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The magazine of

**THE WETHERIDGE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

Vol. 17 No 2

Summer 2003

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Honorary Life President	Mrs Kim Cook Cherry Trees, Ingleden Park Road Tenterden Kent. TN30 6NS
Honorary Life Vice President	The Rev David E Witheridge 2425 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minn 55405. USA
Honorary Life Vice President	Mrs Joyce Browne 5 Greenhill Avenue, Luton Bedfordshire LU2 7DN
Chairman	Mr David Witheridge 70 Copse Road Plympton Devon PL7 3QB
Membership Secretary	Mr Richard Witheridge 16 Haven Close Dunster Minehead, Somerset TA24 6RW. (to be sent all new applications and all renewals of Society membership, complete with subscriptions).
Treasurer	Mr Richard Witheridge Address as above.
Assistant Treasurer	Mrs Maureen Witheridge Address as Treasurer.
Research Coordinator and Assistant Editor.	Mrs Kim Cook Address as above.
Editor	Mr Richard Witheridge Address as above (to be sent all items for publication in the Witheridge Times, Family news, articles etc.)
Secretary	Mrs Barbara Finnemore 1 Corfe Avenue Hartley Vale Plymouth. Devon. PL3 5SQ.
Publisher and Distributer	To be decided

(Continued on the inside of the back cover)



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VISIT THE WITHERIDGE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY'S WEB SITE!

<http://www.WitheridgeFHS.com>

EDITORIAL

Greetings one and all.

First I must mention that this years AGM was held in Orpington Kent at the home of Ron and Brenda Dixon, and we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for the splendid way in which we were invited into their home and the lunch that they laid on for us, including a cake for the Society and two cakes for Joyce Browne's birthday celebration. Thank you Ron and Brenda.

At the AGM we had to elect new members to two posts that had been held by the same persons for some time. Their work over the years has been tremendous and time and energy given without a moan. I refer of course to Joyce and Graham Browne. Thank you both for your work on our behalf.

Seeing that the work of Editor appeared to be leaning towards Kim, who has not been well of late, I naively offered to help by taking on the task of using my computer to type in all the information and produce a draft copy suitable for the printer. This would have been on the understanding that our main researchers supplied the stories etc.

As you can now see I have been landed with the Editors job, although Kim Cook has agreed to become assistant Editor and proof read the articles and lend advice.

Having just moved house and still unpacking boxes and searching for lost items this magazine may be a little late reaching you, for which I apologise in advance. Also we are looking for a new printer/publisher which may take time.

All for now

Richard Witheridge. Editor,

PS. What do you the membership want to see in your magazine? Please let me know if the articles are not what you want, or the contents are just right, or if you have any new ideas for items you'd like to see. ED.

FAMILY NEWS.

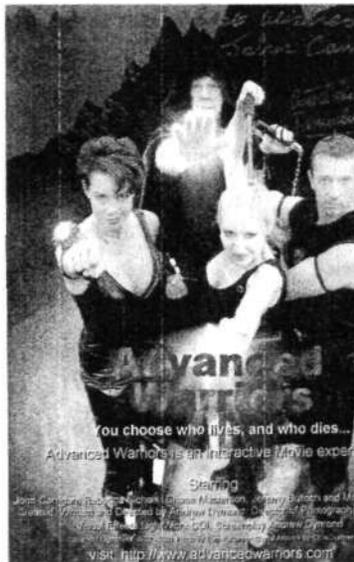
"John M. Witheridge, brother of David E. Witheridge died on April 29, 2003 in Saginaw, Mi. he was 80 years old.

"Survived by wife Janice, son John (Jay) Jr. and daughter Mary Kay. Interred in Saginaw next to parents William and Edith (nee Nemitz) Witheridge.

We send our condolences to David, Jim and all the family.

On a happier note, Andrew Dymond, Sue Witheridge's husband and son in Law of Maureen and Richard has just completed his life long ambition and produced an interactive film on DVD called "Advanced Warriors"

This film allows the viewer to choose which way the story line will go at certain points throughout the film. It is now available in certain shops. Excerpts can be seen on line at "AdvancedWarriors.com" The film stars two professional stars, Chase Masterson and Jeremy Bulloch, along with a cast of others from a Martial Arts team from Kent.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Maureen and Richard Witheridge have now moved house and their new address is-

16 Haven Close, Dunster, Minehead, Somerset. TA24 6RW.

Telephone No 01643 821377. e mail address is still

richard@rwitheridge.fsnet.co.uk

Please note the above when sending membership subscriptions in future.

PARTY TIME IN AUSTRALIA.

Photograph sent by Neil Witheridge showing Grandchildren of Allan and Judith Witheridge in Australia.



Thanks Allan and Judith, Photograph was included in Album presented to Joyce Browne when she retired from the Editors post..

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WITHERIDGE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY HELD AT 21 POPLAR AVENUE,
ORPINGTON, KENT, ON SATURDAY 3RD MAY, 2003**

The meeting opened at 11.0 a.m., under the Chairmanship of Graham Browne, and the watchful gaze of a squirrel who supervised the proceedings whilst eating his 'elevenes' on the bird table in the garden of Brenda and Ron Dixon.

Graham welcomed the members present and thanked Brenda and Ron for their hospitality.

Present:	Graham Browne	Joyce Browne	Kim Cook
	Roy Cook	Brenda Dixon	Ron Dixon
	Richard Witheridge	Maureen Witheridge	June Witheridge
	David Witheridge	Alan Smith	Allison Smith

1. Apologies for Absence

Zoe and Jason Cook were unable to be present at the morning meeting but came later in the day. Adam and Anita Cook sent their regrets at being unable to be present. Kathy and Paul Witheridge of Ontario, sent their best wishes and messages of support, Velma and Rod Metcalfe of New Zealand sent good wishes, and Judith and Allan Witheridge of Figtree, Australia sent regrets and kind messages. Rod and Sue Witheridge also sent their apologies. Tom and Sheila Jewell, Barbara and Terry Finemore, and Carol Goins also sent best wishes. Catherine and Geoff Schingler sent their regrets at absence. Vice President David Witheridge and his son Jim also sent their regrets that David's health did not allow him to travel.

The members present sent their best wishes to David for his complete recovery.

2. Annual General Meeting at Tenterden on Saturday, 4th May 2002

It was proposed by Brenda Dixon and seconded by Allison Smith that the report of this meeting as published in the Witheridge Times of Summer 2002, be taken as read and accepted. This proposal was carried.

3. Matters arising from the Report

There were no matters arising from the Report.

4. Officers' Reports

Chairman's Report
Treasurer's Report
Research Co-ordinator's Report

Copies of these reports were circulated and it was proposed by Roy Cook and seconded by Alan Smith that these reports be taken as read and accepted. The meeting accepted this proposal.

5. Election of Officers

Chairman David Witheridge agreed to serve as Chairman for one year and was duly elected.

Treasurer Richard Witheridge agreed to serve and was unanimously re-elected.

Assistant

Treasurer Maureen Witheridge was re-elected.

Auditor Ron Dixon agreed to take this Office and was duly elected.

Secretary Barbara Finemore had indicated that she would be willing to take this post for two years and was duly elected.

Membership
Secretary

Richard Witheridge agreed to continue in this post and was re-elected.

Research

Co-ordinator Kim Cook was elected to this post
(There was some discussion on the nature of duties involved in this post, and the difficulty of defining the exact nature of the work required, and it was agreed to publicise in the magazine the desirability of members undertaking research to refer to the Co-ordinator)

Editor Richard Witheridge agreed to be elected to this post for one year in the first instance.
(After discussion on the duties and the nature of work required it was agreed to create the post of 'Assistant Editor')

Assistant Editor Kim Cook agreed to undertake some duties in order to help the Editor.

Publisher and
Distributor

(There was discussion on the suitability of various methods of printing and distributing the magazine, having regard to cost and ease of production. Ron Dixon agreed to investigate alternative methods of production and distribution, and the post of Publisher and Distributor was left unfilled for the time being)

Overseas Representatives

Kathy Witheridge Canada and North America

Velma Metcalfe New Zealand

Dorothy Witheridge Australia (It is hoped that Dorothy will continue although we have not yet had acceptance from her).

PS Dorothy has since replied that she is willing to carry on as representative, although she feels that she does not do a lot to help.

On behalf of all members, the Chairman thanked the overseas representatives for the time and effort they expend on our behalf, of which we are all very appreciative.

Committee Members

Jason Cook, Mark Witheridge, Barbara Finemore and Carolyn Green were re elected. Joyce and Graham Browne agreed to become committee members along with Alison Smith.

6. Any Other Business

Time and date of the next meeting

With regard to the proposed event in Tavistock on 1st, 2nd and 3rd May, 2004, Joyce raised the question of altering the date of the meeting to the later Bank Holiday week end - 29th, 30th, and 31st May, as she believed that holiday packages and cheaper air fares are not available until after the first Bank holiday date and that this might deter overseas visitors from coming to this country. This was questioned, and it was pointed out that air fares are usually cheaper in the winter months.

June agreed to make some enquiries about air fares and let the committee know.

It was also thought that it might be desirable to move the Meeting and any event away from a Bank holiday weekend in view of the traffic congestion now prevalent, especially on roads to and from Devon.

(1) It was agreed to ask overseas members and interested friends to consult with each other and let us know their feelings with regard to a later date for any events.

(2) Consider the possibility of having the AGM and event on a weekend after the May Day holiday and before the Spring Bank Holiday e.g. the third week end in May.

(3) It was proposed to allow the committee to set a date for the AGM and events after discussion and consultation, and to publicise the date in the next magazine and/or by mail. This was proposed by Kim, seconded by Allison, and passed.

Date and venue for the AGM of year 2005

It was thought that a Midlands venue might have some interest for members, and Richard said that he held some publications from the Federation of Family History Societies giving addresses of some Societies who had premises which might be suitable for a meeting. He agreed to look into this.

Research by CD-Rom and Internet

Kim reported that there was now much information available on fiche, CD-Rom, and on the Internet which would be of interest to members. She thought that it

would be of benefit to members if the Society purchased certain of the CD-Roms, and made them available to members through the Research Co-ordinator.

After discussion it was proposed that the committee be authorised to consent to the purchase of some material to a value not exceeding £50.00. for the coming year. This material would be held by the Research Co-ordinator who would look up information on request. A list of material available would need to be publicised in the magazine. The proposal was put by Ron Dixon and seconded by Joyce Browne, and the proposal was carried.

POST MEETING NOTE Before any purchase, the Treasurer would have to seek agreement from all the committee members before a cheque could be issued.

Richard told the meeting that he held some books published by the Federation of Family History Societies which were available to members. There needed to be a system whereby members could borrow books, but someone needed to be responsible for ensuring their return. This required further discussion.

Allison Smith asked for, and was given, permission to allow the Folkestone and District Family History Society to publish an article 'Who Was John Gunn' which she had written and which was published in the Witheridge Times, to be published in their journal.

At the end of the meeting an informal ceremony took place, which was not anticipated by the recipients - Joyce was presented with a handsome certificate giving her the honour of being an Honorary Vice President of the Society, and Graham received a framed collage of historical Lord Nelson memorabilia (Graham's family coming two miles from the village where Horatio Nelson was born)

In spite of emotional feelings they managed to thank those responsible for the lovely gesture, and give their thanks for the help and support they had received during their years of office in the Society.

All items printed in the magazine come from our researchers and members and are accepted in good faith. If errors are seen in any of the contents then members are invited to inform the Editor so that they can be corrected.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th APRIL, 2003

During the year we have had some concern for the health of our Vice President, the Rev David Witheridge who fell and broke a femur, but we are pleased to report that his son Jim tells us that David is home from hospital, and although very frail, is improving.

Our Overseas representatives - Dorothy Witheridge Australia, Velma Metcalfe New Zealand and Kathy Witheridge North America, have once again given generously of their time and interest, and I would like our thanks and appreciation for their help to be placed on record.

Kathy and Paul Witheridge have continued to provide and update the Society's Web Site which has had 566 visits up to the time of writing. Kathy's internet links have attracted enquiries and she has spent much time giving and receiving information on Witheridges and their family contacts, and our other researchers also have followed up information which she has found.

Our last Annual General Meeting at Tenterden, Kent was very successful. The visits to a Vineyard and the steam rail journey to the castle at Bodiam were enjoyable, thanks to the efforts of Kim and Roy, which were greatly appreciated.

The difficulties and constitutional matters which troubled us last year have been resolved. And thanks to Kim and Richard our membership of the GOONS and the Federation of Family History Societies has now been regularised

This has been a year of quiet progress for the Society, but the overriding need is for more members to come forward to undertake official duties.

As this is my last annual report I wish to offer my thanks to Kim, Richard, Joyce and of course to those committee members who have helped me throughout the year. Without Joyce, my Chairmanship would have been more difficult, and I hope that the next Chairman receives as much support as I have had.

Also I must thank Brenda and Ron Dixon for their generous offer of hospitality allowing us to meet at their home for this year's Annual General Meeting.

Finally I must say that I have enjoyed my years in office, and of course I hope that the Society will gain members and grow and prosper in the years to come



GRAHAM BROWNE

CHAIRMAN

RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING APRIL 2003.

Our Canadian representative Kathy reports this year that her research is too numerous to list. Over the year she has sent me e mails covering research into:-

The Bradworthy line, the Hammett family associated with Beauchamp Henry Witheridge line.

Overseers of the Poor and Apprenticeships.

The US census for 1880.

Search of the London Gazette.

The ongoing search for the truth about Maria Tall Sandover Witheridge.

Search of the British Census for 1901.

A list of some of the Wills available.

A booklet on the Descendants of John Phillips Witheridge.

Reference to a Jas Witheridge in connection with a court report.

She has also introduced new members to the Society.

Kim's research has been hampered by her ill health, preventing her searching original sources, but she has been using CD's and the internet to resolve some queries (and finding new ones). Kim's main projects concern the index to the 1901 census for England and Wales. This index was transcribed initially by prisoners in jails, and later some parts were sent to India. All of this cheap labour. Poor levels of literacy, understanding of Victorian handwriting, poor knowledge of English geography and place names, and poor knowledge of English Christian and Surnames, also poor knowledge of English Victorian occupations, all led to problems in the translations. Riddled with errors, and apparently some sections have not been indexed at all.

Kim is making a detailed analysis of every index for Witheridge and all the valid variants, using her own card indexes and registration lists, together with the CD's and internet sources to list and identify all the Witheridges and possibly find missing entries. Kim will then submit all the corrections to the web site. She will make her list available in a booklet form later in the year and hopes to bring to the reunion her findings to date. As a matter of interest she has found the following:- A county called "Pusses" (Sussex), a married man who is only three years old!!, and an infant who is a civil servant. These are not necessarily Witheridge,

Joyce, with help from Sheila Jewel of the Devon Family History Society, has carried on research into the puzzling story of Maria Tall Sandover Witheridge. We thought we had solved the puzzle when Kathy sent in her findings, but have since found out that the Maria who died in the workhouse in 1901 was in fact another Maria who was married to John Sandover. This research is still ongoing.

Joyce has also checked the trees for new members and work was done on the Kent, London and Birmingham family details. Discovery of a lease on

property in Barnstaple for 1570 enabled Joyce to re assess connections with the Fremington family. Still looking for further sources of information. Research between Joyce, Sheila and Kim has been excellent and research is to commence on a list of Witheridge wills discovered by Kathy.

Me, well I'm still trying to gather all the information that I have and list it in some orderly fashion, but this is slow and seemingly never ending. This should have started in 1987 when the Society started. But I will keep trying and may one day catch up.

Thanks again are due to Joyce, Kim and Kathy for their efforts for the research on behalf of the Society and of course to Sheila Jewel for all her help and co-operation with Joyce.

Richard Witheridge
Research Co-ordinator May 2003.



Joyce Browne with her Vice President plaque, and Graham Browne receiving his Nelson Memorabilia picture at the AGM in May.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 30TH APRIL 2003.

INCOME.

Brought forward from March 2002 statement No 182 **£1063.77**
Membership Subscriptions including payments for
previous years £ 384.00

TOTAL £ 1447.77

EXPENDITURE

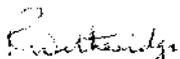
Tea/coffee at home of
Kim & Roy Cook . Donation £ 00.
Payment re Kim Cook for despatch of magazines
for Vol 15 Nos 3 & 16 No 1 £ 63.48
Payment to Kim Cook for despatch of magazines
For Vol 16 No 2 £37.19
Payment to Kim Cook for despatch of magazines
For Vol 16 No 3 £34.59
Payment to Grammer & CO Ltd for printing
magazines Vol. 16 Nos 1, 2 & 3 & Vol 17 No 1 £260.00.
Membership Secretary account (Donation) £ 00.00
Secretary's account (No submission) £ 00.00
Subscription to Guild of One Name Studies. (2003)* £ 12.00
Subscription to Federation of Family History
for 2003 £ 30.00

TOTAL **£437.26**

As per statement No 191

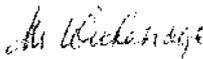
FINAL BALANCE £1010.51

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 2003.



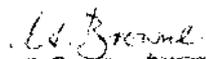
R H Witheridge
Treasurer.

Dated



M L Witheridge.
Assistant Treasurer.

Dated



G Browne
Auditor.

Dated

*As John Witheridge failed to renew his membership to the GoONS, I have now paid the subscription, and although held in my name, it is fully understood that I represent the Witheridge Family History Society.

Once again if we can maintain the balance at this level or more, then the membership subscriptions can be kept at the existing level.

The balance carried forward and shown on the statement will be as stated on the **March** statement from the bank. This will give me time to prepare the accounts and pass to the Auditor and make it simpler for checking by the Auditor. Any later payments/deductions will be included with next years figures.

Richard Witheridge. APR 2003
Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

FINDERS. . . .SEEKERS by Joyce Browne.

Sheila Jewell has sent us information on notes of three burials she found on the Register of Plymouth - St. Andrews. They are noted as:

Infant Mary Jane Witheridge St. Andrews St. buried 30th September 1843

We think that Mary Jane was the daughter of Philip Bowden Witheridge and Jane Ann Netherton. Mary Jane was born in Sept. quarter 1841 (GRO Indexes)

Infant Maria Ann Witheridge St. Andrews St. buried 13th December 1843

In the GRO Indexes this child is noted as 'Marina Ann' , born December quarter, 1843, and was also the daughter of Philip Bowden Witheridge and Jane Ann Netherton.

Infant Benneta Ann Witheridge Claremont St. buried 2nd August 1846

In the GRO Indexes this child is recorded as 'Bernata Ann', birth March quarter 1846. It is likely that she also was the daughter of Philip Bowden Witheridge and Jane Ann Netherton. There is a gap between the births of their daughters, Thirza Ann, born 1844, and their daughter Marina Ann born 1848. If so, this couple were rather unlucky at rearing their daughters - perhaps someone can tell us?

GENEALOGISTS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST LOSE THEIR CENSUS.

Just a few lines from an e mail received from Deidre Deakin, one of our New Zealand cousins. More later

Subject: Fw: Genealogists never die

- 1. My family coat of arms ties at the back....is that normal?**
- 2. My family tree is a few branches short! All help appreciated.**
- 3. My ancestors must be in a witness protection program!**
- 4. Shake your family tree and watch the nuts fall!**
- 5. My hobby is genealogy, I raise dust bunnies as pets.**
- 6. How can one ancestor cause so much TROUBLE??**
- 7. I looked into my family tree and found out I was a sap.**

Computer resources for Family History Research

By Kim Cook.

Introduction

I was going to start by apologising to those who don't yet use computers in their family history research, but I suspect that most of the members here, and of those who will read this in the next issue of *Wetheridge Times*, are already avid computer users. For those who aren't - I can only say you don't know what you're missing! Age is no barrier - there are 90-year-olds who use computer research facilities with great enjoyment and success. And if you feel daunted - join a class! I hope what follows will be an encouragement to non-users to try it and, to those who already use computers, to spread their nets (and I realise that's a pun!) much wider.

There are three main aspects of computer use in family history research. The first is the choice of software program to enable you to enter, store, arrange and print out all your information. The second is the use of web sites to gather information, and the third is the use of data CDs. Each of these aspects is useful on its own, but the key to obtaining and checking accurate information is to be able to use websites and CDs in parallel. This I'll talk about later, but first we need to look at each separately.

Software

The choice of software is a very wide-ranging and subjective issue, and would take far too long to cover here. Suffice to say that I hope Wetheridge FHS members will contribute articles to Richard, our new Editor of *Wetheridge Times*, describing and evaluating the software they use. Publication of these reports would be most useful for those considering starting up, or changing their software. However, nothing beats trying out programs for yourself. If you don't know of anyone near you who's using a genealogy program, there's an excellent CD containing samples of ten of the favourite software programs for you to try in your own home. Available from S&N Genealogy Supplies of Salisbury, Wilts (www.genealogysupplies.com), the 'Top Ten' disk costs just £5.

Websites

Websites fall into two categories, which I call **data sites** and **community sites**. Data sites carry basic information, either transcribed or as digital images. Community sites are those on which people can post their own information, ask for help with queries, and make contact with others researching the same family. While the community sites are very valuable, the best quality of information is usually to be found on the data sites. In this talk, I'll concentrate on some of the most useful data sites, and mention some of the community ones, but if you wish to have a fuller list, I've produced a booklet, *Computer Resources for Family History Research - an introductory guide*, for the Witheridge Society, listing these and other sources. Copies are £2 each, payable to the Witheridge Society. I mention this now to save you scribbling notes when these details and more are in the booklet.

Registration of births, marriages and deaths for various places is now available on line. Chief among these sites is www.freebmd.org.uk also available at <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com>. Teams of generous and dedicated volunteers are painstakingly entering the index details of every birth marriage and death in England and Wales from the start of civil registration on 1 July 1837, through to 31 December 1903. Eventually, the index will cover later dates, and you should be aware that currently work is limited to the basic registers. No work is yet being done on overseas, marine, adoption or other special registers. Even so, the database currently holds some 63 million records, and is updated every few weeks.

Another site offering this information is www.1837online.com. This offers, not a transcript of the indexes, but digital images.

In the past, I've successfully used www.bdm.nsw.gov.au for births, marriages and deaths in New South Wales, Australia, but recent attempts have met with no success. Another option is to try via www.nsw.gov.au and then entering either 'bdm' or 'family history' in the search window at the top of the home page. But if anyone's having difficulty accessing this site, I've transcribed a considerable number of entries, and will be happy to do lookups for members.

One of the longest-running and most useful sites is that of the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) at www.familysearch.com. Here you will find the International Genealogy Index (IGI) containing extracts from UK parish registers, and other registrations from around the world. Coverage is patchy, but if you strike lucky, it's possible to take a family tree back two hundred years in three or four lines, within a couple of hours! However, while many of the transcriptions have been done by experienced LDS researchers, a few have obviously been done by rank amateurs, and there are errors. It should also be noted that very few burials have been transcribed. Notwithstanding, the IGI has long been one of the most useful resources available to researcher. As well as the IGI, this site also has the 1880 census for the USA, the 1881 census for Canada and the 1881 census for the UK, which can be searched individually or simultaneously. The site also holds Ancestral Files and Pedigree Resource files, based on information supplied by individuals.

Much has been said (some of it uncomplimentary, some downright scathing) about the site for the 1901 census for England and Wales (www.census.pro.gov.uk). This has the potential to be a very valuable site for family historians, and to some extent it does fulfil that potential - but only to some extent. Having turned down a combined bid from the Federation of Family History Societies and the LDS (Mormon) church, the authorities favoured an outfit supported by senior government officials. In order to stay within their tendered budget, they had to use very cheap labour - initially inmates of Her Majesty's prisons, and later people in India! As you can imagine, the quality of the work was very patchy - some excellent, some poor, some frankly atrocious. Understandably, many of the overseas workers had minimal expertise in the English language, and often none at all of English geography, names, or occupations. The result is that you can enter correct information in the search criteria and find nothing. On one occasion when I entered the known place of birth as Brighton, Sussex, nothing came up. When I found the entry by other means, the county was shown as Pusses! Other place errors include Bumondery (Bermondsey), Lydenham (Sydenham) and Sillingbourne (Sittingbourne). Among the Witheridges, Winnie has been transcribed as Minnie, Hester as Hecter, Annie as Amy, while poor Emma (nee Sheppard) is given no Christian name at all! And for real nonsense,

how about a two-year-old son who's a charwoman, a mature man given the Christian names William Anne, and occupation of housemaid, and a three-year-old who's a civil servant (perhaps the one who assigned the contract for 1901 in the first place)! Ideas on how to get round these problems are included in the general tips that follow later.

A useful site pointing to the source of records in various locations is www.a2a.pro.gov.uk. This is the official site of the PRO's Access to Archives project, aiming to offer a full catalogue of all deposits in record offices and other archives. It currently has 4.35 million catalogue entries from 318 record offices and other sources, covering wills, land deeds, school and charity records, and much more. If you have a system for blocking pop-ups, use it on this site, as the pop-ups are frequent and annoying!

The Society of Genealogists, (www.englishorigins.com) offers instant downloads from a number of very useful sources, including Boyds Marriage Index 1538-1840, London apprenticeship abstracts, and wills from various sources, including a PCC wills index (not yet completed).

The Federation of Family History Societies (www.familyhistoryonline.net) offers a growing database of census transcriptions, baptism and marriage transcriptions, the National Burials Index and monumental inscriptions, covering various counties and dates. Coverage is at present patchy, but the site is growing nicely and promises to be extremely useful.

A recent change has seen the merger of the official sites of the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission, at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk. The two main elements of this site are PROCAT, the online catalogue of 9.5 million documents, including Chancery, Inland Revenue, Armed Forces, Admiralty, and Director of Public Prosecutions. These are not available for viewing online, but can be ordered in advance if travelling to Kew. But even more useful is the link to [documentsonline](#), with more than 700,000 Probate Wills from 1670-1858 (PCC Wills back to 1700 have been completed), available for almost immediate download.

Those with Scottish ancestry will be interested in www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, the official site of the GRO for Scotland, and www.scottishdocuments, hosted by the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN), offering downloads of Scottish wills and testaments (1500-1875) and a very useful guide to old styles of handwriting and terminology to help you decipher them.

Useful community sites include www.ancestry.com, www.genuki.org.uk, www.rootsweb.com, and if you want to find more, try www.cyndislist.com. This offers no less than 181,500 links, mostly by category, to websites of interest to family historians. It's so full of options, it can be difficult to navigate at first, but it's well worth persevering!

Busy sites

You should be aware that some sites experience severe problems at times of peak usage, and it can be difficult to get through. This is particularly true immediately after an update, when everyone wants to see if the information they're waiting for has now been added. Don't be put off trying to get through at a peak time, but don't be surprised or agitated if you aren't always successful. Many websites are victims of their own success.

Statistics for freebmd show that peak times include the two days immediately after an update, and 1pm-8pm on weekdays, and all day Sundays. Saturdays, for some reason, are relatively quiet - presumably shopping and sport take over, to say nothing of family gatherings like this one today! On average, two-thirds of attempted freebmd searches at these peak times are successful. On a normal day there are approximately 80,000 successful searches. But to give you an example of what can happen when there's a peak overload, I can quote you a recent example. The site was updated overnight on 31 March/1 April. On 1 April, 150,000 searches were attempted. 100,000 of these were successful, 20,000 failed because server was too busy, and 30,000 failed on time-out. If a search on any site fails because the server is too busy, there's nothing much you can do about it except be patient and keep trying.

Time-outs

However, searches may fail because they're timed out - the results have taken too long to download. In this case, alter your tactics. If you're looking for entries within a particular time-span (say 20 years), split the search, and make four searches each over five years. You're much more likely to be successful this way. Alternatively, narrow your search on geographical grounds, either to one county, or even one registration district or parish, according to what the site offers. Again, you'll be more successful checking four registration districts (or other defined areas) separately than trying to cover a whole county at one go. This process of refining your search is likely to be successful on many busy sites.

Errors in data

While avoiding time-outs involves inputting more specific search criteria, avoiding errors in data involves just the opposite. For instance, various records and indexes use different means of referring to counties. If not written in full, Bedfordshire can be Bed, Bedford, Bedfords, or Beds. Key in any one, and entries using the other forms just won't show up. So leave out the county. Even when there are place names that occur in more than one county, leave the county out of your search criteria. In the search results, it should be quite easy to determine which of the entries refers to the place you're looking for.

If you're still not getting search results, take out other search criteria, one by one, until either you come up with a result or you're left with just the surname. However, if you're researching names like Cook or Smith, this may eventually produce too many results and lead to a time-out, in which case you'll need to put back at least one additional piece of information. If gender is an option, divide your search into male and female. Put in an age range rather than a place, as place names have more likelihood of having an incorrect character. Some search engines allow you to put in a wild card - a character or characters (often an asterisk or question mark) to indicate an option on a letter, or groups of letters. For instance, if you want to check for Witheridge and Witheredge, you could enter Wither*dge. However, most search engines are unable to cope with a wild card in the first two letters, so you're unlikely to be able to search under W*theridge.

Other variations

Some sites offer Soundex or fuzzy searches. This means that if you put in Witheridge, it will automatically include names that sound similar, but are spelled differently. The IGI site does this anyway, unless you click on the box for exact spelling only. But different sites vary in what they include in fuzzy searches. IGI doesn't include Weatheredge or Withridge. Some sites include some very odd links, while leaving out some that you might think obvious. So watch what comes up, and be prepared to search specifically under other variant spellings.

Data CDs

This is just a brief selection, chosen with our members' interests in mind. Some are available now, others may be ordered on subscription at a special pre-release price, indicated with *. A longer list may be found in the booklet mentioned earlier. More details can be found on the websites of the following suppliers. DFHS (Devon Family History Society) at www.devonfhs.org.uk, FFHS (Federation of Family History Societies at (www.familyhistoryonline.net), LDS (Latter Day Saints) at www.lds.org.uk/genealogy/software.htm, and S&N Supplies at www.genealogysupplies.com .

1851 Census Cornwall	S&N	*£34.95
1851 Census Devon/Norfolk/Warwicks, indexed	LDS	£5.95
1851 Census London	S&N	£59.95
1870 Census British people in USA	S&N	£24.95
1871 Census Devon	S&N	*£34.95
1880 Census USA, indexed	LDS	£45.00
1881 Census UK, indexed	LDS	£29.95
1881 Census Canada	LDS	£17.57
1891 Census Cornwall	S&N	*£34.95
1891 Census UK Devon	S&N	£49.95
1891 Census London	S&N	£49.95
Full index an optional extra at £9.95, only with full disk set		
1891 Census Warwickshire	S&N	£49.95

Phillimore PRs Devon Marriages Vol 1 S&N
£9.95

Ipplepen/Kingskerswell/ Uffculme/ Martinhoe
Werrington/Countisbury/Trentishoe, various dates

Phillimore PRs Devon Marriages, Vol 2 S&N £9.95

St Andrew's, Plymouth, 1581-1654
Plymouth Marriage Index Vol 1, indexed **DFHS £15.50**
Vital Records UK (2nd edition) **LDS £22.95**
 IGI supplement, with 12.3 million entries.
Vital Records Australia **LDS**
£7.95
 IGI supplement, with 4.5 million entries.
NB Contractual limitations mean this is not for sale to Australia
 Vital Records North America (inc Canada) **LDS £17.95**
 IGI supplement with 4.6 million entries

Combination research

As I mentioned earlier, the best way to use these resources is in combination. Let me give you some examples.

You find a family in one census, but you don't know the maiden name of the wife. You then check freebmd to find the relevant entry in the marriage index. Once you've found the correct index entry, simply click on the page reference number, and this will show you all the names listed on this page. There may be up to eight marriages, but as you already know the Christian name of the wife, you've got a good chance of identifying the correct person. However, if the wife's name is a common one, like Mary Ann, and there's more than one Mary Ann in the list, note all the possible surnames. Then, having noted the wife's place of birth in the first census you checked, check the last census on which the wife was single, for the area in which she lived. If you don't find someone who matches the age, place of birth and surname, then that's the wrong spouse. Use this method to eliminate all the wrong ones, and you should be left with the correct one.

Conversely, if you've found a marriage entry and need to establish which of the spouses listed on the same page is the correct one, search the husband's name in the next census and see if the names of husband and wife match.

If a census return shows someone has been widowed, and you want to find the name of the deceased spouse, check freebmd for both the marriage and the death. When you get two names that match, you've found the right person.

In any of the above examples, if the death and/or marriage is post-registration, but the birth was pre-registration, use IGI to check for baptisms. You may not find what you're looking for, but it's worth a try. If you're still stuck, and it's a Witheridge, there's a good chance we already have the answer on file. But if it's not a Witheridge, try checking the research names listed on the site of the Guild of One-Name Studies (listed earlier), or go into one of the community sites and see if someone's already found the answer you're looking for.

Summary

This can only be a brief overview of the computer resources available to us. As I've mentioned before, there is a Witheridge FHS booklet, *Computer Resources for Family History Research - an introductory guide*, which has a more comprehensive list of websites and CDs. But whether you're new to computer research, or an old hand, I hope this has given you some new insights into what's available and how to get the best results.

NOTE

Kim Cook presented copies of the booklets on the 1901 Census and Computer Resources for Family Research at the AGM/reunion prior to giving her talk. The first showed a list of all the Witheridges and variants in the 1901 Census for England and Wales and at £2 +p&p is good value and useful to the researcher.

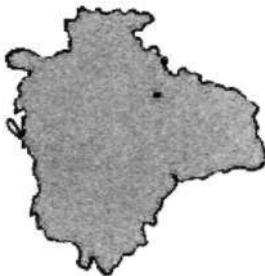
The second gives a guide to the various web sites available and also includes a list of data CD's available and where to find them. This is again good value at £1.50 + p&p.

Both are available from Kim Cook who has spent time researching these and is aimed at saving others going over the same ground.

Members are reminded that when intending to start researching a specific person or tree, that the research co-ordinator may already have information or be able to point you in the right direction.

JOYCE BROWNE PRESENTATION.

The Society offered Joyce Browne the post of Honorary Vice President and this was duly accepted by Joyce. For those members not able to be at the AGM, the following is a black and white copy of the plaque presented to Joyce.



Presented by

The Witheridge
Family History Society

to

Joyce Browne
on her appointment as

Honorary Vice President

*in recognition of her work as Editor for many years
and gratitude for the research work
which she has carried out and shared with the Society.*

President

Dated

GRAHAM BROWNE PRESENTATION.

For Graham our retiring Chairman, knowing his interest in the Nelson Society, we produced a framed composite picture of Nelson memorabilia,.



Don't forget that the next AGM/Reunion is being planned for Tavistock in South Devon.

Richard needs to know who is interested in attending so that plans can be made to make it interesting for you. The date has been changed to the weekend before the late Bank holiday, i.e. 22nd to 24th May 2004. It is hoped this will be helpful to overseas visitors. Also it will be easier travelling by road to Devon and booking accommodation. Lists of accommodation will be sent to those interested.

Early replies essential please.

MAJOR PHILIP WITHERIDGE.

A newspaper report given to me by Philip Witheridge and later a newspaper cutting sent to me by Annette Witheridge who resides in America.



Major Harry Witheridge died 22nd September 2002. He was awarded an MC while serving with the Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Regiment.

In 1944, Witheridge who was then a Captain was ordered, with the 8th Battalion, to attack point 411 on Monte Darniano. The approach was held up by the terraced hillside and walls 8 to 10 feet high, and numerous camouflaged enemy machine guns posts.

Witheridge went out into open ground to draw enemy fire and allow his gunners to pinpoint the enemy. After taking the ground with heavy casualties Witheridge and his men repelled numerous counter attacks. Four days later Witheridge led a patrol to deal with German troops around the village of Lorenzo and they accounted for 16 of the enemy and captured two Spandau posts without loss. Witheridge was awarded the MC for his part in establishing the Darniano bridgehead.

Henry James Witheridge was born on January 31 1910, the son of a railway superintendent at Tufnell Park, north London. On return to civilian life Witheridge was a prime mover in setting up the Brunswick Boys Club which was inaugurated by Prince Philip in 1949. He joined the overseas branch of the Midland bank and helped in setting up various banks abroad.

In retirement he enjoyed golf and was a keen gardener.

He is survived by his wife Toots Smith whom he married in 1954.

The report gives more about his life which can be seen in the Daily Telegraph for December 10th 2002 for anyone with a particular interest.

I'm sure someone will know who he was and give us more information.

Federation booklets

The Federation of Family History Society holds a lot of information books etc useful to the researcher and Richard can supply a list and the address to send to for copies of the information. The following is a list of books held by Richard and can be borrowed on short term loan at the cost of postage both ways.

INFORMATION SENT TO THE WITHERIDGE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY FROM 2002 -	
TITLE	AUTHOR/S
Probate Jurisdictions: Where to look for Wills. 5 th Edition.	Jeremy Gibson and Else Churchill
Record Offices. How to find them. 9 th Edition.	Jeremy Gibson and Pamela Peskett
Local Newspapers 1750-1920 England and Wales, Channel Islands, Isle of Man. A select location list. 2 nd Edition	Jeremy Gibson, Brett Langston and BrendaW Smith
Tracing your German Ancestors. 2 nd Edition.	Peter Towey
Scottish Family History on the Web. A Directory.	Stuart Raymond
Family History on the Web. An internet directory for England and Wales. 2002/3 Edition.	Stuart Raymond
Genealogical resources within the Jewish home and family.	Rosemary Wenzelul
Basic facts about Lunatics in England and Wales for Family Historians.	Pamela Faithfull
Surnames and Genealogy. A new approach.	George Redmonds
Current Publications on Microfiche by member Societies. 5 th Edition.	Compiled by John P Perkins
Administrative Records for Surrey and Sussex genealogists. Government, Ecclesiastical, Estate.	Stuart A Raymond
Surrey and Sussex lists of names.	Stuart A Raymond
Information sources for Surrey and Sussex Genealogists History, Archives, Journals etc.	Stuart A Raymond
Using Computers for Genealogy. 3 rd Edition.	David Hawgood
Basic facts about Descendant tracing.	Tom Wood
The book catalogue for Family and local Historian.	FFHS Publication
Was your Grandfather a Railwayman?. A directory of Railway Archive sources for Family Historians. 4 th Edition.	Tom Richards
Family History News and Digest	FFHS

From our researcher Kathy in Canada we have the following.

I have done up a little article on the Tavistock/New Jersey Witheridge family! I have been working on this line for a number of years and I am not sure whether it has ever been included in a magazine. I think John did an article on the Nanticoke family several years ago, but I don't think he had all the information back then.

Here it is:

TAVISTOCK TO NEW JERSEY

In the past few years I have been researching the Witheridge family who emigrated from Tavistock, Devon to New Jersey, USA.

John Phillips Witheridge, bapt., Feb 2, 1805 in Tavistock, Devon, married Jane Percy on Sep 13, 1832 at Tavistock. There were 8 children of the marriage.

1851 Census:

Ottery, Lamerton, Tavistock, Devon

WITHERIDGE, John	head	46	Labourer	Tavistock
WITHERIDGE, Jane	wife	38		
Lamerton				
WITHERIDGE, Richard	son	16	Mine Lab	Lamerton
WITHERIDGE, John	son	13	Farm Lab	Lamerton
WITHERIDGE, Emma	dau	8	Scholar	Lamerton
WITHERIDGE, William	son	5		Lamerton
WITHERIDGE, Mary	dau	2		Lamerton
WITHERIDGE, Ann	dau	1		
Lamerton				

The third child, John Phillips Witheridge, born May 23, 1837 at Tavistock, married Emma Northcott in 1862 in Devon.

There were eight children of the marriage, the first four born in Devon. Their third child, George born and died in 1864 in Devon. The remaining five children were born in New Jersey, USA.

The family appeared in the US census as follows:

1870 Census for Rockway Twp., New Jersey

WITHERIDGE, John 31 England

This family appeared in the 1880 Census for Randolph, Morris, New Jersey, USA

WITHERIDGE, John	head	43	1837	England	mine worker
WITHERIDGE, Emma	wife	41	1839	England	house keeper
WITHERIDGE, Mary	dau	17	1863	N.J.	
WITHERIDGE, George	son	14	1866	N.J.	
WITHERIDGE, John	son	11	1869	N.J.	
WITHERIDGE, Tom	son	7	1873	N.J.	
WITHERIDGE, Jane	dau	4	1876	N.J.	
WITHERIDGE, Emma	dau	3	1877	N.J.	
WITHERIDGE, Willie W.	son	1	1879	N.J.	

1900 Census - 226 S. Market Street, Nanticoke

WITHERIDGE, John	head	63	May 1837	mar	1838
England					
WITHERIDGE, Emma	wife	38	Nov 1838	England	
WITHERIDGE, Tom	son	26	Aug 1873	New	
Jersey					
WITHERIDGE, Emma	dau	23	Oct 1876	New Jersey	

The obituary of Emma Witheridge, read as follows:

DEATH OF MRS. EMMA WITHERIDGE

At the home of her daughter, Mrs. John Curtis of 310 State Street, Mrs. Emma Witheridge, aged 78, died on Saturday morning shortly before 9 o'clock of general Debility. She was born in Devonshire, England, Nov 17, 1838 and came to this country in the month of December, 1868, and took up her residence at Port Oram, New Jersey, where she resided until November of 1885. Thirty-two years ago she came to Nanticoke.

In 1862 she was married to John P. Witheridge, who died in November of 1914. Their golden wedding anniversary was celebrated five years ago and was attended by all the children and relatives.

Deceased was invalid for sixteen years but was always cheerful and possessed a loving disposition.

She made her home with her daughter, Mrs. John Curtis, for the past eight years.

She was an active member of the M.E. Church and took a prominent part in church work up to the time that she was affected with a paralytic stroke which made her an invalid.

She is survived by the following children: Mrs. John Curtis, George Witheridge of Plymouth; John and Thomas Witheridge of Nanticoke; Mrs. Jane Werfield; Mrs. Morris W. Gannon of British Columbia; also the following sisters and brothers: Mrs. Harry Hortop, Mrs. George Hammond, James Northcott, all of England, and Mrs. Polly Traher of Pittston.

Their youngest child, William W. Witheridge, born about 1879 in New Jersey, had a very tragic death on September 19, 1895 at the age of 16 years. An account of this Tragedy was shown in the magazine, see Vol 16 No 3, Autumn/Winter 2002.

SOMEONE HAD TO DO IT!

(be an Overseer of the Poor)

by Joyce Browne

In England, by the year 1536, Laws and Statutes had come into force which stipulated that the poor were to be cared for in their parishes with money which was to be subscribed by the residents. By 1597 Justices of the Peace were given the power to raise the money compulsorily. Every parish, however small, had to appoint an 'Overseer of the Poor'. Large parishes could divide responsibilities into districts, but no parish was to have more than four overseers, who had to work closely with the Churchwardens.

What were the duties of Overseers, and what manner of men were they?

They had to be 'substantial householders' - the post was unpaid. They had to be men of authority - they had the 'complete governance of the poor'.

They had to be prepared and able to give their time to the duties of the post.

In the parish of Ermington, where the registers began in 1603, the name of **Arthur Witheridge** is given as Churchwarden in 1608 and

again in 1626. His son **Lionell Witheridge** was Churchwarden in 1649, and was Overseer of the Poor in 1652. From then on, for a hundred and twelve years and through five generations, Witheridge men appear as Wardens and Overseers.

We might think that the appointment as Overseer carried a certain cachet, given the authority attached to it, but I think it could incur a great deal of unpopularity, given the nature of the duties.

The overseer was appointed in Easter week, and he had to live within the parish. His appointment was confirmed and sealed within one month by two Justices of the Peace, and thereafter he had to meet once a month with the Churchwardens and other overseers to consider methods of relieving the poor. This was not optional, if he failed to do this and could not prove that he was sick, and had no exemption granted by the Justices, he must forfeit 20s.0d. - Grandmother's funeral was no excuse! This was the first commitment on his time.

The responsibility of having the 'complete governance of the poor' needed many skills. It was not enough to be a man of compassion and social conscience, the overseer needed to have judgment, business sense, accounting skills, and local knowledge.

First he had to decide who was poor - and there were three classes of 'poor'. The first was not too difficult to categorise - they were the blind, the lame, the aged, those suffering from 'decrepitude' 'distracted persons', and infants with no parents.

The second class may have been more difficult to distinguish - it included persons maimed by accident, harmed by fire, or suffering from having too many children to support. The third class comprised those who had made themselves poor by rioting, idleness and drunkenness, and they were not to be relieved except in cases of extreme necessity, and those who could work were to be made to maintain themselves by hard labour or be sent to a house of correction.

The overseer had to use his judgment and acumen to decide who needed complete support and who could be set to work, and for the latter he had to find work and see that they reported for that work.

Having decided who should receive relief, the overseer had to ensure that those who could not work were settled in their homes, and keep a

register of names and amounts given and decide whether they needed money or relief in kind.

Persons receiving relief had to wear a badge on the upper right sleeve consisting of a large letter 'P' (for Pauper) and the first letter of the name of the parish. If an overseer gave relief to a person not wearing a badge the officer could be fined 20s.0d. for every offence. The informer who told a magistrate about this was given a portion of the 20s.0d and the rest was given to the poor. (Think what ill-feeling this could cause among neighbours)

A further erosion on the overseer's time was that he had to visit the poor in their homes to see that they were living sober lives, and the only excuse for not visiting was if the family had a disease such as smallpox or the plague.

Business acumen and local knowledge was needed to help the overseer find work within the parish for any who were fit to work, and he had to ensure that there was a sufficient stock of materials, such as linen, wool and textiles available for those who could undertake work for the parish. Women were paid to knit stockings and make clothes for the needy.

One of the most important duties of the overseer was that he was required to estimate, on a yearly basis, how much money would be needed to support the poor of the parish. This money did not come from a higher authority or national fund, but had to be raised by means of a annual tax, levied on goods, property and land from every worker, trader, farmer, leaseholder or landowner in the parish. The overseer had to set the rate of tax and collect it. I can imagine how his popularity waxed and waned over this!

If, because of some emergency, the overseer used his own money for relief purposes he was entitled to levy a rate to cover his loss. The only expenses he was allowed to claim were for unusual travel or in the preparation of the accounts.

These accounts had to be presented annually, in a set form, with details of expenditure on each person or family. If an overseer was found to have presented false accounts, on the warrant of a Justice of the Peace he could be committed to gaol, and if he refused or was

unable to refund any shortfall the money could be obtained by the distress or seizure of his goods or property.

From birth to death the unfortunate poor came under the control of the overseer. He had to decide when parents were unable to maintain their children and disburse relief accordingly. If the children were over seven years of age, but under fifteen they could be set to work or put out as apprentices, with their own agreement, but if they were over twelve and refused a placement then they could be compelled by a Justice of the Peace.

All burials had to be reported to the overseer as he had to present a list of all burials within the parish during his year of office. Also he was responsible for seeing that the regulations concerning burial in wool were complied with. By the mid eighteenth century the wool industry was in decline and in order to boost trade a law was passed that every corpse was to be buried in a woollen shroud. (the rich and upwardly mobile were being buried in silk and other material) An affidavit had to be sworn that the deceased was buried in wool, and if this was not forthcoming, a fine of £5. 0d. was levied. The overseer was the man who had to ensure that either the affidavit or the fine was presented, and if he did not then he had to pay a fine himself.

In the year 1757, in Ermington, Mary Witheridge, the infant daughter of John Witheridge, Overseer or the Poor, was buried in wool, the affidavit being sworn by one John Clees. One wonders how much the wool trade benefited, and how much the lawyers made out of it.

The authorities tried to ensure that no taint of corruption should attach to the office of Overseer, and anyone who had any authority over the maintenance of the poor house, if a village had one, was not allowed to supply goods for it himself.

Witheridge names appear on lists of Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor in several parishes, and if you find one of your ancestors so named I feel that you can hold that name in some respect and admiration for his public service in difficult conditions and in hard times.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

(Continued from inside front cover)

Auditor

Mr Ron Dixon
21 Poplar Avenue
Orpington
Kent. BR6 8LA

Representative Australia

Mrs Dorothy Witheridge
2/66 Abuklea Road Eastwood 2122
Australia.

Representative Canada and
North America

Mrs Kathy Witheridge
343 Bright Street, Sarnia. Ontario.
Canada. N7T 4G5

Representative New Zealand

Mrs Velma Metcalfe
49 Chester Road Tawa, Wellington
New Zealand.

Committee Members

Mr Jason Cook
2 Rusthall Close
Addiscombe
Croydon
Surrey CR0 7YH

Mr Mark Witheridge
27 Shenley Fields Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
West Midlands B29 5AG

Mrs Barbara Finnemore
1 Corfe Avenue
Hartley Vale
Plymouth
Devon PL3 5SQ

Mrs Carolyn Green
2 Thomhill Gardens
Newport
South Wales
NP10 9GA

Mrs Joyce Browne

Mr Graham Browne

Mrs Maureen Witheridge

Mrs Allison Smith

