



Volume 2

Number 1

Spring 1988

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Editorial

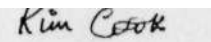
In the theatre I'd be called an understudy - someone who knows the part and has to step in when the principal isn't around. In this case our editor Annette isn't ill, fortunately, but she is jetting round the world in her new job, so I'm filling in for her.

Another difference in this issue is the production method. Previously everything had been produced on an electronic typewriter which, while it gave a good image, was very labour intensive. Every alteration or addition had to be re-typed and stripped in by hand. For this issue we have taken advantage of our Chairman, Phil Witheridge, and his word processor. Although the print quality may have suffered marginally, the enormous difference in production time, and the ability to store material for future use, is a tremendous advantage.

It's lovely, too, to be getting feedback from previous issues. We've had some very kind letters, and we're beginning to get articles sparked off by items published in previous issues. The first of these, from George Smith, is included in this issue.

If anything in Witheridge Times nudges your memory, or provokes your curiosity, do follow through. It's a real joy to get letters and/or articles from you, and it helps to make the magazine livelier.

Finally, I'm really looking forward to Witheridge Day on the 2 May at West Wickham. Last year's event was a great success, and we hope to meet many more of you this year. Full details are included with this magazine, but I would emphasise the election of officers for next year. Please do consider if there is any way, however small, in which you could help the Society. None of the offices is arduous, and helping to run the Society can be great fun. And don't forget to send in the forms so that we know how many are coming, and what exhibits (and food!) you're bringing. See you there!



Kim Cook.

Kilroy Witheridge was here

by Philip Witheridge

The men and women amongst us, who have spent time serving our country in one of Her Majesty's Services, will instantly recognise the name 'Kilroy'. For those who don't, I will explain.

When ever you made use of the toilet facilities on any of the service establishments you would almost certainly see the words, 'Kilroy was here', written on the wall. Kilroy must have been a much travelled and a much troubled man to have recorded his name so extensively.

Following on in this vein of thought, it is likely that there are a number of places regularly frequented by other Witheridges where one of us by our association with the place, has left his or her mark. It seems to me that a series of articles could be produced under the common theme of 'Kilroy Witheridge was here'. In each article one of us Witheridges could tell of their association with a place.

Perhaps I may be allowed to provide the first article in this series by recording my presence in Staffordshire, along what is now the route of the M6 motorway between junctions 11, 12 & 13. I was there before the motorway was constructed.

As you travel north on the motorway, the first landmark I draw your attention to is the Wheatsheaf Public House on the right hand side at junction 11. Here in 1948 our football team from Wedges Mills, which is just down the road a little further towards Cannock, played the squatters who had taken over the gun emplacement huts after the war. Our team won, or so we maintained at the time. The final score was disputed and had to be settled with our fists!

At the top of the next rise, I sweated in the hot wet summer of 1948. Here I worked in a field now covered by the motorway. The field in those days belonged to a Mr Kelsal of Great Sareden Farm. The crop was oats which had been flattened by heavy rain. My job was to walk in front of the tractor-drawn binder and lift the heads of grain above the cutting blade so that they weren't cut off and allowed to fall on the ground to be wasted.

Further down the rise I picked potatoes for another farcer, Mr Hadley. Again this field now lies under the motorway. For the full day's picking I got six old shillings and a terrible back ache.

Also here on the right hand side of the motorway is a small-holding which is now a pig farm. The people who worked it in 1949 would remember me as a lad bringing our nanny goats to be serviced by their billy.

The motorway junction 12 is at Gailey. All of this land, the lakes, and a lot more land on the right of the motorway belonged to Lord Hatherton. Yours truly in the winters of 1945 to 1948 earned the princely sum of between six and ten old shillings a day beating for Lord Hatherton and his invited guests, who shot the game we put up. I can still hear Mr Turvey the gamekeeper cursing and shouting at me, "Hey you **** in the white pants, get in line and rattle that stick". The white pants referred to were a pair of my father's first world war navy bellbottom trousers which came right up under my armpits as they were several sizes too large for me. They were however ideal for keeping out the thorns.

About a mile or so beyond the Gailey junction No. 12 and over to the right lies Pillaton Hall. I do not think it can be seen from the motorway as it lies at the bottom of a valley. This was once one of those religious establishments which I'm sure Cromwell knocked about a bit. Each autumn in the years 1944 to 1947, we Witheridges visited Pillaton Hall riding our bicycles to purchase a supply of apples which we stored and used throughout the winter months. I regularly over-indulged on the way home ending up with considerably less apples and the stomach-ache as well.

At junction 13, the A449 crosses the motorway. I regularly travelled along this road, going to work, to study and a-courting. In the winter of 1959, just to the left of the junction at Dunston, I amazed myself and some other road users by skidding on ice and turning my car around through a complete 360 degree turn, continuing on in the same direction without stopping.

Now whenever you travel along this stretch of the M6 motorway, between junctions 11 to 13, think of the Witheridge who once lived, loved and laboured here and who still calls this area his home.



In the early 1860s, as Fort Stamford was being built to defend Plymouth from the sea, it was found that the fort's guns could not be brought to bear down into Jennycliff bay. A gang of Irish navvies was set to work taking off the top of the hill in front of the fort. It was then that an Iron Age burial-ground was found. It is being suggested that the lost Wetheridge Manor was also situated in the area.

Research Report

by Kin Cook

Once again we have good progress to report. Thanks to Joyce Browne's continuing efforts we have now completed the GRO transcripts for births 1837-1968, marriages 1837-1970 and deaths 1837-1985. The next step will be to transcribe the miscellaneous indexes, showing events that took place overseas but were registered with the British authorities. Many a 'missing' entry can be found in these volumes.

A start has been made on transcribing the index of PPR wills, but there is still much to be done. If anyone is planning a visit to Somerset House, do please let me know. I can then advise on which entries have already been noted, thus avoiding duplicated work. If everyone who visits Somerset House could copy a few extra entries while there, it would be a great help.

Likewise, if anyone is taking a holiday in the West Country, or anywhere else where there have been Witheridge settlements, do let me know, as there may be records which you could explore on a rainy day.

One such place that has been very thoroughly researched is Ermington. Here Richard Witheridge has been very busy, and has produced an excellent article with accompanying maps. This will be published soon in Witheridge Times.

I should emphasise that in all our research we are looking at all the variant spellings of Witheridge and Wetheridge. Even for one individual, the name can be spelled in five or six different ways in various documents. We don't as yet have any Wetheridge members, but I hope some will soon be joining us. In the meantime, don't forget the Wetheridges when you're checking local directories.

The certificate bank is working well, and we have already supplied many copy certificates to members. Additions are listed in this issue. If any members have certificates that are not already in our research bank, please can you send photocopies to Joyce Browne.

It is beginning to look as though some members, not related in the Witheridge line, may in fact be related through female lines. It would help if members could supply details of all names being researched, with dates and locations.

The Ermington Family

by Kim Cook

I must admit that I approached this feature on the Ermington branch of the Witheridge family with mixed feelings of pleasure and apprehension. The pleasure comes from writing about a family that I first researched in great detail some fourteen years ago, and whose members I have come to know in increasing numbers during the years since then. The apprehension arises from coping with the complicated nature of the family tree and its intricacies, particularly as so many of our members are descended from this family.

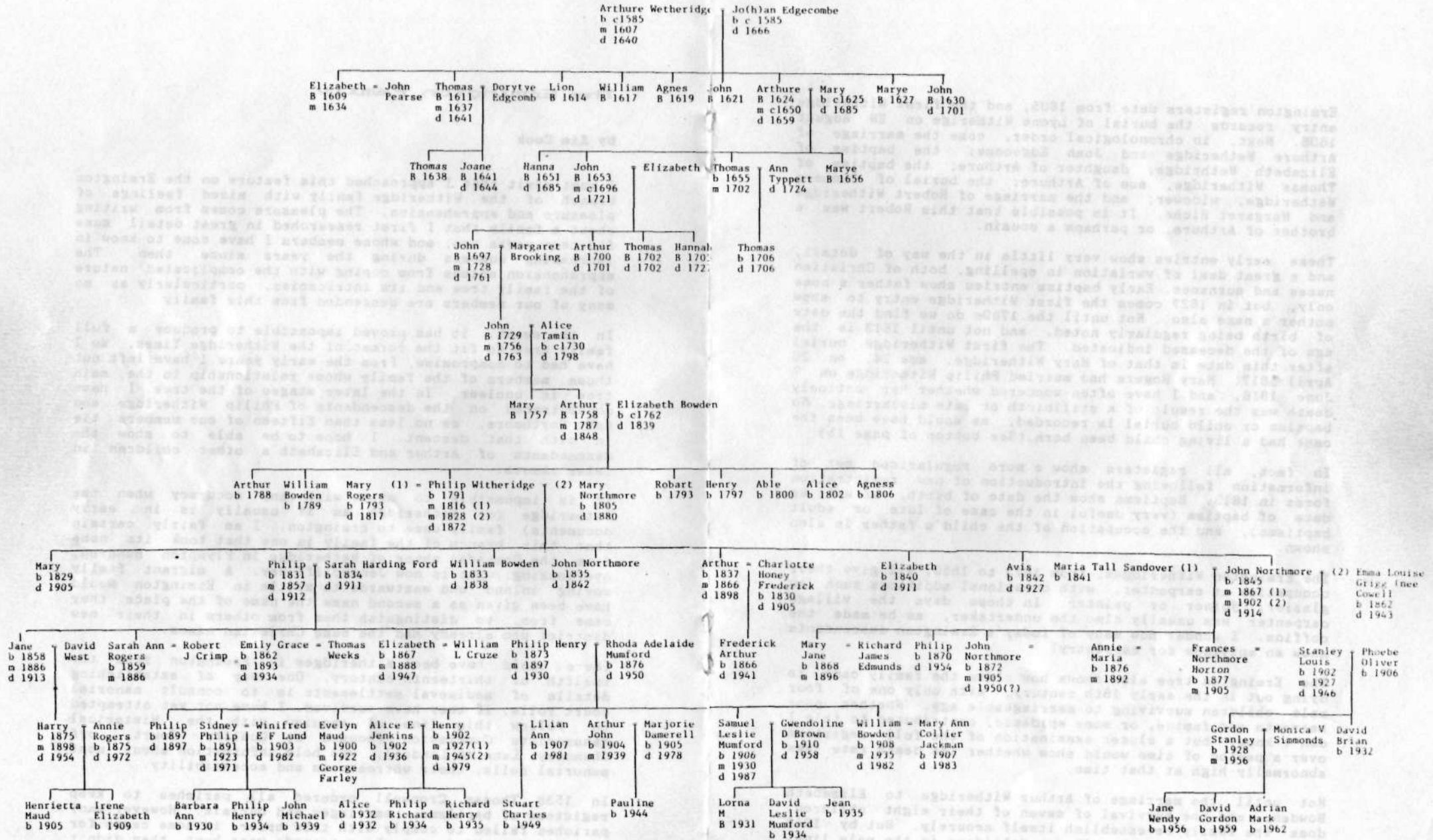
In the event, it has proved impossible to produce a full family tree to fit the format of the Witheridge Times, so I have had to compromise. From the early years I have left out those members of the family whose relationship to the main tree is unclear. In the later stages of the tree I have concentrated on the descendants of Philip Witheridge and Mary Northmore, as no less than fifteen of our members tie in with that descent. I hope to be able to show the descendants of Arthur and Elizabeth's other children in later issues.

It is impossible to state with any accuracy when the Witheridge (or Wetheridge as it usually is in early documents) family came to Ermington. I am fairly certain that this branch of the family is one that took its name from the Domesday manor of Wetheridge in Plympton Hundred, overlooking what is now Jennycliff Bay. A migrant family moving inland and eastwards to settle in Ermington would have been given as a second name the name of the place they came from, to distinguish them from others in their new district who already had the same Christian names.

There could have been Witheridges in Ermington from the twelfth or thirteenth century. One way of establishing details of medieval settlements is to consult manorial court rolls, if they have survived. I have not yet attempted to follow this line of enquiry with the Historical Manuscripts Commission (housed at Quality Court, off Chancery Lane in London), who hold information about most manorial rolls, their whereabouts and accessibility.

In 1538 Thomas Cromwell ordered all parishes to keep registers of baptisms, marriages and burials. However many parishes failed to comply with this order, in some cases for many decades. And even where records were kept, they didn't always survive.

The Ermington Family Tree



Ermington registers date from 1605, and the first Witheridge entry records the burial of Lyone Witherige on 29 August 1606. Next, in chronological order, come the marriage of Arthure Wetheridge and Joan Edgecome; the baptism of Elizabeth Wethridge, daughter of Arthure; the baptism of Thomas Witheridge, son of Arthure; the burial of Richard Wetheridge, widower; and the marriage of Robert Witheridge and Margaret Riche. It is possible that this Robert was a brother of Arthure, or perhaps a cousin.

These early entries show very little in the way of detail, and a great deal of variation in spelling, both of Christian names and surnames. Early baptism entries show father's name only, but in 1627 comes the first Witheridge entry to show mother's name also. Not until the 1780s do we find the date of birth being regularly noted, and not until 1813 is the age of the deceased indicated. The first Witheridge burial after this date is that of Mary Witheridge, age 24, on 20 April 1817. Mary Rogers had married Philip Witheridge on 7 June 1816, and I have often wondered whether her untimely death was the result of a stillbirth or late miscarriage. No baptism or child burial is recorded, as would have been the case had a living child been born. (See bottom of page 15)

In fact, all registers show a more regularised set of information following the introduction of new registration forms in 1813. Baptisms show the date of birth, as well as date of baptism (very useful in the case of late or adult baptisms), and the occupation of the child's father is also shown.

The Ermington Witheridges, from 1813 to 1850, all give their occupation as carpenter, with occasional additions such as glazier, joiner or painter. In those days the village carpenter was usually also the undertaker, as he made the coffins. I wonder how many of today's Ermington descendants show an aptitude for carpentry?

The Ermington tree also shows how close the family came to dying out in the early 18th century, with only one of four male children surviving to marriageable age. Whether poor harvests and famine, or some epidemic, contributed to this I don't know, but a closer examination of the full registers over a period of time would show whether the death rate was abnormally high at that time.

Not until the marriage of Arthur Witheridge to Elizabeth Bowden, and the survival of seven of their eight children, does the family re-establish itself securely. But by 1845 they had had no less than 35 grandchildren in the male line, and I am still trying to calculate the number of their descendants scattered throughout the country today.

Family News

Welcome

With this issue we welcome the first transatlantic members of the Witheridge Society, David and Elizabeth Witheridge of Minneapolis. It is fitting that they should be the first, for David has been a prime mover in Witheridge research for over 25 years, and he has been the means of bringing many of us into contact with each other.

Moreover, we are delighted that we can make that welcome a very personal one, for David and Elizabeth will be visiting the UK from mid-May to mid-June. Sadly, their commitments in the USA make it impossible for them to be with us on Witheridge Day, but they will be visiting a number of our members on their travels, and it may be possible to arrange an informal Witheridge get-together before they return home.

Promotion

Our congratulations go to our Secretary Annette Witheridge who recently landed a super new job. Having written in the first issue of the Witheridge Times that 'you knew you had made it when you got a seat by the window and the sub-editors got your name right, Annette has really made it with her appointment as pop music editor for a national daily paper. Judging from the by-lines (yes they do get her name right!) the seat by the window is in an aeroplane, as she's sending stories from all over Europe, and as far as the USA and Japan.

Congratulations

Our congratulations go to our Chairman Philip and his wife Jean who have become grandparents for the fourth time. Daughter Karen Ruth and son-in-law John Colley have a son, Jamie Anthony John, a brother for Darren, Donna and Heather.

Condolences

We send our condolences to Roy and Kim Cook on the sudden death of Roy's mother in January. This took place within 36 hours of the Witheridge reunion at their home, and contributed to the delay in sending the postal copies of the last issue of the Witheridge Times.

We also send our condolences to the family of Samuel Leslie ? Mumford, who died on the 27 November 1987 aged 81. Sam, the son of Philip and Rhoda Witheridge, was born, raised and went to school in Ermington. He trained to be a teacher at St Lukes College Exeter, taught at a school in South Molton and later at Plympton Secondary School. He was a keen sportsman, playing football and cricket, and in later life, bowls. He was also an accomplished landscape painter.

Bene Atkinson

Witheridge Day & AGM

As we approach the first anniversary of the founding of the Witheridge Society, preparations for another Witheridge Day and our Annual General Meeting, to be held on Bank Holiday Monday, 2 May 1988, are well under way.

While it would have been nice to have had our meeting in Devon, considerations of time and budget have made this impossible. Those who attended the inaugural meeting last year have expressed their satisfaction with last year's venue, and so we have again booked the facilities at St Francis Church Hall, Ravenswood Avenue, West Wickham, Kent.

We open at 10.15am for registration and coffee (or tea), and the meeting will close by 6pm. As we are particularly anxious that no-one should feel excluded on grounds of cost, we are making no charge to members. However, we are asking everyone to bring a dish or plate of food (sweet or savoury) that can be shared at lunch time. We do have good kitchen facilities, and can cope with dishes that need defrosting and/or reheating. Tea and coffee will be provided on arrival, at lunchtime and mid-afternoon (with soft drinks for children), and if members would like to contribute to these costs and the hire of the hall, there will be an opportunity to do so, on a purely voluntary basis.

The Witheridge Society is a family society, and Bank Holidays are family days, so we do want whole families, including young children, to feel welcome. However, some sections of the programme are not geared for young children, so we have planned an alternative programme with swimming (10.45am-12 noon) and a visit to a local park (2.15pm-4pm). Adults may also opt for this programme if they prefer.

As last year, we will be mounting a display of maps, family trees, photos, documents and memorabilia, so if you have any items of interest, do please bring them with you.

The Annual General Meeting will start at 2.15pm, and should be finished within an hour. The Agenda is given at the bottom of page 13 following. Nominations for officers for election may be sent to the Chairman in advance, or given to him in writing by 12.30pm on the day of the meeting.

A leaflet giving fuller information and directions is enclosed with this issue of the magazine. Please can everyone return the tear-off slip so that we know how many are coming, and what food and exhibits they are bringing.

GRO Certificates Held

<u>Christian Name(s)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Via</u>
<u>Birth</u>			
Cecil Frank	28.09.1893	Christchurch	006
Edmund	21.04.1849	Plymouth	001
Emily	01.10.1846	Combmartin	001
George	28.09.1858	Newington	006
James	04.01.1849	Ilfracombe	001
Lenna Beatrice	21.04.1849	Plymouth	001
<u>Marriage</u>			
Abel	08.01.1838	E. Stonehouse	006
Alice Emily	25.12.1913	Pancras	023
Charlotte	27.03.1838	Poole	006
Cyril (Cecil) Frank	12.10.1940	Saffron Walden	006
Edmund	18.10.1870	Stoke Damerel	001
Henry	09.06.1945	Totnes	021
Marjorie Hilda	28.07.1934	Fulham	001
Olive Prudence	22.06.1915	Kingston	001
Robert	05.03.1843	E. Stonehouse	006
William Bowden	04.05.1935	Ermington	021
<u>Death</u>			
Joseph	07.01.1872	Plymouth	001
Joseph William	02.04.1854	Plymouth	001
Philip Henry	14.01.1930	Plymouth	021
Rhoda Adelaide	11.12.1950	Plympton St Mary	021
Thomas	08.09.1857	Plymouth	001

To order a copy of any certificates you need, send £1 per copy to Joyce Browne. (Address given inside the front cover).

Agenda for Annual General Meeting

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Minutes of inaugural meeting
- 3) Matters arising
- 4) Chairman's report
- 5) Secretary's report
- 6) Membership Secretary's report
- 7) Treasurer's report
- 8) Election of officers
- 9) Plans for future activities
- 10) Any other business

Remembering

by George Smith

The article 'We will Remember Them' in the last issue of the Witheridge Times really stirred some memories for me, as both the Witheridges who died in World War I were from my branch of the family. Indeed, had Frederick John Witheridge not died, I might never have been born!

My mother, Ellen Frances Witheridge, was the youngest child of George Causey Witheridge. George had a younger brother Harry, who emigrated to New South Wales, where he lived with his wife Annie and son Frederick John. I believe Harry and Annie died quite young, and Frederick came back to England to rejoin the rest of the family.

Back in England he met and fell in love with his cousin Ellen. War was in progress, and Frederick John had joined the Royal Navy, serving on HMS Amethyst. Courting was restricted to letters and leave-times, which were very brief. The couple became engaged, and on his last leave they were so busy making the final wedding arrangements that Frederick John was late back to his ship.

In fact, by the time he got back to port, the Amethyst had sailed, and he was put on board the Vanguard instead. This ship was blown up at Scapa Flow on 9 July 1917, and he was killed. It has been said that the Vanguard was sabotaged, but I am going to do a bit more research on this.

I have in my possession two beautiful pictures printed on silk. One, of my mother, has been copied from a photograph which still exists. The other is of Frederick John in naval uniform. The pictures appear to be of oriental origin, so perhaps Frederick John had them made while in an eastern port. I wonder if they were a Christmas or even an engagement present for my mother?

At the Witheridge reunion in January, Kim Cook suggested that I contact "the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as they keep records of the burials and/or memorials of all the British war dead. I wrote straight away and they replied promptly, giving me some very useful information.

Frederick John died on 9 July 1917, age 26, and is commemorated on Panel 23 of the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent. This is one of the Naval Memorials commemorating those Naval casualties who have no grave but the sea. The CWGC records confirm that he was the son of the late Harry and Annie Elizabeth Witheridge of New South Wales.

I also asked about the other cousin George, and they told me that he died on 1 July 1916 while serving with 9 Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. After the war the Army Graves Service was unable to locate his grave, and he is therefore commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, about eight kilometres north-east of Albert in France.

A little more research showed that George died on the first day of the battle of the Somme, which was probably the worst day ever for battle casualties. At evening roll-call on that dreadful day, British units alone Registered some 57,000 less men than had been present at the morning roll-call. Of these, about 20,000 were dead. Many of the wounded did not recover. It is hardly surprising that George's grave could not be located, when the battle raged back and forth over the same ground for two months.

In fact over 70,000 of the British soldiers who fought and died in the Somme area have no known grave and are therefore commemorated at Thiepval. The men of the Devonshire Regiment, including George, are commemorated on Pier 1, Face C of the memorial.

Sadly, the war to end all wars did not live up to its title, and some of those who survived World War I did not survive World War II. Although ours was the only branch of the Witheridge family to sustain losses in World War I, losses in World War II were probably spread more widely, particularly as there were so many civilian casualties. Among these were my mother's sister Alice Emily Witheridge and her husband Stephen Taylor. They were both killed in their home at 175 Grafton Road, Kentish Town, in an air-raid on 19 February 1944.

Grave stone inscription from Ermington church yard

Mary wife of Philip died 16.4.1817 age 24.
In childbed I was called away, I could no longer stay.
Because it was my savior's will, to call me hence away.
Philip died 29.1.1872 age 82

Supplied by Richard Witheridge.

Membership List

We welcome the following new members to the Society

- 042 Rev David E Witheridge
043 Mrs Elizabeth Witheridge
2425 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minn 55405, USA
1)David Edward Witheridge; 2)William Allen Witheridge;
3)Edith Sophia Nemitz; 4)William Witheridge 1856-1935;
5)Mary Jane Allen; 8)John Witheridge 1828-1905; 9)Clara
Blackmore; 16)Edward Witheridge 1795-1860; 17)Mary
Gear; 32)George Witheridge 1766-1860; 33)Mary
Nor(th)cott;
Combmartin 1500-1875; S Wales 1875-1888; USA 1888-1988.
- 044 Mr John M Witheridge
045 Mrs Mayda Witheridge
046 Mr Colin Witheridge
047 Miss April Witheridge
048 Miss Cheryl Witheridge
6 Nore Close, Darland, Gillingham, Kent ME7 3DG.
1)John Michael Witheridge; 2)Sidney Philip Witheridge
1897-1971; 3)Winifred Emily Frederica Lund 1903-1982;
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 1600-1910; Plympton & Plymouth 1910-1940.
- 049 Mr Christopher R Witheridge
050 Mrs Pamela Witheridge
051 Miss Heather Witheridge
052 Miss Amy Witheridge
053 Master Dale Witheridge
6 Manton Drive, Luton, Beds LU2 7DH.
1)Christopher Roger Witheridge; 2)Stanley R Witheridge;
4)George Henry Witheridge 1864-1966; 5)Sarah Amy
Warren; 8)George Causey Witheridge 1851-1931; 9)Margaret
Rumsey; 16)George Causey Witheridge 1836-1901?; 17)Mary
Ann Bussell; 32)William Witheridge 1791-1870; 33)Fanny
Elizabeth Causey 1799-1850.
Northern 1790-1850; Pancras & Marylebone 1850-1930.
- We wish to apologise for errors in the details for Col
Anthony Witheridge and family in our last membership list.
Their address & details of descent are;
c/o FCO (Brasilia), King Charles Street, London SW1.
1)Anthony Gilbert Witheridge; 2)George Albert Charles
Witheridge; 3)Constance Gilbert; 4)George Henry
Witheridge 1884-1966; 5)Sarah Amy Warren; 8)George
Causey Witheridge 1851-1931; 9)Margaret Rumsey;
16)George Causey Witheridge 1836-1901?; 17)Mary Ann
Bussell; 32)William Witheridge 1791-1870; 33)Fanny
Elizabeth Causey 1799-1879;
Northam 1790-1850; Pancras & Marylebone 1850-1930.

Useful Addresses

Devon Record Office
Castle Street
Exeter
Devon EX4 3PQ Telephone 0392 53509

West Devon Record Office
Clare Place
Coxside
Plymouth
Devon PL4 OJW Telephone 0752 26485

Devon Family History Society
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