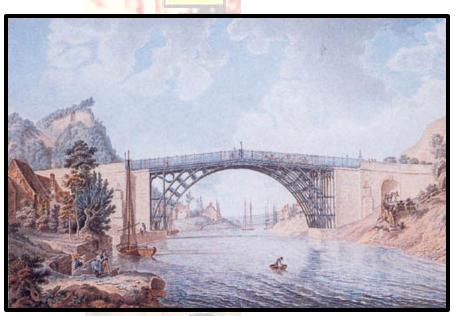**Interacting with the Past: The Coalbrookdale searchable database**
At www.activehistory.co.uk

History is all about <u>bringing the past to life</u>, and in this activity you will do this is in a very unusual and interesting way.

Coalbrookdale, a small town in Shropshire, is famous as the cradle of the Industrial Revolution: a place of blast furnaces, roaring forges and busy factories. Its iron bridge (right) – the very first ever made – still attracts visitors from all over the world. In the 19th Century some people thought it was hell on earth; others thought it was an industrial wonderland at the heart of the British Empire.

This activity allows you to investigate which of these interpretations is most accurate by interacting with the 1851 Census (government survey) of the town. A powerful, searchable database will provide you with very specific information: how many people lived in overcrowded houses, for example, or how many people under the age of 12 were in full-time work.

How to use the searchable online database

The database works with a simple menu system that allows you to construct a question (or 'query') for the computer to answer.

1. A simple search
A simple search consists of three elements: the Variable, the Operator, and the Value.
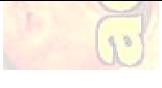
Here are some examples:

Variable	Operator	Value	Result
Christian Name	=	Mary	Provides a list of all people living in Coalbrookdale in 1851 whose Christian name is Mary
House Size	<	Family Size*	Will inform you how many people live in houses too small for the size of their family
Occupation	INCLUDES	Iron	Gives an overview of all the people whose job title has something to do with iron

* The value, as in this instance, can be another variable from the database.

2. A sophisticated search
It is then possible to refine the search further, or broaden it out using the AND / OR functions:

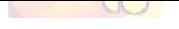|	
Age > 12 AND Age < 20	Tells you about all the teenagers in the town by first listing all those people aged more than 12 years old, then searching within those results for people aged less than 20.
Town of Birth = Wellington OR Town of Birth = Madeley	Tells you how many people were born in two of Shropshire's largest districts by listing all those who were born in Wellington, then adding to those results with those born in Madeley.

Task 1: Who am I?

Copy and Paste one or more of the following tables into a word processor and fill in the blanks by using the searchable database.

	Search Term	How many people could it be?
I am widowed		
I am less than 40 years old		
I am male		
I am a tea dealer by trade		
Give some details about this person: Make some deductions about this person:		

	Search Term	How many people could it be?
My occupation has something to do with iron		
I was born in Madeley		
I am less than 16 years old		
I live with my uncle		
Give some details about this person: Make some deductions about this person:		

	Search Term	How many people could it be?
There are more than 8 people in my household		
My address includes the word 'Eastfield'		
I am over 30 years old		
I was born in Dawley		

Give some details about this person:

Make some deductions about this person:

	Search Term	How many people could it be?
I am over 60 years of age		
I am still working		
I live in Tea Kettle Row		
I live in a two-bedroomed house		

Give some details about this person:

Make some deductions about this person: