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E D I T O R I A L

Greetings from the United Kingdom, where we are having one of the hottest summers on record, and some parts of the country, the south-west among them, are suffering a water shortage.

In days gone by, Sir Francis Drake provided the initiative and the money to have a conduit made to channel water down from Dartmoor to the City of Plymouth. Oh for another Sir Francis to galvanise our authorities into action!

I am always hoping that we shall discover family connections with the Devonshire heroes of the past.

We are researching three Witheridge naval captains of Oliver Cromwell's navy. Two of these men we have mentioned previously, but we are increasing our efforts to know more about them, and if possible link them to our present families.

In this edition we have a research success story from Kathy Witheridge, and an article from a new contributor - the Rev. David Witheridge of Minneapolis, U.S.A. David is an early member of the Society, and his discoveries and painstaking notes have formed the basis of much of our present knowledge. The family tree in this issue is the result of John's searching - he never tires!

Recently, with the co-operation and active help of the Society, one of our members traced a long lost relative. We felt this to be worthy of congratulation and rejoicing, but our pleasure was not mutual, as the relative had no desire to be 'found'.

For strong personal reasons the relative does not wish to have any connection or contact with the family.

This highlights a dilemma which can confront the searcher. Should we not turn the page for fear of what we may read - not knock on the door for fear of the response from within?

If we stop searching we lose some of the reasons for associating together as Witheridges, but if we persist we must expect the occasional rebuff. Above all we must not let our persistence cause pain to others, we must proceed with tact and understanding, and be prepared to retreat before we cause distress.

Happy reading!

THE OTHER WITHERIDGES

by David E. Witheridge

Many of you know that my wife Elizabeth has Alzheimer's disease, and that she fell and broke her hip over three years ago. She never fully recovered her mobility, and I have been her caregiver at home since then. Now she has been moved permanently to a nursing home, and she has adjusted very well.

One result is, that after a long break, I have now begun to look again at my genealogical materials. In this process I have been reminded of our three trips to Britain and the wonderful people we met and the places we saw.

On our first trip in 1976 we discovered in a large gazeteer two other places named Witheridge, besides the well-known village in Devon. One was Witheridge Hill in the far southeast corner of Oxfordshire, and the other was Witheridge Farm near East Ogwell in Devon.

The only one we could manage to see in 1976 was Witheridge Hill (N 51°33'/ W 0°59'). Somehow, in late afternoon we found it in the midst of the most beautiful rolling, wooded countryside, several miles north of Reading and just a few miles west of Henley-on-Thames. We drove up the hill, and at the top we came to several handsome houses - one with the name 'Witheridge Hill Cottage' painted on the gate, and another made into a charming house from a century old school house.

We talked to the woman in the first house, but she said they knew nothing about the history of Witheridge Hill or where it had gotten its name. Then we went to the second house, and a very pleasant woman invited us in to talk about the hill. She said she and her mother had bought the redundant school house ten years earlier and had it redone into their lovely home. However, she didn't know how the hill had come by its name, either. She kindly took us for a walk to see the rest of the hill, but we left still wondering where the name had come from.

In 1980 on our second trip to Britain we were able to look for Witheridge Farm (N 50°31'/ W 3°39'). We were spending two weeks in a cottage on the University of Exeter campus, and on the Sunday of the August Bank Holiday we drove to Newton Abbot and on to East Ogwell. As we travelled down a typical Devon one-lane road, where banks covered with hedges came right down to the edge of the road, we came to a sign

on a side road that said "Witheridge - Private Road". I turned to Elizabeth and said, "Well, I don't know who has a better right than I have to go down that road!"

We drove on another one lane road through lovely woods and finally arrived at a fence and gate in front of a very attractive house. The sign on the gate said 'Witheridge House' As we approached the house a dog barked, and a man came out to greet us. We told him who we were and why we had come. He said his name was John Usher, and we went in to meet his wife Jane and their two children. John was a professor at the Seal-Hayne Agricultural College near Newton Abbot, just across the valley.

He said their place is called Witheridge House, and farther on toward a little river is an older house called Witheridge Farm. We decided not to go on to the other place. John said that the whole area had always been known as Witheridge Farm, but he hadn't been able to find anyone who knew its history.

While Jane and Elizabeth were preparing coffee and refreshments, John took me to the edge of the valley looking across the river, where I took a picture of the green Devon fields on the other side, separated by the typical hedgerows. What a beautiful sight! It's no wonder some Witheridge of long ago decided to establish a farm there.

We hated to leave such a delightful family and such a lovely setting, but we promised to let them know if we discovered any information about the origin of the farm. Unfortunately, my examination of the East Ogwell parish register at the County Record Office failed to show any Witheridges, so the period of their residence there must have pre-dated the start of the register. Maybe they were in the West Ogwell parish, if there was one, because they were slightly closer to West Ogwell.

When I began thinking about writing this article, I called the University of Minnesota map library and asked one of the librarians if he could find these small Witheridge places on large scale maps and send me photocopies. He called a little later and said he had found seven places called Witheridge on the Ordnance Survey maps, and he would send me copies showing all of them!

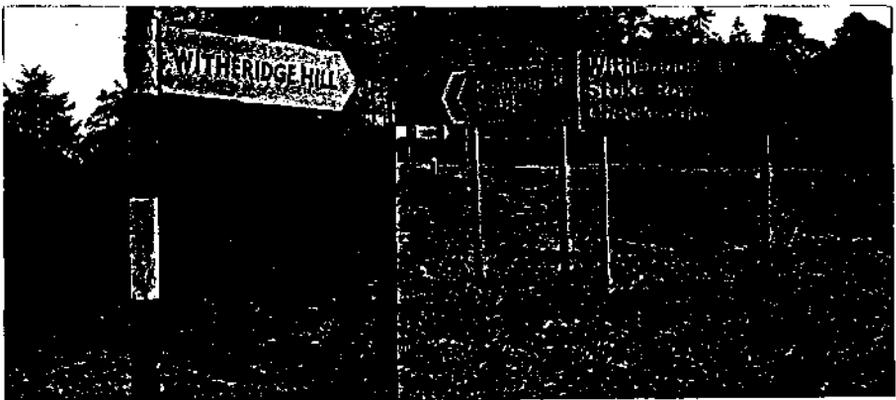
First, of course, was the village we all know in Devon, (N 50°55' / W 3°42'). Next was Witheridge Moor (N 50°55' / W 3° 37') about three miles east of Witheridge, which I had noticed on the map, but had never taken the time to go and

see. The third place was Witheridge Moor Farm (N 50°55'/ W 3° 37') straight south of Witheridge Moor and very close to it - just across the road. The fourth place, also in Devon, was the place I have been calling Witheridge Farm near East Oggwell, which on the Ordnance Survey map is just called Witheridge (N 50°31'/ W 3°39').

The fifth place was Witheridge Farm (N 51 6'/ W3 32' in Somerset. This is just east of the north-south road between Dulverton and Dunster, straight east of Winsford and West Howetown on the way toward Huckham. The sixth was Witheridge Hill in Oxfordshire, described above. The seventh place was Witheridge Wood in Buckinghamshire. This is north of Beaconsfield on the road to Hazlemere between Knotty Green and Penn. On the map it seems to be on both sides of the road.

I believe Kim told me over the phone that she and Roy had visited a Witheridge Cottage in or near Newton Ferrers, Devon. That would be eight places, and there are probably a few more that don't show up on the maps.

Since I'm too old and far away, I hope some other Witheridge descendants will have the curiosity and ingenuity some day to discover the origins of these other Witheridge places.



~~~~~  
: EDITOR'S NOTE :  
: :  
: Since receiving the article "The Other Witheridges" we :  
: have had the sad news that David's wife, Elizabeth, died :  
: unexpectedly on Tuesday, 9th August. David has given :  
: permission for the article to be printed as it was, and :  
: we expect to include an appreciation of the life of :  
: Elizabeth Plumb Witheridge in a later edition. :  
~~~~~

WELCOMBE

by John Witheridge

No, my spelling has not deteriorated in the last few weeks, though I could have made the title more obvious by saying "Welcome to Welcombe", the village in Devon so close to the Cornish border that the fishes swimming in the high reaches of the Tamar are probably more conscious of their Devon or Cornish heritage than the villagers themselves.

"Welcombe" - what a good name to call the place you live. Surely the name says it all? We are actually concerned with the hamlet of Upcott in the parish of Welcombe. Upcott is situated on the hills overlooking the Marsland water which forms the northern boundary of Cornwall. This boundary river rises at Welcombe Cross, just two miles to the east, which has been populated it seems for ever. This is proven by the discovery of a tumulus at a height of 235 feet above sea level indicating the presence of a fortified dwelling or village in prehistoric days. This whole area is probably five/six miles north of the source of the Tamar. A clue to the origins of the family we are about to cover, can be derived from the fact that Bradworthy is only eight to ten miles away.

I wonder if our Witheridge ancestors felt welcome in this rugged and high coastal area of Devon? In fact I am sure they did not. Here is a quote from a letter I received from a modern day parish councillor of this same area - Mr. D.H. O'Dell, secretary, St. Nectane Church, Welcombe:- "in the rather unfriendly weather of North Devon, our houses, our church, and the people here about need constant fortification against the fierce onslaught in this highly exposed position..." Let me also quote a few lines to you from two memorial inscriptions in the churchyard at Welcombe. Then you can pore over the meaning for yourselves.

Plot BG059

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Affectionate Remembrances | also in memory of |
| of | Thomas, |
| Ann Witheridge | Beloved Son of |
| The Beloved wife of | Thomas and Ann Witheridge |
| Thomas Witheridge | who died 31st Jan 1887 |
| of Upcott in this Parish | aged 31 years |
| who died 27th March 1889 | |
| aged 73 years | |

"All their earthly journey rest,
Every tear and pain gone by
Here together met at last
By the portal of the Sky"

On another stone in the Churchyard: Plot BG061

In loving memory of
 John
 The Beloved son of
 Thomas and Ann Witheridge
of Upcott, in this Parish
Who died 2nd April, 1893
aged 33 years

"Peace perfect peace
Death shadowing us and our
Jesus has vanquished death,
And all its power"

I make a point of that line: "Death shadowing us and our".
What could it mean - not the usual line that one would
expect to read on a headstone? Surely a little more pointed
than the normal acceptable verse used in these
circumstances? There must be a meaning in this line.

Look at the family tree. Is it enough for Thomas
Witheridge, husband and father, to lose those members of his
family in short succession, so he commissions the above
inscriptions? If so the man must have been distraught, and
full of pain to lose his sons who were born to him and Ann
so late in life. Ann would have been 39 when son Thomas was
born and 44 years when John was born. Sons born so late in
life were probably the apples of their parents' eyes. Then
- death, death, death.

The detail above was posted to me by Mrs. Albertina Rossiter
(Betty) while on holiday in Devon in the first week of
August, 1994. Betty carried out a similar operation last
year which led to me finding many new references and dates
for our north Devon families. Thank you Betty.

Shortly after receiving Betty's letter I wrote to Mr. O'Dell and he posted to me confirmation of all that Betty had written, plus more. He sent three copies of the burial registers showing the burials of Ann, Thomas and John, also the plan of the burial ground with the three graves marked, and a plan of the church.

Thomas and Ann Witheridge - where do we find them? Try the magazine, Volume 5 No.1 Spring 1991, on the centre fold pages. Remember, the years we are searching are 1887/89/93. Thomas Witheridge, born 1816, married Ann Moore 1841, and died in 1899, aged 83, in the Bideford registration area of north Devon, not many years after his beloved Ann. Thomas was great uncle to Member Ruby Jackman née Witheridge, of Canada.

Thomas was also brother to John Witheridge, born 1821, Bradworthy, who was the last Witheridge to live and die in this same town in Devon. John died in 1901 at the age of 80 years.

In the Bradworthy family tree of 1991 you will note that we have only three children listed to Thomas W., and Ann Moore. The Welcombe registers have just revealed two more children, so where have the other two names appeared from? These were sent to the Witheridge Society by member the Reverend David Witheridge as part of his original research into this family, but I found dates as follows (not knowing about the original references from David) Let me outline this last statement: Our St. Catherine's House indexes for births gives us the following:-

1855 December quarter Thomas Witheridge Bideford 5b 456

1860 June quarter John Witheridge Bideford 5b 493
(Agreeing with the Welcombe registers)

It seemed very odd to me that in the years 1846 to 1855, from the year when Susan was born until Thomas arrived on the scene, no other children were attributed to this family, especially as in the St. Catherine's House birth indexes we have several entries where we are not sure of the parentage.

These are listed in order of years:

1848 June quarter Susan Emily Witheridge ** Bideford X 60

1848 Dec. quarter Sarah Jane Witheridge Bideford X 56

(After further research and information I found that Sarah Jane was the daughter of Thomas and Ann, which makes it unlikely (because of the proximity of the dates of birth) that Susan Emily was a child of this family.)

1849 June quarter George Witheridge Bideford X 67

(We now know that this is not a child of Thomas and Ann)

1851 March quarter Elizabeth Ann Witheridge++ Bideford X 70

(Confirmed by David's records that Elizabeth was the child of Thomas and Ann)

1851 June quarter Emily Jane Witheridge Bideford X 62

(The closeness of this birth to the preceding one seems to rule out this birth)

1853 June quarter Margaret Witheridge Bideford 5b 506

1857 Dec. quarter Emma Jane Witheridge Bideford 5b 485

(We do not know where to place these last two births, though possible both could fit into this family)

** Died June 1848 Bideford

++ Died Dec. 1926 aged 76 years Bideford

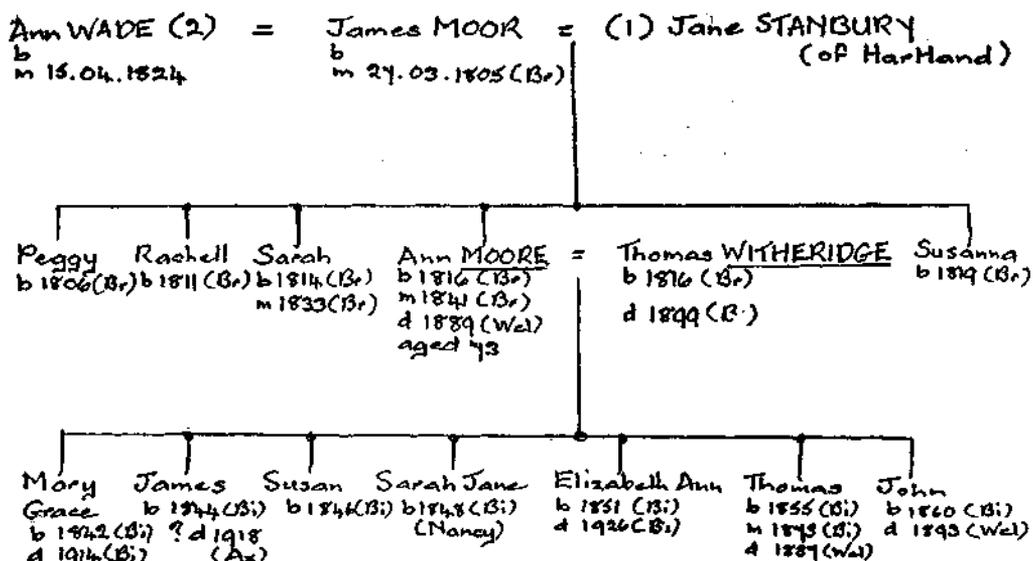
I am sure that this extension to our Bradworthy tree will warrant further research into the English side of this family. It may be found that we still have descendants of this family living in this country who are unknown to us. It is possible that there was issue from the marriage of Thomas in 1873 or possibly a further family line from the George who was born in 1849.

As an extra, to add more depth to the family tree, I have covered some of the preceding generations of the Moore family, which will be of great interest to the Bradworthy family. For those of you who would like to know more about the families who joined the Bradworthy Witheridge family through marriage - I do have the facilities to trace most of these ancestors.

Perhaps in time we will understand the memorial line "Death shadowing us and ours", but whatever the meaning - God Bless them all.

THE WELCOMBE TREE

This is a branch of the Bradworthy Family and enlarges the Family of Thomas Witheridge and Ann Moore, although at this time I cannot be positive that there are no more children



Ax = Axbridge
 Bi = Bideford
 Br = Bradworthy
 Wel = Welcombe

John Witheridge 1994

LED UP THE GARDEN PATH

by Joyce Browne

My first step on the path was when, on the IGI, I read the entry of a marriage "JOHN WITHERIDGE H.M. MARGARET BROOKING, 25th May, 1728, Holy Trinity Exeter"

Separated on the IGI by only one name, John and Margaret appeared again as the parents of a male child baptised 'John' on the 15th September, 1729, at Ermington. He was well documented as my 4 x great grandfather, could John and Margaret Brooking be my 5 x great grandparents? The dates looked right - I decided that they could and they were.

According to the Ermington parish registers, a 'Margaret' was born to John and Margaret Brooking and baptised on the 8th May, 1702, but as there were other eligible Margaret Brookings around at the time of the 1728 marriage I decided to investigate further before I claimed her as 'mine'. One niggle in my mind was the question of why the marriage should take place in Exeter and not Ermington?

Then came what I thought was an inspiration - marriages usually take place at the home of the bride or her parents - what if there were a Margaret Brooking living in Exeter? There was! She was Margaret Brooking, born 1705, to a Samuel Brooking of Exeter and I traced her line back to 1634.

By this time the Brooking One Name Society had become interested in this Witheridge marriage and asked for more details.

There were numerous Brookings all over South Devon, and in an effort to differentiate between them and substantiate my findings I studied parish registers, read Brooking Wills, leases and any document I could find, but any previous connection between the Brookings and the Witheridges which might lead to a marriage eluded me. The Brooking Society seemed satisfied that I had the right Margaret, and I was well up the garden path.

Another thing about Margaret Brooking Witheridge puzzled me. I had no date of her death, and there was no record of her burial in the Ermington register, but as some events are missing from the registers, I was not too bothered.

I have often noticed that my most significant discoveries have come when looking for something else. I was looking at

the Newton Ferrers parish registers for Brooking and Edgcombe names when I found a burial entry "13th October, 1758, Margaret Witheridge of Ermington"

This was my Margaret Brooking Witheridge. A whole new train of thought sparked. What was she doing in Newton Ferrers? Did she die in Ermington, and for some reason be transported to Newton Ferrers for burial? Was she visiting relatives when she died?

I thought about this for some time, and then remembered that whilst investigating in Plymouth I had seen a lease on a property called 'Keaton' which a Newton Ferrers Brooking had willed to his five daughters, four of whom were married, and their husbands named. Was Margaret the fifth daughter, and John Witheridge the unnamed fifth son-in-law? John and Margaret lived at a property called 'Witheridge's Keaton' or 'Keaton Holeacres' in Ermington. Was this how the Keaton property had come into Witheridge hands? John's father had lived there before him.

I remembered how thrilled I had been when I found John's signature in the Rate and Account books for Ermington, and the accounts of the Rates he was paying for the property where he lived until his death in 1761. (I did not know then that Margaret had pre-deceased him) .

Thinking that I might kill several birds with one stone, I asked Sheila Jewell in Exeter to read and thoroughly investigate the lease. She did. She found that John Witheridge was not the fifth son-in-law and there was nothing to link these Brookings with the Witheridges or the Witheridge Keaton property.

Although the Brooking property and the Witheridge home appear not to be the same, Sheila's search revealed something else - the Marriage Bond between John Witheridge and Margaret Brooking.

There are very few of the Devonshire Bonds in existence and how this one survived is a mystery, and what it reveals is another mystery.

The words which leap at me from the flowery script are
"... the above bounden JOHN WITHERIDGE of Ermington and MARGARET BROOKING aforesaid- WIDOW"

My first question was - was Margaret older than I supposed when she married John and was this why she had only one child by him? (John born 1729 died 1763) More questions

arise - did she have children by her first marriage, and if so, what happened to them? Was the Brooking marriage her first?

This Marriage Bond is the only document so far found which mentions that Margaret was a widow when she married John Witheridge.

Has all my research into Brooking affairs been wasted now that it seems that we Ermington Witheridges can no longer include a Brooking in our blood line? I am no nearer knowing who my 5 x great grandmother was, nor why she and John chose to be married in Exeter, a long way from Ermington. There is no obvious reason for concealment. For instance the dates of the wedding and the birth of the child appear to be unremarkable.

One line of enquiry would be to find a Brooking who married a Margaret and who died before May, 1728. This we have tried, so far without success.

It's all rather depressing. Can we ever be sure that we know our family line? I do know that we must keep on searching for every possible corroboration, although we may think that we have 'proof of a conclusion.

At the end of the path my 5 x great grandmother Margaret still stands. I can't see her face, but I dare bet that she's smiling!

UP-DATE ON THE SEARCH FOR JOHN WITHERIDGE, SEAMAN, DIED NEW ZEALAND, 1916 - SOMETIMES KNOWN AS JOHN PENGELLY BUSSELL

(See article by Velma Metcalfe, magazine Winter 1994)

I have had conversations recently with ex-member Christopher Witheridge, who is descended from George Causey Witheridge and Mary Ann Bussell. Christopher's family held a re-union a few weeks ago, and Chris very kindly told them the John Pengelly Bussell story, and asked for any information. Unfortunately no-one had ever heard of any 'stray' in their family, or had any knowledge which could lead us to identify the seaman who died in Dunedin in 1916.

Nil Desperandum!

Joyce

RESEARCH NOTES ON JOHN WITHERIDGE

The story of a painstaking search

by Kathy Witheridge, Ontario

I commenced my research on a John Witheridge in or about 1991. My first knowledge of him was when a member of a Genealogy Society in Canada forwarded a copy taken from a cemetery index in Hamilton, Ontario.

HAMILTON CEMETERY, YORK STREET, HAMILTON, ONTARIO
SECTION "T" PART 2 OF 2 - STONES #651 AND UP
M.G.R. #901915 NT - O.G.S. #4465 - HAM. BRA. CEM295

1226 Mary J. Knight/Beloved wife of/John Witheridge/
Aug.24 1881 - Feb 21 1923/John/husband of the above/
Nov.9 1874 - May 20 1932/ WITHERIDGE

This was the first information with which I had to work. I then proceeded to write to the Public Library in Hamilton, Ontario, to obtain a copy of the obituary of John Witheridge and also of his wife, Mary Jane (Knight) Witheridge. I received the following:-

Hamilton Spectator - Thursday February 22, 1925

"The funeral of Mrs. Mary Jane Witheridge, wife of John Witheridge, will take place from the residence of her sister, Mrs. J. Scott, 439 Charlton Avenue West, to Hamilton Cemetery on Friday afternoon at 2.0 p.m. The funeral will be private."

Hamilton Spectator - Saturday May 21, 1932

"John Witheridge, a well known resident of this City, died yesterday. He resided with his brother-in-law, John Scott, 439 Charlton Avenue West, and was 55 years of age. Mr. Witheridge had been ill for one week and his passing will be a distinct shock to a very wide circle of friends who will mourn his loss. He was born in England and had resided in this City eleven years. He was a member of the St. George's Anglican Church and was employed in the locker rooms of the Hamilton Golf and Country Club, Ancaster.

Mr. Witheridge had a long military career having 21 years active service, during which time he was through the Boer War, Khyber Pass and the World War. He was awarded eight medals and was a Sergeant-Major, retired on a pension.

He leaves to mourn his passing, one son, Ivor, and one daughter, Sylvia, both at home."

"The funeral will be private on Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock from the residence of his brother-in-law, John Scott, 439 Charlton Avenue West. Internment will take place at Hamilton Cemetery."

From these obituaries I obtained quite a lot of information:

1. John Witheridge was born in England, and if the gravestone is correct, his date of birth was November 9th 1874.
2. He had 21 years active Military Service.
3. He moved to Hamilton, Ontario, on or about the year 1921 but where he moved from I have no idea.
4. There were two children of the marriage, namely Ivor Witheridge and Sylvia Witheridge.

My first thoughts were to commence with Military records. I wrote to "Certificates and Searches, Ltd." at 68 Moyser Road, London, SW16 6 SQ, and asked them to search the Military Records for John. I forwarded their fee of £10.00, together with £1.50 for postage.

I received a letter from them dated February 23, 1994, and they included two sheets showing Army records of John. They did point out that regimental numbers could change during service, and that it might be worthwhile to search the Medal Rolls for the regiment if it was present at the campaigns in the Khyber Pass. They also suggested that it might be possible to follow the Devon Regiment through France from September 1915 by consulting the War Diaries.

The first Medal Roll, copyright of the Public Record Office, London, Ref WO 100/322, showed that Sgt. J. Witheridge of the 2nd Btn. Devon Regiment was entitled to the South Africa Medal issued on the 1st October, 1902, and to two clasps for service in 1901 and 1902.

The second document showed that John Witheridge, now a Quarter Master Sergeant in the Devon Regiment, Labour Corps, with a different regimental number was entitled to three more medals - the "Victory", "British" and "Star" - that the theatre of war first served in was France and that he had entered this on the 22nd September, 1915. We know, of course, from the previous document that the "first served in" must have referred to the Great War and not previous service in other wars.

This information did not convey much to me as I am unfamiliar with Military Records. I recently wrote to a member of the Devon Family History Society who had written an article in the November issue of "The Devon Family Historian" entitled "The Devonshire Regiment during the South Africa War". I received a reply from Mr. A.E. Vicary of Bexhill, East Sussex, and he gave me some suggestions, but I have not yet been able to follow these.

I did obtain a copy of the Will of John Witheridge which gave a little information, and I found that he had a daughter, Sylvia Maud Witheridge, born April 17, 1915, and a son, Ivor John Witheridge, born September 3 1921.

At the time of John's death there was a uncashed cheque from the British Ministry of Pensions, dated April 1st, 1932, for £17. 2. 5.

I also obtained a copy of the deed to his property which he purchased on July 4 1925. The house was bought after the death of his wife, Mary Jane, who died on February 21, 1923, but the deed gave little information.

My next step was to write to Joyce Browne of the Witheridge Society, and she publicised my search in the magazine of Spring, 1994, and checked all the references in the St. Catherine's House indexes through the years 1873 to 1878. John's gravestone gives his date of birth as 1873, but the age in his obituary was given as 55 years in 1932, which would indicate that his date of birth was 1877.

Out of all the possible 'John's' in that age group in England, there was only one death unaccounted for, that was a William John Witheridge, born Barnstaple, 1873, neither could I find a marriage in England- could this be the one I was looking for?

Recently, I found a reference in the St. Catherine's House indexes for a birth of a Sylvia M. Witheridge, born 1915, mother's maiden name "Knight", born in Bodmin Ref.5c 96. This has to be my Sylvia Maud Witheridge, daughter of John Witheridge and Mary Jane. I have sent for a copy of this certificate, and I hope for more information, but it will not tell me John's father's name!

I also learned recently that our local branch of the L.D.S. Library were in possession in the 1881 Census Indexes for most of England. I searched the 1881 Census for Devon and Cornwall for any John Witheridge aged approximately 8 years and found:-

Census Place - Sithney WITHERIDGE, JOHN Age 7
Head of Household - John
Place of Birth Sithney, Cornwall

Census Place - Ermington WITHERIDGE JOHN Age 8
Head of Household- John
Place of Birth Ermington, Devon

The John Witheridge in Cornwall was the son of John and Esther Witheridge. John Snr. was born in Minehead Somerset, c. 1848, so I decided to apply for his birth certificate.

The birth certificate states that John Witheridge was born at Minehead on March 24, 1848. He was the son of Thomas Witheridge and Jane Witheridge, formerly Thomas. Thomas Witheridge was a Coast Guard Officer, and resided at Minehead, Somerset.

I looked in my St. Catherine's House indexes and found 1873 (June) John Witheridge, born at Helston, Cornwall. Ref. 5c 214.

I now felt that I was getting somewhere, and decided to look in old issues of 'The Witheridge Times'. I found an article written by John Witheridge in the Spring issue, 1993, and a family tree extension of the Combe Martin, Berryrnabor, Helston and Penzance families who emigrated to Australia. Thomas Witheridge did marry Jane Thomas (1834), they had a son John (Jack) who married Esther Jennings (1871), they in turn had a son John (1873) who married Charity Veal (1910), he died in Penzance in 1959.

MY BUBBLE WAS BURST! I honestly believed that I had the right John. I had seen the marriage of a John in the indexes for 1910, but I thought it fitted in with my John as his first child was born in 1915.

The indexes show a John Edward Witheridge, born in Totnes, 1872, Ref. 5b 1872, but he is a 'No' having died in Weston-Super-Mare in 1952.

I then looked in the 'Witheridge Times' for a family tree on the Ermington family. In the 1989 Handbook there is a family tree and I found:-

John Northmore Witheridge, born 1872, married 1905, and death given as 1950 has a question mark beside it, so I take it that there is a doubt about the date of death.

There is a reference to a marriage in 1905:

1905 (M) John N. Witheridge, married Devonport Ref.5b 534

My last hope - or it is back to the drawing board!

Where oh where did 'my' John come from? One consolation - I do know where he finished up!

Can anyone help?

THE SEQUEL - FOUND!

by Joyce Browne

After Witheridge Day some hours of concentration on our published family trees convinced Kathy and me that the most likely candidate to be Sergeant Major John Witheridge, died Ontario 1932, was John Northmore Witheridge, born Ermington, 1872.

If this was correct, then the age given in his obituary and the date of birth on his tombstone were both incorrect. There was only one way to find out - if the bride of the marriage St. Catherine's House index Mar. qu. 1905, Devonport 5b 534, was Mary Jane Knight and the groom a John Witheridge then we had the right couple, and we ought to discover who John's father was and his family connection. We did!

The marriage certificate revealed that the groom was John Northmore Witheridge, aged 32 (age correct this time) - Bachelor- Sergeant in the 2nd Battalion Devonshire Regiment - and the bride was Mary Jane Knight, spinster.

John, born on the 10th October, 1872 at Ermington, was the son of John Northmore Witheridge and Maria Tall Sandover. (See John's article on the Northmore connection, magazine Winter 1994)

John senior was a carpenter, as were many of the Ermington family, following the trade of their ancestor, Arthur (1758-1847)

John junior would have been too young to have been in the first Boer War - 1880-1881 - but the right age for the second - 1899-1902. His service on the Khyber Pass on the North West Frontier may have been after this as, after the Boer War, the regiment returned to India.

As wars go, the war in South Africa was very nasty, both from a civilian and military point of view, and Sgt. John Witheridge would have been embroiled in some tricky situations and seen some horrible sights. The British interned Dutch civilians in concentration camps where many, including women and children, died.

The young Winston Churchill, as a war correspondent, dashed from place to place reporting on the battles and the progress of the war in which the British suffered some disastrous defeats.

The Devonshire's 1st Battalion was locked in the siege of Ladysmith, which lasted for 118 days with terrible suffering.

The 2nd Battalion, John's, was in action at a place called Wagon Hill, and after fighting all day and holding their position the Devonshires were called upon to make a bayonet charge to dislodge the Boers from a rocky ridge. They responded with the utmost gallantry and determination - took the ridge but at a terrible cost on both sides. They lost all their officers but one, and one officer won the Victoria Cross. No doubt we could find out more about this from the Museum of the Devon and Dorset Regiment at Exeter.

After all these horrors a home posting must have been marvellous for John. His address on the marriage certificate is given as "Stoke Damerel" which is the registration district for Devonport, where the military barracks were situated, but although he was married in Stoke Damerel, the Reverend Pinwill, Vicar of his home village, Ermington, officiated.

What motivated John to take his family to Canada after the first World War we don't know. Was it that as a much travelled man he couldn't settle down in Devon? We know from his obituary that his wife had a sister in Canada, but which family arrived there first we do not know.

Why did it take us so long to find him? There are several points to take to heart here -

Firstly - if it hadn't been for Kathy's painstaking research, and her efforts to find military records, John, died 1932, would still be unknown.

Secondly - we must suspect that an age or date of birth can be incorrect even when it appears to come from a reliable source.

Thirdly - we must never make assumptions. Because we thought that John born 1872, had died in 1950 we ruled him out of our investigation.

Fourthly - try to obtain certificates, although because of cost it may be tempting to by pass this evidence.

There is a twist in the tail of this story. When I told Philip about the identity of our 'lost' Sergeant Major he said "My father told me that I had a great uncle in Canada!"

John Northmore Witheridge was 1st cousin twice removed to our Philip, and at least nine of our members can claim relationship to him.





CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number R. 210148

1905. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church of Stoke Damarel in the County of Devonport in the Parish of Stoke Damarel

| No. | When Married. | Name and Surname. | Age. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father. |
|-----|-----------------|------------------------------|------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 308 | 31 January 1905 | John Hawthorne Wetkewidge | 32 | Single | Sergeant 2nd Devon | Stoke Damarel | John Wetkewidge | Carpenter |
| | | Mary Jane Knight | 26 | Spinster | | S Paunobas | William Knights. | Laborer. |

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by Licence or after by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { John Hawthorne Wetkewidge in the presence of us, { Thomas Knight
Mary Jane Knight } { Joseph Pugh
Admiral Penneville
Sicari & Emington

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Devonport day of May 19 05



This certificate is issued in pursuance of section 65 of the Marriage Act 1949. Sub-section 3 of that section provides that any certified copy of an entry purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office shall be received as evidence of the marriage to which it relates without any further or other proof of the entry, and no certified copy purporting to have been given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect unless it is sealed or stamped as aforesaid.

CAUTION.—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

WARNING: THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON PRESENTING IT.

MX 891348

F A M I L Y N E W S

Readers will now know that Elizabeth Plumb Witheridge, wife of the Rev. David Witheridge of Minneapolis, U.S.A., died on the 9th August, 1995.

Elizabeth had been suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, and the results of a fall, but although she had become resident in a Nursing Home, her death was unexpected.

David had been her loving carer for some time, and no doubt her passing will have a profound effect. We can only extend our sympathy to him and his family, and keep him in our thoughts and prayers.

On a happier note we report the marriage of Kim and Roy Cook's second son, Adam. (Yes, the second son, Jason is the first!)

Adam married Miss Anita Doherty on the 10th June at St. John's Church, West Wickham. Jason was one of three Ushers and the Witheridge family was well represented.

One unusual feature of the wedding was that it was on the 6th birthday of Anita's younger sister, Hannah. A replica of the top tier of the wedding cake was presented to her, and all the guests sang "Happy Birthday!"

TAILPIECE

A shop sign in Porlock Weir, Somerset, proclaims "No muddy boots, please, or dogs smoking ice creams."

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