

The recording of occupations in the Anglican baptism registers of England and Wales, 1690-1799*

1 Introduction

The use of English Anglican parish registers as historical sources has been mainly oriented towards demographic and genealogical research. However, some historians and antiquaries have always been alive to the potential of these registers for the wider study of social and economic history, including the study of occupations for particular communities. In his introduction to the parish registers of England, J. C. Cox noted that

...it will be found that the driest of them, which may lack even a line of interpolation or a single descriptive passage from beginning to end, will often yield no small amount of local knowledge to the intelligent inquirer, particularly as to past trades and occupations of special localities.¹

This occupational information can be used in many ways by the intelligent inquirer. It may be used to study the occupational structure of particular communities. When such information is combined with techniques such as family reconstitution, it can also be used to analyse the demographic behaviour of different socio-economic groups within the parish. Finally, any impetus to record extra information could well shed light upon the culture of parochial registration. Any increase in the amount of detail recorded within the pages of parish registers may well indicate a desire to maintain or improve the quality of registration.

While the utility of such information is obvious, the temporal and spatial incidence of occupational recording within registers has not been established.² The occasional piece of parliamentary legislation that affected parochial registration appears to have had a direct impact upon the frequency with which parish registers recorded such information. For example, Paul Glennie suggests that occupations were most frequently recorded during the 1690s and the latter half of the 1750s than at other times.³ These periods were in the immediate aftermath of the Marriage Duty Acts and Hardwicke's

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¹ J. C. Cox, *The parish registers of England* (London, 1910), p. 245.

² It should be noted that some have argued that the occupational descriptors recorded in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth- century sources are prone to status inflation or are inconsistent between different sources: thus limiting their usefulness. For example, see G. Morton, 'Presenting the self: record linkage and referring to ordinary historical persons', *History and Computing* 6 (1994), pp. 12-20; S. King, 'Power, representation and the historical individual: problems with sources for record linkage in two Yorkshire townships, 1650-1820', *The Local Historian* 27 (1997), pp. 78-90.

³ P. Glennie, *'Distinguishing men's trades': occupational sources and debates for pre-census England: Historical Geography Research Series* 25 (Bristol, 1990), p. 30.

Marriage Act respectively, two pieces of legislation that placed greater emphasis upon the quality of parochial registration.⁴ Other estimates of the number of parish registers that record occupational information prior to 1813 are somewhat rare, and characterised by a high degree of uncertainty. For example, Peter Lindert on the basis of personal experience suggested that relatively complete occupational information for males at burial for periods of at least nine years could be found for four per cent of all parishes in any twenty-five year period.⁵ Most other commentators have been content to merely point to a handful of registers that actually record this information.⁶

There is some awareness that recording male occupations for those recorded within the pages of parish registers was relatively common in northern England during the late eighteenth century, mainly due to the burgeoning literature on the peculiarities of Dade registers in the diocese of York, and Barrington registers in the diocese of Durham. These were initiatives that aimed to reform parochial registration by improving the quality and quantity of information that was recorded for each baptism and burial entry.⁷ However, before the introduction of Rose's Act in 1813, there was no legal requirement for those compiling parish registers to record occupational information.⁸

This paper will attempt to shed some light upon this penumbra in our knowledge of the recording of occupations in Anglican registers. It will report the results of an analysis of over 11,000 searches of baptism registers in England and Wales between 1690 and 1799 that sought to identify periods when occupations of fathers at the baptism (or birth) of their legitimate children were recorded systematically. The approach adopted here is to examine what was actually recorded in the registers themselves, rather than to rely upon episcopal records and the occasional example. Some of the conclusions will be speculative, but will hopefully establish further avenues for investigation.

Five sections follow from this introduction. The third section will chart how such recording varies over time, and between the different parts of England. An attempt will also be made in the fourth section to relate these spatial and temporal patterns of change to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to see whether these patterns can be related to attempts by diocesan ordinaries to improve parochial registration. Following this, a similar analysis

⁴ 6 & 7 Wm. III c. 6 placed a duty upon burials, marriages and baptisms that varied according to economic status. Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act was passed in 1753; see 26 Geo. II c. 33.

⁵ P. H. Lindert, 'English occupations, 1670-1811', *Journal of Economic History* **40** (1980), pp. 685-712.

⁶ For example, see Cox, *Parish registers*, pp. 245-9.

⁷ Marriages had to be recorded in statutorily defined *pro forma* registers after 1754, as a consequence of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act (26 Geo. II c. 33). A fuller discussion of Dade and Barrington registers will be found below; see pp. 29-32.

⁸ 52 Geo. III c. 146; the schedules annexed to the Act required that the 'trade or profession' of the parents at the baptism of the child be recorded. Occupational information was not required at either burial or marriage. For a fuller discussion of the debates surrounding the passage of this piece of legislation, see S. Basten, 'From Rose's bill to Rose's Act: a reappraisal of the 1812 Parish Register Act', *Local Population Studies* **76** (2006), pp. 43-62.

will be conducted for Welsh Anglican registers during the same period. It will conclude by drawing out some of the broader consequences that can be deduced from all the patterns that have been identified. Before all this, it is necessary to discuss the methodology that underpinned the register searches. Accordingly, the following section will explain both why baptism registers were selected for study, as well why this particular search period was chosen.

2 Search methodology

The task of searching each individual parish register in England for evidence of occupational recording is a truly Herculean one. Identifying the location of each register, and then searching them from 1538 through to the early nineteenth century would be one that consumed vast quantities of both time and money, and so placing some limitations upon the size of the task is desirable. To keep the task within reasonable bounds, baptism registers only were searched, and then for the years between 1690 and 1799. Limiting the search for occupations to the baptism sections of registers has a series of benefits. Firstly, the age distribution of fathers at the baptism of children more closely represents the overall age distribution of the male adult population than the age structure at marriage or at burial. This means that this information can be used to reconstruct the occupational structure of these communities. Secondly, baptism registers are relatively consistent in terms of the way that occupational information is recorded, with only the occupation of the legitimate father is recorded. In contrast, burial registers can record occupational information for the deceased, or a relative of the deceased. This makes it much harder to arrive at a simple judgement about the consistency of occupational recording for adults for a particular period of time.

The decision to limit the searches for the period between 1690 and 1799 was also made on the basis that it would keep the task within manageable proportions. A pilot study of Bedfordshire registers between 1538 and 1812 indicated that occupational recording before 1695 was uncommon.⁹ Additionally, searching registers in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries would place a greater premium on palaeographic skills, as well as increase the amount of time that would needed to be spent on searching registers for occupational information. Limiting the search period in this way ensured that the greatest volume of occupational information would be found in the most efficient manner.

⁹ See Appendix 1 below, pp. 44-6. The most common periods for occupational recording before 1695 appear to have been the very early years of parochial registration, especially in surviving paper registers from the 1530s and 1540s. Additionally, recording this information seems to have been slightly more common during the Commonwealth and Protectorate.

Register searches were performed by a team of researchers, usually from microfilmed or microfiched copies of the original registers.¹⁰ The convention followed was that if an individual year appeared on visual inspection to have an occupation recorded for at least three-quarters of all events, then it would be regarded as systematically recording occupational information for that year. This approach, while perhaps lacking the accuracy that other methods might produce, made the performance of these register searches economically feasible. The data was collected in a simple spreadsheet format, listing the name and a unique identifier for each parish or chapelry, as well as the years covered by the register searches, as well as the years that recorded occupational information.

The manner in which the data was recorded by the researcher ‘in the field’ was not really amenable to systematic analysis, and much more flexible way of storing and analysing the data was needed rather than in simple rectangular form. Accordingly, the data was then transcribed using a ‘homemade’ mark-up language, and analysed with a similarly crafted interpreter. Two records below serve as exemplars of the conventions used to store this data.

```
LEI/001/Ab Kettleby/E/  
1690-1799%  
1702-1704/1716-1726/  
Leicester/Lincoln/Canterbury/  
N/$  
  
YWR/201/Little Ouseburn/E/  
1690-1799%  
1714-1728/1766-1799/  
peculiar/York/York/  
E/Peculiar jurisdiction of the Precentor of Yorkminster$
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The first line of both these records specifies the unique registration unit identifier supplied by the registration unit codebook, an electronic catalogue of all the parochial units functioning in England and Wales before 1820 that has been compiled from a variety of sources.¹¹ This is the seven character alphanumeric code at the start of the line. This also specifies the county in which the parish is wholly or largely located. For instance, the identifier for Ab Kettleby contains the string ‘LEI’, signifying that the parish is in Leicestershire, while the inclusion of ‘YWR’ indicates that Little Ouseburn lies in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The final character specifies whether the parish is located in England (‘E’) or Wales (‘W’).¹² The second and third lines refer to the years searched for

¹⁰ The researchers were, in addition to the author: Joseph Barker, Richard Churchley, Alec Corio, Oliver Dunn, Selah Hennessy, Lauren Monaghan-Pisano, Eli Schacher, Geoffrey Stanning, Timothy Swain, Lucy Ward, Matthew Ward, Alison Warren, and Matthew Westlake.

¹¹ See P. M. Kitson and S. J. Thompson, ‘The England and Wales Anglican registration unit codebook’ (forthcoming).

¹² Following usual convention, Monmouthshire was assumed to be part of Wales.

occupations, and those which record them. For the former in both cases, the years 1690 through to 1799 inclusive have been searched for occupational information. The latter line denotes the years that on visual inspection record occupational information systematically. In Ab Kettleby, the baptism register records occupational information from 1702 to 1704, and from 1716 through to 1726. Meanwhile, in Little Ouseburn, the register records this information from 1714 through to 1728, and thence from 1766 through to 1799.

The fourth line specifies the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in which the registration unit lies. For example, Ab Kettleby is in the archdeaconry of Leicester, in turn part of the diocese of Lincoln and the province of Canterbury. Little Ouseburn, on the other hand, is a peculiar jurisdiction within the Diocese and Province of York. Finally, the fifth line specifies the peculiar jurisdiction to which the parish is subject, if one exists. Ab Kettleby has none, and so it is marked with an 'N'. Little Ouseburn is an ecclesiastical peculiar, and so is marked with an 'E' followed by the name of the jurisdiction. Another possible outcome is if the registration unit covers a peculiar manorial jurisdiction. In these cases, it has been assumed (as was usually the case) that the manorial jurisdiction related to probate business, while other matters of ecclesiastical administration were dealt with at the archidiaconal or diocesan level. Here, the fourth line specifies the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but the manorial probate jurisdiction is also specified, prefixed by an 'M'. This extra information allows for the analysis of patterns of occupational recording at the level of the county as well as by ecclesiastical province, diocese and archdeaconry.¹³

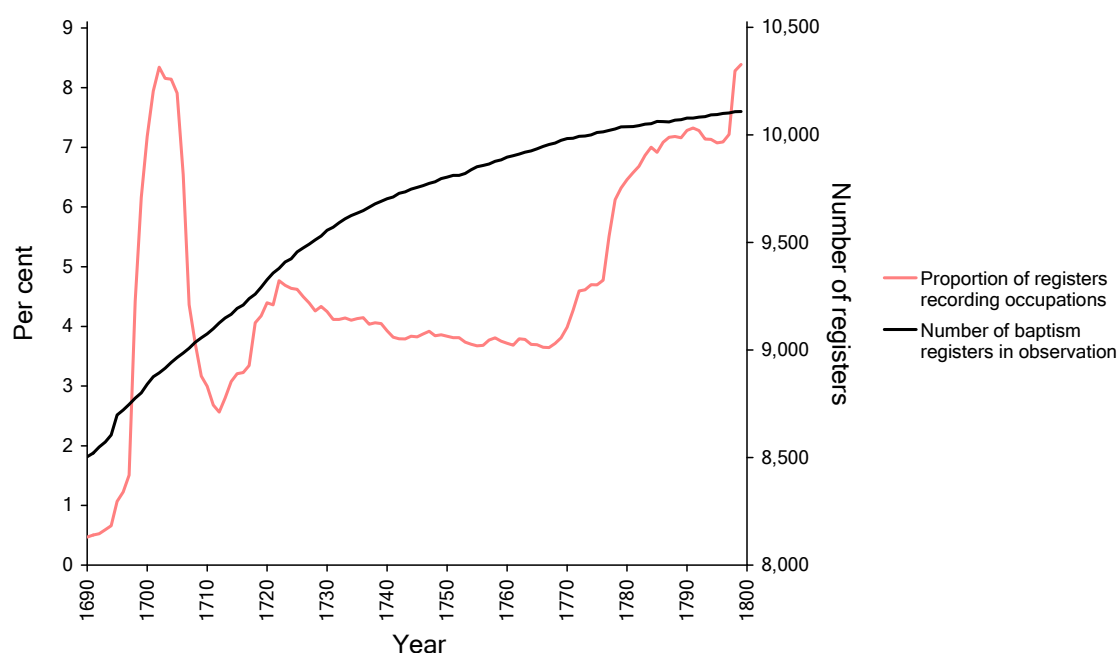
The data was analysed using a very simple set of scripts written in the Visual Basic for Applications language, implemented as a series of modules for Microsoft Excel. These were used to calculate a range of statistics, such as the proportion of registers in observation at any one time that recorded occupational information, or the total proportion of years that record occupational information for a given register or group of registers. The fourth section of this paper will analyse these register searches by ecclesiastical administrative units; before this, the more conventional territorial units of counties will be used as the basis for analysing occupational recording in baptism registers.

¹³ A reliable source for identifying the archdeaconries to which Welsh parishes belonged could not be found, and so at the present time it is only possible to analyse the four Welsh dioceses of Bangor, Llandaff, St Asaph and St Davids at the aggregate level.

3 Occupational recording at baptism in England by civil jurisdiction

This section will be primarily devoted towards an analysis of occupational recording in baptisms registers by county. However, it is best to start with an analysis of the overall pattern for England between 1690 and 1799, and figure 1 below serves to illustrate this. It depicts graphically the number of registers that are in observation at any one time, as well as the proportion of registers that seemingly record occupational information consistently in that particular year. The number of registers in observation rises steadily from just under 8,500 in 1690 to over 10,000 in 1799; this increase is attributable to the number of registers that only survive from the eighteenth century, as well as newly-created units from that century that tend to be located in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Figure 1: Numbers and proportions of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

The patterns of occupational recording that are revealed by this graph are intriguing. In 1690, less than half of one per cent of all registers in observation record occupational information for the father at baptism. From 1695 onwards, many registers systematically record occupational information for fathers at baptism. This reaches a peak in 1702, when over eight per cent of all registers record occupational information. This level is general sustained until 1705, after which point it becomes less common for registers to record such details. This decline is sustained until 1712, as after this point there is a mild recovery to a peak of 4.75 per cent of all registers in observation in 1722. From this point onwards, there is a shallow decline until 1769.

The final third of the eighteenth century is notable for a series of stepped increases. In and around the years of 1770, 1777 and 1798, there are marked increases in the proportion of registers that record occupational information. Both 1777 and 1798 correspond to the introduction of the Dade registration initiative in the diocese of York, and the Barrington system in the diocese of Durham respectively. Indeed, the closing years of the eighteenth century see the proportion of registers recording occupational information reach their highest point since the early eighteenth century. Moreover, since the number of registers in observation is greater at this point, the total number of registers that record occupational information is also at its highest at this time. In 1702, 742 registers appear to be systematically recording occupations; in 1798, the equivalent figure is 848.

It is also possible to study patterns of occupational recording by county, and table 1 does just this. It should be noted that Yorkshire is split into its four constitutive units, namely the three Ridings and the combined Ainsty of the City of York and the City of York itself.¹⁴ Along with specifying the number of register searches in each county, it also details the number of registers that record occupational information for at least one year between 1690 and 1799, as well as the proportion of all years covered that record occupational information. Additionally, it specifies the total number of registers that record occupational information for a run of at least four years between 1690 and 1719, the year in which the greatest proportion of inspected registers in observation record occupational information, as well as the size of that proportion.

It is rather difficult to take in all the statistics that are reported in table 1, and so it is convenient to map both the proportion of registers that record occupations, as well as the proportion of years that record occupations. This is done in figures 2 and 3 below.¹⁵ The value of plotting both these values allows discrimination between counties such as Durham and Yorkshire. In the former, most registers record occupations from 1798 due to the introduction of Barrington registers but few do so from earlier in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, many Yorkshire registers consistently record occupations for the father at baptism for most of the eighteenth century. For both County Durham and Northumberland, the respective values in figure 2 is relatively high, while it is low in figure 3; conversely, these values are high for all parts of Yorkshire during the period under question.

¹⁴ The Ainsty of York was a small group of largely rural parishes situated to the west of the city of York. It was not technically part of any Riding until 1836, when it was constituted as Ainsty Wapentake within the West Riding of York.

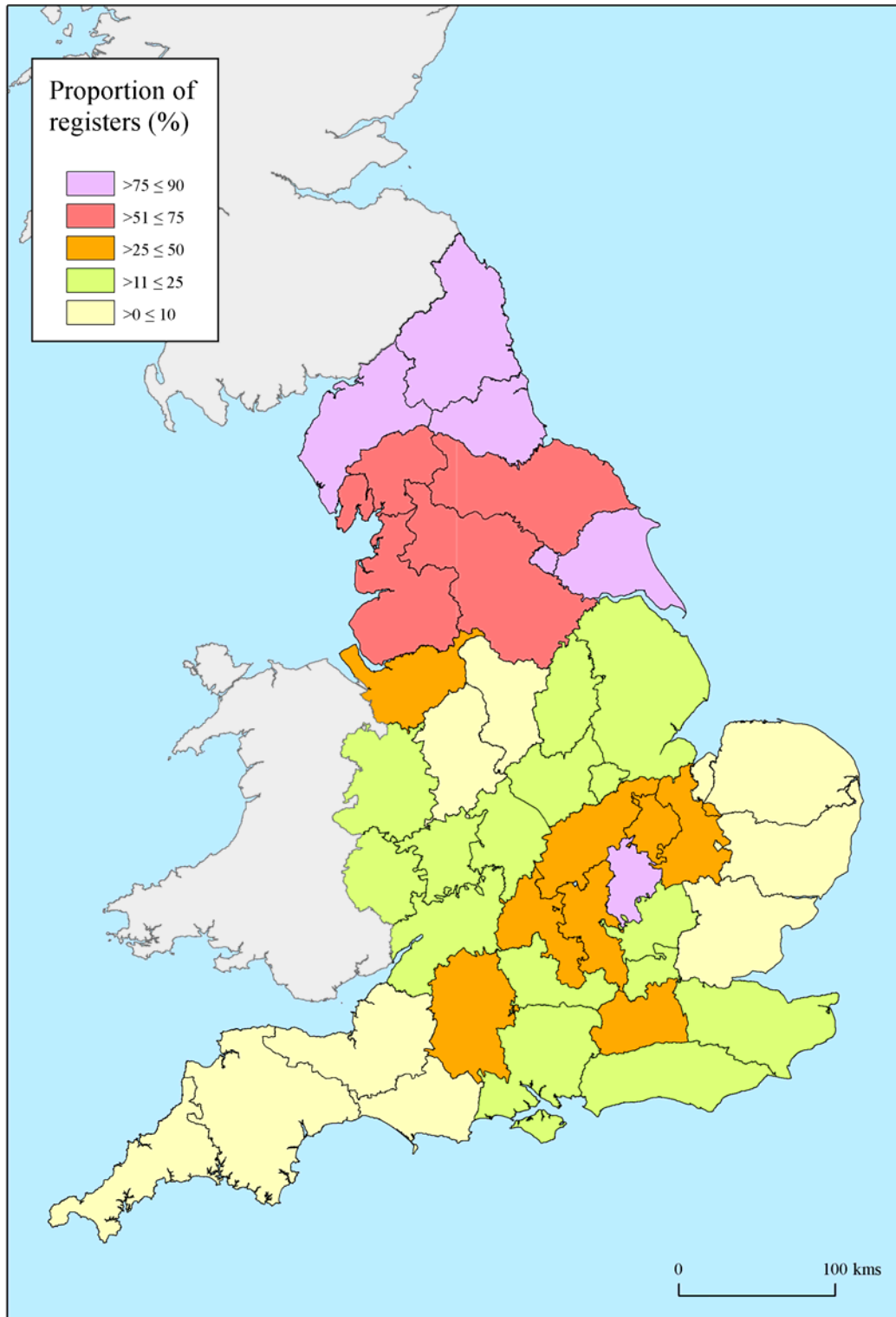
¹⁵ I am grateful to Max Satchell for creating figures 2 and 3.

Table 1: Occupational recording in Anglican baptism registers by county, 1690–1799

County	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers recording occupations in peak year (%)
Bedfordshire	127	80.31	16.23	57.48	1705	38.58
Berkshire	158	18.35	1.99	12.66	1702	14.09
Buckinghamshire	206	33.50	4.57	19.90	1704	21.86
Cambridgeshire	172	27.91	2.93	6.98	1729	8.33
Cheshire	128	46.09	17.86	7.81	1724	35.78
Cornwall	207	4.83	0.88	0.48	1792	3.40
County Durham	91	80.22	8.48	6.59	1799	79.78
Cumberland	136	80.15	18.12	8.09	1780	57.46
Derbyshire	180	3.33	0.41	1.11	1705	1.33
Devonshire	462	6.71	0.83	4.33	1700	4.80
Dorsetshire	239	2.93	0.19	2.09	1700	2.17
Essex	398	3.77	0.74	1.76	1702	1.38
Gloucestershire	337	13.65	1.17	9.50	1701	10.14
Hampshire	308	14.29	1.95	6.49	1703	7.09
Herefordshire	224	12.50	1.01	9.38	1701	10.61
Hertfordshire	130	16.92	4.51	10.00	1723	7.14
Huntingdonshire	90	46.67	6.58	13.33	1723	15.91
Kent	400	12.75	1.66	9.75	1704	9.89
Lancashire	207	53.62	21.20	9.66	1725	36.00
Leicestershire	252	13.49	1.59	9.13	1701	8.66
Lincolnshire	619	13.73	2.71	5.49	1702	5.29
Middlesex	188	25.00	7.53	20.21	1704	21.12
Norfolk	703	2.84	0.38	1.14	1702	1.47
Northamptonshire	292	40.07	5.75	22.60	1704	24.03
Northumberland	102	78.43	9.67	9.80	1799	77.45
Nottinghamshire	215	15.35	2.07	5.12	1787	6.98
Oxfordshire	229	37.12	4.28	20.52	1700	25.79
Rutland	50	22.00	2.49	12.00	1701	15.22
Shropshire	232	17.67	2.82	10.78	1705	11.76
Somerset	472	4.45	0.28	2.12	1705	2.78
Staffordshire	178	7.30	1.50	5.06	1721	3.23
Suffolk	501	9.78	1.03	5.59	1702	6.56
Surrey	146	32.88	7.06	23.29	1705	23.02
Sussex	307	16.29	1.70	12.05	1701	13.15
Warwickshire	211	19.43	2.03	12.80	1701	13.61
Westmorland	62	56.45	12.35	6.45	1790	47.54
Wiltshire	311	29.58	3.26	22.19	1703	21.75
Worcestershire	204	13.73	1.64	9.80	1704	11.96
Yorkshire City and Ainsty of York	42	90.48	33.80	30.95	1796	83.33
Yorkshire East Riding	195	80.00	26.93	23.59	1787	54.17
Yorkshire North Riding	232	62.93	15.13	14.66	1794	39.13
Yorkshire West Riding	278	73.38	26.54	21.94	1784	50.75
<i>England</i>	<i>10,221</i>	<i>23.25</i>	<i>4.65</i>	<i>10.03</i>	<i>1799</i>	<i>8.39</i>

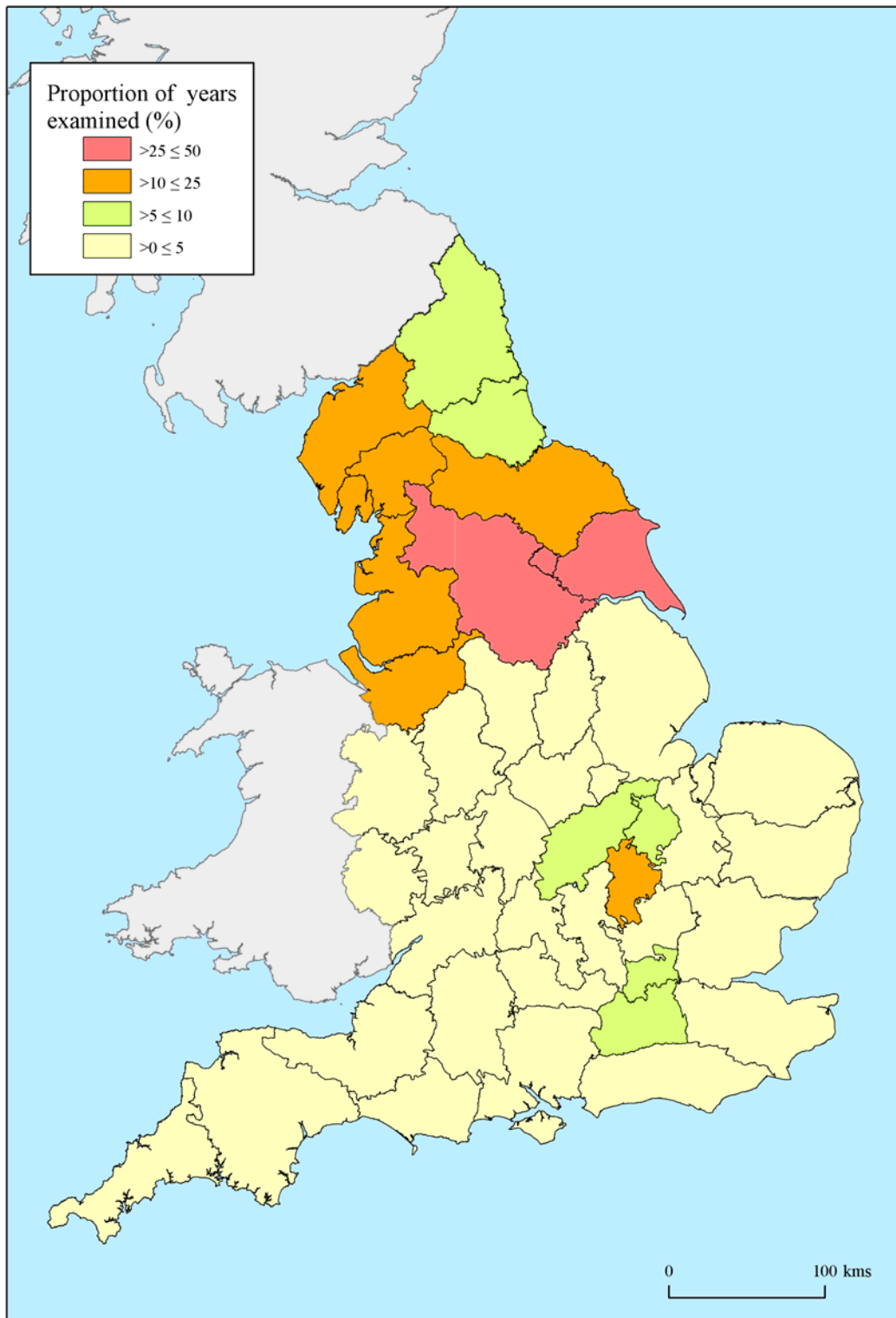
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 2: Proportions of Anglican parish registers by county that record the occupation of the father at baptism in England, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 3: Proportions of years inspected of Anglican parish registers by county that record the occupation of the father at baptism in England, 1690-1799



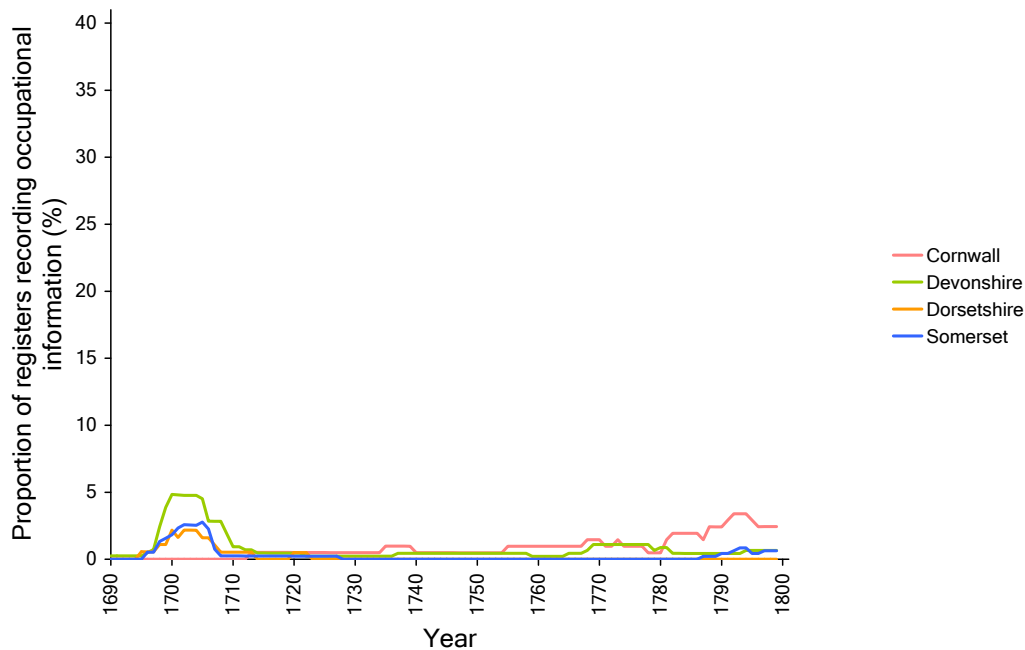
Source: Parish register searches database.

Both figures highlight a marked contrast between northern and southern England. As figure 2 shows, the nine most northerly counties all have more than fifty per cent of surveyed registers recording occupational information. The only southern county to achieve this level is Bedfordshire. Interestingly, parish registers in an area that might be broadly described as the eastern and southern Midlands also show a relatively high propensity to record occupational information, though none of the counties manage to achieve the heights of Bedfordshire. A swathe of counties surrounding this area also manage to achieve between eleven and twenty-five per cent of all inspected registers recording occupational information. The counties that are least likely to possess registers that record occupational information are those in East Anglia, and the West Country, in addition to Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

Figure 3 modifies this overall picture somewhat. It clearly demonstrates that the indication of occupational recording in Durham and Northumberland in figure 2 is overstated due to the introduction of the Barrington scheme in 1798. Additionally, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire in the east Midlands, as well as Middlesex and Surrey, contain registers that collectively manage to record occupations for more than five per cent of all years under observation. However, the standout feature of this map is the extent to which northern counties extensively record occupational information during the eighteenth century. Between ten and twenty-five per cent of register-years that have been surveyed record occupational information in the counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, Westmorland, Cumberland and the North Riding of Yorkshire. Meanwhile, the East and West Ridings, as well as the Ainsty of York, all manage to achieve a range of between 25 and 50 per cent of all years inspected systematically recording occupational information.

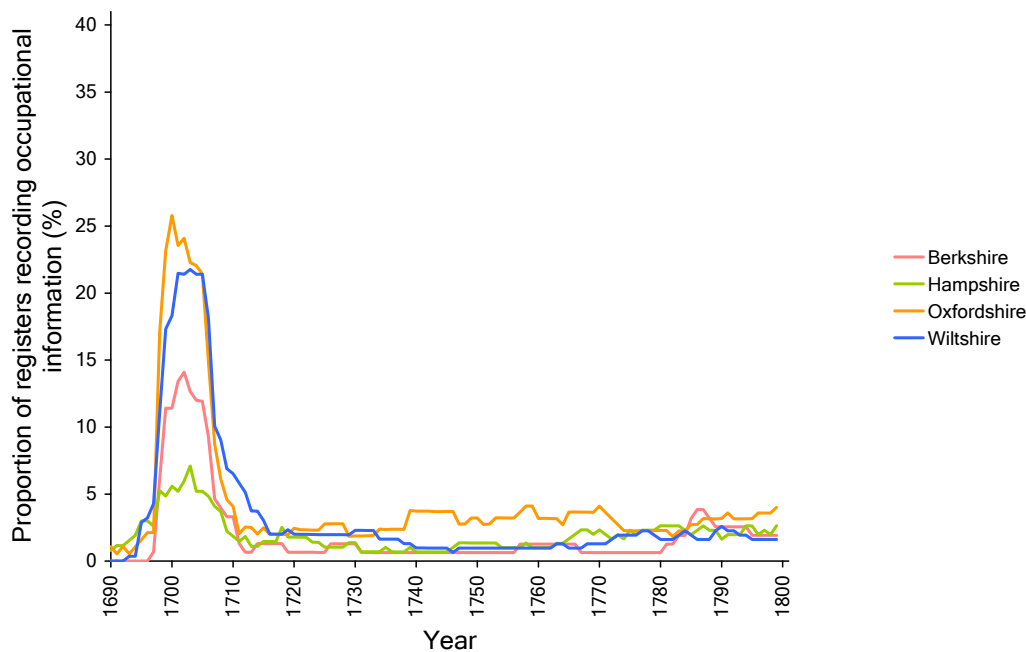
The picture that begins to emerge is one of distinction between northern and southern England. In the former, many registers record occupational information for many years throughout the eighteenth century, while in the latter, occupational recording seems to have been briefer and less common. To further explore the differences between these two regions, figures 5 through to 14 below illustrate the proportion of registers that record occupational information at any time between 1690 and 1799 for all the 42 counties. The counties have been grouped into geographically contiguous groups, and where possible the graphs have been scaled identically to permit comparison. However, the far higher recording of occupations in northern England necessitates the adoption of a scale up to 90 for the final three graphs, rather than the maximum of 40 for all the others.

Figure 4: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire and Somerset, 1690-1799



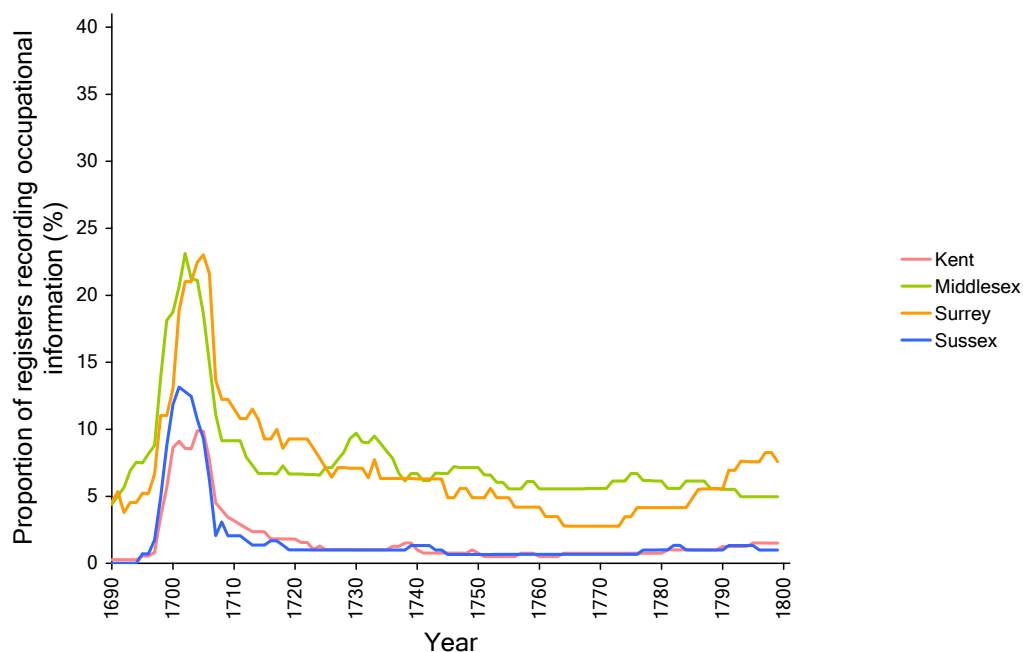
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 5: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, 1690-1799



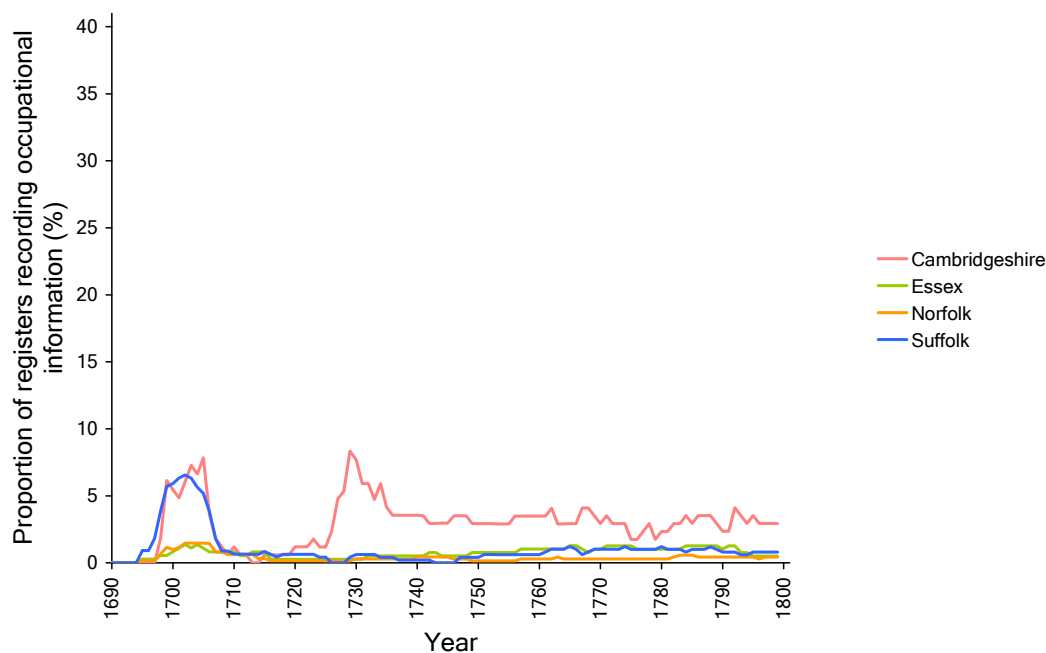
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 6: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex, 1690-1799



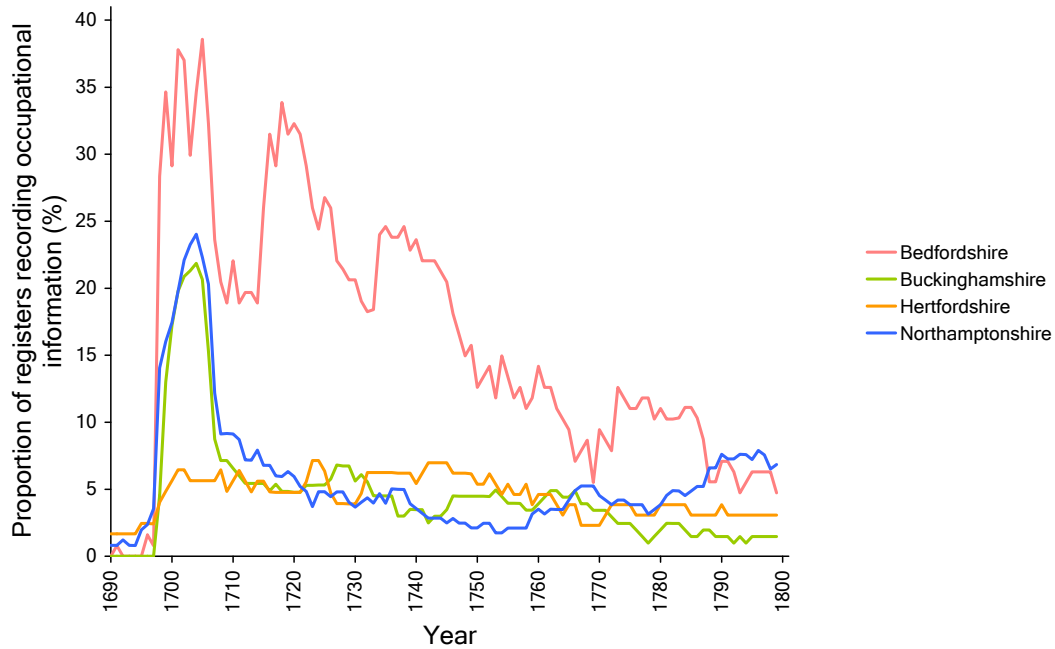
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 7: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, 1690-1799



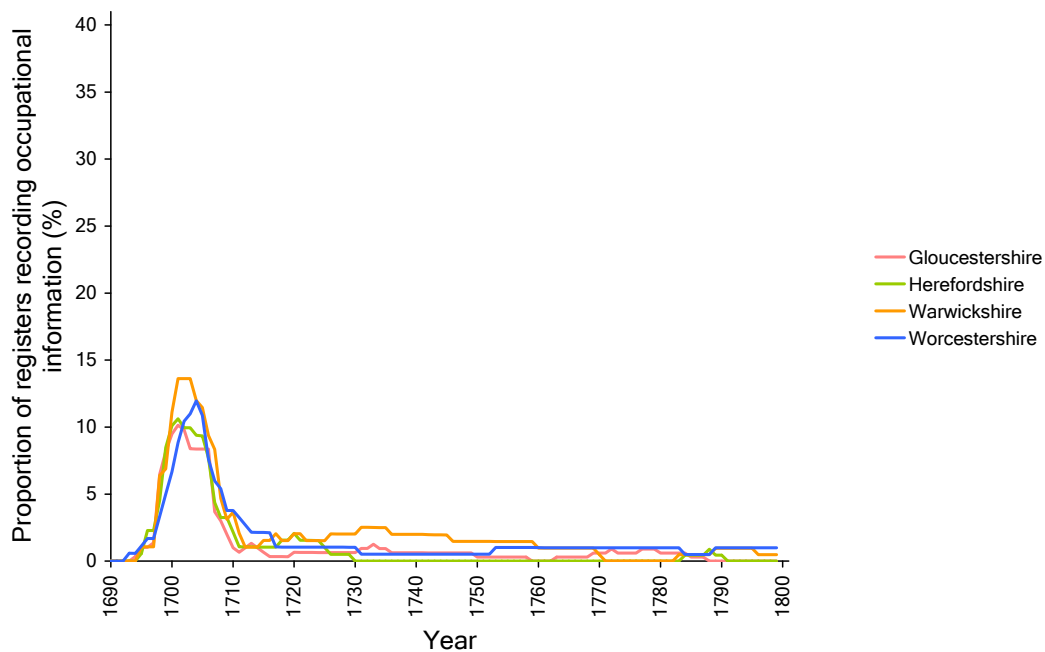
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 8: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire, 1690-1799



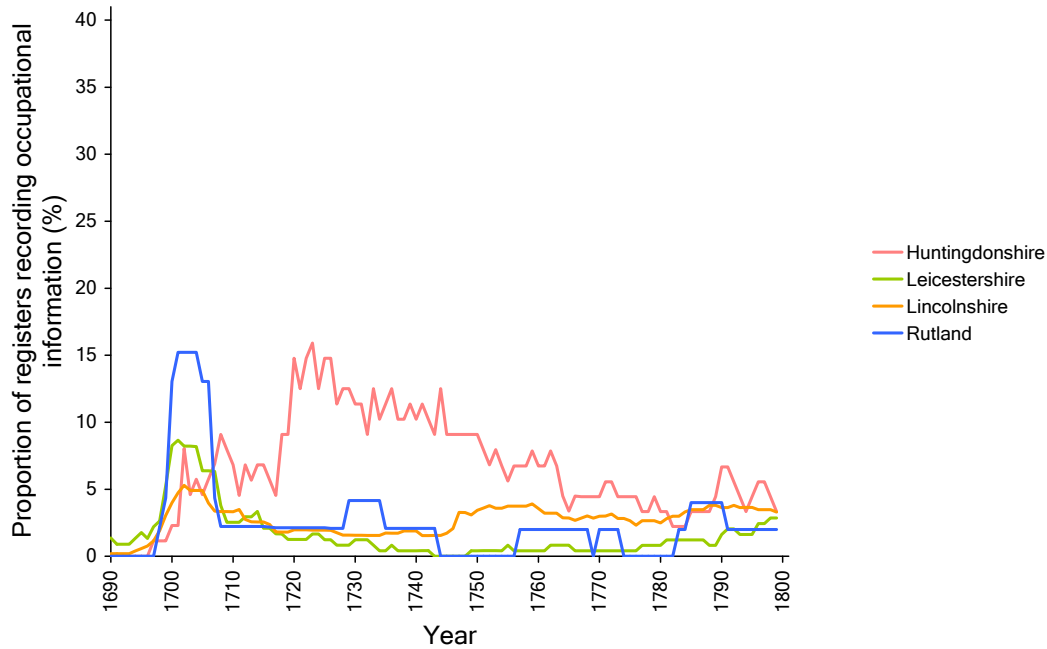
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 9: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, 1690-1799



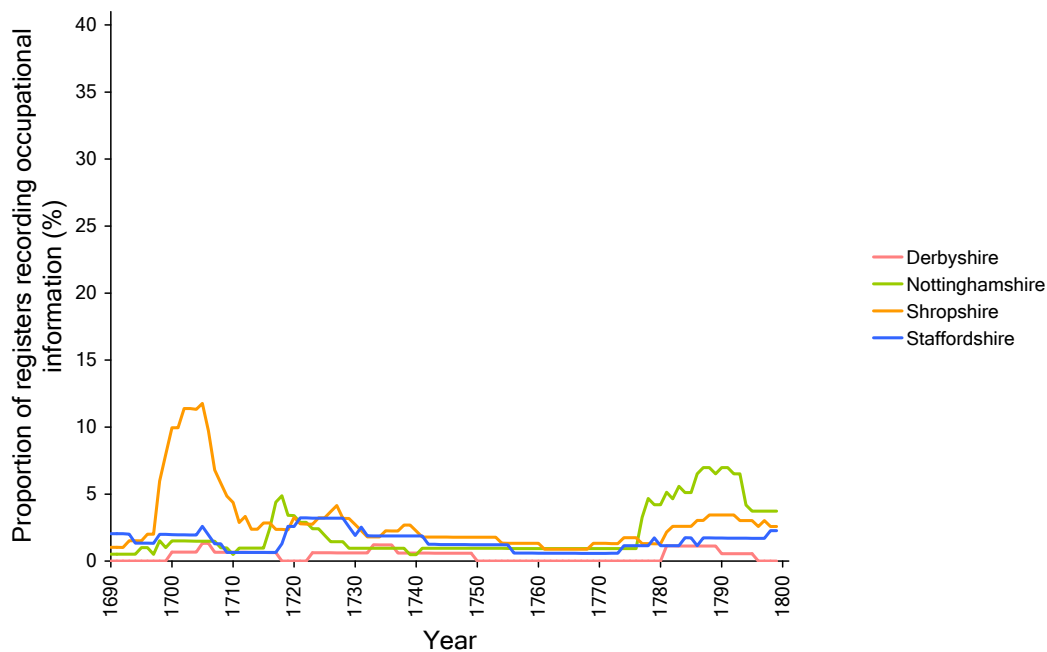
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 10: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland, 1690-1799



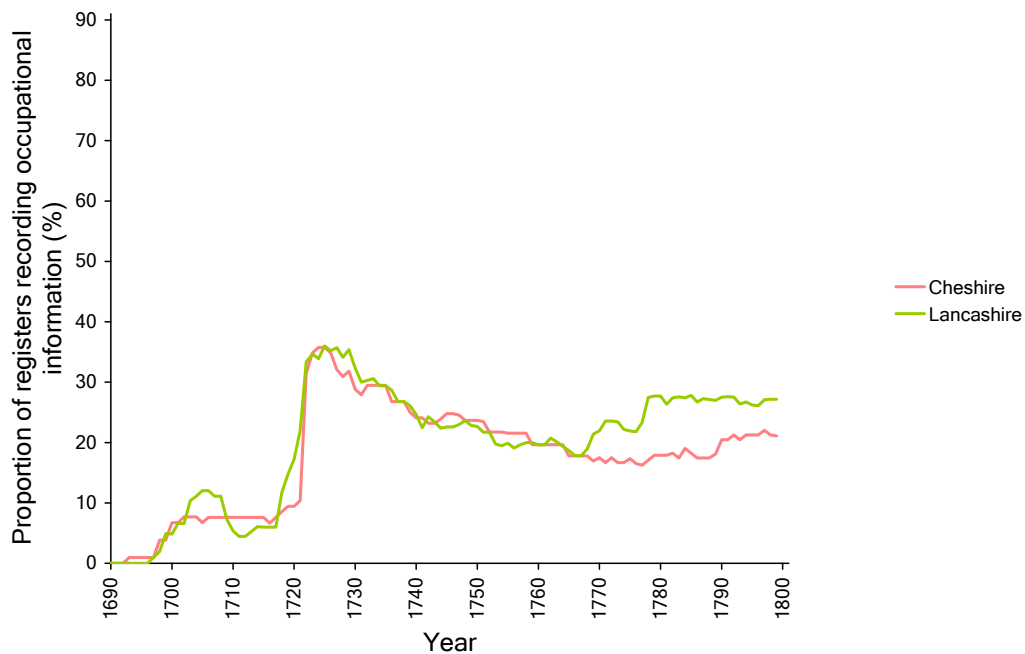
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 11: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, 1690-1799



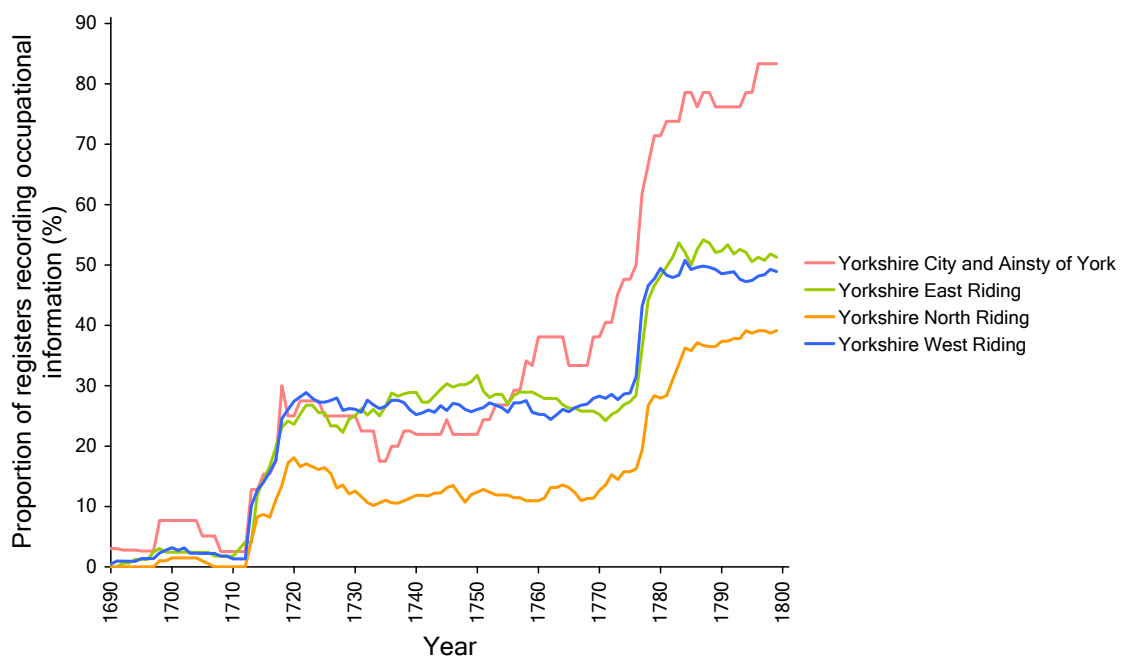
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 12: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire, 1690-1799



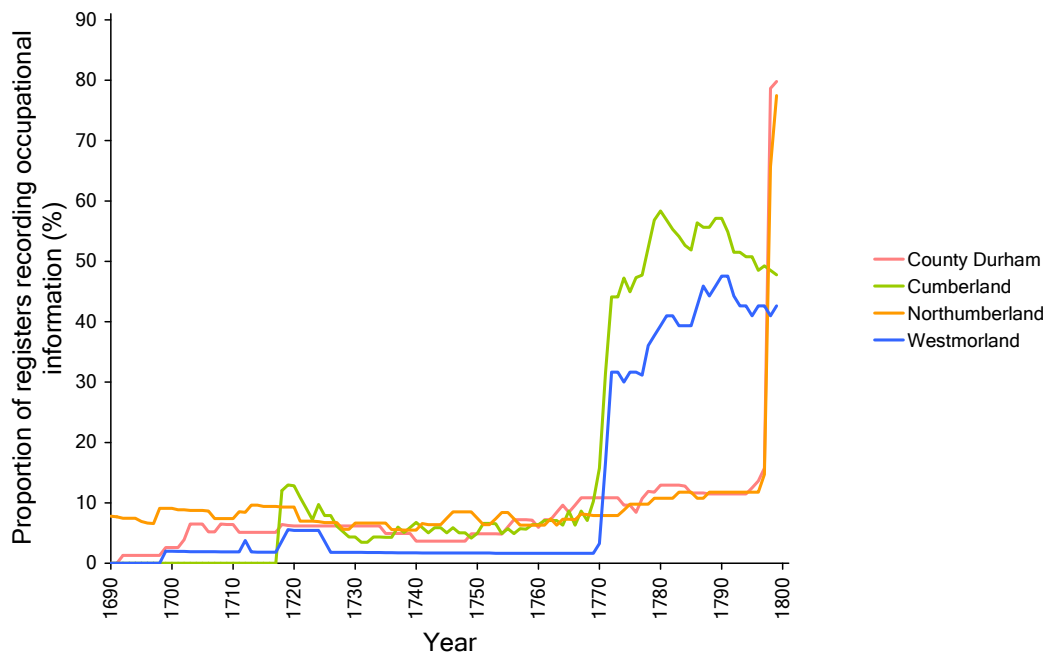
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 13: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in constitutive elements of the county of Yorkshire, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 14: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the counties of County Durham, Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

The impression that emerges from all these preceding figures is that throughout most of southern England, and to a much lesser extent in northern England, there is a peak in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The following counties achieve a peak value of more than twenty per cent around 1700: Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Middlesex, Surrey, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire; the latter county is the standout performer, with a maximum value of nearly forty per cent. Moreover, the way in which registers in this county record occupations extensively throughout the eighteenth century is unique. On the other hand, the following southern counties lack a very pronounced spike in the early eighteenth century: Hertfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Cornwall, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire. With the possible exception of a rather limited peak around 1730 in Cambridgeshire, there is little in the way of evidence for any initiatives to record occupational information in baptism registers.

Northern England can be divided into two parts. The constituent elements of Yorkshire as well as Cheshire and Lancashire have a peak in the second decade of the eighteenth century, which is sustained to a much greater degree than elsewhere. Such a peak is less pronounced but present in Cumberland, but barely noticeable in Westmorland and County Durham. However, everywhere other than Cheshire and Lancashire experience massive increases in the proportion of registers that record

occupational information during the second half of the eighteenth century. In Cumberland and Westmorland, the major growth takes place just after 1770, while all the constituent parts of Yorkshire witness a similar growth just before 1780, though to differing degrees. Finally, Durham experiences a massive increase in the proportion of recording at the end of the period, with some eighty per cent of registers recording occupational information by 1799. By and large, this pattern seems to give the general impression that changes in the propensity to record occupational information in parish registers were driven by ecclesiastical initiatives. The increase in the sub-divisions of Yorkshire around 1778 coincided with the introduction of the Dade registration system at that time, while the surge around 1798 in Durham coincided with the enforcement of the Barrington system. However, there are other intriguing peaks in the graphs for northern counties, most notably around 1715 for Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and 1770 for Cumberland and Westmorland, that suggest that there were other initiatives that had an impact in these regions at these times that have hitherto not been brought to the attention of historians. Notwithstanding these initiatives, it would appear that the recording of occupational information was endemic in northern England for much of the eighteenth century.

The general pattern that seems to emerge from this analysis is that the recording of occupational information at baptism was more common than is generally believed, with at least two and half per cent of registers surviving from any one time entering this information into its pages. Moreover, there seems to be a marked difference between northern and southern England. For the latter, recording of occupational information was comparatively rare, though it was most common in the first decade of the eighteenth century, and to be found most frequently in areas that could be described broadly as the eastern and southern Midlands. There does not seem to have been any systematic attempt to improve the quality of parochial registration by recording the occupation of the father at baptism here. Meanwhile, in the North, efforts to record occupational information in a systematic fashion seem to have originated from ecclesiastical attempts to improve the quality of parochial registration.

Thus far the analysis has relied upon the comparison of civil units, namely counties and divisions thereof. However, it has become clear that in such units could serve to obscure some of the patterns taking place, as many of the attempts to improve registration were done so using episcopal or archidiaconal authority. Moreover, ecclesiastical jurisdictions do not always follow county boundaries, and many parishes were peculiar jurisdictions and potentially exempt from any initiative from either the local bishop or archdeacon. Accordingly, analysing occupational recording by

ecclesiastical jurisdiction makes a great deal of sense, and the next section will do just this.

4 Occupational recording by English diocese

Since the registration unit codebook that supplies not only the unique alphanumeric identifier for each parish or chapelry, but also details the ecclesiastical jurisdiction to which it is subject, it is a straightforward matter to pursue the analysis of occupational recording by diocese. It would also be possible to disaggregate the data to the level of archdeaconry; however, this would greatly extend this section without any great benefit. Accordingly, patterns for the twenty-two pre-nineteenth-century Anglican dioceses of England are presented in table 4 below.¹⁶

The marked differences between northern and southern England are again highlighted by this tabulation. Throughout the province of Canterbury, with one exception, the peak year for recording the occupation of the father at baptism is in the first decade of the eighteenth century.¹⁷ The sole exception is the diocese of Ely, which exhibits a peak year in 1729. The proportion of registers that record occupations varies between the five per cent found in Norfolk and the value of thirty-seven per cent found in the diocese of Peterborough. However, the total proportion of years inspected that record occupational information in all southern dioceses is remarkably homogenous, with only Peterborough being able to exceed five per cent. This confirms that there is a general absence of systematic attempts to introduce the recording of occupations as a matter of course in Anglican registers by the Church hierarchy in southern England during this period. The area covered by the north of England is very different. In all four dioceses, more than half of all registers record occupations systematically for at least one year between 1690 and 1799. The peak year is also situated outside the first decade of the eighteenth century. With the exception of registers from the diocese of Durham, the proportion of years inspected recording occupations is at least three times greater than anything recorded for southern England.

¹⁶ Appendix 2 also reports summary statistics for all of the archdeaconries and major peculiars for England.

¹⁷ It should be noted that the four Welsh dioceses, namely Bangor, Llandaff, St Asaph and St Davids, have been excluded from the province of Canterbury; the patterns for these units will be analysed in section 5 below.

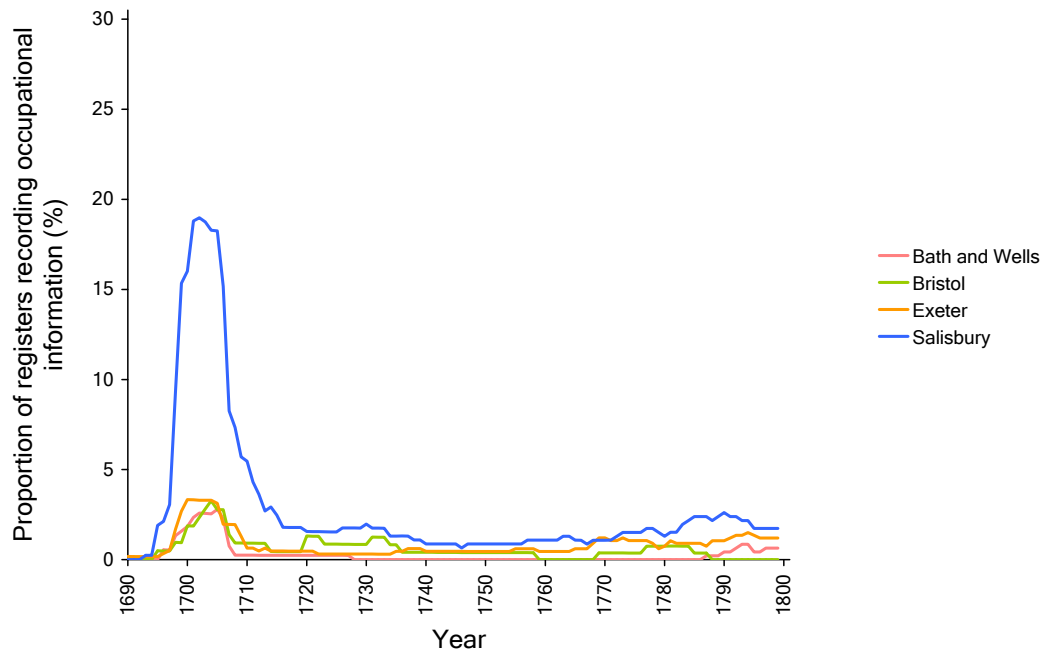
Table 4: Occupational recording in Anglican baptism registers by English diocese, 1690–1799

Province	Diocese	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers recording occupations in peak year (%)
Canterbury	Bath and Wells	470	4.47	0.28	2.13	1705	2.79
	Bristol	276	5.07	0.58	2.90	1704	3.27
	Canterbury	356	12.08	1.60	8.99	1704	8.85
	Chichester	282	16.67	1.40	12.41	1701	13.53
	Ely	158	29.11	2.97	6.96	1729	8.39
	Exeter	666	6.16	0.85	3.15	1700	3.34
	Gloucester	268	13.43	0.97	9.70	1701	10.92
	Hereford	399	12.78	1.12	9.02	1700	9.58
	Lichfield and Coventry	601	11.79	1.67	7.48	1703	7.36
	Lincoln	1,362	25.33	4.58	13.95	1702	11.72
	London	622	10.29	2.72	7.23	1702	7.13
	Norwich	1,218	5.83	0.67	3.04	1702	3.66
	Oxford	234	36.75	4.28	20.09	1700	25.26
	Peterborough	341	37.24	5.22	21.11	1704	22.77
	Rochester	94	19.15	3.55	14.89	1705	17.44
	Salisbury	464	26.08	2.86	19.18	1702	18.98
	Winchester	445	20.45	3.67	12.13	1703	12.09
	Worcester	262	14.50	2.00	11.07	1704	12.97
<i>Province of Canterbury</i>		<i>8,526</i>	<i>15.62</i>	<i>2.28</i>	<i>9.37</i>	<i>1702</i>	<i>9.22</i>
York	Carlisle	126	84.13	18.80	0.79	1789	72.22
	Chester	501	51.70	16.72	11.18	1725	30.05
	Durham	195	79.49	8.79	7.69	1799	78.76
	York	870	60.57	19.26	17.59	1787	40.54
	<i>Province of York</i>		<i>1,692</i>	<i>61.88</i>	<i>17.33</i>	<i>13.30</i>	<i>1799</i>

Source: Parish register searches database.

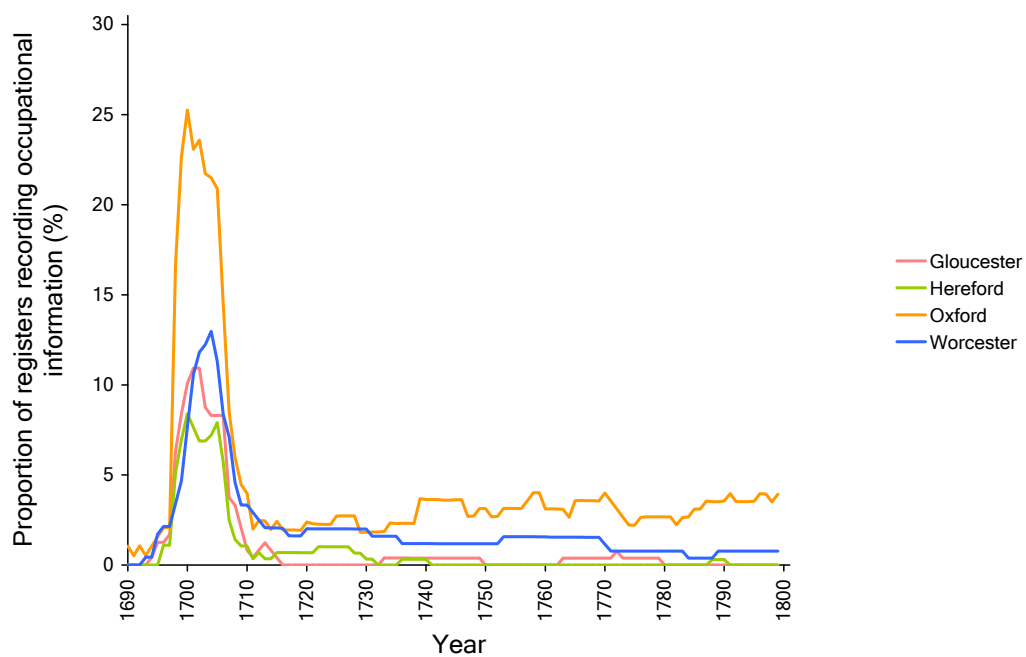
Figures 15 to 20 below show how the propensity to record occupational information varies by diocese in England between 1690 and 1799. This again confirms the general distinction between northern and southern England. The peak in the first decade of the eighteenth century is not particularly noticeable in the bishoprics of the province of York, and in many southern dioceses it is barely noticeable. However, in the dioceses of Salisbury, Oxford and Peterborough, this surge approaches or exceeds twenty per cent of all registers surveyed. After this, the proportion of registers that record occupations barely exceeds five per cent for most southern dioceses for the remainder of the eighteenth century.

Figure 15: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Bath and Wells, Bristol, Exeter, and Salisbury, 1690-1799



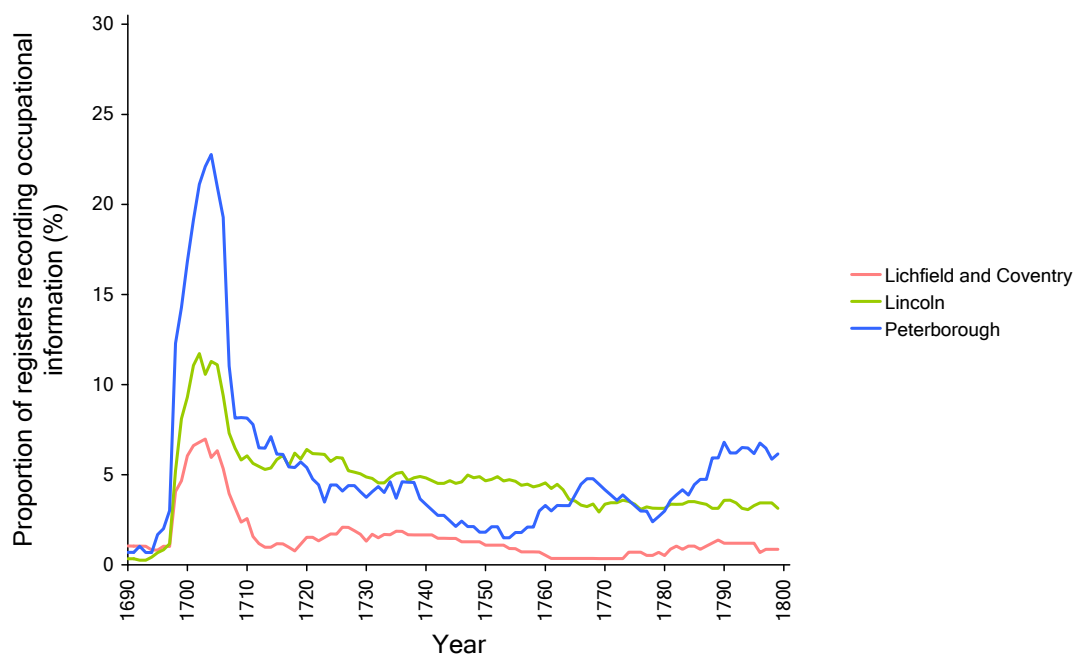
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 16: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Gloucester, Hereford, Oxford, and Worcester, 1690-1799



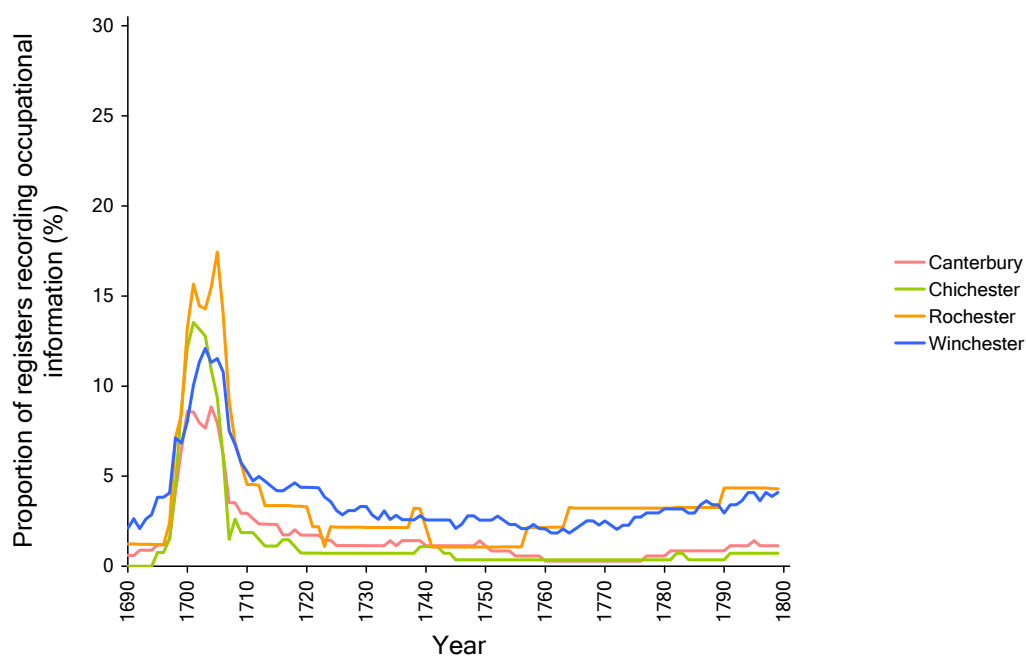
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 17: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Lichfield and Coventry, Lincoln, and Peterborough, 1690-1799



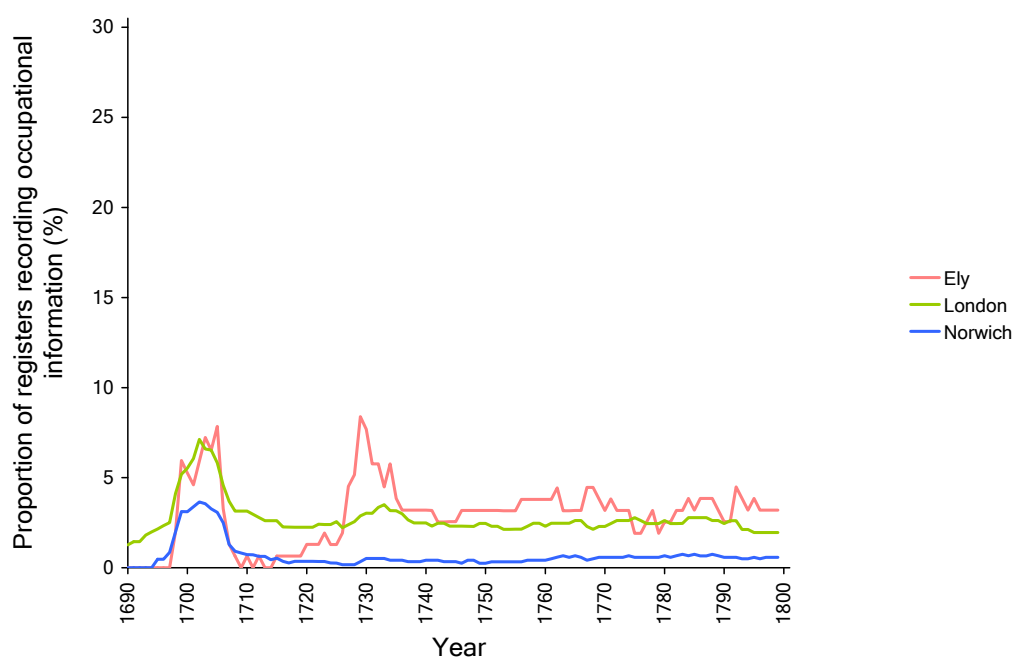
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 18: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Canterbury, Chichester, Rochester, and Winchester, 1690-1799



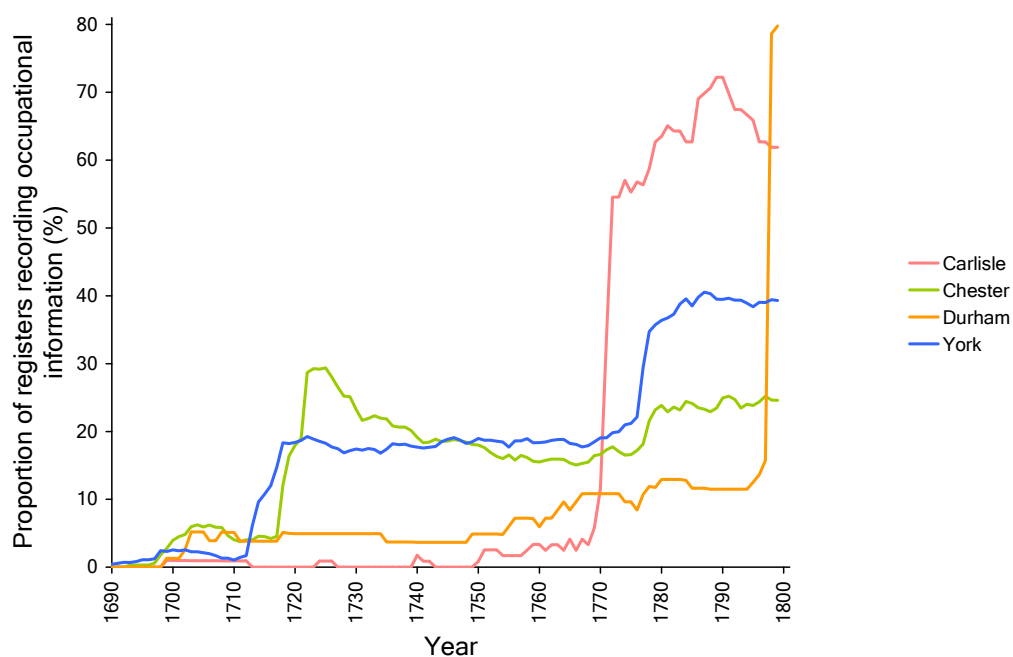
Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 19: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Ely, London, and Norwich, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 20: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Carlisle, Chester, Durham, and York, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

The evidence from this analysis of occupational recording by ecclesiastical jurisdiction is suggestive. The general distinction between northern and southern England is confirmed, and it becomes even more apparent that the factors affecting occupational recording in the province of York during the eighteenth century are linked to centralised attempts to improve parochial recording. In the south, however, neither ecclesiastical nor civil jurisdictions seem able to explain the geography of the surge in occupational recording in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Indeed, many of the dioceses in western England exhibit the same weak response to the Marriage Duty Act as the northern dioceses. With the exception of Bedfordshire, no counties seem to display a sudden surge in recording to reach a level that is in excess of one third of all extant registers, a pattern which is common in northern England when new systems of registration are introduced. Moreover, the counties that possess the greatest proportion of registers that record this information tend to be coterminous, situated in the eastern and southern Midlands, as well as the area surrounding London.

Any attempt at explaining the chronology and geography of the increase in occupational recording associated with the Marriage Duty Act invites both a closer examination of the legislation associated with this tax, as well as a closer examination of the geography of these registers, and this will now follow. This new tax was introduced by an act of parliament of 1695, to be enforced from 1 August of that year.¹⁸ The legislation required the person keeping the register to ensure that it was done accurately on pain of a fine of £100.¹⁹ The introduction of the act does have an impact upon the number of registers recording this information, but it is slight; 51 registers record occupations in 1693, and the equivalent figure for 1694 is 57. This increases only to 93 registers in 1695, and 107 in 1696. From this latter year, the clergy were liable to a fine of 40 shillings if they did not keep a register of births; many registers do indeed record dates of both births and baptism at around this period.²⁰ However, it is only from 1698 that the number of registers that do record this information begins to increase markedly; the numbers jump from 132 in 1697, to 388 in 1698 and 542 for the following year. This seems to have been the direct result of an additional piece of legislation from this year

¹⁸ 6 & 7 Wm. & M. c. 6. For a full discussion of the tax and all its associated legislation, see T. Arkell, 'An examination of the Poll taxes of the later seventeenth century, the Marriage Duty Act and Gregory King', in K. Schurer and T. Arkell (eds.), *Surveying the people: the interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 142-80; J. Boulton, 'The Marriage Duty Act and parochial registration in London, 1695-1706', in Schurer and Arkell, *Surveying the people*, pp. 222-52; *London inhabitants within the walls 1695* ed. D. V. Glass: *London Record Society* (Chatham, 1966), pp. i-xxxviii.

¹⁹ 6 & 7 Wm. & M. c. 6, s. 20.

²⁰ 7 & 8 Wm. III c. 25; for an analysis of registers that record intervals between birth and baptism at this time, see B. M. Berry and R. S. Schofield, 'Age at baptism in pre-industrial England', *Population Studies* 25 (1971), pp. 453-63.

that, along with creating new penalties for those who did not record these details, contained the following clause:

Be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That every Ecclesiastical or other Person required by the said former Acts or any of them to keep a Register of Persons buried christened born or married shal in the same Registers respectively according to the best of his Knowledg or Information together with the Name of every Person so married buried christened or born sett down and express or cause to be sett down and expressed in Writing the respective Degree Condition or Quality according to which His Majesties Duty ought to be paid for every such Burial Birth or Marriage respectively...²¹

Those keeping registers were therefore encouraged to record occupational information from this point onwards.

The duty itself was extended in 1696 to remain in force until 1706, and this also seems to explain why many registers cease recording occupational information at around this time.²² In 1704, 728 parishes record occupational information, while the figures for subsequent years are: 1705- 709; 1706- 588; 1707- 393; 1708- 336; and 1709- 287. Moreover, a subsequent act of parliament indemnified the clergy from being personally liable for non-collected dues.²³ These changes seem to have removed the impetus to record occupational information.

Given the clear legislative impetus underlying these changes, it is also necessary to explain why so *few* registers actually record this information, as well as trying to understand the peculiar geography of these registers. The Marriage Duty Act was an unpopular one, and never managed to achieve the financial returns to the Exchequer that were expected of it. Additionally, many register either start after the ending of the duty, or have no data for the key years between 1695 and 1706, suggesting that events were recorded in a separate register that has not survived for these parishes. Indeed, many communities may have recorded this information in a separate register that was subsequently lost or destroyed after the expiration of the legislation.²⁴

However, this does not explain the distinctive distribution of the registers that record occupations for the father at around this time. Communities whose registers record occupational information at baptism systematically for at least two years between 1690 and 1709 have been plotted in figure 21 below.

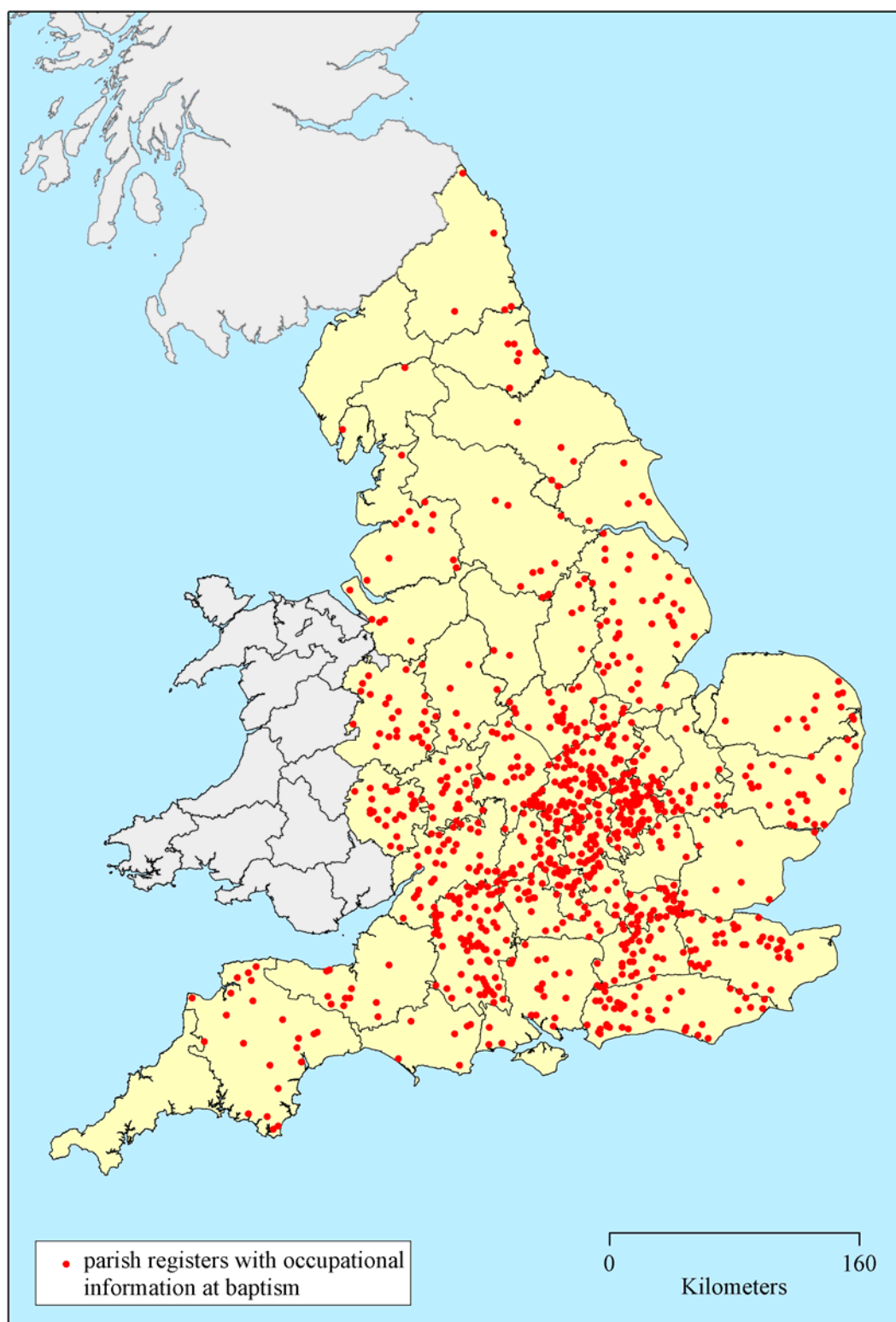
²¹ 'An Act for preventing Frauds and Abuses in the charging collecting & paying the Duties upon Marriages Births Burials Batchellors and Widowers' 9 Wm. III c.32 (1697-8), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=46918> (2007), last accessed: 6 July 2007.

²² 8 & 9 Wm. III c. 20 continued the enforceability of the Marriage Duty Act until 1 August 1706.

²³ 4 & 5 Anne c. 23.

²⁴ It is possible that systematically searching both original registers and bishops' transcripts would identify more parishes that record occupational information at this time. Doing this however would have significantly increased the scale of the data collection exercise.

Figure 21: English communities whose parish registers systematically record the occupation of the father at baptism for at least two years between 1690 and 1709



Source: Parish register searches database.

This shows that these registers tend to be concentrated in an area that may be loosely termed the south-east Midlands.²⁵ Many registers around London also record this information at this time, and there is a goodly leavening of coverage for the West Midlands. Meanwhile, the paucity of registers from northern England, the West Country and East Anglia is also apparent. This, broadly speaking, was an area typified by nucleated village settlement and open field agricultural systems, and so it is possible that the peculiar social and economic features of these communities would have made the recording of occupational information possess a utility that it would not possess in other parts of the country. A comparison of figure 21 above with Wrathmell and Roberts' 'central province', an area in which nucleated village settlement and open field agricultural systems predominated, suggests that parishes from this area were most likely to record occupations at the start of the eighteenth century.²⁶ This is obviously speculative, and registers that record occupations do exist from outside this region. However, certain aspects of the geography of this are sufficiently striking to suggest that there is some sort of relationship.²⁷

Northern England contrasts markedly with the south. Few communities record occupational information at the time of the Marriage Duty Acts, while all dioceses exhibit some form of marked peak after the first decade of the eighteenth century. The diocese of York seems to be the first to do so around 1715, closely followed by the diocese of Chester. However, both these surges are constrained to only around one in five registers for York, and one in three for Chester. The diocese of Carlisle, on the other hand, experiences a dramatic surge around 1770, moving from less than five per cent of all registers recording occupations, to nearly sixty per cent over a period of two or so years. The way in which this peak is limited only to the parishes of this particular see is quite striking, and justifies the examination the data in this way. This is consistent with the notion of some sort of central initiative or requirement to commence recording this information. Indeed, the figures for northern England confirm the impact of diocesan schemes to improve parochial recording in the Province of York during the second half of the eighteenth century. The peak in all the constituent parts of Yorkshire around 1777 shows the role that Archbishop Markham's support for the Dade system of registration had in increasing the amount of information recorded in baptism registers, even though

²⁵ The presence of Wiltshire and Surrey in this area ensures that this is a very imprecise definition.

²⁶ See B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmell, *An atlas of rural settlement in England* (London, 2000); and B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmell, *Region and place: a study of English rural settlement* (London, 2002).

²⁷ For example, registers from Wiltshire do exhibit a marked tendency to record occupational information at this time, while Hampshire does not. The former is situated within the 'central province', while the latter is not.

the noting of the father's occupation was a very small part of the overall requirements.²⁸ There is a clear surge in the proportion of registers recording occupations in the see of Carlisle around 1772, which do not coincide with any known initiative to improve the quality of parochial registration from the Diocese of Carlisle, which covered large swathes of these counties.²⁹ Indeed, this initiative predates both the more well-known Dade and Barrington registration schemes. Meanwhile, the introduction of the Barrington registers in the Diocese of Durham had an overwhelming impact upon the recording of occupations in registers from Durham and Northumberland from 1798.³⁰

It is also possible that studying these patterns at the diocesan level may hide important regional variations. However, it is easy to disaggregate these figures and report them for all of the nine constituent archdeaconries in the province of York, and the results of this are presented in Figures 22 and 23 below.³¹ Analysing the data in this way uncovers some very interesting patterns. The archdeaconry of Chester is the only northern jurisdiction to exhibit a prominent peak around 1700, and then goes on to witness a surge in occupational recording around 1721. By 1726, over forty per cent of all registers in observation are describing the father's occupation. This subsequently falls, but even by 1799 nearly one third of all registers continue to do so. The archdeaconry of Richmond also exhibits an increase in the number of registers recording occupations from 1718, but it does not manage quite the same level as that achieved by Chester.

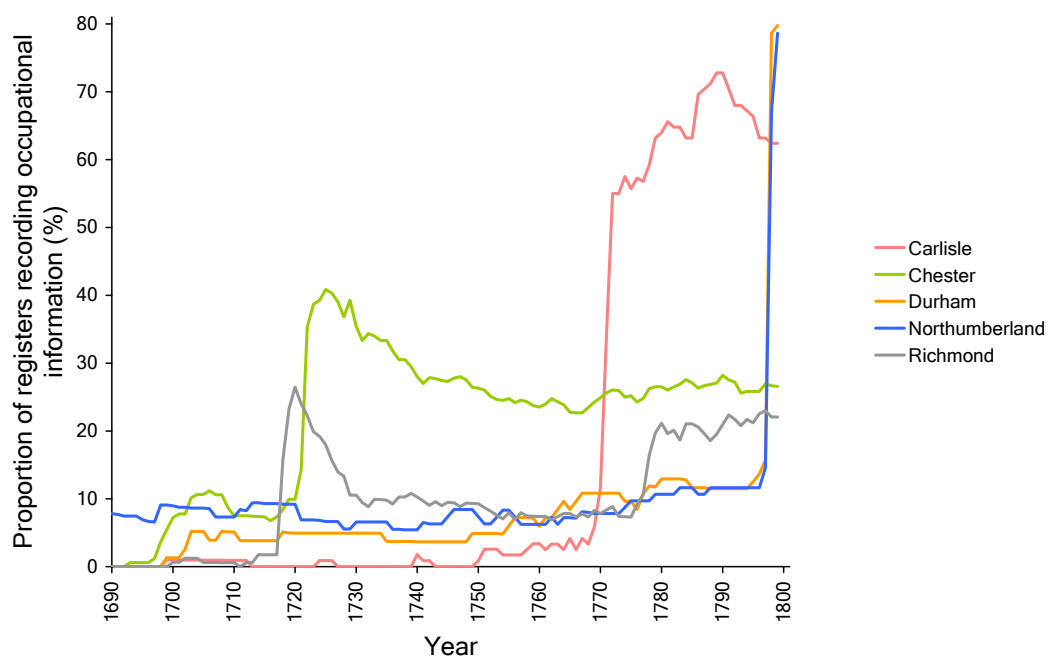
²⁸ For a full discussion of the main characteristics of Dade registers, see R. A. Bellingham, 'The Dade parish registers', *Family history news and digest* **10** (1995), pp. 76-79; R. A. Bellingham, 'Dade registers', *Archives* **27** (2002), pp. 134-47; R. A. Bellingham, 'Dade parish registers', *Local Population Studies* **73** (2004), pp. 51-60; C. C. Webb, *A guide to the parish records in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research* (York, 1987), pp. v-vi; A. Wilcox, *National index of parish registers vol. 11 part 2: Yorkshire: North and East Ridings and York* (London, 1998), p. 11.

²⁹ An attempt to improve the quality of parochial registration was introduced in June 1786, but this was concerned with the recording of the mother's maiden name at the time of baptism. See P. B. Park and J. Arnison, *National index of parish registers vol. 10 part 3: Cumberland and Westmorland* (London, 1999), p. 3.

³⁰ D. J. Steel, *National index of parish registers vol. 1: sources of births, marriages and deaths before 1837 (I)* (London, 1968), pp. 44-5; C. P. Neat and D. G. Mason, *National index of parish registers vol. 11 part 1: Durham and Northumberland* (London, 1984). For instance, a letter of 30 September 1797, pasted into the register of Elwick Hall (County Durham) recorded the visitation of Bishop Barrington in 1797, and the recommendation of an improved form of parochial registration. See *The parish register of Elwick Hall* ed. J. A. Welford 2 vols. (Elwick Hall and Musselburgh, 1972-8), vol. 2 pp. 168-9. For a full discussion of the genesis of Barrington registers, see S. Basten, 'Parenting and the infant lifecourse in late Georgian Northern England', unpublished University of Cambridge PhD thesis (2007), ch. 2.

³¹ The diocese of Chester consisted of two archdeaconries, namely Chester and Richmond. The former covered the county of Chester as well as Lancashire south of the River Ribble. The archdeaconry of Richmond covered the rest of Lancashire, the south-western half of Westmorland and part of Cumberland, in addition to the western half of the North Riding of Yorkshire and the westernmost extremities of the West Riding. The diocese of Carlisle consisted of but one archdeaconry, covering the rest of Westmorland and Cumberland. The diocese of Durham was split between the archdeaconries of Northumberland and Durham, both roughly corresponding to the counties of the same name. Finally, the archdeaconries of York, Cleveland the East Riding, and Nottingham formed the diocese of York. The territorial jurisdictions covered by the final pair correspond to the obvious counties. The archdeaconry of York relates to the West Riding of Yorkshire, while that of Cleveland covers the eastern half of the North Riding.

Figure 22: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the archdeaconries of Carlisle, Chester, Durham, Northumberland and Richmond, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

It is worth noting that the ordinary in the diocese of Chester between 1714 and 1725 was Francis Gastrell, who was also responsible for a comprehensive study of the parishes in his diocese known as the *Notitia Cestriensis*.³² It is also worth noting that the two to three year interval between the peaks in the two archdeaconries could well coincide with the triennial visitation of the bishop to these jurisdictions. In any case, the steep ‘cliff faces’ suggest that these surges were the result of central direction, rather than a general climate encouraging the reception of new registers. It is also worth pointing out that there is little sign of any effort by Archbishop Markham’s successor at the diocese of Chester, Bielby Porteus, to introduce Dade-type registration during the 1770s. There is little sign of any change in the series for the archdeaconry of Chester, though there is an increase in the archdeaconry of Richmond at around this time.³³ This may simply be due to the diffusion of this new form of registration rather than any systematic effort to introduce it across the archdeaconry.³⁴

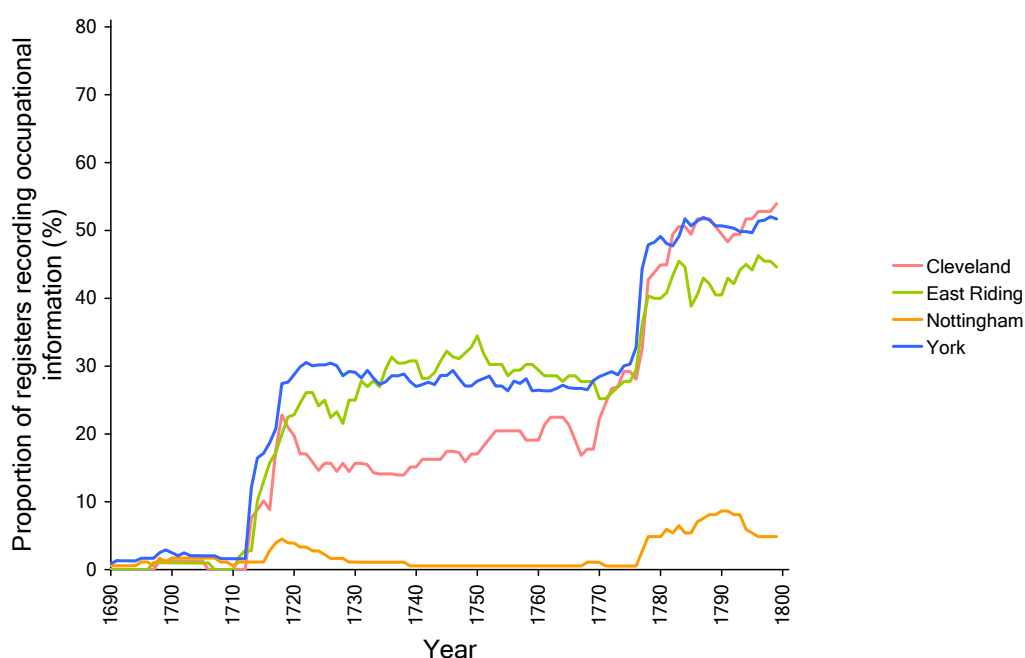
³² Oxford Dictionary of National Biography; F. Gastrell, *Notitia cestriensis: or Historical notices of the diocese of Chester* ed. F. R. Raines 4 vols. (Manchester, 1845-50).

³³ Bellingham suggests that this might have been the case; see Bellingham, ‘Dade parish registers’, p. 55.

³⁴ It is also worth noting that the archdeaconry of Stow in the diocese of Lincoln also exhibits an increase in occupational recording from the late 1770s onwards, similar to the diffusion effect visible in the archdeaconry of Richmond. See Appendix 2 below for further details.

The archdeaconries of Carlisle, Durham and Northumberland again show clear evidence of an attempt to enforce a centrally-determined requirement to record occupational information during the late eighteenth century. In the latter two jurisdictions, this clearly coincides with the introduction of Barrington registers in 1798. However, this is clearly predated by developments in the Carlisle around 1770. Even in these two locations, where the authority of the ecclesiastical authorities was used to enforce these initiatives, only between fifty and eighty per cent of all registers began to record occupations in a systematic manner.

Figure 23: The proportion of English parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the archdeaconries of Cleveland, the East Riding, Nottingham, and York, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

The four archdeaconries in the diocese of York also display some interesting yet contrasting patterns. Firstly, the three Yorkshire archdeaconries all display a tendency to commence recording occupational information around 1715. While the peak varies between different parishes, and does not display the characteristic steep incline that can be observed for the late eighteenth-century initiatives in the dioceses of Durham and Carlisle, it does seem that this was the result of a general climate of encouragement for more detailed parochial recording. It also coincides with the primary visitation of the new archbishop of York, William Dawes, in 1715. Secondly, it is also clear that between twenty and thirty per cent of all registers in observation at any one time in these three archdeaconries also recorded occupational information from this point until the final

quarter of the eighteenth century. While the impact of the Dade register scheme around 1777 is clear, it did not have the same impact as the initiatives instigated in Durham and Carlisle at around the same time.³⁵ Finally, it would seem that the archdeaconry of Nottingham was rather anomalous in comparison with the rest of the diocese. There is little evidence of a peak in recording around 1715, and not much of a systematic attempt was made to introduce Dade registers in the closing years of the 1780s.³⁶ Indeed, registering the occupation of the father in Nottinghamshire seems to have been extremely rare throughout the eighteenth century, and including data from this county serves to depress the overall figures for the diocese of York.

From this analysis, three things become abundantly clear. Firstly, increasing the amount of information recorded in baptism registers was common during eighteenth century England: Dade registers by no means emerged without any precedent. It is clear that there were several attempts at introducing more thorough systems of registration in northern England, with varying degrees of success. The recording of occupational information for the father at baptism was very common in the diocese of York before 1777, and there were several parishes elsewhere that recorded occupational information throughout northern England. Indeed, Dade registers in many ways were one of the least successful implementations of a new system of registration. Secondly, attempts to introduce similar improvements in parochial registration outside the province of York are conspicuous by their almost complete absence. The collected evidence suggests that there is only one diocese that attempted to introduce the registering of father's occupations in parish registers in the province of Canterbury, and that diocese was in Wales.³⁷ Seemingly the only successful attempt at increasing the quality of parochial registration that was introduced by a bishop in southern England was the requirement to record the mother's maiden name at baptism in the diocese of Norwich from 1783.³⁸ Finally, it is also apparent that Nottinghamshire's patterns of occupational recording mean that while it is technically part of the province of York, it shares more in terms of its registration characteristics with the dioceses of southern England.

All this begs the question as to why registers in northern England would be more prone to record occupational information latter in the eighteenth century. Clearly the impact of episcopal or archidiaconal visitations drove the tendency for registers in the

³⁵ It is worth pointing out that Dade-style registers need not necessarily record occupational information; they could simply concentrate upon recording the genealogical information concerning grandparents and so on.

³⁶ On the basis of the register searches, only the ones recorded in A. Henstock, "'Genealogical' register entries in Nottingham parishes', *Local Population Studies* **25** (1980), pp. 57-8, appear to record occupational information from this time onward.

³⁷ The diocese in question was that of Bangor, around 1740. See below. There is also perhaps a hint that a similar initiative was introduced in the see of St Asaph around 1783.

³⁸ See P. M. Kitson, 'Parochial registration in the diocese of Norwich during the eighteenth century' (forthcoming).

dioceses of Chester and York to record occupational information during the second decade of the eighteenth century. The rationale behind the adoption of Dade and Barrington registers appears to have differed markedly, while no work seems to have been done on why registers in the diocese of Carlisle commence recording occupational descriptors or additional nominative information during the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁹ However, the motives of those in authority cannot explain why the propensity to record occupational information was so high at times when there were no initiatives. While this is again necessarily speculative, it is worth pointing out that this region was typified by dispersed settlement as well as being dominated by parishes containing multiple townships. Moreover, the occupational structure of many rural communities in the north remained a variety of different occupations for longer than was the case in the south, where the emergence of a sizable agricultural proletariat by the early nineteenth century resulted in large proportions of individuals simply being described as simply a 'labourer' in the parish register. The addition of occupational information, or the mother's maiden name, or recording the names of grandparents, would serve to distinguish between different people who might possess the same name. The rationale behind the adoption of these different registration initiatives seems to have varied between the different dioceses in the province of York. However, the underlying geographical, social and economic structures of these parishes would appear at first glance to have given the recording of occupational information a greater utility than was the case elsewhere in England.

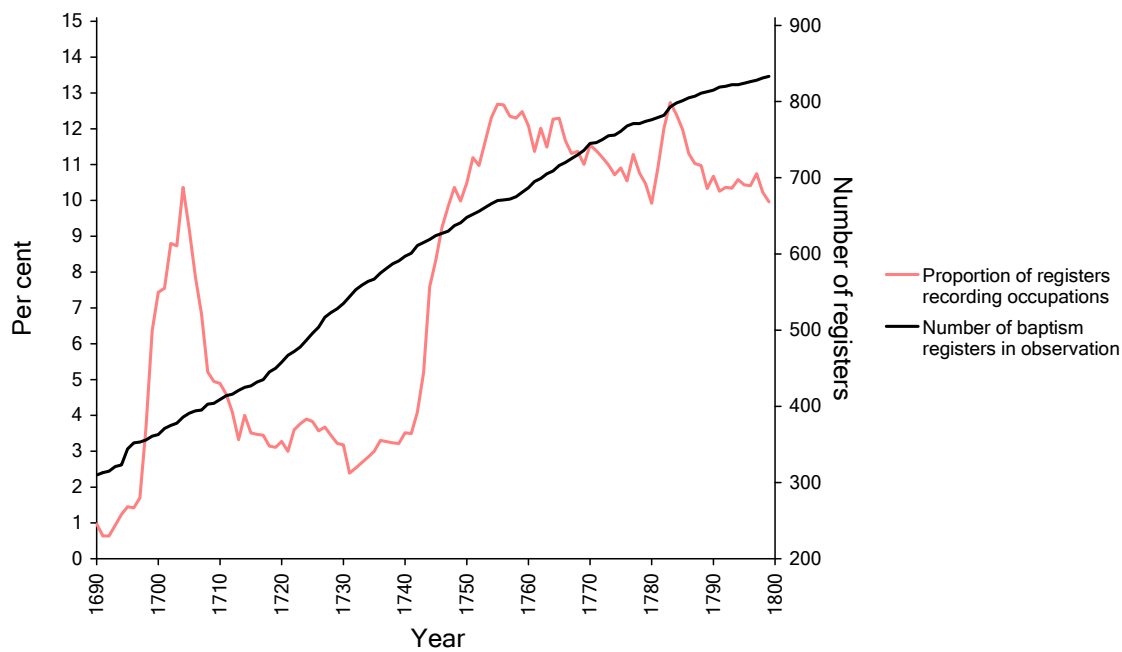
5 Occupational recording in the Anglican parish registers of Wales, 1690-1799

The picture in terms of the recording of occupational information in baptism registers that emerges for England from the two preceding sections is one of a distinction between late eighteenth century ecclesiastical initiatives in the north, while occupational recording the south was driven by piecemeal action to address concerns created in the aftermath of the Marriage Duty Act. This section will explore the extent to which either of these patterns is applicable to the Anglican registers of Wales. Before analysing the utility of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, it is useful to examine the general patterns of occupational recording for the father at baptism. This is done by Figure 24 below which shows the proportions of registers in observation that record occupational

³⁹ William Dade, the man behind the eponymous registers, appears to have been motivated largely by genealogical concerns; see Bellingham, 'Dade parish registers', pp. 51-5. Bishop Barrington of Durham seems to have been driven more by a belief that the Church had to be above reproach to survive an age of revolutionary ferment; see S. Basten, 'Parenting and the infant lifecourse', ch. 2.

information for the father at baptism at any one time, combined with the number of registers that are in observation for any given year.

Figure 24: Numbers and proportions of Welsh parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

Three aspects of this particular figure are worthy of note. Firstly, large numbers of surviving Welsh registers do not commence until well after 1700; indeed, many ancient Welsh parishes have *no* extant registers before the enforcement of Rose's Act in 1813.⁴⁰ Despite this, the usual peak around 1700, coinciding with the Marriage Duty Act, is still glaringly obvious. Although this manages to reach a value of nearly eleven per cent of registers in observation, the small numbers of registers that survive from this time mean that the true proportion of all parishes that possess occupational information around 1700 is much smaller than is the case in England. Additionally, the generally poor survivorship of registers from west Wales ensures that far fewer registers will be available from these areas, further ensuring that these registers will be concentrated in particular areas. The final striking feature is the marked increase in occupational recording that takes place just after 1740. This is perhaps not quite as dramatic as the peaks found in the dioceses of Carlisle or Durham later in the eighteenth century, but it does suggest that there may

⁴⁰ Cardiganshire is a particularly poor county in this regard, with 21 parishes out of 70 having no surviving registers before 1800. Clerical carelessness and damp seem to have been the major culprits: see *Cofrestrï plwyf Cymru: Parish registers of Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1986), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

well have been an initiative to ensure the recording of occupational information in at least one part of the principality.

Table 5: Occupational recording in Anglican baptism registers for the four divisions of the Principality of Wales, and the county of Monmouthshire, 1690–1799

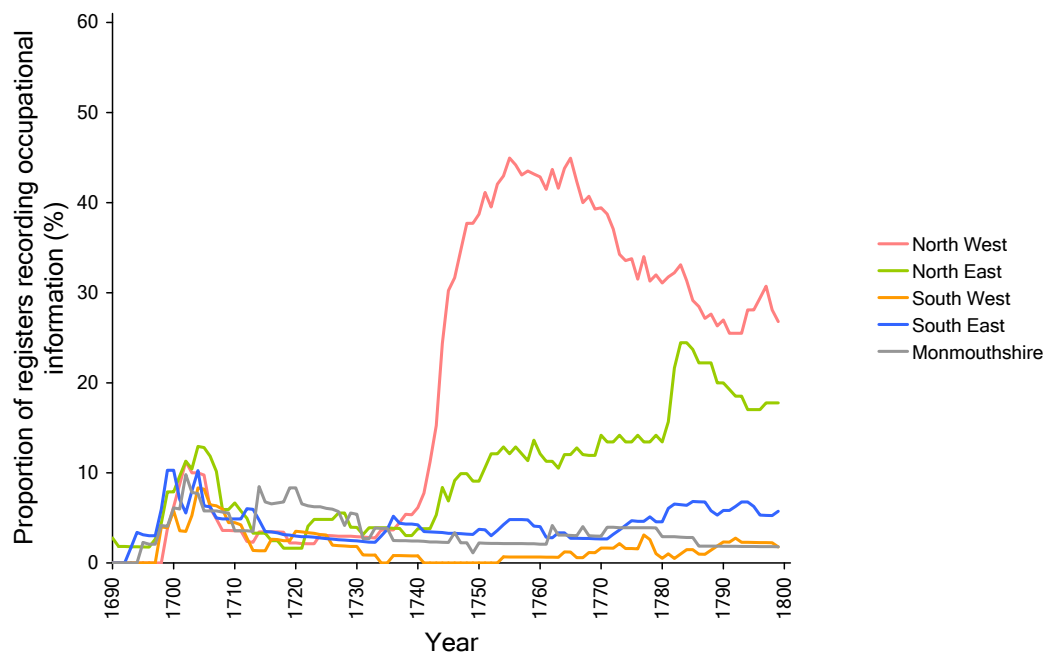
Division	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupations (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers recording occupations in peak year (%)
North West	156	66.67	22.92	5.77	1755	44.96
North East	135	48.89	10.03	11.85	1783	24.44
South West	225	8.89	1.53	1.78	1704	8.33
South East	211	16.11	4.37	3.32	1699	10.29
Monmouthshire	112	16.07	3.31	3.57	1702	9.80
<i>Wales</i>	<i>839</i>	<i>28.84</i>	<i>8.40</i>	<i>4.77</i>	<i>1783</i>	<i>12.74</i>

Source: Parish register searches database.

Table 5 above and figure 25 below describe some of the key features of the recording of occupations in Welsh registers for the different parts of Wales. Rather than report findings for each of the 13 counties, both detail findings for the four circuits of the 12 counties excluding Monmouthshire that were used by the Courts of Great Session. These were the alternatives to the English assize courts that were established by the Tudor acts for the governance of Wales.⁴¹ It is convenient to do this as some of the counties possess very few parishes- both Merionethshire and Flintshire possessed less than 30- and this would potentially complicate any analysis. It would appear that Wales mimicked the geographical patterns found in England. South Wales is generally poor ground for finding registers that record occupational information for the father at baptism, though it does seem to be strongest in the south-east. On the other hand, North Wales possesses many registers that record occupational information, while half of all registers in Denbighshire, Flintshire and Montgomeryshire record occupational information at some point in the eighteenth century; the equivalent figure for Merionethshire, Anglesey and Caernarvonshire approaches ninety per cent.

⁴¹ 34 & 35 Hen VIII c. 26 ss. 5-15. Anglesey, Merionethshire and Caernarvonshire formed North West Wales, while Denbighshire, Flintshire and Montgomeryshire formed North East Wales. Similarly, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire were grouped together, as were Glamorgan, Radnorshire and Brecknock into South West and South East Wales respectively. Monmouthshire was included as part of the Oxford assize circuit.

Figure 25: The proportion of parish registers recording occupational information for the four divisions of the Principality of Wales, and the county of Monmouthshire



Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 25 confirms and expands this general pattern. To a very similar extent, all the divisions of Wales experience a peak in occupational recording around 1705. However, there is a massive surge in north-west Wales around 1745, and a much more restrained one in north-east Wales around 1783. The three divisions of south Wales including Monmouthshire rarely exceed a value of five per cent of all registers in observation recording occupational information for any one particular year. The tendency for registers from the north to be more likely to record occupational information during the later years of the eighteenth century, combined with a general paucity of such information from the south-west, is remarkably similar to the situation in England.

The next issue for consideration is whether ecclesiastical jurisdictions can be used to make sense of these patterns. Table 6 below reports the results of analysis for the four Welsh dioceses of Bangor, Llandaff, St Asaph and St Davids. As in England, the boundaries of these jurisdictions rarely followed those of civil units. The diocese of Bangor mainly comprised the areas covered by the counties of Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, while that of St Asaph covered the counties of Flintshire, Denbighshire and most of Montgomeryshire. The diocese of Llandaff included most of Glamorgan as well as Monmouthshire, while the diocese of St Davids comprised the counties of Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Radnorshire and Brecknock,

as well as the western portion of Glamorgan. It should be noted that some Welsh parishes lay in the dioceses of Chester and Hereford, while some English parishes lay in the dioceses of St Asaph and Llandaff. As a result, the sum total of parishes in table 6 does not match the figure reported in table 5. The table again shows the general pattern, with the diocese of Bangor clearly witnessing some sort of initiative to increase the quality of parochial registration around the middle of the eighteenth century. A similar, but far more muted process seems to have been taking place in the parishes of St Asaph around 1783. However, the situation in Llandaff and St Davids is far more muted, and in general resembles the situation to be found in most southern English dioceses for the eighteenth century.

Table 6: Occupational recording in Anglican baptism registers by Welsh diocese, 1690–1799

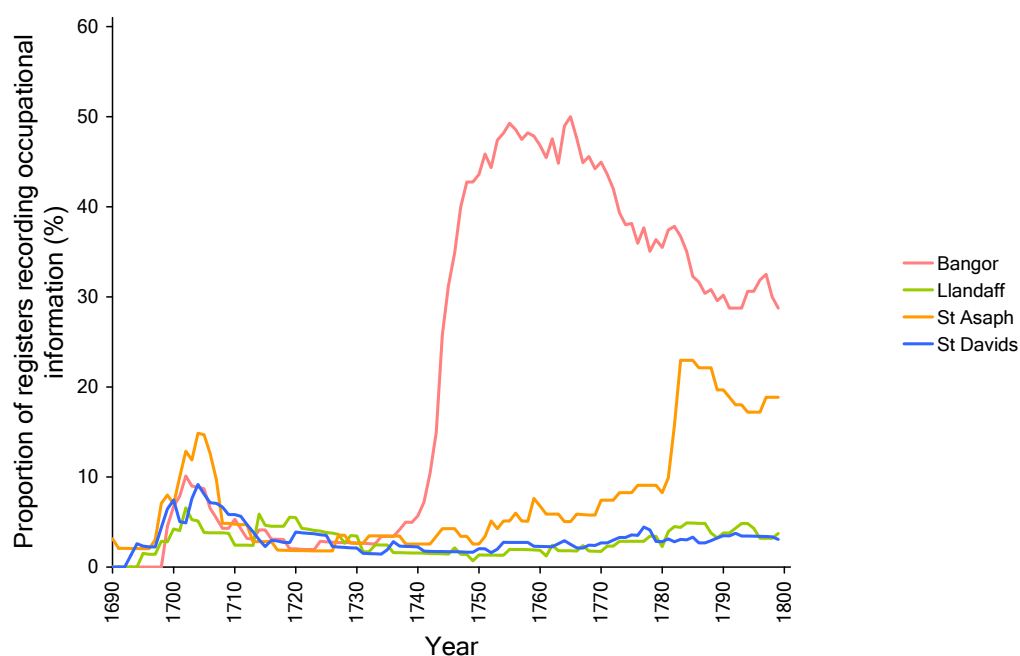
Diocese	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupations (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers recording occupations in peak year (%)
Bangor	163	72.39	24.98	6.13	1765	50.00
Llandaff	190	15.26	2.85	2.11	1702	6.58
St Asaph	122	43.44	7.61	12.30	1783	22.95
St Davids	358	10.61	2.95	2.51	1704	9.17
<i>All Welsh dioceses</i>	<i>833</i>	<i>28.57</i>	<i>8.46</i>	<i>4.56</i>	<i>1783</i>	<i>13.21</i>

Source: Parish register searches database.

Figure 26 below summarises this information in graphical form. This again confirms the general pattern established above, with the soaring proportion of registers in the diocese of Bangor systematically recording occupational information from the early years of the 1740s onwards. There are, however, one or two dissimilarities between the patterns found in this diocese with the regulatory efforts found in northern England during the late eighteenth century. Firstly, the peak, while dramatic, is not quite as steep as the ones found in either the diocese of Durham or Carlisle. The peak value is not achieved until 1754, suggesting that the diffusion of this practice was relatively slow in comparison to northern England. Secondly, the maximum value achieved is sufficiently impressive to suggest that this was driven by some central initiative, but paradoxically sufficiently unimpressive to suggest that the drive behind this change was not as powerful as those in the northern initiatives to improve parochial registration. The author is unaware of any reference to this change in the secondary literature, and it would appear that the diocese of Bangor was the chronological precursor to all the later eighteenth-

century efforts at increasing the amount of information recorded within parish registers.⁴² Moreover, this had lasting effects; even by the turn of the eighteenth century, around one third of the baptism registers from this diocese were still recording occupational information. The far more muted increase in the diocese of St Asaph is also clear, though even here around one quarter of registers started recording occupational information in a systematic fashion from around 1782 onwards. Additionally, a not insubstantial number of registers also seem to record occupational information from the 1750s; perhaps this was the result of individual clergyman being inspired to follow from the lead of the colleagues in the neighbouring diocese of Bangor.

Figure 26: The proportion of parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the dioceses of Bangor, Llandaff, St Asaph, and St Davids, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

The overall picture for Wales tends to reflect that for England, with a general tendency for many parishes to recording occupational information at baptism at around the time of the Marriage Duty Act, and for northern dioceses to introduce initiatives to record occupational information at baptism at some point during the eighteenth century. In the absence of the necessary archival work to establish the key reasons behind these initiatives, it is perhaps unwise to speculate on the causes underlying them. However, it is worthwhile to point out that many parts of Wales would have dispersed settlement

⁴² Interestingly, the change in Bangor seems to coincide with the arrival of a new bishop. Thomas Herring, the incumbent since 1737, was translated to the see of York in 1743; his successor was Matthew Hutton, who was bishop until 1748 before he was also translated to York. However, this was a rather remote and poorly endowed diocese, and it seems likely that the diocesan was non-resident for most of the year.

patterns, with several distinct communities within each parish. Additionally, there would be the added problem of a small surname stock, especially as Welsh naming practices shifted away from the use of patronymic prefixes such as 'ap' and 'ferch', and moved towards anglicised surnames such as Davies, Jones and Thomas. In this light, recording occupational information for the father at baptism might have added an additional useful factor to distinguish between different people with similar names recording occupational information, and would parallel the rationale behind the attempt to introduce the Dade system of registration in the diocese of York from 1777.⁴³

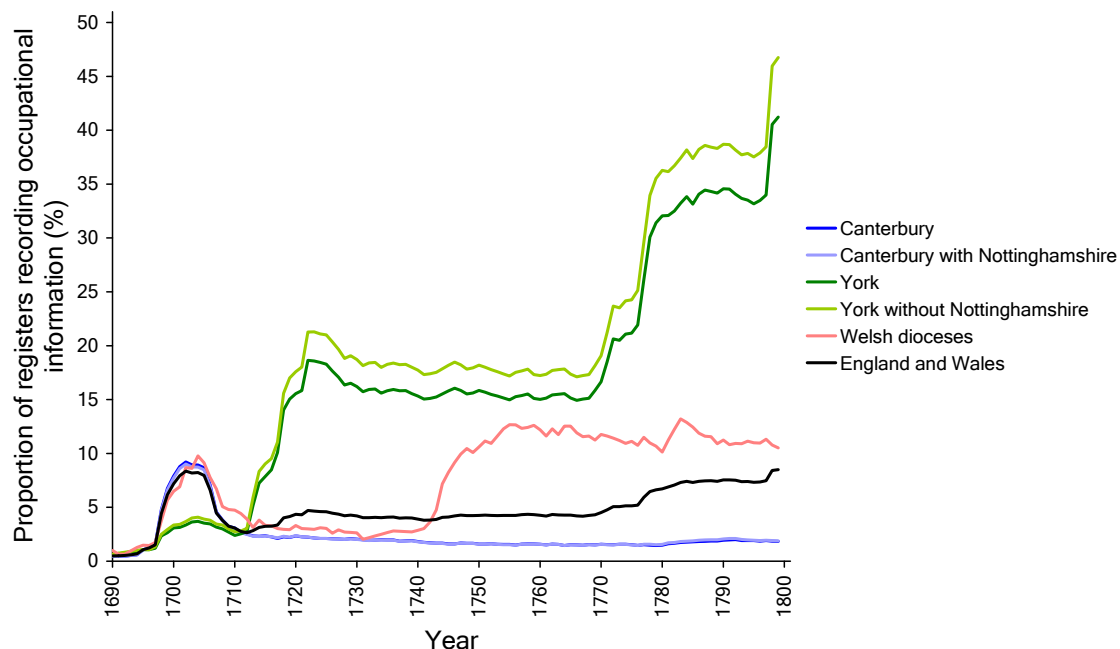
This section has demonstrated some of the characteristics of Welsh parochial registration during the eighteenth century, most notably the poor coverage of Anglican registers from the years of the century, and also the extent to which many of the patterns of occupational recording follow those on the other side of the border. Most notably, the impact of the Marriage Duty Act in the first decade of the century, and ecclesiastical initiatives after this time, have been clearly demonstrated. However, it is important to bear in mind that there are several other problems facing the use of these registers, most notably the persistently poor quality of registration that may afflict many registers, and the rise of non-conformity during this period. It is entirely possible that the coverage of the population by baptism registers in the diocese of Bangor around 1750 may be better than that found after 1813 such was the increase in the chapel-going population. This all of course is rather speculative, but hopefully the research presented here may stimulate further enquiry into the rather neglected parish registers of Wales.

6 Conclusion

It is now time to take stock of the findings reported in the three preceding sections. Three key points have emerged from the analysis of the register searches that is reported here. Firstly, it is clear that the recording of the occupation of the father at baptism was relatively common in eighteenth-century English Anglican parish registers. Figure 27 below shows how the proportion of registers with these details changes between 1690 and 1799 for England and Wales as a whole, and the provinces of York, Canterbury *sans* the Welsh dioceses and the four Welsh dioceses themselves. Additionally, the impact of transferring Nottinghamshire from York to Canterbury is also shown by plotting two corrected series for either province.

⁴³ It was common in Wales for occupations to be used to discriminate between different people with the same name until quite recently. To take a well-known if fictional example to illustrate this, the three main human characters in the children's television programme 'Ivor the Engine' were known as Jones the Steam (a train driver), Evans the Song (a choir master) and Dai Station (a railway station manager).

Figure 27: The proportion of parish registers recording occupational information for the father at baptism in the ecclesiastical provinces of Canterbury, York and the four Welsh dioceses, 1690-1799



Source: Parish register searches database.

Outside the early peak in the first decade of the eighteenth century, around four per cent of registers at any one time will be recording occupational information. While this cannot be termed ubiquitous by any stretch of the imagination, it is still far more common than expected. Moreover, in northern England, this recording is far more common, with around one in six registers recording occupations at any one time between around 1720 and 1770, even *before* the introduction of the various initiatives in the dioceses of Carlisle, York and Durham in the final third of the century. The problems of rapid population growth combined with parishes containing more than one township, may have encouraged parish clerks in this part of England to include this information as an added discriminator between individuals. The relatively high occurrence of occupational information in parts of Wales may also reflect this, due to the dispersed settlement patterns and low surname stock found in the principality.

The comparative absence of similar initiatives in southern England may reflect the prevalence of nucleated settlement, single township parishes and relatively high surname stocks. However, only more rigorous study of these initiatives by ecclesiastical authorities will confirm these suspicions. Notwithstanding the concerns about the quality of Anglican registration during the eighteenth century- and the literature on these concerns was started by the eighteenth century Anglican hierarchy- it is also clear that there were

several efforts to improve the quality of parochial registration at the local level. Indeed, it is possible to see Rose's Act in 1812 as the culmination of a series of attempts to improve registration at the diocesan level throughout the eighteenth century, and that the recourse to statutory legislation reflected the lack of any alternative means of bringing about change in the Church of England.⁴⁴

The second key point concerns the use of this information for the purpose of reconstructing the structure of the economy of pre-industrial England and Wales. The relative abundance of occupational recording in Anglican registers in the first two decades of the eighteenth century will also permit the construction of some sound estimates of the occupational structure of both countries at this time. By splitting the country into two parts- the province of Canterbury plus the county of Nottinghamshire, and the province of York minus Nottinghamshire- it is possible to make allowances for the distinction between the peak in occupational recording inspired by the Marriage Duty Act in the South, and the ecclesiastically-inspired peak after 1715 in the North. By constructing samples of registers for both parts of the county around these respective years, it will be possible to construct a very extensive sample covering a wide range of different types of community. In northern England, around 214, or 14.6 per cent, of a total of 1,471 inspected registers record occupations for at least four years between 1690 and 1719. The equivalent figures for southern England are 810 out of 8,741, or 9.3 per cent. The totals for Wales are more modest, simply because there are fewer registers that survive from the early years of the eighteenth century. Still, 41 out of 742, or 5.5% of registers record occupations for at least four years between 1690 and 1799.

In total, some 1,065 registers could be used to construct a 'census' of the male occupational structure of England and Wales around 1710. If one assumes that there are around 10,000 parishes in England, and around 1,000 in Wales, this gives a figure of 9.7 per cent of all parishes that could potentially provide occupational information for this 'census'.⁴⁵ Even if as much as a quarter of these registers could not be included on the grounds of poor registration or for other reasons, this would still result in a sample of 7.3 per cent of all parishes being available for inclusion. By way of contrast, it should be

⁴⁴ The ecclesiastical forum that might have brought about change- convocation- last sat in 1717. It is also possible to see the clampdown upon clandestine marriage wrought by Lord Hardwick's Marriage Act as a recourse to parliamentary action in the absence of any suitable ecclesiastical means to bring about change.

⁴⁵ It is extremely difficult to give an exact number of the total number of Anglican registration units functioning at any one time during the eighteenth century, since old units are being destroyed as a result of amalgamations in medieval urban centres that possessed several very small parishes as well as through rural depopulation in eastern England. At the same time, new units are being created due to population growth, especially in southern Lancashire and western Yorkshire.

remembered that the population history of England was calculated on the basis of a sample of 404 parish registers, or only 4 per cent of the total number.⁴⁶

Despite the large empirical base upon which such a census could be based, there would still be some major problems that would need to be surmounted before an accurate summary of the occupational structure of England could be constructed. Firstly, the geographical coverage of the registers recording occupations is liable to be rather patchy. There is very little available data for many counties, most notably Cornwall and Norfolk. Additionally, the coverage of Wales is strongest in the shires constituted from the old Marcher lordships.⁴⁷ Northern England is over-represented, and this would largely be due to Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire contributing a disproportionate number of registers. However, the native interest that these counties possess for any historian of the economic change in the eighteenth century ensures that this is preferable to the alternative of a shortage of data from these counties. Moreover, the parishes that are most likely to record occupational information in southern England are drawn disproportionately from the eastern and southern midlands, and around London. It is therefore entirely possible that the region most dominated by open field agricultural systems is over-represented in the southern sample. Fortunately, since data for all English and Welsh parishes exist for the years after 1813 thanks to Rose's Act, it should prove possible to directly compare the sample parishes in the early nineteenth century with that for the whole country. Moreover, the development of reliable population estimates for each English county for the eighteenth century could also be used to narrow the possible margins of error in using this sample to estimate the occupational structure of England and Wales at this time.⁴⁸

However, it is important to note that the problem of changing demographic conditions could also pose one final problem of comparability with later occupational information drawn from parish registers. The early eighteenth century was a period of relatively late marriage, with high proportions of each birth cohort remaining celibate. Moreover, this was a period when agricultural service was also more prevalent than it would become later in the eighteenth century. Accordingly, the occupational information from these registers would cover a smaller fraction of the adult male population than they would under other prevailing demographic conditions. Correcting for these potential biases may require the use of assumptions with varying degrees of underlying heroism.

⁴⁶ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The population history of England 1541-1871: a reconstruction* 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1989). This is slightly misleading, since in addition to the 404 parishes, the London bills of mortality were also used to estimate national series of vital events.

⁴⁷ Namely Denbighshire, Flintshire, Montgomeryshire, Radnor, Brecknock, and Monmouthshire.

⁴⁸ It should be noted that L. Shaw-Taylor and E. A. Wrigley are in the process of drawing up a grant application to collect and study this data.

However, none of these problems seem insurmountable, in contrast to the great gains to be had from generating a plausible snapshot of the structure of the economy based upon empirical data.

One final implication of the large numbers of Anglican registers that record occupational information lies in the possibilities for historical demography. Table 7 below groups registers that cover all 110 years between 1690 and 1799 by the number of years that systematically record occupations for the father at baptism. Such registers that record such an extensive run of occupational information, and that cover the entirety of the eighteenth century, could well prove amenable to family reconstitution. Indeed, the fact that those compiling the parish register took the care to record occupational information suggests that they were diligent in maintaining the register in other ways. As can be seen, very large numbers of registers record such information for lengthy periods during the eighteenth century; 250 registers record occupational information for more than 50 years during this century.

Table 7: The frequency distribution of Anglican baptism registers in England and Wales according to the total number of years where the occupation of the father is systematically recorded between 1690 and 1799

Number of years recording occupations	Frequency	Per cent
0	6,501	75.26
1-10	1,006	11.65
11-20	382	4.42
21-30	285	3.30
31-40	128	1.48
41-50	86	1.00
51-60	67	0.78
61-70	55	0.64
71-80	57	0.66
81-90	35	0.41
91-100	13	0.15
101-110	23	0.27
<i>Total</i>	<i>8,638</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Parish register searches database.

If a register was to commence the recording of occupational information in 1737, and maintain this until 1812, the statutory requirements of Rose's Act would ensure that occupational information would be continued until 1837. A century of occupational recording would in turn ensure two complete cohorts, for the purposes of family reconstitution, where there would be ample occupational information with which to explore variations in demographic behaviour for different socio-economic groups within the community. Several key issues concerning the population history of England during the eighteenth century could then be explored, such as the extent to which economic change loosened demographic controls on the lower echelons of society, resulting in

earlier marriage or higher levels of marital fertility. Around 180 registers record occupational information for this length of time- a surprisingly high number. Not all of these registers will be suitable for reconstitution, as the burial register may not record events with sufficient detail, or the mother's name may be omitted from the baptism register. Some will be subject to periods of under-registration, or will be located in urban environments where non-conformity and high levels of migration would make application of the technique of family reconstitution deeply problematic. Other registers will simply record too few events for sufficient numbers of linked events to be created for reliable statistical analysis. Even if this was to exclude ninety per cent of these registers, this would still ensure that around twenty registers could be reconstituted. The demographic data that would emerge from this would shine a great deal of empirically-based light upon whether there were significant differences in demographic behaviour between different socio-economic groups during the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ This is an arena that has been subject to much speculation, but with little hard evidence brought to the matter. It is also worth noting that there would probably be an inbuilt bias towards communities from northern England. This region that has tended to be overlooked by family reconstitution studies of English communities, despite the massive structural changes that took place in this region during the Industrial Revolution.

This paper has sought to chart both chronologically and spatially the recording of occupations in one section of parish registers. In trying to explain some of these patterns, the analysis has inevitably been somewhat speculative. However, it has served to highlight many lacunae in our understanding of parochial registration during the eighteenth century. This was a period where there were clearly many initiatives directed towards improving baptismal registration, and this in turn sheds interesting light upon diocesan administration during this period. It has also sought to highlight some of the opportunities for further research that the systematic exploitation of these registers could bring. The patterns of occupational recording described here could be utilised to radically transform our understanding of the structure of the English and Welsh economy before the onset of the Industrial Revolution, as well as to explore variations in demographic behaviour by socio-economic status during this process itself. Far from being uncommon, the frequency of occupational recording is sufficient to bear a wealth of further research.

Peter Kitson

12 September 2007

⁴⁹ The author is currently investigating submitting a grant application to collect such registers and to perform family reconstitutions using them.

Appendix 1: Occupational recording at baptism in Bedfordshire, 1538-1812

Before embarking on the process of searching all Anglican baptism registers for dates when the occupation of the father at baptism was recorded, it seemed wise to conduct a pilot study to explore the viability of doing this. For this purpose, the baptismal registers of every parish in Bedfordshire were studied, since all of her pre-1813 parish registers have been printed. Moreover, the transcriptions appear to be extremely thorough and complete.⁵⁰ For instance, the actual registers have been collated with the bishops' transcripts, and it seems that the registers record individual entries in their entirety, albeit in an abbreviated form.⁵¹ Only the baptism register was studied, on the grounds that it is the recording of occupations at baptism which are the most useful place for this information to be documented. Additionally, the baptism of infants is far more common event for a given unit of time than is the case with adult burials or marriages.

Methodologically, the investigative technique was generally identical to that described in Section 2 above. Each baptism register was studied, and if according to visual inspection the proportion of baptisms in any given year that recorded the occupation of the father at baptism was less than three-quarters, that year was regarded as not systematically recording occupational information. Although this method does introduce the possibility of errors, it also ensures the researcher to study a large number of parish registers very quickly.⁵² In any case, the results of such an analysis will give a very good indication of overall trends in the registration of occupational information. The data was then analysed with a series of computer scripts, again in a similar manner to that described in Section 2 above.

Figure A1.1 below shows how the percentages of all Bedfordshire parish registers recording occupational information for the father at the baptism of his child change over time. A small number of registers record these details before the final decade of the seventeenth century. The prominent peak during the 1540s is simply due to a single parish – Bedford St Mary – and the fact that relatively few registers survive from this period. A handful of parishes record occupational information during the seventeenth century, but the proportion never exceeds four per cent of the 125 parishes under study. However, the most dramatic feature of this figure is the huge surge in the proportion of registers recording occupational information after 1698. Between that year and 1705,

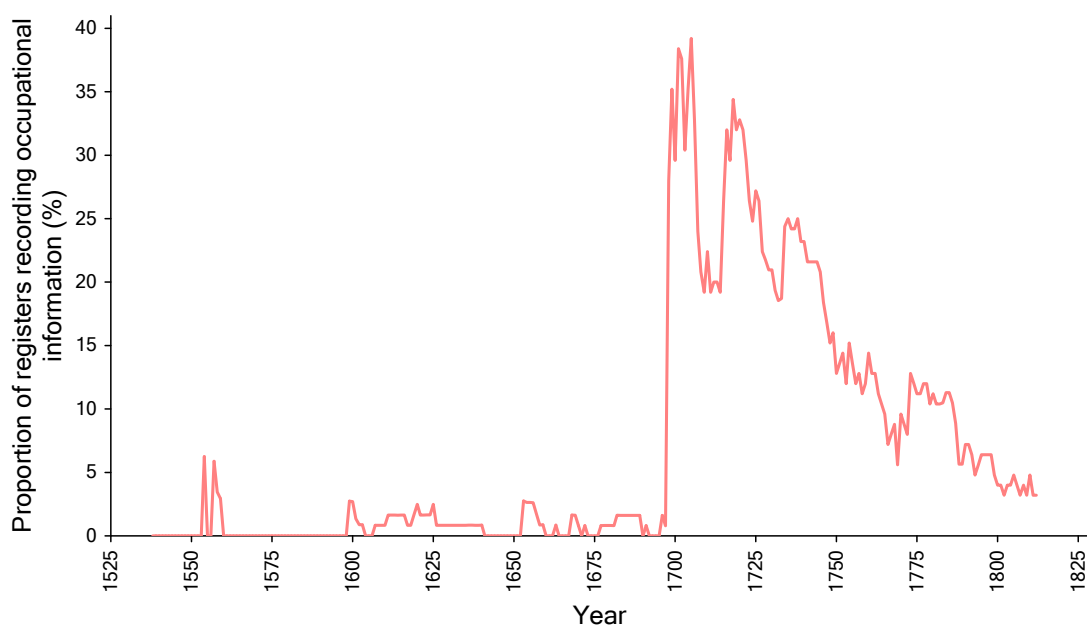
⁵⁰ C. Webb, *National index of parish registers vol. 9 part 1: Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire* (London, 1991), pp. 15-16.

⁵¹ Properly speaking, the registers were collated with the archidiaconal transcripts, since these returns were made to the Archdeacon of Bedford rather than the Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese the archdeaconry lay. The printed versions of the registers record abbreviated versions of forenames, and occasionally, occupations.

⁵² The whole exercise took approximately fifteen hours to complete.

between thirty and forty per cent of all parish registers record occupational information for the father at baptism. The aggregate proportion of registers recording this information then drops off gradually over time, although there are some notable rallies during the years around 1719, 1737 and 1780. By the eve of the introduction of Rose's Act, only approximately three per cent of all Bedfordshire registers are recording occupational information at the baptism of infants.

Figure A1.1: Bedfordshire registers recording occupations of the father of the child at baptism, 1538-1812



Source: Bedfordshire parish register searches.

To some extent, however, the information portrayed in the graph is misleading. It suggests that a large number of registers start recording occupational descriptors from the end of the seventeenth century, and that individual parishes gradually ceased to record this information over time. That the situation was more complex than this is confirmed by studying the runs of years that record occupational information within registers. The result of this analysis is tabulated below in table A1.1. This demonstrates clearly that nearly eighty-one per cent of all the parish registers of Bedfordshire registers record occupational information for at least one year before 1813, and that around nine per cent of the total number of registration years record occupational information. Clearly, it was very common for parish registers in this county to record occupational information, but it was comparatively rare for registers to possess lengthy periods that recorded occupational information. This is again borne out by the length of runs, with a mean length of 7.7 years and a median of 4 years.

Table A1.1: Frequencies of different lengths of occupational runs

Descriptive statistic	Value
Number of parishes	125
Parishes with at least one year of systematic occupational recording	101 (80.8%)
Total number of registration years in observation (years)	28,329
Total number of years recording occupations at baptism (years)	2,424 (8.6%)
Mean length of a run of occupational recording (years)	7.7
Median length of a run of occupational recording (years)	4
Modal length of a run of occupational recording (years)	1
Standard deviation of run length	11.6

Source: Bedfordshire parish register searches.

This evidence from Bedfordshire suggests that the Marriage Duty Act did indeed result in an upsurge in the registration of occupational information, at least within baptismal registers. By contrast, the efforts of the second half of the eighteenth century do not appear to have had much of an impact. The absence of any near-universal adoption of occupational recording at one point in time suggests that there was no administrative prescription underlying the observed patterns, at least not at the level of the archdeaconry. However, in the light of the analysis elsewhere in this paper, it is clear that occupational recording in this particular county was unduly high in comparison to elsewhere in England during the eighteenth century. There is no *prima facie* case for believing that this would also be the case before the advent of the Marriage Duty Acts, and so this county may serve as a general indicator of the extent of occupational recording before this date.⁵³ The general impression that one gets from Figure A1.1 is that occupational recording before 1690 is very rare, and that perhaps the best place to look for occupations may be the handful of paper registers from the commencement of parochial registration that were not discarded after they were transcribed onto vellum in the late sixteenth century, as well as during the Commonwealth and Protectorate's experiment with civil registration during the 1650s.

⁵³ It is perhaps not in keeping with the rest of this paper to relate impressionistic accounts of occupational recording in Anglican parish registers, but the author cannot recall seeing much in the way of occupational information in registers before 1700 in the several hundred Anglican registers he investigated over the course of his doctoral research. The only area that seemed to have a notable concentration of registers with this information was the city of London.

**Appendix 2: Occupational recording in Anglican baptism registers
by ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England, 1690-1799**

Province	Diocese	Archdeaconry or similar jurisdiction	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers in peak year (%)
		Bath	74	1.35	0.01	0.00	1700	1.64
		Taunton	150	10.00	0.70	5.33	1705	7.03
	Bath and Wells	Wells	199	2.01	0.10	0.50	1792	1.01
		peculiar jurisdictions	47	2.13	0.10	2.13	1702	2.33
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>470</i>	<i>4.47</i>	<i>0.28</i>	<i>2.13</i>	<i>1705</i>	<i>2.79</i>
		Bristol	36	19.44	3.23	8.33	1704	10.71
		Dorset	201	2.99	0.20	1.99	1700	1.94
	Bristol	peculiar jurisdictions	39	2.56	0.13	2.56	1700	3.33
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>5.07</i>	<i>0.58</i>	<i>2.90</i>	<i>1704</i>	<i>3.27</i>
Canterbury		Canterbury	215	9.30	1.02	6.51	1704	6.34
		Consistory Court of Canterbury	53	5.66	0.38	5.66	1700	4.00
		Exempt Deaneries of Battle, Pagham, South Malling and Tarring	25	12.00	5.09	8.00	1698	8.70
	Canterbury	Exempt Deaneries of Croydon and of the Arches	26	26.92	4.33	19.23	1699	23.08
		Exempt Deanery of Shoreham	36	27.78	2.57	22.22	1704	26.47
		peculiar jurisdictions	1	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>12.08</i>	<i>1.60</i>	<i>8.99</i>	<i>1704</i>	<i>8.85</i>
		Chichester	131	19.08	2.00	15.27	1702	17.50
		Lewes	140	12.86	0.82	9.29	1701	10.37
	Chichester	peculiar jurisdictions	11	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>282</i>	<i>16.67</i>	<i>1.40</i>	<i>12.41</i>	<i>1701</i>	<i>13.53</i>

Province	Diocese	Archdeaconry or similar jurisdiction	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers in peak year (%)	
Ely		Ely	156	29.49	3.01	7.05	1729	8.50	
		peculiar jurisdictions	2	-	-	-	-	-	
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>29.11</i>	<i>2.97</i>	<i>6.96</i>	<i>1729</i>	<i>8.39</i>	
	Exeter		Barnstaple	134	8.21	1.14	6.72	1700	7.32
			Exeter	131	3.82	0.69	1.53	1698	1.71
			Totnes	155	7.74	0.69	5.16	1700	5.76
			Truro	178	3.37	0.70	0.00	1791	2.26
			peculiar jurisdictions	68	10.29	1.36	2.94	1773	4.41
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>666</i>	<i>6.16</i>	<i>0.85</i>	<i>3.15</i>	<i>1700</i>	<i>3.34</i>	
	Canterbury		Gloucester	253	12.65	0.91	8.70	1701	10.31
		peculiar jurisdictions	15	-	-	-	-	-	
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>268</i>	<i>13.43</i>	<i>0.97</i>	<i>9.70</i>	<i>1701</i>	<i>10.92</i>	
Hereford			Hereford	183	11.48	0.83	9.29	1700	10.32
			Salop	114	11.40	0.61	5.26	1705	7.29
			peculiar jurisdictions	31	12.90	0.61	6.45	1700	8.00
			<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>328</i>	<i>11.59</i>	<i>0.73</i>	<i>7.62</i>	<i>1700</i>	<i>8.39</i>
			Coventry	121	23.14	1.92	14.05	1701	16.04
Lichfield and Coventry			Derby	158	3.16	0.38	1.27	1705	1.50
			Salop	82	18.29	2.61	12.20	1703	15.28
		Stafford	139	7.19	2.16	5.04	1724	4.24	
		peculiar jurisdictions	85	10.59	0.82	7.06	1705	6.76	
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>586</i>	<i>11.43</i>	<i>1.49</i>	<i>7.17</i>	<i>1703</i>	<i>6.99</i>	

Province	Diocese	Archdeaconry or similar jurisdiction	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers in peak year (%)
		Bedford	123	81.30	16.36	59.35	1705	39.84
		Buckingham	189	32.80	3.81	18.52	1704	20.96
		Huntingdon	161	32.92	6.37	11.80	1723	12.82
		Leicester	248	12.90	1.55	8.87	1702	8.33
	Lincoln	Lincoln	508	13.78	2.91	5.51	1702	5.34
		Stow	75	12.00	1.92	5.33	1792	8.00
		peculiar jurisdictions	58	32.76	6.36	15.52	1701	15.38
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>1,362</i>	<i>25.33</i>	<i>4.58</i>	<i>13.95</i>	<i>1702</i>	<i>11.72</i>
		Colchester	149	4.03	0.60	1.34	1765	2.03
		Essex	147	4.08	0.98	2.72	1702	2.29
		London	75	9.33	1.27	8.00	1699	7.04
	London	Middlesex	170	15.88	4.59	11.76	1702	12.16
		St Albans	26	15.38	0.94	7.69	1700	11.54
		peculiar jurisdictions	55	25.45	10.34	20.00	1704	23.53
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>622</i>	<i>10.29</i>	<i>2.72</i>	<i>7.23</i>	<i>1702</i>	<i>7.13</i>
		Norfolk	380	3.16	0.33	1.58	1699	2.13
		Norwich	303	2.64	0.47	0.66	1702	1.13
		Sudbury	234	8.12	0.77	3.85	1698	4.78
	Norwich	Suffolk	276	11.59	1.34	7.25	1701	8.33
		peculiar jurisdictions	25	-	0.00	0.00	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>1,218</i>	<i>5.83</i>	<i>0.67</i>	<i>3.04</i>	<i>1702</i>	<i>3.66</i>

Province	Diocese	Archdeaconry or similar jurisdiction	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers in peak year (%)
Oxford		Oxford	207	34.78	3.48	17.87	1700	23.39
		peculiar jurisdictions	27	51.85	10.57	37.04	1700	39.13
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	234	36.75	4.28	20.09	1700	25.26
Peterborough		Northampton	330	37.88	5.32	21.52	1704	23.13
		peculiar jurisdictions	11	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	341	37.24	5.22	21.11	1704	22.77
Rochester		Rochester	92	18.48	3.54	14.13	1705	16.67
		peculiar jurisdictions	2	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	94	19.15	3.55	14.89	1705	17.44
Canterbury		Berkshire	142	19.01	2.17	14.08	1702	14.81
		Sarum	100	21.00	2.05	13.00	1701	14.61
		Wiltshire	163	31.29	3.44	25.15	1703	24.34
		peculiar jurisdictions	59	37.29	4.27	25.42	1699	30.36
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	464	26.08	2.86	19.18	1702	18.98
Winchester		Surrey	135	34.81	7.52	25.19	1705	24.81
		Winchester	253	15.02	1.85	5.93	1703	6.51
		peculiar jurisdictions	57	10.53	2.28	8.77	1703	9.26
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	445	20.45	3.67	12.13	1703	12.09
Worcester		Worcester	236	14.41	1.73	11.44	1704	13.02
		peculiar jurisdictions	25	16.00	4.66	8.00	1703	13.04
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	262	14.50	2.00	11.07	1704	12.97
Provincial total			8,461	15.66	2.28	9.34	1702	9.16

Province	Diocese	Archdeaconry or similar jurisdiction	Number of register searches	Proportion of registers with occupational recording 1690-1799 (%)	Proportion of years covered recording occupational information (%)	Proportion of registers with at least 4 years of occupational recording 1690-1719 (%)	Peak year	Proportion of registers recording occupations in peak year (%)
	Carlisle	Carlisle	125	84.80	18.96	0.80	1789	72.80
		peculiar jurisdictions	1	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>84.13</i>	<i>18.80</i>	<i>0.79</i>	<i>1789</i>	<i>72.22</i>
	Chester	Chester	271	52.40	22.67	8.49	1725	40.86
		Richmond	216	50.46	10.58	14.81	1720	26.44
		peculiar jurisdictions	8	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>495</i>	<i>51.52</i>	<i>16.81</i>	<i>11.31</i>	<i>1725</i>	<i>29.38</i>
	Durham	Durham	91	80.22	7.94	5.49	1799	79.78
		Northumberland	-	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>80.22</i>	<i>7.94</i>	<i>5.49</i>	<i>1799</i>	<i>79.78</i>
York		Cleveland	90	76.67	21.55	15.56	1799	53.93
		East Riding	123	71.54	25.53	22.76	1796	46.28
		Liberty of Beverley Minster	22	86.36	29.36	31.82	1791	63.64
		Liberty of Southwell Minster	27	14.81	2.31	0.00	1777	11.54
	York	Nottingham	185	16.22	2.23	5.95	1790	8.65
		peculiar jurisdictions	126	70.63	20.29	15.87	1787	56.80
		York	297	76.77	27.72	24.58	1798	52.03
		<i>Diocesan total</i>	<i>870</i>	<i>60.57</i>	<i>19.26</i>	<i>17.59</i>	<i>1787</i>	<i>40.54</i>
		Provincial total	1,582	60.75	17.87	13.59	1798	38.83
		<i>Provinces of Canterbury and York combined</i>	<i>10,043</i>	<i>22.76</i>	<i>4.61</i>	<i>10.01</i>	<i>1702</i>	<i>8.28</i>