

Institution: University of Kent
Unit of Assessment: D30 History
Title of case study: The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study relates to cultural life and education. Kenneth Fincham is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of British Early Modern History, and the impact arose from a major research programme funded by the AHRC to create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835 [hereafter CCEd] <p>The database is an online resource launched in 2005 and available free to all users. It provides a relational database and supporting website containing key information on clergy, schoolteachers and ecclesiastical patrons which has brought together for the first time a comprehensive range of sources. From the start CCEd was designed to serve constituencies outside as well as within academia, and it has proved an invaluable resource for genealogists across the globe seeking information on clerical ancestors, local historians researching parish histories, independent researchers interested in the clergy, and hard-pressed archivists responsible for managing and interpreting major diocesan collections. It has received in excess of 9.9m hits since 2010 and highly positive feedback from its many different types of user.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>CCEd was created in 1999 and publicly launched in 2005 by a team headed by three Project Directors (hereafter PDs) Kenneth Fincham (Kent: Lecturer 1990; Senior Lecturer 1995, Reader 1999; Professor 2007), Stephen Taylor (Reading [Durham since 2012]) and Arthur Burns (Kings College London [KCL]), who have proven and complementary expertise in the history of the Church of England. Fincham was the PI responsible, with the other PDs, for creating the methodology, designing the software, identifying evidence to be entered, and recruiting nearly 100 research assistants to input data. The project was framed by Fincham's long-standing research experience and expertise in the field of early modern religious history, and was funded by two grants from the AHRB/C, a standard award in 1999-2005 (£529,000) and a resource enhancement in 2005-9 (£319,000). Further improvements to the website were introduced in 2012-13, funded by grants from KCL and Kent. Together with the Department of Digital Humanities at KCL, and 3 Research Officers, the PDs devised a relational database and populated it with key evidence on clerical careers (dates of ordination, institutions to livings, licences to preach, etc) extracted from more than 50 archives across England and Wales, as well as creating an accompanying website and online journal. The resource is a major research output in its own right, and has become an indispensable tool for the study of early modern Britain, consulted by social and cultural as well as ecclesiastical historians.</p> <p>The CCEd has broken new ground in five areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It makes available a vast amount of material - currently over 1.5 million evidence records - that has hitherto been widely dispersed, sometimes inaccessible and hard to integrate, relating to careers of the clergy from the Reformation to the mid-nineteenth century. As a direct result, and for the first time, we can establish the dynamics of the clerical profession: its size, education, geographical mobility, and patterns of career trajectories. 2. It has created a fundamental resource for understanding the structure of the Church of England, including the complex location of over 15,000 parishes and chapelries, the exercise of lay patronage, and the national distribution of school teachers. The website contains essays, glossaries, bibliographies and maps explaining how the Church actually operated. This is all the more important when we recall that the Church of England was the largest employer of educated males in this period, with an institutional presence which sometimes surpassed that of the state. 3. It has begun to generate significant new academic research, led by the PDs themselves, including three major essays by Fincham and Taylor on the Church of England from 1640s to the 1660s (see Section 3, items 4-6); it has been extensively used in at least 4 PhDs (such as Reid, Kent, 2010; Cummins, Reading, 2011), and in monographs such as S. Hardman Moore, <i>Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home</i> (2007) and R. Payne, <i>Ecclesiastical Patronage in England 1770-1801</i> (2010).

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4. It offers a model for those engaged in prosopographical research, and especially for those projects where there is a close structural relationship between individuals and locations (see Section 3, item 3). The PDs have advised some 20 projects, including the [Surman index](#) of dissenting ministers and chapels at Dr Williams's Library (funded by the British Academy).
5. It is an important project within the Digital Humanities field, in part because of the challenges in supporting complex research requirements, and in part as a demonstration of the continuing value of database work and of integrated text and database resources. The team has made many presentations reflecting the methodology evolved in fashioning CCEd, which is included in the [Connected Histories project \(JISC\)](#).

In the AHRC End of Award Report (RG/2904/9246) in 2006, the Project was given the top ranking as 'outstanding'. It was described as 'a resource of huge importance to a very wide range of scholars' which has 'already led to many articles' and 'will promote a great deal of future research'.

The research that produced the database was also the key driver behind the research outputs listed in 3 below.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. A. Burns, K. Fincham and S. Taylor: 'The Historical Public and Academic Archival Research: the Experience of the *Clergy of the Church of England Database*' in *Archives*, 27 (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2002), pp. 110-9.
2. A. Burns, K. Fincham and S. Taylor: 'Counting the Clergy: the CCEd and the Limitations of a Prosopographical Tool' in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A handbook*, ed. K. Keats-Rohan (Prosopographica et Genealogica, 13, 2007), pp. 275-89.
3. A. Burns, K. Fincham and S. Taylor: 'In and Out of the Archives: Reflections on the Diocesan Records of the Church of England since the Reformation' in *Du Papier a L'Archive: Du Privé au Publique: France et les Iles Britanniques, Deux Mémoires*, ed. J-P. Genet (Paris: Sorbonne, 2011), pp. 83-97.
4. K. Fincham and S. Taylor: 'Episcopalian Conformity and Nonconformity 1646-60': REF2 Output 1 (EP-31110).

A reviewer in *Historical Journal* 54 (2011), pp. 881-96 (at pp. 892-3) commented: '...several [of the essays in these volumes]... stand out as major contributions to the field. Pre-eminent amongst these is a startling piece by Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor on "Episcopalian conformity and nonconformity, 1646-1660". [... The article draws] heavily on more than a decade of labours for the Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835'.

5. K. Fincham and S. Taylor: 'Vital Statistics: Episcopal Ordination and Ordinands in England, 1646-60': REF2 Output 3 (EP-31109).

An anonymous reviewer reported: 'This should certainly be published, and EHR is the right journal for it... The article is clear, convincing and challenging in each of its three objectives. These authors have already rocked our understanding of the religious trajectories of the period, with massive consequences for our understanding of the politics (and cultural history) of the period'.

6. K. Fincham and S. Taylor: 'The Restoration of the Church of England, 1660-1662: Ordination, Re-ordination and Conformity': REF2 Output 4 (EP-31112).

Research awards

1999-2005: AHRC £529,000.

2005-2009: AHRC resource enhancement award, £319,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Development of the impact

From its inception, CCEd was intended to be a collaborative project with three key groups, genealogists, local historians and county archivists, and was consciously designed to be an easily accessible resource in order to encourage interaction. The PDs tapped their knowledge of the diocesan collections and recruited many of them to work as research assistants, inputting data

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from primary sources which had been targeted for CCEd; some also helped link the data thus collected. The project was advertised through local record offices. The team held workshops to showcase the potential of CCEd, devoted considerable time to answering a stream of enquiries via the website, and established an [online journal](#) on the website, with a 'Notes and Queries' section intended specifically to facilitate dialogue with these users. The web front page was improved in 2012-13 with designated introductory platforms for each of these three constituencies.

Reach

CCEd has numerous users across the world, including Japan and South Korea. It attracted an average of 8,233 unique visitors and 569,749 hits each month between January and July 2013, and a total of more than 9.9m hits since 2010. [5.1] There is also a continual stream of email enquiries to the project office each month: the majority come from the UK, but there has been considerable interest from Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada; others have come from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, and even American Samoa. These come primarily from individuals, but also archive offices such as Lincolnshire Archives, Dorset Local Studies Library, East Sussex RO, and Norfolk RO. [5.2]

CCEd was featured in *The Church Times* (2008) and *The Guardian* (2009) [5.6; 5.7]; earned the 'Site of the Week' award by the *Family Tree Magazine*; and was recommended by the newsletter of *The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies* (April-May 2008). A review on UK travel and heritage website, *BritainExpress*, described CCEd as a 'wonderful resource'. [5.7] It has also been cited on numerous genealogical websites and in archivist newsletters. [5.9-5.13] It has been used by the National Archives for its E179 taxation project, and by Lambeth Palace Library for the Sion Cataloguing Project. In 2008, CCEd was utilised in the production of an episode of BBC1's [Who Do You Think You Are?](#) which investigated the life of clergyman James Mayne, an ancestor of the episode's star, Patsy Kensit; the database was used to establish a 'timeline' for Mayne's career. [5.3] The episode attracted 7.1m viewers. [5.4]

The benefits to users are primarily cultural, enhancing quality of life through better understanding of the past, sometimes as manifest in a particular family identity or locality, but also educational, explaining how a complex institution - the Church of England - operated, the types of sources it generated and the uses to which they may be put.

Significance

In 2009, an article in *The Guardian* stated that CCEd's 'true significance may be its role in opening up the raw material of scholarship to the widest possible audience'. [5.7] Its success in achieving this is evident from the feedback received from its different types of users:

Family historians: 'May I say that your new website... has turned up several clergymen in my family history who held just about all the offices mentioned. That is why I was so interested in the difference between deacon, curate, rector and vicar' (Nancy Frey, 27 Feb. 2009); 'your endeavour is a monumental work and I, for one, am extremely grateful that it is being done and is freely available' (Andrew Groom from Australia, 9 Jan. 2013). [5.2]

Local historians: '...can I express my admiration for your site, which is of enormous help to those of us researching and writing about local history at the coalface level. It is absolutely brilliant, and extraordinarily easy to use' (Paul Herrington, 21 July 2010). [5.2] Annabelle Hughes used it extensively for her edition of *Sussex Clergy Inventories 1600-1750* (Sussex Record Society, 91, 2009). Ms Hughes was assisted by John Hawkins, a retired businessman and volunteer for the Sussex section of CCEd (p. ix fn. 1). Graham Claydon, author of *The Unlikely Canon: George Evans of Windsor* (Sea Dream Music, 2009) attended several CCEd dissemination meetings, and acknowledges the assistance of Fincham and 'others of the team connected with constructing the Online Clergy Database' (p. i).

Archivists: 'To have a reliable, accurate and comprehensive resource of all ordained clergymen, beneficed, stipendiary, together with those holding offices and dignitaries is of great value to staff in an archive service with a diocesan archive (Salisbury) that covers two other counties (Berkshire and Dorset). It has been of use in the writing of parish thumbnail accounts for our Community History website which has many hits by users around the world' (Steve Hobbs, archivist at Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, 21 March 2013); 'may I say a big thank you for the database, it is a very useful resource, both for helping others with their research, but also with double

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checking references found in my own work' (archivist, Somerset Heritage Centre, 15 April 2011). [5.2] In several archives, such as Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, and Lambeth Palace Library, CCEd is not merely presented as a resource for users, with a link to the archive's own website, but as a way of explaining groups of ecclesiastical records and putting them in the context of holdings elsewhere. [5.2; 5.13]

A distinctive feature of CCEd is the regular and beneficial dialogue between CCEd's users and the project team. The team responds to enquiries and also invites participation through the [Users' Corrections and Additions Form](#). Assistance is frequently provided about the interpretation of database sources, and the availability of other sources not in CCEd. The interactive nature of the database project allows entries to be updated and corrected on the basis of information supplied by users: that three clergymen with the same name were actually one individual ('John Beardsley', Clergy ID 39803); that two clergy with different forenames were one individual ('Richard Collyns', ID 95761); disentangling the records of two clergymen with similar names (see 'George Silvester' and 'John Silvester', IDs 31646, 151680); using parish records and wills to plug gaps in CCEd data (see Humphrey Newbury, Clergy ID 58050). Timothy Connor sent us monumental inscriptions for clergy which he had collected from churches and graveyards in the south west, which have been incorporated into CCEd: see 'Brian Congall' (Clergy ID 154699), 'Richard Handleigh' (57195), 'Robert Lougher' (71566), 'John Way' (51775) and 'Robert Welsteede' (103243). These often provide particularly valuable additional detail such as date of death, which CCEd often lacks, and also can contain evocative descriptions, such as Robert Lougher as 'once most vigilant pastor of this parish'. [5.2]

All these contributions are acknowledged in the Comment Box for the clergyman in question, to underline the collaborative character of CCEd. Sometimes more extensive information is supplied which can be developed into innovative new research pieces, such as Richard Palmer's article in CCEd's 'Notes and Queries' on Bethnal Green curate James Mayne. [5.5]

The project team tries to respond promptly to all contact from users, which is much appreciated. As Jodie Williams, a US genealogist, has written, 'Professor Fincham... has been most gracious in providing me [with] expanded information and [has] been very helpful in my research'. [5.2]

The database has therefore reached beyond the academic community to inform, inspire and interact with a wide range of users for enduring mutual benefit.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Sources on the use of the database:

1. CCEd user statistics for [2010](#), [2011](#), [2012](#) and [2013](#)
2. CCEd: Testimonials and sample of email exchanges with CCEd users, 2008-13
3. ['Patsy Kensit – How We Did It'](#) BBC *Who Do You Think You Are?* website, 2008
4. [Viewing figures](#) for *Who Do You Think You Are?*, BBC1, w/e 17 August 2008, BARB
5. Richard Palmer, ['James Mayne \[cce-id 70753\], curate of Bethnal Green'](#), CCEd Online Journal N&Q 2, 2008

Reviews of the database:

6. ['History BC – Before Crockford'](#), *Church Times*, 6 August 2008, pp.27-28
7. Lucy Ward, ['Seek and ye shall find'](#), *The Guardian*, 19 May 2009
8. ['The Clergy of the Church of England Database'](#), BritainExpress.com, 27 March 2011

Recommendations from specialist websites:

9. Genuki [guide to English church records](#)
10. National Archives [guide to researching Anglican or Roman Catholic clergy](#)
11. BBC [list of recommended websites for genealogical research](#)
12. John Kinder Theological Library [recommended research resources](#)
13. Lambeth Palace Library [Research Guide: Biographical Sources for Anglican Clergy](#), p.1