

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

WEBSTER, Joshua

?St Albans 1709 – ?Chigwell 1801

Dr Joshua Webster, of Chigwell Row, amateur topographical artist and something of a celebrity in Essex. Traditionally supposed to be a son of the Old Pretender, possibly because he attended Simon, Lord Lovat after Culloden, Webster practised medicine in St Alban's from 1746, was a member of the Corporation of Surgeons of London in 1777, compiled a Herbal and invented a diet drink, *Cerevisia Anglicana*, which was praised by Benjamin Franklin. He was also alleged to be the author of a poem, *The Beggar's Petition*, a claim later disputed. The Fairlop Oak, in Hainault Forest, very near Chigwell Row, was the site of an annual fair from c.1725; when it eventually died c.1820, its timber was bought by Isaac Seabrook, builder of St Pancras New Church and used for the pulpit there. Dr Webster's picture, with a lengthy posthumous inscription, was presumably acquired at the same time; however, it is not in pastel as reported elsewhere.

Bibliography

Arthur Jones, *Hertfordshire 1731–1800 as recorded in the Gentleman's Magazine*, p. 136; *Notes & queries*, 1914

Drawings

Fairlop Oak Tree, watercolour, gch./ppr, c.30x24, inscr. "Webster of Chigwell Row AD 1800" (St Pancras Church; in the new church 1820) ♀