

## THE ARTHUR FAIRWEATHER WINDOW

Any visitor to Woodbridge Methodist Church cannot fail to notice our one pictorial stained glass window on the south side. Methodist chapels and churches, with some notable exceptions like Wesley's Chapel in City Road, London, are not known for overt decoration but a greater number, mainly former Wesleyan chapels, do have stained glass windows.

The subject of the window is similar to the style of William Holman Hunt's famous "Light of the World" painting. These paintings can be seen in St Paul's Cathedral and Keble College Oxford and were much imitated. For example as a stained glass window in the Central Methodist Church, Blackpool. And Woodbridge Methodist Church. This image was clearly a popular subject in Victorian and Edwardian times because in that age they loved images which told a story.

It is based on the text in Revelations, Ch 3, v 20 in the Bible.

Christ is depicted wearing a white robe symbolising the power of the Spirit upon Him. He wears another jewelled red robe and there is a rayed crown of gold interwoven with a crown of thorns. He carries a two-fold lighted lamp. All parts of Victorian images had meanings.

The window is dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of Arthur Robert Fairweather JP (1863 - 1937). Arthur Robert Fairweather Snr was born in Plumsgate near Framlingham. He and his wife had four children including Arthur Robert Jnr born in 1893. His younger sister, Gladys Toshack, was still alive and a member of the church in Woodbridge in the 1970s. The census of 1911 shows 18 year-old Arthur Robert was "assisting in business" as a compositor and bookbinder. This business was his father's, who was a printer, publisher, bookseller and newsagent, based at 10 Church Street, Woodbridge (across the alley from the cycle and video shop). Their London agents were WH Smith. He became the proprietor and publisher of the Woodbridge Reporter and Wickham Market Gazette, both later to be taken over by the EADT. When Arthur Fairweather Snr died in 1937, his effects were valued at £ 6272 1s 4d. He was a contemporary of another prominent Woodbridge Wesleyan Methodist, Rowland Hill. In the summer of 2021, we shall be visited by a distant relative of Arthur Fairweather who will bring his Bible and his Hymn Book to hand over.

Thank you to all who made suggestions towards my research, including Doreen Bishop, Ivan Jacobs, Jenny Archer, Mike Rowland, Audrey Robertson and Rev David Marshall. It has been fun linking the Victorian and Edwardian era to the recent past.

Monty Guest