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Contents

Editorial	2
Map of Witheridge Settlements	3
Witheridge Origins	4
Genealogical Chart	6
Identifying Relations	7
Family Tree Showing Degrees of Kinship	8
Membership List	10

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Editorial

The first inkling I had that the name Witheridge was special happened at the grand old age of five when I returned home from school in tears complaining bitterly that the other children could spell their names, whereas mine was so long that I could not!

My mother (who later confessed she had been overjoyed on marriage to be changing her name from Beard) was worried for weeks - until it became apparent that I couldn't spell anything, which is probably why I chose that good English profession of journalism for a living.

When I was a trainee reporter on a college course, the entire class collapsed giggling when a girl from Devon produced a copy of the Tiverton Gazette with the immortal headline: 'Witheridge long wait for vicar'!

When finally allowed to write, I discovered the wrath of the sub-editor, who has the job of making stories fit pages. Plain Jane Smith could have her by-line on as many articles as she wished. Annette Witheridge, it seemed, caused problems.

A famous journalist once commented that you knew you had made it when you got a seat by the window and the sub-editors got your name right. Needless to say, I have not even made the window...

But despite everything I wouldn't change being a Witheridge for the world. Yes, I've been to Witheridge, photographed the signpost, bored the locals with tales and got terribly excited when I've discovered a namesake.

When I met Kim Cook, who has been painstakingly researching our history for years, I was like a child in a sweet shop. I couldn't get over the information she had gathered.

She suggested the Witheridge Society a few months ago and hasn't stopped working for it since. The first Witheridge Day on 4 May is just the start.

Among other things, we hope to bring you the Witheridge Times once every three months and that is where you, the readers, come in. I want to know all your news and views, your ideas, complaints and queries - in fact anything of Witheridge concern or interest.

Happy reading - and researching!

Annette Witheridge

Annette Witheridge

MAJOR WITHERIDGE SETTLEMENTS IN DEVON



Wetheridge Origins

by Kim Cook

Although I've never owned the name Wetheridge myself (it was my mother's maiden name), I've always thought it must be among the best of British surnames. Distinguished but not pompous, down-to-earth but not crude, uncommon enough to be interesting, but not rare enough to be odd, it's a good, sound English name. And it's ideal from a research point of view too, as the outline is readily spotted in even the most illegible of old documents.

But where does the name come from, what does it mean, and how do our families come to bear this fascinating name?

The word itself is Anglo-Saxon, but there has been some dispute about its meaning. Ridge presents no problems, coming from hrycg, meaning back, hump, or elevation, as in raised land or the pitch of a roof. The first part of the word has been said to mean either willow or castrated ram - quite a difference there!

So which is correct? Willows are certainly more elegant, but I believe the ram is more accurate, for three reasons.

Firstly, the Anglo-Saxon alphabet differed from ours in a number of ways. Instead of using the letters th, it had two distinct ways of showing that sound. One was the þ, often incorrectly read as a y, and still seen today in ye olde Englishe! The other was the letter ð, which also gave a th sound, although phonetically slightly different. In all the old Devonshire documents, Wetheridge appears either as Weðerige or, more rarely, Wiðerige. The word for ram was always written weðer, while that for willow was wipig.

Secondly, for hundreds of years the spellings of Wetheridge and Wetheridge were completely interchangeable, and in earlier times the Wetheridge spelling was slightly more common. While the Anglo-Saxon word for ram could

also be spelled either way, I have never seen any example of wrpig, or withy, spelled any other way.

Thirdly, both the Devonshire locations bearing this name are in areas where sheep farming was common, and where it was common practice to emasculate rams to prevent them from straying, leaving only a few entire for breeding.

There are in fact three locations linked with the name Witheridge. One is near the Berkshire/Buckinghamshire border, where there is still a Witheridge Hill. But in old documents this name is spelled Wip̄eridge, and apart from one isolated instance in the 13th century does not appear to have given its name to any family.

One of the Devon locations is the mid-Devon town that still bears our name, and where most of us have, at one time or other, stood by the signpost to have our photos taken! Originally, this was believed to have been the home of all the Witheridge families, who took the name of their home village with them when they migrated to other towns and villages.

However, looking at the map showing where Witheridges had settled, it seemed unlikely that people would have moved across Dartmoor to reach places like Wembury, Ermington, Kingsbridge and Plymouth. I then began to wonder whether there had been another place called Witheridge somewhere in South Devon.

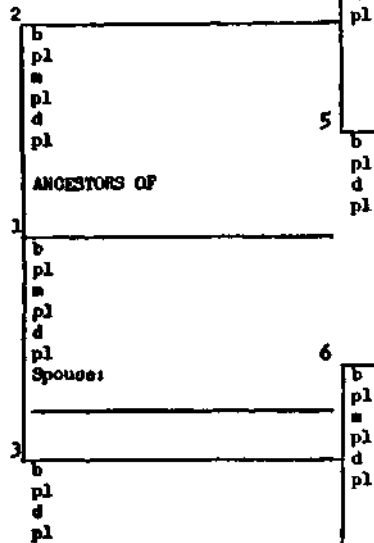
The story of that hunch, and the subsequent search for a missing Domesday manor is too long to be told here, but I now know that the manor of Witheridge stood on the cliffs above Jennycliff Bay, between Plymouth and Wembury. The manor has long since gone and, ironically, the original Anglo-Saxon Weðerige has changed over the years to the more elegant Withyhedge. But if you look at the 6-inch OS map of the area, you can still see a field bearing the name Withyhedge Brake.

So there we have the two sources for our surname, which suggest that we come from two quite different families. But were those families ever linked in any way, and if so can we prove it? That's another challenge!

GENEALOGICAL CHART - No _____

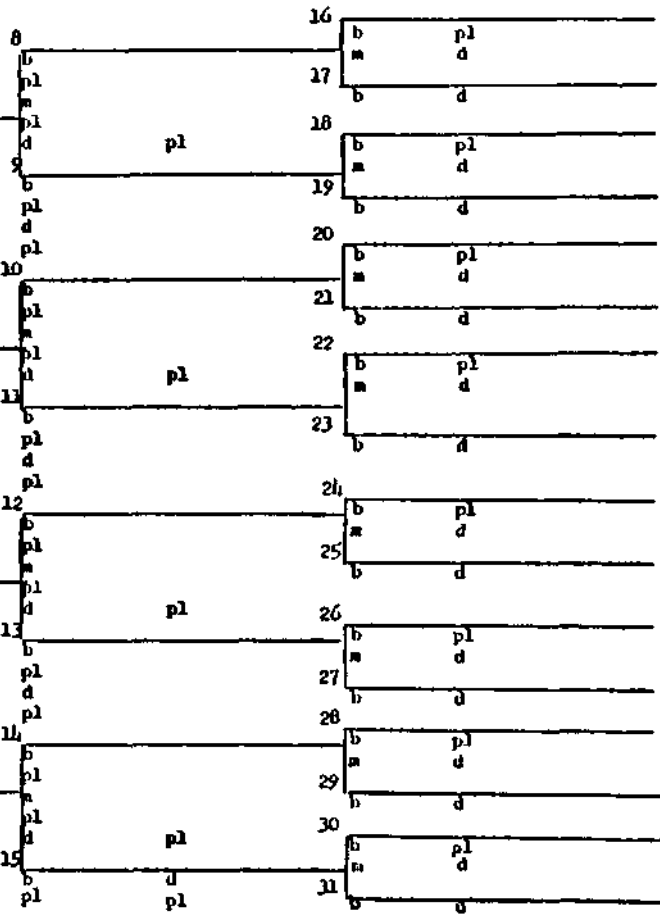
Abbreviations:

- b - born
- m - married
- d - died
- pl - place



No 1 on this chart is
the same person as No _____
on Chart No _____

Print or type all information.
Use reverse side for sources and additional data.



Identifying Relations

by Kim Cook

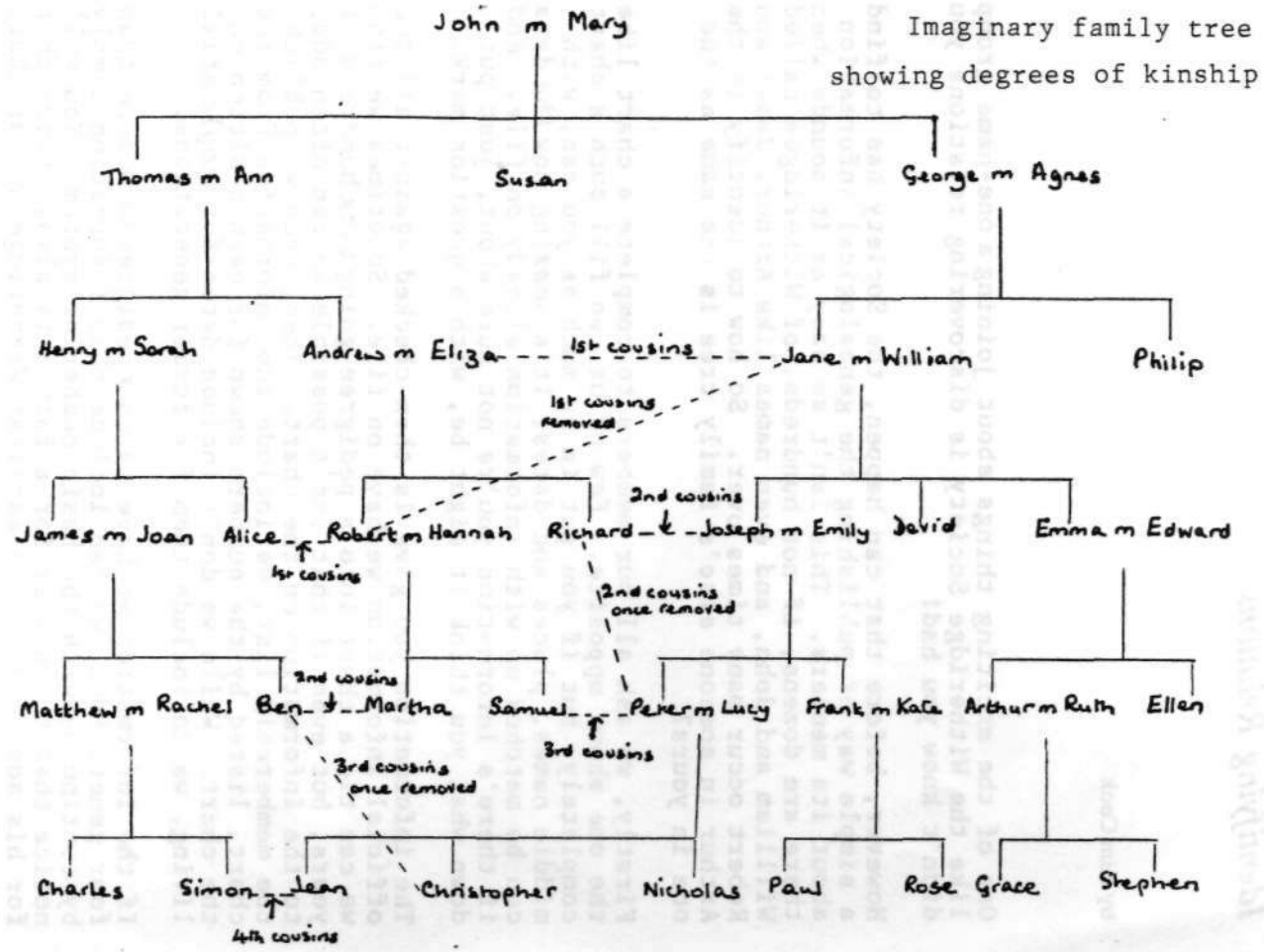
One of the exciting things about joining a one-name group like the Witheridge Society is discovering relations you didn't know you had!

However, before that can happen, the Society has to find a simple way of publishing the genealogical information about its members. This isn't as easy as it sounds when there are dozens, if not hundreds, of Witheridges called William and John, and even names like Arthur, James and Robert occur many times over. So how to identify if the Arthur in someone else's family tree is the same as the one in yours?

Firstly, we ask all our members to complete a chart like the one shown opposite. Few of us can fill such a chart completely, but if you put in as much as you can, with middle names, places and dates, it's amazing how the data can be matched up with information already on file. And if there's information you're not sure about, just put down what you think it might be, with a question mark.

The information you give is then checked against all the official information we have on file. Sometimes we find we can tie a chart into a pedigree going back hundreds of years, but even if that isn't possible we can often add to the information on the chart. Then, when we publish the membership list, we include the information from the chart, listed by the numbers shown for each position on the chart. While we don't include dates for people still living, we do include them for former generations.

If the information we have takes a pedigree back more than four generations, we can include this information simply by continuing with the basic numbering system. You will notice that the number for a father is always twice that for his son. So if the earliest Witheridge on your chart



is at number 16, but you also know the name of his father, then the father's number will be 32.

Where a chart has been extensively filled, we may not have room to include all the information on the female lines, so only the Witheridges and the people they married will be included. However, we may at a later date be able to publish a fuller directory of members' interests, from which it may emerge that some of our members could be related through female lines as well.

From the membership list published in this issue, you will see that already there are members that are related. But it may not be immediately obvious what that relationship is. And many people find working out degrees of relationship rather confusing. What is a second cousin once removed, for example?

Taking the information published in this list, let's look at how to work out these relationships.

Firstly you will note that members 001, 012 and 016 all share a similar ancestry. The first ancestors common to all three are William Henry Witheridge 1870-1939 and his wife Flora (née Marks). In charts 001 and 016 these are numbered 6 and 7, while in chart 012 they are numbered 4 and 5. Looking at the blank chart printed on an earlier page we see that 4 and 5 are paternal grandparents while 6 and 7 are maternal grandparents. These three members therefore have grandparents in common, which makes them first cousins.

Most people can work that out quite simply, but how can more distant relationships be calculated? And what if the related people are of different generations?

Opposite is an imaginary family tree showing five generations descended from the common ancestors, John and Mary. The dotted lines show the degrees of kinship.

To establish the relationship between two members of a family, follow the line of each one back till you reach a common pair of ancestors. Then from the common ancestors count the generations to the most senior of the two you are linking. The degree of kinship is the number of generations minus one. In this instance it is three gener-

continued on p 12

Membership List

- 001 Mrs Kim Cook
002 Mr Roy Cook
003 Mr Jason Cook
004 Mr Adam Cook
18 Hawkhurst Way, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9PF
1) Kim Celia Tracy Cook; 3) Marjorie Hilda Witheridge;
6) William Henry Witheridge 1870-1939; 7) Flora Laura
Annie Marks 1872-1934; 12) Edmund Witheridge 1849-1910;
13) Prudence White Barry 1849-1924; 24) Thomas Wither-
idge 1820-1859; 25) Mary Ann Garry 1820-1900; 48) Joseph
Witheridge 1788-1872; 49) Jane Bonney c1790-c1840.
Wembury 1600-1810; Plymouth 1810-1883; Fulham and
Kingston 1883-1963
- 005 Miss Annette Witheridge
Flat B, 2 Goring Road, Bounds Green, London N11.
1) Annette Ruth Witheridge; 2) Dennis Witheridge
1922-1979; 3) Ena Beard; 4) Arthur Witheridge 1887-
1946; 5) Ada Florence Welch 1889-1945; 8) Frederick
Witheridge.
Summerfield, Winson Green (Birmingham) and Sutton
Coldfield 1880-1985.
- 006 Mrs Joyce Browne
5 Greenhill Avenue, Luton, Beds LU2 7DN
1) Joyce Rose Browne; 2) Arthur Harry Witheridge;
3) Violet Mary Rose; 4) Francis Robert Witheridge
1853-1899; 5) Sarah Jane Curtis; 8) Robert Witheridge
1828-?; 9) Emma Shepperd 1828-?; 16) Robert Witheridge
1793-1851; 17) Ann Light 1803-1877; 32) Arthur Wither-
idge 1758-1848; 33) Elizabeth Bowden 1762-1839.
Ermington 1600-1810; Plymouth 1810-1860; Bournemouth,
Christchurch and Poole 1860-1910.
- 007 Mr Michael Witheridge
13 Lamorna Grove, Stanmore, Middx HA7 1PH
1) Michael Edwin Frank Witheridge; 2) Stanley Wither-
idge 1909-1958; 3) Phyllis Doreen Bishop; 4) Joseph
Witheridge c1881-1945; 5) Mabel Garland.
Plymouth and Cornwall 1880-1965.

- 008 Mr Philip H Witheridge
 009 Mrs Jean Witheridge
 010 Mr Philip P Witheridge
 011 Mr Simon R Witheridge
 The Paddocks, Gretton Fields, Nr Winchcombe,
 Cheltenham, Glos GL54 5HJ
 1) Philip Henry Witheridge; 2) Sidney Philip Wither-
 idge 1897-1971; 2) Winifred Emily Frederica Lund 1903-
 1982; 4) Philip Henry Witheridge 1873-?; 5) Rhoda
 Adelaide Mumford; 8) Philip Witheridge 1831-1912; 9)
 Sarah Harding 1834-?; 16) Philip Witheridge 1791-1872;
 17) Mary Northmore 1805-1880; 32) Arthur Witheridge
 1758-1848; 33) Elizabeth Bowden 1762-1839.
 Ermington 1600-1910; Plympton and Plymouth 1910-1940.
- 012 Mrs Brenda Dixon
 013 Mr Ron Dixon
 014 Miss Sarah Dixon
 015 Mr Richard Dixon
 21 Poplar Avenue, Crofton Heath, Orpington, Kent
 1) Brenda Anne Dixon; 2) William Edmund George Wither-
 idge 1899-1972; 3) Dorothy Victoria James; 4) William
 Henry Witheridge 1870-1939; 5) Flora Laura Annie Marks
 1872-1934; 8) Edmund Witheridge 1849-1910; 9) Prudence
 White Barry 1849-1924; 16) Thomas Witheridge 1820-1857;
 25) Mary Ann Garry 1820-1900; 48) Joseph Witheridge
 1788-1872; 49) Jane Bonney c1790-c1840.
 Wembury 1600-1810; Plymouth 1810-1883; Fulham and
 Kingston 1883-1935.
- 016 Mr Eric Pover
 9 Haven Close, Swanley, Kent BR8 7JY
 1) George Eric Stanley Pover; 2) George Pover; 3) Ethel
 Witheridge; 6) William Henry Witheridge 1870-1939; 7)
 Flora Laura Annie Marks 1872-1934; 12) Edmund Wither-
 idge 1849-1910; 13) Prudence White Barry 1849-1924;
 24) Thomas Witheridge 1820-1857; 25) Mary Ann Garry
 1820-1900; 48) Joseph Witheridge 1788-1872; 49) Jane
 Bonney c1790-c1840.
 Wembury 1600-1810; Plymouth 1810-1883; Fulham and
 Kingston 1883-1925.
- 017 Mr Gordon Witheridge
 018 Mrs Jane Billings
 019 Mr David Witheridge
 020 Mr Adrian Witheridge
 110 Bonney Road, Leicester LE3 9NH
 1) Gordon Witheridge; 2) Stanley Witheridge; 3) Phoebe
 Oliver; 4) John Northmore Witheridge 1845-1914; 5)

- Emma Louise Grigg (née Cowell); 8) Philip Witheridge 1791-1872; 9) Mary Northmore 1805-1880; 16) Arthur Witheridge 1758-1848; 17) Elizabeth Bowden 1762-1839. Ermington 1600-1880; Devonport and Plymouth 1880-1940.
- 021 Mr Richard Witheridge
 2 Apsley Road, Bath, Avon BA1 3LP
 1) Richard Henry Witheridge; 2) Henry Witheridge 1902-1979; 3) Alice Jenkins; 4) Philip Henry Witheridge 1873-1930; 5) Rhoda Adelaide Mumford 1876-1950; 8) Philip Witheridge 1831-1912; 9) Sarah Harding Ford 1834-1911; 16) Philip Witheridge 1791-1872; 17) Mary Northmore 1805-1880; 32) Arthur Witheridge 1758-1848; 33) Elizabeth Bowden 1762-1839.
 Ermington 1600-1950.
- 022 Mr Philip Hookway
 87 Chetwynd Drive, Nuneaton, Warks CV11 4TJ
 1) Philip Edgar Hookway; 3) Lilian Mabel Cole; 6) James Elias Cole 1875-1937; 7) Dorcas Mary Witheridge 1875-1947; 14) George Witheridge 1840-1913; 15) Dorcas Mary Hammett 1841-1905; 28) William Witheridge; 29) Mary Rolph.
 Kingsbridge, Thurlestone and West Alvington 1820-1860; Plymouth 1860-1900; Cardiff 1900-1950.

Identifying Relations - continued from p 9

ations from the common ancestor to Richard and Joseph, so they are second cousins.

However, if we look at the relationship between Richard and Peter, we can see immediately that they belong to different generations. We still follow the same method, taking generations minus one, until we reach the senior one. Then we count the number of generations the younger is removed from the older. Thus Richard and Peter are second cousins once removed, while Peter's children are second cousins twice removed to Richard.

Looking again at our membership list we can see no less than four families sharing similar ancestry in different degrees - members 006, 008, 017 and 021. Using the method outlined above, it's now quite easy to work out the various degrees of relationship between them. Can you do it? It'll be good practice for you before you have to work out some more when the next membership list is published, as I'm sure we'll find many more kinfolk there!

Useful Addresses

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Devon EX4 3PQ

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Plymouth
Devon PL4 0JW

Telephone 0752 26485

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Mrs P Witwicka
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14 Charterhouse Buildings
London EC1

Telephone 01-251 8799