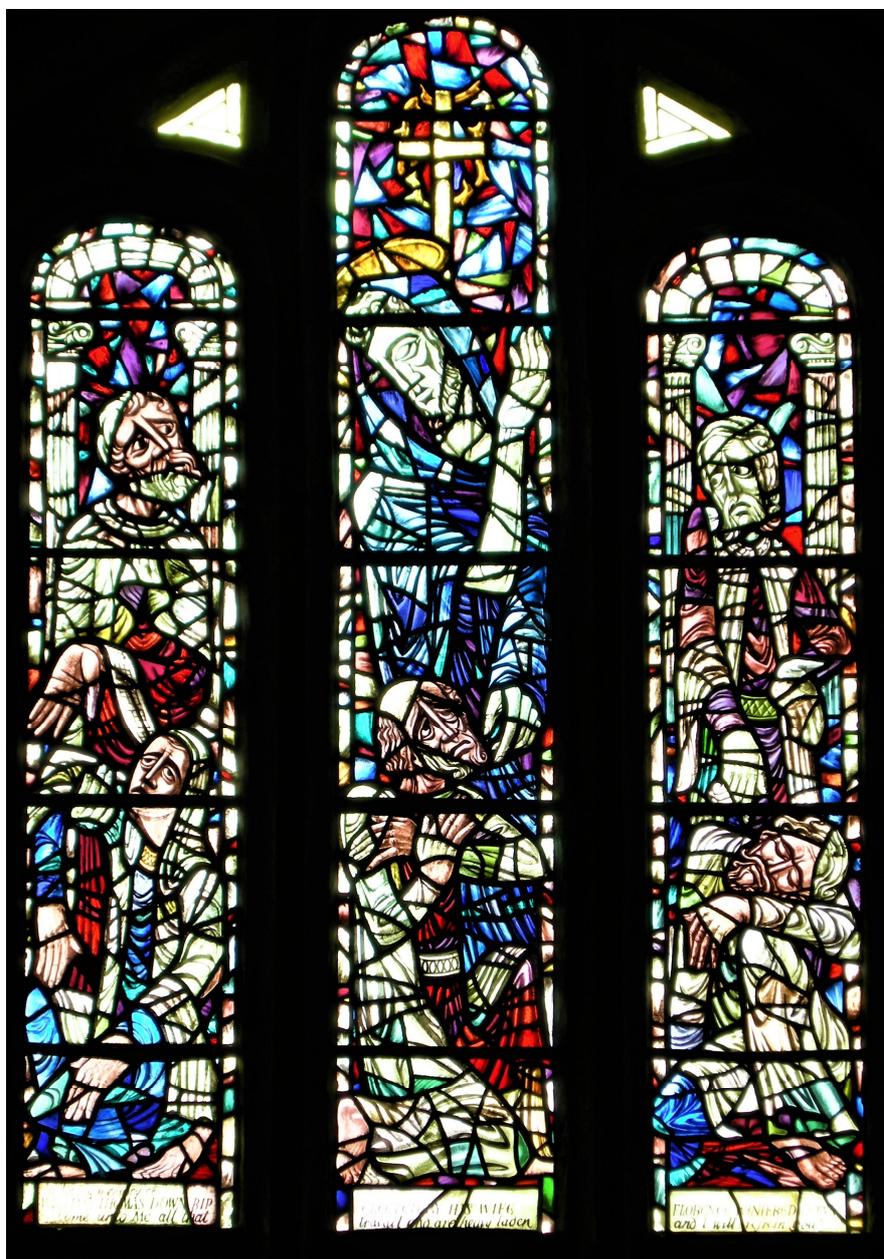


EVERY WINDOW TELLS A STORY

Stained Glass in our Churches

by Peter Hamilton-Leggett

No 4 The William Down window, Walkhampton



William Thomas Down was born in Plymouth in 1879. His mother, Marie, was a dressmaker and his father, Thomas Gill Down, had numerous jobs including accountant, newsagent and draper.

William became a housepainter and in March 1906 he decided to make his fortune in Canada. He embarked on RMS Virginian, a newly built triple screw turbine liner, from Liverpool. Twenty-four days later he arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia where his brother was living,

Whilst living at Hamilton, he met and married Florence Winifred Aylmore on 29 October 1913 in Wentworth, Ontario, Canada.

Florence had been born Florence Winifred Johns on 21 April 1875 in Stonehouse, Devon. She married Ernest Reeves Aylmore on 19 August 1897 in Stoke Damerel Church, Devon. Ernest Aylmore died in 1908 and

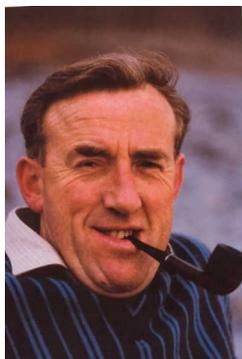
Florence lived on her own in Mutley Plain, earning a living as a dressmaker. Just after this she visited Canada where she met William Down. The picture shows Florence & William posing for a photograph in Detroit. They returned to England sometime before 1921 and lived at Bedford Place, Bere Ferrers. In 1939 they were living at 46 Church Hill, Plympton. At that time he was an unemployed house painter. They retired to Walkhampton where they lived at Corner Cottage, opposite Town Farm. He died on 15 June 1954 at Freedom Fields Hospital, Plymouth. He left £885.

Florence approached the Walkhampton PCC with an offer of £150 to provide a stained glass window in memory of her late husband. The theme was to be *Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden*. The vicar reported that he had contacted some artists, one of whom had



submitted a design with figures in keeping with the design and period of the window itself. The committee were generally in favour of it especially as the widow and relatives liked it. They passed a resolution to apply for a faculty for its installation.

At the May 1955 meeting the vicar reported that "the Down memorial window had not yet been installed owing to a calamity at the stained glass works resulting in the ruin of the work. There had been no report from the artist since." No other records exist but the window was eventually erected. Florence died in June 1956 in Plymouth, at the age of 81. Neither are buried in Walkhampton.



The window was designed and made by James Paterson of Bideford. Paterson had been born near Edinburgh in 1916. Encouraged by his parents in 1936 he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art but was unable to accept due to lack of funds. He joined the RAF where his talents as an artist & cartoonist were soon recognised. After the war he was able to accept a place at the Royal College. He married Margaret Walker in 1947 in Yorkshire. They had four children. In 1948 he joined Bideford School of Art and seven years later he became principal, a post he held for 30 years. He soon became recognised as a stained glass painter as well as an accomplished painter in both oil & watercolour. His works appear in many galleries throughout the world. In 1956 Agatha Christie commissioned him to design the east window of Churston Ferrers church. This work follows the same sort of flowing design as used at Walkhampton. He also designed the east window of Brentor church and the two roundals at the Castle Inn, Lydford. Other churches in the vicinity include Sticklepath, Holsworthy, Ashburton, and Plymouth. He died in Bideford on 4 August 1986 aged 70. One of his sons, Robert, carried on his father's business under the name Stained Glass Workshop.



James Paterson was given the theme "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden" taken from Matthew chapter 11 verse 28.



Those who of us who are used to the traditional Book of Common



Prayer will recognize this verse as one of the four Comfortable Words that are said by the priest to the congregation after the General Confession. There are three parts to this phrase. First of all we hear an invitation: "come unto me". Christ stands and invites people to come to him, but the question follows: who can come? Who receives this offer? The answer follows: "all that travail and are heavy laden". What a telling description of all those who struggle through life, worn down by drudgery and a knowledge of



our own shortcomings. We are weighed down, trudging onwards, and Jesus says: "come unto me". Note, he does not say, "sort yourself out, and then come to me". No. Come as you are, come when you are low, come when you are broken.

Paterson interoperates this beautifully. We have a bearded Jesus with a golden halo in the central light whilst around him are five people in despair. Their eyes and faces showing various emotions. The words at the bottom of the glass read: -

*In loving memory of William Thomas Down / Erected by his wife / Florence Winifred Down
Come unto me all that / travail and are heavy laden / and I will refresh you*