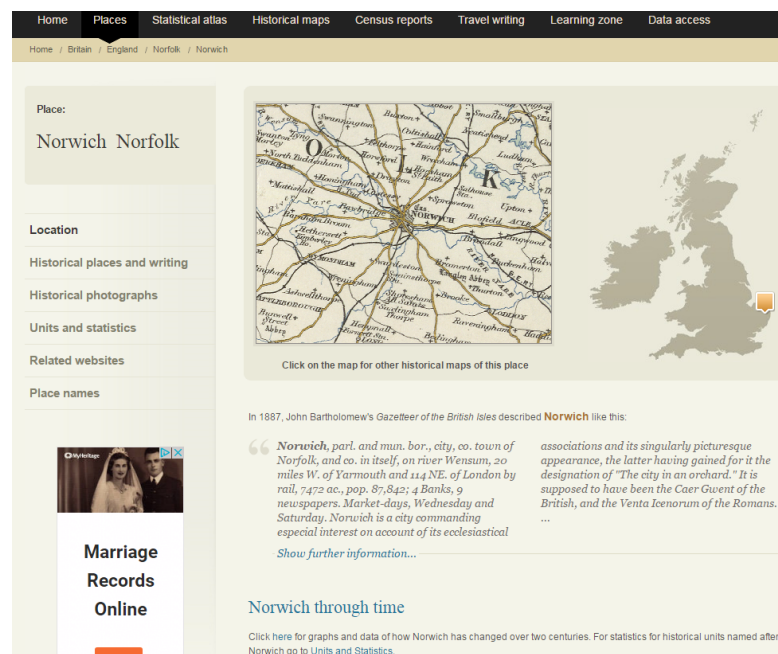
(1) You can reach the relevant *place page* by searching from our home page using *any* of the names of the likely administrative units just by typing the name into the box:



The screenshot shows a web interface with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Home', 'Places', 'Statistical atlas', and 'Historical maps'. Below the navigation bar is a search box titled 'Find a historical place:'. The search box contains the text 'norwich' and a 'Search' button. Below the search box, there is a line of text: 'Search by placename to view statistics, maps, writings and more.' and another line: 'Enter a full postcode or a place name (just a name, NO county) in the search box to access all our content for a place'.

However, you can also get there with any of the names used for the place in our descriptive gazetteers or our collection of travel writing. For example, “NORWITCH” is not the usual name of anywhere in Britain, but it turns out it was used by the 17<sup>th</sup> century travel writer Celia Fiennes for both Norwich in Norfolk and Northwich in Cheshire.

(2) Our initial **Location** *place page* shows you where the place was, and includes a selected entry from a descriptive gazetteer:



The screenshot shows a web page for 'Norwich Norfolk'. The page has a navigation bar at the top with 'Home', 'Places', 'Statistical atlas', 'Historical maps', 'Census reports', 'Travel writing', 'Learning zone', and 'Data access'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Britain / England / Norfolk / Norwich'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a sidebar with the following links: 'Place: Norwich Norfolk', 'Location', 'Historical places and writing', 'Historical photographs', 'Units and statistics', 'Related websites', and 'Place names'. Below these links is a small image of a couple in historical attire, followed by the text 'Marriage Records Online'. The right column contains a large map of Norwich, Norfolk, with a red dot indicating the location. Below the map is a quote from John Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles (1887) describing Norwich. The quote reads: 'Norwich, par. and mun. bor., city, co. town of Norfolk, and co. in itself, on river Wensum, 20 miles W. of Yarmouth and 11.4 NE. of London by rail, 7,472 ac., pop. 87,842; 4 Banks, 9 newspapers. Market-days, Wednesday and Saturday. Norwich is a city commanding especial interest on account of its ecclesiastical associations and its singularly picturesque appearance, the latter having gained for it the designation of "The city in an orchard." It is supposed to have been the Coer Guent of the British, and the Venta Icenorum of the Romans. ...'. Below the quote is a link 'Show further information...'. At the bottom of the right column is a link 'Norwich through time' and a small text: 'Click here for graphs and data of how Norwich has changed over two centuries. For statistics for historical units named after Norwich go to Units and Statistics.'

(3) Our *place pages* are designed as the main entry point to the site – most users arrive directly at them having searched for a place-name in Google – and they give access to all the different kinds of information we hold. Apart from the **Location** page as seen above, users can access:

- **The Map Library:** Clicking on the detailed left-hand map takes you into our historical map library, already zoomed in to your chosen location. You can explore our historical map *mosaics* using the main viewer, but if you scroll down the map library page you can also access images of the individual original map sheets. If you select the “Boundary maps” tab in the map library the system lists administrative boundary maps covering your place.
- **Place through Time:** Beneath the historical gazetteer entry is a link to statistics for the modern unit covering this location. These statistics have been specially constructed to show the changes going back through time. See Section VIII for more details.
- **Historical places and writing** reached by clicking in the sidebar gives you access to any other descriptive gazetteer entries we hold, and direct links to any references to the place in our travel writing collection. The “Historical writing about this area” tab on this page lists the twenty nearest other places for which we hold linked text.
- **Units and Statistics** gives you access to two separate sets of administrative units, and their associated statistics: to units linked to the current place, and generally named after it; also to units whose boundary polygons *covered* the place.
- **Related websites** similarly provides *deep links* to two sets of web sites: a small set of sites where we have systematically linked our place pages with theirs, currently limited to VCH, GENUKI, Wikipedia and History of the Workhouse; and a second set of geo-referenced sites which can be accessed by geographical coordinates in the “Locations nearby” tab.
- **Place names** lists all associated names, with the sources they appeared in, distinguishing between names from historical writing and names of administrative units, for example, for Chester-le-Street in Durham:

Name	Author	Source
CHESTER	<a href="#">John Bartholomew</a>	<i>Gazetteer of the British Isles</i> (Edinburgh: Bartholomew, 1887).
	<a href="#">Daniel Defoe</a>	<i>A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies</i> (London: JM Dent and Co, 1927).
	<a href="#">John Marius Wilson</a>	<i>Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales</i> (Edinburgh: A Fullarton & Co., 1870-72).
CHESTER IN THE STREET	<a href="#">Daniel Defoe</a>	<i>A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies</i> (London: JM Dent and Co, 1927).
CHESTER LE STREET	<a href="#">John Bartholomew</a>	<i>Gazetteer of the British Isles</i> (Edinburgh: Bartholomew, 1887).
	<a href="#">John Marius Wilson</a>	<i>Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales</i> (Edinburgh: A Fullarton & Co., 1870-72).
CHESTER ON THE STRATE	<a href="#">John Wesley</a>	<i>The Journal of John Wesley</i> (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2000).
CHESTER STREETE	<a href="#">Celia Fiennes</a>	<i>Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary</i> (London: Field and Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, 1888).
CHESTER UPON THE STREET	<a href="#">William Camden</a>	<i>Britain, or, a Chorographical Description of the most flourishing Kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland</i> (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1610).
CONCESTER	<a href="#">William Camden</a>	<i>Britain, or, a Chorographical Description of the most flourishing Kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland</i> (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1610).
CONDERICUM	<a href="#">William Camden</a>	<i>Britain, or, a Chorographical Description of the most flourishing Kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland</i> (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1610).

### III. Using Vision of Britain as a geographical name authority

As already suggested the “places” information is compiled from an array of different data sources and presented as simply as possible. The information contained within the system on administrative units on the other hand goes into much more depth and was computerised from the geographical name authorities identified by the National Council on Archives in its *Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names* (1997):

- F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England* (London, Royal Historical Society, 2 vols, 1979, 1991)
- M. Richards, *Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1969)
- The NCA identified the General Register Office’s *Index of Scottish Place Names from 1971 Census with Location and Population* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1975) as the authority for Scotland. We originally based our work on the computerised gazetteer of counties, burghs and parishes constructed since the NCA reported by the Scottish Archives Network (SCAN), although most of this information has been “re-attributed” to census reports:

[http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/search/gazetteer\\_indexnew.asp](http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/search/gazetteer_indexnew.asp)

- More recently, we have added a systematic listing of British Parliamentary Constituencies based on Richard Cheffins’ *Parliamentary Constituencies and their registers since 1832* (British Library, 1998).

These authorities are concerned not with vaguely defined “places” but with administrative units, i.e. with corporate bodies whose creation, abolition, naming and boundaries were the outcomes of legal processes. Our system was designed to handle the very complex information in Youngs, and proved able to handle the other sources with minimal modification. However, our goal was never simply to replicate the pages in the books:

- We wanted to make the best possible use of modern database technology, structuring the gazetteer as an ontology – like a polyhierarchic thesaurus, but defining various kinds of relationship – and supporting a highly inter-connected web site. Vision of Britain is unusual for a database-driven site in the degree to which it supports browsing as well as searching.
- Our *administrative unit gazetteer* is not only a reference resource in its own right, it provides the framework for presenting a very large body of historical statistics gathered for administrative units, most notably by the census. One obvious consequence is that the system includes various kinds of unit that Youngs, and especially Richards left out: they have to be there so we can link statistics to them. Much more importantly, we have linked statistics to our gazetteer by matching the names in the gazetteer with the names in our quite separate transcriptions of statistical tables, and especially the parish-level census listings. Where there were mis-matches, we checked the names in both the gazetteer and the census, and if both had been correctly transcribed we added the name from the census as an alternate name for the unit, citing the census as an authority. Two further consequences are, therefore, that the gazetteer has been very systematically checked and that our gazetteer already contains far more name variants than Youngs does. This work is on-going.
- It also serves as a framework to which the actual boundaries of administrative units, stored as vectors, have been attached, enabling it to create maps showing both the boundaries of individual units and various thematic maps created from the historical statistics. This had a big effect on how we defined our *unit types*. In general, selecting all the boundaries for a given date for all the units of a given type should give you a map of the country. For example, this meant that while Youngs has a section for “Boroughs”, which covers both ancient boroughs and later County/Municipal Boroughs, we include the former with Hundreds,

Wapentakes, etc, as “Ancient Districts”, and the latter with Urban and Rural Districts as “Local Government Districts”. We also impose the obvious rule that each unit can have only one boundary at any given time, but this means we cannot follow Youngs and treat Civil and Ecclesiastical Parishes based on the same settlement as the same unit: their boundaries evolved separately. Because most statistical data relates to Ancient Parishes or to Civil Parishes, we treat the latter as developing out of the former while Ecclesiastical Parishes exist as separate units, generally starting from the 1840s.

#### IV. Simple Administrative unit searching and browsing

(4) You know what the unit was called and just want to confirm the spelling, or find out other information. Enter via our home page, by selecting “Expert Search” option, or click the “Expert Search” link available in the bottom bar on every page.

The screenshot shows the home page of the Vision of Britain website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, Places, Statistical atlas, Historical maps, Census reports, Travel writing, Learning zone, and Data access. Below this is a main content area. On the left, there's a 'Find a historical place:' section with a search box and a 'Search' button. Below the search box is a link to 'Expert search' which is circled in red. To the right of the search box are sections for 'Election results', 'Travel writing', and 'Census reports'. On the far right is a map of the UK with the text 'Your area through time: Click on an area'. At the bottom of the page is a footer with copyright information, a link to 'About this site', a circled 'Expert search' link, and the JISC logo.

(5) Then click on the “Search Units” tab – or go straight there using this web address:

[www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk/units](http://www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk/units)

This brings up a page containing this form:

The screenshot shows the 'Search Units' form. At the top are four tabs: 'Search Places', 'Search Units' (which is selected), 'Search Descriptions', and 'Explore Types'. Below the tabs is a form with the following fields: 'Name:' with a text input box; 'Search type:' with a dropdown menu set to 'Search names for exact match'; 'Region:' with a dropdown menu set to 'Anywhere'; and 'Entry type:' with a dropdown menu set to 'Any type of entry'. At the bottom of the form is a blue 'Search' button.

(6) Type in the place-name you are interested in then click on the “search” button. NB the system ignores the capitalisation of letters and punctuation, and replaces hyphens by spaces. If you typed in either “Ynyscynhaearn” or “YNYSCYNHAEARN” you would get:

The unit name you asked about was *YNYSCYNHAEARN*. These are exact matches (1 - 2). Please click on the correct one (there are 2 matches in all):

Unit Name	Type of Unit	Containing Unit (and Type)
<a href="#">YNYSCYNHAEARN AP/CP</a>	Parish-level Unit	CAERNARVONSHIRE (Ancient County)
<a href="#">YNYSCYNHAEARN EP</a>	Ecclesiastical Parish	CAERNARVONSHIRE (Ancient County)

(7) Clicking on the name “YNYSCYNHAEARN AP/CP” in row one brings several kinds of information. This Welsh example has been chosen to show how we have extended the limited information provided by Richards to match Youngs. The entry begins with information about the unit’s identity, including preferred name as given by Richards, and its ID number. This Ancient Parish still exists, so no dates of creation or abolition are given:

Relationships / unit history of <b>YNYSCYNHAEARN</b>	
Preferred Name:	YNYSCYNHAEARN
Unit Type:	<a href="#">Parish-level Unit</a>
Status:	<a href="#">Ancient Parish</a> <a href="#">Civil Parish</a>
Date created:	
Date abolished:	
Unit ID:	10323848
Authorities:	M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.

Next is information on the unit’s names. In this case we have the original name given by Richards but also two other spellings that appeared in census reports. You will note we record the language of each name, but the information provided by Richards is often unhelpful. Searching for either of these other names would have brought you to this same unit page:

Name	Status	Language	Start	End	Authority
YNYSCYNHAEARN	Preferred	English			M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.
YNYN CYNHAIARN	Alternate	English			<a href="#">1851 Census of Great Britain, Table [1], 'Population Abstract'.</a>
YNYSCYNHAIARN	Alternate	English			<a href="#">1911 Census of England and Wales, Table 5, 'Registration Counties, Districts and Sub-districts with their constituent civil parishes. - Urban or Rural District in which each parish is situated; Area; families or separate occupiers, and population, 1901 and 1911; and population enumerated in Institutions, large establishments, and on vessels, &amp;c., 1911'.</a>

The remainder of the page documents the parish’s relationships with other units, and because this page was created from a database we can easily include cross-references to all the other units mentioned through hyperlinks. First come “associations”, which currently means “SucceededBy” and, rarely, “AdministeredBy”. “SucceededBy” is used by us to link units with more or less the same name and area, i.e. units which some would see as the same. Here we use it to provide a link to information about the Ecclesiastical Parish:



Nature of association	Other unit involved	Type of unit	Authority
was succeeded by	YNYSCYNHAEARN EP	Ecclesiastical Parish	M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.

For parishes, in both Youngs and our system, a large part of the information is the list of higher-level units they were part of at one time or another.

Name	Type	Start	End	Authority
CAERNARVONSHIRE	Ancient County			M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.
FESTINIOG RegD/PLU	Poor Law Union/Reg. District			1911 Census of England and Wales, Table 5, 'Registration Counties, Districts and Sub-districts with their constituent civil parishes. - Urban or Rural District in which each parish is situated; Area; families or separate occupiers, and population, 1901 and 1911; and population enumerated in Institutions, large establishments, and on vessels, &c., 1911'.
EIFIONYDD Hundred	Ancient District			M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.
EIFIONYDD Cmt	Ancient District			M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.
PORTMADOC UD	Local Government District			M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 225.
TREMADOC	Registration sub-District			1911 Census of England and Wales, Table 5, 'Registration Counties, Districts and Sub-districts with their constituent civil parishes. - Urban or Rural District in which each parish is situated; Area; families or separate occupiers, and population, 1901 and 1911; and population enumerated in Institutions, large establishments, and on vessels, &c., 1911'.
YNYSCYNHAIARN USD	Sanitary District			1891 Census of England and Wales, Table 4, 'Area and Population in Rural Sanitary Districts'.
YNYSCYNHAIARN UD	Local Government District			1911 Census of England and Wales, Table 5, 'Registration Counties, Districts and Sub-districts with their constituent civil parishes. - Urban or Rural District in which each parish is situated; Area; families or separate occupiers, and population, 1901 and 1911; and population enumerated in Institutions, large establishments, and on vessels, &c., 1911'.

Boundary changes involve one unit getting smaller, or being abolished, and another getting larger, or being created, so we hold them as relationships: ReducedToEnlarge, ReducedToCreate, AbolishedToEnlarge and AbolishedToCreate. Here our main sources are the census reports, which give much more detail than Youngs, let alone Richards. Our referencing of sources always allows us to identify an *immediate source*, from which we took the information, but also an *ultimate source* where the information used by the immediate source originated:

Date	Type of change	Other unit involved	Area transferred	Authority
01 Apr 1934	was reduced to enlarge	DOLBENMAEN CPI/AP	Area: 533 acres. Population in 1931: 21.	1931 Census of England and Wales, Table B, 'Areas altered between 26th April, 1931 and 30th June, 1934, showing constitution as at the latter date, in terms of constitution as at the former date, together with particulars of acreage and population'; M. of H. Order No. 78190. The Caernarvonshire Review Order, 1934
01 Apr 1934	was enlarged by the abolition of	TREFLYS AP/CP	Area: 242 acres. Population in 1931: 9.	1931 Census of England and Wales, Table B, 'Areas altered between 26th April, 1931 and 30th June, 1934, showing constitution as at the latter date, in terms of constitution as at the former date, together with particulars of acreage and population'; M. of H. Order No. 78190. The Caernarvonshire Review Order, 1934

Lastly, we list the lower-level units that the unit contained. These will generally be of a different type, but as many parishes began as townships or chapeltries we treat them all as *parish-level units* and let one contain another. These listings are of course much longer for districts and counties as they include all the component parishes:

Name	Type	Start	End	Authority
TREMADOC Tn	Parish-level Unit			M. Richards, <i>Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units</i> (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), p. 212.

(8) Every unit in the system has at least one “IsPartOf” relationship to a higher-level unit, with the exception of the *root unit* which identifies the world. That means that you can reach every British unit in the system by clicking on links starting from “*Great Britain*”. Similarly, if you are very unsure what a particular parish was called but know, for example, that it was in a particular Poor Law Union, search for the Union and look in the list of contained parishes.

## V. Narrowing searches by area or kind of unit

(9) There are few places in Britain called “Ynyscynhaearn”. If you search instead for “Newton”, you get 50 matches which have to be displayed over four separate pages. If you use the wildcard options discussed below, you can get hundreds or even thousands of matches, so some way of narrowing searches is essential. The simplest is to limit the geographical area by changing the “Region” option on the search form from “Anywhere” to a county. Specifying “Herefordshire” when searching for “Newton” produces just three matches:

Search Places
Search Units
Search Descriptions
Explore Types

Name: newton

Search type: Search names for exact match

Region: Herefordshire

Entry type:

Search

Searches can include asterisks (\*) looking for.

Wild card and 'sound alike' searches

Searching here by nation or county will be returned if they were within the

Our administrative gazetteer combines

Frederick Youngs' Guide to the Local

Melville Richards' Welsh Administrative

Richard Chaffins' Parliamentary Constituencies

Gazetteer of Scottish Administrative

sure of, or you can try including names that sound like the name you are

consider specifying region and/or type. These searches can also be slow!

ture of our underlying database. For example, if you specify a county, parishes

y of that name.

ical Society, 1979 and 1991)

1969)

ish Library, 1998)

sources



(10) Restricting searches by county makes use of the detailed structure of the system. “Herefordshire” is the name of four different units within our gazetteer: the ancient, registration/union and administrative counties, plus the current unitary authority. Ignoring the last, the other three all had somewhat different boundaries. Requiring units to be within “Herefordshire” will produce matches if a unit was within *any* of these “Herefordshires”, directly or indirectly, based on following “IsPartOf” relationships. An example of this at work is “Lydney”, in the Forest of Dean: narrowing the search to Gloucestershire will find it but so, correctly, will specifying Monmouthshire: Lydney was part of Chepstow Registration District and Poor Law Union, and therefore part of Monmouthshire Registration/Union County.

(11) Searching for “Reading” gets you fourteen matches, and narrowing the search by specifying “Berkshire” still gets you nine: all are based on the same town, although the modern local authority is a Unitary Authority and is therefore *not* part of Berkshire. The sheer number of administrative units associated with all settlements of any size is why the Vision of Britain home page searches the same list of unit names but presents the results in terms of “places”, defined as groupings of units with the same name and location. Our more specialised administrative unit search facility allows you to specify particular kinds of unit for example solely chapelries:

## VI. Exploring types

(12) This facility is based on our typology of administrative units. This can be explored in more detail through the relevant tab in the “Expert Search” or via this address:

[www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk/types](http://www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk/types)

Although this is presented as if it were a thesaurus, it has a fixed number of levels and they behave differently:

- **Geographical level** is essentially about scale, and runs: World → Continent → Sub-Continent → Country → Region → County → Higher-level District → Middle-level District → Lower-level District → Parish → sub-Parish → sub sub-Parish. Multiple levels of district are needed because several specific administrative systems included at least two levels between counties and parishes. Every type is assigned to a geographical level.

- **Types** are fundamental characteristics of units which they always have and cannot change. As already explained they are usually administrative geographies which completely divide up the whole country.
- **Status** is a more flexible characteristic: units need not have a status, but if they do they can change them over time, or have several at once; the rules depend on the type. “Chapelry”, “Ancient Parish” and “Civil Parish” are all status values within “Parish-level Unit”, and over time units changed status between them. Status values are held in a separate table, like names, so each unit can have any number of associated status values, each with dates and sources. For example, Youngs provides information on Poor Law Unions, but we identify the majority which were also Registration Districts via an additional status value with a different authority, and separately include the Registration Districts which were not Unions. This is why the type they all belong to is “Poor Law Union/Registration District”.

## VII. Broadening searches using wild cards and “sound-alikes”

(13) If you are not sure how to spell a place-name, you can do “fuzzy” searches. However, these can bring back very large numbers of matches and you are strongly advised to also narrow your search by locality or type, as explained in the previous section. These more complex searches obviously slow the system down. Simple searches for exact matches are much faster than anything else as they can use the indexes built into the database.

(14) Use an asterisk to indicate characters you are not sure of. For example:

- “**M\*LTON**”, searching only for parish-level units, matches Malton, Melton, Milton, Moulton ... and also Middle Hulton and Much Woolton.
- “**\*TON**”, searching only for parish-level units in Herefordshire, takes a long time to run and finds 117 matches, from Adforton to Yatton.
- “**\*NEWTON\***”, again searching only for Herefordshire parishes, finds three “NEWTON”s, and also two “WELSH NEWTON”s, “WALFORD LETTON AND NEWTON”, “DIXTON NEWTON”, and “WELSH NEWTON AND LLANROTHAL”.

Asterisks match any number of characters including none, so including them at the start and end lets you check the name does not appear within a longer one.

(15) Alternatively, you can change “Search type” to “Search for sound-alikes” and use the “soundex” facility built into our database software. This is unreliable, and has little idea about Welsh pronunciation, but will sometimes help.

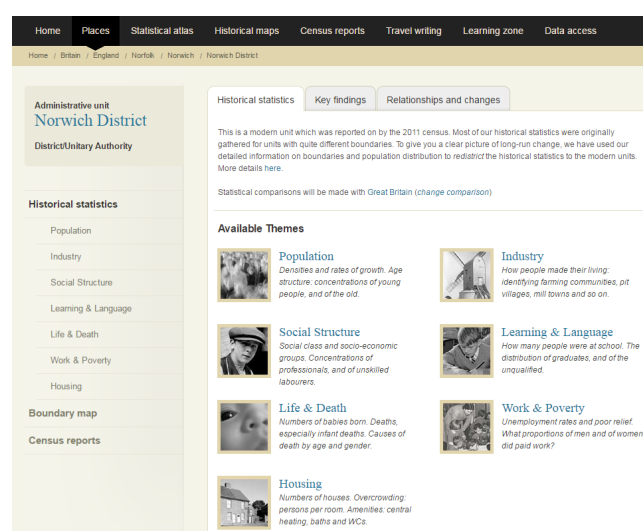
Placename:	<input type="text" value="reding"/>
Search type:	<div> <div>Search for sound-alikes</div> <div>Search for exact match</div> <div>Search for sound-alikes</div> </div>
Region:	
Entry type:	<input type="text" value="-----Any type of entry-----"/>

## VIII. Place through Time

On the right hand side of the homepage is a map showing modern regions of Great Britain. An area of interest can be selected by clicking on this map and you will then be presented with a regional map and the list of unit names from within that region, either can be clicked to select an individual modern District or Unitary Authority.



Once a unit is selected you arrive at the unit homepage. Here you can access our historical statistics that have been converted (“re-districted”) to modern areas. This allows us to show you trends for modern districts and unitary authorities over long periods of time. These unit homepages work in the same way as those for historical units explained in Section IX.




## IX. Learning more about a unit


(16) In so far as “Vision of Britain” is a computerised replacement for Youngs’ *Local Administrative Units*, the unit search form, search results page which lists the various matches, and the unit “Relationships and Changes” page are the only pages you need to know about – but the system is much more. The “Relationships and Changes” page is just one of a number of specialised pages which can exist for the relevant unit, although it is the only one which *always* exists. Also available are the “Key findings”, “Historical Statistics”, “Boundary Map” and “Census Reports” pages.

Ynyscynhaearn / Administrative Unit: Ynyscynhaearn AP/CP /


## Historical statistics




**Population**  
Densities and rates of growth. Age structure: concentrations of young people, and of the old.



**Industry**



**Social Class**

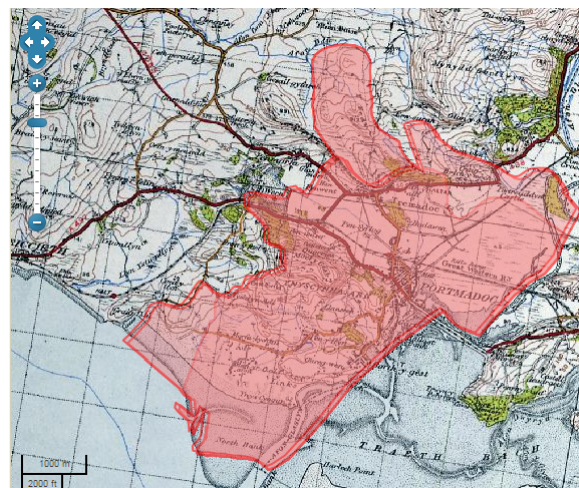


**Housing**  
Numbers of houses. Overcrowding: persons per room. Amenities: central heating, baths and WCs.

(17) Statistical content varies considerably, ecclesiastical units having none and various kinds of district having most. However, almost all parishes should offer basic population statistics taken from the census. Clicking on the “Population” graphic takes you to an overview for the theme offering links to pages for “Rates” such as population density, shown as graphs with links to statistical maps, and to pages for “datasets” (also known as “nCubes”) which hold the actual numbers. Clicking the blue arrows next to individual numbers takes you to a page telling you everything we know about that particular data value:

Year	Population 20 years earlier	Population 10 years earlier	Current Total Population
1801			525 <a href="#">↩</a>
1811		525 <a href="#">↩</a>	889 <a href="#">↩</a>
1821		889 <a href="#">↩</a>	885 <a href="#">↩</a>
1831		885 <a href="#">↩</a>	1,075 <a href="#">↩</a>
1841		1,075 <a href="#">↩</a>	1,888 <a href="#">↩</a>
1851		1,888 <a href="#">↩</a>	2,347 <a href="#">↩</a>
1881		4,367 <a href="#">↩</a>	5,506 <a href="#">↩</a>
1891		5,506 <a href="#">↩</a>	5,224 <a href="#">↩</a>
1901		4,959 <a href="#">↩</a>	4,883 <a href="#">↩</a>

(18) Vision of Britain is a *geo-spatial* database, so it can hold locational information as coordinates. Just as each unit can have any number of associated names, it can have any number of sets of boundaries, dated to record change over time. These are presented on the “Boundary map” page, as here for Ynyscynhaearn. A map showing *only* boundaries would be pretty meaningless, so the boundaries are overlain on samples from the most appropriately scaled historical map images which form another large part of the system:

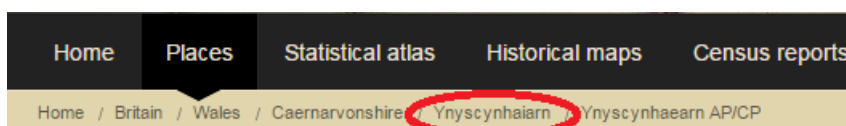


This map shows *all* the boundaries the parish ever had, without dates, but we hope in the future to add another page providing a sequence of maps for different dates.

(19) As well as computerising listings of administrative units, like Youngs, we hold the complete text of four 19<sup>th</sup> century *descriptive gazetteers*, a total of 96,093 entries, covering mountains and rivers as well as towns and villages. These can be directly searched via a different expert interface, which also allows you to narrow searches by county or by type of entry. Access by clicking on the “Search Descriptions” tab in the “Expert Search” Interface or via this address:

[www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk/descriptions](http://www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk/descriptions)

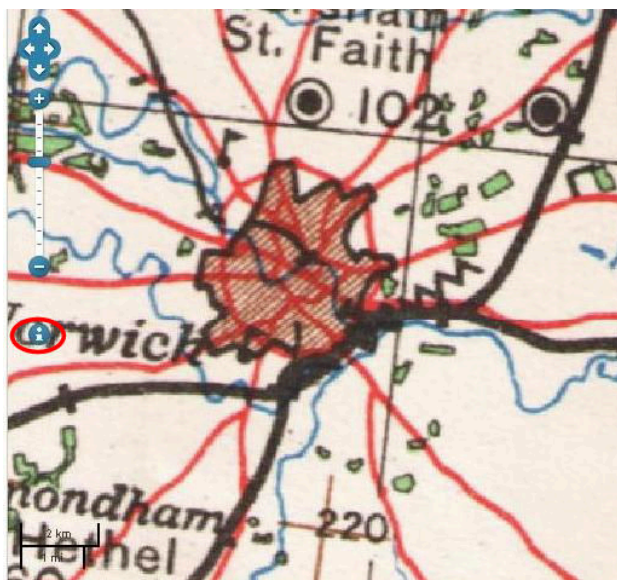
(20) Clicking on “Ynyscynhaiarn” in the crumb trail:



takes you to the place home page already detailed in section II, which summarises location and provides links to all available kinds of information.

## X. Finding units from locations

(21) Unlike Youngs, Vision of Britain holds locations for units so it can show them on maps; but it can also find units *from* maps. Begin by selecting “Historical Mapping” from the top menu bar, which brings up a map of the whole country. Click on the area you are interested in to zoom in, and keep clicking and zooming until your location is clearly visible. Then click on the “Information” icon (📍), below the slider, and click one more time on your location:



(22) This takes you to a location page, which shows your chosen location on a different map and lists its geographical coordinates. If you then click on “Historical units & statistics” in the sidebar, you get a listing of administrative units which covered the location:

Administrative Area:	Popu- lation	Life+ Death	Indu- stry	Work+ Poverty	Social Class	Hous- ing	Learn +Lang	Roots+ Relig.	Land Use
Norwich CP	✓					✓			
Norwich St Peter Mancroft AP/CP	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Norwich CB/MB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Norwich District	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Norwich PLU/RegD	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Norfolk AdmC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Norfolk AncC	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓
Norfolk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Norfolk RegC	✓	✓	✓			✓			
the East GovOf	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Britain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
England and Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
England	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
the United Kingdom									

There is a technical reason why the end dates are not currently listed, which we hope to sort out in the future. One obvious limitation is that this only works for the units we hold computerised boundaries for, but if a genealogist can identify the location of a house on our maps we should be able to tell them the Ancient Parish and Registration District covering the location, and so help them locate relevant parish registers and Civil Registration listings.