

ARTHUR MARKHAM

Arthur Markham was born in Dunstable in 1859 the son of James Markham, Blacksmith, and Mary Anne Markham, Straw Bonnet Maker.

He entered the ministry in 1880, was trained at Didsbury College and married Mary Claudia Rule in Croydon in June 1886 and together were to have five daughters. Mary died in 1902. Arthur married Annie Petch in Bedale, N Yorkshire in September 1904

Arthur arrived in Maidenhead in 1915 and was afforded a warm welcome as recorded in the Slough Windsor and Eton Observer for the 18th September that year:

WINDSOR WESLEYAN CIRCUIT

Slough the Problem.

Welcome to the New Superintendent Minister

“So wide an area was drawn upon in welcoming Arthur Markham, the new Superintendent Minister of the Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead Circuit, that the meeting in the Wesleyan Church, Maidenhead provided something like a clue to the interest and vitality of the Methodist body in the various districts comprised in the Circuit. Maidenhead itself, considering the extent of population, did not contribute an oppressively large share. There were members from Slough, Windsor, Holyport, Sunninghill, Lent Rise, Cookham, and other localities, some of which are not easily reached from Maidenhead in day-time, and still less easily reached when the clock hands are in the neighbourhood of 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. The fact that “units” as military strategists would term them, found their way from the outlying districts by means of train, brake, bicycle, or legs, proved that there is a strong interest spread over a large area, no matter how any particular locality may compare with another.

Mr. A. Bromley (Circuit Steward), who presided, mentioned that letters expressing regret or inability to attend had been received from Mr Bannard (Littlewick), Mr Bird and Mr Miles (Windsor), Mr Pyme (Cookham Rise), and others. He commented upon the experience of their new Minister and how pleased they were that Mr Markham, when considering invitations from Leeds and their own circuit decided in favour of the latter. He expressed the hope that the ensuing three years would be fruitful ones and voiced general regret in referring to the recent bereavement of Mr and Mrs Truscott and family.

SAD HEARTS AND HOMES

Mr R Cousins (Circuit Steward, Windsor) remarked that in the varied duties before the minister there were many sad hearts and many sad homes that stood in need of consolation. The Wesleyan body looked with confidence to Mr Markham in his new ministry and it behoved all of them to give him the fullest measure of cooperation.

Mr J W Walker J.P. observed that it was his privilege that evening to offer a welcome on behalf of the Methodism of his native town - the Methodism that was introduced by his uncle and aunt, the Methodism with which his father and mother were for many years the chief supporters, the Methodism to which he himself owed not a little. One could feel sure that the local Methodists, even amid the sorrows and darkness of the present time, would do all they could to make the Superintendent's stay as pleasant as possible. It might well be that Mr. Markham's successor might be here before peace was proclaimed but, be that as it might, their own community was at peace and had been delighted with Mr Marham's ministrations on Sunday. The preacher among other things urged them to pay their tradesmen's bills - advice which was well worth bearing in mind by all concerned. Regarding the Sunday School, that institution was on its trial throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians and others spoke of the great difficulty in carrying on the Sunday School with the success it deserved, and any help which the Superintendent could give would be peculiarly welcome. It had been the happy lot and mark of the local Wesleyan body that its strength had been in the Sunday School. New difficulties had occurred. One of the local difficulties they had to face was the almost total absence of the recognition of the Lord's Day. All those who dwelt in the Thames Valley knew what it was to have the Sabbath turned into a fair day. That sort of thing hindered improvement among young people and strong efforts were needed in order to bring about improvement.

“THE CIRCUIT POET”

Mr M Pearce (Sunninghill) who was described as “the circuit poet” echoed the welcome voiced by previous speakers. He remarked that the distance which separated many of the congregation from the Suninghill Church, accounted for poor attendance at times, especially in the morning.

The Rev Brook-Hirst reminded his hearers that September had a peculiar significance for Methodist ministers because it opened the door of opportunity. The three years' system was one of the relics of the days, which he thought were very quickly passing away; there was a possibility that Mr Markham would be there to celebrate the service of peace and victory. Years ago he (Mr Brook-Hirst) thought that the Methodist Church was the panacea for all to the evils in the world, and that it was as perfect as any human organisation could be. Now he entertained more modest views of it, because he thought there were other organisations as, and perhaps more, successfully doing the work of God and extending his kingdom. He had lost faith in profession, and to a large extent had lost faith in talk. His faith lay in work. Some of the laziest men in the Methodist Church occupied official positions in which workers were needed. Profession and talk were absolutely useless unless they were prepared to do the work.

SLOUGH - THE PROBLEM

Mr J W Roberts (Slough) described Slough as “the problem of the circuit”. Yet the place contained some of the most loyal Methodists one could find anywhere. Often he wondered how Methodist ministers could put up with some of their people and could find the necessary patience. Some wanted one thing and some wanted another.

My Symmons (representing Holyport) asked for all the support that could be given to the chapel at Holyport. The Methodist body there was not strong.

After a few words from Mr Blazey of Lent Rise, Mr Markham gave a brief address. He and his wife appreciated the kind welcome which had been given to them. In this connection he specifically mentioned the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Bromley. It was largely in consequence of the persuasion of Mrs Markham that he (the Superintendent Minister) had decided to come to Maidenhead. He would not have come if he had not felt whole-hearted in the matter, and now that he was among them he asked for their help in ministering to the best of his ability. He and his wife took their first walk in Maidenhead on the previous evening and as they viewed and admired the beautiful river scenery he remarked “This is quite a Paradise”. He had listened very attentively to the speeches of the various representatives from different parts of the circuit and he noticed that where one place was described as “flat” another was spoken of as “hilly”; while one presented “problems” difficult of solutions, another appeared to possess particularly pleasant and agreeable features. He would try and balance the one against the other and meet the difficulties as they arose to the best of his ability. In this connection Mr Markham mentioned the case of a candidate for the police force who during his preliminary examination was asked the distance between Liverpool and New York. The man replied that he did not know, but if that was to be his beat he would give up his job. Whatever the amount and character of the work demanded of

him (Mr Markham) however he was not going to give up his job. Church difficulties had been aggravated by the war. Let them let them face these difficulties in the right way - face them in the way that the Empire faced its duty. He would not make any promises, because that, in his opinion, was a mistake, and all that he would say was this - that he would do his best".

Arthur Markham's Maidenhead superintendancy of the Windsor circuit spanned World War 1.

WAR ITEMS.

"Pte Arthur Charles Upson, Seaforth Highlanders, eldest son of Councillor A Upson J.P., and Mrs Upson, of Maidenhead was killed in action on November 17th. Reference to the sad event was made at a meeting of the Maidenhead Town Council on Tuesday evening and a memorial service is to be conducted by the Rev Arthur Markham at the Wesleyan Chapel on Sunday evening."

(Reading Mercury 1 December 1915)

Leaving Maidenhead in 1919, Arthur Markham served in Whitstable before becoming a supernumery in Ilford in 1923. His wife Annie died in January 1927.

Arthur died in 1935