

The Identification of a Parliamentary Army Chaplain: John Moore of Leicestershire

by Stephen Copson

This short piece discusses whether previous attempts to identify a seventeenth-century clergyman and army chaplain might be mistaken.

In the Civil War period, the ecclesiastical framework of England and Wales was severely shaken. Bishops were abolished, worship reformed, patronage rights disturbed. Some clergy who supported the Royalist cause were purged and other inadequate ministers were removed from their livings. The Parliamentary armies and garrisons offered opportunity for clergy and laity to show their support by serving as chaplains. Commanders too could demonstrate their conservative or radical tendencies by their choice of chaplain. In her comprehensive survey of Parliamentary army chaplains, Dr Anne Laurence lists one Moore (*fl.* 1644-46), whom she tentatively identifies as John Moore, born at Burton Overy and subsequently Vicar of Clavering in Essex. She distinguishes him from John Moore, minister of Knapshot (*sic*) and also from John Moore of Markfield. There is, however, more here to unravel.¹

Following Dr Laurence's identification, it is possible to piece together a short biography. The Moore family were freeholders in Burton Overy. John Moore, born about 1607, entered Magdalene College, Cambridge, at Easter 1624 and graduated B.A. in 1628-9. Ordained deacon and priest at Peterborough on 20 and 21 December 1629, he received his M.A. in 1632. In the same year he settled in Bedford.² There are further suggestions that he was Vicar of Lockington in Leicestershire (1637-48) and curate at St James, Duke's Place in London between 1641 and 1643.³ In 1643 he was appointed Vicar of Clavering with Langley, following the sequestration of John Cornelius.⁴ He was appointed Rector of Lutterworth in 1647 but was forcibly kept out.⁵ In 1660 John Cornelius was restored to the living and Moore settled at Easton in Huntingdon, where he continued to preach. He died in 1674 and was buried at Burton Overy.⁶ In this brief introduction four John Moores with Leicestershire

1. A. Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains 1642-51*, p.154. Royal Historical Society/Boydell 1990
2. *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, ed., J. and J. A. Venn. Part 1 [to 1751]. 4 vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1922-27
3. *Al. Cant.*, as n.2; *Walker Revised, being a revision of John Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion, 1642-60*, ed., A. G. Matthews. Oxford: Clarendon reissued 1988.
4. T. W. Davids, *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in Essex*, p.361f. London: Jackson, Walford and Hodder, 1863
5. *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-2*, ed. A. G. Matthews, p.352. Oxford: Clarendon reissued 1988; Laurence, as n.1.
6. *Calamy Revised*, as n.5, p.352.

connections have in fact been encountered. This short article will try to settle the identities of each and consider the possibility of whether another holds a claim to be recognised as the Parliamentary Army chaplain.

The John Moore who was Vicar of Lockington was most probably the person who matriculated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1628, obtained B.A. 1631-2 and M.A. in 1635.⁷ He was installed at Lockington on 24 February 1636/7. He had resigned the living by 1647, when William Plante was appointed.⁸ In that same year the new Rector of East and West Leake, Nottinghamshire, was a certain John Moore, following the sequestered Edward Bigland.⁹ In 1650 Moore was described by the Parliamentary Commissioners as 'an able preaching Minister and well affected to the present government.' In 1651 at Priors Hardwick in Warwickshire, he attended a meeting of Presbyterian clergy gathered from Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire as well as Warwickshire which was disrupted by Baptists.¹⁰ He appears to have taken no part in the Nottingham Association of Presbyterian ministers from 1658-60, and in 1662, after conforming, he was duly instituted to the living by Gervase Pigott of Thrumpton, himself known as a friend and benefactor to Puritan clergy. Moore died intestate in 1667 and administration of his will was given to Pigott. There is nothing to connect this John Moore with an Army chaplaincy.¹¹

Dr Laurence introduces, in order to dismiss, another John Moore as minister of Knapshot (sic) as probably the Baptist of Markfield who signed *A Further Testimony to Truth* in 1659. These in fact are two separate individuals. A John Moore did sign the 1659 declaration, along with George Moore, as from the Markfield Baptist congregation.¹² John Moore of Knaptoft, however, was an ordained clergyman who had succeeded his father in 1619 as rector of that parish. Father and son belonged to the Puritan tradition and had struggled to uphold principle against the church authorities. Rector of Knaptoft from 1586 until 1619, John Moore sen. had been brought before the ecclesiastical court in November 1604 charged with nonconformity for refusing to wear the surplice. He was summoned four times in 1605 but ambiguously pulled up short of the disobedience that would have deprived him of his living. He was finally discharged by the court 'in hope of conformity'.¹³ In 1612 he published *A Target for Tillage*, a broadside against the enclosure of land. In 1617 he also produced *The Mapped of Man's Mortalitie*.

On his death, his son succeeded him. He compounded for first fruits on 17 November, 1619 and held the living until 1638 when he was deprived, apparently on an allegation of simony.¹⁴ This followed the trial in the Star Chamber of Bishop Williams of Lincoln in 1637. Archbishop Laud took the opportunity to hold a visitation of the diocese and Moore was ejected. The Crown directly nominated William Farrowe, who also held the living of Strixton near Wellingborough in Northamptonshire.¹⁵ Could this John Moore have been curate at St. James, Duke's Place in London in 1641?

7. *Al. Cant.* as n.2

8. W. A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660*, p.346. 2 vols. London: Longman, Green & Co. 1900

9. *Walker Revised*, as n.3, p.292

10. N. Stephens, *Precept for the Baptisme of Infants with Appended Answer of William Swayne, Preacher of the Word at Withbrooke near Coventry*. London 1650

11. S. P. Potter, *A History of East Leake*, p.32. Nottingham: W.B.Cooke at the Thoroton Press, 1903

12. A. Betteridge, 'Early Baptists in Leicestershire and Rutland', *Baptist Quarterly*, 25 (1974), pp.272-86

13. *The State of the Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I as illustrated by documents relating to the diocese of Lincoln*, ed. C. W. Foster, p.364f. Lincoln Record Society, 23 (1926)

14. Leicestershire Record Office, DE 3389/141, J. H. Green, 'Notes on Mowsley and Knaptoft'

15. *DNB* (s.v. 'John Moore') is incorrect in stating that Moore followed Farrowe in 1638.

Could he have been chaplain to Purefoy's regiment from 1644 to 1646? A further clue is found at Lutterworth. At sometime prior to August 1646, Nathaniel Tovey had been sequestered from the rectory of Lutterworth.¹⁶ On 6 April 1647 the County Committee ordered that the living should not be disposed of until the patron Basil Fielding, Earl of Denbigh, had been given sufficient time to nominate someone of his choice. On 16 April, the County Committee recommended, apparently on the petition of several parishioners, that John Moore be settled in the rectory. Sir Arthur Hesilrigge and Colonel Purefoy were requested to write on behalf of the Committee to Denbigh to advise him of the recommendation. Purefoy took the matter to the Committee for Plundered Ministers in London on 16 April. The Committee minutes show that on 11 June the nomination of John Moore was received and on 14 June it was confirmed. On 14 July, it was first noted that Moore already held two benefices in Essex and that Tovey was unwilling to relinquish the first fruits of the living. The minutes for 14 September state that Moore had been kept out by force. The Committee reiterated their order that Moore should possess the living and enjoy it without opposition, but it also added that Moore should 'take special care' to arrange for 'a godly and orthodox divine' to fill his place at Clavering.¹⁷

It is possible that William Purefoy took a particular interest in this matter because he wanted to settle his former regimental chaplain into the rectory. Although disqualified by the Self-Denying Ordinance, Purefoy may have been helping a former comrade in arms. When we remember that Denbigh had been Purefoy's commander from June 1643 to Autumn 1644, and that their relationship had been marked by frequent disputes, it is possible to view the matter of the rectory as another trial of strength or settling of old scores. This would support Dr Laurence's identification of John Moore, Vicar of Clavering and Civil War chaplain. There is, however, no positive proof to make the link beyond doubt. A suspicion remains. It is not certain that John Moore ever took possession of Lutterworth. Rather, everything points to his remaining in Essex. Certainly he signed the *Testimony* of 1648 in Essex. It is a curious coincidence then that John Moore of Knaptoft is found associated with Lutterworth. In 1653, he published an attack on the enclosure of land, *The Crying Sin of England, of not Caring for the POOR*. It would have been topical as it appears that land was being enclosed in the parish around 1653. The pamphlet led to a fierce exchange with Joseph Lee, Vicar of Cotesbach, which simmered on until 1656.¹⁸ The title page of *The Crying Sin of England* declared it was 'the Chief Heads of two Sermons preached at the Lecture at Lutterworth.' These sermons were delivered in May 1652. In 1653, the Committee for Plundered Ministers placed John St. Nicholas in the rectory. Nichols assumed that he followed John Moore of Knaptoft.¹⁹

The sequestered living at Lutterworth and the Army chaplaincy may not be linked. Another possibility can be suggested. The Knaptoft John Moore was the son of a Puritan father. He had been ejected in 1638 in circumstances that hint at a Laudian purge. In 1641 perhaps it was this John Moore who served the cure of St. James,

16. *Walker Revised*, as n.3, p.246

17. J. Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicester* 4 vols republished 1971, Vol 2 part 2 p.264; *Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, Earl of Denbigh's Papers (1874) p.284; Department of Western Manuscripts, British Library, London, Add MS 15671, pp.58, 75, 121 & 212.

18. *The Crying Sin of England* was answered by *Considerations concerning Common Fields* (1653). This in turn drew in response *A Reply to Considerations* (1654), which was challenged by *A Vindication of Considerations*, written March 1653/4 but not published until 1656. For Joseph Lee, see *Calamy Revised*, as n.5, p.320.

19. *Calamy Revised*, as n.5, p.423. For St. Nicholas, see Nichols, as n.17, pp.269-70. Nichols actually dates the exchange as 1657, the year of Moore's death.

Duke's Place, then a donative of the City of London, to leave in 1644 to become chaplain to Purefoy's regiment. When the Vicar of Clavering did not take possession of the rectory, John Moore, formerly of Knaptoft was put in, either at the request of the patron or by order of the Committee for Plundered Ministers (the relevant minutes are missing). Dr Laurence seems to make the connection of Moore the Army chaplain with Moore the Vicar of Clavering principally through the link involving William Purefoy as both regimental colonel and member of the County Committee who recommended for the living of Lutterworth. Although the evidence still falls short of definite proof, this short article has sought to show how a stronger case could be made out for identifying the Army chaplain with the John Moore who lived and, indeed, died in Leicestershire.²⁰

By 1653, William Farrowe had been removed and John Moore had returned to Knaptoft. His original patron, Lady Turpin, had sold off her estate and the right of nomination to pay off debts. The new patron was Lady Grace Manners. Her son John, Earl of Rutland, presented Nathaniel Tovey to the vicarage of Aylestone in 1654, perhaps some compensation for failing to regain his old living.²¹ Moore lived at Shearsby, which with Mowsley formed part of the parish, and remained there until his death in 1657. He was buried at Knaptoft. By way of postscript, there are two further John Moores. The Rector of Knaptoft had two sons: John, who entered Clare College, Cambridge and Thomas, an ironmonger of Market Harborough. It was Thomas's son, John, who most definitely became successively Bishop of Norwich and then of Ely. Thankfully, the family history of this literary cleric has already been fully documented for Leicestershire readers.²²

Personal details

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20. It is intriguing to conjecture whether the Committee for Plundered Ministers itself had mixed up these John Moores and that mistakenly it had tried to put in John Moore of Clavering when the County Committee had intended John Moore of Knaptoft.

21 Nichols, as n.17, p.299

22 DNB; See C. Moore, 'Bishop Moore, "The Father of Black Letter Collections"', *TLAAS*, 6 (1884), for family details.