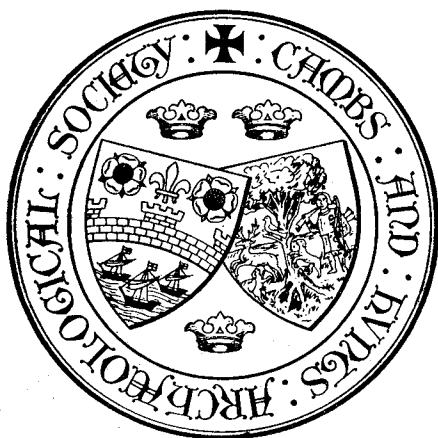


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LITTLE CATWORTH AND MOSES SOME.

BY S. INSKIP LADDS, A.R.I.B.A.

From the time of Domesday Book, Little Catworth has formed part of the Soke of Spaldwick, and ecclesiastically it is in the parish of Stow Longa, although by a recent arrangement its people are looked after by the Rector of Great Catworth.

In 1851¹ it was stated "In this hamlet is a small burial ground, containing the bodies of the Rev. Somes, his wife, and her sister. He was one of the ejected ministers under the St. Bartholomew's Act."

The reference is to the Revd. Moses Some, who however, was not ejected under the St. Bartholomew's Act, but resigned as a Non-juror in 1689.

Canon Overton says of him²: "Moses Soame (or Some) was a graduate of Christ's College, Cambridge, and became Rector of Broughton, near Kettering, 'of which Benefice he had the advowson, which he sold on the change of Government at the Revolution and then resigned, his conscience not permitting him to take the new oath.'³ He retired to the hamlet of Little Catworth, in Hunts., where he had an estate of his own, and there 'he built a small Chapel resolving to dedicate the remainder of his days to the service of God in this place, in which Chapel he performed the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer for many years for all the remaining part of his life. He also therein, both morning and evening, every day throughout the year, administered the Holy Communion to his family and to as many others of the neighbourhood as would come to partake of it,—the cup in alder⁴ wine, which answered the purpose as he thought, since his circumstances would not allow him to purchase other wine for such constant use."

Canon Overton, writing from Gumley in July 1903, to the Revd. John S. Ladds, Rector of West Keal, Lincs., says that Some was very friendly with Mr. William Bunbury, B.D., the 'learned and Worthy Rector of the Parish.'⁵

Forty-five years ago there was still a strong tradition in the neighbourhood that there had been a Chapel at Little

1. Hatfield's History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Huntingdon, (1854), p. 599.

2. Canon Overton. The Non-jurors, pp. 288-289. It is an interesting coincidence that Canon Overton was, himself, Prebendary of Stow Longa in Lincoln Cathedral, 1879-1903.

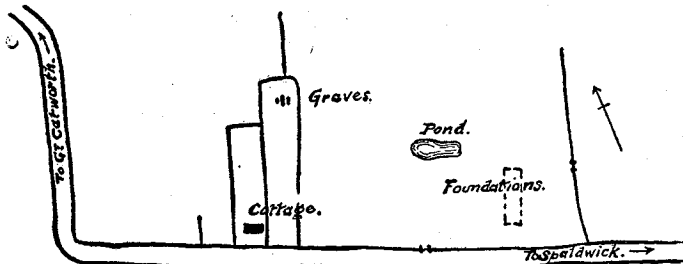
3. Canon Overton says that he obtained this account of Moses Some from the Rawlinson MSS., (Bodleian Library, Oxford), "in the Doctor's unpublished continuation of Wood's Athenæ Oxoniensis."

4. So printed, but elder [berry] wine must be intended.

5. William Bunbury was Rector of Great Catworth, 1707-1749.

Catworth. The graves were still visible in a cottage garden, and a young woman said that her grandmother had attended service in the Chapel in her youth; an older woman said that her mother used to go to church there. It seems very doubtful whether the chapel these women spoke of was the one which Moses Some built,—it seems more probable that a dissenting chapel had had a short existence there.

The cottage may have been Moses Some's residence, and signs of foundations in the large field adjoining were pointed out as those of the Chapel; but the Inclosure Award Map (1781) shows this field divided up into six "Old Inclosures," all with cottages or buildings near the road, so Some's Chapel,—which was most likely upon his own premises,—can hardly have stood here.



Sketch Plan showing position of graves.

The following letters preserved amongst the Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon⁶ throw an interesting light on the events. Apparently there was at least one other letter before those which remain.

My Lord

I being now in London am advised by Dr. Pinfold (Chancellor of the Diocess where I liv) humbly to request y^e L^d ship not to delay any longer ye consecration of ye chappel at Little Catworth. Mr. Lister⁷ hath sent me word that he for his part doth most freely consent to the officiating minister's having all ye right y^e he can give him to ye tithes of ye place; & your Lordship, I hope, will concur in promoting it: he saith that he has writ to make such request to y^e L^d ship; and is pleased to pfer, wthout any entreaty, y^e (if at all necessary) notwithstanding ye season

6. Huntingdon Archdeaconry Records, No. 265, Parochial. The date, 1684, is curious; it would seem that 1694 would be more likely, but the Archdeaconry Records are not available for consultation during the war, and the date cannot be checked.

7. William Lister, A.M., became Prebendary of Stow Longa, 23 August, 1684. The next Prebendary recorded was Matthew Goodwin, in 1727.

and his remoteness, he will come purposely about it. I humbly beg to know by this post what time y^e do please to appoint for consecration.

I am

Y^r. Lordship's most
humble Serv^t

Nov^b 22. 1684.

M. Some.

I lodge at Samuel Blackerby's Esq.
in Angel-Court on Snowhill
over ag^t. Sepulchre's Church.

Endorsed:—M^r. Some about consecration of a Chappell he has built at Little Catworth in ye parish of Stow Longa, Com: Hunt. dated 22. Nov^r. answer'd 25. Nov^r. 84.

S^r,

Yo^r. Lre of ye 22. of Nov^r to my L^d Bp. of Lincolne was Rec^d by his Lp. who is pleased to comand me to so send you this answer thereto.

1. That my L^d. (de Jure) cannot proceed to consecration of this Chappell, untill it doth cleerly appear to his L^p. that the same is well endowed.
2. That his L^p is informed That by an antient Contract ye Inh^ritants of y^e part of Litle Catworth (w^{ch} is in ye parish of Stow) are to pay a Third part of all Rates made towards the Repair of Stow Church.
3. That you designe to make this a parish Church, and to annex part of the Tythes (payable now to Stow Church) to this new intended parish Church.
4. That whereas you write that M^r. Lister the Prebendary of Stow does most freely consent for his part That the officiating Minister shall have all the Right that he can give him, to the Tythes of that place, and that he has Writ to my L^d to make such request, & y^e he is Ready to take a Journey hither about it. M^r. Lister has indeed writt but with submission to my Lord to do as his L^p. shall thinke fitt, But all this while here is not anything substantially done: And M^r. Lister can do but for his owne tyme and cannot ablige his successors by any Act he shall do, unles that Act be first Confirmed by the Bp w^{ch} so farr as it may be to ye Damage of the Church, my Ld. will not at all Confirme.
5. That the Vicar of Stow, whose name is (as I thinke) M^r. Robert Wright^s does not at all Consent hereto, And altho. the Prebendary be Patron of y^e Vicarage, and would consent to anything, though never so much for ye good of y^e intended new parish or chappell, yet without the consent of the p^r sent Vicar, and that it

8. Robert Wright was Vicar of Spaldwick, 1673—1697. He probably acted as Curate of Stow Longa the whole time.

appear to be a Melioration of Stow Church, the Bp cannot (de Jure) confirm any such act. And besides the Parishioners of Stow ought to be very well secured by you and yo^r Tenants That ye afors^d Third part of all Rates to be made for ye Repair of Stow Church shall be duely pd. for ye future by those Inh'tants of Litle Catworth who are within Stow Church.

6. And also that the Vicar, and his successors, shall not for the future be defrauded of their antient and Just dues for Buryings, Christenings and Churchings nor of the Easter Booke.

When you have given my Lord satisfaction in all these particulars his Lp. will then give you his Answer what time he will Appoint for Consecration : In ye Interim, I think you ought to begg his Lp's pardon for the slip of your Pen, in Charging his Lp so rashly with Longer Delay in this busines, especially considering that ye Chappell floore is all cover^d with Water. This is all I had in Comand from his Lp who am

S^r

Your humble Servant

T. G.

Buckden

25. Nov^r 84.

Copy of Lre. to M^r Moses Some, clerke.

My Lord

Yours of Nov^{br} 25 I most humbly thank y^r Lp for : w^{ch} seems to require my giving your Lp satisfaction in these 6 points. 1. Y^t ye Chappel be well endowed before Consecration : w^{ch} my L^d. shall be done against w^t time y^r Lp please to appoint. I consider y^t there are sins of Omission as well as Commission; & y^t our Liturgy placeth in ye first part of o^r daily confession, our leaving undone those things w^{ch} we ought to have done; & therefore I resolve to dispose as well as I can (praying to God to direct my judg^{mt}) that estate God pleases to bestow upon me. Full as much as ye parsonage where I liv is endowed wth I intend to endow Catworth wth all; viz^t wth 15 acres of land, & a house & homestead, & 4 Cow-commons and 30 sheep eommons; & if y^r Lp think there's reason for my endowing it wth more I shall be willing thereto : but if y^r Lp think it better for things to continue as they are, & for ye publick w^p of Almighty God to be so seldom as it is, I shall be satisfied, in doing only what I can in ye case. If y^r Lp does believe y^t we have any ill design y^u will do well to oppose it; but otherwise I hope y^u will please to think y^r self concern'd to be, not a Hinderer, but promoter of it. If y^u do think ye design ill,

I should be very glad to understand wherein it is so, y^t therein I may change my purpose.

2. Wheth^r ye Inhabitants of Little Catworth have used to pay a 3^d part of ye charge in repairing Stow-Church. My L^d, I think they have: but there is land I am told belonging to that Church let for 32^s per Ann^u w^{ch} if nev^r converted to other uses (as very commonly it is) would, I suppose, keep it alway in good repair. Some other things too, seeming to be wors than this, done there, I could (were it to any purpose) acquaint y^r L^p wth all. But I can say no more as to ye p^r sent business than y^t, as far as I know, they of Catworth have us'd to pay a 3^d part.
3. Whether I designe to make it a parish church, and to annex part of Stow tythes thereunto. My Lord; All y^t I designe is, to have ye service of God duly and constantly there performed: I do not, nor ever did designe any ye least temporary advantage to my self in this matter: I thank God I have enough, and do desire no more; & therefore concerning this particular, I am satisfied wth w^t y^r L^p shall think best to order: who, I am willing to believe, is desirous to do in all things w^t is really best & most pleasing to Alm. God.
4. Concerning w^t is said y^t nothing is yet substantially done by M^r Lister: I humbly desire to know from y^r L^p w^t y^e please to expect he should furth^r do
- 5 & 6. Concerning ye Vicar of Stow's not consenting. M^r Walker has told me y^t there is no vicar of Stow, & y^t M^r Wright is only Curate there. And concerning ye melioration mentioned of Stow Church, as necessary to be. That church will not be perjured however, as I can conceive, by w^t is designed: for, ye Curate's stipend may continue; & I do not understand how ye Church properly has any more than w^t ye officiating Minister hath: but, however, ye p^r sent p^r bendary is satisfied wth w^t is proposed; & for his success^{rs} there will be ye same reason for them to be so; but if they shall not they may make their claim. In some respects I suppose y^t Stow-Curacy will be meliorated; as for instance, in being freed from its so far-distant parishioners, &c.

I am

Y^r L^p's most humble,

obliged serv^t

M. Some.

Little Catworth,

Dec^{br} 11. 84.

A letter to Kimbolton, directed to be left wth Silvester Addington at M^r Day's a draper, will come to me.

My Lord,

I was 2 or 3 times last week to wait on your L^dship, & hap'n'd alway to come when you were either busy or indisposed; I hope that will excuse for my giving your L^dship this trouble. I think you were pleased to say that the consecration of ye Chappell at Catworth would be best, you thought, to rest till a parliamt and gave order for a form of endowmt to be ready; which I suppose is by this time presented to your Lordship, or will be speedily. I humbly desire to know whether yr L^dship would have me wait on you again about it; and also whether yr L^dship doth allow of our being prosecuted for using divine service before it be consecrated: I am much mistaken if it be against Canon, but if your L^p think it be, all but ye common daily service shall be forborn: and I humbly request that yr L^p will please now upon this promise to put a stop to ye proceedings which are threatned. If yr L^p will please to fav^r me wth a line by Huntingdon next post, directed for me at Little Catworth, it will very much oblige further

Yr L^p's most humble serv^t

M. Some.

Sr

[My Lord hath]⁹ Rec^d a Lre from you without date, wherein you tell his L^p that he should say it would be best that the Consecration of [the Chapel at] Catworth should stay till a Parliamt And yt his L^p gave order for a form of Endowment to be ready, wch you [say hath been done]: And yt you desire to know if his L^p does Allow of yo^r being Prosecuted for using Divine Service [before Consecration, to] all wch I am comanded to Return you this by way of Answer: Viz: That it is not probable my L^d [would let the] consecration of the Chappell rest till a Parliamt when his L^p Knowes he must necessar^{ly} attend [although I have] often heard his L^p say That an Act of Parliamt would settle things best, and if designed to make it a [parish church] it could not be done without an Act of Parliamt. That his L^p did never yet see any Endowment, nor [doth he] hear of the Regestring thereof in his Regry at Lincolne. That he never gave order for Prosecution of you [nor any]one eels, for Officiating there without Lycence; but Leaves to the Chancellor of his Diocess and to the Official of [the] Archdeaconry of Huntingdon And if they or either of them have caused any Prosecution agst any one for Officiating [and pr]eaching there without Lycence, He has reason to Commend them for their Diligence and Circumspection;

9. This letter is much torn where folded, but it is possible to supply the missing words, with reasonable certainty, from the context.

And [if an]y of the Inh'itants of Catworth be presented or Prosecuted for not coming to their parish Church such Prosecution is [warr]antable both by Canon and Common Law. So y^t upon the whole matter here's nothing but one Irregularity heaped upon [anoth]er : A Chappell built without Lycence or Leave from ye B^p and without any kind of Endowm^t Divine Service [and] Sermons Celebrated and preached therein before Consecration, without any manner of Lycence, Thereby incouraging [folk] to Absent themselves from their own Parish Church, contrary to Law : And nothing warrantable at all, but ye [prosecu]tion complaned of in y^r Lre.
[Jun]e 85.

These letters show us a clergyman, evidently of the Laudian school rather than a Puritan, very anxious to get his new Chapel consecrated, and quite willing to give of his substance to form an endowment for it. The proposed endowment may not seem to us to be very much, but it was worth considerably more then than it would be today, and he clearly hoped to get some tythe, so doubtless the Incumbent would have had a sufficient, if not a luxurious, living.

It is obvious that Some wished to remain within the Church of England,—but he had resigned Broughton because he could not take the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary, so it is difficult to see how he hoped to hold the Living if his new Chapel had been made a parish Church. However, the Bishop was not friendly to the scheme, and no consecration took place, although it would seem that Some escaped serious prosecution and was allowed to continue the services in his Chapel until the end of his life.

Moses Some's property at Little Catworth was copyhold of the Manor of Spaldwick with the Soke, and some further information as to him may be obtained from the Court Rolls of that Manor. In October, 1680, Daniel Some¹⁰ surrendered a third part of a Messuage, a pigstie of pasture, eighty acres of arable land and ten acres of meadow with appurtenances in Little Catworth to Moses Some, clerk, and Sarah his wife and their heirs. Daniel was no doubt, father of Moses, and we may assume that this surrender represents a marriage settlement.

Daniel probably did not long survive, and Moses was most likely in possession of the whole estate at the time he built his chapel;—comparing the proposed endowment

10. In the Rolls the name is always spelt 'Soame' or 'Soams,' but both Daniel and Moses sign themselves 'Some.'

with the ninety acres and appurtenancies,—the latter word including the Common rights,—it would seem that he proposed to give the Chapel one sixth of his land and one quarter of his common rights.

In 1715, Moses settled the property on his nephew, William Some, of Ravensthorpe, Northants., when it was described as seventy acres of land and ten acres of meadow and two cottages; about nine acres having been sold a few years previously. Sarah was evidently dead by this time.

By October, 1734, Moses Some was dead and his nephew, William was his heir.

William, in 1743, surrendered about forty acres of land with eight cow commons and sixty sheep commons to certain Trustees as a perpetual endowment of the Vicarage of Desborough, Northants. This seems to have been about half the estate, but whether it was a gift or a sale is not clear.

William was dead by October, 1757, and left the rest of the estate (thirty-six acres of land, five acres of meadow, a Messuage and two cottages), to his youngest son, John Some, who sold it in 1759.

These events all took place before the Inclosure of the Parish (1780), and the lands all lay dispersedly in the open fields so it is not possible, today, to identify any of them except the Cottage garden with the three graves.