



Vol. 14 No.2 Summer 2000

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For all communication with the Guild of One Name Studies)

(To be sent new applications and all renewals of Society membership, complete with subscriptions)

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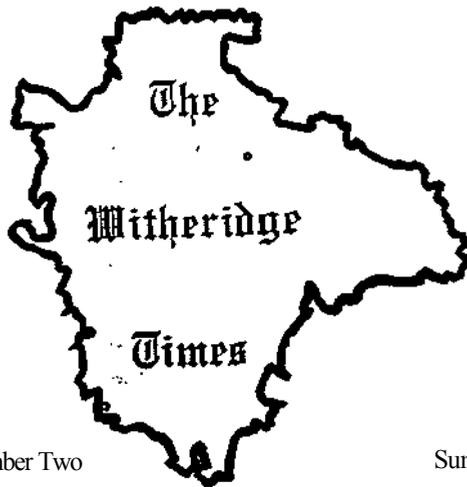
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(To be sent all items for publication in the Witheridge Times - family news, articles etc., and all requests for copies of the certificates held by the Society)

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Continued on back cover



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Summer 2000

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EDITORIAL

Greetings from Britain to everyone whether you are in summer or winter!

As I have in the past I must comment on our Witheridge Day activities, which are reported in more detail in this magazine. Once again we saw a glorious display of primroses, bluebells and forget-me-nots in the Devon lanes, and the weather did not let us down, but our special Millennium event turned out to be a massive disappointment. Both the coach trips scheduled for Sunday, 30th April, and Monday 1st May had to be cancelled owing to lack of support. This left us with the Annual General Meeting at the Tiverton Hotel on Saturday, 29th April, and unfortunately this suffered from the lowest attendance ever at an AGM.

In spite of the low turn out, we did have a happy day, with much spirited and useful discussion, but we do need more interested members to attend.

As a Society, we are dedicated to finding people who are no longer with us, but now we need to find people who are not only with us but willing to offer their services as Officers of the Society. Please think about this, and if you think that you can help, or would like to know more, please contact me, or Graham, at our address or by 'phone - 01582 729573.

In this issue we have a fascinating story by the Rev. David Witheridge of Minneapolis about his investigation into a family about whom we knew little - now read on!

Have happy reading and searching!



CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Mr. John Witheridge

9, Swale Close
Stone Cross
Nr. Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN24 5QY

Mr. Mark Witheridge

27, Shenley Fields Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
Warw.
B29 5AG

FAMILY NEWS

Some of our readers will remember the exciting stories of Witheridge pioneers who went to Canada, told in the magazines Volume 6 No. 2 (Summer 1992) and Volume 6 No. 3 (Autumn 1992). These were the stories of members of the Bradworthy family, discovered and investigated by Kathy Witheridge and recounted to us. One of Kathy's contacts was Clarence Ayre, son of Sarah Maude Witheridge and Thomas H. Ayre. Sarah Maude was descended through the Bradworthy family from George Witheridge (b 1761) and Jane Oke, and it was her grandfather, another George who went to Darlington, Ontario, and began to farm there. It was from the civilisation of Darlington that Sarah Maude and her husband Thomas Ayre went to the then virgin territory of Saskatchewan, virgin that is except for the native Indians, and it is reported that Sarah and Thomas's son Clarence was the first white child to be born in the area.

Clarence himself has told us that sometimes when his father was away, the Indians would come and ride round and round the log cabin which was their home. Clarence has now graduated a long way from a log cabin, although he is still living in the area. Kathy thinks that he is the oldest Witheridge descendant in Canada, and although he has had some health problems recently, he is now doing much better.

We are not the only people interested in Clarence, as extracts from a newspaper show:- "Clarence Ayre was born at Flander's Farm eight miles north of North Battleford on February 15th 1911. It was reported that he was the first white baby to be born in this district."

"Family memories indicate that Clarence was of a very quiet nature when he was a small boy, and when the family visited neighbors he was content to sit on a chair the whole time."

"Clarence had been diagnosed as having a heart murmur and his mother thought he should receive training in something that he could earn an income at and not be too strenuous... so thus began the piano lessons. (We know that his mother also played the piano) After studying with Mr. Bill deStrake and Mrs. Neil he obtained his Teach Certificate in 1931 and his Solo Performance Certificate in 1933. However, teaching music did not appeal and Clarence opted to start farming in 1939 and continued farming until his retirement in 1980."

In 1938 Clarence married Ethel Benson who died in 1981, and he subsequently married Alida Peppinck, who sadly has also since died, and Clarence is now alone.

It would seem that Clarence has never been a man to sit still for long - the newspaper reports that:-

"Throughout the years Clarence has been on the church, school and hospital boards, municipal council, wheat pool committee, Edam Donor's Choice, Credit Union committees and also acted as relief organist at the United Church"

"Clarence purchased his first computer at the age of 78 and has spent many hours since then doing accounting, spreadsheets and playing games on it."

Long may you continue, Clarence - you are putting some of us to shame!



CLARENCE AYRE

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
WITHERIDGE SOCIETY, HELD AT TIVERTON, DEVON, ON THE
29TH APRIL, 2000**

The meeting was opened at 10.0 a.m., by the Chairman, Graham Browne. He welcomed those present, especially Kathy and Paul Witheridge who had travelled from Ontario, Canada. The Chairman expressed regret for the loss of members Albertina Rossiter and Joan Payne since the last meeting, and expressed sympathy to their families.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence and goodwill messages were received from:

Rev. David Witheridge, Minneapolis	Annette Witheridge, New York
John James, Burnaby, Canada	Velma Metcalfe, New Zealand
Carol Goins, California	Bob Thomas, Isle of Man
Joyce Stephens	Jason and Zoe Cook
Brenda and Ron Dixon	Philip Witheridge

2. Minutes of the 12th Annual General Meeting at Winchcombe, Glos., on 3rd May, 1999. as published in the Witheridge Times

The Minutes were taken as read, and on the proposal of Joyce Browne, seconded by Roy Cook, were adopted.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

Kim Cook reminded the meeting of the discussion last year of the desirability of making a family archive, so that histories of individual Witheridges are not lost. Members agreed that a reminder should be given in the magazine. Kim also pointed out the advantages of having a Society Librarian.

4. Officers' Reports

Chairman's Report
Secretary and Membership Secretary's Report (not available at the meeting)
Treasurer's Report
Research Co-ordinator's Report

The Treasurer's Report gave rise to some discussion on the rising costs of producing the magazine. Various options were explored, including the

production of an electronic magazine, which could be cheaper but it was recognised that at present this might only be beneficial to a small number of members. It was agreed to explore any options open to us to reduce costs.

The reports were accepted and adopted. Proposer to adopt the reports: Kim Cook, seconded by Joyce Browne.

5. Election of Officers

Chairman:	Graham Browne
Secretary:	John Witheridge
Membership Secretary:	John Witheridge
Treasurer:	Richard Witheridge
Assistant Treasurer:	Maureen Witheridge
Research Co-ordinator:	Richard Witheridge
Editor:	Joyce Browne
Publisher & Distributor:	Philip Witheridge

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from Philip indicating that he would be willing to serve as Committee member, publisher and distributor for one more year, but in the year 2001, owing to various pressures on his time, and difficulties with his equipment, he wished to resign all the duties he now undertakes. On behalf of the Society and the members present the Chairman expressed his thanks to Philip for all the work he has done in the past, and for the great help he has been in promoting the Society and its aims.

A letter received by the Chairman from John Witheridge said that he would be willing to continue as Membership Secretary for one more year only (it might be that he would be willing to continue as Secretary).

The Chairman acknowledged the tremendous debt the Society owed to John for all his work and enterprise in the promotion of the interests of the Society and individual members.

The members present wished to send their thanks to the overseas representatives for their valuable work and for agreeing to continue to represent the Society.

Dorothy Witheridge	Australia
Velma Metcalfe	New Zealand
Kathy Witheridge	Canada and North America

Committee members:

Annette Witheridge
Joyce Stephens
John Witheridge
Richard Witheridge
Maureen Witheridge
Joyce Browne
Mark Witheridge
Jason Cook
Philip Witheridge

6. Any Other Business

1. There was a unanimous vote to invite Tom and Sheila Jewell, who have been very helpful to the Society, to become honorary members. Tom and Sheila, who were present at the meeting, accepted this invitation, and accordingly are now honorary members of the Witheridge Society.

2. John James, who has been in correspondence with Richard and Joyce on the subject of record keeping in the Society, sent examples of records kept by the Laity family society and these were circulated at the meeting. (The Laity family has connections with the Witheridges). John would like the proposal to be put to the meeting that the Witheridge Society adopt a system of central record keeping. Those present agreed that in principle central record keeping is a good idea.

Kim felt that this emphasised the need for a librarian, and it was thought that we need definition of the work involved in this. More discussion followed on various methods of keeping family history records including computer programmes. It was pointed out that Richard has prepared booklets on records held by the Society which are available from him, and that some members, including Judith and Allan Witheridge of Australia have already listed their holdings, and these have been published in the magazine.

It was agreed to ask members to list their holdings and sources of information and to publicise these, and it was agreed that, without an AGM vote, a volunteer could be appointed as librarian. No one at the meeting felt able to undertake this task.

It was proposed by Kim that we seek a librarian and then consider the method of record keeping. This was seconded by Roy.

3. Falling attendance at the Annual General Meeting

[a] It was suggested that we might amend the constitution so as to reduce the number of members needed to form a quorum. After much discussion it was decided to reduce the number required to form a quorum from ten to eight for the period of one year. (This was thought not to require an amendment to the constitution) This was proposed by Kim and seconded by Roy.

[b] It was suggested that it might be more appropriate to hold a General Meeting bi-annually rather than each year. Kim thought that this would not be in accordance with the regulations imposed by the Federation of Family History Societies, to which we are affiliated. Membership of the FFHS is valuable not only because of the contacts and information which may be gained, but because their insurance covers the Witheridge Society meetings, and this is a very necessary coverage. It was agreed that we write to the FFHS and clarify the position on this issue.

[c] Paul suggested that postal voting, or voting by e-mail might be useful and would reflect the wishes of the membership more accurately. It was proposed that this option should be published in the magazine as early as possible and it should be stated that votes must be with the Chairman a week before the meeting but not disclosed until after the votes were taken at the meeting. This suggestion was taken up and proposed by Kim and seconded by Paul.

[d] Sheila Jewell made the suggestion that members should be asked what they would like from the Society in order to retain their interest. It was agreed to feature this suggestion in the magazine.

4. Rising costs - particularly in the production of the magazine

This gave rise to lively discussion, particularly with regard to methods of production of the magazine. It was felt that electronic production is the way forward, and it was agreed to experiment with this bearing in mind that many members are not on the internet, nor do they have computers. Some members who are on the internet still prefer to have a 'hard copy' of the magazine. The use of plastic envelopes was suggested, and it was decided to explore ways of reducing our costs without cutting down on our quality.

Paul thought that to increase the subscription would be counter productive and the Treasurer agreed that there should be no change at present.

5. Date and time of the next meeting

As had been decided at the 1999 meeting the next Annual General Meeting will be held at Singleton, near Chichester, Sussex. It is hoped that this will be a two day event which will include a visit to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum which is a collection of over forty regional historic buildings which have been rescued from destruction, restored and rebuilt in their original form.

It is hoped that the meeting will take place in one of the buildings at the Museum, as it is thought that a room has now been made available for gatherings and meetings.

The event will take place during the week end of 5th, 6th and 7th May, 2001, according to which days the Museum is open and accommodation available. Kim will investigate this and report so that notice can be given in the magazine

Meeting in the Year 2002

The idea of holding a meeting in Canada was discussed, and Paul agreed to investigate the possibility of this.

Another suggestion was to hold the meeting at The Blue Riband Holiday Centre at Hemsby, near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. This centre is owned by a family of Witheridges who are not members, but who might be interested in our efforts.

Further discussion will take place

The President, Kim Cook, closed the meeting, and thanked those present for making the journey to Tiverton, and for the happy atmosphere and the lively exchange of views during the day.



THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1999

My report must begin with my thanks to all the Society's Officers who have again made every effort to fulfil their duties and to continue their researches with much enthusiasm, as always. They, together with our overseas representatives, Kathy Witheridge, Velma Metcalfe and Dorothy Witheridge deserve great credit. Without them we would not have a successful Society.

Thanks to Kathy and Paul Witheridge the Society now has a Web Site on the Internet. It is too early for me to know what impact this has had, but no doubt we shall hear some information on this later.

During 1999 the Society has become acutely aware of several problems, such as falling attendance at meetings, and the replacement of officers who have indicated that they wish to retire, and these matters will be discussed at the Annual General Meeting.

Unfortunately, the special Millennium programme which Richard has worked so hard to organise has had to be cancelled for lack of support. However, I am sure that the 2000 meeting will be a worthwhile occasion.

The Society has continued to attract some new members from overseas, and they are, of course, very welcome, and the Society must ensure that they will find their membership to be worthwhile.

Finally I must again thank all our officers for their work during 1999/2000

Signed: GRAHAM BROWNE Chairman

RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING APRIL 2000

Joyce has been busy as usual, and researching various areas including Halwell, South Milton, Thurleston, Stoke Damerel for the Smiths, Tavistock and Lamerton for Mrs. Weldy on behalf of Kathy who posed the question, and also the Birmingham families. Joyce has now uncovered information about John Witheridge and Alice Tamlin who married in 1755. Although the Banns were called in Ermington, they were actually married in Bigbury, and Joyce is now hoping to check out the Bigbury parish records to confirm this. Joyce has worked on information about William Crossing who married Emily Witheridge and lived at Ivybridge for some time. From Sheila Jewell (DFHS researcher), Joyce has received a receipt for a sum of cash for work carried out at Harford Rectory house (near Ivybridge) and signed by Henry Witheridge, dated 1843. There is still a lot of information out there if only we know where to look.

Joyce has also been taking a further look at the Salem Witch trials and the connection with Sarah Buckley and Mary Witheridge, and she is also looking for a James Witheridge who died in Newport in 1915 aged 75, trying to find

who he was and where he was born. Also doing research into West Alvington as a result of correspondence with Velma Metcalfe in New Zealand. That looks like plenty to keep you busy, Joyce!

John has continued to research the Cumbria and Lancashire Witheridges, and whilst this is taking time he is hopeful that information will be available in another article in the magazine. He is still researching Captains John and Edward Witheridge - research into death of Captain John Witheridge and why there was an international political question raised, also why there were two different dates of death in different parts of the world. Could there have been two or even three Captain John Witheridges?

John is currently working on an article for the Tavistock/Australian family - further information required to complete the CombeMartin/Melbourne family history. He is continuing to build information in connection with the Quakers and family connection with Sir William Penn, and looking at houses with Witheridge names and hoping that present owners will look at their deeds to see if there is a Witheridge family link.

John has been asked to check for a Chief Inspector Witheridge of Scotland Yard, is also investigating another twist in the Bideford/Australian family history, also new Witheridge families in the Stafford and surrounding areas, and a whole load of smaller issues.

One very nice find - a picture of a gold and diamond brooch from the 800s. Brooch signed WIRERIG!!!! This found whilst researching Baldwin de Witheridge and ancestors.

If John keeps going he will link us to Adam and Eve!!!!???

I noticed that a DFHS member in Australia recently requested information on Ermington and I was able to send her quite a bit of information including a few photographs. This resulted in a telephone call from her.

Signed: RICHARD WITHERIDGE

Research Co-ordinator



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 30TH APRIL 2000

INCOME

Brought forward from 98/99	£902.03
Membership Subscription transferred from Membership Secretary's account	£294.90
Donations to Society	£ 70.00
Membership fee from J. Cook for 1999	£ 10.00
Raffle at AGM 1999	£ 10.50
Advance payments for coach trios	£ 8.00
TOTAL	<u>£1295.43</u>

TOTAL 1295.43

EXPENDITURE

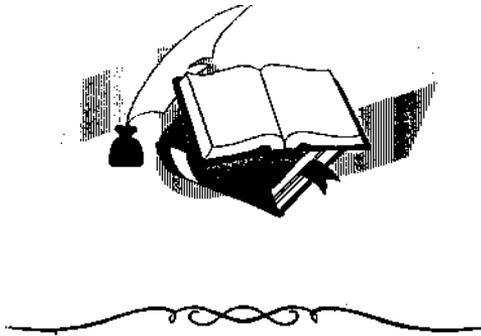
Payment for hire of hall + Buffet meals	£ 54.00
Payment re Philip Witheridge claim for <u>1998</u> printing 4 vols, of magazine and despatch, plus printing Witheridge Day <u>1998</u> invitations etc. (Cashed since last account)	£312.88
Donation to Macmillan Cancer Trust in memory of Terry Stephens (Cashed since last account)	£ 15.00
Payment re Philip Witheridge claim for <u>1999</u> printing 4 vols, of magazine and despatch, plus printing Witheridge Day <u>1999</u> invitations	£320.40
Membership Secretary's account for all correspondence etc., for 1999	£18.19
Subscription to Guild of One Name Studies	£ 12.00
Subscription to Federation of Family History Socs.	£ 25.00
TOTAL	<u>£758.47</u>
FINAL BALANCE	<u>£536.96</u>

We the undersigned believe the above to be an accurate statement of the current financial standing for the Witheridge Society for the year ending 30th April, 2000.

Signed: R. WITHERIDGE	ML. WITHERIDGE	G. BROWNE
Treasurer	Assistant Treasurer	Auditor
Dated: 13.04.2000	13.04.2000	17.04.2000

If we can maintain the balance at this level or more, then the membership subscriptions can be kept at the existing level.. However, with the costs rising each year we will need to watch carefully how our expenses are being used and try to find ways of reducing the costs wherever possible.

Richard Witheridge Apr. 2000



REPORT ON WITHERIDGE DAY 2000

by Joyce Browne

This year our journey to Devon was through wet and sodden countryside, but all changed when we reached Tiverton. Although the hotel had changed its decor since we visited in 1997, the atmosphere was pleasant and the Topaz room where we were to hold the meeting was equipped with an overhead projector and supplied with iced water and orange drink (the tea and coffee came later).

Because of the poor attendance the early part of the meeting took the form of a committee meeting, but then our new members Tom and Sheila Jewell arrived and we could fulfil the function of a Annual General Meeting. We had some lively and helpful discussions, the outcome of which are reported in the Minutes, and there was still animated conversation when the lunch came. The Witheridge cake was cut, and after lunch Tom gave us a talk.

He mentioned some of the problems of talking to Family History Societies, who seem to want to hear about the same subjects - the Poor Law, soldiers and sailors. Tom thought that we might like to hear a different subject, and he called his talk "Certified".

He joked about the thought that we were all certifiable for taking up Family History, and he went on to show us a remarkable collection of all kinds of certificates which can be available to the family historian.

Medical Certificates issued by various authorities which give details of a personal nature and sometimes reveal their state of mind - not usually available until at least one hundred years after their date of issue.

Vagrant Certificate of 1598 for a vagrant's journey to the parish to which he belonged.

Certificate of approval to a marriage 1732 - this gave permission for a licence to be taken out to marry the signatory's daughter.

Sacramental certificates - these were an oath that a man received the sacrament and so was of good character and a fit person to hold a job in public service.

Certificate of surname and Christian name - this from Auckland, New Zealand - designed to show that the man concerned was a twin.

Cradle Roll - also from Auckland certificate of the acceptance of the baby by the Church or Chapel.

Commercial certificate of Merit This issued to bonny babies who were fed on Cow and Gate Milk

School Certificates - this showed rules of entry to an Exeter school, and illegitimate children were excluded from entry.

Marriage Certificate - this showed a man being recorded 'Jones Baines' when he was baptised 'Robert' - and no-one knew why he was called 'Jones'.

Baptismal Certificates issued by particular sects - this one by Bible Christians

Military Certificates death certificates marked 'MPD' meaning 'Missing presumed dead'

Tom told the story of a man who was born in Sicily who emigrated to America, then applied for United States citizenship and eventually became a doctor. His wife was a friend of Tom and Sheila, and Tom came into possession of the documents which reveal the birth and life story of Guiseppe Sapinsa.

An unusual certificate was one issued for shares in a new school which opened in 1893.

Another unusual document was given to one Emmeline Denner from Tiverton Dairy School to certify that she was proficient in the making of butter.

Much amusement was provoked by the certificate issued in May 1940 to Shelagh Jewell (not our Sheila!), saying that Shelagh had 'provided help, comfort and contentment' to the soldiers, sailors and airmen of the BEF - making tea no doubt!

Pedler's Certificate One of the most interesting examples was that issued in 1887 to 'Afram Seff' - Ephraim Sieff of Marks and Spencer fame!

There were certificates of fitness and unfitness for the armed forces and one of discharge of a Drummer in 1806, and various documents showed the progress of Tom's brother to First Class Engineer in the Merchant Navy.

One set of papers revealed the laxity of one sea captain when his ship, the 'Torridge' of Appledore, encountered dense fog. It appeared that in spite of the weather conditions the ship forged on and ran into the SS' Etna'. The Captain's excuse was that the engines refused to go astern in time.

Naval certificates can give great insight into lives and achievements and Tom had those of his father and brother to record their careers , and also a record of his own prowess in athletics!

Tom concluded by pointing out that there are many books written on the subject of Naval research.

Sheila talked to us about the desirability of looking through all sorts of documents which may not appear to be relevant to our search for family. Many bundles of documents contain names which are not indexed. It was among bundles of notes kept by a lady who kept all sorts of documents that Sheila discovered that Henry Witheridge of Ermington had built the rectory at Harford, and found his receipt for £50.0. on account.

In the Exeter Record Office are bundles labelled 'Basketry', 'Coroners' Accounts', 'Manorial Surveys', 'Turkish Prisoners' (intriguing that one!), 'Inland Revenue', 'Catalogue of Prisoners', 'Wills 1812-1851' (most Wills were lost in bombing in 1942) 'School Records', 'Brixham Fishing Apprenticeships', - to name just some of those available.

Sheila also commented that we should be wary of information obtained on the Internet. Unfortunately some people who contacted the DFHS computer and gave and asked for family information had 'picked up bits here and there' and had not checked with primary sources. Information obtained in this way can be incorrect and misleading.

I spoke briefly about David Witheridge's investigation into the Witheridge Gubb family of South Africa, his account of which is in the magazine, and I was able to show a pedigree of this Witheridge family - the only one known to have been drawn up by a professional genealogist in 1913-1916. David sent this especially so that it could be shown to the meeting, and everyone expressed their interest, and sent thanks to David.

Before the meeting was closed by Kim, Graham presented Richard with an oil painting of several locations in Ermington. This was in appreciation of Richard's work in organising the weekend.

We were still talking when Kim closed the meeting at 5.0p.m. It was delightful to meet old friends, especially Kathy and Paul Witheridge from Ontario, whose contribution to the day was very much appreciated. We all felt that we had spent a happy and worthwhile time.



OUR SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILY

by David E. Witheridge

On Sheila Jewell's list of "stray" Witheridges (Witheridge Times, Vol 13 No. 3 p. 16) there was one entry that caught my eye. It was the marriage of **Mary WITHERIDGE** and **William GUBB** on the 2nd December, 1799 in the Parish of Plymouth St. Andrew. I got out my records and, sure enough, they were the Mary How Witheridge and William Gubb, mariner, who were the parents of Thomas Witheridge Gubb, the founder of the large family of Witheridge descendants in South Africa.

I decided that because I am not getting any younger, and for fear it might get lost or forgotten, I had to write down the interesting story of how we discovered these Witheridge relatives in South Africa.

It was back in 1984 that I got a letter from Harry Witheridge of Virginia Water, Surrey. Harry is the uncle of Colonel Anthony Witheridge, retired Army Officer who died last year. (See Witheridge Times, Vol 13. No.1. pp 6-7). Harry enclosed a clipping that his wife 'Toots' (Alice) had taken from The Daily Telegraph, dated Monday February 20, 1984. It was the death notice of a woman who had died in South Africa, but, amazingly, the notice had been sent to be published in a London paper! It read as follows:

"GUBB - on Feb. 8, 1984, EILEEN (Betty) widow of
THOMAS WITHERIDGE GUBB. Passed away
peacefully in Cape Town. Deeply mourned by all her family."

Harry wanted to know if I had any knowledge of Witheridges in South Africa. I hadn't of course, but I immediately began a search.

First I found the address of the public library in Cape Town and wrote to them. I quoted the death notice in the London paper and asked if they would look for an obituary of Mrs. Gubb in a Cape Town newspaper and send me a copy. I also asked if they would look in the city or telephone directory for the addresses of any surviving relatives named. Of course, I sent a cheque to defray expenses, but they graciously returned it.

Within a few weeks I got a letter enclosing copies of the death notice that had been published in two Cape Town papers, which mentioned that she was the "dearly

loved mother of Anne and Jane and stepmother of Nick." They found three Gubbs in the telephone directory - a B. Gubb and two N. Gubbs. They thought that one of the N. Gubbs was probably the Nick referred to in the death notice. It was interesting that the Cape Town death notice omitted the Witheridge name, while the one in the London paper very specifically included it.

My next step was to write to Mr. N.Gubb at the two addresses given - the same letter to both addresses - hoping that I would get a reply from at least one of them. I told him about seeing the death notice from the London paper, writing to the Cape Town library, and getting the reply with his address. I told him about my ancestry in Combe Martin, Devon, and asked if he was related to the late Thomas Witheridge Gubb, and, if so, what could he tell me about the ancestry of Thomas Witheridge Gubb.

Soon thereafter a most fascinating letter arrived, not from Nick Gubb, but from Margaret Gubb, the widow of Noel, a cousin of Nick's. She said I had indeed arrived at the right source of information about the Gubbs and the Witheridges.

Her husband Noel had died the previous February, and Margaret had just returned from Britain, where she had taken his ashes for interment in the churchyard at Combe Martin. For many years they had gone back every year to Combe Martin. So these Witheridge descendants, whose ancestors had gone to South Africa a century earlier, still kept returning to England as their true home.

Margaret promised to send me a longer letter with more information about the family, but she said the South African branch was started by Thomas Witheridge Gubb, second son of William Gubb and Mary Witheridge, born c. 1809. She said they had a family tree titled "Pedigree of Witheridge of Berrynarbor and Combe Martin in North Devon, Shewing descent of Gubb Family from the same." Since her husband had made a negative of it in order to give copies to each of their children, she promised to send me a copy soon. I could hardly wait!

Noel had an additional tie to Combe Martin through the Clogg family. Back in 1779 William Witheridge married Abigail Clogg. This William was the uncle of Mary How Witheridge who married William Gubb and thus started the Thomas Witheridge Gubb line. So the Cloggs and Gubbs had a family connection. The Cloggs owned a large house in Combe Martin called 'Easticotts', and Noel stayed there with the Cloggs when he was released from the Russian border after the defeat of Germany. Margaret said it is in Richard Clogg's grave where Noel is buried, as those lines of Clogg and Gubb are now extinct in Combe Martin.

Margaret's second letter was also full of interesting information. She said that she wished she had known about us earlier, "as my younger daughter Margaret and her husband Andre are at present travelling around America with their two children, but will be due back next week, otherwise, who knows, they might have called on you."

The first Thomas Witheridge Gubb "was the owner of a fleet of ships plying between England and South Africa. Hence his son" (another Thomas Witheridge Gubb b. 1852) "was far from poor, and he in his turn became a millionaire on three occasions. I am not sure how he lost each one in turn but he lived in grand style. He also set up the 'Gubb Wool Washing Industry' in Uitenhage - on his death this became Gubb & Inngs and of recent years bought out by an American Company and lastly by the South African Government."

She seemed to place most of the blame for the loss of the family fortune on the second Thomas Witheridge Gubb's second wife and her life style. She not only "destroyed herself, but in the process reduced the Gubb fortunes and silver, antiques, etc., to a shadow of its former glory. I think the decline set in there, and we are no longer affluent. I doubt if any of this generation will make their mark in the world market. My son Andrew has chosen a field which may make him well known, but is probably the poorest paying in the country. He has a doctorate in Botany, writes articles, book, etc., and is the botanist for the North Western Cape, stationed at Kimberley."

Margaret went on to say she knew of no Witheridge relatives back in Devon, and that their Gubb family seemed to have died out there, so their continuing friendship was only with the Cloggs. "The Clogg home is Easticotts, a lovely place now sadly neglected, beyond the Roman Catholic Church. The Gubbs owned several homes and farms and at one stage a good deal of the village. Richard Clogg was a squire of the village I am told."

"We have a very good friend whose parents were retainers in the Clogg and Gubb homes, and he is a tremendous source of information on the tribes of Combe Martin, etc. His son Gerald has an interest in tracing family trees, and I will send him a copy of your two letters to see what else we can glean."

"Unfortunately I will not be returning to Combe Martin until May 1985 when I hope to stay three months. Noel and I had planned to spend six months there this year when he retired, but he died without achieving the pleasure of a very long stay."

She then said that her own future was in jeopardy, because she had just learned that she had cancer and was facing both radiation treatment and an operation. But the doctor said it was in an early stage, so she was determined to have a positive attitude.

When the pedigree arrived, I was amazed and thrilled. It showed their Witheridge line, which included mine, back to Berrynarbor in 1553, when Nicholas Witheridge married Mary Somer. It is probably the only professionally prepared Witheridge pedigree in existence. The name of the genealogist is not given, but it was produced somewhere between 1913 and 1916. A note at the bottom says: "The above Pedigree has been compiled chiefly from evidence supplied from Wills proved in the Court of the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple, and from the Parish Registers of Barry Narbor and Combe Martin, indicated in the chart by the letters B-N and C-M respectively. The particulars of the descendants of Thomas Witheridge Gubb (1809-1913) are supplied by living members of the family."

An indication of the skill and care of the genealogist is given in another footnote referring to a certain jug that was passed down through several generations. "This heirloom, described in Thomas W's Will (1626) as 'one stoning jug, covered with silver, etc., which my late deceased father willed to me to leave unto him,' and by Thomas W. (1695) as 'my stoning jug tipped with silver and the cover thereto,' was evidently an Elizabeth stoneware, or 'tiger ware' jug with silver rim and lid, of the type which now sells at from £250 to £350 in the London Auction Rooms. Genealogically the incident is of great interest, as shewing how the description of an heirloom in the Wills of three consecutive generations enables a pedigree to be corroborated and the identities of individuals with common Christian names to be established."

Because this pedigree was produced before the destruction of many records in the World War II bombing of Exeter, I was able to add much information to my own records. However, I was also able to make a few additions and corrections to the pedigree on the basis of my own research, especially in parish registers, and through information from other Witheridge relatives in Devon.

The Thomas Witheridge Gubb whose widow's death was reported in the London paper on February 20th 1984, was the fourth and last Thomas Witheridge Gubb in consecutive generations.

I see that I noted in my records that Mary How Witheridge, the mother of the first Thomas Witheridge Gubb, had a brother John, who married Elizabeth Harris. They were the ancestors of our members Carol Goins and Velma Metcalfe. She had a brother Francis, who married Ann Eastaway. They were the ancestors of Tony Witheridge, John James and Neil Witheridge. She had a brother Martin who married Emma———. They were the ancestors of Una Parsons, Kenneth Norman, and Mavis Pegler - all living now in Combe Martin. (These three and their ancestors have lived continuously in the adjoining parishes of Berrynarbor and Combe Martin for 500 years, which must be some kind of record!) Of course, the Thomas Witheridge Gubb descendants in South Africa are related to all the Witheridge who stem back to Combe Martin and Berrynarbor.

My joy in establishing such a wonderful connection to the South African family through Margaret Gubb suddenly came to an end shortly after Christmas of 1984, when I received a letter of Una Parsons of Combe Martin. In my Christmas letter to Una I had told her of my good fortune in finding the descendants of Thomas Witheridge Gubb, and I included many of the details given here.

Una said "With regard to the Cape Town family, it now transpired that we have been hearing about them for quite a long time, from our neighbours (also friends) Gerald and Eva Walters. When visiting C. Martin, the Gubbs rented one of their flats,(just a few yards from Marine Cottage). Mrs. Gubb was planning to come again, as you mention in your letter, but according to Gerald and Eva she died (cancer) just before Christmas; her daughter says she hopes to bring her ashes to Combe Martin; there is a nice seat, with a plaque bearing the name and dates of birth and death of Noel Gubb, in the Parish Churchyard.

"I can remember Mr. Richard Clogg, and of course my parents remember him well. He was a bachelor, and employed a housekeeper, who was a most elegant lady. He was not a 'Squire' but a Justice of the Peace (lay magistrate), and was also chairman of the Parish Council for very many years. You will be interested to know that he attended the Baptist Church."

Since Margaret Gubb's daughter was planning to go to Combe Martin the next summer, I hoped I could establish contact with her and continue the correspondence I had been having with her mother. I had met Gerald Walters when my wife Elizabeth and I had visited Combe Martin a few years earlier. (He is some kind of distant relative of mine through the Cutliffe family.)

So I made copies of my correspondence with Margaret, as well as a copy of my latest revised Witheridge pedigree, and sent them to Una Parsons to give to Gerald Walters, so that he could pass them on to Margaret's daughter when she came to Combe Martin. I also asked for the daughter's address. Unfortunately, Margaret's daughter didn't visit Combe Martin when expected, my letter got lost, and nobody sent me the daughter's address. It wasn't until December of 1986 that Gerald Walters finally give Una Parsons the daughter's address and she sent it to me. I wrote to the daughter, Jennifer Kruger, but I never got a reply. I didn't know whether she didn't get my letter, or whether she just didn't want to get involved with any new relatives from abroad.

At the close of the 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Witheridge Society in 1997 Kim Cook and I returned for another visit to Combe Martin. One of the things I wanted to do was to look up the tombstone of the first Thomas Witheridge Gubb, which I had heard from somewhere was in the Parish Churchyard. After a difficult search, we finally found a large tombstone, with a long list of Gubbs starting with William Gubb, marine, followed by his children John, Mary Henry, and William, and then, right down by the ground, his wife Mary. But weeds and grass had grown round the stone, so we began pulling them away, and we found another name at the bottom. Under the sod and dirt were these words:

"—————THOMAS WILLIAM GUBB
—————WHO DIED AT UITENHAGE, CAPE OF
—————1871, AGED 62"

What a thrill it was to uncover that inscription!. Even though the light wasn't ideal, we were able to get several pictures of the tombstone, which later helped in deciphering the somewhat obscure inscription.

While in Combe Martin I also decided to try again to establish contact with the South African Gubb family, and I was able to get a new address for Jennifer Kruger from Gerald Walters. This time I decided to contact her first by telephone, so I'd at least know that she got my message and that I had the right address.

I tried to get her number from the Directory Service, but they couldn't find a Jennifer Kruger at the address I had. Then I remembered that Tony Witheridge is an expert at finding people via the internet, so I called him. He worked for a while on the problem, but had no luck, because Kruger is about as common in South Africa as Smith is in America.

Then I decided to try to find Margaret's son, Andrew Gubb. I didn't have an address, but Margaret had said that he was a botanist and worked for the North Western Cape stationed at Kimberly. The library at Johannesburg first suggested the Department of Agriculture in North Western Cape. When that didn't work, they suggested I try the South African Association of Botanists. They were able to tell me that Andrew worked for the Wild Life Society, Western Cape Region, and they gave me his telephone number. Each time I called he was out, but I was able to talk to his secretary. Finally she conferred with him, and he suggested that I send him an e-mail.

In those days (1997) I didn't have e-mail, so I sent him a message through my son Jim's e-mail. About ten days later I got a reply, and I was jubilant that at last I had made contact again with the Gubb family of South Africa. He gave me his home address, as well as his sister's address and phone number, and he said he would pass on my message to Jennifer.

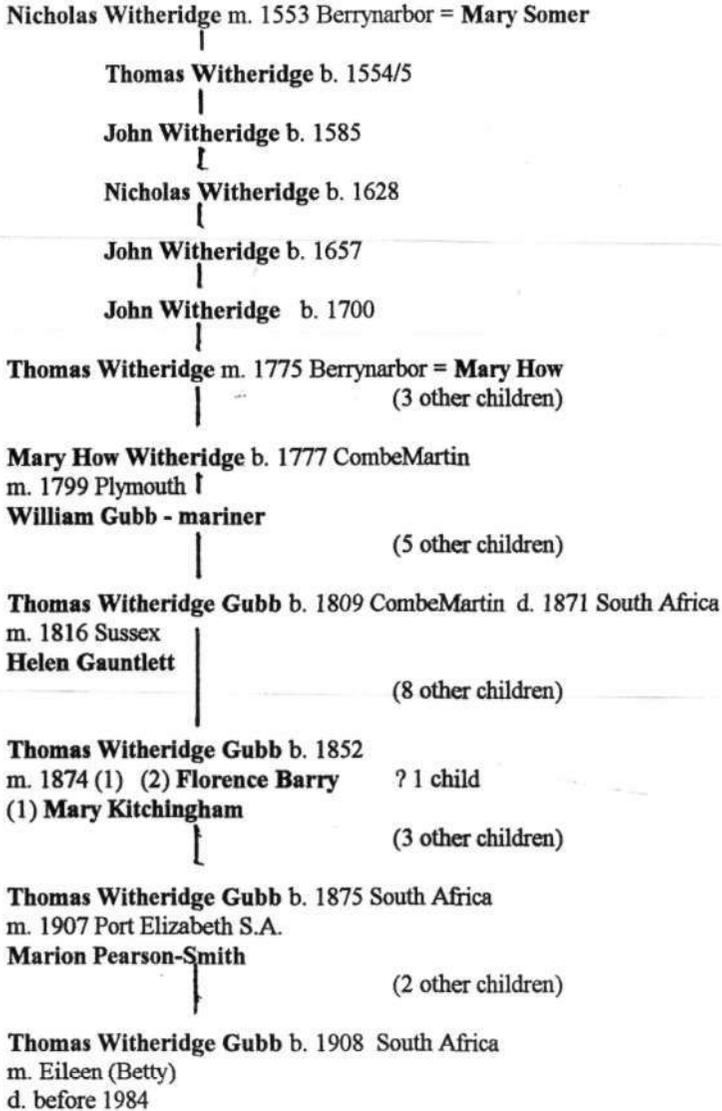
I wrote Andrew a long letter about the Witheridge Society, our meeting in Devon, our visit to the churchyard in Combe Martin, and a little bit about myself. I enclosed a few pictures of the Witheridge Society and of the Thomas Witheridge Gubb tombstone. He had said he would be on leave in December and would have time to answer more fully then. I waited and waited, but no answer or even acknowledgement of my letter ever came. I suppose I should have written again, but I got busy with other things, and I assumed that neither he nor Jennifer wanted to get involved in such far-removed family matters.

Now, however, this recapitulation of the story has me all fired up again, and I'm determined to keep working until we in the Witheridge Society can establish a permanent relationship with our Witheridge cousins in South Africa.



THE THOMAS WITHERIDGE GUBB NAME

CHART SHOWING DESCENT COMPILED FROM INFORMATION
SUPPLIED BY DAVID WITHERIDGE, APRIL 2000



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