

Witheridge

Family History Society

Newsletter

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Family News



Jennifer and Margaret celebrated Margaret's 90th birthday in September.

News from Australia

Shortly after the publication of our December *Newsletter*, we were pleased to have news from **Jennifer and Richard Woolcott**. During the year they had moved Jennifer's Mum, **Margaret Witheridge**, from her home of more than 70 years, to a new villa close to Jennifer and Richard, so that Jennifer could give Margaret the care she needed. Sadly, this arrangement lasted only 5 months before doctors advised that a higher level of care was needed, and in late summer Margaret moved to an Anglican Care facility nearby.

Margaret's health (and Jennifer's) improved, and in September Margaret celebrated her 90th birthday.

Last March Jennifer and Richard had been due to go on a long anticipated trip to Alice Springs and Uluru, but feared that with Margaret's moves and care needs, it would have to be postponed. Thanks to Jennifer's brother and wonderful family, who cared for Margaret while they were away for a week, Jennifer and Richard had a wonderful time away. Once Margaret was settled, Jennifer and Richard were able to go on the 12-day holiday to China they had booked in 2015. They visited beautiful gardens and palaces, travelled at 431 kph on the world's fastest train, and walked on the Great Wall (pictured right).



A medal and a trophy...

London's New Year's Day Parade in which all 32 London Boroughs take part, along with invited teams from throughout the UK and overseas, is now famous world wide. This year **Lauren Cook**, son of Jason and Zoe, was one of those invited to take part. HJA, the stage school Lauren attends, joined with St Christopher's Hospice, representing the Borough of Bromley with their 'Super Stars and Hospice Heroes' display. Among the Super Stars portrayed by HJA students were Michael Jackson, David Bowie, Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland as Dorothy, while Lauren (in dark wig and white satin suit) was Elvis! The Hospice Heroes were children and staff from St Christopher's, and everyone enjoyed the day, despite the rain. At the end of the day, all participants received a commemorative medal (left),



and the Bromley team were awarded a prize of £2,000 which was donated to St Christopher's.

A few weeks later, Lauren and two friends from HJA took part in a 'Rising Stars' dance competition, which they had to choreograph themselves, and they were runners-up in their section. Lauren (centre) holds the trophy they received.

...and another trophy

Lauren's trophy was added to the one received by her brother **Ethan Cook**. Dad Jason sent in this report.

Some of you may recall a report in one of last year's newsletters about my son, Ethan, and his junior pool team winning the National Pool Championship in Great Yarmouth. Unfortunately, they didn't qualify for this year's championships, but they were given a wild card entry as defending champions. This meant that once again the first weekend in March was spent at the Vauxhall Holiday Park in Great Yarmouth.

This was to be Ethan's last event with the London Junior team as he is now 18, and therefore too old to be eligible to play in future junior events. Following last year's success, three of the team's best players had already turned 18, and had left the team. This meant that this year's team was a lot younger – in fact the second youngest in the competition – and considerably less experienced. To be fair, I was not expecting them to be a force in the competition, and was a little apprehensive when they were drawn against Lancashire in the first round. Although London had beaten them in the final last year, Lancashire were considered to be among the favourites.

A 23-16 win saw London safely into the next round, where they were drawn against Staffordshire Juniors (whom they had beaten at the same stage last year). The early stages were very close, and just after halfway London had a narrow 13-11 lead. However, the London team kicked up a gear, and ran out 23-15 winners, putting them into the semi-finals.

Kent were their next opponents, and London were hungry for revenge after Kent had beaten them to automatic qualification. The match was scheduled for an 8.30 am start on Sunday morning, meaning I was up at 6.30 to cook breakfast (if the name fits...!!) for the lads staying in the same caravan as me. This proved to be a hard fought

Left: Ethan Cook (tallest in back row) with some of his younger team-mates from the London Junior Pool Team, with their runners'-up trophies.



encounter, eventually finishing 22-22. This meant that there was a three frame playoff, which London won, putting them into the final again.

Their opponents in the final were Sussex, who had won London's region in qualifying for the championships. Unfortunately, there was to be no fairytale ending, as Sussex won 23-18. Ethan did manage to beat an England international in the final though, and I can honestly say that the entire team exceeded everyone's expectations in terms of the achievement just to get to the final.

Once again, a very proud dad!!

Perfect Holiday

Liz and Chris Davey (our Treasurer and Vice Chairman) recently enjoyed what can only be described as a perfect holiday. Chris has written this report.

After thirty years of our friends in Sydney asking when we were coming to visit them, this was the year we called their bluff! A short-lived attempt to sort out flights, hotels etc, led us quickly to our friend Dave's company, Freedom Australia, a specialist travel agent who did an amazing job for us with faultless arrangements working like clockwork throughout the trip.

On 20 January, we left a cold and grey Heathrow, bound for sunnier climes: Singapore in the monsoon season. We were booked on Emirates and knew they stopped at Dubai after about seven hours, but the fifteen hour hop to Brisbane, our first Australian destination did not appeal, so we opted for a stop in Singapore. It did not disappoint. Our first full day was blessed with bright sunshine. We took advantage of the superb, and cheap, public transport system to visit the Gardens by the Bay, a stunning eco park, and the amazing Hotel in the Sky which dominates the skyline. Day two rewarded us with real monsoon rain, that we 'enjoyed' by thinking we could dodge the showers and walk to the underground station. Bad mistake, we could not have got any wetter if we had dived in the hotel pool. We abandoned our plan to visit the Botanic Gardens and dried out in the National Gallery, home to some stunning artwork.

Once we were sure the rain had stopped, we made the obligatory trip to Raffles Hotel, then back to our hotel to collect our luggage for the onward flight to Brisbane. For anybody who has endured US Immigration, Australian immigration officers might as well be on a different planet.

Friendly and very helpful, they extricated us from behind a group of about three hundred Chinese school kids, and guided us through the electronic passport gate. We were in Australia, bags collected in about ten minutes.

From Brisbane we flew a short hop to Cairns, enjoying spectacular views of the coast as



Left: The famous Raffles Hotel in Singapore, founded in 1887, and still the epitome of luxury, with its colonial architecture, period furniture, and liveried Sikh doormen.

we flew. Hire car was waiting for us at Cairns and we were quickly on the road to Port Douglas. A very interesting road at that. The Captain Cook Highway winds along the coast giving great views of the beaches and sea; if you are not driving that is. This is a road that demands concentration, but Liz tells me the views are terrific.

Driving in Australia is very easy, they drive on the correct side of the road to start with, and outside the big cities traffic is very light. We enjoyed five days in Port Douglas, with beautiful weather and a nice hotel. It was very quiet. We had not realised that this was their off season. It should have been the rainy season, but we had wall to-wall sunshine, with just a few showers while we were in the rainforest. Our trip out to the Barrier Reef lived up to the hype. I snorkelled while Liz looked glamorous on the beach – somebody has to do it! The biggest thing in the water was a black-tipped reef shark; completely harmless so we were told. It would take a month to list the tropical fish varieties I saw on the reef; suffice to say they are even more colourful in real life.

From Port Douglas we flew to Uluru in the ‘red centre’, except it was not red at all. They had had very heavy rainfall the previous week so the desert was covered in coarse green vegetation. The resort itself is immaculate; a group of several hotels arranged around a central green and swimming pool. It doubles as a college for young aboriginal students training for the hospitality industry: managers, chefs etc, and they are clearly being taught to a high standard. We were especially impressed by the young lady who ran the ‘dining under the stars’ barbecue - she had a voice like a foghorn and sounded like Crocodile Dundee on steroids! The rock itself is awe inspiring, and so alien in the surrounding desert. It was hot, around 30 degrees in the day, but that did not bother us, it was those damn flies. In the end we resorted to the nets that make you look like a bee keeper, but they work.

We then flew down to Sydney to stay with our lifelong friends Rodney and Laura. I went to school with Rodney, Liz with Laura. The city lived up to its reputation. It is in a stunning setting with one of the finest harbours in the world. All the more surprising that the harbour was discovered by a land party of explorers because Captain Cook had sailed straight past. From the seaward side all you can see is high cliffs as you sail past the entrance. You have to come through the gap and turn right, then all

is revealed. The Harbour Bridge is much bigger close up than I imagined, a real triumph of engineering. The Opera House is the other well-known landmark. Our hosts had arranged tickets for an excellent show about John Lennon. The building is as impressive on the inside as the outside. Rodney and Laura had

The awe-inspiring Uluru (formerly Ayers' Rock), with the surrounding desert uncharacteristically covered in coarse green vegetation.





Left: One of the many sheer-sided valleys in the Blue Mountains which presented such a challenging barrier to explorers trying to push west from Sydney.

booked a cottage in the Blue Mountains for three days during our stay. Our first day there saw our first and only bad weather on the trip. Low cloud and rain obscured the famous views at first, but then it suddenly cleared revealing the steep sided valleys and endless eucalyptus trees. By our last day we were back to bright sunshine and high temperatures again. The Blue Mountains should really be called the Blue Canyons. It is a high plateau split by numerous deep forested valleys with sheer walls. You can see how they presented an almost impossible barrier to the early explorers trying to push west from Sydney.

After numerous trips to Sydney's famous beaches, and some lovely dinners meeting people we had heard about so much in the last thirty years we felt we knew them, we reluctantly said goodbye and headed for Melbourne. We had been hot since we arrived in Australia. Melbourne provided some welcome relief from the high temperatures. The weather was beautiful but more like an English summer.

Melbourne was the exception when it came to driving. I can honestly say that it is more stressful than just about anywhere I have driven, and that includes the Paris Periphique in the rush hour. They have a really eccentric system of right turns where there are tram tracks, and there are tram tracks everywhere. You pull off to the left and then have to deal with conflicting traffic going straight across the lights, as well as the oncoming traffic and the trams themselves. I found it easier to make a series of left turns and come round the block. The locals admit it is bonkers and they are slowly changing it.

Melbourne is very different from Sydney in character. There is a rivalry there to equal the famous Glasgow/Edinburgh competition. It feels more European than Sydney, that still has a frontier edge. We loved it, and especially the surrounding countryside. We drove up to the Dandenong Hills to see the famous Puffing Billy railway. The scenery could best be compared to a muscular version of Hampshire, with delightful little villages



One of Melbourne's free trams, which run just about everywhere across the city – lovely for those who ride the tram, but a nightmare for drivers!

separated by fields and extensive hardwood forests.

To break the journey home we had elected to stop off in Hong Kong for a couple of days. This proved to be another highlight of our travels. It is an amazing city, that has retained its colonial atmosphere despite officially being part of China. They seem to revel in the traditions of old Hong Kong and, surprisingly, the Chinese government almost seems to encourage it. They drive on the left, many of the street names read like something out of Victorian London, and much of the engineering has the same feel. The Peaks tram is worth the journey alone, with incredible views over the city and on into the New Territories. The food is superb as you would expect, we even ended



up with the best fish and chips for lunch one day. *Chris and Liz enjoying Hong Kong*

From Hong Kong it was time for the long slog home. The timing of our flight meant that the stretch from the stopover at Dubai to London was done in daylight, and clear skies gave us stunning views over the snow-covered mountains of the Caucasus, Turkey and Eastern Europe. We finally arrived back in London at about lunchtime on Sunday 19 February to quite nice weather. We made a total of ten flights, only one was late which caused a bit of a rush to make the connection. Our luggage turned up on time every time. Emirates and Qantas were both excellent. Would we do it again? Definitely, but New Zealand will be our destination for our next long haul holiday, and that may have to wait until our grandsons are in school. *Sounds like the perfect holiday, and one to go into the family history! Ed.*

Sad farewells

In recent months we have been saddened by news of the deaths of two members of the Witheridge FHS who have been closely involved in recent years – **Julia Crocker** and **Tom Jewell**. Tributes are printed on pages 16 and 17.

Sometimes we aren't notified of the deaths of members at the time. Through the work being done to update our membership details, we have recently learned of the death, in 2012, of **Peter Witheridge Grafton**, (see page 18).

Apology

We apologise to all our members in the USA and Canada, for the late arrival of their Christmas cards. They were all sent in good time, in one parcel, to our Representative, Jim Witheridge, in Minneapolis, but failed to arrive until 17 January. Our local post office has been unable to determine why there was such a delay. Jim promptly forwarded them to our North American members, so the delay was not his fault.

Officers' Reports

Year Ending 31 December 2016

Chairman's Report by Jason Cook

This year, the Witheridge FHS's 30th year, has seen many changes within the Committee. Early in 2016, **Beth Neilly** resigned as our Secretary, having bravely taken on the task in 2012, soon after joining the Witheridge FHS. In December 2016 **Barbara Finemore** retired, having been elected in 2013 as our Membership Secretary. We are grateful to both for their contribution to the Society throughout those years, and both have been sent gift vouchers as a token of our appreciation.



At our 2016 AGM we welcomed new member **Paul Barber**, and were delighted when he offered to be our Facebook Moderator. Although **Geoff Shingler's** appointment isn't strictly within the year covered by this report, I must also mention how very grateful we are to him for agreeing to take over the post of Membership Secretary for 2017, and how impressed we are with the work he's done.

However, we are still without a Secretary. As reported in the minutes of the 2016 AGM we agreed to appoint a paid Secretary from outside the membership. In the December 2016 *Newsletter*, I reported on the disappointing outcome. In the weeks after the AGM we found an excellent candidate, who was due to start in late summer. Sadly, her circumstances changed suddenly, and she was unable to take up the post. Since then we have been unable to find another suitable candidate.

Meanwhile, both **Kim Cook** and I have tried to cover the bases, despite long working hours for me, and considerable health problems for Kim, but this situation cannot continue. We cannot function efficiently without a Secretary, and as no volunteers have come forward, the Committee has again put forward the proposal to employ someone outside the Society, under the same terms as before. Even if this is successful, it can only be a stop-gap, and we would ask any member who is capable of sending out group e-mailings of our *Newsletter* and other notices a few times each year, to consider being our Secretary.

Although Beth Neilly combined the task of Secretary and *Newsletter* Editor, these two posts have now been separated. Kim has managed to produce two issues of the *Newsletter* in recent months, but we need to produce four issues a year. Communication with members is seriously compromised without a regular *Newsletter*. This can be produced in any form, eg Word or pdf, readily available on most computers, and we are asking all members to consider whether they might be able to help with this. Kim is very willing to give help and support, but can no longer be responsible for producing it on her own.

Despite these difficulties, the Witheridge FHS has come through 2016 in slightly better shape than it was at the start of the year. Currently, we are working through lists of non-member contacts who might be able to attend our 30th Birthday Reunion, and we're hoping this will encourage some to join the Society. If there is someone on your family tree who isn't yet a member, perhaps you could encourage them to join, too.

Treasurer's Report by Liz Davey

As of 21 February 2017 the Witheridge FHS had a healthy balance of £1237.21 (less a cheque for £113.11 which cleared the following month). Income came entirely from subscriptions.

There was the normal expenditure for two issues of the *Newsletter*, membership of the Federation of Family History Societies, the AGM, Christmas cards and a thank-you voucher for the auditor.

This year also saw exceptional payments made to charities in memory of deceased members **Joyce Browne** and **Allan Witheridge**, and thank-you vouchers sent to former committee members **Beth Neilly** (Secretary) and **Barbara Finemore** (Membership Secretary)



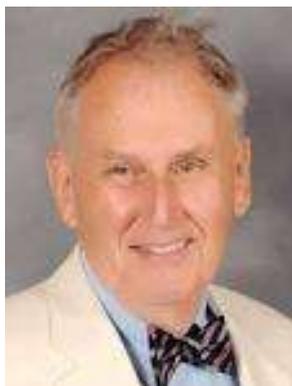
Secretary's Report

As noted in the Chairman's report, above, we don't currently have a Secretary. Throughout the year, **Jason Cook** and **Kim Cook** have done their best to keep the Society's administration functioning. However, as both work, and have other functions within the Society, and as Kim has considerable health problems, their best is not as good as we should expect it to be if we had a dedicated Secretary. Jason and Kim have just about kept up with the basics, such as AGM minutes for 2016, and administrative requirements for the 2017 AGM. The secretarial tasks aren't onerous if done by someone dedicated to the role. If you think you might be able to help, but would like more information, please contact Jason Cook.

Membership Report

Barbara Finemore was our Membership Secretary throughout the year but, following her retirement in December, she relinquished the paperwork, and therefore no longer had the information needed to complete a report. Although our new Membership Secretary **Geoff Shingler** now has the paperwork, he's not fully conversant with what happened in 2016. **Liz Davey**, **Jason Cook**, and **Kim Cook**, have put together the information we have. From this, it's clear that a general renewal reminder in a *Newsletter* doesn't have the impact of personal reminders. In response to last year's general reminder, only 5 members renewed. However, once personal emails were sent, a further 19 responded. Although we welcomed two new members, sadly three of our long-term members, **Allan Witheridge**, **Joyce Browne** and **Julia Crocker** died. We are offering Allan's widow, Judith, honorary membership in recognition of her wonderful work over many years on the Society's behalf. Some of our most

senior members who are in poor health, have not renewed, and we suspect there may have been deaths about which we've not been notified. The total membership as at 31 December was 29, we we're hoping to add to that number as a result of publicising our 30th Anniversary.



Webmaster's Report by *Bill Dwyne*

Although the detailed Google statistics on usage by location are no longer available to us, it's possible to obtain a more general breakdown on usage from Dreamhost. These show that 52% of visitors to our web-site are from google.co.uk, 13% from google.com, and 3% from google.fr. A less popular search engine called duckduckgo.com produces less than 1% of our usage. The balance (over 30%) comes from various web-crawlers, who are very common and search all web-sites. Some are legitimate, some not. Many of these carry Russian labels, but this doesn't necessarily mean that they come from Russia!

The most popular part of the web-site is the Photo Album (zenphoto), which was accessed by 71% of those using the site.

Internet security/safety is an ever-growing concern for many. Basically, you should treat Internet safety in the same way as you treat safety in general. Telephone and doorstep scams are just as popular as Internet ones, so don't respond to any of them. The Internet is safe if you are initiating the contact, but not safe if someone else initiates it. Do not respond to any requests.

Finally, if you have any material that you'd like to share on the web-site, including photos of ancestors, their homes, their local churches, or their graves, these would be welcome additions to our site.

Research Co-ordinator's Report by *Kim Cook*

During the past year, it's given me great pleasure to help our two newest members, **Paul Barber** and **Richard Ellis**, resolve queries with their respective family trees. Helping members, new and old, with their family research queries, is a key part of the Research Co-ordinator's role, and may save you re-doing research that has already been done and verified by very experienced researchers. Be aware that many of the family trees posted on various web-sites contain serious errors, as do many privately held ones. If you've copied information from the web, or received information from someone else research the same family, please don't assume it's accurate. Check it out with our Witheridge FHS information. Likewise, if you've discovered anything new about your Witheridge ancestors, please let us know, so that we can share it with other members who share your ancestry.



Also during the year, I managed to obtain and transcribe a copy of the will of **George Witheridge**, born about 1790, who lived in the parish of St Mary

Newington, and died there in 1855. The will refers to his 'beloved wife Ann' and also mentions his sister, **Grace Moor Witheridge**, and his half-brother **William May** of Tavistock, mason. These details provide full confirmation of a provisional construction I made some years ago, in the belief that George was the son of **James Witheridge** and his wife **Mary May**, who married in Tavistock in 1788. George moved to London and married **Ann Payne** in Shoreditch in 1825. The 1841 census shows George and Ann living in Newington with Elizabeth Witheridge, 15. This information has now been added to the ENP for the Bradworthy branch of the family.

Throughout the year, as and when possible, I have been adding information to many of the Enhanced Narrative Pedigrees (ENPs) of the various branches of the Witheridge family, and updating the file copies. Many of the ENPs are now so comprehensive and wide-ranging that I am having to re-order them into sub-groups within each family, and sometimes into sub-groups of sub-groups! This will make it much easier to follow the various lines, and will also enable me to separate them out so that more members can have easy access at meetings. This work isn't complete, but all ENPs will, as usual, be on display at the AGM and Reunion.

Witheridge FHS 30th Birthday Reunion

Saturday 20 May 2017, at 2.00pm

at St Mark's Centre, Church Road, Biggin Hill, Kent TN16 3LB

Provisional Timetable

2.00 pm WFHS 30th Birthday Reunion, to which former members and non-members are invited. There will be plenty of time, before and after refreshments, for those attending to meet each other and enjoy a display of pedigrees, family trees, GRO and parish register certificates, wills, family trees and maps. A Question and Answer session is also planned.

3.30 pm Refreshments, with cutting of the WFHS 30th Birthday cake.

5.00 pm Formal closing of Reunion Meeting.

5.30 pm Meet at local pub-restaurant for Reunion Meal (to be booked).

6.15 pm Reunion Meal

Note: Please will all those planning to attend the Reunion Meal confirm their attendance by Saturday 6 May if possible, by emailing Jason Cook (jasonprcook@googlemail.com), so that we can book enough places at the venue.

Witheridge FHS Annual General Meeting



Saturday 20 May 2017 at 12.30 pm
St Mark's Centre , Church Road,
Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent TN16 3LB

The 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Witheridge Family History Society will take place on Saturday 22 May 2017 at 12.30 pm, in St Mark's Centre, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent TN16 3LB. Please email our Chairman, Jason Cook, if you wish to be sent absentee voter forms.

Agenda

- 1 Chairman's opening and welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the 2016 AGM held at St Mark's Centre, Church Road, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent, on 4 June 2016
- 4 Matters arising from these Minutes
- 5 Matters arising from Officers' Reports
- 6 Election of Officers and Committee Members

These reports will be emailed or mailed to members shortly.

The following have been nominated for the posts listed, and have agreed to stand.

Chairman

Jason Cook

Proposed by: Philip Milnes-Smith

Seconded by: Val Wells

Vice Chairman

Chris Davey

Proposed by: Kim Cook

Seconded by: Catherine Shingler

Secretary

Position Vacant

No nomination received

Membership Secretary

Geoff Shingler

Proposed by: Jason Cook

Seconded by: Kim Cook

Treasurer	Liz Davey Proposed by: Geoff Shingler Seconded by: Alison Smith
Assistant Treasurer	Chris Davey Proposed by: Jason Cook Seconded by: Catherine Shingler
Editor and Publisher	Position vacant No nomination received
Research Co-ordinator	Kim Cook Proposed by: Val Wells Seconded by: Alison Smith
Webmaster	Bill Dwyne Proposed by: Jason Cook Seconded by: Liz Davey
Facebook Moderator	Paul Barber Proposed by: Philip Milnes-Smith Seconded by: Kim Cook
Committee Members	Pamela Glynn Proposed by: Chris Davey Seconded by: Liz Davey Roy Cook Proposed by: Alison Smith Seconded by: Chris Davey Alison Smith Proposed by: Val Wells Seconded by: Jason Cook

7 Overseas Representatives

The would like to record the Society's thanks and gratitude to Jennifer and Richard Woolcott, our Australia Representatives, and to Jim Witheridge, our North American Representative, who has been ably assisted by Annette Witheridge. We are delighted to say that they have agreed to continue as the Society's Overseas Representatives, and the Society is delighted to accept their offer.

Australia: Jennifer and Richard Woolcott

New Zealand: Position vacant – nominations invited

North America: Jim Witheridge and Annette Witheridge

8 Appointment of Auditor

We are very grateful to **Janice Cawsey** who has kindly agreed to act as our Auditor again for the current year. We have expressed our thanks for her work last year with the gift of a garden voucher.

9 WFHS Secretary

If, under Item 6 above, we are unable to elect a Secretary at this AGM, we need to appoint someone to do the work for us, until such time as a volunteer Secretary can be co-opted. We have more than sufficient finance in our funds to cover payment of at least £350.00, to keep the Society running

efficiently for a few months. In accordance with Section 4.3 of the Constitution, the person appointed would be made an Honorary Member for the duration of the appointment, and would therefore be subject to all the rules of membership, but not eligible to vote. During that time, in addition to dealing with essential correspondence, the Secretary would be expected to work with the Committee in producing a regular newsletter and encouraging the recruitment of new and former members.

Motion: To appoint a paid Secretary, not currently a member of the Society, to support the Committee until such time as a volunteer Secretary can be found within the Society. The initial budget for this would be £350.00 over a period of a few months, with the person appointed made an Honorary Member for the duration of the appointment.

Proposed by: **Jason Cook**

Seconded by: **Geoff Shingler**

10 Honorary Membership

It has been proposed that we award an Honorary Membership to **Judith Witheridge** in recognition of her sterling work over many years as our Australia Representative and for organising the annual Witheridge Family Reunions in Australia. This small token will enable Judith to receive all our Newsletter and other mailings, without having to pay an annual subscription.

Motion: To award an Honorary Membership to Judith Witheridge in recognition of her sterling work over many years as our Australia Representative, and for organising the annual Witheridge Family Reunions in Australia.

Proposed by: **Kim Cook**

Seconded by: **Rob Staples**

11 WFHS Christmas Card for 2017

Hannah Shingler (daughter of our Membership Secretary Geoff Shingler) has been asked to design our 2017 Christmas Card, and has agreed to do so. Hannah has produced some beautiful cards in the past couple of years, and we are grateful that she has agreed to provide another design.

12 Date and venue for 2018 Reunion

The proposed date of the of the 2018 reunion will be either 9 or 16 May 2018. Members are invited to indicate their preferred date and make proposals for possible venue. These will be discussed by the Committee, with final proposals put to the membership by 1 August 2017, and the venue approved by 1 September 2017.

13 Any other business

Please note that any item discussed under Any other business, which has not been specified on the Agenda may be voted on and passed or rejected in the same way as all other items, but will need need further ratification by the Committee at its next meeting.

AGM - Voting and Absentee Voting

All full members, and additional family members over the age of 16 who are covered by that membership, are entitled to vote, provided the membership is fully paid up at the date of the meeting.

Any voting member unable to attend may register an absentee vote by post or e-mail. **All absentee votes must be received at least four full days before the meeting, ie, by Tuesday 16 May 2017** Postal votes must be sent to the Hon Chairman at 2 Rusthall Close, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7YH in a sealed envelope clearly marked 'Postal Vote'. Votes registered via e-mail must be sent to jasonprcook@gmail.com with 'Absentee Vote' in the subject box. Votes received by this mail box will be printed off and taken to the meeting, but neither these, nor the postal votes, will be counted until the votes of those present at the meeting have been cast. Should more than one vote be received from a member, only the last received for that member will be counted.

Any AGM motion concerning the Constitution requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast in order to be passed, but other motions can be passed by a simple majority. In the event of an equal number of votes being cast for and against a motion (except motions amending the Constitution) the Chairman of the meeting has a casting vote.

Subscription Reminder

Subscriptions for 2017 became due on 1 January. All members should now have received a personal reminder from our new Membership Secretary, Geoff Shingler, including details of payment methods. However, if any of you have overlooked your renewal, please send your your payment as soon as possible, with an email to Geoff confirming your payment and the method used. Once your renewal has been received, our Web-master Bill Dwyne will be notified, and you will then receive the new password for the 'Members' Only' section of our WFHS web-site. We are gradually adding more information and photos to this section of the web-site, so don't miss out on access to this.

Witheridge FHS Web-site

The website also contains details of our reunions, the Society's history, and our research holdings. Take a look – you'll be surprised how much information we hold! There is also a very popular photo album, and we welcome additional material.

If you have any research queries, or need any further information about your family, these can be sent direct to witheridge1987@gmail.com. However, there is currently some delay in dealing with these, so please be patient!

Tom Jewell

20 December 1930—4 March 2017



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death, on 4 March 2017, of **Tom Jewell**. For many years, Tom and his wife Sheila, both very experienced family history researchers, undertook a great deal of research on behalf of the Witheridge FHS, and gave some fascinating and informative presentations at our Reunions. They became such great friends of the Society that they joined, even though neither has any proven direct links with the Witheridge family. While there is a record of an Elizabeth Witheridge who married Emanuel Jewel in 1788 in Holsworthy, so far we have no proof that Emanuel was related to Tom.

Tom was a Devonshire man through and through, with the sea in his blood. He was born in Plymouth, close to the Hoe, his father **Charles Jewell** was a naval officer, and earlier generations of Jewell men had served in the Merchant Marine. Tom was educated at Sutton High School, Plymouth, and then joined Post Office Telephones (now British Telecom) at their Plymouth Centre. Despite his maritime background, Tom did his National Service in the Army and was posted to Nairobi, Kenya. Back in Plymouth he resumed his telecommunications work, and met Sheila, who had joined the company as a telephonist. They married in 1954, and had three children, Ian, Susan and Michael. By the time Tom retired, he had become Superintendent of BT Telecoms Traffic.

Throughout Tom's life, he and Sheila had a passion for family history, and both were long-term members of the Devon FHS. Tom also did a considerable amount of work on the history of the UK telephone industry and the people who worked in it. Both were regular visitors to the various branches of the Devon Record Office, and were always generous in helping others with their research. Personally I am very grateful to both Tom and Sheila for uncovering details about my own ancestors that were available only in local record offices, which I had not been able to travel to in recent years. This was typical of their generosity.

Tom enjoyed an active retirement in Exeter, until he was diagnosed with amyloidosis, a rare and dangerous condition which, in Tom's case, affected his kidneys. For almost three years he had been on dialysis three times a week, but he never complained or let it get him down. During the last six months, Tom had become increasingly poorly, and his health took a further down-turn when he contracted pneumonia. Throughout this time, Sheila cared for Tom, but in his last weeks Tom had to go into Exeter Hospice, where he died on 4 March.

A service celebrating Tom's life, held at St Peter's Chapel, Exeter, included a reading by his grand-daughter of Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar', and ended, appropriately, with a recording of the Royal Marines playing 'Plymouth Hoe'. Donations in his memory were given to Exeter Hospicare.

Tom was skilled, courteous, generous, and uncomplaining, and will be sadly missed. We send our heartfelt condolences to Sheila and all the family. *KC*



Julia Crocker

1948—20 November 2016

Julia Crocker had been a member of the Witheridge FHS for some years. She was descended from William Witheridge of Bideford and his wife Fanny Causey. Their daughter Fanny Elizabeth and her husband James Henry Crocker moved to London and later to Croydon, Surrey.

Julia, a lively, energetic and talented soul, was born in the Luton area in 1948. Sadly, her father, actor **Horace George Crocker**, died when Julia was just a year old. The family moved to Dorset, where Julia was educated at Shaftesbury High School, before they moved again, this time to Bath.

After leaving school, Julia joined the Civil Service, but left after six years to look after her four sons, all born in the 1970s. While juggling family life and studying for an Open University degree, she took on an amazing variety of part-time jobs – social work with the RNID, secretary to a surgical appliance fitter, lollipop lady, cinema usherette, market researcher, and spot welder! Having achieved her BA degree, she then enrolled as a full-time student at Bath College of Higher Education and gained her BEd.

With permanent teaching jobs scarce, Julia spent some time as a supply teacher, but in 1986 switched to working as a staff trainer for Homebase, and later managed a Barnardo's charity shop.

In 1989, with all her children in secondary school, Julia returned to the Civil Service, starting in the Pay and Personnel Agency of the Ministry of Defence. During the next 16 years, Julia qualified as a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and eventually moved to business improvement consultancy and performance assessment for the Defence Procurement Agency in Bristol, where she also qualified as an Investment Management Consultant. She also resumed her studies with the Open University and in 2001 was awarded a BA Honours degree.

In 1994 Julia paid her first visit to Orkney, and fell in love with these islands off the Scottish Coast. In 2005 she took early retirement and moved to Stronsay, a small island of some 230 inhabitants north-west of Orkney mainland. Here she ran an Arts and Crafts Shop, and also served as Director of the Stronsay Development Trust and Stronsay Renewable Energy Ltd. Both organisations are committed to sustainable development on the island, and to that end installed a 900Kw community wind turbine. Some retirement!

In 2016, Julia decided to retire for the second time and moved to Warminster to be near her family. When I contacted her after the move she was 'camping out' in her new home, waiting for her belongings to complete their journey from Orkney, and also waiting for an Internet connection. The next time I contacted her, I was sad to learn that she was being treated for cancer. We learned in the new year that she had died in November.

Her bubbly and lively presence will be sorely missed. We send our condolences to Julia's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. *KC*

Peter Witheridge Grafton

19 May 1916—20 May 2012

Peter Witheridge Grafton joined the Witheridge FHS in 1987, our first year. Although he was never able to attend any of our meetings, Peter was greatly interested in his family history. He had traced his family back to the marriage in 1874 of **James Grafton** of Westminster to **Agness Rebeca Witheridge** of Yealmpton, but knew nothing of his earlier family. We were able to provide him with details of his ancestry back to **Walter Witheridge**, who was named on a land lease in West Alvington in 1687. By 1800 the family was in Yealmpton, where Peter's 3 x great grandfather, another **Walter Witheridge**, was born.

In the 1880s, Agness and James Grafton had established a public house, called Grafton's, in Sutton Ground, Westminster, and their descendants were still running it in 1939. Peter's parents, **James Hawkins Grafton** and **Ethel Marion Brannan** had seven children, and to all of them, Grafton's was home. Peter and his twin, Douglas were third and fourth. Later Grafton's found fame as the birthplace of the Goons, and is still a haunt of Goons fans today!

Peter was educated at Westminster City School, Sutton Valence School and then at the College of Estate Management, and became a quantity surveyor. In WW2 he served in the Queen's Westminster Rifles, the Dorsetshire Regiment, and the Royal Engineers, in India, Ceylon, Java and the Cocos Islands. After the war, he became a partner in G D Walford and Partners, Chartered Quantity Surveyors, and in 1978 was made a senior partner. That year he also became President of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

In 1950 Peter stood as a Liberal candidate for Bromley, Kent, and broke his leg three days before the election was announced. He conducted his entire campaign on crutches, but was beaten by the Conservative candidate, none other than Harold Macmillan! Although Peter never stood for parliament again, he co-founded the Radical Reform Group, which included many Liberals, and campaigned under the slogan 'social reform without socialism'.

Another great interest of Peter's was golf, and he was President and Founder of the Grafton Morris annual golf competition held by the Old Boys Golf Association.

In 1939 Peter married Joan Bleackley, and they had four children. Joan died in 1969, and in 1971 he married Margaret Ruth Ward, by whom he had two children. He was appointed CBE in 1972.

We hadn't heard from Peter for some years, and recently, while revising our membership list, discovered that Peter had died on 20 May 2012, age 96.

Left: Graftons, in Sutton Ground, Westminster, with James (Jimmy) Grafton on the far right.

