

The Church of England in the nineteenth century experienced change as

Absenteeism, nepotism, pluralism, expensive lifestyles and a limited urban presence made the church unpopular and

Priests were constrained by large income differences, limited training opportunities, theological differences, a hierarchy dominated by a narrow elite, by government power and local conflicts

these realities created a need to reform the Church that involved the



Bishop George Law, member of an influential priestly family

Privileged priestly families

Who were influential and wealthy and regularly provided sons to the church. Some like the Law family held many important church posts in the governments patronage portfolio.

Other Anglican families had similar advantages at the local level as they controlled important appointment powers that they used to benefit their sons and cousins and in-laws in Holy Orders.

This situation questions established thinking which asserts

That a separate professional Priesthood emerged

It is generally agreed that nineteenth century religious leaders became less elite, more organised about their work, more enthusiastic about their religious tasks, spent less time playing sports and socialising, began to adopt a religious uniform and continued to be an important local personality who could challenge both the local ' powers ' and the local ' rebels '.

But some priests were the local ' power ', squire or lord.

George James, b.1815, a gardener (1851), indep. nurseryman (1861)
his son

George James II, b. 1837, Aide to Arch-Deacon Law of Wells (1861), Canon of Gloucester Cathedral (1881)
his son-in-law

Arthur Wasley, b. 1882, House Servant (1901), Gentleman (1932).

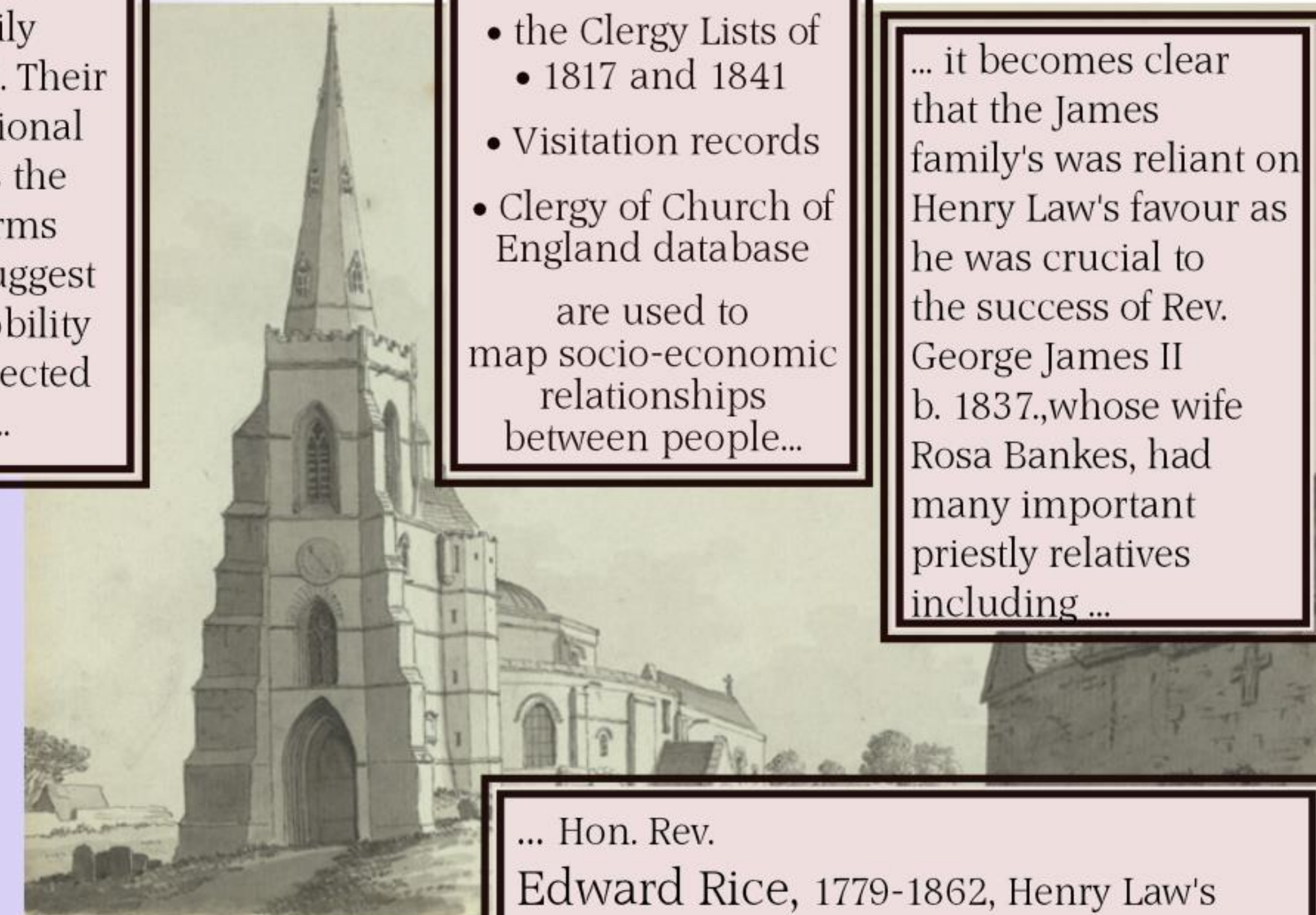
The censuses indicates the James family were not grand. Their inter- generational story implies the church reforms worked and suggest that Social Mobility was an unexpected outcome...

... Yet when Church sources like

- the Clergy Lists of 1817 and 1841
- Visitation records
- Clergy of Church of England database

are used to map socio-economic relationships between people...

... it becomes clear that the James family's was reliant on Henry Law's favour as he was crucial to the success of Rev. George James II b. 1837., whose wife Rosa Bankes, had many important priestly relatives including ...



Church careers were built on the right type of church appointments and needed a high level of self-promotion

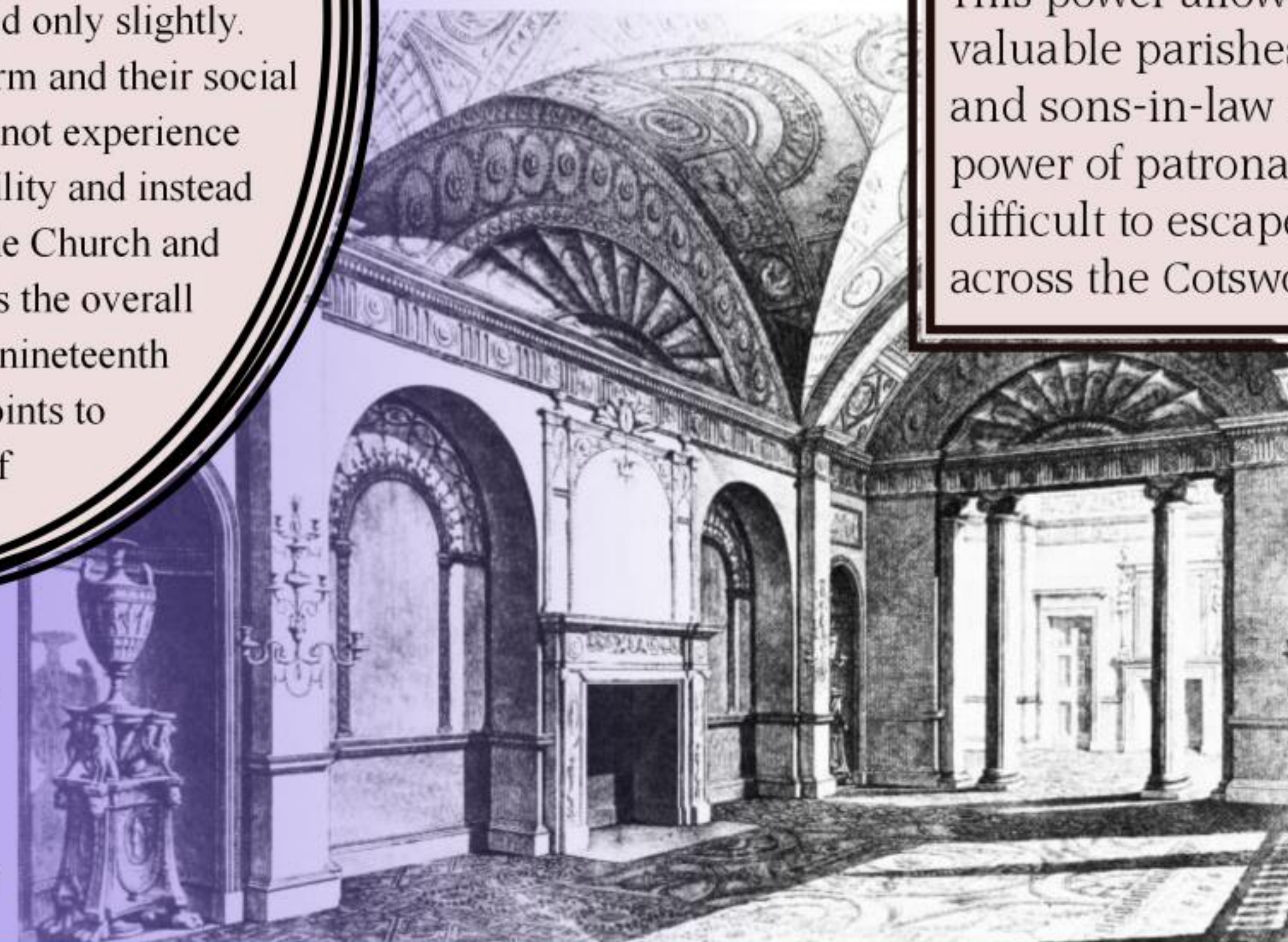
... Hon. Rev.

Edward Rice, 1779-1862, Henry Law's predecessor as Dean of Gloucester Cathedral Rice had social and economic power at his disposal during the early Victorian decades. This power allowed him to appoint priests to valuable parishes. Rice appointed his sons and sons-in-law and their relatives with this power of patronage. By the 1850's it was difficult to escape Rice's religious influence across the Cotswolds.

Stability in the midst of reform

Gibson in 1991 highlighted a social shift amongst the bishops from aristocratic to middle class backgrounds. A wider examination of Anglican leaders across the century with a broader understanding of privilege and connectivity indicates that the type of men running the church changed only slightly. High status families managed reform and their social networks so that their sons did not experience dramatic downward social mobility and instead retained the power to shape the Church and wider society. This questions the overall impact and efficacy of the nineteenth century reforms and points to the importance of privilege.

Brown [2015] has tracked the buying and selling of mansion estates to assess social mobility at the very top of society



Clarke and Cummin [2011] have used probates attached to rare surname's to track social mobility over multiple generations, showing a long run convergence between the wealthiest and poorest. But power and money also flows from mothers.

Social mobility has generally been consider across one person's life time as individual achievement and merit