Mr Waterson’s Affliction: Curious Case of the Vanishing Vicar Notes and References

1. J and J.A.Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, Part 2, Vol 6, p.364. The baptism date given (July 5th 1752) seems unlikely: all other evidence points to 1754 or 1755 as his year of birth. His age at marriage in 1782 is given as 28 and his age at death in May 1809 as 54. His ordination as a priest in October 1776 is also likely to be shortly after he turned 23, the minimum age for this (W M Jacob, The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 2007, p.52).

2. CCEd Clergy of the Church of England database (http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/); Cambridge Chronicle and Journal 30/12/1780, p1 col. 3. Some sources claim Waterson was master at the Perse Grammar School in Cambridge but his Cambridge school was actually a private one, not a free grammar school.

3. Cambridge Chronicle and Journal 13/1/1781 p3, col 2; J and J.A.Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, Part 2, Vol 5, p.136 (which does not list Sleaford as one of Plampin’s benefits), cf. CCEd Clergy of the Church of England database (http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/); Lincolnshire Archives Office (hereafter LAO) PD 136/35 Presentation Deed of John Plampin to New Sleaford, 1780. Lincolnshire Archives Office (hereafter LAO) Carre’s Hospital Box 1 minutes and accounts 1704-1836 includes an entry in February 1781 “Reed of the Revd. Mr Plampin as Schoolmaster 3/4’s Rent Xmas last £1-5s-0d”, suggesting Plampin, while only vicar for about six months, was resident at Sleaford during that period.

4. LAO CC 118/1333, DIOC/BEN/1/67 (two items re lease of allotment Revd. Edward Waterson to J Cooper, 1797) and Sleaford Glebe Terrier bundle, terriers of 1724 and 1745.


8. LAO DIOC/BEN/1/67 (two items re lease of allotment Revd. Edward Waterson to J Cooper, 1797), PSJ 12/A/1 pp.6, 335-332 account books of Benjamin Cheales, attourney; Lloyds Bank Archives, Southwark, A/50/B/2.0 Peacock, Willson & Co ledger 1792-1812, p.73.


10. A transcript of Hervey’s diary, originally written in a form of shorthand, is at Cumbria Record Office (WD HPG 2166). Lincolnshire Archives Office has a microfilm of this (MF 2/32) and a (not always reliable) typescript made by Rev Hugh Bailey in 1975 (Quarrington PAR 23/4).


13. Ibid; LAO Quarrington PAR 23/4.

14. LAO MF 2/32.


16. LAO 2 Cragg 1/6.

17. Anglesey Record Office, Beaumaris burials 1809; the Monthly Magazine or British Register, Vol 27, Part 1 for 1809, p.323. Beaumaris is directly across the Menai Strait from Llanfairfechan.
19. LAO Dioc Spe 8a Survey of Clergy 1807 p.23, Carre’s Hospital Box 1 Minutes 1793-1826 18 Oct 1803.
22. LAO, Washingborough Burial Register 1819; LRSM 17-09-1841 (“Parson’s Justice”)
23. LAO 2 Cragg 1/6. The charge of favouritism towards Cooper is interesting. Revd Pugh, vicar of Rauceby and Cranwell, was part of Waterson’s circle of friends and brought the young Romaine Hervey to the area as his curate in 1799. Romaine Hervey seems to have met the Cooper family and become friends with them through Pugh, for some time entertaining romantic intentions towards Miss Grace Cooper - Quarrington PAR 23/4. See also end note 4 above.
24. LAO CC 118/1333, lease of Sleaford Prebend 1796, LCC will 1806/I/130 Richard Yerburgh; Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, HA 507/3/303 details of “parcels taken from the settlement dated 2nd May 1823”, c.1850; Trollope, Sleaford and the Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn, pp.141-142
25. Lincolnshire Archivist’s Report 9 1957-1958, p.15
26. Altogether, Waterson probably had a retirement income of around £200 a year – sufficient but not lavish. Normanton was worth about £10 a year in this period and Waterson’s own figures suggest that Sleaford (minus the almshouse chaplaincy and Quarrington, both of which he had surrendered) was worth about £178 – LAO Dioc/BEN/1/67.
27. Jacob, The Clerical Profession, p.75.
28. CCEd Clergy of the Church of England database (http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/).
29. LAO Sleaford PAR 1/5 burials 1783-1812, Sleaford PAR 10/2 Vestry Book 1762-1835, p.395; KQS Land Tax, Flaxwell, 1808.